

CONFIDENTIAL
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 52ND AVIATION BATTALION (COMBAT)
APO San Francisco 96494
"FLYING DRAGONS"

AVBAGB-CC

13 November 1970

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 52nd Aviation Battalion (Combat), Period Ending 31 October 1970, RCS CSFGR-65 (h2) (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Section 1 - Operations: Significant Activities.

a. (C) General. This report for the period 1 August 1970 through 31 October 1970 is submitted in compliance with AR 525-15, USAFPAF Reg 525-15 and USAFV Supplement 1 to AR 525-15.

(1) Headquarters, 52nd Aviation Battalion (Combat), LTC Ronald H. Merritt, Commanding, remains at Camp Holloway, Pleiku, RVN. Inclosure 1 reflects the station list of all assigned and attached units with location and APO, as of 31 October 1970.

(2) During the quarter the battalion underwent a significant change of missions as 20 VNAF aviators reported to the 189th AHC on 20 August 1970 and 20 VNAF aviators reported to the 170th AHC on 15 October 1970. Both groups were involved in Phase I & II of Improvement and Modernization Program. The 57th AHC and 119th AHC saw a reduction in committed aircraft as the 4th Infantry Division conducted a standdown prior to redeployment. The battalion continues to support the 5th Special Forces Group, Airborne; II ARVN Corps; MACV; other forces in the Central Highlands; and the remaining deployed elements of the US Fourth Infantry Division. (See Inclosure 2). All operational and administrative functions and activities of Camp Holloway, Holloway Army Airfield, and Kontum Army Airfield are controlled by the 52nd Aviation Battalion (Combat).

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GROUP 4
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS

I Field Force G-3
Box #3 ORRL'S
Box #8

Authority NND911547
 By 10 NARA Date 226 99

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AVB&CB-CC (13 Nov 70)

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Less Than 1000 Hours, 1st
 Aviation Battalion (Combat), Period Ending 31 October 1970,
 MCS CSFOR-65, (M2) (U)

b. (C) Personnel

(1) Awards and Decorations. The following awards were approved and presented during this reporting period.

	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEP</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Silver Star	4	0	0	4
Soldiers Medal	1	3	0	4
Distinguished Flying Cross	50	20	9	79
Bronze Star "V"	3	15	0	18
Bronze Star	32	65	27	124
Army Commendation Medal "V"	2	0	0	2
Army Commendation Medal	174	220	118	512
Air Medal "V"	27	15	6	48
Air Medal	128	790	589	1507
Purple Heart	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>
	424	1130	749	2303

(3) Personnel turnover for the reporting period was as follows:

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>				<u>EM</u>		
	<u>GAINS</u>	<u>LOSSES</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>		<u>GAINS</u>	<u>LOSSES</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
AUG	24	11	+13		152	137	+15
SEP	12	13	-1		113	133	-20
OCT	16	14	+2		98	135	-37

(4) The battalion total strength is 1852 as of 31 October 1970. The battalion is short 18 commissioned officers, 32 warrant officers, and 154 enlisted men. Strengths by units are shown in Inclosure III.

(5) Information Office Activities:

- (a) Printed releases 196
- (b) Pictorial releases 75
- (c) Hometown printed releases 661
- (d) Hometown pictorial releases 250

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AVBAGB-CC (13 Nov 70)

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(6) reenlistment Data

	HHC	52d Scty	57th	119th	174th	179th	189th	219th	361st	Total
AUG	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	-	1	3
SEP	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	-	2	4
OCT	1	0	3	0	0	0	3	2	1	10

(7) Legal Activities

The legal section was formed in August, 1970, with the assignment of two non-JACC certified lawyers to the Battalion. These lawyers assumed all duties of trial and defense counsel for cases arising out of the 52d, 7/17 Cav, and 43d Signal Battalion. At the time the legal section was formed, the 52d had eight cases pending with charges in some of the cases dating back to early in the year. The docket was reduced to nothing and at this time there are 11 new cases pending in this Battalion. Eight of the 11 cases pending at this time are drug related offenses. This can be attributed to the increase in the use of drugs throughout Vietnam and to the increased emphasis on drug control in the Battalion. The legal section has combined efforts with the Chaplain and Flight Surgeon to present drug programs to all E4's and below and the CIL gave a class to all officers and CNO's on Drug Control.

c. (C) Intelligence: The S-2 section continues to publish a daily intelligence summary of significant activities in the Pleiku - Kontum - Binh Binh Province area. Intelligence information is gathered from the Headquarters, Military Region II: 4th Infantry Division; 5th Special Forces; 525 MI Detachment; other supported units; liaison visits to other S-2 offices; and debriefings submitted by aviators and air mission commanders.

(1) Enemy Activity: During this reporting period the 52nd Aviation Battalion (Combat) assets were subjected to one (1) enemy initiated attack by fire. This attack took place during the month of September when the airstrip located at Dak To received six (6) 122mm rockets. This attack resulted in one (1) AH-1G destroyed and one (1) AH-1G damaged.

(2) Movement: During the last week of October the A-20 Sapper Battalion which was previously thought to have been located in Eastern Cambodia has been identified Southwest of LZ Oasis. The 631st Battalion has set up a base camp in the Chu Prong Mountains approximately 20 km west of Pleiku. During the month of September elements of the 408th Sapper Battalion moved from their normal location in Base Area 229 to site due west of LZ Weight-Davis. Also, the 1-95B Battalion moved into the vicinity of LZ Blackhawk on QL 19.

(3) New Units: The 394 Artillery Battalion which has been carried as an unknown unit has been identified in contact 10 km south of Camp Enari. This unit's last known location was Baker, Cambodia.

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AVBACB-CC (13 Nov 70)

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(4) Enemy capabilities, vulnerabilities and probable courses of action:

(a) Capabilities: The enemy possesses the capability of conducting battalion sized operations against allied installations, base camps, and populated areas in both Kontum and Pleiku provinces. In addition the enemy can conduct stand-off/sapper attacks employing mortars up to 122mm, 75mm recoilless rifle, and rockets up to 140mm throughout the area. The enemy can also interdict QL 14 and QL 19 with company size units. Friendly air activity may be restricted with fire from small arms, automatic weapons, and 12.7mm and 37mm anti-aircraft weapons.

(b) Vulnerabilities: Enemy units are subject to airstrikes, and artillery fire while moving, in bivouac, or massing for an attack. Munitions and food caches are vulnerable to allied search and clear operations. Bivouac sites can be located by airborne personnel and red haze detection devices; also, movement can be detected by airborne and ground sensor devices. Enemy lines of communication are over extended and subject to interdiction by allied forces.

(c) The enemy should continue to limit their actions to political activity, small scale attacks, and acts of terrorism with a noticable absence of large unit actions. Allied installations and base camps along with logistical complexes will probably be targeted for attacks by fire while local RF + IF units involved in the GVN pacification program will receive the bulk of the small unit harrassing attacks.

(5) Enemy Battle Losses:

(a) Confirmed KBA	187
(b) Estimated KBA	280
(c) Structures Destroyed	352
(d) Structures Damaged	92

(6) Ground to Air Fire: During this reporting period the 52nd Aviation Battalion had sixty-six aircraft hit by ground-to-air fire. From the total number of aircraft hits, thirty aircraft were hit with SA fire; thirty-one were hit with automatic weapon fire of the .30 caliber type; three were hit with .50 caliber fire; and two aircraft were hit by fire larger than .50 caliber.

(7) Security Clearances: The following clearances were granted/validated by the S-2 section during this reporting period.

	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEP</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
SECRET	31	12	21	64
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CONFIDENTIAL

AVBACE-CC (13 Nov 70)

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 52nd Aviation Battalion (Combat), period ending 31 October 1970, RCS CSFOR-65 (n2) (U)

d. (C) Operations.

(1) During the reporting period, the 52nd Aviation Battalion (Combat) has supported combat, combat service, and pacification operations throughout the II Military Region. The battalion flew a total of 29,395 hours during the period, including 13,407 hours of combat assault. Units or activities receiving daily aviation support included the 4th Infantry Division, MACV, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), IFFV Artillery, II Military Region, and Pleiku, Kontum, Phu Bon, and Binh Dinh Provinces. Tabulated data of operational results is shown in Inclosure 4.

(2) The following operations were supported during the period.

<u>OPERATION</u>	<u>START</u>	<u>TERMINATION</u>
Park Silver	Continued	Continues
Putnam Paragon	Continued	12 August 70
Putnam Valley	13 August 70	21 August 70
Wayne Span	Continued	7 August 70
Wayne Pierce	7 August 70	27 August 70
Wayne Horse	28 August 70	14 October 70
Brandeis Blue	Continued	25 August 70
Nguyen Hue	13 October 70	17 October 70
Nguyen Hue	23 October 70	25 October 70

(3) The 57th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) continued to provide support primarily to the 4th Infantry Division, II Corps, IFFV Artillery, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), and Command and Control Central.

(4) Until a 100% standdown on 30 October 1970, prior to redeployment, the 119th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) had the primary mission this quarter of supporting the 4th Infantry Division. The unit also supported MACV, IFFV Artillery Group, 5th Special Forces Group, II Corps Headquarters, 173d ABN Bde, and ARVN units.

(5) The 170th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) continued in a general support role. The main mission support went to ARVN units, Command and Control Central, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 22nd Division Forward (ARVN), II Corps Headquarters, and elements of the 52nd Aviation Battalion (Combat). On 15 October 1970, the mission of the 170th changed significantly with the addition of 20 VNAF aviators to the company. The 170th pilots are training the VNAF in order to enable them to become proficient in combat helicopter operations in the Republic of Vietnam. As of 31 October 1970, the VNAF aviators had flown an average of 24.1 hours.

(6) The 179th Aviation Company (Support Helicopter) continued to support the first and second brigades of the 4th Infantry Division in the An Khe area.

AVB/COB-CC (13 Nov 70)

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 52nd Aviation Battalion (Combat), Period Ending 31 October 1970, MCS CSFCH-65 (h2) (U)

It also supported the 22d Division (ARVN), IRTV Artillery, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), II Corps Headquarters, the 17th Aviation Group (Combat), and the 7/17th Cavalry.

(7) The 189th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) provided support to the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), II Corps Headquarters, and the 4th Infantry Division. The mission of the 189th underwent a tremendous change on 20 August 1970, as they received 20 Vietnamese Air Force aviators, recent graduates of flight school at Hunter AAF, Savannah, Georgia. The mission given the 189th was to train the VNAF aviators in the art of air mobility and techniques of combat helicopter operations in the Republic of Vietnam. As of 31 October 1970, the 20 VNAF has flown the minimum number of hours required (180) under the I&M Plan 70-51.

(8) The 219th Aviation Company (Utility Airplane) was transferred to the 52nd Aviation Battalion (Combat) on 15 October 1970. The 219th continued its air support for MACV Advisory Team 36-Fleiku, MACV Advisory Team 41-Kontum, MACV Advisory Team 42-Binh Dinh. MACV Advisory Team 25-Darlac, 52d Artillery Group in Kontum and Fleiku provinces, the 4th Infantry Division, the 173d Airborne Brigade, Command and Control Central (CCC), Command and Control South (CCS), and 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne). On 24 October 1970, the additional mission of supporting MACV Advisory Team 31-Phu Ben, at Cheo neo was received.

(9) The 361st Aviation Company (Escort) has had the primary mission of supporting Command and Control Central (FOB II) daily during the reporting period. This support consisted of six (6) AH-1G's, four (4) of which supported FOB II at Kontum. In addition to the six (6) AH-1G's that supported Command and Control Central, the 361st Aviation Company maintains two (2) AH-1G's on II Corps thirty (30) minute standby at night, and, when requested, during daylight hours.

(10) During the period the Battalion experienced hazardous flying conditions due to the monsoon season and high winds caused by tropical storms along the coast.

e. (U) Training. The Battalion has continued its extensive training program initiated last quarter. Replacement training of new aviators and orientation of supported ground unit commanders has received utmost attention. Liaison has been made with ARVN units of the II Military Region (47th ARVN Regt, 42nd ARVN Regt, and 22nd ARVN Division Headquarters) and classes are being prepared on the tactical employment of rotary-winged aircraft. These classes, taught to all subordinate ground unit commanders, will cover all aspects of airmobile operations from the selection of the LZ to the actual assault into the LZ. These classes will be taught by the Battalion Liaison officer to II Corps Military Headquarters. The Battalion standardization section has undertaken a program of instrument instruction for pilots to insure that they are proficient for instrument flights. Also, an OH-58A

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBACB-CC (13 Nov 70)

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Instructor pilot was assigned to Battalion headquarters and transitioned ten of the staff. This quarter the 52nd Battalion requested 232 quotas for AANTS Courses and received 80. This is in comparison to the first quarter when 61 quotas were requested and 31 were received. An extensive ground school in the concept of airmobile operations was taught the 20 VNAF of the 170th and the 20 VNAF of the 189th. Plans are underway at this time to train personnel of the 229th VNAF Squadron being formed at Pleiku AB in the care and use of FOL products. This training will be conducted by personnel from the Battalion S-4 office. Plans are also being drawn up and classes prepared on the preparation and use of FILL's, maintenance reports, and care of the aircraft. Members of the battalion staff will assist in this instruction. In addition, during the last week in October members of the 52nd Pathfinder Detachment began training 24 members of the 3rd ARVN Cavalry II Corps Rangers in the techniques of Pathfinder employment.

f. (C) Logistics.

(1) Class II: The problem of non-availability of flight gloves was alleviated. This was accomplished by our Bn Supply technician hand carrying our consolidated list of all valid due out requests directly to ICCV Long Binh. Upon submission of our requisitions we received an approximate 92% fill.

(2) Class III:

a. We are experiencing an apparent problem in maintaining an adequate supply (15 days) of Class III A on hand.

b. Total J4-4 dispensed by this Battalion during the reporting period was 1,161,000 gallons.

(3) Class V:

a. Ammunition issues and expenditures for helicopter gunships, by type, were as follows:

<u>NOMENCLATURE</u>	<u>ISSUED FROM ASH</u>	<u>EXPENDED</u>
2.75" hkt	6,149	8,324
40 mm	26,550	19,600
7.62" MM	574,000	728,538
20 mm	16,800	14,452

b. On several occasions during this past quarter we have experienced the problem of our ASH having several types of ordnance listed on their ASH that are not included on our ASH. Example: MC23 (C-4), M456 (Det Cord), G881 (Frag grenade)

8
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