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

AVBACB-CC

13 August 1970

SUBJECT: Operation Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 52nd Aviation Battalion (Combat), Period Ending 31 July 1970
RCS GSFOR-65 (R2) (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Section 1 - Operations: Significant Activities.

a. (C) General. This report for the period 1 May 1970 through 31 July 1970 is submitted in compliance with AR 525-15, USARPAC Reg 525-15 and USAFW 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 July 1970.

(2) During the quarter there has been no significant change of mission. The battalion continues to provide aviation support to the U.S. Fourth Infantry Division; 5th Special Forces Group, Airborne; II ARVN Corps; MACV; and other forces in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. (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).

b. (C) Personnel.

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

	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUNE</u>	<u>JULY</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Silver Star	0	3	3	6
Distinguished Flying Cross	3	24	55	82
Bronze Star "V"	3	1	2	6
Bronze Star	25	16	58	99
Army Commendation Medal "V"	11	19	3	33
Army Commendation Medal	94	35	221	350
Air Medal "V"	30	16	110	156
Air Medal	175	132	782	1089
Purple Heart	0	14	22	36
	341	260	1256	1857

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GROUP 4
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS

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

MONTH	OFFICERS			EM		
	GAINS	LOSSES	CHANGE	GAINS	LOSSES	CHANGE
MAY	96	45	+51	160	177	-17
JUN	55	71	-16	123	192	-69
JUL	40	32	+8	162	158	+4

(4) The battalion total strength is 1751 as of 31 Jul 70. The battalion is short 1 commissioned officer, 30 warrant officers, and 128 enlisted men. Strengths by unit are shown in Inclosure 3.

(5) Information Office activities:

- (a) Printed Releases 50
- (b) Pictorial Releases 15
- (c) Homotown Printed Releases 212
- (d) Homotown Pictorial Releases 95

c. (C) Intelligence. The S-2 section continues to publish a daily intelligence summary of significant activities in the Pleiku-Kontum area and western Binh Dinh Province. Intelligence information is gathered from the Headquarters, Military Region II; 5th Special Forces; 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 six enemy initiated attacks by fire. Three such attacks were in the month of May when Camp Holloway, on three different occasions, received a total of eight 122mm rockets. Enemy initiated activity decreased slightly the following month. Camp Holloway only received one attack during the month of June when two 122mm rockets were expended against the camp. Kontum Army Airfield during the same reporting period accounted for one stand-off attack when two 122mm rockets fell inside their perimeter. The month of July was the quietest month reported. Camp Holloway received six 82mm mortars during one stand-off attack.

(2) Movement: The major NVA units have moved out of the Dak Pek-Dak To region and are believed to be located in and around base area 609. An element of the 66th NVA Regt was reported in the southern section of base area 702. The K394 Artillery Battalion moved from the Darlae Province Area to an unlocated area west of the Duc Co Special Forces Camp. Also the K-20 Sapper Battalion, that was located to the east of base area 609, was identified in the Duc Co area. In late June, the K631 Composite Battalion that normally works in the LZ Oasis, TACR, moved out of country for approximately three weeks before returning to an area southwest of LZ Oasis.

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(3) New Units: There have been agent reports that a new unit for the Military Region II area is located around the Dak To area. The proposed unit is the 1st NVA Regt. This unit normally works in the Military Region I area. Presently, there are no known sources that can confirm the exact location of this new unit.

(4) Situation: NVA units have pulled back to the Tri-Border area. The local force units are doing most of the harrassing at the present time. The primary targets are RF/PP units, OP's, and poorly defended villages. The enemy is generally avoiding contact to conserve his strength and resources.

(5) Ground-to-Air Fire: During this reporting period the 52nd Aviation Battalion (Combat) had ninety-three aircraft receive ground-to-air fire. From the total number of aircraft hits, thirty-five aircraft were hit with automatic weapons fire, .30 caliber or smaller; forty-seven aircraft were hit by small arms fire; and eleven aircraft were hit by .50 caliber or larger ground-to-air fire.

(6) Capabilities:

(a) Kontum Province: In Kontum Province the enemy forces can conduct stand-off attacks or combination stand-off/sapper attacks against US/allied installations anywhere in the province. The enemy can employ mortars up to 120mm, 75mm recoilless rifle, and rockets up to 140mm throughout the area, and 82mm/100mm/105mm artillery against those installations near the Cambodian Border. He can conduct ground attacks of up to reinforced battalion strength with supporting artillery, primarily in the area of Dak To/Ben Het and Dak Seang. The enemy can also interdict QL 14N and route 512. Friendly air activity may be restricted with fire from small arms, automatic weapons, and 12.7mm and 37mm anti-aircraft weapons.

(b) Pleiku Province: The K631 composite battalion is capable of launching 122mm rocket attacks on installations around Pleiku and Camp Enari and conducting multi-battalion operations. The 408th Sapper Battalion is capable of conducting multi-company sapper attacks on Pleiku, US and ARVN installations, and attacks by fire on villages and friendly units in the area. The H-15 LF Bn is capable of harrassing villages, US, and friendly units using 60mm mortars and B-40 rockets.

d. (C) Operations.

(1) During the reporting period, the 52nd Aviation Battalion (Combat) has supported combat, combat service, and pacification operations throughout the II Corps Tactical Zone. The battalion flew a total of 30,538 hours during the period, including 14,515 hours of combat assault. Units or activities receiving daily aviation support included the 4th Infantry Division, MACV, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), IITV Artillery, II ARVN Corps, and Pleiku, Kontum, Phu Ben, and Binh Dinh Provinces. Tabulated data of operational results is shown in Inclosure 4.

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(2) The following operations were supported during this period

<u>OPERATION</u>	<u>START</u>	<u>TERMINATION</u>
Park Silver	Continued	Continues
Baird Silver	Continued	4 May 70
Wayne Wind	Continued	4 May 70
Putnam Plateau	Continued	4 May 70
Dak Seang IV & V	1 April 70	9 May 70
Binh Tay	5 May 70	26 Jun 70
Cheadle Blue	15 May 70	28 May 70
Wayne Jump	16 May 70	26 May 70
Fredendahl Gold	18 May 70	30 May 70
Putnam Paragon	18 May 70	Continues
Robertson White	1 Jun 70	9 Jun 70
Wayne Hurdle	1 Jun 70	26 Jun 70
Wright Blue	23 Jun 70	28 Jun 70
Wayne East	28 Jun 70	14 Jul 70
Brandies Blue	2 Jul 70	Continues
Wayne Span	13 Jul 70	Continues

(3) 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 Hq, 173 ABN Bde, and ARVN units. A new mission, Command and Control for the 22nd ARVN Division, was added this quarter.

(4) The 179th Aviation Company (Support Helicopter) continued to support the first and second brigades of the 4th Infantry Division in the An Khe area. Resupply and operations were conducted from the Night Jumper Pad (An Khe), Armageddon, and LZ Uplift. It also supported the 22nd Division (ARVN) out of Plei Djerong and Due Co in the May through June Cambodian operation. Minor support was given to the 1/92 Artillery and the 5th Special Forces.

(5) The 189th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) provided support to the 4th Infantry Division for a massive operation into Cambodia from 3 May 70 to 29 May 70. During the remainder of the quarter general support was given to 5th Special Forces, II Corps, and the 52nd Aviation Battalion.

(6) During the months of May, June, and July, 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, 22nd Division Forward, CORDS, and II Corps in the Kontum Province and the Pleiku Province areas.

(7) The 361st Aviation Company (Escort) has had the primary mission of supporting Command and Control Central (FOB II) daily with four (4) AH-1G's. Additionally, two (2) AH-1G's supported II Corps and the 4th Infantry Division from 1 May 1970 to 12 July 1970. From 12 July to the present the two (2) above mentioned AH-1G's were in support of FOB operations from a second launch site located at Due Co.

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(8) The 57th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) continues to provide support primarily to the 4th Infantry Division, II Corps, IFFV Artillery, and the 5th Special Forces Group.

(9) During the period the battalion experienced hazardous flying conditions due to the monsoon season.

e. (C) Training. The Battalion has initiated an extensive training program during this quarter to ensure that all personnel are properly trained. Replacement training of instructor pilots has received utmost attention. Three aviators were trained at the instructors pilot school, 5th Avn Det., Phu Loi, and additional instructor pilots were requested to give instruction here at Battalion. These instructors qualified nine trainees as instructor pilots. Additional AARTS courses have been requested and received in the following fields: Technical Inspectors, Engine Course, Tech Supply, Lower Train, and Radar Operators.

f. (C) Logistics.

(1) Class II: Shortages were experienced in certain sizes of flight gloves. This is a continuing problem.

(2) Total JP-4 dispensed by this battalion during the reporting period was 1,561,000 gallons.

(3) Class V.

a. Ammunition expenditures and issues were basically below the amounts shown on last report. This was a direct result of limited activity in Dak To and no activity in Dak Seang. Ammunition issues and expenditures for helicopter gunships, by type, were as follows:

<u>NOMENCLATURE</u>	<u>ISSUED FROM ASP</u>	<u>EXPENDED</u>
2.75" Rkt	6,639	14,476
40mm	35,596	19,200
7.62mm	918,000	819,993
20mm	4,800	2,960

b. 2.75" rockets (fleschottos) are a continuing problem. The ASP is not authorized to stock these items and they are currently on the ASR bi-monthly listings.

(4) Class IX: Repair parts for the SPH-4 helmet are a problem. At present all support units are in the process of establishing ASL's for those helmets. This should solve the problem.

g. (U) Civil Affairs.

(1) The first joint United States Army and Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) civic action project in the Pleiku area was completed on 3 July 1970. The project was conducted in coordination with the 20th ARVN Engineer Battalion.

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(2) Several tons of fatigues were donated by the 45th General Support Group. Each company of 52nd Avn Bn (Cbt) donated food, clothing, and building materials. The 52nd Aviation Battalion and 20th ARVN engineer medics conducted joint out-patient treatment and distributed 5,000 bars of soap to the 2,000 Montagnards of Plei Monu, Plei Chuet, Plei Ngo.

(3) The 57th AHC, An Khe, is involved in a program of village improvement by constructing latrines and recreational areas, by moving homes to better locations, and by giving medical treatment to newly arrived refugees prior to relocation.

(4) The 170th AHC, Kontum, is currently involved in a project to provide the Dr. Patricia Smith Hospital in Kontum with 1200 gals. of potable water on a daily basis. In addition medics from the 154th Med. Det. are training Montagnards in the duties of a laboratory technician.

(5) The 189th AHC, Camp Holloway, is providing support for and salaries of two school teachers at Tora Bai.

(6) The 361st Avn Co (E), Camp Holloway and the 119th AHC, An Khe, are providing material and assistance in the building a Vietnamese school at Xom Moi.

(7) Approximately 150-170 Montagnards and Vietnamese are treated each month in the dispensaries at Holloway, Kontum, An Khe.

(8) The 52nd Sec Det, Camp Holloway, operates a Montagnards Souvenir shop. Handicraft items are purchased from the Montagnards and sold at an 18% profit. These profits are in turn used to support the detachment's other civic action programs. Recently they purchased two organs to be donated to local Montagnard churches. The 52nd Sec. Det. also assists the 20th ARVN ENG GP (C) in its civic action program.

h. (U) Aircraft Maintenance.

(1) Maintenance Statistics:

	AH-1G	UH-1C	UH-1H	CH-47C	CH-58
Aircraft Authorized*	12	32	93	16	5
Total Aircraft Assigned	11	27	88	16	4
Average	11	6.7	22	16	2
Availability Rate (%)	92.5	65.8	81.3	66.6	77.2
EDM Rate	12.5	21.9	17.2	24.2	5.8

*Statistics are based on 1st Avn Bde Letter, dtd 18 April 1970,
 SUBJECT: Aircraft Authorizations.

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(2) Aircraft on-hand status as of 31 July 1970.

UNIT	AH-1G Auth/OH	UH-1C Auth/OH	UH-1H Auth/OH	CH-47C Auth/OH	CH-58 Auth/OH
57th Avn Co	8/7	22/21			
119th Avn Co	8/6	22/22			
170th Avn Co	8/8	22/20			
179th Avn Co				16/16	2/2
189th Avn Co	8/6	22/22			
361st Avn Co	12/11				
HHC			1/2		3/2

(3) Aircraft availability rates by unit and other tabulated maintenance data are shown in Inclosure 5.

i. (U) Accident Prevention.

(1) There were a total of fourteen (14) accidents recorded during this quarter. (See Inclosure 6). The breakdown of cause factors consists of seven (7) material failures and seven (7) human factors accidents. The only significant trend during this reporting period consists of six (6) engine failures, four (4) of which occurred in June. All suspect components were submitted for teardown and analysis. The Six-Point Engine Preservation Program, initiated by all battalion units in July, should greatly reduce engine failures in the future.

(2) There were 12 incidents reported during this quarter. Main rotor and tail rotor strikes account for seventy-three percent and hard landings for twenty-seven percent of the total. The problems in these areas were due to operational error, lack of supervision on the part of air mission commanders in the choice of landing zones, and lack of judgement on the part of aircraft commanders. Emphasis has been placed on these weaknesses as well as on operator awareness and knowledge of aircraft capabilities.

(3) 16 precautionary landings were noted in this three month period. Eleven of these landings occurred on the month of July. Despite close monitoring of cause factors, no significant trends have been observed. Engine failure accounted for the only forced landing during the period.

j. (U) Flight Standardization

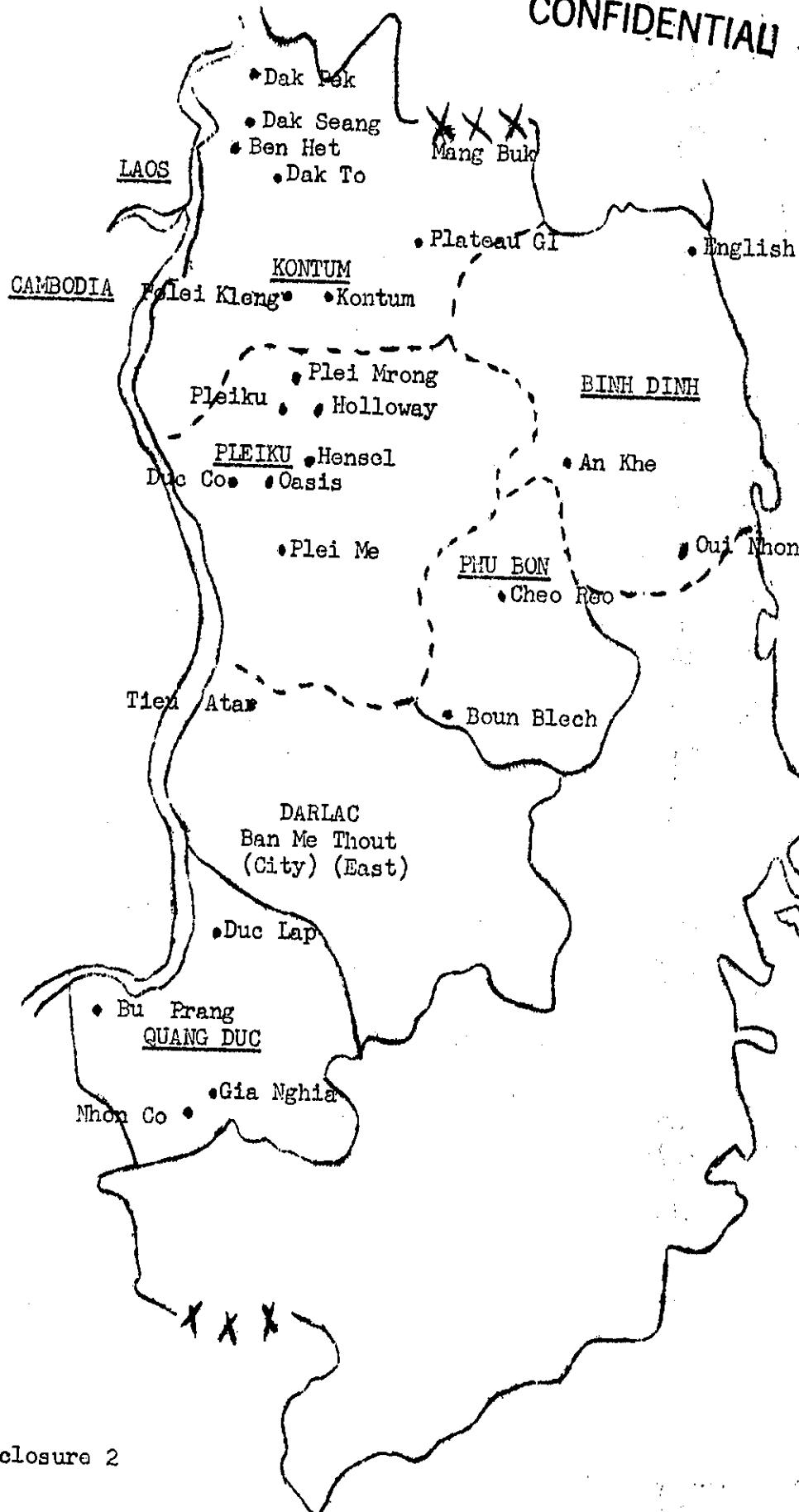
(1) The Battalion Standardization section flew 54 hours this quarter qualifying new instructor pilots and administering 90 day standardization rides.

(2) Records have not been adequately maintained at this office to substantiate the quality performance of those instructor pilots trained. Records do not reflect how many written and flight examinations were given to the applicants at battalion level for prospective aircraft commanders.

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Inclosure 2

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