

145TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION HISTORY

**Compiled by
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dated

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VAPAHG

Units & Dates Assigned

HHC & HHD 45th TRANS BN..1 July 1962 thru 23 September 1963..redesignated 145th C.A.B.
 HHC & HHD, 145TH C.A.B.....24 September 1963 thru 2 April 1972...left Vietnam
 8th TRANS CO....11 Dec 1961 thru 25 June 1963...became 117th Avn CO
 18th AVN CO....7 Feb 1962 thru October 1964...to 14th C.A.B.
 25th Avn CO....July 1971 thru 26 March 1972...left Vietnam
 33rd TRANS CO....17 September 1962 thru 25 June 1963...became 118th Avn CO
 57th TRANS CO....11 December 1961 thru 25 June 1963...became 120th Avn CO
 57th MED DET....February 1962 thru
 UTT....3 October 1962 thru 15 August 1964...became 68th Avn CO
 68th Avn CO....16 August 1964 thru 1 March 1965...became 197th Avn CO
 68th Avn CO....28 November 1965 thru 1 April 1971...left Vietnam
 71st Avn CO....2 September 1966 thru April 1967...to 14th C.A.B.
 74th Avn CO....26 March 1965 thru February 1968...to 210th C.A.B.
 81st TRANS CO....17 September 1962 thru 25 June 1963...became 119th Avn CO
 93rd TRANS CO....26 January 1962 thru 25 June 1963...became 121st Avn CO
 117th Avn CO....25 June 1963 thru August 1965...to 52nd C.A.B. See 8th Trans
 117th Avn CO....January 1968 thru March 1968...to 214th C.A.B.
 117th Avn CO....December 1971 thru 26 March 1972...left Vietnam
 118th Avn CO....25 June 1963 thru 31 August 1971...left Vietnam See 33rd Trans Co
 119th Avn CO....25 June 1963 to 30 June 1963...to 52nd Avn Bn. See 81st Trans Co
 120th Avn CO....25 June 1963 thru July 1966...to Capital Avn BN. See 57th Trans Co
 121st Avn CO....25 June 1963 thru July 1963...to Delta Avn Bn. See 93rd Trans Co
 135th Avn CO....March 1968 thru November 1968...to 222nd Avn BN.
 147th Avn CO....September 1966 thru November 1966...222nd Avn BN.
 184th Avn CO....13 August 1966 thru March 1967...11th C.A.B.
 190th Avn CO....12 August 1967 thru 10 December 1970...left Vietnam
 197th Avn CO....1 March 1965 thru 1 September 1966...became 334th Avn CO
 213th Avn CO....July 1971 thru 31 March 1972...Inactivated
 242nd Avn CO....April 1971 thru 1 October 1971...left Vietnam
 334th Avn CO....1 September 1966 thru July 1971...to 12th GP.
 335th Avn CO....1 September 1966 thru December 1966...to 173rd Airborne Brigade
 335th Avn CO....March 1967 thru January 1968...to 268th C.A.B.
 339th Trans Co..7 Feb 1962 thru... 1964
 Cobra NETT.....August 1967 thru April 1968... around Vietnam
 CO A, 82nd Avn Bn....August 1966 thru 1 September 1966...became 335th Avn CO
 CO A, 501st Avn Bn....14 December 1964 thru 1 September 1966...became 71st Avn CO

Units and their Detachments

HHC - 125th ATC, 145th Sec Plt, Path Finded Det, 87th QM Det, 391st QM Det (Petr1)
 18th AVN Co - 163rd Med Det (OA), 256th Trans Det (KC)
 25th AVN Co - ?
 57th Med Det (HEL AMB)
 68th AVN Co - 282nd Sig Det (RL), 391st Trans Det (Hel Maint) (KD), 430th Med Det (OA)
 A/501st-71st AVN Co - 94th Sig Det (RL), 151st Trans Det (Hel Maint) (KD)
 74th AVN Co - 563rd Trans Det (KC),
 8th Trans Co-117th AVN Co - 140th Trans Det (Hel Maint) (KD), 256th Sig Det (RL)
 33rd Trans-118th Avn Co -198th Sig Det (RL), 573rd Trans Det (Hel Maint), 93rd Med Det (OA)
 81st Trans-119th Avn Co -70th Sig Det (RL), 94th Med Det (OA), 545th Trans Det (Hel Maint)
 57th Trans-120th Avn Co -98th Trans Det (Hel Maint) (KD), 622nd Sig Det (RL), 129th Med Det
 93rd Trans-121st AVN Co -41st Med Det (OA), 80th Trans Det (Hel Maint), 257th Sig Det (RL)
 135th AVN Co - 68th Sig Det (RL), 614th Trans Det (Hel Maint) (KD)
 147th AVN Co - 171st Trans Det (AB)
 184th AVN Co - 243rd Sig Det (RL)
 190th AVN Co - 520th Med Det (OA), 605th Trans Det (Hel Maint) (KD)
 UTT-68th-197th-334th AVN Co -320th Sig Det (RL), 571st Trans Det (Hel Maint), 774th Med Det
 213th AVN Co - 329th Trans Det (AB)
 242nd Avn Co - 621st Trans Det (AB)
 A/82-335th AVN Co -25th Med Det (OA), 166th Trans Det (Hel Maint) (KD), 234th Sig Det (RL)
 339th Trans Co - ?
 Cobra NETT

Battalion History

11 December 1961 To 2 April 1972

During 1961 a general survey of the situation throughout Vietnam was made by General Maxwell Taylor, President Kennedy's military advisor. One item which he emphasized in his report was the lack of mobility of the ARVN troops.

To correct the situation, orders were sent to the 8th and 57th Transportation Companies (Light Helicopter) in the Fall of 1961 to deploy to Vietnam. Both units were equipped with Piasecki 21 Shawnee helicopters (Flying Banana).

Early November found the officers and men of the 8th and 57th Transportation Companies starting to think about Thanksgiving and Christmas leaves. Little did they realize that Thanksgiving would be spent on the Pacific Ocean and Christmas would be a sacred moment or two in South Vietnam, crammed between maintenance and missions. When the flag went up and the order to move was received, the procedures were old hat. Inspections, checks, allotments etc., were more or less routine.

In four days, one hundred percent of all TO&E aircraft were flyable and ready to depart. At 1000 hours, 6 November 1961, twenty H-21's from the 57th Trans Co. departed Gray Field, Fort Lewis, Washington for Stockton, California. At 1900 hours, 8 November 1961, twenty Helicopters arrived at Stockton, California without incident. This included a night flight over the Sierra Mountains, reaching an altitude of 10,500 feet.

On 21 November 1961, the units of the 8th and 57th departed for "destination unknown" aboard the USNS Core. Twenty-one days later, crowds gathered to observe the Banana Helicopters docked at Saigon, Vietnam. Hundreds and hundreds of people gazed with admiration at the big helicopters with U.S. Army boldly written across the side. As rapidly as possible the cocoons were removed, engines pre-oiled and the crowds waited expectantly as the first helicopter prepared for flight. Smoke blew out of the exhaust as the engine roared into action. Slowly the blades started to turn. Faster and faster until the pilot made all of his flight checks. Then with a powerful lurch, the first United States Army Cargo Helicopter to fly in South Vietnam, lifted off the deck of the carrier USNS CORE and sped down the Mekong River to the Saigon International Airport. Another first for the 57th Transportation Company. One by one the H-21's moved noisily off the carrier to their new home in a strange and unfamiliar land.

The units arrived on the USNS Core on 11 December 1961, 12 days later the units carried out the first airmobile action of the Vietnam War. The 22nd of December 1961 will be long remembered by the men who served with the 8th and 57th Trans Companies on that day. Operating jointly, members of the 8th and 57th Transportation Company (Light Helicopter), a training exercise was conducted north of the city of Saigon. Everyone knew that this was a rehearsal for the real thing that was to follow. Thirty H-21 helicopters loaded to maximum capacity with crack Vietnamese paratroopers raced across the docile countryside. Take-off, check points, release points and the landing area were hit with exact timing indicating the degree of professionalism and training that these two units possessed. The training exercise was completed successfully in every detail and we know that we were ready for the "big one".

The first combat assault in Vietnam, on 23 December 1961, was conducted in pineapple fields about 10 miles east of Saigon and just south of the village of Duc Hoa with 30

aircraft from both the 8th and 57th Transportation Companies participating. At dawn on the morning of 23 December 1961, the pilots examined their aircraft with unusual thoroughness. Each item on the pre-flight check list was carefully scrutinized. Simultaneously the Vietnamese paratroopers quietly and orderly broke themselves into chalk loads and assembled around the helicopter that was to make history for them. Slowly the time passed. One hour, two, then three. The pilots laughed nervously as intelligence patiently tried to get a fix on the radio that we were after. Then the word came. Go! With the 57th Transportation Company leading into a small page in history, thirty helicopters formed in echelons right and left, gaining speed as they left the Saigon Airport behind. On time, and on target, the helicopters flared for a landing into an almost impossible zone. Perpendicular rows of pineapple fields deep in mud and water. If ever pilot training and technique paid dividends, this was the day. Small arms fire broke out immediately and several of the aircraft were under fire as they departed the area to return for additional troops and reinforcements. All the aircrafts departed this area but one. As the pilots looked back they could see the cloud of black smoke and orange flames reaching for the sky and there was little doubt as to what had happened. Another, but undesirable first for the 57th Transportation Company. The first aircraft to be lost to insurgent activity while on an operational mission. Operation Chopper was a great success.

On the 24th of December 1961, Specialist Fourth Class George F. Fryett, was reported kidnaped by the insurgent Viet Cong. The 57th Transportation Company and the 8th Transportation Company were jointly alerted to prepare to mass a large number of troops as soon as the location of this American soldier was determined. Frantic preparations were made to continue making ready the H-21's for this most important mission. That word wouldn't come until June 1962.

On 2 January 1962, the word was received and for the first time, a large number of troops were delivered into an otherwise inaccessible area. One thousand and thirty six troops were flown into a hole in the jungle. This landing zone was no more than 300 yards by 150 yards. The ground was soft and the zone was further confined by isolated trees and brush growing at random. Tall, towering jungle trees ridged the area and the Viet Cong roamed at will throughout this dense foliated area. Without incident, this mission was performed to the amazement of the Vietnamese staff and commanders who were now grasping the importance of helicopter in their operations and the complete freedom and flexibility it would give them in future actions.

The one problem which arose was with their limited range the units could only be used in the countryside around Tan Son Nhut Airbase. To help the situation the 93rd Transportation Company arrived in Vietnam the 26th of January 1962 in the Da Nang area.

On 15 December 1961, the 93rd Transportation Company departed from Quonset Point, Rhode Island, aboard the U.S.S Carr for their long voyage from their deep rooted homes at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, to a new challenge in the Republic of South Viet Nam. After arriving at Subic Bay, Phillippines Islands, the company transferred their men and equipment aboard the U.S.S Princeton and continued to Da Nang, Viet Nam, arriving on 25 January 1962. On 1 February 1962, only six days later, the 93rd Transportation Company was operational and began their dangerous flying mission in Viet Nam.

The 93rd Transportation Company readily accepted their new challenging tactical mission of providing air transportation for combat troops of the Republic of South Viet Nam to expedite the tactical operations and logistical support in the forward areas of the combat zones. This also includes transportation of troops, equipment and supplies into inaccessible areas and evacuation of combat casualties.

Even with the third company the airmobile assets were still spread thin and all three units experienced a serious shortage of spare parts. To provide a utility supply network for the H-21s the 18th Aviation Company equipped with U-1A Otter aircraft arrived in Vietnam 7 February 1962. The 339th Transportation Company arrived with the 18th AVN CO to provide aviation and maintenance support to all aviation type units in Vietnam at the time.

The 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) arrived in February 1962 with the first "Hueys" in Vietnam. These new units were the beginning of a greatly increased aid program aimed at improving the capability of the South Vietnamese to fight the growing guerrilla force.

A one time priority of training became the goal for the 57th Trans Co. Helicopters departed regularly to train the Infantryman on the minimum procedures he must grasp prior to being sent on an assault mission. In three months, the 57th Transportation Company adequately trained 26,364 men. We now had the flexibility to move anywhere in the Mekong Delta Area and displace trained troops. At first awed by the helicopters, the Vietnamese soldier soon came to look forward to an assault by the helicopter. Slowly, the local commanders began to employ the helicopters more and more in less stereotyped missions. New ideas were sought and in every case the pilots of the 57th Transportation Company carried them out to the letter. An entire new concept in thinking and maneuver against the insurgent forces made the helicopter the most desired tool in their inventory. The ratio of men employed, to Viet Cong destroyed, clearly demonstrated the soundness of helicopter vertical envelopment.

With the arrival of the United States Marine Squadron came and even greater lift capability. Instead of fifteen choppers, we could now employ thirty or more. The men of the 57th Transportation Company eagerly greeted the Marines and passed on to them the experience that they had gained during the many assault missions they had flown.

The CH-21 Army helicopters rapidly became "the pack horses of the Viet Nameese mountains, jungles and rice paddies" flying dangerous supply routes that a few months earlier took land parties week to negotiate. Soon the helicopters crews of the 93rd were much at home shuffling equipment across the mountains. Loads varied from howitzers attached to slings riding below the ships to disassembled parts of two bull dozers which were flown to a U.S. Army Special Forces outpost to build an airstrip.

On 22 April 1962, another first was recorded for the 57th Transportation Company. A massive mission of thirty helicopters, lifting 1,104 troops, flown jointly by United States Marines and United States Army Helicopter pilots descended upon a little known area in an effort to suppress those who wish to overthrow the government. With minimum planning and liaison, the mission was performed in training-film style. Each unit moving directly to the appointed place at the appointed time with split second timing.

Specialist Forth Class George F Fryett of the 57th Trans Co was released by the insurgent Viet Cong forces on June 23, 1962, after being held captive since the 24th of December 1961.

On 27 June 1962, General Hightower selected the 93rd Transportation Company and attached units as the most outstanding company visited in the Republic of South Viet Nam. General Hightower visited a majority of the organizations in Viet Nam but chose an aviation unit, the 93rd Transportation Company as the most outstanding.

To provide better command of the helicopter and fixed wing units the 45th Transportation Battalion was deployed from Fort Sill, OK. On 1 July 1962 the 45th Trans Bn. arrived in Vietnam.

On the 19th of July 1962, a triple threat was passed against the Viet Cong. On this day, for the first time, forty helicopters deposited their troops in an area south west of Ben Cat. These choppers were flown by the 57th Transportation Company, United States Marines, and Vietnamese Air Force pilots. Four hundred and eighty soldiers were massed adjacent to a suspected Viet Cong strong point. Landed in flooded rice paddies with mud and water up to the waist and chests of the debarking men. A feat deemed impossible just a few short months ago.

As of the 24th of July 1962 the 57th Trans Co has flown 4,583 hours in support of the Vietnamese forces. A grand total of 133,464 ton miles of cargo have been flown to assist this nation in its struggle for independence and freedom from the Viet Cong. 51,358 troops have been transported by helicopter to insure the eventual defeat of the insurgents.

On 2 August 1962, the 93rd Transportation Company conducted the first large scale heliborne operation ever conducted in the I Corps Tactical Zone which consisted of a two

company raid on the Viet Cong 5th Region Headquarters in th Do XA area. The participation of the 93rd Transportation Company permitted the rapid capture of the Viet Cong radio station and caused heavy casualties to be inflicted upon the enemy.

On 30 August 1962, the 93rd Transportation Company participated in Operation "Lam Son II" another air-mobile combat assault against a hard-core Viet Cong Battalion deep in the jungles of Quang Ngai Province, complimented by 10 CH-34 helicopters of the 1st Helicopter Squadron VNAF, a heavy ground fog covered the landing zone preventing the first lift until two hours after the pre-strike, instead of immediately after the strike as planned. Despite encountering heavy fire from the alerted and prepared Viet Cong the loss of two CH-21 helicopters to enemy ground fire and the wounding of four crew members, the 93rd Transportation Company successfully completed two air lifts into the heavily enemy infested landing zone. Of the twelve helicopters from the 93rd Transportation Company, nine were hit and damaged by enemy fire and two shot down. Six persons were killed and five wounded in helicopters during "Lam Son II". All objectives were taken, 40 Viet Cong guerrillas were killed, six prisoners were taken, many enemy supplies including an ammunition dump were destroyed and valuable intelligence documents were seized. The psychological effect of this successful raid deep within enemy held territory was immeasurable.

On 12 September 1962, the advance party departed Da Nang on a classified mission to relocate the 93rd Transportation Company.

33rd and 81st Trans. Co. arrived in Vietnam on 17 September 1962. With the arrival of the last two Companies the Battalion was complete, the first of its kind in Vietnam.

On 19 September 1962 the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing of Soc Trang and the 93rd Transportation Company of Da Nang exchanged locations, the 93rd saying farewell to the mountains and jungle thus moving to their present location at Soc Trang Airfield in the flat Mekong River Delta. Air lifting the company to Soc Trang required transporting 47 loads; 855,299 pounds of cargo; 196,142.2 cargo-ton miles; 53,068 passenger miles and 96 hours of flight time. On 23 September 1962, the first operational mission in the Delta area was flown.

With the arrival of the Utility Tactical Transport Helicopter Company on 3 October 1962 a whole new concept in airmobility was born. The UTT was equipped with 15 UH-1A "Huey" Gunships, originally designated "Test Escort". In November 1962 the UTT was reinforced with 11 new UH-1B model Huey, the B models were greatly improved. Thus was born the first Combat Aviation Battalion in Vietnam (and the world I believe) although it wouldn't be designated as such until September 1963.

Here is a letter from Al Compton who served with the UTT as a crew chief when they arrived:

Dear James, With the data I have collected I am sending you some more information on the old UTT.

I arrived on Okinawa SO 209, 28 July, 1961. The Company was located on a high hill overlooking the China Sea. The area was known as Sukiran. The airfield was located right next to the sea and known as Hamby Army Airfield. I was originally assigned to the 25th Trans Det, the support maintenance unit, but was assigned to the UTT on SO 208 11 Oct, 1961. I was assigned to the 3rd platoon and SFC Francis "Smitty" Smith was my Platoon Sgt. I believe we had 5 UH-1A models in our platoon. They were all like new 1959 models. We had an old Papa-san who did nothing but walk the line and wax them. They were beautiful. The finish was like glass. I was made crew chief around Dec, 1961 and my ship no. was 59-1659. I named her the "Virginia Creeper". The CO was Maj Robert L. Runkle. Capt. Ivan Slavich was the Exec Off. Duty on Okinawa was good. We flew missions to outlying islands and sometimes just tooled around the main island. As crew chief I always flew co-pilot position. It was not unusual for the chiefs to get in as much "stick time" as the pilots. Sometime near the end of 1962 an uneasy feeling came over me as our basic missions began to change. I had heard little of Vietnam. We began altering and modifying the ships. Suddenly looks didn't mean as much as they did before. Electricians were all over us making up wiring harnesses and such. Then they

brought on 30 cal machine guns. The old air cooled type I had used in the 50's in Korea. These were mounted one on each skid. Then came the tubes for the 2.75 rockets. One on each side of the fuselage. By this time rumors were flying. Then came a briefing and the rumors were confirmed. We were going to Nam as the first attack helicopter formed in the Army. We trained and trained. We lived on the firing range trying to get the bugs out. It was a real home made set up. 30 cal ammo for the guns was laid out in rows on the floor of the ship and hand fed through a chute through the floor to the guns. It took 2 people, one on each side to accomplish this. Hence the door gunner was born. He would assist the crew chief in his duties. This ammo on the floor thing was terrible. Later on we devised a box to hold it. It had a divider in the center so each half fed one gun. The ammo would still overfeed so we installed a weighted bar to ride on top of it and help control the feed. Then problems with the guns jamming. Once we lifted off, the weight was so that the skids rode too low for us to reach the guns to clear. So we installed a long arm to the bolt mech. Now we could reach out and unjam them. Trouble was, the static electricity when we grabbed the handle was eating us up. So we taped foam rubber to them and it worked. The rockets worked pretty well once we got all the electrical bugs out. Only thing was, the pilot had to put a grease pencil mark on the windshield in front of him for a cross hair. Whenever a different pilot flew the ship he would have to re-locate the mark. In Sept we loaded up, bag and baggage, onto Airforce C-123's and C130's at Kadena airfield, and said goodbye to our families not knowing when or if we would see them again. A platoon had previously been sent to Thailand and would join us at Tan Son Nhut. We set up in a tent city and squatted over slit trenches. Our main mission was to support troop-carrying H-21's. My platoon was soon sent to Soc Trang. In the mean-time the company had set up in new Quarters with roofs and screened in walls. Tho we still had to sleep with our mosquito nets to keep from being carried away. Right after we first arrived our beautiful ships were flown over to a do it yourself paint shop and everything was painted over except the tail number, with drab rough texture OD paint. Capt Slavich made Maj and took over the company on Nov 25, 1962. He was a former Marine and a combat vet of Korea. He acquired the nick-name "Drivin Ivan". He was hell when he was well and he was never sick. Our first casualty was Johnie Lee. I don't remember his rank. Spec 4 or 5 I believe SSGT. He was killed by a round that penetrated the bottom of the ship. He was in operations but always wanted to fly. On this particular day in the first part of November, Spec 5 Donald Bunner, a crew chief, let Johnie take his flight. Don always felt bad about this afterwards. The old A models were good but we were flying them into the ground. The hours were adding up on them faster than we could count. We encountered severe cracking and just plain not enough power. On the same mission with Johnie Lee was a young Capt named Joel R. Steine. He was flying pilot and took a round through the windshield, instrument panel and hitting him in the chest just over his heart. His co-pilot a MAAG Lt Col took the controls while Capt Steine removed a 30 cal round from the pocket of his flak jacket. He was only bruised. In late Nov. 1962 we started receiving the newer more powerful B models. They were fitted with factory made rocket pods and quad 7.62 machine guns. I traded in my old A model and received no 878. We took our second casualty around Jan 2, 1963. Sgt William "Bill" Deal. His ship was shot down in a battle at Ap Bac near Tam Hiep in the Delta area. Bill had been my door gunner until the B models came in and he was given a ship of his own. He was a good friend. A buddy. I'm sorry I never got to meet his family. He was from Mays Landing, N.J.

The location on the wall for Johnie Lee is 1 E 14. For Bill Deal it's 1 E 15. Tom Derosier went back to the States and to flight school. I next saw him at the 7th Army Aviation Safety and Standardization Det. in Germany. He was a 1st Lt but was promoted to Capt while there. I later found he had returned as a pilot to Nam and was killed. E 23 27. He was a real decent person. Very quiet and shy. The last I heard of Col. Slavich he was living in Charlotte, N.C. I believe he was in real estate a middle-management executive with McGuire Properties. He was a hell of a guy!

Enclosed is a picture of me (the one with the flight helmet on!) taken by Richard Tregaskis. From his book "Vietnam Diary". The main thing about the picture is that the whole time these were taken, and the time we spent in the ship bringing him in, he had a frag grenade taped to the back of his leg! It wasn't found until after we had turned him over for interrogation! They gave it to me but Tregaskis asked me if he could have it so I gave it to him. I don't know if he ever had it de-fused! Hope you'll be able to use this information I'm sending. It has taken several days to get it all together. I seem to have forgotten a lot of things that happened back then. I do remember our movie house was named in honor of Johnie Lee. I remember a bronze plaque being installed with his name on it. I wonder what ever happened to it? So long for now.
Al Compton

On 17 December 1962, orders were received assigning the 18th Aviation Operating Detachment from Okinawa to Soc Trang per General Order 45, USASG, effective 5 December 1962. The 18th A.O.D. has the mission of facilitating all Army flight operations by providing flight information planning data, coordination of day, night and instrument flights, navigational aids, and Air traffic control for the aviation unit to whom it is attached. The 18th A.O.D. is established with 39 Enlisted Men and 5 officers to provide it services for handling a daily air traffic count of 50. At Soc Trang, the 18th A.O.D. normally handles as aircraft count of 103 daily.

In December the 93rd Transportation Company established another mile-stone and record by flying 1,017.2 hours in a single month in the Republic of South Viet Nam.

On 20 December 1962, during an airmobile assault with ARVN troops near Tuy Hoa, CWO Charles Raymond Holloway of the 81st was killed in action. Subsequently the base at Pleiku was officially named Camp Holloway.

Throughout 1963 the UTT would be used as a test unit for the Army to determine the effectiveness of armed helicopters. It was demonstrated that armed helicopters employing the tactics and techniques developed by the UTT could provide adequate protection for airmobile operations against an insurgent force similar to the Viet Cong. The new year also brought many changes in types of missions. In addition to escorting transport helicopters, now providing reconnaissance, convoy protection, and close support for ARVN ground troops became major roles.

AP BAC - 2 January 1963, on 2 January 1963 the 93rd Transportation Company started the new year on a tragic note. While supporting the 7th Infantry ARVN Division from a staging area located at a small dirt strip at Tan Hiep, the entire flight of the CH-21, U.S. Army helicopters from the 93rd Transportation Company was ambushed by an entrenched hard-core Viet Cong reinforced Battalion on the fourth assault rifle lift committing the reserve forces. In the final stage of the approach from contour level, heavy machine gun and automatic rifle fire was received. Without regard for personal safety, the ten helicopters proceeded past the armored personnel carriers and the main advancing body to land their troops in the designated landing zone. Not one helicopter aborted or failed to complete its mission of getting the troops into the landing zone.

Although hit by ground fire the first four aircraft were able to make successful take-offs from the area. The fifth aircraft, however, was shot down due to heavy ground fire. The crew of the sixth helicopter unhesitatingly diverted their take-off and attempted to pick up the crew of the downed aircraft and were immediately shot down also. The landing zone was untenable due to enemy fire which prevented further rescue attempts. The remainder of the flight departed for the staging area although the second aircraft had to make a force landing due to damage from the ground fire received. The downed crews were left to fend for themselves in the rice paddies ahead of the main attacking force, where they remained under enemy fire for the next eight hours. One man was dead and five had been wounded by enemy fire.

Upon return to the staging area, assessment of damage to the seven remaining helicopters revealed only two were flyable. Approximately one hour later information was received from ground troops in the area that firing had subsided and evacuation of the downed crews could be made. The rescue aircraft was landed despite sporadic ground fire and

damage to the aircraft. When the loading of the wounded and crews was attempted, the tempo of enemy fire increased and a heavy volume of fire entered the cockpit wounding the pilot. This forced the aircraft to make an immediate take-off leaving the wounded and crews behind. The aircraft was flown out of the landing zone, but 1/2 mile away a forced landing had to be made due to damage from enemy fire. Meanwhile, at the staging area, two other helicopters had been rapidly repaired from parts of other downed aircraft. For the remaining hours of the afternoon, ammunition and medical evacuations were flown by these ships into the first three landing zones.

Approximately eight hours from the time they were shot down, the crews and their wounded were finally picked up by ARVN armored personnel carriers. Then they had to ride for approximately two hours through attacks with the armored personnel carriers until an area was reached where they could be evacuated by helicopter.

At the days end, nine Americans had been wounded and one killed in action, Sgt William L Deal of the UTT in support of the 93rd Trans Co. Of the ten helicopters committed on the mission, all ten had been hit by enemy fire, four had been shot down and only three helicopters were flyable to return to the airfield.

On 2 January 1963, Sergeant William L Deal was the first UTT man to be fatally wounded. It was realized that the effectiveness of helicopters against prepared positions was limited.

On 3 and 4 January maintenance personnel from the 93rd Transportation Company flew to the downed aircraft and with disregard for their personal safety and only concern for their equipment and the ultimate recovery of the downed aircraft, they went into the areas for two days under hostile fire, remaining there to effect repairs.

The heroism, esprit-de-corps and comradish displayed throughout the entire action upholds the common knowledge of the spirit the officers and men to the 93rd Transportation Company have as being perhaps among the best if not the best in the Army.

On 10 January 1963, the 93rd and the 57th Trans Companies suffered another air tragedy when a CH-21 helicopter from the 57th Transportation Company enroute from Soc Trang to Saigon crashed with three 93rd officers riding as passengers. All seven persons aboard the aircraft were killed. The three officers from the 93rd Transportation Company were Captain Donald B. Toth, 1st Lt Lewis L. Stone and 1st Lt Charles M. Fitts.

On the brighter side in January the 93rd Trans Co received a playful 9 month Bengal tiger mascot named "Tuffy" from MAAG Laos. After his arrival, Tuffy was showered with attention and affection from Privates to Generals, Tuffy was good natured, playful and usually harmless. For many in the company a scratch or scar from Tuffy was a treasured memory never to be forgotten. Tuffy's diet was not that of a normal tiger. His favorite dishes included weiners, steaks, meat balls, and spaghetti. In the cool of the evening, Tuffy always took his daily swim in his own private swimming pool. Thus with a playful Bengal tiger as company mascot, the members of the 93rd Transportation Company soon became widely known as the Soc Trang Flying Tigers.

In February 1963 one platoon of the UTT was deployed to support the Marines in the mountainous region around Da Nang.

On 4 March 1963, Major Edward C. Seymour, the present commander, assumed command of the 93rd Transportation Company relieving Major Paul E. Ewing who was reassigned to the 45th Transportation Battalion at Ton Son Nhut.

In March of 1963 the Army started replacing the H-21 Shawnee helicopters (Flying Banana) with the new UH-1 Huey helicopters.

On 27 March 1963, the first Machine Gun Platoon, of 1 officer and 20 Enlisted men, arrived for 90 days TDY from the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii for duty as gunners on the CH-21 helicopters of the 93rd Transportation Company.

In April 1963, planning and coordination between UTT and ARVN commanders brought about the operation called "Eagle Flight". Because of it's success, this type of operation was used extensively in the months following. Before the first year of combat was completed, 41 Eagle Flight had been conducted.

In early June 1963 armed helicopters were initiated into four other companies, and the UTT armament section was requested to assist with installation of the weapons and to train personnel.

The Army redesignated most of the units of the 45th Trans. Bn. on 25 June 1963. The 8th Trans. Co. was redesignated the 117th Aslt. Hel. Co., 33rd Trans to 118th AHC, 81st to 119th AHC, 57th to the 120th AHC, and 93rd redesignated 121st AHC, retaining their men, equipment, location and history. The 118AHC with its UH-1B gunships (Bandits) became the first Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam. The Bandits were credited with 150 enemy kills in the first month.

Also in June, Tuffy, the Soc Trang tiger mascot weighing over 250 pounds and 15 months old, departed the 121st Aviation Company for the Toledo Ohio Zoo. Tuffy no longer will have his own private pool but will also suffer a reduction in rank from Number 1 Top Tiger of the 121st Aviation Company to Number 6 Bengal Tiger of the Toledo Zoo.

In July 1963, the 121st Aviation Company was transferred from the 45th Trans Bn to the Delta Avn Bn (Prov), and topped their previous record flying time by having a busy flying month totaling 1,064 hours. Also in July the 119th AHC was transferred to the 52nd Avn Bn.

On 23 August 1963, the 121st Aviation Company again established another record by having the largest Decorations and Awards Presentations Ceremony in the history of Viet Nam by decorating forty-four (44) individuals (almost 1/4 of the company). Lieutenant Colonel Wayne N. Phillips, Commanding Officer of the Delta Aviation Battalion and Major Edward C. Seymour, Commander of the 121st Aviation Company presented on the date, three (3) Distinguished Flying Cross, one (1) Bronze Star with Valor, thirty-seven (37) Air medals and fifty-four (54) Oak Leaf Clusters to the Air medal, and 14 Purple hearts.

In August the 121st Aviation Company again topped the 1000 hour a month mark by flying 1,019.1 hours.

145th Combat Aviation Battalion Begins

The 45th Transportation Battalion was redesignated the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion on 24 September 1963 and brought to a close the 45th Transportation Battalion and gave birth to the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion. With the redesignation of the 45th a new chapter in aviation history began. The second and last 45th Battalion Commander in Vietnam, LTC. Kenneth D. Mertel, became the first Commander of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion and continued the "Old Warriors" proud history. The new 145th retained the slogan earned by the 45th, "First In Vietnam". The slogan originally given to the 45th for being the first Aviation Battalion in Vietnam would take on a new meaning in the 145th, the meaning of being first and foremost in all aspects of airmobile tactics and equipment.

The 145th started its history with the units of the UTT, 18th Avn, 117th AHC, 118th AHC, 120th AHC, 339th Trans, HHC 145th CAB, and elements of the 57th MED DET., having lost the 119th AHC to the 52nd CAB and the 121st to Delta Avn. Bn.. I believe the 57th Med. Det. was assigned to and supported by the 145th at this time. The units of the 145th continued their mission of supporting the South Vietnamese Units and working out airmobile tactics that would be the basis for all airmobile operations through out the war.

LTC. Mertel turned over command of the 145th to LTC. Charles M. Grandelli on the 29th of November 1963. After the riots and overthrow of the Dien government in November 1963 the news media started to notice the Vietnam War. Under the command of LTC. Grandelli the largest heliborne assault operation ever executed to date by US Forces in support of ARVN troops took place on the 17th and 18th of January 1964. LTC. Grandelli carried on the very fine traditions of the 145th until the 30th of March 1964 when he turned over command to LTC. John C. Hughes.

Due to their efforts the 145th Battalion and Airlift Platoon, UTT, 118th AHC, and the 120th AHC was awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry for operations between 2 June 1964 to 12 June 1964.

21 July 1964 brought about another change of command when LTC. Hughes turned over command to LTC. Robert K. Cunningham. Shortly there after in August of 1964 the UTT was

redesignated the 68th Aviation Company, this was just a name change, the personnel, equipment, and mission remained the same.

August 18, 1964 was the day the last CH-21C flew in Vietnam. CWO Charles D. Holbrook from the 120th Aviation Company flew the last CH-21C from Saigon to Vung Tau to be transported back to the United States on that date.

In October 1964 the 18th Aviation Company (Fixed Wing) was transferred to the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion.

Shortly after midnight on 1 November 1964, Viet Cong staged a mortar attack on Bien Hoa Air Base. Four men were killed and 62 were wounded in the enlisted compound. An estimated 30 rounds of 82mm mortar fire were received. Troops of the 145th reacted with courage and determination as standby fire teams were launched and defensive bunkers were manned. One of the UH-1B's rescued a VNAF aviator whose A1-E had crashed in flames during the attack, resulting in the battalion's first two Vietnamese Flying Crosses with star.

In December of 1964, A Company, 501st Aviation Battalion was assigned to the battalion and became operational very quickly due to an infusion and training program conducted by the 118th Aviation Company.

Distinguished Unit Citation, 121st Avn Co: - Award of the Distinguished Unit Citation by the President of the United States of America to the following units of the Armed Forces of the United States is confirmed in accordance with paragraph 194, AR 672-5-1. The text of the citation as announced by President Lyndon B Johnson on 7 March 1966 reads as follows: The 121st Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light) United States Armed Forces, and attached units- 2nd Medical Dispensary (General), 80th Transportation Detachment (Cargo Helicopter Field Maintenance), 82nd Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance), 134th Medical Detachment, 257th Signal Detachment, Detachment 7, 30th Weather Squadron, United States Air Force, 6th Airlift Platoon, and the 5th Gunner Detachment. By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States I have today awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation to the 121st Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light) United States Armed Forces, and attached units for extraordinary heroism in the Republic of Vietnam. The 121st Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light) and attached units distinguished themselves by extraordinary heroism while engaged in military operations in the Republic of Vietnam on 5 December 1964. The members of this Company and the foregoing unit demonstrated indomitable courage and professional skill while providing direct support for a Republic of Vietnam military ground operation in territory known to be dominated by insurgents. Their outstanding effectiveness resulted in the success of aerial troop lifts despite exposure to intensive hostile gun fire, in the timely modification of techniques which kept pace with the rapidly changing tactical situation, and in the on-the-spot field maintenance for aircraft. Prompt medical assistance was given to the combat soldier and a countless number of friendly casualties were quickly evacuated from the battlefield. Through their fortitude, perseverance, and gallant efforts, these brave officers and men contributed in great measure to the progress of the counterinsurgency effort conducted in the Republic of Vietnam. The devotion to duty, outstanding achievements, and extraordinary heroism displayed by the members of the 121st Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light) and the participating units reflect great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States.

March of 1965 brought about many changes in the 145th. The 68th Aviation Company, formerly the UTT, went through another name change, now the 197th Aviation Company. The 74th Aviation Company (Fixed Wing) arrived in Vietnam and was assigned to the 145th. With the addition of A Company / 501st Avn Bn and the 74th Avn Co the 145th was larger than ever before.

Here is a letter written to me by David Price about name and unit patch changes of the UTT, 68th, 197th Armed Helicopter Company:

Dear Jim: I don't know who designed the UTT patch. The Company was wearing it when I arrived in June 1964. However, I designed the 197th patch. We had a contest in the company and I won. I have an article from Stars & Stripes with a photo of me

receiving the prize (a Savings Bond) from our C.O. Maj Jim Jagers. I think my design was selected largely because we were sick of name changes and ripping off one pocket patch and sewing on another. As you know we were UTT, then 68th Armed Hel Co, then 197th, same people, just bureaucratic Army B.S. on what we should be called. We knew we were UTT! I could probably find the article if your interested. Keep up the good work Jim. I admire what you're doing. Dave Price

The first unit in Army Aviation to receive the Presidential Citation for Vietnam service was awarded to the 197th Aviation Company (Armed Helicopter) for their actions from 1 April 1965 to 3 April 1965.

Valorous Unit Award, 121st Avn Co and attached units: By direction of the Secretary of the Army, under the provisions of paragraph 202.1, AR 672-5-1, the Valorous Unit Award is awarded to the 13th Avn Bn, assigned and attached units (121st Avn Co. and Detachments) for extraordinary heroism while engaged in military operation during the period of 4, 5, and 6 April 1965 in the vicinity of Vinh Binh, in Chuong Tien Province, Republic of Vietnam, in direct support of the 21st ARVN Div.

In May of 1965 Company A/82nd Aviation Battalion arrived in Vietnam and would soon become officially part of the 145th. As with many units that arrived before and after this one, many of the personnel from other units of the 145th and the new unit would be exchanged. The reason for this was to bring experienced personnel to the new unit and to help break up the DEROS dates. This also served to unite the units of the 145th into one fighting unit.

On the 17th of May 1965 the 197th Aviation Company flew the first "Lighting Bug", or more commonly know as "Firefly", mission. Here is the complete story told by Marvin Myers, captain at the time:

According to the log that I kept on my activities, the first "Lighting Bug" mission was flown on 17 May 1965. The device was placed in the door of a slick and consisted of seven (I think that was the number), of C-123 landing lights. This was the brainchild of LTC Dick Thrower of USARV and he flew on most missions. I heard he was later killed while working the system, after I had gone home. Once we reached the target area the light was folded out and lit up an area about the size of a football field.

Dick Jarrard was my co-pilot on the 17th and we flew out to the Duc Hoa area to coordinate with ARVN on what we were going to be doing that night. Four ships from the 3rd (Dragons) Platoon were involved on the mission. Jarrard and I flew the low ship, and Jim Reed (Dragon 33- Later killed in an accident at Fort Sill), flew as leader of his Fire Team with Jan Bingen flying his wing. I don't have a record of who flew the light ship with LTC Thrower in back aiming the light.

At some point during the night, a Mohawk called up with information that boats were on the canals. I believe he was using SLAR. Anyway, we jumped in the ships and headed for Duc Hoa. Flying just behind the beam, we were able to see well enough to fly at tree top level. The concept was that we would acquire the target in the low ship, push out a flare that would go off when it hit the ground, and then Dragon 33 would engage it.

We did engage several folks that night, but on one run a round apparently hit a flare and it went off in the aircraft. When we were finally able to get it out of the aircraft, both Jarrard and I had vertigo so bad we nearly crashed trying to figure out where we were.

This action took place between the battle of Song Be and the Battle of Dong Xoi. Since the Dragons were the first guns on the scene at Dong Xoi at around 3:00 A.M. (0300), I think the experience we had with lightning Bug probably saved our lives.

The 197th Aviation Company also flew the first combat mission using the M-5 40mm grenade launching system on 29 May 1965. Here is the report from Cpt. Marvin Myers:

I fired the system with a Jim Anderson (Cpt-possible Ordinance Corp) on 27 May 1965. The first combat mission was flown on 29 May 65, and I believe we were just north of Tan Uyen when we encountered a squad of VC in the open (every gun ship drivers dream). The tail number of the aircraft was 986 and we moved in for the kill. I began to pump out 40mm and the VC were running for all they were worth. Still, the rounds fell short. We moved in closer and closer and I'm sure the VC couldn't believe they were still alive. Finally, we were so close, an M-79 would have done as well. I recorded that we fired some 300 rounds and right now, I doubt if we hit anyone. Later the ship was equipped with rockets as well as the grenade launcher, but it was not one of our favorite weapons, because of its limited range.

BATTLE OF DONG XOAI

At 0100 hours, 10 June 1965, the 118th Aviation Company (Air Mobile, Light) was directed by the III Corps Tactical Operation Center to send its standby fire team immediately to Dong Xoai. They were told that the Dong Xoai Special Forces Camp had been under extreme heavy mortar and small arms fire since midnight. The fire team approached the town at 0130 hours and started making firing passes once they were in position over the town. They were engaged by the Viet Cong as soon as they began firing and the tracers from their guns kept the enemy gunners aware of their position. Without the slightest hesitation, the two armed helicopters kept up a steady stream of fire to silence the enemy guns surrounding the Special Forces compound. Not until after they had expended all their ammunition, and the fire team leaders helicopter was hit by ground fire and the pilot wounded, did the two helicopters leave the battle area.

At the time that the light fire team was closing Bien Hoa, III Corps had decided to reinforce Dong Xoai by helicopters at first light with Vietnamese infantry. At 0430 hours, flight crews of the 118th Aviation Company were on flight line preparing for the combat assault at day light.

The town of Dong Xoai is situated at the most important road junction in the heart of War Zone D. The United States Special Forces has established a fortified compound and numerous strong points at strategic locations taking the entire area under their command. Many parts of the fortifications were still under construction when the first mortar shells awoke the defenders.

At 0600 hours, 10 June 1965, all flyable 118th Aviation Company aircraft departed Bien Hoa for a combat assault on Dong Xoai. The morale of the company was high. They had grown fond of the Special Forces over three years in which the company has served in Viet Nam. Many members of the Special Forces B Detachment at Dong Xoai were friends of the company. Although the tactical situation was extremely confused at Dong Xoai and only scattered intelligence as to the enemy's strength and positions had reached III corps, the 118th was ready to do anything within their capability to aid the garrison under attack.

Phuoc Vinh, the nearest fortified town to Dong Xoai, was the staging area. Elements of the 1st Battalion 7th Regiment ARVN, were going to make the first assault with the 118th Aviation Company. Due to the urgency of the situation, there was little time to gather data on the enemy situation. The landing zone for the first assault was an open field two miles north of Dong Xoai and next to the road that led to the Thanh Loi Plantation. In case more ground troops were needed, two more landing zones were chosen at suitable strategic areas in the vicinity of Dong Xoai.

The formation of 118th helicopters begin to receive fire as they began to descend east of Dong Xoai. On final approach into the first landing zone more fire was received. The flight held suppressive fire as it was not known at the time whether friendly troops were in the area. Seconds before the flight touched down the lead helicopter reported what appeared to be friendly civilians waving to them from the edge of the landing zone. The flight leader at once gave the order to the crews to hold their fire because they were friendly civilians in the area. As soon as the ships landed and the troops started unloading the civilians dove into concealed fox holes where they had their weapons hidden and immediately engaged the helicopters. Due to the fact the whole flight of helicopters

were low on fuel and were able to become airborne and out of the range of small arms very quickly, no major damage to the flight element resulted. However, with the departure of the helicopters, the Viet Cong directed their fire on the assault troops in the landing zone. The enemy had utilized the lack of intelligence on the part of the allied forces to their best advantage at the crucial moment by deceiving the heliborne force. Once the troops were committed, they were ambushed. The Viet Cong, from their well prepared positions, systematically cut down the lead elements of the 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment. Later when the battle was over, it was disclosed that the 1st Battalion ceased to be a fighting unit twenty minutes after it was committed into the Viet Cong trap.

When the 118th Aviation Company returned to Phuoc Vinh for more soldiers and fuel, they were informed that the Viet Cong had anticipated heliborne reinforcements for the surrounded Special Forces Camp were employing strong units with heavy weapons and they intended to occupy Dong Xoai. It was also disclosed that all the friendly troops had been forced to reposition themselves inside the main compound that had the best defensive capability.

When the 118th helicopters, loaded with soldiers of the remaining elements of the 1st Battalion, 7th ARVN departed Phuoc Vinh they set their organic armed helicopter platoon ahead of the flight to conduct a reconnaissance of the intended landing zone. The armed fire teams made repeated passes over the air strip at the Thanh Loi Plantation. They carefully check the entire plantation for traces of the enemy concentrations but were able to find no evidence of the Viet Cong using the plantation to stage attack on Dong Xoai. The fact that the enemy up until the battle of Dong Xoai, had never used a plantation openly as a headquarters and staging area caused the flight elements to hold their suppressive fire power again as the helicopters approached to land.

As the 118th Aviation Company's formation of fourteen troop helicopter approached the landing strip a heard of cattle appeared and moved up the strip to the intended landing area. The lead helicopter made a decision to land the troops short of the original intended area. The decision saved many lives. No sooner had the skids of the first helicopter touched ground when a tremendous explosion was seen and heard and felt. The enemy had detonated a huge claymore mine planted at the original landing area. The explosion of the mine was a signal. Within seconds of the explosion, reports of automatic weapons came from all members of the formation. The soldiers and helicopters were caught in a hail storm of bullets and exploding mortar rounds. The enemy fire was coming from everywhere. In the well kept and beautiful plantation mansions they were firing from windows and roofs. Among the rubber trees fire from concealed bunkers and fox holes. At once, the armed escorts of the 118th Aviation Company charged in and fired everything they had on both sides of the helicopters still unloading their troops. At the same time the door gunners of the troops carriers were burning up the barrels of their machine guns to suppress the enemy fire. It was only a few seconds since the formation of the helicopters had landed, and yet it was already eternity for the helicopter crews and the ARVN soldiers on the ground. Scores of the brave little Vietnamese soldiers were falling in front of the eyes of the helicopter crews as they watched them leap from the aircraft and fall as enemy bullets slammed into their bodies. The helicopters were also receiving heavy damage in those seconds on the ground. One of the troops carriers had a mortar round explode right outside the cockpit causing it to roll over immediately on its side. A split second later it exploded in a ball of fire. The entire crew was killed. The remaining helicopters were taking off at this time. All guns were firing, but the enemy fire was not decreasing in intensity. From roof tops, windows doorways and trenches, enemy bullets ripped into helicopters. When at last the whole formation was out of range of the enemy weapons, only one helicopter reported negative damage.

The Viet Cong had planned the attack on Dong Xoai with superb care. There was no question left in anyone's mind that further heliborne assaults into available landing zones would mean annihilation to the majority of the ground troops and at tremendous risk to the aviation elements. The 118th Aviation Company commander, in temporary command of the entire Army Aviation efforts in Dong Xoai at the time ordered the remaining elements

with troops aboard back to the staging area. The last helicopters to land at Phou Vinh were two armed helicopters from the 118th. The fire team remained over the battle area to act as radio communication relay and fire support for the ground troops. The light fire team had expended ammunition and had lost all communications with the ground assault elements. It was not known at this time whether the Special Forces compound was still holding out after almost 18 hours of continuous attack.

The 118th Aviation Company's flight surgeon in charge of the medical aid station at Phuoc Vinh was at the communication center requesting Air Force C/130 transports to evacuate over a hundred wounded ARVN soldiers when a relayed radio came through from Dong Xoai. It was one of the Americans in the Dong Xoai Special Forces compound. The message was tragic and heroic. It said I am using my last battery for my radio and there is no more ammunition; we are all wounded, some of the more serious wounded are holding grenades with safety pins already pulled. The Viet Cong are attacking in human waves. The last wave has been defeated but we are expecting the next wave now.

The commander of the 118th, Maj Harvey E Stewart, who was present and heard the radio message stood up and said "I am going in". With that he went to the parked helicopters. Five other officers followed him and enlisted crew members just climbed into their seats and waited for take off.

Three Helicopters departed Phouc Vinh for Dong Xoai to evacuate the brave solders who were holding out to the last grenades. When they were about to close Dong Xoai, A message to all air units in the Dong Xoai area came over the radio. Dong Xoai was declared to a free strike area and everything that moved would be bombed and strafed. The three helicopters, nevertheless, pressed on without hesitation. Such was the moral present in the 118th Aviation Company. Had there been need for the entire company to go to Dong Xoai, the company would have volunteered to the man.

The 118th Aviation Company's own organic helicopters again played a vital role in the successful execution of the mission. The armed escort contacted Air Force fighter bombers in the area and ask for their fire support. While the Air Force made their bomb runs over the town the armed escorts went in from the south with all guns firing. One quarter of a mile south of Dong Xoai compound was a water crossing. The Viet Cong had concealed in the area two French armored cars that were captured earlier in the battle. The armed helicopters were able to discover these mobile weapons platforms during their low reconnaissance by fire and engaged them with rockets. Their accurate fire effectively rendered the armored cars incapable of further combat. Had the .50 cal. machine guns on those armored cars not been put out of action, they would have taken a serious toll of the troop carriers as they approached Dong Xoai.

The three troop carriers now moved in from the south. They were fast and low and their door gunners were firing at any trace of Viet Cong activity in range. There was constant firing and marking of targets all along the flight route into the soccer field at Dong Xoai. With complete surprise they touched down in the soccer field outside the Special Forces compound. Hastily, the Viet Cong organized an attack. The crews reported enemy standing up on the compound walls and firing down at the helicopters not more than fifty feet away. While the helicopters were being hit from all directions and the door gunners firing at point targets at close range, a crew chief leaped from the helicopter and exposed himself completely to the enemy fire. He fired a full magazine from his M14 at the compound entrance, then with disregard for his own safety, fought his way into the compound and brought out the last defenders of the outpost. For this act of valor the crew chief was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. There were nine wounded Americans and eight Vietnamese that were rescued from Dong Xoai that afternoon. They were the last survivors of the original defenders of Dong Xoai.

At the debriefing held at Phuoc Vinh after the three helicopters had returned, an interesting event came to everyone's attention. Within seconds after the take off of the evacuation helicopters, the area where they had landed exploded into mortar fire and it was raked with large caliber machine gun fire in all quadrants. The fact that the helicopters were able to successfully complete their mission can be attributed to the

element of surprise and the daring courage of the 118th helicopter crews. The Viet Cong were evidently expecting a landing in the heart of Dong Xoai. The extra seconds it took them to reposition their weapons to bear down upon the helicopters that were making the evacuation allowed the successful accomplishment of that daring mission. For their courage above and beyond the call of duty, the three crews were decorated with one Distinguished Service Cross, five Silver Stars, one Distinguished Flying Cross and five Air Medals for heroism.

With the evacuation of the compound, the armed helicopters and Air Force fighter bombers were free to make strike over the entire area. The armed helicopters made strike after strike stopping only to rearm and refuel. There was constant rain of fire from the sky in the whole area, was the remark made by III Corps advisor in a 118th Aviation Company command and control helicopter.

Late in the afternoon of 10 June 1965, the 52nd Ranger Battalion arrived in Phuoc Vinh. Plans were immediately put into effect to take them to Dong Xoai. Verbal orders were given to the aviation company commanders while the crews made last minute checks on their helicopters prior to becoming airborne. As the battalion-sized airmobile force neared Dong Xoai, the final decision was to put the Rangers into the soccer field where the successful evacuation was made a few hours before.

The 118th Aviation Company was again given the honor of leading the combat assault. The flight route was the same as we used on the previous evacuation mission. The helicopter slipped into the soccer field receiving only scattered small arms as they landed. Once on the ground, however, the Rangers were being shot down as they tried to move from the landing zone to the compound and toward the center of town. The enemy, nevertheless, must not have expected another daring assault that day and the air strikes must have done their job well. The Viet Cong hastily prepared a defense around the church in town which had become their forward command post. However, resistance was slowly put to an end, the compound was secured, the town reoccupied. Dong Xoai was under control of the allied forces once again when darkness came that day. The success of the last assault must be attributed to the high degree of mobility and flexibility of our fighting force, and the determination and willingness of our flight crews in their helicopters.

The 118th Aviation Company returned to Bien Hoa after the lift of 52nd Ranger Battalion on 10 June 1965. The day of heavy fighting had caused the loss of one entire helicopter crew and aircraft, plus almost every helicopter having received bullet and shrapnel damage. Ten purple hearts were awarded to members of the 118th Thunderbirds as a result of this action.

During the night, more detailed intelligence of the enemy situation was developed. The enemy had initially committed a full regiment of regular troops with heavy supporting elements. Seven Viet Cong anti-aircraft gun positions were destroyed by air in and around Dong Xoai. Hundreds of mortar round from enemy mortars had destroyed practically every fortification in the Special Forces Compound. But the devastation air strikes and bombardments had caused the Viet Cong to suffer heavy losses. During the day a second regiment with headquarters at the Thanh Loi Plantation had to be committed for the attack on the compound. The Viet Cong used human wave attacks on the compound was repeatedly beaten back before the defenders were evacuated when their ammunition gave out. However, even though the Viet Cong occupied all of Dong Xoai by late afternoon 10 June 1965, it was not long before they were overwhelmed by the allied forces. The arrival of the battle wise ARVN Ranger Battalion was enough to break all organized resistance in the immediate vicinity of the town.

The next morning 11 June 1965 118th Aviation Company was back in full strength at Phuoc Vinh. There was to be a battalion sized combat assault with the 118th as the lead element. One hundred paratroopers of the 7th airborne Battalion ARVN were lifted by the 118th into the soccer at Dong Xoai. Although fire was expected by the aviation units, the armed escorts flew low to draw fire from the enemy prior to the arrival of the troops carrying helicopters, no enemy fire was received. The assault was completed with the arrival of the remaining elements of the airmobile battalion.

Large scale medical evacuation of ARVN casualties began immediately after the air landing of the paratroopers on 11 June 1965. Hostilities were coming to a halt in Dong Xoai except for isolated and rear guard action. The wounded were brought to the soccer field and loaded on helicopters. There were almost no medical facilities at Dong Xoai all the casualties were taken to Phuoc Vinh where the 118th Aviation Company flight surgeon had set up a clearing station. The doctor had been working for over forty hours with little rest when the mass evacuation of wounded ARVN soldiers began. Helicopters continued to bring to Phuoc Vinh seriously wounded and the medical personnel were overwhelmed with the work. At one time there were over two hundred wounded awaiting treatment at Phuoc Vinh. The medical personnel worked diligently and many soldiers lives were saved.

On 12 June 1965, again staging from Phuoc Vinh, Republic of Vietnam, the company lifted elements of the first battalion 48 Regiment ARVN. The mission of the 1st Battalion was to reinforce the garrison already located at Dong Xoai. The troop strength at Dong Xoai was approaching a thousand and sufficient strength was present to secure the town.

Except for isolated snipers and enemy soldiers that were trapped in the town itself, the main body of the enemy had vanished. There was only small units engagements on 12 June 1965. The 118th provided armed helicopters support on a continuous basis to give fire support to the ground forces. There was enemy fire but no casualties were sustained by the flight crews. The armed helicopters also made an extensive reconnaissance and search of the areas where the elements of the 1st Battalion 7th Regiment were committed to battle on 10 June 1965. They were unable to detect any signs of the ARVN unit. The 118th thus prepared for an assault on the following day.

Also other action on 12 June 1965 is outlined by WO Ralph Orlando letter about a rescue attempt that day:

"On day 3, the 12th, I flew a slick with Major Harvey Stewart since the Bandit ships were long gone upon my return from R&R. Much of this day was spent in and around Dong Xoai in poor flying conditions & with a stick buddy whose flying skills gave me some worry. I witnessed from him what I thought was a man pulling half a train, but in latter years I realized I witnessed bravery at it's finest but did not recognize it. We got involved in a rescue attempt of an Air Force F-100 pilot calling a May Day over Thanh Loi Plantation. The pilot parachuted into the rubber trees & sent up a flare to mark his position. The Major had me land into the closest open area about 200 meters from the smoke. The Major & Lt Scott, the doorgunner, took off into the heavy canopy of the plantation. William Quatse, the crewchief, & I were told to wait only a few minutes & then leave for Phuoc Vinh since our fuel was very low. Finally, after about 5 mins. we saw the Major & Lt running toward us. They dove onto the helicopter floor & said to pull pitch. The shots coming at us told me that was probably a great idea. Back at Phuoc Vinh, the Major informed me that the pilot was hanging in the trees, the area was covered by V.C. & it looked like the pilot had been killed. Ralph Orlando

After being in continuous operations for over 72 hours, the 118th Aviation Company still provided the majority of the helicopters for the assault on 13 June 1965. Despite the heavy casualties and excessive damage to the helicopters, the morale of the company remained extremely high. Many of the helicopters now carried volunteer gunners consisting of clerks and cooks from the company.

The company went to Xuan Loc to pick up soldiers belonging to the ARVN 43 Regiment. A hundred soldiers were lifted into a landing zone a half mile north of the original assault area conducted on the first day of the operation. From the landing area, the soldiers were to move through the jungle and rubber trees to search for the troops that had disappeared shortly after they were landed. During the conduct of the assault, scattered small arms fire was received from the enemy hiding in the vast Thanh Loi Plantation. The company did not sustain any damage to the helicopters, nor any casualties. The enemy in this assault, turned out to be the weather which came to be a serious hazard to flight.

The lift of the 43 Regiment was conducted at night under minimum lighting conditions. All during the daylight hours, fire teams searched for the 7th Regiment soldiers. Finally the situation became too urgent not to risk an air assault and ground search. The 118th was the only airmobile company experienced in night assaults. The assault was accomplished according to schedule. However due to the rapidly deteriorating weather on the return flights, the pilots were unable to hold their formation and helicopters were scattered all over "War Zone D". There was hidden thunderstorms through out the area. Heavy rain reduced visibility to bare minimum and winds gusting up to forty knots made any helicopter flying extremely difficult. Only the high degree of training and professionalism of the aviators prevented sure disaster and loss of crews and helicopters. The flight returned to Bien Hoa individually with every helicopter accounted for at 2330 hours. Many of the helicopters had but few minutes of fuel remaining.

The Dong Xoai battle was to have a final chapter on 20 June 1965. On that date the largest heliborne operation in the III Corps area was to climax the closing of the battle. The 118th Aviation Company was again chosen to lead the assault of seventy-seven troop carriers and forty armed escorts. Staging for Hon Quan, the mission of the heliborne force was to conduct combat assaults to the area north of Dong Xoai where reconnaissance patrols and intelligence indicated a concentration of Viet Cong forces in a rubber plantation it was believed that they were remnants of the two enemy regiments that had attacked Dong Xoai. It appeared that the enemy was now attempting to withdraw and break contact.

One thousand and eighty-nine paratroopers which were the entire 3rd and 8th ARVN Airborne Battalions, cream of the Vietnamese Army, were landed by combat assault. Minor damages were sustained by a single helicopter which was caused by one enemy small arms bullet. There was no other incidents of enemy resistance that day.

On 20 June 1965, the battle of Dong Xoai came to a close for the 118th Aviation Company.

Distinguished Unit Citation were awarded to the 145th C.A.B., 117th AHC, 118th AML, 120th AHC, 197th AHC, and Company A/501st Avn. BN. for their actions between 10 June 1965 to 13 June 1965.

24 June 1965 LTC. Cunningham turned over command of the 145th to LTC. Charles M. Honour Jr.. As it would turn out LTC. Robert K. Cunningham would be the longest 145th Battalion Commander in Vietnam, serving as Battalion Commander for 11 months and 2 days. And LTC. Honour would be the only Battalion Commander to be Killed in Action with the 145th.

In August of 1965 the 117th Aviation Company would be transferred to the 52nd Combat Aviation Battalion not to be returned until January 1968.

During the month of October 1965 the 145th C.A.B. supported the 173rd Airborne Brigade in numerous search and destroy operations in the "Iron Triangle" and "War Zone D". The first combat assaults in support of the 1st Infantry Division were also made during the month of October. A Co, 82nd Avn Bn was re-assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade on 18 October 1965.

November of 1965 brought about another award for the 145th C.A.B., the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm for its service from 29 December 1964 to 4 November 1965. On November 16, 1965 the second youngest Army Aviator to be Killed in Combat in South Vietnam was Dana Edward Brann, 19, born August 8, 1947. He died in action while serving with the 120th Aviation Company, may he rest in peace. November also brought the return of the 68th Aviation Company to the Battalion. Although the 68th got its name from the other 68th that served with the Battalion, this 68th was a brand new unit. The new 68th worked hard to uphold the image of the other 68th it was named after, after a short time the members of the other 68th (197th) began to accept the new unit. The Meritorious Unit Commendation was awarded to the 197th AHC for its outstanding service from May to November 1965.

In the months of November and December 1965 the 145th C.A.B. participated in an allied operation called "Operation Rice Bowl". The object of the operation was to secure the rice fields in the valley North of Vo Dat, and deny the Viet Cong use of the freshly

harvested rice. Also during this same period the battalion welcomed the recently arrived 68th Aviation Company to Bien Hoa which was initially stationed at Vung Tau.

1 January 1966 started off with LTC Charles M Honour commanding the Battalion. In the next two years the 145th would be credited with many "First" and many awards. Starting in 1965 the Army started building up many new helicopter units and battalions, Vietnam would become known as the Helicopter War. The 145th played a large part in the build up and set the example for other battalions to follow.

On New Years Day 1966, the 335th AHC was involved in Operation Marauder in the bao Trai area, then Operation Crimp in the Hobo Woods.

On 18 February 1966 LTC Charles M Honour was killed in action. LTC Horst K Joost, who was the executive officer of the 173d Airborne Brigade at the time, replaced LTC Honour on 20 February 1966. The 335th AHC gave support to the 1st Inf Div at Di An during the month of February 1966.

SUBJECT: Commanders Combat Note #1

23 February 1966

I am proud to have been designated to command the 145th Aviation Battalion. This organization has distinguished itself on many occasions. It enjoys an esteemed reputation and has set the pace for other similar units arriving in Vietnam.

I intend to maintain this high state of professionalism while being cognizant that we are all first and foremost ground combat qualified and then are qualified to provide aviation combat support.

Army aviation has changed the course of this conflict from a ground bound, ambush-susceptible slugging match, to a highly mobile and flexible posture that has been instrumental in keeping the Viet Cong off-balance. Army Aviation is providing the Free World Forces an offensive capability which is confronting the Viet Cong with an unpredictable nemesis. You are writing this chapter in history.

We must be mindful however, that our enemy carefully studies our every move and attempt to predict our pattern so that he can strike our weak spot. We must not be complacent with our past successes. We must constantly strive to improve our techniques and procedures. We must also be efficient with our resources of manpower and materiel. A non-combat loss of personnel and aircraft through an accident is a score for our enemy.

This battalion is an integrated team. Although basically the slick helicopter crew is the "bread and butter" of our many tasks, they are supported by everyone that makes up the organization. This includes the gunships, which provides protective fires, to the maintenance, avionics, operations, mail clerks, cooks, and all others that make the team. The success of each operation is the result of a contribution from each team member. Always bear this in mind!

Keeping everyone in this battalion informed is one of my goals. To this end, I will periodically publish a Commander's Combat Note which is intended to be disseminated to all members of the organization.

CLEAR LEFT AND RIGHT

HORST K JOOST, Lt Colonel, Inf
Commanding

The 1st Aviation Brigade was formed on the 1st of March 1966 and the 145th served under the 12th Group of the 1st Aviation Brigade. This was done for better command and control of all army aviation units and operations.

SUBJECT: Commander's Combat Note #7

5 March 1966

\SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS 21 FEBRUARY THROUGH 3 MARCH 1966\

1. During this period the 145th Aviation Battalion, in addition to moving to Bien Hoa, conducted nine major airmobile operations, two of which were conducted in one day. Our armed helicopters operating at night, accounted for 18 sampans or boats sunk, one of which was carrying VC troops and explosives, 15 sampans were damaged, and five VC huts were destroyed. On 23 February, armed helicopters of 197th Aviation Company were responsible

for the VC withdrawal from an attack on as ARVN compound when they brought fire to bear on the attackers.

2. This battalion supported by the 2d Brigade, 1st U.S. Infantry Division, on 21 February, during operation MASTIFF, by conducting six combat assaults with three infantry battalions, into two landing zones, 15 kilometers southeast of Dau Tieng. Forty-four troop carriers and 32 gunships were employed. Enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire was received during the landings. Aircraft damage was slight. Suppressive fire from aircraft placed on enemy positions was possible for decreasing the volume and intensity of VC fire.

3. On 22 February this battalion airlifted a regiment of the 10th ARVN Division from An Loc, vicinity of Xuan Loc, and conducted an airmobile assault 43KM to the south, near Binh Gia. Thirty UH-1D's and 17 UH-1B's (armed) were employed in the operation. No air or artillery preparation of the LZ was used in order to achieve surprise during the landing, and to preclude the possibility of setting the dry grass which covered the LZ on fire. The gunships of the 197th Aviation Company led the way by a few minutes and placed accurate and deadly fire on the treeline which encircled the LZ. The initial assault was accomplished with no enemy fire on the LZ. The gunship preparation however, necessitated the subsequent lifts to be diverted to an alternate LZ. The response on the part of all elements was immediate when modifications plans were made from the battalion command and control aircraft. Gunships diverted to the new LZ and began to place fire on suspected areas. The troop carriers modified the formation while airborne to compensate for the new conditions on the LZ. Between lifts, Air Force tactical air placed strikes on enemy ground fire along the helicopter flight routes, which had begun to become active. This operation demonstrated the flexibility of airmobile operations by being able to adjust to changing conditions with a minimum amount of radio transmission from a single command element. It also demonstrated the team work inherent in the gunships, troop carriers, and Air Force tactical air.

4. The 2d Brigade, 1st (US) Infantry Division was extracted from two landing zones by this battalion on 25 February, employing 31 UH-1D helicopters and 17 armed helicopters. These troops were lifted back to Dau Tieng prepared to be re-committed to another airmobile assault. Enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire was received by flight elements in the vicinity of the extraction zones. Three aircraft hits were sustained.

5. The morning of 26 February found this battalion assembling 20 troop carriers and 14 armed helicopters to airlift elements of the 25th ARVN Division and assault two landing zones located 15 KM Northeast of Ben Luc in order to conduct search and destroy operations against Viet Cong forces, supplies and installations. Ground fire was received and one aircraft was hit.

6. At 1700 hours that evening, the battalion lifted elements of the 173rd Airborne Brigade into one landing zone in war zone D, 11KM Northwest of Bien Hoa. This assault was designed to commit a reaction force into a blocking position to entrap a VC main force element, that was being engaged by the paratrooper elements previously lifted into area. Enemy fire was received from numerous locations around the assault LZ as the helicopters landed. Two aircraft received damage. During the extraction one UH-1D troop carrier from the 118th Aviation Company experienced a flame out and was successfully landed without damage in a rice paddy in the vicinity of the operational area. A night recovery of the downed aircraft by a CH-47 helicopter was executed. This latter accomplishment demonstrated the teamwork that we have developed in accomplishing any mission.

7. Early in the morning of 28 February, a main force Viet Cong, estimated to be a regiment, attacked and over ran the ARVN secured town of Vo Xu located east of Vo Dat in the Rice Bowl area. At 0455 hours the 145th Aviation Battalion was alerted to provide a rapid reaction airmobile capability to reinforce the friendly forces in Vo Xu. By 0630 hours, forty UH-1D troop carriers and 17 UH-1B armed carriers were on alert at Bien Hoa, Vung Tau and Tan Son Nhut. All aircraft and crews were assembled, briefed and organized for combat by 0730 hours. One Ranger Battalion was airlifted from Duc Hoa and positioned at Vo Dat. Another was lifted from Bao Trai and positioned at Vo Dat. Another ARVN Ranger Battalion was then lifted from An Loc and an airmobile assault conducted south of Vo Xu.

One of the Rangers Battalion positioned at Vo Dat next conducted an assault on the same LZ. These assaults were designed to entrap and intercept the VC that had attacked Vo Xu earlier in the day. Three aircraft were hit by enemy ground fire. During the assault, one troop carrier experienced a hard landing, and could not be flown out of the LZ. Immediate action was taken to prepare the aircraft for liftout. A CH-47 helicopter arrived and within seconds snatched the aircraft out of the LZ. This recovery was performed with such speed that it did not interfere with the tactical plan of the ground elements. This day's operation proved on several occasions that Army Aviation are more responsive to rapid reaction than are the ground elements. Planning for the conduct of the operation was accomplished in the cockpit by commanders and staff while flying to assembly areas. Short, standardized briefings and mission type orders are the keys to rapid reaction.

8. On 1 March 2/503 Inf Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade, was extracted from their operational area in War Zone D, to the Brigade base. Three lifts employing twenty-eight UH-1D and thirteen UH-1B (armed) helicopters. Hostile ground fire was encountered during the lift out.

9. In the early morning of 2 March, the battalion again assembled its elements for an airmobile assault. Thirty UH-1D troop carriers and eighteen UH-1B armed helicopters were employed. This time elements of the 25th ARVN Division were lifted from Trang Bang and Cu Chi to assault three landing zones were prepared by tactical air strikes and armed helicopters, however, light to moderate automatic and semi-automatic enemy weapons fire was encountered. Gunships and tactical air was placed on this ground fire. One troop carrier was hit. During the airmobile assaults an air observer detected approximately 40 VC fleeing west toward the Cambodian border. Gunships gave chase and worked the area over with their weapons. Damage to the VC was unknown.

10. On the last day of the reporting period, 3 March, this battalion conducted an airmobile assault with element of the 10th ARVN Division south of Baria, immediately adjacent to the sea coast. Twenty-seven UH-1D and 25 UH-1B armed helicopters were employed. Troop pick-up was from a road north of Baria. Four lifts completed this operation. Light to moderate hostile fire was encountered during the assault. Armed helicopters and tactical air strikes worked over these enemy locations during and between lifts. No aircraft hits were sustained.

11. In addition to these operations this battalion provided normal command and liaison, administrative and logistical support for III ARVN Corps.

12. A wrap-up for this period is as follows:

- A total of 5,547 U.S. and ARVN forces were committed in airmobile assaults. Extractions of forces from areas of operations consisted of 1,525 U.S. Forces. Repositioning of 639 ARVN troops was accomplished.

- The total sorties flown was 6,118 for a total of 2,192 flying hours.

13. This was a full period and every member of this battalion are to be congratulated for their accomplishments. Added congratulations must go to the maintenance personnel who have kept us ABOVE ALL.

14. In the area of civic action, which I feel is as vital as combat operations, this battalion is making great strides. In addition to our heavy operation schedule for the period, the 145th Aviation Battalion was active in the areas of Community Relations, Education and Training, and Health and Sanitation. A total of \$VC 16,020 was collected by the 197th Aviation Company to purchase baby beds for Saigon orphanage. Officers and enlisted men from A/501st Aviation conducted 4 one-hour English classes for the Bien Hoa National Police. Members of the 118th Aviation Company continued to provide support to Bien Hoa orphanage in the form of 320 lbs of rice, 100 lbs of peanuts, powered milk, cooking oil, condiments and various cleaning products. In addition, two doctors visited the Leprosy colony for the purpose of treating patients. Letters received by members of the 68th Aviation Company indicate that local drives in their hometowns are making progress and donations for distribution to the local populace will be forthcoming.

"FIRST IN VIETNAM"

HORST K. JOOST, Lt. Colonel, Inf

Commanding

SUBJECT: Commander's Combat Note Number 9

13 March 1966

\SUMMARY OF OPERATION 4 MARCH THROUGH 11 MARCH 1966\

This week the 145th Aviation Battalion accomplished a variety of combat and combat support missions which contributed significantly toward beating Victor Charlie.

The battalion, or elements thereof, conducted three multi-ground battalion airmobile assaults or extractions; two airmobile assaults in which company sized ground elements were employed; and one airmobile company reinforced the lift of another aviation battalion.

The 197th Aviation Company, in addition to providing their normal armed reconnaissance and marking of LZ's, and armed escort for all airmobile operations, sank 6 sampans and damaged 9 sampans by their lightning Bug operations.

The battalion effort on the VC score board for this week is as follows:

An estimated 58 VC killed, a body count of 36 VC killed, 27 structures destroyed and 20 damaged, and 31 sampans destroyed and 31 damaged. This one weeks toll is a commendable figure. It is especially significant when it is realized that some ground combat units of brigade size can't match this claim.

On 4 March, the 118th Aviation Company, reinforced by A/501st Aviation Battalion, supported the 1st Aviation Battalion with 15 UH-1D troop carriers and 6 armed helicopters to lift 405 troops of the 5th ARVN Division from Lai Khe into an operational area Northeast of Phu Loi.

On 5 March, the 118th Aviation Company reinforced by A/501st Aviation Battalion, employed 11 troops carriers and armed helicopters to lift 111 troops of the 1st Bde, 1st U.S. Inf Div from a pick-up site fifteen kilometers North of Tan Uyen into a landing zone at Tan Uyen. In the afternoon the same ground element was lifted back to its original departure point.

A major operation was conducted by this battalion, reinforced by aviation elements of the 1st U.S. Infantry Division on 6 March 1966. The unit being supported was the 25th ARVN Division. Fifty UH-1D troop carriers, 27 UH-1B armed helicopters, and 2 OI-D fixed wing aircraft were assembled to execute this operation. The plan was to extract four infantry battalions from two pick-up sites twelve kilometers south of Tay Ninh during the hours of darkness, and conduct two combat assaults into two landing zones four kilometers Southwest of Cu Chi at daybreak. Due to a dense ground fog in the pick-up area, the pick-up had to be delayed until later in the morning. Eight hundred and twenty-two ground troops conducted the assault. Moderate automatic weapons fire was encountered during the landing, resulting in one helicopter being hit. The fires of the organic gunships of the airmobile companies, and of the 197th Aviation Company were placed on this enemy fire which served to suppress it. Armed helicopters committed to ground battle also took a toll of nine structures destroyed and eleven damaged. During the airmobile assault of the last ground elements, a group of 10 VC were spotted fleeing the area. Gunships of the 197th were immediately over the spot and opened fire. The result - eight VC killed and two possibles. Body count was confirmed by ground elements. It is worthy to know that we had some frustrated crews when they realized that their mission didn't permit them to land and recover the VC weapons. It is also regrettable that the weather conditions did not permit the night extraction and the dawn assault to be executed as planned. As the tactical information permits, it is intended in the future to conduct more night operations.

At 1440 hours on 8 March, a CIDG company conducting search and destroy operations 10 kilometers west of Tay Ninh was attacked and surrounded by an estimated two company size VC force. The 118th Aviation Company (reinforced) was assembled for a reaction operation and flown to Tay Ninh. There they picked-up 200 troops of the 25th ARVN Division and airlifted them into an operational area to reinforce the CIDG unit. This operation again demonstrates the flexibility and rapid response capability of helicopter units. From the time the alert was received by the Battalion Operation Center, until troops were landed in

the operational area, only 105 minutes had elapsed. This is an amazingly short time considering that the aircraft had to be recalled from other missions.

The last large operation of the period was conducted on 9 March when two battalions of the 173rd Airborne Brigade assaulted an operational area deep into War Zone D, 16 KM East of Phouc Hoa. During the troop carrier lifts, ten attached CH-47 helicopters lifted 41 sorties of artillery and supplies into the operational area. Five lifts of the fifty assault helicopters were required to complete an airmovement of the ground elements. Twenty-seven armed helicopters provided air escort and suppressive fire support. Automatic weapons fire was received by flight elements enroute to the operational area and sniper fire was encountered in the landing zone. One aircraft was hit.

During the period the 145th Aviation Battalion provided administrative and combat support to the 1st (US) Infantry Division, 173rd (US) Airborne Brigade and III ARVN Corps.

Operational statistics are as follows:

Rotary Wing:	Total Sorties	- 4,948
	Total Flying Hours	- 1,818
	Passengers Flown	- 5,984
Fixed Wing:	Total Sorties	- 224
	Total Flying Hours	- 339

The aviation company of this battalion, thus far not mentioned is the 68th. In its silent, modest approach to mission accomplishment, it is already flying 293 hours over program for the month. This is 104 hours over the next highest company. It also has one aircraft less than the other companies.

This battalion has been assigned a new, unique, and challenging mission which will enable us to operate with the U.S. Navy. Plans are being developed at this time and more information will be released as the project develops. Captain Brofer, 197th Aviation Company has been assigned as the Battalion Project Officer.

\SUMMARY OF CIVIC ACTIONS\

During the period units of the battalion were active in the areas of Community Relations, Education and Training, Health and Sanitary, Construction and Communications. Personnel from the 197th Aviation Company constructed a fence within the An Loc Orphanage, along with organizing a drive to obtain materials to repair a perimeter fence damaged by Viet Cong. In addition the officers and men donated 400 pounds of cookies and candy, 1 case of body soap and 1/2 case of mosquito repellent. The majority of these donations were sent to members of the unit from supporters in the United States. The 118th Aviation Company performed loudspeaker and leaflet support for Psychological Welfare operations for Voice of America for a period of three hours. The officers and men also donated 3,000 \$VN to the Bien Hoa Orphanage along with 300 pounds of rice, 10 pounds of sugar and 1/2 case of wash soap. Doctor Altomonte attended to the sick at the orphanage. Members of the 120th Aviation Company continued to provide support to the Go Vap Orphanage in the form of \$47.50 MPC, and 2,540 \$VN, one-hundred bags of cement for building projects, 2 cases of cornmeal, 4 cases of evaporated milk and 60 pounds of beans. Captain Wurster from the 129th Med Det surveyed the health needs at the orphanage and concluded that the children receive adequate treatment from their own doctor. A conversational English class was conducted by A/501st Aviation Battalion for the Bien Hoa National Police. Coordination has been made with the MACV Sector Advisor to sponsor a Now Life Hamlet in the Ho Nai Refugee area. Many units work in this area but with 80,000 refugees and more arriving each day, there is a tremendous opportunity to help in the traditional American spirit. Our first project will be to field a MEDCAP team.

HORST K. JOOST, Lt Colonel, Inf
Commanding

SUBJECT: Commander's Combat Note #11

21 March 1966

\SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS 11 MARCH THROUGH 17 MARCH 1966\

The 145th Aviation Battalion conducted six major airmobile assaults this week. Four of these major operations were conducted in two consecutive days. Two of these operations were rapid reactions requiring recall and assembly of aircraft from other tasks.

The 197th Aviation killed 4 VC confirmed by body count. The company also destroyed 9 sampans (one being 35 feet in length). Four VC installations were destroyed and 8 damaged.

This week the armed helicopters of A/501st Avn Bn, and the 118th, 68th and 197th Aviation Companies had numerous occasions to prove their worth by protecting the troop carrier aircraft and the ground elements they were supporting. The gunners on the troop carriers also had several opportunities to prove to the VC that it isn't healthy to fire at a helicopter.

On 11 March 1966, the 145th C.A.B. (Reinf) assembled at the forward command post at 0600 hours to receive the final briefing and organize for combat. This operation was the second airmobile assault conducted in support of operation "Silver City" in War Zone D. Fifty UH-1D troop carriers and thirty-one UH-1B armed helicopters were committed in support of the 173rd (US) Airborne Brigade. The Battalion combat assault landed six hundred and fifty-six troops from Bien Hoa into the landing zone eighteen kilometers east of Phouc Hoa.

Since their employment into this area, the 173rd Airborne Brigade has achieved phenomenal success against the enemy. At last count (which is incomplete) for operation Silver City over 300 enemy dead have been counted, and a vast store of arms, documents, and supplies have been captured.

Two major operations were conducted on 14 March 1966. At 0935 hours, two companies of the 145th C.A.B. (68th and A/501st), attached to the 11 C.A.B., landed at the staging area two kilometers north of Cu Chi. Twenty UH-1D troop carriers and six UH-1B armed helicopters were committed in support of the 25th (US) Inf. Div.. Two hundred and seventy-two troops were airlifted in two lifts from the staging area into the operational area twelve kilometers southwest of Cu Chi. Hostile small arms and semi-automatic weapons fire was encountered. This was the first airmobile operation conducted in support of the 25th (US) Inf. Div since its arrival in the Republic of South Vietnam.

At 1100 hours on 14 March 1966, fifty-two UH-1D and twenty-nine UH-1B armed Helicopters were committed in support of the 25th ARVN Division. The Battalion flew to intermediate staging areas located at Trang Bang and Tram Vang where five hundred and twenty troops were loaded and later combat assault landed into an operational area seven kilometers northwest of Duc Hoa. Light to moderate small arms fire was encountered during the first combat assault. The Battalion then flew to Tan An and Ben Luc where an additional five hundred and twenty troops were loaded and combat assault landed into the second landing zone seven kilometers southwest of Duc Hoa and airlifted one hundred troops from that location into the second landing zone. During the entire operation, one aircraft was hit.

At 0230 hours on 15 March 1966 the 145th Aviation Battalion reacted immediately to a rapid reaction request from III ARVN Corps. Under the cover of darkness the 145th Aviation Battalion assembled for final briefing and to conduct final organization for combat.

The flight elements departed the assembly area at 0620 hours and picked up the first lift of troops of the 5th ARVN Division at Lia Khe during darkness. With the assistance of the 145th Battalion Pathfinders, the loading proceeded in an orderly fashion. At dawn, two hundred and forty-six troops were combat assault landed into a landing zone eight kilometers south, southeast of Ben Cat. The troop carriers then returned to Bien Hoa and airlifted an additional three hundred and twenty troops into a second landing zone twelve kilometers south of Ben Cat. During the operation the 197th Aviation Company was responsible for evacuating twelve casualties, destroying four structures and damaging eight others.

This reaction operation was initiated with the purpose of reinforcing ARVN elements in the area that had been attacked during the night. The landing areas were chosen with the intent to block the enemy and destroy them. During the landings an intense amount of

automatic weapons fire was received from the south eastern edge of the "Iron Triangle". Information was relayed from the ground elements to the 5th ARVN Division Commander, located with the 145th Aviation Battalion Commander in the Command and Control aircraft, that the enemy was in fact withdrawing to the Iron Triangle. It was determined that tactical air would not be on station for at least one half hour. The Division Commander asked what the 145th Aviation Battalion could do to engage the enemy. He was informed we could turn all guns on enemy. As the last elements were landed in the assault, the order was given to all 145th Aviation Battalion elements to prepare for offensive firing. Instructions were transmitted while companies were making a forming turn to echelon the Battalion. Four companies consisting of a total of 37 troop carriers and 19 gunships were spaced one minute apart, echelon right, at an altitude of 1500 feet. On the signal of the lead company all weapons of the gunships and slicks fired into the suspected enemy areas along the eastern edge of the "Iron Triangle". The width of area was covered extensive, and the density of strikes within the beaten zone was awesome. It is frustrating not to know the extent of damage incurred on the enemy. It is certain that we caused damage, since this fire covered the area from which we were receiving automatic weapons fire. A total of seventy-eight thousand rounds of 7.62 ammunition, three hundred and fifty 2.75 inch rockets, and one hundred and thirty-five rounds of 40mm ammunition were expended during the one firing pass.

At 0830 hours, on the same day, the 145th Aviation Battalion (Reinf), again assembled for combat in support of another airmobile assault. Forty-three UH-1D troop carriers and twenty-seven UH-1B armed helicopters flew to intermediate staging areas at Cu-Chi and an area eight kilometers northwest of Duc Hoa. From these two locations four hundred and ten troops of the 25th ARVN Division were airlifted in one combat assault into the operational area six kilometers west of Duc Hoa. Small arms and semi-automatic fire was received in the vicinity of the landing zone and one of the attached aircraft was hit.

On 15 March in support of Operation Silver City the 335th AHC responded when two thousand VC encircled the 2/503rd Inf, the attacked began just after sunrise, the Cowboys responded by sling-loading ammunition into the landing zone under withering hostile fire. The VC left behind four hundred of their dead.

On 16 March, the 145th Aviation Battalion (Reinf) reacted immediately to a rapid reaction initiated by the 1st (US) Infantry Division in support of the 173rd (US) Airborne Brigade. At 0935 hours the battalion Operations Center was notified of the rapid reaction. By 1200 hours, twenty-eight UH-1D troop carriers and sixteen UH-1B armed helicopters had been recalled from III ARVN Corps support missions, assembled at the forward command post and lifted two hundred troops of the 1st (US) Infantry Division (2nd Brigade) into a landing zone twenty-two kilometers north of Bien Hoa. Throughout the remainder of the day an additional twelve hundred and thirty troops were lifted from Lai Khe, Long Than North (Bearcat), and Phuc Ving into two landing zones in the operational area. Due to the immediate requirement for additional support in the second landing zone, troops were repositioned from one landing zone to the other. Small arms and semi-automatic weapons fire was encountered in the vicinity of the landing zones; however, there were no aircraft hit. Throughout the entire operation, the flight elements arrived at the pickup sites prior to the time the ground elements were organized for air movement. The rapidity with which this rapid reaction was accomplished indicates the flexibility which is ever present within the companies of the Battalion.

On 17 March, the 68th Aviation Company was attached to the 11th Aviation Battalion to support the 25th (US) Infantry Division in search and destroy operations being conducted eight kilometers southeast of Tay Ninh. Ten UH-1D troop carriers and two UH-1B armed helicopters were involved in the operation which was staged from Phu Loi. One hundred and twelve troops of the 2nd Brigade, 25th (US) Infantry Division were airlifted in one lift and combat assault landed into the operational area.

During the 11-17 March time period, the 74th Aviation Company conducted the following missions:

Command and Liaison - 39

Air Escort

- 21

Radio Relay	- 13	Visual Reconnaissance	- 76
Artillery Adjustment	- 27	Photo	- 1
Air Control	- 30	Forward Air Control	- 1
Surveillance	- 12	Logistics	- 5

During 11 March through 17 March 1966 the 145th Aviation Battalion also provided normal administrative and combat support to the 1st (US) Infantry Division, 173rd (US) Airborne Brigade and III ARVN Corps.

Operational statistics for rotary wing aircraft in support of operations are as follows:

Total Sorties	- 4221
Total Flying Hours	- 1668
Passengers Flown	- 6196

Operational statistics for fixed wing aircraft in supportations are as follows:

Total Sorties	- 252
Total Flying Hours	- 538

Due to the large influx of new aviators in the Battalion a vigorous training program is now under way within the companies to insure that all newly assigned personnel receive a detailed and thorough standardization flight check prior to flying on III Corps aviation support missions.

\SUMMARY OF CIVIC ACTIONS\

This week 11 March to 17 March 1966 the 145th Aviation Battalion accomplished a variety of Civic Actions in its effort to expand the Civil Affairs Program. In the area of commerce the Battalion and subordinate units provided approximately 300 jobs for the local populace on a continuous basis, broken down as follows:

Bn Hq & HMD	- 30	118th Avn Co	- 70
68th Avn Co	- 50	197th Avn Co	- 50
74th Avn Co	- 28	A/501st Avn Bn	- 41

The 68th AVN CO relocated 201 ARVN and refugees on three separate operations conducted in the Xuan Loc, Tanh Ninh area. In addition they transported 3,500 lbs of food and personal belongings associated with the move. Preliminary planning was accomplished with U.S. Advisors at Can Co for the company's sponsorship. The 68th has also extended an offer to help the An Phong welfare organization when assistance is needed.

The 74th accomplished initial coordination with the Phu Loi Civic Actions Coordinator and it is anticipated that work will begin very soon. Help is needed in the education, Community Relations and Construction fields.

The 118th accomplished Civic Actions in virtually all areas. One hundred civilians were evacuated from a village in the Song Be area that was supposed to be over-run by Viet Cong. At the same time two gunships evacuated two civilians that needed immediate medical attention. Both of these operations were done under extreme hazardous conditions and in only a few hours duration. The gunship received several rounds of small arms fire while completing the medical evacuation. Twenty-two bags of rice which were located on a search and destroy mission in the operational area north of Phu Loi were lifted to home station. The rice was donated to help relieve some financial burden of the Bien Hoa Orphanage. In addition the officers and men have volunteered their off-duty time to help construct plywood and tin-lined cupboards at the orphanage. Donations for the week were: Two cases of jam, 50 cans of bread, 12 lbs of sugar, 100 lbs of peanuts, 600 lbs of white rice, 200 lbs of powdered milk, 1 case of bath soap, 1 dozen wash clothes, 15 tooth brushes and tooth paste packs, 6 dozen diapers, assorted children's clothes, 10 lbs of salt, and 2 cases of candies. The following medical supplies and cleaning products were donated by the officers: 1 case of chlorine bleach, 1 case of insect spray, 1 case of auromycin eye ointment, and 2 boxes of assorted vitamins to fulfill their daily needs. The 118th also flew a psychological warfare mission for three hours duration. During the mission the Voice of America and leaflets offered the words of freedom and safety from the South Vietnamese Government in the Tan Uyen area. Doctor Altomonte treated patients again at the

Leper Colony for various illness other than leprosy. This assistance has greatly helped in isolating the disease and has lessened the suffering of those afflicted with leprosy. SP4 Amisano has been giving English classes to the children around Cong-Ly. He is affectionately known as the "teacher" and this kind of people to people program is the very foundation of our civic actions here in Vietnam.

The 197th continued to provide support to the An Lac Orphanage in the areas of Health and Sanitation, and Community Relations. Donations included 1 case of body soap, 5 lbs of tooth brushes and tooth paste, 40 lbs of flour, 15 lbs of sugar and 20 lbs of candy. Emphasis is being placed on improving the cleanliness of the children. Civic organizations in the U.S. supporting the 197th sponsoring of the orphanage have indicated that 80 lbs of clothes is on the way and it will be a continuous program from then on.

A/501st Avn Bn was active in the areas of Community Relations, Transportation and Education. An English class was taught for the National Police of Bien Hoa. The officers and men donated 12,875 \$VN worth of clothes, writing pads, readers, and coloring books which were presented to the Catholic Orphanage of Bien Hoa. On 13 March two helicopters assisted the 5th ARVN Division in relocating 45 civilians, bag and baggage, from Song Be to Duc Phoung. Also during the course of normal missions 300 lbs of US AID rice and 200 lbs of school supplies were transported to a remote village northeast of Song Be.

The effort to expand civic action activities has shown some real progress in the last week (11-17 March 1966) despite the loss of the 120th Aviation Company which was very active in Civil Affairs.

Commander's Combat Note #12

28 March 1966

Summary Of Operations 18 March Through 24 March 1966

The 145th Aviation Battalion conducted two major airmobile assaults, and two extractions, and on five occasions provided aviation reinforcement to other units during the period. Included was reinforcement to the II Corps and IV Corps aviation.

The 197th Aviation Company sank three sampans and damaged three. The company also destroyed two V.C. structures. During the support of the 25th ARVN Division, three armed helicopters evacuated 14 ARVN casualties.

On 18 March 1966, the 145th Aviation Battalion employed 28 UH-1D troop carriers and UH-1B armed helicopters to support 25th (ARVN) Division in air assaults operations 13 kilometers southwest of Duc Hoa. From the staging area at Duc Hoa, 595 troops were airlifted in three successive assaults. Light small arms and automatic weapons fire was encountered on the 2nd and 3rd assaults. Three aircraft were hit.

During the 2nd assault ten Viet Cong was sighted in the open 400 meters north of the landing zone. Although tactical air, organic artillery and mortars were available and could have been used, the airmobile force commander took advantage of the flexibility, fire power and rapid response of the armed helicopters. The target was immediately engaged and neutralized with seven Viet Cong estimated killed.

At 1620 hours, the 145th Aviation Battalion responded to a rapid reaction notification to air land one battalion (317 troops) from the 25th (ARVN) Division to reinforce the troops that had been air landed earlier in the day. The responsiveness of the Aviation Battalion was clearly evident as the entire operation, from notification to termination, took only one hour and thirty minutes. Moderate ground fire was received from the vicinity of the landing zone and two aircraft were hit. Thirty one ARVN casualties were evacuated, under fire, after the assault troops had landed. Only through the close covering fire provided by the gun ships was it possible to remove those casualties without losing an aircraft to the enemy fire. All personnel participating are to be commended for their courageous behavior in the face of enemy fire. I also want to commend Lieutenant Holcomb, 74th Aviation Company for his quick thinking and actions, while flying fixed wing cover in support of this operation.

The 118th Aviation Company, also on this day, committed five UH-1D troop carriers and four UH-1B armed helicopters to extract 46 ARVN Special Forces from a site 25 kilometers north of Suoi Da, in support of operation MARCH EAGLE I.

On 19 March 1966 Company A/501st and 118th Aviation Company teamed together to extract troops of the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division (US), from a site 20 kilometers southeast of Phuoc Vinh. Ten UH-1D troop carriers and two UH-1B helicopters were used to extract 112 troops in two airlifts.

The 145th Aviation Battalion employed seventeen UH-1D troop carriers and ten UH-1B armed helicopters in support of III (ARVN) Corps missions on 20 March 1966.

On 21 March 1966, the Battalion supported the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Operation Silver City by employing thirty-three UH-1D troop carriers and eight UH-1B armed helicopters to extract 1186 troops of the 1st and 2nd Battalion 503rd Airborne Infantry in six air lifts.

In the afternoon the Battalion supported III (ARVN) Corps with twenty nine UH-1D troop carriers and eight UH-1B armed helicopters. Three hundred CIDG troops were extracted from the landing zone 16 kilometers of Xom Cat and air lifted to Bien Hoa.

Operation Silver City terminated at 1635 hours on 22 March 1966, as the 145th Aviation Battalion employing forty UH-1D troop carriers and nineteen UH-1B armed helicopters, extracted six hundred and ninety troops of the 1st Battalion, RAR from landing zone along the Song Be River. In addition to the troops, the Aircraft lifted 4.2 mortars, several Engineer assault boats and other crew-served weapons.

The flexibility and rapid reaction of the 145th was proven again as the Battalion responded to a late request by the ground commander to depart the staging area thirty minutes earlier than scheduled.

Offensive firing highlighted the operation. Seven UH-1B armed helicopters conducted offensive firing along the banks of the Song Be River opposite the landing zone. The remaining twelve UH-1B armed helicopters were placed in support of the commander. While in orbit east of the landing zone they received small arms and automatic weapons fire from a location four kilometers east of the landing zone. The target was immediately engaged and neutralized.

On 23 March, the 68th Aviation Company, reinforced by the 118th Aviation Company, responded to a rapid reaction request to support the IV (ARVN) Corps. Ten UH-1D troop carriers and UH-1B armed helicopters air lifted two hundred and seventy nine troops in one air assault and four extractions in the vicinity of Muc Hoa.

Three UH-1B armed helicopters from the 197th Aviation Company supported the 25th (ARVN) Division at Duc Hoa.

On 24 March, the 118th Aviation Company reinforced the 1st Aviation Company, 1st (US) Infantry Division, Airlifting 185 troops with five UH-1D troop carriers in five combat air assaults. Enemy fire was received in vicinity of the landing zone.

On 24 March 1966, A/501st Aviation Company departed this station to reinforce the aviation of the II Corps. The unit departed in a posture prepared to operate in the field for an extended period. With only a short warning, aviation again proved their responsiveness to mission accomplishment, when this company moved a couple hundred miles and was ready to operate on arrival. These short notice, field operations will become more frequent. Therefore, all companies must update their plans for such contingencies.

During the week, 18 March 1966 through 24 March 1966, the 74th Aviation Company accomplished the following tasks:

TYPE MISSION\	TOTAL NUMBER\
Visual Reconnaissance	64
Forward Air Control	2
Radio Relay	20
Surveillance	25
Artillery adjustment	21
Naval Vessel escort and road column	
Observation	35
Command Liaison	19
Logistics	3

Operational statistics for rotary wing aircraft in support of operations are as follows:

Total Sorties	4315
Total Flying Hours	1551
Passengers Flown	5045

Operational Statistics for fixed wing:

Total Sorties	229
Total Flying Hours	538

This week, I am pleased to announce that the first Combat Crewman's Badges were awarded to Sergeant Major L. A. DuBrey, the Battalion Sergeant Major, and SP5 Buster R. Timberlake, crew chief for the Battalion Commander's Command and Control aircraft. These were the first awards of the many Combat Crewmen wings and Combat Aviator wings that have been earned by members of the Battalion. Wear these wings proudly.

\SUMMARY OF CIVIC ACTIONS\

During the week the 145th Aviation Battalion Hq & Hq Det continued its plans to expand Civic Actions in the surrounding communities. Three thousand pounds of Viet Cong captured rice was donated to the parish through the chief. The parish, in turn, will distribute the rice to refugees who are unable to provide for themselves. In this category there are many blind, incapacitated, ill, and elderly refugees. Approximately one hundred adults and children observe this demonstration of good will which will do much to foster the Vietnamese-American Relations. On Sunday, several officers attended Catholic Mass at the refugee village, and surveyed the school needs. Pictures were taken, and information gathered to send home in an effort to solicit home town help.

The 68th Aviation Company was active in the civic action area by evacuating two hundred and fifty eight ARVN dependents and refugees on four different operations in as many days. One of the evacuation operations was from a village recently over-run by the Viet Cong on two separate occasions. Incident to the movement of the dependents and refugees, 12,000 pounds of foodstuff, and personal belongings were moved.

This week the 74th Aviation Company obtained volunteers, written material, and classroom spaces to teach Conversational English classes to Vietnamese children in Phu Cuong, two afternoons each week. Two volunteers, are aiding a Regional Forces Platoon in construction of new living quarters in Phu Cuong. The Platoon presently lives, with dependents, in two crowded buildings. The officers and men donated condensed milk, fresh milk, canned hams, and orange juice to a local school to supplement the children's diet. For construction at the school, five bags of cement were donated.

The 118th Aviation Company was active in many areas of civic affairs. The officers of the 118th Avn Co donated thirteen dozen "Dixie-Cups" of ice cream to the Bien Hoa Orphanage. The celebration was a complete surprise to the children who gave their hardest thanks. It will be a long time before this act of generosity is forgotten. The company also donated the following list of items to the orphanage: Flour, sugar, cases of canned food, soap for personal use, baby night shirts and assorted children's clothing, salt, cooking oil, powdered milk, and a few toys of various kinds donated by relatives from the States. Doctor Altomonte donated another six hours work at the Leper Colony on Sunday. SP4 Amisano again donated time each day this past week to teaching the children on Cong La Street English at night. The classes are approximately 1 1/2 hours long and recently a couple of the Bien Hoa National Police also attended.

The 118th Aviation Company, in the course of their operational missions, transported a total of 250 lbs of medical supplies and dressings and evacuated ten civilians from Da Thelgen area because of injuries and tuberculosis.

Despite the fact that the 197th Aviation Company was engaged in moving from Saigon to Bien Hoa, the company still found the time to accomplish civic actions in their support of the An Lac Orphanage. The company has already explored the possibility of supporting a boys farm in the Bien Hoa area that is affiliated with the An Lac Orphanage. The soap was a gift from the people of the state of New Hampshire, in response to a request for

support. The officers and men donated: rice, dried beans, cases of cherries, cases of dehydrated potatoes, cases of dehydrated eggs, cases of egg noodles, cases of jello, a case of orange juice, a case of cocoa, and approximately 20 pounds clothing.

A/501st Aviation Battalion was active in the area of community relations and education. On 24 March, 1500 pounds of Viet Cong captured rice was donated to the Catholic orphanage of Bien Hoa. Also a conversational English class was taught to the National Police of Bien Hoa.

Horst K. Joost, Lt. Colonel, Inf
Commanding

Commander's Combat Note #

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS 25 MARCH THROUGH 31 MARCH 1966

A total of one hundred and eleven troops were landed on two landing zones nine miles northeast of PHU CUONG.

On 30 March, Company A/501st, employing eight UH-1D troop carriers and two armed helicopters, airlifted ninety-nine troops of the 1st (US) Infantry Division from Bien Hoa to a landing zone fifteen kilometers north of Tan Uyen. In the afternoon the company again supported the 1st (US) Infantry Division by lifting two hundred and seventy-two troops in five assaults from Bear Cat.

On 31 March 1966, Company A/501st reinforced the 1st Aviation Battalion, 1st (US) Infantry Division with seven troop carriers and airlifted one hundred and ninety nine troops in five combat air assaults from Yung Tau to a landing zone three kilometers east of Phu My.

During the week the 74th Aviation Company conducted the following task:

	Sorties
Visual Reconnaissance	87
Radio Relay	22
Forward Air Control	1
Surveillance	42
Command Liaison	16
Escort	49
Artillery Adjustment	47
Logistics	9

On 26 March the 74th Aviation Company celebrated their first anniversary since activation. During the one year period they have set a commendable record of 22,438 flying hours, consisting of 15,503 sorties. Congratulations and continued success.

Operational statistics for the rotary wing aircraft of the Battalion for this week's period are as follows:

Total Sorties	5004
Total Flying Hours	1495
Passengers Flown	4865

Operational statistics for fixed wing aircraft for the Battalion are as follows:

Total Sorties	333
Total Flying Hours	519

The 145th Aviation Battalion has gone to sea. We now have a task force of gunships which are operating with the U.S. Navy with the mission of providing aerial fire support for naval patrol boats operating in the river and delta areas to destroy the Viet Cong and to secure shipping lanes. At present two armed helicopters operate from the deck of the Seventh Fleet Dock Landing Ship U.S.S. Belle Grove. The team work developed between the Army helicopter crew and the Navy landing teams is something to behold when a helicopter is launched and landed.

The helicopters were first landed aboard the vessel on 25 March 1966. The first rapid-reaction was called on 26 March, to assist the Marine Landing Force during operation JACK STAY in the Rung Sat Special Zone. The operation consisted of directing an ambush party from the air to move to a safe area, and to escort a river patrol boat employing

Underwater Demolition Teams. On 27 March, the gunships were launched to escort medical evacuation patrol boats. Also on that day the fire team was launched to support a swift boat that was attacked by V.C. gunfire. The fire team expended twenty four rockets and 5,000 rounds of 7.62 caliber ammunition against the VC ground fires.

Captain D. R. Brofer is the Project Officer and commander of the gunship task force. This project will soon be expanded and all companies will provide crews and aircraft for the Task Force. The army crews are enthusiastic about the duty and I was pleased to have the Captain of the U.S.S. Belle Grove tell me that he has worked with the Army on numerous occasions but he has never met a more gung-ho, mission-oriented group of army people as these gun crews.

In the field of training, a program has been initiated by the Battalion in the adjustment of artillery fire. The goal is to have every rotary wing and fixed wing aviator proficient in the adjustment of artillery fires.

SUMMARY OF CIVIC ACTIONS

The 145th Aviation Battalion Hq and Hq Det conducted its biggest operation to date, in the area of Community Relations. 30,000 pounds of bulgur wheat were obtained from the Catholic Relief Society through coordination with the III Corps G-5. The bulgur was transported to the Bui Vinh refugee village during a two day operation. This donation constitutes the basic staple for approximately 2000 refugees for one month. The bulgur will be distributed to the needy by members of the Hq and Hq Det and members of the community under the supervision of the GVN. A fund was established by the Battalion Headquarters to provide money for approximately 60 school children to attend the elementary school, and also buy school supplies. Contributions received on March 31st amounted to 17,000 piasters, enough to sustain the program for the remaining school year. 2000 piasters were turned over to the Parish Chief for March and April. In the area of communication, 150 pounds of books, magazines and leaflets were obtained through JUSPAO and donated to the Bui Vinh refugee center. These materials will be used to stock a reading room and will contribute to the psychological warfare effort.

In addition to normal missions the 68th Aviation Company evacuated or relocated 119 ARVN dependents and refugees on four separate operations. 11,500 pounds of personal belongings and foodstuffs were also transported in conjunction with these movements. In coordination with the Korean Hospital, four Vietnamese civilians were transported from Phu My to the Korean Hospital for surgery. Aircraft returning from normal missions provided this transportation. On the spot first aid was also administered by a gunship crew, on a normal mission at Vo Dat, to two small children with severe cuts.

The 74th Aviation Company was active in the areas of Community Relations, Sanitation, Health, and Construction. The officers and men donated 20 cartons of dixie cups to the Phu Cuong school. In addition, 1 case of tooth paste was donated to the school along with instructions for its use. Two volunteers continued to assist a Regional Forces Platoon in the construction of new living quarters.

The 118th Aviation Company was very active this week in civic action activities. Armed elements evacuated two injured children and one woman from a village over-run by the Viet Cong, thus saving their lives. The Officers and men donated the following to the Bien Hoa orphanage: Brown sugar, powdered soup, assorted jams, canned vanilla pudding, raisins, corn beef, canned beef, peanut butter, egg noodles, white rice, powdered milk, boxes of clothing, and toys. Doctor Alomonte made his weekly visit to the Leper Colony and treated fifteen patients for common illnesses. A project was also completed at the orphanage to improve the sanitation of the toilet area. SP/4 Amisano again held Conversational English classes for the local residents of Cong Ly Street. In addition to normal missions, the airmobile elements relocated approximately 50 refugees from a Viet Cong controlled outlying area of Song Be to a New Life Hamlet in Song Be.

The 197th Aviation Company was busy this week completing its move to Bien Hoa. However, on 25 March the home of one of its Vietnamese employees was completely destroyed by fire. The 197th immediately responded by donating food and clothing for the family and

construction material for a new house. In the area of commerce the unit has provided employment for approximately 20 local Vietnamese in the Bien Hoa area.

A/501st Aviation Battalion, although on an operational mission near Ban Me Thuot for most of the period, continued its Conversational English class for the National Police of Bien Hoa. Representatives of the company visited a Montagnard village in the operation area when it was learned that the villagers would not leave the village to hunt and fish because of their fear of armed helicopters. This visit did much to foster Vietnamese-American relations.

Horst K. Joost, Lt.Colonel, Inf
Commanding

SUBJECT: Commander's Combat Note # 15

9 April 1966

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS 1 APRIL THROUGH 7 APRIL 1966

The 145th Aviation Battalion made great strides this week in demonstrating that Army Aviation is a significant and vital part of combat operations in defeating the Viet Cong in Vietnam.

Evidence of damage to the Viet Cong from this Battalion's effort is obvious from this weeks score board: Nineteen V.C. killed, thirty-nine estimated killed, three wounded prisoners, thirty-three V.C. structures destroyed and twenty damaged, eighteen sampans sunk and fourteen damaged, and one truck destroyed.

One of the major efforts this week was the aviation support of the 2nd Brigade, 25th (US) Division during operation "CIRCLE PINES" from 30 March to 4 April. All units of the Battalion provided support, however, 118th Aviation Company was assigned mission responsibility. The area of operations was to the north of a line running from Cu Chi to Trung Lap and to the Saigon River. This operation was a classic example of how aviation should and should not be employed. Some significant lessons were learned. The most significant being that Army Aviation can't be dispatched as taxi cabs to perform a mission. Close coordination and understanding must be established between the aviation unit commander and the support ground commander, and the individual pilot must know the current situation. It was discovered that, during the initial days of the operation, aircraft that were being assigned to support the Brigade on a single mission basis were being subjected to enemy fire when lifting resupply to forward elements. This fire ranged from single shot snipping to medium and heavy automatic weapons fire. In an attempt to bring order to this situation, Major Underwood, Commanding Officer of the 118th Aviation Company was assigned the mission to support the operation until termination. Troop carrier aircraft and gunship of all other companies of the Battalion reinforced the 118th Aviation Company during the remainder of the operation as required. By close association with the command and staff elements of the supported Brigade, the aviation commander was able to advise how and where to best use airlift and aerial fire support. He was able to study the enemy fire techniques and take appropriate counter measures to protect the aircraft and incur maximum damage to the enemy. At one stage of the operation the Brigade was supported by eleven troop carrier aircraft and fourteen armed aircraft. By the employment of appropriate tactics with gunships against enemy ground fire, hits on troop carrier aircraft were considerably reduced and the score of V.C. kills mounted. After the aviation leadership, advice and management was established, the supported Brigade enjoyed the type of support that aviation is designed to produce. Also, no aircraft stood idle- this critical resource was fully used. Within these few days, aviation was employed as follows: Lift supplies from support base to forward employed elements; command, control and liaison for commanders and staff; radio relay; armed escort of ground columns, reconnaissance by fire in advance of ground columns; armed escorts for troop carrier aircraft; preparation by fire of a landing zone; reconnaissance and marking of a landing zone; airlift of troops in an airmobile assault; armed reconnaissance of a river and aerial fire against V.C. river traffic; armed aircraft strikes on target designated by forward ground elements which were too close to friendly troops for tactical air engagement (some strikes were 100 meters in front of friendly troops); and medical evacuation of wounded. What started out

to be an operation where aviation was piecemealed to support the Brigade for occasional mission, turned out to be a well coordinated operation in which aviation was effectively and economically used and contributed significantly to success of the operation. This reversal is due to the fact that an aviation unit commander was assigned a mission and he felt the responsibility toward that supported unit. That personal responsibility in fact kept his company maintenance working overtime to come up with several more aircraft available for missions than programmed.

A summary of the result achieved and resources employed for this operation is shown below:

	118th	A/501st	68th	197th	total
Total Flying Hours	253	77	45	33	408
Total Sorties Flown	913	26	132	26	1097
Total Tons Cargo	90	19	7	--	116
Passengers Lifted	879	273	40	--	1192
Medevacs	17	3	2	1	23
V.C. Structures destroyed/damaged	10/5	2/2	7/5	4/6	23/18
V.C. Sampans destroyed/damaged	3/10	0/0	6/7	0/0	9/10
Total task performed	1197	341	90	32	1660

Rounds expended

	7.62mm	55,000	10,000	16,000	24,000	105,050
40mm	500	0	80	50	630	
Rockets	234	28	52	98	412	

V.C. KIA Confirmed	5	0	0	4	9
Estimated	10	3	3	15	31

During the week (1 April - 7 April 1966) the 197th Aviation Company, operating on independent missions (excluding the support rendered in the operation described above) claimed eight sampans sunk, four sampans damaged, ten V.C. structures destroyed, one truck destroyed and three V.C. killed.

The combined effort of the 145th Aviation Battalion conducted an operation in support of Operation GREENE EAGLE in the Tay Ninh area on 5 April. This operation consisted of conducting an air assault of 200 CIDG troops into an area to establish security for an artillery support base. 105mm howitzer artillery was then airlifted by Chinooks into the secured base and artillery registered. The next air assault consisted of lifting 710 CIDG troops into two landing zones for the conduct of a search destroy operation. This air assault was highlighted by the employment of tear gas dispensed by helicopters to create a barrier to an avenue of approach into the landing zone. After the tear gas was dispensed, offensive fire was conducted over the tear gassed area by dropping sixty 81mm mortar rounds from a helicopter, and by firing armed helicopters and machine guns from troop carrying aircraft. The fire power accounted for four enemy confirmed killed, three wounded prisoners, and a possible four other V.C. killed. Later in the day the assaulting force was extracted and reemployed in another airmobile assault against a suspected V.C. location. During this operation the 197th Aviation Company was also credited with three V.C. killed and estimated four V.C. killed from the result of strikes placed against enemy ground fire.

On 7 April, the 68th Aviation Company conducted an airmobile assault with 190 RF/PF troops in an area 15 kilometers south of Mon Quan.

The 74th Aviation Company performed the following tasks during the period:

	Tasks
Visual reconnaissance	100
Escort Missions	40

Psychological warfare

3

The armed aircraft task force of this Battalion, operating with the Navy, has been designated Task Force Sea Wolf. At present the task force is operating aboard the U.S.S. Belle Grove in the Rung Sat Special Zone. During the week these gunships provided forward air control support for the navy tactical air strikes, escorted friendly patrol boats and LST's and LOM's during the U.S. Marine Corps extraction from the Rung Sat Special Zone, conducted night and day reconnaissance, which located a V.C. bunker and tunnel complex, and conducted strikes on enemy positions and sampans. With a result of one sampan destroyed and two structures damaged. A gunship also evacuated a wounded Vietnamese Marine.

Training in Artillery adjustment from an aerial platform has been initiated by the Battalion this week.

The operational statistics for the period are:

Rotary Wing:

Total Sorties	4428
Total Flying hours	1404
Passengers	5421

Fixed Wing:

Total Sorties	329
Total Flying hour	556

The following awards were received by the Battalion:

Distinguished Flying Cross	6
Bronze Star "Valor"	1
Air Medal "VALOR"	11
Army Commendation Medal	3
Purple Heart	10

The following promotions were received:

Capt to Major	2
E-2 to E-3	11
E-3 to E-4	3
E-4 to E-5	11
E-6 to E-7	1

SUMMARY OF CIVIC ACTIONS (1 April - 7 April 1966)

The Hq & Hq Detachment donated 4500 pounds of rolled wheat, candy and canned goods to the Bui Vinh refugee center.

The 68th Aviation Company evacuated or relocated 114 ARVN dependents and refugees in the VO DAT, XUAN LOC area. 10,000 pounds of personal belongings and foodstuffs were airlifted concurrently with the dependents and refugees. Final coordination was made at Can Gio by representatives of the 68th Aviation Company, in an effort to begin several projects in that community.

The officers and men of the 74th Aviation Company distributed coolaide to the children of the 5th ARVN Division Dependents School at Phu Loi. In addition, coolaide, orange juice, candy and cookies were donated to the HIET BINH XA School. Lt Ebert and Sp/4 Montey conducted a conversational English Language Seminar for the faculty of the HIET BINH XA School.

The 118th Aviation Company evacuated twenty-five refugees from a 25th Inf Div operational area. Armed elements medically evacuated five Montagnards from a V.C. controlled area to HON QUAN. As a result of this evacuation, intelligence was gained, and later the same day armed elements made strikes based upon this intelligence. Here is another example of an immediate pay-off of Civic Action efforts. Donations to the Bien Hoa Orphanage this week consisted of a large amount of foodstuffs, assorted toys, plastic baby bottles with nipples, and clothing for infants and children. In addition, the following items were donated to the Catholic Orphanage in TU DUC: Preserves and jellies, peanut butter, tooth paste and brushes, and assorted children's clothing. Doctor Altomonte made

his weekly visit to the Leper Colony at TAN UYEN and treated twenty-five patients. Doctor Altomonte also donated medical supplies to the Bien Hoa Orphanage in an effort to improve the health and sanitation level. Sp/4 Amisano continued his conversational English instruction each day this week to the children of Cong Ly street and several Bien Hoa National Police.

A/501st Aviation Battalion was active in Refugee Assistance, Transportation, Education, and Community Relations. On 6 April, airmobile elements evacuated 125 refugees from near a the Cambodian border to Bien Soi. The refugees, mostly women and children, had been rendered homeless by a search and destroy operation. Transportation was also provided for the Bien Hoa JUSPAO representative, Mr. Martin, in support of psychological warfare. The officers and men made the following donations: 1500 pounds of rice to the Catholic Orphanage, and 17,478 piasters to a private Bien Hoa school for the purchase of school supplies. Conversational English classes were conducted for members of the Bien Hoa National Police.

Horst K. Joost, Lt. Colonel, Inf
Commanding

Commander's Combat Note: #17

16 April 1966

HELICOPTER TACTICS

1. On a recent operation of the 145th Avn Bn, over a period of five days it became apparent that the VC in the area of Cu Chi were well trained in anti-heliborne tactics. A large number of aircraft were hit and several men were wounded. Most of the aircraft hit were either on low final approach or had just taken off. The VC have an extensive tunnel system in this area and are well dug in. They also have overhead cover and it is difficult to detect them from the air. In one instance there were three cal .50 MGs within a 6 KM radius in a triangular shape that opened fire on an aircraft at 2500: and continued firing until the aircraft was over 5000:.

2. There are several sound principles which can be followed to reduce the chance of an aircraft being hit. In areas like Cu Chi troop carrier aircraft should never operate at less than 2500 ft. unless accompanied by an armed escort. At low level an aviator's best defense is speed. On approaches to the same LZ alter the approach from time to time.

3. The 197th Avn Co has twelve cardinal rules that apply to armed aircraft. Most of them also apply to troop carriers. They are proven as effective tactics.

1. Do not overfly the target.
2. Do not fly in the deadman zone without a reason (100'-1000').
3. Never fly the 180 degree wing position.
4. Always assume that the area is hot.
5. Always make a high reconnaissance.
6. Never fire until you have the friendly forces located.
7. Never fly parallel to terrain features.
8. Avoid firing over the heads of friendly troops.
9. Expend only when you have a worthwhile target.
10. Always know the situation.
11. Take your time.
12. Brief your elements to a man.

4. Commanders, remember, an aviator must be briefed on the tactical situation and his mission to be effective. Detailed coordination with the supported ground commander will help to clarify; the enemy situation. Use all the protective measures available to you. If gunship escort will increase the probability of mission accomplishment- use it.

Above all, avoid flying over known hostile position if you can accomplish your mission.

"First In Vietnam"
Horst K. Joost, Lt Colonel, Inf
Commanding

16 April 1966

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS 8 APRIL THROUGH 14 APRIL 1966

On Easter Sunday the 145th Aviation Battalion, reinforced by elements of the 11th Aviation Battalion, conducted an airmobile assault, employing 489 troops of MIKE FORCE, III (ARVN) Corps approximately 25 kilometers South of Bien Hoa. The force was landed in three lifts. It was planned to extract the force on the following day, however, at 1445 hours this Battalion was alerted and responded to a rapid reaction request to extract the force immediately. Aviation was recalled from other missions and assembled for the extraction which was completed by 1905 hours.

On 11 April, the Battalion returned to the Cu Chi area to support the 25th (US) Division. A jolly time can always be expected when operating in this area and we were not disappointed. Over 500 troops were employed in an airmobile assault of four lifts ten miles northwest of Cu Chi. No artillery or tactical air preparation was used on the landing zone due to the proximity of a village. As the first elements approached, the gunships marking and reconnoitering received moderate automatic weapons fire. The gunships returned the fire, allowing the troop carriers to land. Light enemy fire persisted throughout the assault with the result of four aircraft being hit. The battalion's gunship continued to provide close in fire support to the ground elements after the completion of the lift.

For the last two days of the period, the 145th Aviation Battalion supported the 173rd Airborne Brigade in conducting eight airmobile assaults and two extractions in the Song Be area.

The gunships of the 197th Aviation Company again added to the toll of Viet Cong destruction. In one action, gunships responded to a call from an Air Force forward air controller who spotted Viet Cong in the open near Duc Hoa. The gunships engaged with a result of ten confirmed dead Viet Cong. The company's total score for the week is three sampans destroyed and five damage, five structures destroyed and three damaged, and ten confirmed Viet Cong killed and six estimated killed.

The 74th Aviation Company flew 142 visual reconnaissance and 39 escort missions during the period.

Task Force Sea wolf continued to operate from the U.S.S. Belle Grove in support of Naval operations in the Rung Sat Special Zone. Their activities consisted of giving area and aircraft orientation flights to river patrol boat commanders, conducting daylight and night visual reconnaissance of the river areas, conducting airstrikes against Viet Cong targets, and flying cover for patrol boats. On two occasions Task Force Sea wolf was instrumental in stopping Viet Cong attacks against friendly villages by repeated firing runs against the besiegers. The total score for the Task Force for this period is one sampan destroyed and two damaged, and two confirmed Viet Cong killed and four estimated killed.

Operational statistics for the period are as follows:

Rotary Wing:

Total Sorties	4440
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Total Flying Hours	1640
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Passengers	6040
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Fixed Wing:

Total Sorties:	393
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Total Flying Hours	605
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Training:

The airmobile companies of the Battalion are conducting in-country orientation briefings and flights to aviators of the 25th (US) Aviation Battalion.

Awards:

The following is a recapitulation of awards received:

	8 April- 14 April	Since 1 January 65
Distinguished Service Cross	0	2
Silver Star	0	15

Legion of Merit	1	3
Distinguished Flying Cross	2	120
Soldiers Medal	0	9
Bronze Star "Valor"	0	26
Bronze Star	1	95
Air Medal "Valor"	4	277*
Air Medal	0	9,486*
Army Commendation Medal "Valor"	0	50
Army Commendation Medal	8	286
Purple Heart	3	186

* It is worthy of note that these 9,763 Air Medals represent in excess of 375,875 combat flying hours by members of this Battalion!!

SUMMARY OF CIVIC ACTIONS (8 April - 14 April 1966)

On 14 April, the HQ & HQ Detachment, 145th Aviation Battalion donated 3000\$VN piasters to purchase school furniture for a self help construction project in the Bui Vinh Parish. In the psy-war effort, thirty pounds of reading material were placed in the community reading room.

The 68th Aviation Company was active in the area of transportation. On 12 April, an airmobile element medically evacuated a wounded child to Bien Hoa Provincial Hospital for immediate attention. In addition, the company evacuated or relocated 62 ARVN dependents and refugees and 2500 pounds of personal belongings and foodstuffs in the course of normal missions.

In the area of Community Relations, the officers and men of the 74th Aviation Company donated a case of fresh eggs to Regional Forces dependents on Easter, 500 pounds of clothing collected by the Washington States Highway Patrol to the Duc Hoa Refugee Center, and foodstuffs to an employee with a recent death in his family. 5900\$vn piasters were turned over to the Phu Cuong orphanage for the purchase of supplies and materials.

The 118th Aviation Company made significant contributions in the civic actions in support of 25th Division operations at Cu Chi. Airmobile elements medically evacuated a total of 15 GVN civilians to medical facilities at Trung Lap. In addition, approximately 50 refugees were evacuated from search and destroy areas to the Cu Chi District Headquarters for immediate refugee assistance. The officers and men donated over 1000 pounds of foodstuff, 9 boxes of assorted clothing and sanitation items to the Bui Vinh Refugee Center, and the Bien Hoa Orphanage. Captain Cooper personally donated 1200 pencils inscribed "From an American Soldier of the 118th Aviation Company", to the Bien Hoa and Bui Vinh School children in a friendship gesture. Sp/4 Amisano conducted English classes for the residents of Cong Ly Street. Doctor Altomonte treated approximately thirty patients and local civilians during his weekly visit to the Tan Uyen Leper Colony. Doctor Altomonte's effort at Tan Uyen were cited by the District Chief as a major contribution in the pacification effort in this Viet Cong influenced area.

The officers and men of the 197th Aviation Company donated 100 pounds of clothing and health and sanitation items to the An Loc Orphanage on Easter Sunday. An armed element of the company branched out in the communications field when it dropped psy-war leaflets in the Run Sat Special Zone at the request of the NHA BE District Chief.

This week, A/501st Aviation Battalion accepted limited sponsorship of the Bui Hiep Refugee Center. In addition, 9 refugees were evacuated in the Ham Tam area by airmobile elements on 11 April. Ten Bien Hoa National police attended the weekly conversational English class conducted by members of the unit.

HORST K. JOOST, Lt Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

Commander's Combat Note # 19

23 April 1966

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS 15 APRIL THROUGH 21 APRIL 1966

Long in need of praise have been a number of aviation activities which are not necessarily glamorous or receive much recognition but which are all important to the mission accomplishment of the 145th Aviation Battalion.

The first of these is the support provided to us during each airmobile operation by Captain Thurman, Operations Officer, 56th Transportation Company, and his aircraft recovery crews. During this month alone he has recovered three downed UH-1D aircraft out of hostile territory. Each recovery has been performed under duress but with such efficiency that in no instance did it interfere or detract from the airmobile mission. Our highest praises to this unit.

Another unsung activity is the constant cover we receive from the 57th Medical Detachment (Air Ambulance) during airmobile operations. They are always overhead when needed. In a recent Battalion operation, one helicopter ambulance received eight hits while evacuating wounded U.S. Forces. They always come back for more.

Our own 74th Aviation Company is constantly aloft to provide radio relay service, weather advisory, visual reconnaissance and air artillery adjustments during airmobile operations. These aircraft spend many long hours over the objective area. They are the first aircraft over the objective area and usually the last to leave after the operation is completed.

The next activity is that of our Battalion Pathfinder Detachment. This Detachment is commanded by Lieutenant Grover D Westfall. It precedes the troop carrier aircraft into the pick up site to organize and control troop loading and aircraft landing for pickup. During an extraction, these personnel depart the extraction zone after the last ground elements are airborne.

The 145th Aviation Battalion supports the III (ARVN) Corps with helicopters on a daily basis. Every company in the Battalion receives a turn at this duty. In the performance of this duty aircraft are dispatched throughout the III Corps area, and engage in a variety of missions. Locally we brand these as "Pigs and Rice" missions, the name being derived from the requirement to frequently haul these commodities. These missions are administrative and tactical in nature. An example of some administrative support: This Sunday a helicopter was used to lift Post Exchange supplies and operate as an airmobile PX to fourteen extremely isolated post which are inaccessible by road in the III Corps area. Religious service are conducted in this manner to isolated posts. Daily mail and courier flights are made to all posts in the three division tactical areas. Helicopters are used to resupply the ARVN forces located on a number of high pinnacles in the Corps area. These outposts exist only by helicopter resupply. Popular forces personnel and occasionally their dependents and belongings are transported to new locations. A helicopter pilot flying these missions cannot allow himself to become shook about what he may see being loaded in his aircraft. Other administrative tasks are to transport advisors to these remote outposts, the only contact they have with the forces at these locations.

The tactical mission for the Corps consist of providing armed helicopter fire teams daily to each of the three ARVN divisions. These teams are used to conduct strikes against Viet Cong locations, provide escort for road convoys and aerial reconnaissance. Psychological warfare loudspeaker missions are flown by troop carrier helicopters, supported by a fire team. These missions can always be counted on to prompt a reaction by fire from the Viet Cong. Another tactical mission is the delivery by helicopter of Recondo Teams. This week, three Recondo Teams were employed by this Battalion into Viet Cong suspect areas. Gunships cover these deliveries.

Daylight and night reconnaissance is made around the Bien Hoa Air Base complex by a fire team. The senior advisor of the Dong Nai area credits this continuous surveillance as a major contributing factor to the security from Viet Cong attack that the Air Base has enjoyed.

Now for the airmobile operations conducted this week.

On 15 April, Company A/501st Aviation Battalion supported the 173rd Airborne Brigade by conducting two airmobile assaults and four extractions. A total of 425 troops were lifted in twelve lifts. Enemy ground fire was received in the landing zone.

On 16 April, the 68th Aviation Company, supported the 2d Brigade, 25th (US) Division by airlifting 126 troops in two airmobile assaults, northwest of Cu Chi.

Company A/501st, continued to, support the 173rd Airborne Brigade, by conducting six airmobile assaults with 333 troops of the First Royal Australian Regiment in the vicinity of Song Be.

On 17 April, A/501st supported the 173d Airborne Brigade by conducting five airmobile assaults and one extraction in the vicinity of Song Be. A total of 367 troops were lifted.

The 145th Aviation Battalion conducted an airmobile operation on 18 April for the 25th (ARVN) Division, ten kilometers Northwest of Tan An. This operation demonstrated some problems in coordination and control when an unscheduled, unannounced and uncontrolled air strike with White Phosphorous ordnance struck the landing zone immediately prior to the time of the troop landing. Aircraft were diverted for forty-five minutes until the smoke in the landing zone dissipated. A total of 510 troops then assaulted four landing zones. During this operation, armed helicopters of the 68th Aviation Company engaged a squad of Viet Cong with a result of three kills estimated.

Company A/501st again supported the 173d Airborne Brigade on 18 April, by conducting ten combat assaults with 563 troops in the Song Be area.

On 20 April, the 145th Aviation Battalion Supported III (ARVN) Corps CIDG Forces by airlifting 570 troops in four air assaults out of Song Be to two landing zone thirty kilometers east of Song Be. One highlight of the assault was the first employment of the XM-31 20mm cannon sub-system in a combat operation. The System is currently being tested by the 197th Aviation Company (Armed). It consists of 2 - 20mm cannons which are flexible in elevation, mounted on each side of the UH-1B helicopter. This weapon system was used for the helicopter prestrike of the wooded areas surrounding the landing zone. The assault was uncontested.

Also on 20 April 1966, the 118th Aviation Company supported the Capitol Military Region by conducting an airmobile assault with 100 troops ten miles southwest of Saigon. Later in the day this force was extracted.

On 21 April, the 68th Action company departed for Vinh Long to reinforce the 13th Aviation Battalion in support of the IV Corps (ARVN) for a three day period.

The activities of the 197th Aviation Company while operating on separate gunship missions account for seven Viet Cong estimated KIA, four Sampans sunk and two damaged, seven structures destroyed.

The 74th Aviation Company (FW) performed the following tasks during the period:

Visual Reconnaissance	102
Escort Missions	76
Photo Missions	2

Operation Sea Wolf moved into Phase II this week by assembling armed helicopters and additional crew and support personnel to outfit another naval vessel. Personnel are undergoing training to land on LST decks at this time. Also the U.S.S. Belle Grove is being replaced with another LSD. This Battalion received a message this week from Commander and Captain of the U.S.S. Belle Grove Naval Task Force 116 which praised the Sea Wolf Operation. An extract follows:..." In addition we must doff our hats to the highly capable Army helo pilots who so rapidly integrated into their fire support role and who so admirably carried out their assignments. Their quick adjustment without any hitch to night and day flying from our helo and super decks was testimony to their outstanding professional competence. Shipmated in every sense of the word their presence will be sorely missed. However we depart secure in the knowledge that fire team support of the river forces will be in the best of hands. Please convey to USMACV and the Commanding Officer 145th Aviation Battalion our "well done" to Captain Brofer and his fine crews for a truly superlative performance."

Operational statistics for the week are as follows:

Rotary Wing :	
Total Sorties	4332
Total Flying Hours	1480

Personnel Lifted	5803
Fixed Wing:	
Total Sorties	402
Total Flying Hours	538

Personnel of the 25th Aviation Battalion continued with their in-country flight training.

Awards received by the Battalion this week:

Distinguished Flying Cross	1
Bronze Star "Valor"	1
Air Medal "Valor"	8
Air Medal	166
Army Commendation MS	4
Purple Heart	1

At a brief ceremony on 19 April 1966, in Bien Hoa, Honour-Smith Compound was dedicated in memory of Lt. Colonel Charles M. Honour Jr., formerly Battalion Commander of the 145th Aviation Battalion, and Captain Albert M. Smith Jr, formerly Battalion Assistant Adjutant.

After Chaplain (Major) Hugh N. Barnes conducted a short memorial service, Brigadier General Robert T. Knowles, Chief of Staff II Field Forces V, and Lt. Colonel Horst K. Joost, Commanding Officer of the 145th Aviation Battalion, unveiled a large sign at the gate of Honour-Smith Compound. Honour-Smith Compound, previously known as Cong-Ly Complex, Houses parts of three separate units, II Field Forces V, the 145th Aviation Battalion, and 232d Signal Company.

SUMMARY OF CIVIC ACTIONS (15 April - 21 April 1966)

The Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment donated soap to the nearby Refugee Village School.

The 68th Aviation Company re-located 12 refugees, 23 ARVN dependents, and 2600 pounds of personal belongings. A company delegation was sent to the fishing village of Can Gio. The party took along a donation of soap, toothpaste, clothes, toilet articles, school supplies, and miscellaneous items which were obtained by Captain Gore from the American Legion in his home town. Four enlisted members have volunteered to teach English classes and a medical aid program is being planned.

The 74th Aviation Company continued its activities started last week. English classes were taught to children in Phu Cuong. Volunteers aided a Regional Forces Platoon in construction of new living quarters in Phu Cuong. Officers and men donated more condensed milk, fresh milk, canned hams, and orange juice to local school to supplement the children's diet.

The 118th Aviation Company was active in many areas of civil affairs. Fifty pounds of clothing was gathered and donated by the Officers and Enlisted men of the 118th Aviation Company and distributed to the refugee center at Binh Vinh. Captain Glen R. Weber donated Vietnamese ice cream cones to the local children at Hung Trung Province while on a joint service operation on 19 April 66. These children were combat refugees and were greatly taken by this act. Sp/4 Amisano conducted conversational English classes for the eight straight week on Cong-Ly Street. His classes now range to 25 students or more counting the Bien Hoa National Police attending. The Officers of the 118th Aviation Company, contributed donations to the Bien Hoa Orphanage of the following items: Blankets, towels, infant playsuits, toys, soap, tooth paste, talcum powder, tooth brushes, hair brushes, combs, boxes of clothes, adhesive tape, childrens shampoo, boxes of crayons, coloring books, surgical soap, infant shoes, and assorted childrens clothing and a good supply of food stuff. The Company also made donations of food stuffs and clothing to the Tu Duc Orphanage. Doctor Altomonte made his weekly visit to the Tan Uyen Leper Colony and treated twenty patients and local civilians.

The 197th Aviation Company provided additional support to the An Loc Orphanage in Saigon by donating 1000 pounds of rice and a case of One-a-day Vitamins.

A/501st Aviation Battalion's Officers donated 6,785\$VN piasters to purchase school furniture for a self help project at Bui Vinh Refugee Center. Three volunteers conducted a two hour conversational English class for forty residents of Tam Hiep. This was followed by another class on 21 April 66 for approximately fifty residents. Six bags of cement and several types of school supplies were donated to Tam Hiep. A USAF Lieutenant was transported to Due Tu for coordination with the District Chief in making a short film about refugees. A new project was begun by making initial contact with Due Tu Sub-Sector Chief and Tam Hiep Hamlet Chief.

Horst K. Joost Lt. Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

Commander's Combat Note #21

30 April 1966

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS 22 APRIL THROUGH 28 APRIL 1966

This week I wish to praise the outstanding work performed by our maintenance detachments which have month after month kept the aircraft of this Battalion flying several thousand hours over the program. These units are the 391st Transportation Detachments, supporting the 68th Aviation Company; the 563d Transportation Detachment, supporting the 74th Aviation Company; The 573d Transportation Detachment, supporting the 118th Aviation Company; The 571st Transportation Detachment, supporting the 197th Aviation Company; and the 151st Transportation Detachment, supporting A/501st Aviation Battalion.

During the period the 145th Aviation Battalion conducted one airmobile operation involving all companies of the Battalion. The other operation consisted of companies of this Battalion reinforcing other aviation units, companies operating independently to support ground combat units, and daily III (ARVN) Corps support. The 197th Aviation Company continued to conduct numerous Lighting Bug and other aerial fire support missions, while the 74th Aviation Company provided fixed wing support to U.S. and ARVN Forces in the III Corp area. Operation Sea Wolf continued to strike at the Viet Cong in the Rung Sat Special Zone.

Company A/501st continued their supporting of the 173d Airborne Brigade in the Song Be Area on 22 April, by conducting an assault and a subsequent extraction with 476 troopers.

On 23 April, the 68th Aviation Company returned from the IV Corps Area, where they supported the 21st (ARVN) Division for two days. During that time they conducted seven combat assaults and one extraction in the Vi Thanh area. Two aircraft were hit by enemy fire.

This was a busy day for the 118th Aviation Company, conducting two airmobile operations for III (ARVN) Corps. The first operation consisted of airlifting two CIDG Companies, one from Bien Hoa and the other from Dong Xoai to an area thirty kilometers east of Song Be. Also lifted were 90 CIDG dependents. The second operation was initiated by the company when they responded to the requirement to relocate the 9th (ARVN) Regiment to Song Be. In ten lifts the company relocated 1150 troops, the last portion being conducted during the hours of darkness.

The 68th Aviation Company and Company A/501st supported the 1st (US) Infantry Division's operation BIRMINGHAM on 24 April. These companies airlifted 549 troops in five airmobile assaults northwest of Tay Ninh. Enemy ground fire accounted for four aircraft being hit.

The 118th Aviation Company responded to a rapid reaction to support the Capital Military Region by extracting 120 ARVN troops from a site 10 kilometers east of Saigon. In order to respond to this mission it was necessary to recall the aircraft of company from a variety of tasks locations within the III Corps area. From alert to mission accomplishment one hour and forty minutes elapsed.

On 26 April, ten armed helicopters of the Battalion flew in support of MACV directed missions. Company A/501st supported the 25th (ARVN) Division by airlifting 96 ranger troops in two combat assaults in the vicinity of Duc Hoa.

On 28 April, the 145th Aviation Battalion supported III (ARVN) Corps' portion of operation BIRMINGHAM, BY AIRLIFTING 1406 troops of the Airborne (ARVN) Division in four

combat assaults thirty kilometers north of Tay Ninh. In a subsequent action, 280 ARVN Rangers were airlifted in one combat assault north of Tay Ninh.

The armed helicopters of the 197th Aviation Company accounted for five sampans sunk and one damaged.

The 74th Aviation Company conducted the following fixed wing missions for the period:

Visual Reconnaissance	85
Escort Missions	77
Radio Relay	16
Artillery Adjustment	86
Forward Air Control	4
Command Liaison	70
Command Staff Liaison	7

The activities of Task Force Sea Wolf for the past two weeks consisted of flying armed aircraft support for river patrol boats in the Rung Sat Special Zone supporting the Nha Be (Headquarters) and Soi Rap-Long Than River Areas. The armed helicopters operate from two naval vessels at this time; they are the LSD Tortuga and the LST Floyd County. The armed aircraft flew a total of 82 hours for the two week period accounting for an estimated 10 Viet Cong killed and two sampans destroyed. On 26 April, the U.S.S. Tortuga was visited by General Westmoreland, COMNAVFORC, at which time they were able to witness the armed helicopters in action.

The operational statistics for the Battalion are as follow:

Rotary Wing	
Total Sorties	4723
Total Flying Hours	1688
Total Passengers	6263
Fixed Wing	
Total Sorties	400
Total Flying Hours	585
Training	

Training in the conduct of night airmobile operations on platoon and company level progressed as operational commitments permitted.

The awards received by members of this Battalion this week are as follows:

Air Medal for Valor	11
Air Medal	144
Purple Heart	8

This week this Battalion was awarded its 10,000th Air Medal since January 1965. The 10,000th Air Medal was awarded to Specialist E-5 James Bryant, (Crewchief) Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 145th Aviation Battalion.

CIVIC ACTION (22 April - 28 April 1966)

This Battalion should be proud of the dynamic civic action program that it is promoting. Many worthwhile and lasting contributions are made that are vivid demonstrations of the motives of the United States Forces in Vietnam. Each unit of this Battalion feels a responsibility for segment of Vietnamese Life and each active participant obtains personal satisfaction that he is doing just a little more than he was expected to do. In transacting all civic action projects through GVN province officials we are assured that the need for assistance is valid and it strengthens the tie of the people to the government. We are thankful for the generous assistance that we have received from a number of wives, families, and organizations in the United States in the form of contributions. I am certain that their efforts are well rewarded by observing the expression of gratitude in the face of a bare-cheeked-behind, Vietnamese youngster receiving a good set of clothes.

On 26 April the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 145th Aviation Battalion donated 2715\$VN piasters to purchase school furniture for the self help construction project at Bui Vinh. In addition, a water truck with driver supported the school construction project for three days. Thirty pounds of clothing received from supporters in

the United States were distributed to sixty refugee families in Bui Vinh. Chaplin Barnes distributed approximately 400 pounds of foodstuffs and sanitation items at the Don Bosco school in Saigon.

The 68th Aviation Company was active in the area of transportation. During the week, airmobile elements evacuated and relocated 86 refugees and ARVN dependents and 5000 pounds of foodstuff and household goods.

The Officers and men of the 74th Aviation Company donated approximately 300 pounds of foodstuffs to the 5th ARVN Division dependents. In addition, the officers donated 3 cases of soap to the children at Thu Dan Mot through the local GVN official. Members of the 4th Platoon accomplished an emergency medical evacuation of a refugee mother and daughter to the Phu Cuong Hospital.

The 118th Aviation Company donated foodstuff, clothing and sanitation items to the orphanage, evacuated refugees at Song Ben and was active in the Health & Sanitation, and Education fields. The officers and men donated 2000 pounds of foodstuffs, and 200 pounds of clothing, cleaning products and medical supplies to the Bien Hoa Orphanage. Sp-4 Amisano conducted conversational English classes for residents of Cong Ly Street. Airmobile elements evacuated 37 refugees on two separate occasions from search and destroy areas to refugee centers at Song Be and Duc Hoa. Doctor Altomonte treated approximately 25 patients on his weekly visit to the Tan Uyen Leper Colony.

The 197th Aviation Company continued its support to the An Loc Orphanage. Thirty pounds of clothing received from supporters in the United States, and two cases of soap were donated to the orphanage. Sp-5 Geary, a medic, gave on the spot medical aid to include a tetanus shot to a Vietnamese National who had stepped on a nail. The officers assisted the orphanage in obtaining water during this critical period by providing a pump and an operator to fill the water reservoir at the orphanage.

A/501st Aviation Battalion accomplished a variety of task in their support of Bui Heip refugee center. At the request of the Chief, a truck was provided to transport building material for the self-help school project. Conversational English classes were conducted on the 25th and 28th and as a result of the interest generated, classes will be given four days per week starting 2 May. In addition, airmobile elements evacuated a total of 50 refugees from a search and destroy area west of Tay Ninh.

Horst K. Joost Lt. Col Inf
Commanding

Commander's Combat Note #22

8 May 1966

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS 29 APRIL THROUGH 5 MAY 1966

This week the 145th Aviation Battalion provided combat aviation support to every major U.S. and ARVN unit located in the III Corps area.

On 29 April, the 118th Aviation Company supported the 1st Infantry Division by airlifting 460 troops in seven combat assaults in the vicinity of Tay Ninh.

The 68th Aviation Company supported the 25th (ARVN) Division by airlifting 210 troops and 15 tons of cargo.

On 30 April, the 145th Aviation Battalion supported III (ARVN) Corps with one airmobile company, the 25th (US) Division with three airmobile companies, and MACV with fifteen armed helicopters. During the operation of these armed helicopters in the Rung Sat Special Zone, a light fire team received enemy fire and retaliated with a strike which resulted in destroying five sampans and damaging one, and killing two Viet Cong. Cargo on sampans destroyed was observed to be web equipment and steel helmets.

On 1 May, the 118th Aviation Company again supported the 1st U.S. Division by extracting 190 troops from a location 30 kilometers north of Tay Ninh. The extraction was contested by the enemy.

In the same general area, the 68th Aviation Company supported the 25th (ARVN) Division by repositioning troops and supplies.

The 197th Aviation Company, performing a mission in the Rung Sat Special Zone, sank two sampans, destroyed one Viet Cong structure and damaged four others. Operating for the

5th (ARVN) Division, another light fire team of the company destroyed 25 Viet Cong structures which resulted in achieving large secondary explosions. During this strike the fire team leader overheard a radio transmission from Special Forces troops operating in the vicinity, stating that their supply of food, water and ammunition was exhausted. The team leader having finished his assigned mission, diverted his gunship to haul 3000 pounds of supplies to this force. Results: Another aviation mission accomplished, and a ground combat element rendered combat effective. On 2 May 66, the 118th Aviation Company again operated in the Tay Ninh area in support of the 1st (US) Infantry Division by extracting 390 troops in six lifts. Enemy small arms fire was encountered during the extraction.

The 68th Aviation Company supported the 25th (ARVN) Division in the Tay Minh area, by repositioning 164 Troops and 23 tons of cargo.

On 3 May, the 145th Aviation Battalion employed one aviation company in support of the III (ARVN) Corps administrative and supply missions, one company in support of the 25th (ARVN) Division, and one company in support of the 25th (US) Division.

The largest operation of the week was conducted on 4 May, when the Battalion, reinforced by Company A/82 Aviation Battalion supported the 173rd Airborne Brigade in the conduct of an airmobile assault in the War Zone D, northwest of Tan Uyen. Two airborne infantry battalions of 1382 troops assaulted three landing zones in seven lifts. Although all three LZ's were heavily prepared by artillery, tactical air and armed helicopters prior to the landing, enemy small arms fire was received during the assault landing.

On 5 May, two airmobile companies supported III (ARVN) Corps missions, and one company remained on alert to support the tactical needs of the 173d Airborne Brigade.

The 197th Aviation Company had a full day by providing five light fire teams and one heavy fire to support MACV requirements, and one light fire team in support of the 10th (ARVN) Division.

During the week, Company A/501st Aviation Battalion provided the bulk of the III (ARVN) Corps administrative and supply support.

The scoreboard of damage inflicted on the enemy this week by the 197th Aviation Company shows: fourteen sampans destroyed and three damaged; twenty six structures destroyed and four damaged; and five Viet Cong killed by air.

Certain damage was inflicted on the enemy from the gunship of other companies and from the offensive fire technique during assault landings, however, the extent of this damage cannot be verified.

The 74th Aviation Company (fixed wing) missions performed during the week were:

Visual Reconnaissance	38
Escort	23
Radio Relay	3
Artillery Adjustment	43
Forward Air Control	2
Command Support Liaison	3
Command Liaison	45
Combat Observation	20

OPERATION SEA WOLF

Captain Charles R. Williams has replaced Captain Brofer as Commander of Task Force Sea Wolf. Captain Brofer will be leaving soon on rotation. I wish to commend him for his outstanding effort in organizing the Task Force and creating an effective combat aviation unit that is providing aerial fire support for the U.S. Navy.

The operations of the Task Force this week in the Rung Sat Special Zone consisted of providing aerial reconnaissance, medical evacuation, overhead cover for naval swift boats, strikes against Viet Cong concentrations, sampans and installations.

The scoreboard for the week is:

Possible Viet Cong KIA	18
Sampans Destroyed	2
Structures Destroyed	2

Structures Damaged

2

The operational statistics for aircraft performance for the Battalion this week are as follows:

Rotary Wing

Total Sorties	3705
Total Flying Hours	1128
Total Passengers	3896

Fixed Wing

Total Sorties	193
Total Flying Hours	280

Training

Training in the firing of the 20mm weapons system continues. the 197th Aviation Company is training in conjunction with Air Force forward air controllers in the use of night vision devices for detecting targets and developing techniques and procedures for engaging targets at night. The Battalion Pathfinder Detachment is training with the glide slope device to develop techniques aimed at improving the Battalion's capabilities to conduct night airmobile assaults.

The total flying hours for the units of this Battalion for the month of April are as follows:

68th Aviation Company	1948
118th Aviation Company	2167
197th Aviation Company	1573
A/501st Aviation Battalion	1595
74th Aviation Company	2540

9823

It is of interest to note this total represents 2153 hours flown over the program.

Awards and Decorations:

The highlights of the awards and decorations received this week were sixteen Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry which were presented by Major General Lulan, Commanding General of the 10th (ARVN) Division, to members of the 197th Aviation Company. Eight of the medals were with Silver Star, and eight with Bronze Star devices. The awards were presented for the actions of two light fire teams on 22 February 1966, conducting repeated strikes against the enemy in support of ARVN ground operations near Tanh-Linh, Bin-Tuy Province.

Special recognition is given this week to all the signal detachments of this Battalion. Communications are the life blood of airmobile operations and all aviation activity. The avionics maintenance personnel are a vital cog in ability for each unit to function effectively. Each of these units has performed with exceptional distinction:

- 282nd Signal Detachment
- 320th Signal Detachment
- 198th Signal Detachment
- 94th Signal Detachment

Keep up the good work.

CIVIC ACTION (29 April - 5 May 1966)

On 5 May the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 145th Aviation Battalion donated 2,000\$VN piasters to provide elementary school fees for approximately sixty (60) refugee children for the month of May. In addition, transportation was provided for the Duc Tu District Vietnamese Information Service Representative who visited an outlying area for the purpose of psychological warfare activities and to deliver 400 pounds of relief supplies.

The officers and men of the 68th Aviation Company donated clothing, soap, and school supplies to Can Gio. Airmobile elements of the company evacuated 40 refugees and ARVN dependents, and airlifted 1500 pounds of personal belongings and foodstuffs on two

separate operations. The 74th Aviation Company gave two baskets of flowers for a memorial service to the Phu Cuong hospital. The officers and men donated 220 pounds of foodstuffs to the widows of the 5th ARVN Division Dependents and 500 pounds to the Phu Cuong Orphanage.

The officers and men of the 118th Aviation Company donated 600 pounds of foodstuff and a variety of childrens' clothing (200) pounds to the Bien Hoa Orphanage. While on an operational mission with the 1st Infantry Division, the company mess fed 100 children A rations for a two day period. The children had been displaced as a result of search and destroy operations and were waiting relocating assistance. Doctor Altomonte treated 25 patients at the Tan Uyen Leper Colony. In addition, two officers accompanied Doctor Altomonte on his visit and distributed food and clothing to the patients. Ap/4 Amisano initiated another class of conversational English for the residents of Cong-Ly Street. Airmobile elements evacuated 25 refugees and 2100 pounds of personal belongings from an outlying area to Xuan Loc. USOM Relief were also airlifted from Duc Hoa to the Cu Chi area for refugee assistance.

The 197th Aviation Company continued their support of the An Lac Orphanage in Saigon and expanded their program to include the An Lac Orphanage Farm in Bien Hoa Province. 700 pounds of foodstuff were donated to the farm, and 4500\$VN piasters were donated to the orphanage in Saigon. A water pump and operator were provided to the An Lac farm which pumped over 3000 gallons of water to allow showers and other hygiene measures, the first in several months. Doctor Balette initiated medical program assistance for 583 Nationals. Accompanied by two Air Force doctors he drove to Vinh Long, where they explained and treated over 200 Vietnamese of all ages. On 1 May Doctor Balette examined each child at the An Lac farm. On 3 May he returned with two nurses from the 93rd Evacuation Hospital and treated 183 children. On 4 May Doctor Balette spent the afternoon at An Lac orphanage in Saigon where he treated over 200 children.

A/501st Aviation Battalion conducted four (4) two (2) hour conversational English classes for the residents of Bui Hiep. The class consisted of approximately fifty (50) students each. Airmobile elements evacuated 28 refugees from operational areas.

Horst K. Joost Lt. Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

Commander's Combat Note # 23

15 May 1966

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS 6 MAY THROUGH 12 MAY 1966

Operations

The largest scale airmobile operation conducted by the 145 Aviation Battalion this week occurred on 6 May, when 1350 troops of the 173d Airborne Brigade were extracted from War Zone D. Four airmobile companies were employed in seven lifts to extract the ground elements. Moderate small arms was received during the first and second lifts resulting in several aircraft being hit. Suppressive fire by armed helicopters on enemy fire, prior to the third lift, significantly decreased enemy activity and no further hits were sustained.

For the remainder of the week, Company A/501st Aviation Battalion provided support to the 1st (US) Infantry Division for three days, and the 68th Aviation Company for two days. The 118th Aviation Company supported the 25th (US) Infantry Division on 12 May, By airlifting 238 troops in two combat assaults and two extractions, southwest of Trang Bang. All companies of the Battalion provided aviation support for the units of III (ARVN) Corps during the week. The 118th Aviation Company provided the largest share of this support.

The 118th Aviation Company was called upon to fly loud speaker psychological warfare missions. This mission involves the use of a UH-1D equipped with a battery of loudspeakers externally mounted. Controlled by a member of the advisory team of the Psywar Section III Corps (ARVN), prerecorded tapes or in some instances a captured Viet Cong will broadcast appeals to surrender. Often leaflets are dropped to supplement the information broadcast over the loud speakers.