

A light team accompanies this mission as escort as a matter of standard operating procedures. Quite often the recipient of the propaganda broadcasts are inclined to answer with bullets.

The 197th Aviation Company scored one sampan sunk and one Viet Cong killed during the period. Other activities of the company consisted of effectively suppressing enemy automatic weapons fire directed against a Psy-war aircraft, and other armed helicopter strikes at the request of ground elements. Two light teams of the company performed a dramatic rescue of eleven survivors of a CH-47 crash 22 miles southeast of Saigon. This act required that rockets be jettisoned in order to lighten the load, landing in an extremely confined and non-secured area, which demanded the utmost in pilot skills.

The 74th Aviation Company performed the following tasks:

Visual Reconnaissance	97
Forward Air Control	4
Escort Missions	56
Flare Missions	2

Task Force Sea Wolf continued to operate from naval vessels in support of the U.S. Navy in the Rung Sat Special Zone. They provided overhead cover for the extraction of a SEAL team which came under enemy fire. Two firing passes suppressed the enemy fire. One fire team reacted to providing aerial weapons fire on an estimated Viet Cong squad attacking a hamlet. The attack was stopped and an estimated six Viet Cong were killed by the aerial fire support. In another action a fire team struck a preplanned target and located a Viet Cong campsite which was struck. The results, 10 possible Viet Cong killed by air.

The U.S. Tortuga steamed out of Vung Tau and operated to the south during the period. A "first" was achieved by Lieutenant Reed, when he landed his helicopter while the ship was underway at night during marginal weather after returning from a mission. The vessel had to be located by Lt. Reed by use of the low frequency homer. Task Force Sea Wolf also provided overhead cover for the evacuation of personnel from the crashed CH-47 mentioned above. On one occasion a fire team provided overhead cover for an ARVN ground operation west of Con Gio. For the period, Task Force Sea Wolf estimates 20 Viet Cong killed as a result of their air action.

The operational statistics for the week are as follows:

Rotary Wing

Total Sorties Flown	4155
Total Flying Hours	1549
Total Passengers	4512

Fixed Wing

Total Sorties Flown	338
Total Flying Hours	481

Training

The 20mm system is being rotated among the companies of the Battalion in order that all armed helicopter personnel receive instruction in the system. The personnel of the Pathfinder Detachments are training with a Portable Non-Directional beacon, and Glide Slope receiver equipment for night operations. The 68th Aviation Company is preparing to train the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, in the conduct of airmobile operations, which will commence 14 May 1966.

Aviation Safety

I am pleased to note that so far this month the Battalion has not experienced a single recordable aircraft accident. This I feel reflects highly on the attitude and professionalism of all the aviators in the Battalion. Keep up the good work and we shall continue to remain "First in Vietnam".

On the 11th of May 1966 while performing armed convoy escort a UH-1B piloted by WO's Reeves and Nisson of the 197th Avn Co. received damage from enemy automatic weapons. Displaying the utmost in professionalism and calmness WO's Reeves and Nisson piloted their crippled aircraft, which was on fire to a friendly position and executed a force landing

sustaining no further damage to their aircraft. This outstanding achievement by WO's Reeves and Nisson saved a UH-1B from total destruction. Well Done!

Awards and Decorations

The following awards were received by members of this Battalion, during the week:

Bronze Star "Meritorious Service"	6
Air Medal "Valor"	1
Air Medal	323
Army Commendation "Meritorious Service"	4
Purple Heart	2

The following promotions were received during the week:

Captain to Major	1
Lt to Capt	3
E-6 to E-7	1
E-3 to E-4	14
E-2 to E-3	12

This week I want to commend the men of the Medical Section of the 145th Aviation Battalion. They perform daily in caring for routine sick call. In life and limb. We now have a new Battalion Surgeon, Capt Quinnon R. Purvis. The three supporting medical detachments and their commanders are:

93rd Med Det, Bien Hoa, Capt Joe Altomonte
430th Med Det, Vung Tau, Capt John Quakenbush
774th Med Det, Bien Hoa, Capt Julio Balette

SUMMARY OF CIVIC ACTIONS (6 May - 12 May 1966)

On 10 May the officers and men of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment 145th Aviation Battalion donated 2500\$VN piasters to Bui Vinh for the purchase of additional school furniture for the self-help construction projects. Five hundred and fifty school kits were obtained from USAID to be distributed on 14 May at the dedication ceremony. Fifty kits were made up from Battalion resources making a total of six hundred kits, one for each child enrolled. Chaplain Barnes distributed seven hundred pounds of foodstuff to the Don Bosco Boys School and fifty pounds of school supplies were donated to the Bui Vinh Elementary School.

Airmobile elements of the 68th Aviation Company evacuated and relocated a total of 77 refugees and ARVN dependents during the week, along with airlifting 3500 pounds of personal belongings. Sp/5 Gibbs conducted three Conversational English classes for 35 nationals at the Vietnamese - American Cultural Center in Vung Tau. The officers and men of the 68th Aviation Company and members of the Sea Wolf project donated 2 cases of soap, toothpaste and candy on a visit to the refugee village of Can Gio.

The 74th Aviation Company distributed 1000 pounds of foodstuffs to the 5th ARVN Division widows and orphans. The Phu Cuong elementary school construction fund received a donation of 2500\$VN piasters from the officers and men of the 74th Aviation Company.

The officers and men of the 118th Aviation Company donated approximately 1700 pounds of foodstuffs to the Bien Hoa orphanage and the Bui Vinh Refugee Center. In addition, assorted clothing, toys and items for personal hygiene were donated to both locations. two hundred pounds of school supplies including a dozen mechanical pencil sharpeners, paper and pencils were donated to the orphanage elementary school. Doctor Altomonte treated twenty patients on his weekly visit to the Leper Colony and Sergeant Summers from the 93rd Medical Detachment gave emergency treatment, including immunization, to two Vietnamese Nationals with severe cuts. Airmobile elements evacuated and relocated 15 refugees from Ham Tam to Xuan Loc and airlifted approximately two hundred pounds of personal belongings.

The officers and men of the 197th Aviation Company provided 5000 gallons of water to the An Lac Orphanage farm where water continues to be in critical supply. Sp/5 Willingham organized Conversational English classes two nights a week for the children and staff at the orphanage in Saigon. Fifty pounds of clothing received by Captain Brofer from the V.F.W. in his home town were donated to the orphanage. Doctor Balette held sick call at the orphanage in Saigon and the farm and treated 198 children. In addition, 213 children

at the farm received piperazine treatment (worm treatment). SFC Jones, the unit mess sergeant, prepared four cakes and Sp4 Tillis donated 100 packs of gum in an effort to make the operation a success. Doctor Balette's efforts at the farm are already influencing the surrounding community. Local villagers are also attending sick call.

The officers and men of A/501st Aviation Battalion initiated a school fees program for orphans, refugee children and children whose parents are unable to work in Bui Hiep. 3000\$VN piasters were donated to provide school fees for 100 children for the month of May. For Conversational English classes with approximately 40 in attendance were conducted for residents of Bui Hiep. Air elements evacuated twenty-five refugees and personal belongings from a search and destroy area near Ba Ria. Transportation was provided for the Bien Hoa Province Chief and five members of the Provincial Staff for the purpose of coordination visits to the sub-sectors.

Horst K Joost, Lt. Col. Inf.
Commanding

Commander's Combat Note # 24

21 May 1966

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS 13 MAY THROUGH 19 MAY 1966

Anyone who is not intimately familiar with the functions of an Army Aviation Battalion is always awed when he learns of the diversified activity of such a unit. The various missions that were accomplished by the Battalion during the week are excellent examples of this unique capability. It is a tribute to all members of this Battalion that they accept each new task as a personal challenge. This attitude seeks to accomplish each mission better than before. The high professional reputation that this Battalion enjoys can be attributed to this enthusiasm.

This week found the 145th Aviation Battalion conducting nine separate airmobile operations in support of the 1st (US) Infantry Division, the 25th (US) Infantry Division, and the 173d Airborne Brigade. Each day, III (ARVN) Corps units were supported with at least one airmobile company and armed helicopter fire teams.

The highlights of activities began on 13 May, with Company A/501st Aviation Battalion, airlifting 613 troops of the 1st (US) Infantry Division, in 11 combat assaults from Dau Tieng to a landing zone to the southwest. This company remained to provide aviation support for the Division, and conducted another air assault on 15 May, with 394 troops in an area northwest of Ben Cat.

The Battalion conducted an airmobile assault with elements of the 25th (US) Division.

The 145th Aviation Battalion controlled the conduct of an airmobile operation on 16 May, when five airmobile companies were assembled to support the 2d Brigade 25th (US) Infantry Division. After a two hour weather delay, 812 troops assaulted two landing zones 15 kilometers of Cu Chi. Three aircraft were hit by ground fire. The few hits received can be attributed to the excellent pre-strikes by tactical air, artillery and gunships of the 197th Aviation Company. The high volume of accurate suppressive fires laid down on final approach by the assault helicopters and accompanying gunships, and the offensive fires conducted by all elements on departing the landing zones undoubtedly contributed to discouraging the enemy fire. On completion of the assault, the 118th Aviation Company remained to support the Brigade by airlifting Engineer supplies into the objective area and on the return trip evacuating large quantities of captured enemy materiel.

On 17 May, after having participated in an airmobile operation with the Battalion, the 118th Aviation Company returned in the afternoon to support the 25th (US) Infantry Division, by lifting 133 troops. For the next two days the company conducted three more airmobile assaults for the 25th (US) Infantry Division by lifting a total of 400 troops and 14 tons of cargo. All the missions of the 118th Aviation Company were not combat in nature. This can be attested to by the Thunderbird crew which flew a USO show from Saigon to Tay Ninh. Two talented young ladies were members of the troupe.

On the morning of 17 May, this Battalion controlled the combat assault of a battalion of the 173d Airborne Brigade north of Baria. Participating aviation elements were 197th Aviation Company, A/82nd Aviation Battalion and the 118th Aviation Company. A total of 737

troops were lifted in 5 assaults. In order to achieve mass in the objective area, the initial lifts were positioned in a secure area north of Baria. A road was as the landing area. The first assault of the objective area was performed by the last lift from Bien Hoa, and subsequent lifts picked up the personnel previously positioned near the objective area. In this manner the entire battalion was in the objective area in a short time employing the minimum number of aircraft to do the job.

On 19 May, This Battalion responded to a quick reaction mission to support the 1st (US) Infantry Division. Aircraft of the Battalion were recalled from other missions and assembled at Lai Khe where they lifted 485 troops in a combat assault south of Loc Ninh. Time for assembly of all forces at Lai Khe was one hour and thirty minutes. The lack of adequate refueling facilities available at Lai Khe required units to fly to Bien Hoa, Phuc Vinh, Cu Chi and Phu Loi to refuel between lifts. Consequently, valuable time was lost in getting the entire ground unit assembled and additional flying time was put on the aircraft.

The 68th Aviation Company conducted airmobile training for the newly arrived 5th Battalion, Royal Australians which culminated in a practice airmobile assault. Some progress was made also in the understanding between Free World Forces. Major Cook, Commanding Officer, 68th Aviation Company has learned some Australian, and Lt. Colonel Warr, Commanding Officer 5th Royal Australian Regiment, has a better grasp of the American language.

The 197th Aviation Company, in addition to supporting the Battalion airmobile operations by prestriking and marking landing zones, achieved a high toll of the enemy. A light fire team in support of the 5th (ARVN) Division, on 14 May, destroyed 10 enemy structures and damaged 25. A body count of four Viet Cong was confirmed and a possible 12 more estimated. Other activity by the company during the week destroyed three enemy structures, sank five sampans and damaged twenty others.

The Firebirds of Company A/501st Aviation Battalion conducted a strike on a suspected enemy location while on patrol of the Dong Nai sensitive area. Two days later a report was received from the Senior Advisor of the area that this strike resulted in 24 Viet Cong killed by count and 3 wounded.

The 74th Aviation company's role as weather advisory to the air mission commander is becoming increasingly more important for making decisions on the conduct of airmobile operations. In two instances this week the fixed wing pilot's observations were the basic for go or no go on operations. The tasks performed by the company for the week were as follows:

Type Tasks	Number
Visual Reconnaissance	117
Radio Relay	3
Artillery Adjustment	32
Combat Observation	31
Combat Support Liaison	9
Command and Liaison	50
Route Surveillance	40

Task Force Sea Wolf operations this week varied from providing overhead cover for three visiting U.S. Senators aboard a patrol boat, to conducting strikes to relieve the enemy pressure on an ARVN force in contact. The fire teams continued to operate from the two naval vessels. On 17 May, a fire team was called to place a strike on a Viet Cong element that was in contact with a Regional Force Unit. After the strike, contact was broken and the Viet Cong withdrew. A fire team provided overhead cover while salvage crews removed Viet Cong material and equipment from nine Viet Cong sampans. On 18 May, a fire team reacted to a call to strike a Viet Cong element attacking a friendly outpost. The fire team was on target in twelve minutes from notification and was instrumental in breaking off the attack. The toll inflicted on the enemy by Sea Wolf was 15 Viet Cong killed and five sampans destroyed.

The operational statistics for the week are as follows:

Rotary Wing:	
Total Sorties	5308
Total Flying Hours	1625
Total Passengers	4512
Fixed Wing:	
Total Sorties	328
Total Flying Hours	432

Training:

The airmobile training with the Australians conducted by the 68th Aviation Company has been mentioned previously. This company also conducted a class for its aviators on aerial artillery adjustment. A Pathfinder element of the 1st Cavalry Division visited the Battalion to relate their experiences of airmobile operations with emphasis on night operations. DECCA training for the Battalion Staff was initiated.

Awards and Decorations:

The following awards and decorations were received by members of the Battalion this week:

Distinguished Flying Cross	1
Air Medal	229
Army Commendation Medal	1
1st Lieutenant to Captain	3
WO1 to WO2	1
E-2 to E-3	30

The following promotions were announced:

1st Lieutenant to Captain	3
WO1 to WO2	1
E-2 to E-3	30

Recognition for a job well done goes to the Security Platoon of the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 145th Aviation Battalion. The men of this platoon have the important job of providing security for all companies of the Battalion. Their task requires constant alertness, knowledge of infantry weapons and tactics, and that they be model soldiers in appearance and actions. These men protect and safeguard our installations. They have demanding jobs and I am justly proud of their contribution to enable the 145th Aviation Battalion to successfully accomplish its mission.

CIVIC ACTIONS (13 May - 19 May 1966)

This week the officers and men of Headquarters and Detachment, 145 Aviation Battalion donated 50 pounds of clothing to the Bui Vinh Refugee Center. Four water trucks supported the new school construction project and support was provided to renovate the old school.

The enlisted men of the 68th Aviation Company donated one case of soap to the village of Can Gio and Sp/5 Gibbs instructed three Conversational English Classes at the Vung Tau Vietnamese-American Cultural Center for approximately thirty-five students each class.

The officers and men of the 74th Aviation Company donated seven hundred pounds of food stuffs to the widows and orphans of the 5th ARVN Division and three cases of soap to the dependents.

The officers and men of the 118th Aviation Company donated 1100 pounds of foodstuff and 100 pounds of clothing to the Bien Hoa Orphanage and the Bui Vinh Refugee Center. In the health and sanitation area, four cases of soap, assorted sanitation items and nursery equipment were donated to the Bien Hoa Orphanage Nursery. Sp/4 Amisano conducted a Conversational English Class for fifteen residents of Cong Ly Street. The 118th supported the Tan Uyon Leper Colony in the construction field in addition to its normal medical support. Doctor Altomonte treated 28 patients during his weekly visit. Airmobile elements also evacuated twenty-five refugees from an operation area to Cu Chi and airlifted 2400 pounds of Viet Cong captured rice.

The officers and men of the 197th Aviation Company donated thirty pounds of clothing and health and sanitation items including two cases of soap, insect repellent and detergents to the An Lac Orphanage farm. Approximately 5000 gallons of water were provided for the basic sanitation needs of 200 children. Captain Balette continued to expand his medical support to both the farm and the orphanage in Saigon where medical attention has

been virtually non-existent. He treated 250 children during normal sick call and administered the tuberculin test to 173 children at the farm. In addition, Doctor Balette gave 38 smallpox and 202 tetanus shot and treated fifteen adults from community surrounding the farm.

Airmobile elements of A Company, 501st Aviation Battalion conducted emergency medical evacuations for five Vietnamese Nationals on two separate occasions. Transportation was provided for the Province Chief on three occasions for the purpose of coordinating with village leaders, Hamlet meetings, and to attend civic action functions. The officers and men donated 5000\$vn piasters worth of school supplies to the Bui Hiep school system. Motor Pool personnel of A/501st Aviation Battalion, working in conjunction with members 7th ARVN Airborne Battalion and residents of Bui Hiep, rebuilt the bridge at the main entrance to Bui Hiep, and replaced the drainage system under the bridge. A/501st Aviation Battalion provided the materials for this project which is an excellent illustration of a common project with US personnel, ARVN and civilians working together. Four two-hour English classes were conducted this week for the residents of Bui Hiep.

Horst K. Joost, Lt. Col. Infantry
Commanding

Commander's Combat Note #25

28 May 1966

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS 20 MAY THROUGH 26 MAY 1966

The 145th Aviation Battalion conducted three battalion controlled airmobile operations this week. The major share of the Battalion airlift was employed to support the operations of the 25th (US) Infantry Division, northeast of Trung Lap. Daily, airlift and armed helicopter were employed to support the III (ARVN) Corp tactical and administrative missions. In addition to Task Force Sea Wolf, all companies of the Battalion furnished armed helicopter support to protect shipping in the Rung Sat Special Zone.

The period open on 20 May with the 145th Aviation Battalion, reinforced by Company A/25th Aviation Battalion and the 116th Aviation Company, conducting an extraction of an infantry battalion (25th (US) Division) and re-employing them in an airmobile assault in another area. This type of operation demands precision timing, since the new landing zone is being prepared by artillery and tactical air and armed helicopters, while the troops are being extracted. Ground fire was received during the extraction and the assault of the new landing zone. Although 14 aircraft were hit during the operation, it was executed with flawless precision.

During this operation two O-1 aircraft of the 74th Aviation Company (Aloft 44 and 99) spotted and reported Viet Cong in the open, moving away from the assault LZ. Gunships of the 197th Aviation Company took up the pursuit and scored two known Viet Cong kills.

Following this operation, the 118th Aviation Company provided daily aviation support to the 2nd Brigade, 25th (US) Infantry Division, and Company A/501 Aviation Battalion provided daily support to the 1st Brigade, 25th (US) Infantry Division. This situation enabled us to evaluate the amount of work that is performed by Army Aviation to support two Infantry brigades when employed in combat. At the end of a week's support of the Brigade, the 118th Aviation Company submitted the following data:

Week (20-26 May) Entire Support period (16-27 May)

Troops Lifted	1785	3328
Cargo Lifted	307 Tons	413 Tons
Hours flown	518	921
Troop Aircraft	(339)	(628)
Armed Aircraft	(179)	(293)
Total Sorties	2367	3202
Ammunition Expended:		
7.62 rounds	121,000	143,960
40MM rounds	330	2,350
2.75MM Rockets	412	755
Scoreboard:		

Sampans destroyed	25	33
structures destroyed	5	30
Viet Cong Killed (Confirmed)	21	50
Viet Cong Killed (Estimated)	27	30
Aircraft hit	16	21
Number of hits received	22	27

It is of further interest to note that at the end of this period, of the 40 Aviators present in the company, 6 achieved over 120 flying hours since the beginning of the month, 19 achieved over 100 flying hours, and 25 over 90 flying hours. Also by the end of this period, this company had flown 689 hours over program.

Company A/501st Aviation Battalion's support of the 1st Brigade for the same period consisted of:

Troop lifted	900
Cargo lifted	146 tons
Hours flown	356
total sorties	1200

Viet Cong killed 4 confirmed

One afternoon during the period, the 68th Aviation Company also provided support to the 25th (US) Infantry Division by lifting 43 troops and 48 tons of cargo.

It must be recognized that in addition to the aviation support provided by this Battalion, the organic aviation of the 25th Division also provided support to the two Brigades. These figures are significant indicators of the degree to which Army Aviation is inextricably a part of ground combat operations in Vietnam.

On the morning of 22 May, the 145th Aviation Battalion, airlifted an infantry battalion of the 173rd Airborne Brigade from Bien Hoa to a landing zone north of Baria. Company A/501st which participated in this operation reverted to support the 25th (US) Infantry Division in the afternoon.

The 68th Aviation Company conducted an independent airmobile operation on 23 May, in support of the 25th (ARVN) Division. A total of 245 troops and four tons of cargo were lifted to an LZ, 35 kilometers northwest of Saigon. In the afternoon, this company supported the 25th (US) Infantry Division by lifting 43 troops and 48 tons of cargo. On 25 May, this company again supported the 25th (ARVN) Division with four troop carriers and two armed helicopters. Two combat assaults were conducted with an infantry company, west-northwest of Duc Hoa.

The 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, was airlifted into its first combat assault since arriving in country on 24 May. Under the control of the 145th Aviation Battalion, the 68th Aviation Company, Company A/82nd Aviation Battalion and the 116th Aviation Company participated in the operation by conducting five lifts from Vung Tau to an LZ, north of Baria.

The 197th Aviation Company provided the landing zone pre-strike, marking, and over head cover, for the assault of the 25th (US) Infantry Division on 20 May 1966. The company also flew armed helicopter support in the Rung Sat Special Zone and 62 Lighting Bug sorties. The results of the company's action this week accounts for four Viet Cong killed confirmed and four probables, eight sampans destroyed, and eight structures destroyed. A late report from advisor channels revealed that the armed helicopter strike conducted by the company on 18 May, resulted in four Viet Cong killed and three wounded. Secondary explosions were also observed.

The 74th Aviation Company continued to provide valuable weather advisory, visual reconnaissance, radio relay, artillery adjustment and escort missions.

Task Force Sea Wolf was credited with saving another village which was under attack by the Viet Cong. Eighteen minutes after being alerted, fire team conducted a strike against the attacking Viet Cong, forcing them to withdraw. Other activities of the force consisted of flying overhead cover for patrol boats and conducting strikes on enemy sampans. The score board for the Task Force this week was 12 Viet Cong killed, Two sampans damaged and two structures destroyed.

The operational statistics for the 145th Aviation Battalion for the week are as follows:

Rotary Wing:

Total hours flown	2167
Total passengers	4423
Total Sorties	7450

Fixed Wing:

Total hours flown	452
Total Sorties	436

The Scoreboard

	V.C. KIA (B.C.)	V.C. KIA (EST)	Sampans Destroyed	Structures Destroyed
118th Avn Co	20	30	18	-
197th Avn Co	4	4	8	8
68th Avn Co	1	-	-	4
A/501st Avn Bn	5	3	-	4
Sea Wolf	12	-	2	2
Total	42	37	28	18

The following story was related after a "routine" flight from Cu Chi to Trung Lap, a distance of some seven kilometers, that took one hour and 15 minutes to accomplish.

A UH-1D manned by a Company Commander, as Aircraft Commander, his Operations Officer as pilot, the Battalion Aircraft Maintenance Technician as gunner and the regularly assigned Crew Chief, departed Cu Chi for a flight to Trung Lap. The only passenger was an Aviation Liaison Officer. The clouds were formed into a solid overcast at about 600 feet so the Aircraft Commander elected to fly "on the deck" to his destination. After having traveled only about 1/2 mile the pilot spotted a group of VC directly in front of the helicopter diving into trenches, and yelled "VC, Shoot'em". The aircraft was placed in a tight left orbit over the trenches, at a very low altitude, and the crewchief began pouring machine gun fire into the trenches. Almost immediately the gun jammed. The aircraft was rolled over into a right orbit to give the other gunner a chance to fire. He was to get off one burst and his gun jammed. The Liaison Officer was sitting in the middle pointing out the location of the VC and shouting orders to fire. The Aircraft Commander was calling for armed helicopters while the pilot was calling for artillery. The gunners were alternating shouts of "jammed" and "Permission to fire, sir?", as the Aircraft Commander rolled the chopper back and forth attempting to allow the gunner, whose gun was working at the time, to place fire on the enemy. The VC had recovered enough by this time that they were putting up quite a volume of fire at the pitching and rolling, very low, helicopter.

The Liaison Officer continued to point out the location of the VC--announced to all that the VC were shooting at them and encouraged the gunners to keep up the fire by giving them short jabs with his fist as he shouted "Fire!, Fire!, Fire!". The Liaison Officer suddenly realizing that he had little protection from the VC bullets, seized a chest protector and began placing it over his chest. On second thought he placed it on his seat and went back to his shouting of encouragements.

Two armed helicopters arrived on the scene and started their firing runs. The flight leader called, in an over increasingly high pitched voice, "I'm receiving fire--I'm receiving intense fire--I'm being hit." The artillery began to fall and the pilot attempted to adjust. Each time he received an "On the way" the pilot would turn the aircraft to avoid another aircraft or allow a gunner to fire. After several frustrating attempts to sense the rounds, effective fire was finally placed on the VC positions.

Following the artillery concentration, an airstrike of napalm was called and marked by the dodging and weaving chopper. After one hour of circling and shooting, the chopper continued on its administrative way, hardly the worse for wear except for the one bullet

hole and a lot of sore throats and hands, but behind them the forces of the Viet Cong had 25 fewer in its ranks.

Training:

A three day USARV training and standardization conference was conducted in Saigon during the period 23-25 May 1966.

The primary objectives were to establish standardized in-country orientation, pre-flight procedures and starting procedures in both the UH-1D and the UB-1B and the revision of USARV Regulation on 95-1 and 95-6. All aviation elements of company size and larger thought out South Vietnam were represented. The three day conference pointed out the definite lack of present standardization; proper corrective action is now underway. All information pertinent to the company standardization, instructor pilots and instructor pilots will be disseminated at the next standardization board meeting.

Awards and decorations received by members of this Battalion during the week are:

Distinguished Flying Cross	5
Air Medal "Valor"	1
Air Medal	620
Purple Heart	6

Promotions received during the week:

Lt. to Captain	1
E-7 to E-8	2
E-6 to E-7	2
E-5 to E-6	1
E-4 to E-5	1
E-3 to E-4	14
E-2 to E-3	1

CIVIC ACTIONS

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment continued to supply needed water to the Don Bosco Orphanage and worked continuously on community relations at Bui Vinh. The 12,500 \$VN donated on 12 May 1966 has been utilized by the orphanage to purchase lumber and ready-made school furniture.

The 68th Aviation Company continued support of the refugee village of Can Gio with a donation of a case of soap by the enlisted men. Sp5 Gibbs conducted Conversational English Classes for Vietnamese Nationals at the Vietnamese-American Cultural Center in Vung Tau. Captain Quakenbush, Flight Surgeon, visited the village with two of his corpsmen to coordinate a sick call program.

The 74th Aviation Company donated milk, candy and soap to the orphanage at Lai Thieu. A good supply of foodstuffs was also donated to the widows and orphans of 5th ARVN Division through the Division G-5. The company also provided foodstuff to the refugees in Binh Duong province through the 5th ARVN Division Civic Actions Platoon.

The 118th Aviation Company donated food, Clothing, sanitation items and baby items to the Bien Hoa Orphanage. Two hundred yards of black material for clothing was donated to the Tan Uyen Leper Colony. Doctor Altomone made his weekly visit to the leper Colony and treated thirty patients. Airmobile elements of the company supplied the local Vietnamese civilians with 80 tons of captured white rice and one ton of captured material from Viet Cong caches. Captured food, clothing, material and tools were transported from the 25th Infantry Division area to Cu Chi for distribution to needy families.

Officers and men of the 197th Aviation Company fire teams evacuated three critically injured Vietnamese Nationals from the Run Sat Special Zone. Support was provided the An Lac Orphanage by members of the "Raider" Platoon, donating candy and gum for the children and repairing plumbing. Thirty-six hundred gallons of potable water provided the An Lac Orphanage for sanitation purposes. Sp5 Willingham held his weekly English class for the staff and children of the an Lac Farm. In the absence of Doctor Balette, Sp5 Willingham held sick call on Monday 23 May, and gave immunizations to include 160 typhoid shots; he also treated 15 children with ear infections. On 25 May, he again conducted sick call and checked the progress of his earlier treatments.

Airmobile elements of Company A/ 501st Aviation Battalion made an emergency medical evacuation of a Vietnamese National women and child from Cu Chi to Saigon. Both had been wounded by the Viet Cong. Civil affairs representatives of the company made their weekly coordination visit with the Hamlet Chief of Bui Hiep. A 3/4 ton truck was provided Bui Hiep to transport building materials for the self-help school construction project. Captain Haan and first Sergeant Howell donated a large quantity of clothing, soap, tooth brushes, tooth paste and candy to Bien Hiep. A two hour Conversational English class was conducted for 35 residents of Bui Hiep. The company also conducted an emergency medical evacuation from the village.

Horst K. Joost Lt. Colonel Infantry
Commanding

Commander's Combat Note # 26

4 June 1966

SUMMARY OF CIVIC ACTIONS FOR THE PERIOD 27 MAY THROUGH 2 JUNE 1966

The 145TH Aviation Battalion put its full weight behind a fund-raising campaign for the proposed III Corps Orphanage which is under construction near the Dong Nai River at Bien Hoa. The project is the largest joint civic action endeavor conducted by Free World and Vietnamese military forces. Final tabulation has not been completed, but all companies and detachments of the 145th Aviation Battalion reported 100% participation in the campaign.

The battalion's civic action mission continued to expand as units took on new projects and accelerated old ones.

Sergeant Ishikawa of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment visited the Bui Vinh school to assist in supervision and asses further needs of the school's renovation program. Plans have been formulated to double the detachment's continual water resupply project at Bui Vinh Refugee Center. Some 40 pounds of clothing and bath supplies were donated to the Bien Hoa Orphanage.

The 68th Aviation Company initiated its MEDCAP II program at the village of Can Gio. Captain Quakenbush and two of his corpsmen, plus two nurses of the 36th Evacuation Hospital treated 80 villagers at the first weekly sick call. Captain Richard Ragland and his gun ship crew performed a daring but heartbreaking mission when they hovered over a mine field to recover the body of a 13-year-old Vietnamese boy. Sp4 Richard Bone got out of the helicopter to pick up the boy's mangled body. The company donated more than 100 pounds of clothing and items of personal hygiene to the refugees of Can Gio. Sp5 Gibbs taught English to 35 students at the Vietnamese-American Cultural Center in Vung Tau.

The 74th Aviation Company joined forces with the 5th ARVN Division G-5 and the division's Civil Affairs Platoon in three separate projects. Officers and men of the company donated and distributed nearly a ton of powdered milk, eggs, dried and canned foods to the Lai Thieu Orphanage, to widows and orphans of the 5th Division, and to the village of Ben Cat and Can Dinh. Sp5 Daw supervised a team which distributed food and refreshments to 3000 people at a 1st Division sponsored party in Vinh Tuong. Other members of the unit took time to help in the 1st Division's pacification and civic action project southwest of Phu Loi.

The 118th Aviation Company continued its almost daily support of the Bien Hoa Orphanage by donating 600 pounds of captured rice, 200 pounds of other foodstuffs, as well as toys, clothing, school supplies, candy and cloth. The unit gave 25 gallons of ice cream for a party at the orphanage. Dr Altomonte took 200 meters of cloth to Tan Uyen, treated 18 patients at the leper colony there, and also treated 10 local civilians.

Results of the 197th Aviation Company's all-encompassing program in support of the An Lac Orphanage Farm are vivid. Captain Balette vaccinated 37 children to achieve 100% protection against small pox. He also reports that all ear and head infections have been cured. And he began a weekly series of classes on personal hygiene for workers at the An Lac Farm. Sp5 Willingham finds that many of his students are learning to speak English rapidly. In one of his semi-weekly classes last week he taught 90 children. Other members

of the unit supplied the farm with 3,600 gallons of potable water and continued normal donations of food and clothing.

A helicopter crew from Company A, 501st Aviation Battalion, flew an expectant mother from Hiep Hoa to Cong Hoa, arriving at the hospital only moments before the woman delivered. The unit conducted a nightly classes in English for 35 residents of Bui Hiep. It donated 3,000\$VN, which will allow 100 students to attend school during the month of June. Four volunteers helped renovate a school classroom at Bui Hiep. The Civic Action Officer met with a parish priest and teaches to organize and plan expansion of the unit's efforts in Bui Hiep.

Horst K. Joost Lt. Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

Commander's Combat Note #27

6 June 1966

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In these Commander's Notes I have attempted to show the members of this Battalion what they are contributing toward winning the conflict in Vietnam. It has been evident that an aviation Battalion is in fact a combat unit. The toll inflicted on the enemy as a result of actions by this Battalion each week, attest to this fact. In this regard it is worthy to note that the destruction inflicted on the enemy by this aviation battalion has at times exceeded that of the infantry brigades for the same period. The scoreboard of damage inflicted on the enemy by the 145 Aviation Battalion for an eleven month period is phenomenal. While it is difficult to quantify success by numbers, numbers themselves are meaningless unless they are compared. I will attempt to quantify this Battalion's accomplishments into meaningful comparisons.

For the eleven month period, the Battalion achieved in Viet Cong kill of 1,378. These are confirmed by count and do not include estimated kills which would increase the figure at least fourfold. Equated to Viet Cong units, the figure of confirmed kills represents the destruction of from the three to six battalions.

For the same eleven month period, 1807 Viet Cong structures were destroyed, and 625 sampans sunk. The high for monthly sampan destruction was achieved last month when 85 were destroyed. Suffice it to say that this had placed a heavy demand on Viet Cong boat building and certainly has resulted in many supplies and personnel lost.

The total passengers lifted during the eleven month period was 259,103. To make this figure meaningful it was determined that the average number of personnel lifted each month during the period was 23,555. Assuming an infantry battalion strength of 450 for an airmobile assault, approximately 53 infantry battalions, or an equivalent of 6 infantry divisions are lifted each month by this battalion.

The cargo lifted was 4,752 tons for the eleven month period. This represents an equivalent of approximately 105 additional infantry battalions that could have been lifted in combat assaults.

The total number of hours flown for the eleven month period by the units of the battalions was 110,766. To make this figure meaningful, consider that it would take 14 aircraft flying for 24 hours a day for eleven months to achieve that total. It is also worthy to note that the total hours flown each month by the current five companies of the Battalion are equal to or exceed that of the total flown when the Battalion had two additional airmobile companies and one airmobile platoon.

The conclusion reached after examining these figures can only demonstrate that this Battalion is making a significant contribution to the Vietnamese conflict.

These achievements have however, not gone unrewarded. The members of the 145 Aviation Battalion are proud to wear the twice awarded Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palms. A tally of individual awards since January 1965 attests to the bravery and service of the Battalion members.

Distinguished Service Cross

2

Silver Star

16

Legion of Merit

3

Distinguished Flying Cross	131
Soldier's Medal	19
Bronze Star "Valor"	27
Bronze Star "Meritorious Service"	102
Air Medal "Valor"	308
Air Medal	11,527
Army Commendation "Valor"	52
Army Commendation Meritorious Service	307
Purple Heart	203

In the desire to build a lasting influence on the Vietnamese people, and perhaps due to the implacable urge to balance killing from some rational purpose, the members of the 145th Aviation Battalion had developed an extensive Civic Action program. It is a planned program which is realistic, widely diversified, and all important it involves all members of the command as contributors.

The achievements and activities of this Battalion for the past four months in the area of civic actions are summarized below:

Contributions of money, food, clothing, medical assistance, time, and labor had touched directly the lives of some 16,000 needy Vietnamese citizens on a continuing basis. Units in the battalion supports four orphanages and four refugee villages with weekly donations and assistance.

This past month the battalion responded to a call of assistance for donations to be used for the construction of the Dong Hai Orphanage. This project is under the sponsorship of the Commanding General III Corps, Major General Nguyen Bao Tri, and Mrs. Tri. In spite of all the other civic action donations conducted to support various company projects, the members of this Battalion participated 100%, and a check of \$1,427 is being presented for this worthy cause.

In addition, aviation crews evacuate sick and injured civilians, relocate refugees, deliver food and supplies, and transport civic action workers in all parts of the III Corps area in conjunction with daily missions.

Many of the benefits of these civic actions are intangible. Feelings of gratitude, mutual respect, and confidence cannot be measured in statistics.

But benefits which lend themselves to the statistics show that the impact of the battalion's programs is enormous.

The men of the 145th Aviation Battalion had donated 100,000 pounds of food, enough to provide a basic diet for 3,000 refugees for a 30-day re-adjustment period. Enough clothing had been distributed to outfit more than a thousand persons whose belongings were destroyed by the ravages of war.

More than \$5,000 in cash has been given directly to impoverished peoples. Some \$3,600 of this, which was ear marked for education, provided enough tuition fees and school supplies for 1,200 children to attend classes for a year.

Battalion surgeons have treated 1,800 Vietnamese patients and administered vaccine and anti-biotics to 800 more. Units had donated 1,200 pounds of soap, detergents and other supplies to improve health and sanitation in widespread areas. Two orphanages and two villages depend entirely upon the battalion's resources for professional medical assistance.

Soldiers had used after-duty hours to present some 2,500 student hours of instruction in English, personal hygiene and basic construction methods. Others assisted in construction of two school houses built under the self-help program.

Helicopter crews had evacuated 1,800 refugees and 65,000 pounds of house-hold goods from war-torn areas. Additionally they had transported more than 85 tons of food and other items captured by friendly ground forces.

The program has snowballed since the creation of Special Staff section (S-5, Civil Affairs) three months ago. Enthusiasm generated by competition among units is even felt in the United States where numerous civic, fraternal and religious organizations, and even

entire communities have drives in progress to collect donations for distribution through the 145th Aviation Battalion.

Every individual in the battalion has asserted his willingness to assist the Vietnamese people in their war against poverty, hunger, suffering and insurgent aggression. Most important, by dealing through Province representatives on all projects, these actions are helping to crystallize the allegiance of the people to the Government of Vietnam. Driven by this spirit, the Civic Actions program continues to expand.

The summary and analysis of these achievements by members of this Battalion speak for themselves. It is not without loss of members of our ranks that these achievements were possible. For them, I urge that each member of this command examine himself to insure that he has the sense of urgency and mission accomplishment that was fundamental in setting this splendid record. Our goal is to strive for even greater accomplishments in the future.

It is with great pride that I congratulate each member of this command for his efforts and achievements.

First in Vietnam
Horst K. Joost, Lt. Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

On the 21st of April 1966 Nowell N. Estes, Jr., General, USAF Commander sent a letter to General William C. Westmoreland, Commander US Military Asst Command, Vietnam. The subject of the letter was Search and Rescue Operations in Southeast Asia, and resulted in many members of the 145th C.A.B. receiving Letters of Commendation. This series of letters serves as an example of the letters.

SUBJECT: Search and Rescue Task Force Operation in S.E.A.

TO: General W.C. Westmoreland

Date, 21 April 1966

1. During the past eighteen (18) months, search and rescue task forces have saved over 240 lives in the course of combat aircrrew members who have been forced to eject from their damaged aircraft. Frequently, the spotlight of national interest has been focused on these activities, and our units have received recognition from the highest level.

2. In reviewing many detailed mission reports, I have been especially impressed by the exceptional professionalism and dedication displayed by the members of the USAF 602nd Tactical Fighter Wing, Navy pilots from the Carrier Task Groups, and Army aviators from the armed helicopter units. Flying in all kinds of weather and over some of the most hazardous terrain in the world, the pilots from units of all three Services have repeatedly exposed themselves to hostile air and ground fire. Time and again they have provided the vital low-level fire support which has enabled our helicopters and HU-16's to effect survivor pick-up. They have all established a truly remarkable record.

3. Translating the present figures into meaningful terms, the aircrrew recovery record alone now stands at something approaching the equivalent of five squadrons of fighter pilots who have been returned to fight another day. It is significant to note that this includes US Navy, US Air Force, and VNAF pilots engaged in a wide range of combat action. This represents a most significant amount of combat capability, and the additive morale factor is beyond measure. Simply stated, the degree of success that our ARRS units have achieved has been possible only because of the untiring support, exceptional courage, and outstanding technical competence displayed by the Air Force, Navy, and Army pilots who have played such a vital role in this life saving operation.

4. Without reservation, our "Jolly Green" and "Crown" crew members are proud to fly in combined operations with such gallant and dedicated professionals. Their contribution to the accomplishment of a mission dedicated to the basic philosophy "That Others May Live" is a source of the deepest pride and gratitude.

Nowell N. Estes, Jr., General, USAF
Commander

SUBJECT: Search and Rescue Task Force Operations in S.E.A.

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam

28 Apr 66

It is indeed a pleasure to forward the attached letter from General Nowell N. Estes, Jr., Commander Military Aircraft Command, commanding the outstanding accomplishments by the Army aviators of your command. To General Estes' praise I wish to add my own expression of appreciation and to congratulate the pilots and crewmen for a job well done.

W. C. Westmoreland

General, United States Army
Commanding

SUBJECT: Search and Rescue Task Force Operations in S.E.A.

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Aviation brigade

28 Apr 1966

It is with real pleasure that I forward the attached letter of commendation. The splendid record compiled by Army aviators in rescue and low level fire support missions point up their significant contribution to the successful accomplishment of numerous ground operations. Their demonstrated daring, aggressiveness and professionalism have resulted in the saving of countless American lives. Their efforts have been in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army.

Jean E. Engler

Lieutenant General, US Army
Deputy Commanding General

SUBJECT: Search and Rescue Task Operations in S.E.A.

TO: All Personnel, USA Aviation Brigade

21 Apr 66

1. It is with great pride that the attached testimony is received and passed on to you who have made the reason for such plaudits a reality.
2. Each of you is to be congratulated not only for this specific accomplishment, but for your continued outstanding performance in all facets of Army Aviation.

G.P. Senneff, Jr.

Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

SUBJECT: Commendation

TO: Commanding Officer, 145th Aviation Battalion

21 Apr 66

1. Your resourcefulness, dedication, and high degree of professionalism is indeed evident, not only to those connected with Army Aviation, but obviously to the sister services.
2. My sincere congratulations to each of you. I am confident you will continue to display these high standards of performance on future operations.

Raymond F. Campbell, Jr.
Colonel, Armor
Commanding

SUBJECT: Letter of Commendation

TO: CO, A/501st Aslt Hel Co.

6 June 66

It is always a pleasure to receive and pass on correspondence of this nature. I add my commendation to that of Colonel Raymond F. Campbell, Jr. Performances of this nature reflect well on Army Aviation and serve to maintain the 145th Aviation Battalion as "First in Vietnam".

Horst K. Joost

Lt. Colonel, Inf
Commanding

SUBJECT: Letter of Commendation

TO: 1/Lt. John R. Mateyko, 05406512

20 June 1966

A/501st Aslt Hel Co (UH-1) (A)

This correspondence, indorsed by General Westmoreland, is a fitting testimonial to your personal efforts in numerous search missions and several actual rescue operations. The professionalism displayed by you in the discharge of your duties has made this team effort effective and meaningful in saving several crews of downed aircraft. You are to be commended for a job well done.

Gordon T. Carey
Major, Armor
Commanding

(Editorial Note) This series of Commendation serves as an example of what we accomplished as a team, regardless of dates or unit, every man in each unit played a part in accomplishing the mission.

Under LTC Joost command the 118th Assault Helicopter Company received the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period June 1963 to June 1966. And the 117th and the 135th Assault Helicopter Companies were awarded the Valorous Unit Award for the period 1-20 June 1966 while serving with other battalions in Operation Hawthorne/Dan Tang in Kontum Province.

LTC Walter F Jones replaced LTC Joost on June 17, 1966. Under LTC Jones the 118th Aviation Co. (AML) was awarded the Valorous Unit Award for their actions on 19 July 1966. Movement of the 68th Combat Avn Co (AML) from Vung Tau to Bien Hoa during the period 10 through 17 July 1966, resulted in this unit being more centrally located in the III Corps Tactical Zone and in a better position to support operations, by elimination of a significant amount of daily dead-head flying time. The planned movement of the 147th Medium Helicopter Company from Vung Tau to Phu Loi will locate it more centrally within the III CTZ and again reduce dead-head time to and from daily operations. It is also essential to reduce aircraft crowding at Vung Tau, thus improving safety of operations there. The 335th AHC was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for Achievement in the performance of outstanding service in RVN from May 1965 to July 1966. The 120th A.H.C. was transferred to Capital Avn Bn on 1 July of 1966. A special project was undertaken and all Airmobile Light Companies are being augmented with an additional airlift platoon (seven aircraft), this brought the average number of UH-1D aircraft assigned to each unit to 21. The requirement existed for each airmobile company to be capable of airlifting the assault element of one rifle company.

Training of four VNAF pilots commenced on 8 August and completed on 7 November 1966. The training included transition in UH-1 aircraft and 90 days tactical training with the 145th C.A.B. The 184th Avn Co (Surv Light) arrived in Vietnam and was assigned to the 145th on 13 August 1966. While serving with 10th C.A.B. the 117th Assault Hel. Co. was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation service for the period of December 1965 to September 1966. The 1st of September 1966 brought a name change for A Co, 501st Avn Bn to the 71st A.H.C..

On 13 September 1966 during a night combat assault mission, a flight of seven aircraft from the 68th Avn Co encountered extremely bad weather and were forced to divert from their route of flight. One aircraft, its fuel presumably gone, was seen descending into the trees, apparently in a controlled maneuver. Neither the aircraft nor the four crew members were found as of 31 October 1966.

From the 14th of September 1966 to the 24th of November 1966 the 145th was involved in Operation Attleboro, the largest U.S. operation to date in Vietnam. On 19 October 1966 a sizable enemy base area was uncovered in War Zone C (Tay Ninh Province).

During September the Armed Helicopter Standardization Training tested the gunship platoons of 12th Avn Gp, 1st place was the 118th Bandits, 2nd place was the 68th Mustangs, 3rd place was the 116th Stingers, with the 197th in 5th, and 71st in 8th.

1 October 1966 brought another name change for the 197th A.H.C., they became the 334th Armed Helicopter Company, this was the fourth and would be the last name change for them. The 334th A.H.C. retained their fine history earned under the names UTT, 68th

A.H.C., 197th A.H.C., and continued with many more first and unit awards. Co A, 82nd Avn Bn name was changed to the 335th Avn Co on 1 October 1966.

The 145th was the first Aviation Battalion to fly "Smoke Ship" combat operations in Vietnam. During October 1966 the 334th AHC added a new project to its bag of tricks. Gober's Gasser, a gas-laying helicopter designed for use during airmobile assaults, made its debut.

Air Cavalry Task Force: To counter the roadside tax collection efforts of the Viet Cong and to conduct other small raids type operations, an air cavalry task force was organized within the 334th Aviation Company (AML) (Armed). The company was augmented by one platoon of UH-1D helicopter to provide a troop lift capability. The basic organization of the task force included one armed platoon of five helicopters, a slick platoon, a command and control ship, and a psy-war ship with a loudspeaker system mounted. Attached to this force was a TOE infantry platoon, an ALO, a forward observer, an interpreter and two national policemen to assist in identification of friendly civilians.

Also during the 1 August to 31 October 1966 time period steel matting was installed in the 334th Avn Co parking ramp and all 145th units completed construction of aircraft revetment for passive defense of aircraft against enemy attack. USAF bomb containers and sandbags were the materials used. "L" shaped revetments (on the front and one side of helicopters) were adopted as standard. The 145th constructed six two-story tropical barracks at Bien Hoa to billet two Aviation Companies which were directed to vacate VNAF buildings. Construction began for a fifty helicopter parking ramp and aircraft maintenance facilities for two Aviation Companies at Bien Hoa. The Consolidated 145th Battalion Dispensary at Bien Hoa had one of its proposed two building completed in October and is now operational.

For heroism while engaged in aerial flight in connection with military operations against a hostile force: The men of the 71st AHC distinguished themselves by heroic actions on 14 October 1966, in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving as crew members of aircraft which were participating in a hazardous combat assault in support of the 30th ARVN Ranger Battalion. Five minutes prior to the arrival of the lift helicopters, a team of armed helicopters performed a reconnaissance of the proposed landing site and discovered that the tree lines adjacent to the landing zone were heavily infested with anti-aircraft weapons positions. The armed aircraft received an intense volume of hostile fire on their initial pass. Determined to accomplish the mission and to overpower the Viet Cong in that area, the lift helicopters continued their approach and landed the Rangers one hundred and fifty meters from the enemy stronghold. The company was the target of an intense volume of enemy fire on the first wave of the assault. Ten helicopters were struck by hostile fire. Because the Rangers were helplessly pinned down in the landing zone, the 71st AHC voluntarily undertook the mission of returning to the same landing site with a supporting element of the Rangers. During the second wave of the assault, the enemy fire became even more intense than before. The armed escort continually placed devastating defensive fire on the enemy positions. Through the combined efforts of the armed helicopters and the door gunners of the lift helicopters, effective fire was placed into the enemy positions and caused many Viet Cong casualties and prevented the enemy from utilizing all of his available firepower. Even though the aircraft were subjected to continuous small arms and automatic weapons fire, the flights into and out of the area were successfully completed and only light casualties were sustained. Their actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon themselves, their unit and the United States Army. WO Robert L. Pruhs and Sp4 Louis Turchi were Killed In Action that day.

During the month of November 1966 the 145th C.A.B. established a forward command post at Tay Ninh West Airfield in support of Operation "Attleboro". During this period, the battalion controlled elements of the 11th, 13th, 25th, and 52nd Aviation Battalions, as well as its organic components.

OPERATION ATTLEBORO

The 145th Combat Aviation Battalion Forward Command Post at Tay Ninh (West) Airfield became operational at 111330 November 1966. The mission of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion was to provide command and control, troop carriers, armed helicopters, pathfinders and rapid refueling support to the 25th Infantry Division during "OPERATION ATTLEBORO II" from 11 to 24 November 1966. On 21 November the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion conducted two combat assaults, two extractions and one repositioning, all of battalion size. All of the operations utilized A Company, 25th Aviation battalion and the 118th and 175th Assault Helicopter Companies. The first operation was a combat assault from Fire Support Base #1(XT 275785) To XT 2757962. This lift of the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry was compleated by 0840 with 26 UH/1D's transporting 176 troops and flying 35 hours and 110 sorties. The second operation of the day was a combat assault of the 1st Battalion of the 27th Infantry from Fire Support Base #2 (XT 272861) to XT272938. A total of 342 troops were carried in 20 UH/1D which flew 15 hours and 162 sorties. The thrid operation was an extraction of the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry from XT 272962 to Fire Support Base #2 (XT 272861) A total of 276 troops were transported in 110 sorties and 35 hours by 25 UH/1D's. One helicopter from the 175th Assault Helicopter Company received one hit at XT 225685 however there were no casualties. The fourth operation of the day was the extraction of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry from XT 272940 to Fire Support Base #2 (XT 272861). This lift saw a total of 342 troops transported in 15 hours and 162 stories by 20 UH/1D's. The final operation of the day involved repositioning the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry from Fire Support Base #2 (XT 272861) to Tay Ninh (West) 20 UH/1D's moved 276 troops in 108 sorties and 54 flying hours. The 145 Combat Aviation Battalion conducted two operations on 22 November utilizing A Company, 25th Aviation Battalion and the 71st Assault Helicopter Company. The first operation was a combat assault for the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry from XT 270863 to XT 373854. 19 UH/1D's carried 330 troops in 158 sorties and 25 flying hours. In the afternoon the unit was extracted from XT 375857 to XT 272865. 19 UH/1D's carried 330 troops in 160 sorties and 25 hours. On 23 November the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion conducted five tactical operations to include two combat assaults, two extractions and one repositioning. The following units were utilized on all operations:A and B Companies, 25th Aviation Battalion and the 71st and 116th Assault Helicopter Companies. The first operation was a repositioning of one company of the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry from Tay Ninh (West) to Fire Support Base #2 (XT 272861), with 26 UH/1D's transporting 120 troops in 20 sorties and 10 flying hours. The second operation of the day, a combat assault for the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry from XT 285869 into three LZ's located at XT 198870, XT 193869 and XT 189869. A total of 360 troops were transported by 26 UH/1D's flying 28 hours 132 sorties. Fire was recieved at XT 195870 however no aircraft were hit. The thrid mission was a combat assault conducted for the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry from Fire Support Base #2 (XT 272861) to XT 198806. 26 UH/1D's carried 264 troops in 100 sorties and 20 flying hours. The forth mission of the day was an extraction of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry from PZ's (XT 198870, XT 193869 and XT 189969) to Fire Support Base #2. A total of 26 UH/1D's carried 300 troops and flew 132 sorties and 28 hours. The day's fifth operation was the extraction of the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry from XT 198806 to Fire Support Base #1 (XT 275785) and from there to Tay Ninh (West). 26 helicopters carried 400 troops in 150 sorties and flew 40 hours. On the 24th of November the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion conducted two tactical operations utilizing the 71st and 118th Assault Helicopter Companies and A and B Companies, 25th Aviation Battalion. 26 UH/1D's were utilized on both operations. The first mission was the repositioning of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry from Fire Support Base #2 to Tay Ninh (West). A total of 408 troops were carried in 208 sorties and 100 flying hours. The second operations of the day was the extractions of the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry from Fire Support Base #2 to Fire Support Base #1 and from there to Cu Chi. A total of 924 troops were transported in 1998 sorties and 128 hours flown. In Support of "OPERATION ATTLEBORO" elements controlled by the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion flew 1334 hours and 5857 combat sorties with 9105 troops being lifted. 13 aircraft took hits, however none had to be recovered.

On 1 December 1966 LTC Howard M Moore replaced LTC Jones. And the 135th was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period January 1966 to December 1966 while serving with the 10th C.A.B.

The following is the History Newsletter of 71st Assault Helicopter Company for 1 January 1967 to 31 January 1967. COMBAT HIGHLIGHTS for the 71st AHC: 2 Jan 67: This month began in support of the 25th Inf Division in location around Binh Chanh. Moderate fire was received on the first lift with two aircraft being hit and one pilot wounded. Seven more lifts were made with no fire being received until the last. During the afternoon extractions were made with no reported VC activity. The Firebirds provided a heavy fire team in support of the operation. The Rattlers flew a total of 70.6 hours and made 258 sorties. 4 Jan 67: The Rattlers returned to Binh Chanh again in support of the Tropic Lightening Division and preformed two lifts with no enemy activity. The second mission was at Rach Kien where lifts were made. Light sniper fire was received but Charlie proved to be a bad shot. Later in the afternoon, the Rattlers played checkers by lifting and extracting the 3rd Battalion a total of 12 times. Some light fire was reported. Total time was 77.4 hours and 453 sorties. 5 Jan 67: The 25th Division obtained the aid of the Rattlers in the Nha Be area for six lifts into pacified areas. Upon completion, the flight moved to Rach Kien for three lifts. Automatic weapons fire was received on approach, landing, and takeoff. The firebirds suppressed the area and destroyed five structures. Six aircraft took hits, but there were no casualties. Administration and logistic support was provided preceding the extraction which required five lifts. The flight was released after racking up 92.5 hours and flying 402 sorties. 8 Jan 67: Eagle flights were conducted for the 25th Division with extractions preformed later in the day. Light sniper fire was acted upon by the Firebirds resulting in one VC KIA and one structure destroyed. Flight task took a total of 42 hours and 164 sorties. 10 Jan 67: The Rattlers were assisted by the Little Bears (A/25 25INF) for insertion of U.S. and R.V.N. troops northeast of Binh Chanh. The Rattlers provided the reaction force, logistical flights and extractions after the insertion was made. Smoke ships were utilized for screening the canal lines. Several rounds of harassing fire was heard, but had no effect. A total of 42 sorties were extracted. Flight hours were 69.7 and total sorties were 271. 11 Jan 67: A rapid reaction was performed in support of the 9th Infantry Division to assure the Rattlers were on their toes. Three lifts were made with fire being received on all approaches and take-offs from the LZ. The flight time was 21.3 and 110 sorties. 14 Jan 67: Artillery fire and an air strike delayed the first lift in support of the old standby, 25th. Upon completion of the mission, resupply was begun followed by an extraction during the afternoon. 17 Jan 67: The Rattlers were placed on alert while the 25th Division made plans for the conduct of an eagle flight. After being called out just before lunch, the flight was made and extraction and reinsertion was preformed two hours later. An extraction for late afternoon was cancelled due to a difficult tactical situation. Flight hours logged were 57.5 and 167 sorties were completed. 18 Jan 67: The flight journeyed to Binh Chanh for eagle flights planned by the 25th Division. Two LZ's and PZ's were utilized for the insertion and extraction. Automatic weapons fire was received, but no damage to aircraft or crews resulted. The Firebirds, assisted by tracked vehicles, destroyed one structure. Resupply missions ended the day. A tally of 172 sorties and 65.2 hours recorded. 19 Jan 67: A change of scenery was experienced by the Rattlers who supported the 3rd ARVN Airbourne Battalion for eagle flights and the 4 U.S. Division for an extraction. The flights were made into friendly areas because no fire was reported. Extractions were made in an area southeast of Dau Tieng. The flights made 196 sorties during the day and a total of 75.7 flight hours. 23-27 Jan 67: The Rattlers sent 4 UH-1D and 2 UH-1C aircraft to Song Be for the conduct of Recondo operations for II FFV. Missions were also conducted for the subsector advisor and Special Forces in the area. The Firebirds provided reconnaissance support on the recondo missions and engaged targets of opportunity under the direction of the local FAC in the Song Be area. The Recondo Teams consisted of four men who were lowered into selected areas and removed at later times and their purpose was to provide intelligence information about the enemy. Several accidents occurred in which ships were

damaged. Total hours flown during this time were 82.5 and 148 sorties were flown. The Firebirds destroyed 58 structures and damaged 3. A total of 9 secondary explosions were reported and ammo used on the mission was 390 2.75 rockets and 90,000 rounds of 7.62 machinegun ammo. The Rattlers hauled 4.2 tons of cargo and carried 119 passengers. 29 Jan 67: The Rattlers provided support to the 199th Infantry Bde in areas around Cat Loi and Nha Be. Four lifts were made into various LZ's. The U.S. Navy used four slicks and a heavy fire team for a classified SEAL mission. Total hours were 51.7 with 175 sorties. Some automatic weapons fire was received, but no damage was reported. Support was provided the 173rd Airborne Bde for insertion of a long range patrol at 1730 hours. Three six man patrols were inserted in various LZ's in War Zone D. The flight remained airborne until after dark. No fire was received during the operation. Total hours were 10.7 and 41 sorties. 31 Jan 67: The 71st made an extraction for the 9th Infantry Division in an area around Bear Cat. The assistance of a CH-47 was utilized to cut the time of lifting the 600 man force. The LZ was extremely small and allowed only four aircraft to enter at a time. Total flight time for the day was 53.3 and sorties totaled 198.

Civic actions for the 71st AHC during the month of January 1967 was the Rattlers done an excellent job of donating money to be used for purchasing food, closing, and toys for the people at Bui Hung. Work is still continuing at the church with many materials being supplied by the 71st. The 71st's civic action program under the direction of Captain Keller has aided many people and brought many friends to the Rattlers.

Moments To Remember; The day Captain Mangum flew with the Firebirds in order to test the weapons system. The AC said, "Arm the system", so Captain Mangum flipped the switch. A pop was heard, then the crew chief said, "They're gone, - he jettisoned my rocket pods." All that was seen for the rest of the flight was a red glow coming from the copilot's seat. Well done Jettison 6!

The following is the History Newsletter of 71st Assault Helicopter Company for 1 February 1967 to 28 February 1967. COMBAT HIGHLIGHTS for the 71st AHC: 5 Feb 67: The Rattler flight accompanied by a light fire team from the Firebirds, departed Bien Hoa and arrived over Phuoc Vinh at 1630 hours. The operation was in support of the 1st Bn, 26th Inf, 1st US Inf Division. Four lifts were made into 3 LZ's around a village three kilometers northeast of Phoc Vinh. Small arms fire was reported on take off from LZ #1 with no aircraft reporting hits. The area was worked over by the Firebirds and an artillery strike. No further fire was received. Total flight time was 31.9 hours and 107 sorties were logged. 8 Feb 67: Tay Ninh was the destination and support of the 190th LT Inf Brigade was the mission. Resupply, command and control, and administrative flights comprised the day's operations. Automatic weapons fire was reported throughout the day with one aircraft receiving damage due to hostile fire. The Rattlers logged 72.6 hours and 279 sorties during the day. 12 Feb 67: Today's flight was in support of the 199th Inf Brigade. The Rattlers performed six combat assaults and five extractions. Two aircraft were damaged by enemy fire and one crewmember received minor injuries from shrapnel. Operations consisted of hauling a combination of United States and ARV troops. The day's flight time was 110.2 hours and 338 sorties were flown. 13 Feb 67: Support was again given to the 199th for insertions and extractions southeast of Saigon. The Firebirds made preparations of the LZ's and artillery was fired also. Automatic weapons fire was received by the Rattlers and also by the troops. Gunship support was provided continuously and an air strike was called in upon completion of the mission. Flight hours were 98.7 and sorties totaled 319. 15 Feb 67: The Rattlers journeyed to Tay Ninh and arrived at 0730 to begin resupply and personnel moves. One company was inserted at a battalion extracted during the day's operations. Artillery and gunships prepared the areas and some small arms fire was received after the lift. The Rattlers flew 111 hours and performed 301 sorties with 11 slicks and 4 gunships. No aircraft damage was reported. 26 Feb 67: The Rattlers moved to Tay Ninh to provide support to operation "Junction City". Many resupply missions were carried out and several combat assaults were made. The Firebirds provided support to the company as well as standby for the operation. Enemy fire was received during our stay, but damage to aircraft was light.

The 335th A.H.C. (formerly Co. A, 82nd Avn Bn.) earned the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period 1 August 1966 to 31 January 1967. The Valorous Unit Award was earned by the 145th C.A.B., 68th A.H.C., 118th A.H.C., and 334th A.H.C. for their actions on the 19th of March 1967 under the command of LTC Howard Moore in the Battle of Soui Tre. The Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm was awarded to the 145th C.A.B., 68th, 118th, 120th, 147th, 213th, 334th, 335th Aviation Companies for the period 1 March 1966 to 26 March 1967. These last two awards were earned during Operation Junction City in Tay Ninh Province, 2,728 known enemy casualties. The 117th was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period 5 September 1966 to 31 March 1967. In March of 1967 the 184th Avn Co was transferred to the 11th Avn Bn and in April of 67 the 71st A.H.C. was transferred to the 14th Avn Bn.

THE BATTLE OF SQUI TRE

On 19 March 1967, the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion distinguished itself by exceptionally valorous actions in the prelude of what was to become known as the battle of Suoi Tre- the most significant one/day battle to date in the III Corps Tactical Area. The 145th Combat Aviation Battalion was operating in direct support of 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, with the mission to conduct a combat assault into a landing zone located approximately five miles north of Suoi Da, Republic of Vietnam. The initial operational plans were made for the assault to take place on 18 March 1967, several miles further north of the actual landing zone: however obstacles prevented the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry (Mech) and the 22nd Battalion, 34th Armor from securing the landing zone as planned. On the evening of 17 March, the assault was rescheduled for 19 March with the landing zone changed to the new location. The armored and mechanized elements were unable to meet this new schedule. It was then decided that the assault would be conducted into an unsecured landing zone with the armored and mechanized elements scheduled to reinforce the infantry at a later time. The hazards of this unsecured landing zone were known to be many as there were relatively few clearings in the dense jungle which were adequate for airmobile operations. Past experience indicated that when there were few clearings in the area, the Viet Cong either mine or establish ambushes on or near the potential landing zones. Professionalism and esprit de corps prevailed as the aviators of the 68th and 118th Assault Helicopter Companies eagerly awaited the termination of the twenty minute artillary preparation which would mark the beginning of the first lift. The assault was under the control of the Commanding Officer, 145th Combat Aviation Battalion. The lift units were supported by gunships of both assault helicopter companies and those of the 334th Armed Helicopter Company. The first lift encountered little resistance upon entering the landing zone, but received automatic weapons fire upon departure. At the moment the aircraft of the second lift touched down, a command detonated 155mm artillery round was exploded. Two helicopters were completely destroyed and five others seriously damaged from shrapnel. More mines were detonated and the landing zone became a holocaust of fire and flying steel. The Viet Cong were in well established bunkers and had numeric superiority- it was later learned that major portions of two Viet Cong regiments were engaged in the battle. Heroism became the norm rather than the exception. Realizing the necessity for reinforcing the ground units already in the landing zone, the decision was made to land additional troops into a landing zone immediately adjacent to the initial landing zone. The 118th Assault Helicopter Company "Thunderbirds" and the 68th Assault Helicopter Company "Top Tigers" wasted no time getting another load of troops aboard and into the air. The tremendous urgency of the situation was relized by all. The lift approached through sporadic ground fire which culminated in the detonation of another mine which damaged the lead aircraft. The next element approached through a withering hail of automatic weapons fire and was met with another mine upon landing. Initially suppressive fire from escort gunships was impossible due to friendly elements scattered throughout the area. Showing the utmost in determination and a remarkable tactical grasp of the situation the armed helicopters located the enemy emplacements and supported the troop carrying aircraft by delivering accurate and deadly fire on the enemy. The armed helicopters were only able to accomplish the needed accuracy by flying directly into the barrage of fire. Their actions were

instrumental in preventing the loss of additional lives and aircraft. Under the calm, inspirational leadership of the battalion commander, the companies preformed in a manner that was in the highest traditions of Army Aviation. The courageous air crews flew eight lifts into the landing zone after the initial holocaust with individual acts of heroism being numerous as indicated by five individuals being awarded the Silver Star, 19 the Distinguished Flying Cross, 14 the Bronze Star for valor and 96 the Air Medal for valor. Four enlisted crew members of the first helicopter downed in the landing zone immediately began stripping the helicopters of radios, weapons, and other valuable equipment. Realizing that the landing zone was in imminent danger of being engulfed in flames, they secured fire extinguishers and flack vests to fight the blaze. Failing to thwart the fire, they ran through the inferno looking for the wounded. As the blaze advanced, it set off hand grenades that had been dropped during the confusion of the initial mine explosions. These men began giving medical aid to wounded infantry soldiers and loading them onto helicopters which came back on successive lifts. They voluntarily remained in the landing zone under heavy fire throughout the morning and afternoon. Another enlisted crew member braved the exploding mines and rescued his critically injured pilot and mortally wounded door gunner from their burning helicopter. Then he carried the pilot under intense automatic weapon fire to an evacuation helicopter across the landing zone. He returned and removed the radios and weapons from the helicopter prior to returning to the evacuation helicopter where he preformed life saving first aid to the wounded. A warrant officer's aircraft received extensive damage during the initial blast; however he determined that the urgency of the situation warranted the helicopter being flown and he made three successive lifts in his damaged ship to deliver additional reinforcements to the beleaguered ground troops. These are only but a few examples of the many acts of bravery which occurred during this action. There were cases of downed aviators taking machineguns and providing suppressive fires in the landing zone for successive lifts instead of being immediately evacuated. In several instances, aircraft which were severely damaged were flown out of the landing zone to more secure areas so that they could be air lifted without incurring additional damage.

LTC John A Todd replaced LTC Moore on the 7th of August 1967. The 190th A.H.C. arrived in Vietnam and was assigned to the 145th on 2 September 1967, shortly thereafter to be sent on temporary duty to I Corp with the Marines and returned to Bien Hoa on the 16th of November 1967. The 213th Assault Support Helicopter Company was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period 13 February 1967 to 15 October 1967.

On 22 October 1967, the Cobras flew its first combat mission. On that day two Cobras from the Playboy Platoon of the 334th Armed Helicopter Company were flown by Major Donald Becker and Warrant Officer Welch from Bien Hoa to Nui Dat in support of the Australian Tack Force.

Under the Command of LTC Todd the Presidential Unit Citation was awarded for the period of 6 to 23 November 1967 by the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States to the 335th Assault Helicopter Company. The award to the "Cowboys" was for extraordinary heroism during Operation Mac Arthur in Kontum Province in November 1967.

The 335th Assault Helicopter Company, prior to being transferred out of the 145th CAB, was assigned the mission of supporting the 173rd Airborne Brigade, they conducted airmobile assaults with the 2/503d on 11 November 1967 in the area south-west of Dak To. The landing zone was to be hewn out of the dense jungle and bamboo by B-52 strikes and numerous other airstrikes. Close examination of the intended landing zone by the command and control party revealed an area sufficient for only one aircraft at a time. The first troops on the ground immediately initiated clearing operations to enlarge the landing zone, while additional troops were being inserted. This landing zone soon became Fire Support Base 16. At approximately 1200 hours, 11 November 1967, the 1/503d made strong contact with an estimated battalion sized force.

The 335th AHC was called upon to reinforce the beleaguered unit with C 4/503d. The nearest landing zone to the area would accommodate only one aircraft at a time. During this operation enemy fire was received going into and coming out of the landing zone. The

armed helicopters immediately placed suppressive fires on the enemy, however, this did not deter the enemy from firing at all of the helicopters. Fortunately no aircraft were hit on this part of the operation. The armed helicopters demonstrated remarkable skill according to the commander of the ground forces. They placed rocket and machine gun fire scant meters from the friendly lines, and escorting the troop carrying helicopters into the landing zone.

During the time this action was in progress, a single ship was resupplying C 1/503d with badly needed ammunition. In order to complete the mission the pilot had to fly dangerously near the enemy position. On each trip into the area he experienced heavy enemy rifle and automatic weapons fire. Realizing he had received numerous hits, the pilot landed to inspect the aircraft and found it no longer airworthy. He immediately procured another aircraft and continued the mission. Again he received numerous hits and was barely able to return to a secure area before being forced to land. The timely arrival of reinforcements and ammunition turned the tide of battle and most assuredly saved C 1/503d from being overrun and annihilated.

The 335th AHC provided general support to the 173rd Airborne Brigade with resupply missions and insertion of Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRP).

Many times the only mean for landing a LRRP was by using a rope dropped from the hovering helicopter allowing the team members to repel to the ground. The pilots demonstrated outstanding airmanship, and courage while hovering in one spot, above 100 foot trees, under enemy fire, to place the team in the correct location.

Numerous times the team would make contact with a superior enemy force, necessitating immediate extraction. Without hesitation the pilots of the 335th AHC came to their rescue, again hovering above the trees, offering a perfect target for the enemy.

On 19 November 1967 the 2/503d started to move up the northern slope of Hill 875. As they neared the crest of the hill they met with extremely heavy resistance, resulting in heavy casualties. The 335th AHC was again called upon to deliver critical supplies. The landing zone was not large enough to accommodate even one helicopter, so it was necessary to employ the kick-out method. The enemy controlled the crest of the hill, which provided unlimited fields of fire at aircraft approaching to points below the crest. Also, pinpoint accuracy in dropping the supplies was an absolute must, for to miss the target area by even a few meters on the side of the hill increased the difficulty in retrieving them by one hundred fold. To obtain this accuracy an extremely low airspeed was required, making the helicopters a virtual "sitting duck" for enemy gunners.

On each sortie into this area, the helicopters met extremely heavy fire. Realizing the urgency of their mission, the crews never faltered in providing the ground unit with the life sustaining supplies. Although numerous aircraft were hit and aircrew members wounded, the men of the 335th AHC could not be deterred and continued their mission, even though their very lives were at stake. One aircraft attempted a sling load delivery of a landing zone clearing kit. He encountered murderous fire and was forced to jettison the load, returning to a secure area where inspection of the aircraft revealed sufficient damage to preclude further flight. Without immediate assistance the 2/503d could not hope to hold their position. Three companies of the 4/503d were dispatched to reinforce. The 4/503d also met with sharp resistance, sustaining heavy casualties. When the 4/503d join up with the 2/503d there remained approximately one hundred effective fighting men. These two units were able to fight their way to a position approximately one hundred meters down the slope where a landing zone clearing kit was successfully dropped. After a landing zone was cut out of the jungle, the 335th AHC aircraft again braved the intense enemy fire in order to evacuate two hundred twenty-two wounded to distant medical facilities. Without this timely evacuation, many of these wounded would have surely died.

On 22 November 1967, the 335th AHC assisted by elements of the 52nd Combat Aviation Battalion conducted an airmobile operation with the 1/12th Infantry, 4th US Inf. Div. southeast of Hill 875.

On 23 November 1967 the remnants of the 2d and 4th Battalions, 503d Inf., mounted an attack on the crest of Hill 875. The attack commenced at 1100 hours and the hill was

secured at 1120 hours. The enemy had retreated, leaving their dead, numerous large bunkers with up to twenty feet of overhead cover, and numerous items of equipment. During the battle the 335th AHC participated in all phases, experiencing the most hazardous of combat conditions.

The 335th AHC had ten wounded in action, while the 173d Abn Bde had 118 killed in action, 271 wounded in action and three missing in action. The NVA losses were 298 by body count. Nine of the 335th AHC helicopters received extensive combat damage. Three were evacuated by CH-47, four were repaired for a one time flight to home station, and two continued to fly. The support provided to the 173d Abn Bde by the 335th AHC during this operation was truly outstanding and on repeated occasions necessitated the air crews performing above and beyond the call of duty. Without their efforts, the tide of battle would have most probably been turned in favor of the enemy.

Part of the 334th A.H.C. was transferred to Thailand the 24th of November 1967 on temporary duty to fly escort duty over the Ho Chi Minh Trail. They were to fly gunship cover for troops placing and picking up listening devices all along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Their refuel point was to be Khe Sanh which went under seize shortly there after, the mission was called off the 3rd of March 1968.

LTC Robert M Deets assumed command of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion on 1 December 1967. LTC Deets started his military career as a Navy Seabee in 1943. He was a member of an underwater demolition team and earned the Bronze Star for Valor. He began his career as an Army officer through a direct commission in November of 1951. Prior to being assigned to the 145th he was assigned to S-3 at 12th Group. Thanks to LTC Deets we have this very fine detailed report on the Battalion's History.

On 7 December 1967 the 190th Assault Helicopter Company conducted airmobile operations with the 4th Bn, 7th Regt, 5th Inf Div (ARVN). The unit was to receive an ATT in conjunction with a search and destroy operation. The landing zone was prepared for the assault by artillery and airstrikes under the command of an aircraft from the 74th Reconnaissance Airplane Company. The first assault went as planned with negative fire received. The second assault into LZ#2 met with heavy automatic weapons fire from the right front. Chalk 10 was shot down in the landing zone and chalk 9 made an emergency landing eight hundred meters north of the LZ. This aircraft had received sixteen hits. The troops in LZ #2 were pinned down under voluminous enemy fire and without the planned, subsequent lift, were in danger of annihilation. On the next lift into the LZ the lead aircraft was engulfed by intense enemy fire that wounded or killed all of the ARVN troops on board. Several other aircraft in flight were hit causing two to make forced landings in the pickup zone and another at Cu Chi.

The FAC from the 74th Recon Airplane Company continued to direct artillery and airstrikes on the entrenched enemy. To provide cover for the remaining lifts, the smoke aircraft was employed. Braving the murderous enemy fire, he repeatedly provided smoke cover for the remaining lifts. A heavy fire team from the 334th Armed Helicopter Company was scrambled to assist in the operation. They attacked the enemy fortifications with determination and tenacity, disregarding their personal safety in order to place their fires to the best advantage. The remaining aircraft were utilized to airlift a reserve company into the area. The aircrues did not hesitate in continuing their mission even in the face of devastating enemy fire. The smoke ship was hit and forced to return to Bien Hoa for repairs. Numerous medical evacuation flights were attempted; however, each time the aircraft met with murderous enemy fire. A second smoke ship was called out to assist in the operation. After two passes through the area, providing a smoke screen for medical evacuation flights, he too was hit and forced to land in the landing zone. realizing the precarious position the crew of the smoke ship was in, an armed helicopter from the 190th AHC braved the intense, enemy, automatic weapons fire to land and extract them.

As nightfall approached, the ground troops ran low on ammunition. Again a crew from the 190th AHC volunteered to deliver the desperately required ammunition and at the same time extract the remaining wounded. Although the enemy was literally filling the sky with bullets, the mission received light to heavy combat damage. Three medical evacuation

helicopters were damaged, one making a forced landing five miles east of Cu Chi, another making a forced landing just inside the perimeter at Cu Chi and the third taking numerous hits and wounding the gunner.

Two smoke aircraft were hit, one making a forced landing in the landing zone and the other being grounded after returning to the station. Of the aircraft that received the combat damage six required evacuation by CH-47, four were repaired and released for a one time flight to home station, two were repaired and returned to the flight, and seven were hit but continued to fly.

On 8 December 1967 the 68th Assault Helicopter Company supported the 30th and 38th Ranger Battalions in combat assaults for search and destroy operations southeast of Phu Cong. The initial phases of the operation progressed as planned with negative resistance. Prior to the combat assault into LZ #3 the armed helicopters discovered occupied enemy bunkers on the north side. Although the area was hit by artillery, a decision was made to disregard LZ #3 and insert the troops into LZ 12.

The element moving west encountered steady resistance after moving about four hundred meters west along the small north-south stream line. Additional forces were inserted into LZ #4. The flight reported enemy fire on takeoff. The ground unit moved south and immediately made contact. Two medical evacuation missions were requested for eleven wounded in action and one killed in action. The two aircraft attempted to land at the position by flying low level but the enemy fire was so heavy that they had to abort the mission. Both aircraft were hit and one crew chief owes his life to his chest protector. While providing cover for medical evacuation, the armed helicopter fire team were taken under heavy fire. One armed helicopter was hit, necessitating his return to home station for repairs.

An aerial observer from the 74th Reconnaissance Airplane Company directed numerous artillery and airstrikes upon the enemy positions. While the artillery concentration distracted the enemy, a medical evacuation was successfully completed. However, on his second trip in for wounded he came under heavy enemy fire and received numerous hits. Another call for medical evacuation was received. Since no other aircraft were immediately available, the 68th AHC command and control aircraft accepted the mission. Although enemy fire laced the area, three wounded in action and one killed in action were successfully evacuated. Again the requirement for a medical evacuation came forth and again the mission was completed in spite of the extremely heavy automatic weapons fire.

Artillery, tactical air and armed helicopters continued to strike the area. An AH-1G Cobra light fire team from the 334th Armed Helicopter Company arrived and joined in the attempt to neutralize the enemy automatic weapons positions. On one rocket pass the sky seemed to be filled with enemy fire, hitting one armed helicopter and seriously wounding the pilot. Although an extraction had been planned, the tactical situation and approaching darkness necessitated implementation of the alternate plan which called for withdrawal by boat. The 68th AHC sustained two wounded in action, while the ground units had three killed in action and twenty-two wounded in action. Enemy losses were not known. Six helicopters were hit, one requiring evacuation by CH-47, two repaired for a one time flight to home station and three continued to fly.

On 14 December 1967 the 190th Assault Helicopter Company was diverted from the assigned mission to support Company A, 5th Special Forces Group (CIDG), in airmobile operations in the area west of Hiep Hoa, RVN. On final approach to LZ #L the flight received light automatic weapons fire. One armed helicopter was hit damaging the hydraulic system and wounding the crew chief. Two subsequent lifts were made into the same landing zone. Sporadic M-79 fire hit in the landing zone while the aircraft were on the ground, however, no aircraft were damaged. About one hour after the insertions, the ground troops made contact with an estimated regimental sized force. Tactical air and two light fire teams provided immediate support. The enemy was well entrenched and possessed a minimum of six fifty caliber machine guns.

The fire from these weapons plus countless small and automatic weapons was devastation and deadly. Yet fire support to assist the ARVN's in breaking contact was a

dire necessity. A Cobra light fire team proved its worth time and time again as they challenged the fifty caliber positions, never once faltering in the attack. The efforts of these armed helicopters bore fruit and the unit was able to break contact and withdraw.

This success was not without cost as three armed helicopters were hit, one of which made an emergency landing with the aircraft on fire. Although the sky was filled with enemy fire, the downed aircraft's wingman threaded his way down through the hail of bullets to pull the crew practically out of the enemy's hands. The action of the armed helicopters in the face of vastly superior enemy fire power, was the factor that made the difference between annihilation and successful withdrawal of the outnumbered ground units. The 190th Assault Helicopter Company had two crew members wounded, one armed helicopter totally destroyed and three other aircraft hit.

On 17 December 1967 the 118th Assault Helicopter Company was diverted from its schedule for a tactical emergency in support of the 604th CIDG, 25th Infantry Division (ARVN) in the area southwest of Bao Trai. A unit of the 604th CIDG was in heavy contact and in dire need of immediate reinforcements. The emergency standby, light fire teams from the 68th AHC had been scramble to support the ground unit in contact. Even though the area had been struck repeatedly by tactical airstrikes and armed helicopter, the enemy continued to offer strong resistance. On each pass the armed helicopters drew heavy automatic weapons fire, resulting in one aircraft hit and forced to make an emergency landing. The landing was effected in a secure area. After several airstrikes on the enemy positions, the flight departed the pickup zone with a company to reinforce the unit in contact.

Although a smoke screen was employed, the flight encountered an intense volume of fire during the approach to the landing zone, on the ground in the landing zone, and during takeoff. Two aircraft were hit by enemy fire during take off and made emergency landings three kilometers east of the landing zone. Two other aircraft in the flight followed then to the ground and extracted all members and weapons. These aircraft also received fire while on the ground near the downed aircraft. While reconnoitering the area, an armed helicopter from the 68th Assault Helicopter Company was hit by automatic weapons fire, wounding the crew chief. Whenever a helicopter got near the area, the ground seemed to be covered with white flashes as the enemy automatic weapons opened fire. No area in the vicinity of the doomed aircraft seemed to be free of the enemy and making an insertion of a security force by air was impractical. For this reason, elements of the 25th ARVN Division stationed in Bao Trai were directed to proceed over land to the area to provide security until an extraction of the aircraft could be effected. One element mounted in APC's moved west from Bao Trai while a second element moved to the southwest to act as a blocking force. The element to the north encountered resistance about four hundred meters north on the downed aircraft and halted. A Diamondhead armed helicopter, was shot down and made an emergency landing while supporting this element. The crew was extracted by his wingman, however all armament, including XM-21 system, remained with the aircraft.

Also, an armed helicopter from the 190th AHC flown by a crew from the 118th AHC was shot down. This aircraft crashed and burned. The crew was picked up by the alternate C & C aircraft, quite shaken, but otherwise unhurt. The ARVN troops were making no progress and it is becoming increasingly apparent that they did not intend to reach the aircraft. With the prospect of these aircraft remaining in an insecure area over night, recovery of the XM-21 system became a major concern.

While a Cobra light fire team from the 334th Armed Helicopter Company and a light fire team from the 25th Infantry Division (US) placed continuous fires on the area of heaviest VC fire, a UH-1C from the 118th AHC with a volunteer crew, approached the downed aircraft low level from the east. Upon landing, two men jumped out and removed the two guns. The intense fire placed on the enemy positions couple with the fading light, permitted successful recovery of the guns. The professionalism displayed by the aircrew members involved in this operation was outstanding. Regardless of the situation, mission accomplishment was foremost in their minds. In this operation there were six crew members wounded, two hospitalized, and four treated and released. One armed helicopter was destroyed and seven armed and nine troop carrier helicopters received combat damage.

On 18 December 1967 the 68th Assault Helicopter Company supported the 1/27th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division (US) on airmobile operations southwest of Bao Tri, RVN. The mission of the ground unit was to secure the area around three helicopter that had been shot down in order so extraction by CH 47 helicopters could be affected. The three helicopters had been shot down on 17 December and had remained without security. After intensive artillery and tactical air preparation, air assaults were made into LZ 1 and LZ 2 with only light resistance. The ground unit initially encountered no resistance and soon advanced to the first downed aircraft. The armed helicopters of the 68th AHC, while covering the advance of the ground unit in the direction of the other two aircraft, received heavy automatic weapons fire from the same area where the enemy had been entrenched the previous day. The aerial observer, from the 74th Reconnaissance Company, flying above the area continued to direct airstrikes and artillery against the enemy positions. Movement by the ground troops was impeded because of heavy fire from the tree lines and canals. A second element moved west and then north to circumnavigate the enemy position.

Meanwhile the light fire teams were assisting the ground unit in contact with the enemy. On each firing pass the armed helicopters received heavy fire from the numerous heavily fortified positions. Two aircraft were hit and one crew chief was wounded. More artillery and tactical airstrikes were employed, allowing the ground unit to advance very slow. However, their movement was continually hampered by sporadic sniper fire. Time was growing short for a daylight extraction of the downed aircraft. The decision was made to attempt an extraction, utilizing the smoke aircraft, even though the enemy fields of fire covered the area.

After the aircraft was rigged, the smoke ship put down a ring of smoke around the downed aircraft while the light fire teams suppressed the area, enabling the CH-47 to make the extraction. The ground unit continued to have heavy contact and at this point were running dangerously low on ammunition. Oblivious to the heavy enemy automatic weapons fire, an aircraft from the 68th AHC accomplished the ammunition resupply mission. Armed helicopters provided escort for the resupply aircraft, many times literally looking down the barrels of the enemy weapons. Two flare equipped aircraft from the 118th AHC were scrambled to provide battlefield illumination. A Cobra light fire team, from the NETT Team, was diverted from another mission to augment the light fire teams on station.

Extraction of the two remaining helicopters was of prime importance. As the armed helicopters placed suppressive fire on the enemy positions, the aircraft with the rigging crews made a low level approach and landed beside the aircraft. By this time the only light on the scene was that provided by the flare aircraft, and determining the location of the downed aircraft was extremely difficult. To aid in fixing the exact location, the rigging aircraft remained on the ground turning on his rotating beacon on call. This signal enabled the CH-47 crews to locate the downed aircraft.

Without this signal, determining a location that would permit a landing would have been extremely difficult if not impossible. The first aircraft was extracted without incident. However, as the CH-47 departed the area with the UH-1, it received heavy automatic weapons fire, wounding the gunner. The armed helicopters placed immediate fire on the enemy positions, curtailing further enemy fire. The ground troops had not planned to remain in the field overnight, therefore, receipt of the night kit, rations and ammunition was imperative. Although the area contained many enemy positions, and location of the landing zone in the dim light of the aerial flares was extremely difficult, the 68th AHC made seven sorties into the landing zone. It was necessary to utilize aircraft landing lights to locate the land zone, thus making them an even better target for enemy gunners. Despite these hazards, the aircrues pressed forward with the mission, providing the ground unit with life sustaining items. The 68th AHC had one wounded in action, and five aircraft received combat damage. Four aircraft required evacuation by CH-47 helicopters, however, three were from the previous days operation.

Three other helicopters were repaired on the spot and cleared for a one time flight to Bien Hoa. Another was damaged but continued to fly. At approximately 0200 hours, 19

December 1967, the ground unit was attacked with mortars, RPG and automatic weapons fire. If the two aircraft had not been extracted prior to this time, they would have been destroyed or badly damaged.

On 25 December 1967, Christmas Day, the 145th C.A.B. invited 120 children from Bui Vinh Orphanage to have dinner at the 334th AHC Mess Hall, they were served turkey with all the trimmings.

On 28 December 1967, the 118th Assault Helicopter Company supported the 1st Battalion, 25th Infantry Division (ARVN) on airmobile operations near Bao Trai, RVN. After a weather delay until 1100 hours, the operation proceeded without undue difficulty. At approximately 1600 hours the decision was made to extract the southern element and a light fire team was instructed to perform a reconnaissance of the area. They received heavy automatic weapons and small arms fire, sustaining numerous aircraft hits and one door gunner wounded in action.

The ground unit was directed to move further to the north and prepare for extraction. In the meantime the element located at LZ #2 was extracted without incident. The southern element had moved into a new position but was still receiving fire from the east and south. Artillery was called in to provide cover for the unit while it moved farther to the north. The standby smoke aircraft from the 334th Armed Helicopter Company was scrambled to assist in the extraction. The ground unit secured another landing zone, reporting only sniper fire from the north.

The armed helicopter made a reconnaissance of the area and drew very light fire, so the decision was made to proceed with the extraction. As the smoke aircraft started its pass, it encountered extremely heavy automatic fire along the north flank. The smoke aircraft was hit and three crewmen were wounded but they remained on station to provide the desperately needed smokescreen.

The flight started receiving heavy fire just short of the landing zone, while on the ground, and after take off. The fire was coming from all sides while the flight was in the landing zone. Continuous suppression from all the armed helicopters and the door gunners on the troop carrying helicopters failed to diminish the rate of enemy fire. The first two aircraft received numerous hits and both crew chiefs were wounded. Four of the enemy were killed by the door gunners while the flight was on the ground. On take off two aircraft were crippled by fire, necessitating emergency landings approximately two thousand meters from the landing zone.

The first aircraft was on fire as it landed. All crews, radios and weapons were evacuated. The ground troops that were aboard the downed aircraft provided security. The remaining aircraft proceeded directly to the hospital at Cu Chi to drop off the wounded ground troops and aircrew members. Two of these aircraft returned to the AO while the other two remained at Cu Chi, not flyable due to combat damage. The emergency standby fire team and the flare aircraft were scrambled. Sufficient troops to secure the area until a company size force could move to the area by foot were to be inserted by the flyable aircraft.

By this time the area was in total darkness, the only light being that provided by the aerial flares. The remaining lifts were made under extremely hazardous conditions, without further incident. There were eight aircrew members wounded in action. A total of ten aircraft were damaged by enemy ground fire. Of these, two remained on the ground in the AO overnight and were extracted the following morning. One remained overnight at Cu Chi and was extracted the following morning, while the remaining damaged aircraft were repaired and flown back to Bien Hoa Airbase.

During this time period the 334th AHC became the first aviation company to fly combat operations in AH-1G Huey Cobra Gunships in Vietnam.

On 31 December 1967 the Meritorious Unit Commendation was awarded to the 68th AHC, 118th AHC, and 334th AHC for the period 1 January 1967 to 31 December 1967. The 335th AHC was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period 1 February 1967 to 31 December 1967.

January 1968 brought the return of the 117th AHC to the 145th CAB from the 10th CAB, and the loss of the 335th AHC to the 268th CAB.

BATTLE OF BIEN HOA TET OFFENSIVE 1968

On the morning of 31 January 1968, the Bien Hoa Air Base, III Corps Headquarters, the Prisoner of War Compound, and other key installations around the Bien Hoa - Long Binh area received enemy mortar and rocket fire. The Communists were starting to carry out a plan that they had studied for a considerable period of time. The attacking forces, elements of the 274th and 275th Viet Cong Regiments, along with the 68th Regiment, 9th VC Division, had been recruiting and training their leaders for a substantial length of time. It was instilled in the minds of their soldiers that this ultimate plan could not fail, and that victory would surely be theirs. A prisoner later captured stated that he was told by commanders that Bien Hoa would "drop into their hands like a ripe apple". "Charlie" felt that such an offensive, one that involved ground attacks on major military complexes, would be completely unexpected. He was right but he completely underestimated the retaliatory firepower of the allied forces, and most of all, the devastating assaults of the armed helicopter.

Approximately 1600 hours, 30 January, Lt. Col. Robert M. Deets' secretary reported to the 145th Battalion Operations Office that her home was taken over by the Viet Cong and was to be used for the operational headquarters within the city of Bien Hoa.

While a silent Bien Hoa Air Base slept, Colonel Nick Psaki and LTC Deets set up their Operational Plan Charlie - Charlie, knowing the enemy forces would unleash a devastating attack. Beginning at 3 O'clock in the morning of 31 January 1968, they launched their surprisingly well-coordinated assaults at major installations throughout the countryside. The assaults came within minutes of each other. Throughout Vietnam, Americans awakened to a new phase in the war. The Bien Hoa Air Base received approximately 150 rounds of enemy rocket and mortar fire. Almost simultaneously the Viet Cong ground forces made their move to overrun the base. Formed into four companies of 52 men each, his soldiers penetrated the perimeter between bunkers in the 101st Airborne Division cantonment area and the III Corps Headquarters, gradually making their way to the approach end of runway 27. It was there they were met by the gunships led by Captain Kenneth Rubin, 334th Gunship Company, assigned by the Command and Control of Checkmate Charlie-Charlie.

Captain Rubin and his "Firefly" team had just returned from a mission near Duc Hoa when they were told to engage the enemy on the east side of the airbase. They spotted the Viet Cong off the eastern end of the runway and awaited clearance to fire. An emergency standby fire team from the 118th Assault Helicopter Company was soon airborne and on station. Captain Rubin was then given permission to engage the enemy. After approximately 30 minutes his team needed to refuel and the mission was given to the 118th Gunship Team. Captain Rubin and his Australian Co-pilot were both wounded and their helicopter shot-up so bad it was rendered non-flyable. Captain Rubin was given another helicopter and then formed another "Firefly Team" and later returned for further action. Lt. Col. Anderson and Major Jarrett requested and were given permission to insert their Cobra "NETT" team into the action. Their flying was outstanding and was a major factor in winning the Battle of Bien Hoa. Contact with the Viet Cong lasted until late in the morning. By that time almost every helicopter fire team in the battalion had participated in the effort to destroy the firmly emplaced enemy in this action.

All night long personnel had received sporadic small arms fire from the water tower near the entrance to the air base. The 12th Combat Aviation Group Commander, Colonel Nick Psaki and elements of the 68th Combat Aviation Company, personally eliminated the enemy while men on the ground observed the battle only 100 meters away. By noon the ground was under control and the enemy guerillas were dead, but they were hard to be found in their well-fortified positions.

III Corps Headquarters, adjacent to the air base came under mortar attack at 0545 hours. By 0700 hours the VC had begun to move from his vulnerable position on the end of

the runway to the buildings across the street from the headquarters. The occupants of the compound received automatic weapons and RPG rocket fire from the new enemy emplacements. Gunships and armored vehicles from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment engaged the enemy forces in house to house fighting and drove them from their positions. The Viet Cong casualties were extremely heavy during this encounter.

Elements of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion supported other hard-hit installations during the widespread Tet Truce Offensive. At the same time Bien Hoa Air Base received its first incoming rounds, the nearby Long Binh Complex, Headquarters 11 Field Force, received rocket mortar fire. Elements of the 274th and 275th Viet Cong Regiments launched a heavy ground attack around that area. Twenty-four hours earlier the most elaborate military headquarters in Vietnam had enjoyed an uneventful duty day, but suddenly it was fighting for its life. Attacking from across highway 1A from Khu Gia Vien Village, commonly known as "windows village," the heavily armed enemy assaulted the defensive perimeter. The "Mustang" fire teams from the 68th Assault Helicopter Company, and "Striker" AH-1G "Cobra" helicopters from the NETT Team proceeded immediately to the area to give fire support to the embattled friendly forces. Continuous air assaults were provided by these ships to repel the enemy attacks. It was later learned that beneath "Widows Village", "Charlie" had built an elaborate tunnel complex, complete with ammunition and supplies, making himself well prepared for an assault on the 12th CAG and the Long Binh complex.

The Viet Cong also launched a major effort in the Saigon-Cholon area. The "Bandits", gunships of the 118th Assault Helicopter Company launched combat assaults against Viet Cong firmly emplaced in the Phu Tho Race Track. Elements of the 68th Assault Helicopter Company were in heavy contact with enemy forces occupying the Cholon district of Saigon. Cobra aircraft from the 334th Armed Helicopter Company and Cobra NETT Team were also dispatched to Saigon to add their devastating firepower on the enemy. Helicopters of the 190th Assault Helicopter Company were called upon to evacuate the besieged defenders of the American Embassy, who were hard hit by the daring enemy.

Since the American New Year, there had been strong indications the enemy was planning such a major offensive. Since January 20th United States military along with our own Vietnamese intelligence sources had suspected the enemy's intentions. The 274th and 275th Viet Cong Regiments were located as far north as Bu Dop in early January. Their north to south cross-country movement placed them in the vicinity of the Dong Nai River by the end of the month. The 68th Regiment of the 9th Viet Cong Division moved from a position near Tay Ninh in early January to Bien Hoa in time for the attack on January 31. As early as the 2nd of December, a warning order had been given to the residents of Bien Hoa City that they had better stop cooperating with the U.S. Forces or face annihilation. At seven o'clock in the evening of 30 January 1968, seven Viet Cong rode by the main gate of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion and shouted, "Yankee--tonight you die". These VC were armed with pistols, automatic weapons, and one grenade launcher.

Minutes before the first rocket round impacted on the air base the enemy forces had penetrated the perimeter and were poised for the attack. The attacks of the Viet Cong caught almost everyone by surprise except Colonel Psaki and Lt. Col. Deets. Those who were accustomed to the unimpeded everyday routine of "rear area" living suddenly found themselves thrust into action against a determined enemy force. In place of an uneventful night's rest, the American and Allied Force on the air base were shaken from their beds by the blinding flash and deafening explosion of impacting Chinese Communist 122mm rockets. Suddenly the Bien Hoa Air Base wasn't secure as it was thought to be. Immediately following the initial rocket attack the sky was lined with tracers and one was faced with the stark realization that this was no ordinary mortar attack. The action seemed painfully close, and immediate reaction to the harrowing enemy threat was paramount. Crew Chiefs quickly readied their aircraft for action. Maintenance personnel prepared themselves to keep all aircraft flyable. Aircraft commanders gave last minute briefings to their crews and were soon airborne in an all-out effort to repulse the Communist intruders. In order to continue to give the ground commander the maximum effort he had learned to expect from

the 145th, all personnel worked longer hours under more strenuous conditions; "Charlies" presence was keenly felt. Maintenance personnel worked virtually around the clock in order to put damaged aircraft back in flying conditions. Ground crews refueled and reloaded their helicopters in record time. Company clerks and cooks learned how to be door gunners, and basic infantry training was put to use. For the first time in many months there was no mail, it was backlogged in Ton Son Nhut Air Base or stacked up in San Francisco. Everybody became accustomed to "C" rations, and meals in the mess halls were few.

The effort put forth by the members of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion resulted in the successful defense Bien Hoa, while Air Force fighter aircraft were initially forced to remain on the ground, Army helicopters were quickly aloft and defending the perimeter of the air base. The men of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion kept the enemy in place until the job was done.

Operational Data

145th CAB

31 January 1968 to 29 February 1968

Passengers Transported	24,069
Sorties Flown	14,673
Tons of Cargo	7,199
Hours Flown	13,380
Passengers Medevac	201
Confirmed Viet Soldiers Killed	407
Estimated Viet Soldiers Killed	513
Structures Destroyed	676
Structures Damaged	168
Sampans Destroyed	70

By the 1st of May 1968 things had just about gotten back to normal in Vietnam. The 145th C.A.B. had the units of HHC, 68th, 118th, 135th, 190th, and the 334th assigned to it at the time.

On 1 July 1968 LTC Robert M. Deets turned over command of the 145th CAB to LTC Gerald L Waldron. Under LTC Waldron's command the Meritorious Unit Commendation was awarded to the 190th AHC for the period 9 August 1967 to 27 July 1968.

On the 24th of December 1968, LTC Carl H McNair, Jr assumed command of the 145th CAB, taking over for LTC Gerald L Waldron.

This is from the first edition of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion Monthly News (dated 10 February 1969). The purpose of the "News" is to establish a battalion informed on "What's Happening" at the local level.

FROM THE TIGER'S DEN

The 68th "Top Tigers" recently initiated a new program within their company. The program is designed to honor members of the unit who perform their normal duties in an outstanding manner. The program will consist of having a Crewchief, Gunner, Mechanic, Driver and Soldier of the Month. Individuals in the grade of E5 and below will be selected from each duty section. The platoon leaders and platoon sergeants will determine those individuals who performed their duties in an outstanding manner and who displayed outstanding military appearance and bearing during the month. The individuals who are selected will receive three days off from their duties and will be presented a plaque with their name and award engraved on it. Also the names of the individuals will be placed on the new "Top Tiger of the Month" sign that has recently been constructed in front of the company orderly room.

The "Top Tigers of the Month" for this month have already been selected and they are: Soldier- Sp4 Oliver W Watson, Crewchief- Sp4 John E Green, Gunner- Sp4 Patrick H O'Gordon, Mechanic- Sp4 Robert D Marrs, Driver- Sp4 Merle A Larson

The "Thunderbirds" of the 118th would like to take this opportunity to introduce Major John A. Britton, the new Thunderbird 6. Major Britton completed his civilian education at Iowa State University in 1956 with a B.S. in Industrial Administration, but his schooling did not stop there. Since then he has been to a dozen Army schools and training programs, the most unusual being the Deep Sea Survival School. It was at this school that he was required to spend hours in a one man life raft, and was thrown out and dragged by parachute harness from a speed boat. When Major Britton was asked about the training, he said, "There was no final exam and everyone was continually tested for a week - if you didn't drown you passed the course"

Another interesting assignment Major Britton had was with the Army International Olympic Rifle Team. In 1959, while participating with the team, he won the National Championship in the International Smallbore Free Rifle Shooting match at Camp Perry, Ohio.

Major Britton served one previous tour in RVN between 29 June 1963 and 29 April 1964. Upon his return from RVN, he held the positions of Battalion Executive Officer for the 53rd Aviation Battalion and Company Commander of the 1st Aviation Company. Thunderbird "6" then attended a Counterinsurgency course for a year before his return to RVN, and he worked as Assistant G-1 at the 1st Aviation Brigade prior to arriving at the 118th.

The new Company Commander has many ratings and awards to his credit. They include Ranger, Parachutist, and Army Aviator badges, plus two Army Commendation Medals, a Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm. Thunderbird "6" is also qualified in seven types of aircraft, is both Fixed and Rotor Wing rated, and has a standard Instrument ticket.

All the officers and men of the Thunderbirds welcome our new "6" and hope his tour with us will be as successful as his past assignments.

FROM THE COLISEUM

The Gladiators of the 190th Assault Helicopter Company, 145th Combat Aviation Battalion, have been selected to train two highly skilled Vietnamese Aviators in the employment of the armed helicopter. The Gladiators will be the first unit in Vietnam to introduce the Vietnamese Air Force to the UH-1C gunship. This Gun Platoon has garnered an unrivaled record of safety and achievement during their tactical assault operations. The Gladiators appreciate this opportunity to forward their gunnery techniques.

The two history making Vietnamese Air Force Aviators are CPT Buu Ngo of the 217th Squadron, and 1LT Vo Van Minh of the 211th Squadron, both from the 74th Wing at Can Tho Air Base. Cpt Ngo has flown the UH-1A, B, D, H, and a majority in the CH-34 for a collective total of 2000 hours. 1LT Minh has flown the UH-1D and H models for 100 hours while collecting an amazing 2450 hours in a CH-34. A very adept, aviator with 2550 total flying hours, he is also an Instructor Pilot in the CH-34. Their training was initiated on 14 January and will continue for 30 days through 13 February 1969.

The Skipper of the Gladiators, 1LT Robert Giovannoni, reported that his Aircraft Commanders will qualify both pilots in M-3, the M-5, and the M-21 gunnery systems. Upon completion of their tour with the Gladiators, they will return to their units to possess others with the invaluable instruction.

FROM THE SNAKE PIT:

Charlie Cong is suffering from Excedrin Headache No. 334. In the last ten days the Communists have lost over 94 men and 66 sampans to the blazing guns of the Saber Company Cobras.

Eighteen miles southwest of Saigon and barely two miles from the vital Ben Luc bridge, the Raider Platoon made heavy contact with a VC force in a staging area. When the smoke cleared, the VC had withdrawn leaving 41 of their comrades behind.

A similar action took place Friday night just six miles northwest of Bien Hoa on the Dong Nai River. Sixty communists were caught in the Firefly spotlight and brought under intense fire. The enemy attempted to rally and return the gunship fire, but lost 21 killed in the effort.

These incidents have seriously hampered the Communists attempt mass men and material for assaults on key villages in their attempt to cut the link between the capital and the rice-rich Mekong Delta.

WELL DONE

1LT Bryant, Johnny L., 334th Aerial Wpns Co- While flying over an enemy position, 1LT Bryant's aircraft received ground fire with the hydraulic and electrical systems being shot out. 1LT Bryant successfully landed the aircraft with no further damage.

1LT FRIGA, George W., 118th Aslt Hel Co- While picking up to hover, the 90 degree drive shaft to the tail rotor gear box failed. 1LT Friga executed emergency procedures, landing the aircraft with light damage to the skids.

SALUTE:

A well deserved salute is extended to the following individuals with-in the Battalion who were decorated during the month of January for their valorous actions and meritorious service.

BURNS, David A.-W01-190TH-DFC, WEBSTER, Geoffrey-CPT-68TH-DFC, DAVIDTER, John A.-SP4-68TH-DFC, WALKER, Wayne T.-W01-118TH-BS, DAY, James A.-SP4-190TH-AM "V", BROWN, Frank E.-SP4-190TH-AM "V", DENT, Rudolf L.-SP4-190TH-AM "V", HALL, Charles E.-SP4-68TH-AM "V", MURPHY, Micheal T.-W01-68TH-AM "V", DAWKINS, Glenn R.-SP4-68TH-AM "V", PRESTON, Thurman R.-SP4-68TH-AM "V" OLC, WIESCHOWSKI, Ronald L.-SP4-190TH-AM "V", AIGLER, Kenneth T. Jr-SP4-190TH-AM "V", CALIENDO, Stephen N-SP4-190TH-AM "V", CHRISTY, Larry D-SP5-190TH-AM "V", KENNEDY, Terry B-PFC-68TH-AM "V", YOUSEY, James L.-SP4-68TH-AM "V", DUNN, James D.-SP4-68TH-AM "V", NEGLIA, Salvatore C.-1LT-190TH-AM "V", SMITH, Andrew H.-SP4-68TH-AM "V", BIRELY, Richard E-CW2-118TH-AM "V", ALEXANDER, Nicholas B-W01-118TH-AM "V", ALLEN, Ronald T.-W01-190TH-AM "V", FAIRFIELD, Kenneth R-SP4-118TH-AM "V", STICKLEY, Dennis W-W01-68TH-AM "V", JAMES, John W.-SP5-118TH-ACM "V", KARVONEN, Robert E.-SSG-118TH-ACM "V", MYERS, David O.-SP4-68TH-ACM "V", TAYLOR, Gerald E.-SP4-68TH-ACM "V", GURNSEY, Earl F.-SP4-118TH-ACM "V", CUNNINGHAM, Robert J.-W01-68TH-ACM, ZIEGLER, Russell W.-SP4-190TH-ACM, WILLOUGHBY, Raymond-SP5-190TH-ACM, WILMS Robert H. Jr.-CW2-68TH-ACM

LTC John J Top assumed command of the 145th CAB on the 31st of May 1969, continuing the traditions passed on to him by LTC Carl H McNair and all the other former Commanders of the 145th CAB.

LTC John J Top turned over command to LTC Jack Seliskar on the 23rd of November 1969. The 334th Aviation Company (Attack Helicopter), commanded by Maj. John R. McQuestion, on April 29th, 1970, was the first Aviation Company to fly into Cambodia, (officially). And just to keep the record straight, those of us who were there know we flew into Cambodia years before that. The 334th AHC mission was in support of the official 60 day, 20 mile clean out operation into Cambodia in May and June 1970, that all units of the 145th CAB participated in.

LTC Jack Seliskar turned over command of the 145th CAB on the 19th of May 1970 to LTC Calvin G Dodd.

On 13 June 1970, 1Lt Scott R Alwin, 68th AHC, 145th CAB, was awarded his 102nd through 108th Air Medal which set the record for the most Air Medals held by an Army Aviator.

On the 15th August 1970, LTC William H Dillard assumed the command of the 145th CAB from LTC Calvin G Dodd.

In September of 1970 the 190th AHC entered into joint training with the South Vietnamese Air Force.

LTC Richard D Kenyon took over for LTC William H Dillard on 1 December 1970. The 190th Avn Co left Vietnam on the 10th of December 1970.

In February 1971 the 68th Avn Co (AHC) entered into joint training with the South Vietnamese Air Force. And on the 1st of April 1971 the 68th AHC left Vietnam.

In April of 1971 the 242d Avn Co (ASHC) joined the 145th CAB. And in May of 1971 the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion was relocated to Long Binh.

Command of the 145th CAB was turned over to LTC William J Lumpkins on the 19th of July 1971 by LTC Richard D Kenyon. Also in July of 1971 the 25th Avn Co and the 213th Avn Co joined the 145th CAB. The 334th Avn Co (Armed Escort) was transferred to the 12th Combat Aviation Group in July 1971.

On the 31st of August 1971 the 118th Avn Co (AHC) left Vietnam.

On 1 October 1971 the 242d Avn Co departed Vietnam.

The 117th Avn Co (AHC) joined the 145th CAB for the third time in December 1971. And on the 26th of March 1972 the 117th AHC and the 25th Avn Co (CAC) left Vietnam.

On 31 March 1972 the 213th Avn Co was deactivated.

LTC William J Lumpkins turned over command of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion to LTC Neal C Petree on the 1st of April 1972. On the 2nd of April 1972 the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion left Vietnam.

At the current time I have very little information on the 145th C.A.B. after it left Vietnam. I believe it was stationed at Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia until 30 Sept 1982 when deactivated. And then reactivated at Fort Rucker, Alabama as the 1st Bn., 145th Aviation Regiment on 20 November 1987. Here is a list of 145th C.A.B. commanders after it left Vietnam:

LTC Ernest W. Rhyan, Jr. 3 June 1972 - 19 Dec 1972

LTC Lawrence A. Bell 15 May 1973 - 29 May 1974

LTC Duane C. Ingram 30 May 1974 - 26 Nov 1975

LTC Paul J. Wenzel 26 Nov 1975 - 7 June 1977

LTC Harold E. Culley 8 June 1977 - 8 Jan 1976

LTC Phillip W. Gaskins 9 Jan 1979 - 25 June 1981

LTC John M. Kilkenny 26 Jun 1981 - 30 Sep 1982

Reactivated as 1st Battalion, 145th Aviation Regiment 20 November 1987

LTC Michael S. Byington 20 Nov 1987 - July 1989

LTC James Diamond July 1989 - July 1991