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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 145TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO San Francisco 96266

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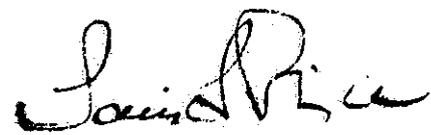
1 April 1972

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, 145th Combat Aviation
Battalion, Period Ending 31 March 1972 (RCS: CSFOR - 65(R3) (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION:

1. Reference AR 505-15 and USARV Reg 525-15.
2. Attached is the Operational Report - Lessons Learned covering the activities of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion for the period 1 November 1971 through 31 March 1972.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



LOUIS L. PIERCE
CPT, FA
Adjutant

1 Incl
as

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I. (C) Operations: Significant Activities

1. Mission: The mission of the 145th Aviation Battalion (Combat) remained relatively unchanged during the reporting period; however, the assets and organization of the battalion did change with the addition of two assault helicopter companies. The battalion continued to support and augment the capabilities of Third Regional Assistance Command and the Republic of Vietnam Forces operating in Military Region III. On 4 February 1972, designated units within the battalion received redeployment of inactivation orders as a result of Operation KEYSTONE, Increment Eleven.

2. Organization: On 5 November 1971, the 117th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) was assigned to the battalion from the 222d Aviation Battalion (Combat). The 240th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) was under operational control of the battalion (for the period of 5 November to 15 November 1971) while the 222d Aviation Battalion was being inactivated. On 1 January 1972, the 120th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) was assigned to the 145th Aviation Battalion from the 165th Aviation Group, which was being inactivated. On 29 February 1972, the 334th Aviation Company (Attack Helicopter) redeployed to Fort Knox, KY, with all aviation assets, ground support equipment, and a cadre detachment. On 1 March 1972, the 120th Aviation Company was reassigned to the 12th Combat Aviation Group. On 15 March 1972, the 25th Corps Aviation Company redeployed, colors only, to USAREUR. The 213th Assault Support Helicopter Company was inactivated. On 15 March 1972, the 117th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) was redeployed to USAEIGHT with colors only. On 31 March 1972, The Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 145th Combat Aviation Battalion was redeployed to Fort Rucker, Alabama, with colors only.

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4. Personnel and Administration:

a. Unit Strength: The battalion strength as of 1 February 1972 is shown as Inclosure 2. On 30 March 1972 the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion had a zero balance of assigned personnel.

b. The following statistics of the reporting period are submitted:

(1) Assignments:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
26	14	157

(2) Permanent Change of Station

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
43	52	372

(3) Casualties Returned to Duty:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
2	2	8

(4) Casualties Evacuated:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
2	2	18

(5) Killed in Action:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
0	0	0

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(6) Killed not as a result of Hostile Action:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
0	2	3

(7) Reenlistment: During the reporting period 24 personnel reenlisted in the battalion. Approximately \$70,000.00 was paid in VET's.

(8) Promotions: The following promotions were made during the reporting period:

<u>CPT</u>	<u>1LT</u>	<u>CW2</u>	<u>E-8</u>	<u>E-7</u>	<u>E-6</u>	<u>E-5</u>	<u>E-4</u>
0	0	31	1	2	3	33	87

(9) ReClassifications: None.

(10) Retirements: None.

(11) R&R Program: The R&R Program was stressed throughout the battalion. During the reporting period the battalion received 232 allocations of which 47 were not filled.

(12) Leaves: Leaves granted during the reporting period were as follows:

	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
EMERGENCY	0	2	12
COMPASSIONATE	0	1	3
SPECIAL	3	1	15
ORDINARY	8	3	14
14 DAY	36	18	47

(13) PIO Coverage:

(a) Honotown News Releases:	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>
	37	28	42	21	0

(b) News Releases: Major events covered during the period were as follows:

- CIVIC ACTION: MEDCAPS
- DENTCAPS
- Support of the Good Shepherd Convont

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Other Stories: Units Assigned to Battalion
Unit Standdown, R deployment and Inactivation
Change of Commands
Reenlistments

5. Intelligence and Security:

a. Intelligence Briefing and Dissemination of Intelligence Information: Intelligence briefings were conducted on a weekly basis for the unit commanders and staff. The Battalion Commander, operations personnel and unit commanders received, updated and confirmed intelligence reports as the enemy situation dictated. The main emphasis was placed on anti-aircraft weapon positions, shot-at reports, and reported enemy movements within the battalion's area of operation.

b. Personnel Security Clearances, Revocations, Denial and Suspensions; and Personnel Security Indoctrination: Personnel security clearances were issued when requested by the unit commander and all prerequisites required by A1 380-5 were met. Security indoctrination of battalion personnel was accomplished at two levels: first at the individual's entrance briefing and second at unit level by the unit commander or his designated representative.

c. Stand Down Operations: Upon notification that the 145th Aviation Battalion Headquarters would stand down, all classified documents were reviewed to determine their value. Those not required for future operations were destroyed immediately. DA Form 2962 was prepared for all personnel assigned to the battalion having a security clearance in an effort to expedite the outprocessing of large groups of personnel. On 2 March 1972, a letter was dispatched to Headquarters, 12th Combat Aviation Group requesting permission to destroy all remaining classified documents. On 4 March 1972, permission was received to destroy all documents not required as directed by 1st Aviation Brigade and 12th Aviation Group Letters of Instruction.

6. Operations:

a. The operations section provided staff coordination and supervision for all operations and aircraft missions within the battalion. This was accomplished through the battalion operations center utilizing the Aviation Liaison Officers and their essential operations NCO's. The battalion operations center (BOC) was operational 24 hours a day. All missions and operations were coordinated through the 12th Combat Aviation Group Army Aviation Element of Headquarters, Third Regional Assistance Command. The Battalion Operations Center provided liaison between the supported unit and supporting unit, assigned missions, coordinated the battalion's aviation assets and insured mission accomplishment. When required, the personnel and

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equipment assets of the BOC maintained the flexibility to establish a Tactical Operations Center in forward areas for extended periods of time. This forward TOC coordinated the battalion's aviation assets in an area removed from the home bases of the aviation companies and near the headquarters of the supported command to facilitate close coordination of mission requirements. TOC was utilized for a 45 day period for 21 November 1971 to 3 January 1972 in operations staging out of Tay Ninh Province into the Chop Rubber Plantation in Cambodia.

b. During this reporting period the battalion supported units in MR III with combat assaults, direct combat supports, and other combat support missions. Specific missions included; emergency armed helicopter standby each night at Plantation, Bearcat, Long Than North and Phu Loi Base Camps, airlifting assault troops and equipment, and providing command and control aircraft, medevac and aircraft recovery.

c. In early November the battalion acquired the 117th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) and had Operational Control of the 240th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter). For the first time in six months, the 145th Aviation Battalion had an assault helicopter capability. These two units conducted more than 15 combat assaults in a 30 day period in support of operations conducted by Royal Thailand Army Volunteer Forces, Regional Popular Forces, and Provincial Reconnaissance Units.

d. The 213th Aviation Company (Aslt Hpt Hel) continued to provide general support for all non-divisional units in Military Region III. During the reporting period, the OH-47C helicopter support shifted from support of United States Army and Air Force units to Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces. This was due primarily to the shift of the combat role to the ARVN Forces in South Vietnam.

e. The 334th Aviation Company (Corps) was assigned two missions. The first mission remains classified and beyond all scope of this report. The second was to provide aerial weapons support on call in Military Region III.

f. The mission of the 25th Aviation Company (Corps) remained unchanged during the reporting period; to provide immediate and responsive aviation support to the Third Regional Assistance Command. During January 1972, two additional OH-58A helicopters were attached to the company to provide support for the 5th Battalion, 42d Artillery (Non-Divisional).

g. On 20 November 1971, the 145th Aviation Battalion was given the warning order to prepare to support a major offensive by forces of III Corps and the 3d Airborne Division, both ARVN organizations, into the Chop Rubber Plantation Cambodia. The battalion TOC was established at Tay Ninh West on 21 November 1971, and air operations command the following day. The initial days of the

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operation required two CH-47C helicopters, two UH-1H armed helicopters, two AH-1G attack helicopters, and two UH-1H utility helicopters. Those aircraft conducted combat resupply and armed escort missions into fire support bases along the Cambodian border from Thien Ngon to the "Fish Hook". During the hours of darkness two AH-1G attack helicopters and a UH-1H utility helicopter equipped with MA IV flares were on emergency standby at Tay Ninh West Airfield. As elements of the Airborne Division progressed up highway QL 22 northwest of Krok toward the Crap Plantation, CH-47C cargo helicopters were required to conduct resupply missions from Thien Ngon to firebases and night defense positions 30 nautical miles within Cambodia. The 5th ARVN Division pushed North and East of Krok into the village of Dambo. On 9 December 1971, an armored element of the 5th Division became completely surrounded by a regiment of North Vietnamese Regulars. An intense mortar and ground attack was launched by the NVA in an attempt to overrun the surrounded unit. Two CH-47C cargo helicopters with a light fire team of AH-1G and light fire team of UH-1H armed helicopters in support attempted to resupply the beleaguered allies. One CH-47C received intensive 51 caliber anti-aircraft fire from undetected positions surrounding the landing zone and crashed within the perimeter of the ARVN defense positions. The crew escaped with minor injuries. The crew was evacuated and the position resupplied the following day at the cost of a UH-1H from the 11th Combat Aviation Battalion to anti-aircraft fire. The offensive grew to a close with the orderly withdrawal of ARVN Forces from Cambodia on 3 January 1972.

h. On 1 January 1972, the 120th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) was assigned to the 145th Aviation Battalion as a result of the inactivation of the 165th Aviation Group (Combat). The 120th Aviation Company's mission was expanded from general support of Headquarters, USARV and Headquarters, MACV in February as units of the 145th began stand down operations. The 120th Aviation Company was reorganized under a modified Table of Organization and Equipment to broaden its support role as a residual aviation unit. Six CH-47C cargo helicopters, five UH-1H helicopters and five OH-58A helicopters were added to the aviation assets of the company.

i. The first element of the 145th Aviation Battalion to receive stand down and redeployment instructions was the 334th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter). On 3 February 1972, the 334th Aviation Company began stand down operations in preparation for redeployment to Fort Knox, KY.

j. The 233rd Assault Support Helicopter Company and the 25th Aviation Company (Corps) received stand down instructions on 15 February 1972. The 213th Aviation Company split its assets between redeployment to the United States Eighth Army and the 120th Aviation Company. The 25th Aviation Company was redeployed, colors only, to USAREUR. Those two units accomplished their stand down with a minimum of turmoil. On 1 March 1972, the 213th Assault Support Helicopter Company received notification that it was to be inactivated rather than deployed to USAEIGHTH. The unit received instructions to turn their colors over to the 12th Combat Aviation Group pending official forwarding instructions.

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k. On 20 February 1972, the 117th Aviation Company started stand down operations. With the exceptions of ferrying aircraft to Cam Ran Bay due to over-load conditions at Vung Tau the operation was accomplished efficiently and rapidly. The colors of the 117th were sent to Headquarters, USAREIGHT.

l. On 1 March 1972, the 120th Aviation Company, the last operational aviation unit in the battalion, was reassigned to the 12th Aviation Group. On the same date, HHC, 145th Combat Aviation Battalion received stand down instructions. The 120th Aviation Company remained as a residual unit to the Republic of Vietnam and HHC, 145th Combat Aviation Battalion colors were redeployed by color detachment to Fort Rucker, Alabama.

7. Aviation Safety - Two accidents occurred during the reporting period while flying 23,244 hours.

a. On 10 November 1971, a UH-1H had a transmission failure while in flight. The aircraft crashed and burned on impact. There were a total of 7 fatalities.

b. On 15 November 1971, a UH-1H on a medivac mission had a number one hanger bearing failure. The pilot analyzed the trouble as a partial transmission failure and executed a down wind approach. The aircraft made a hard landing resulting in damage to the skids, cross tubes, aircraft under belly, and tailboom.

8. Logistics: The S4 Section provided staff supervision and coordination for all logistical operations within the battalion. Frequent staff visits and inspections of subordinate units by the S4 staff with emphasis on instructional assistance and compliance with applicable regulations and policies were conducted.

II. (U) Lessons Learned: All commander's observations and lessons learned were compiled into the After Action Report on Inactivation of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion attached as inclosure 1.

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