

HISTORY OF  
COMPANY "A", 2ND AVIATION BATTALION  
1 AUGUST-31 AUGUST 1966

Prepared By  
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Approved By  
ERNEST H. JOHNSON  
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Commanding

HEADQUARTERS  
173rd AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEP)  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96250

335TH AVIATION COMPANY (AIRMObILE-LIGHT)  
173RD Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO 96250 San Francisco, California

ARAV-AM

1 September 1966

SUBJECT: Monthly History for Company A, 82nd Aviation Battalion:  
1 August 1966 through 31 August 1966.

TO: Commanding Officer  
335th Aviation Company (Airmobile Light)  
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO San Francisco, California 96250

1. Operations:

a. 1 August 1966, found Co. A, 82nd Aviation Battalion in Bien Hoa after terminating support of the 173rd Airborne Brigade's Operation Aurora II on 31 July. Extensive post-operation aircraft maintenance was in process, and recovered parts of the company's crashed Cowboy 571 were flown to Cam Ranh Bay for inspection to determine cause of the fatal accident of 27 July 1966.

b. On 2 August 1966, Company A held an Awards and Decorations Ceremony in the company area. The Company Commander, Major Johnson, pinned awards on 26 members of the company. In the afternoon the Cowboys, with Falcon cover, lifted troops of 4th Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade into the local TAOR in support of Operation Uniontown. Later in the afternoon pilots flew to Vung Tau to ferry UH-1D's 902 and 910 to Bien Hoa as replacements for UH-1D's 735 and 571 destroyed on Operation Aurora II.

c. From 3 August 1966 until 9 August 1966, Company A continued to support the Brigade in Operation Uniontown and Provided aircraft for Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol Training. Training of the LRPP's consisted of practice in methods of infiltrating and exfiltrating patrols in enemy territory. The new "Palmer Snatch", rappelling and rope ladder methods were practiced. On the afternoon of 5 August the Falcons with 173rd Aviation Platoon put on a fire power demonstration in War Zone D for the new unit commanders within the brigade.

d. On 10 August, the 173rd Airborne Brigade opened a search and destroy operation East of Xuan Loc. Labelling the operation, Toledo, the Brigade Headquarters moved into position Castile at the base of Gia Ray Mountain, with the Cowboys supporting from Xuan Loc airfield.

e. The Cowboys on 13 August with elements of the 145th Aviation Battalion lifted 1/503 and 4/503 into LZ Grenada in support of Operation Toledo. At approximately 2000 hours, Cowboy operations at Xuan-Loc received a call that a "Dust Off" helicopter was missing near LZ Grenada. Captain Wayne Davis and Lt. Fred Zabarsky took Cowboy 674 on a rescue mission through darkness and marginal weather. The crewchief of the "Dust Off" was found and rescued and elements of 2/503 were directed to the crash site.

f. On 14 August, the Cowboy's lifted an ARVN unit from An Loc to a position East of Castile in support of Operation Toledo.

g. On 16 August Falcon 86, Major William MacPhail, flying a UH-1B armed with a new chemical dispersing unit made a CS run on a location suspected to be harboring large VC units. The CS was effective as Falcon 86 took four(4) hits. Immediately after spraying, the Falcons struck the area with their machine guns, rockets and grenades.

h. In the late afternoon of 17 August, an OH-13S, Casper 419, lost power and settled into the trees in a small LZ near position Granada. There were no injuries and the aircraft was repaired and flown to Bien Hoa on 18 August.

i. On 20 August 1966, Falcon 86 was slightly wounded on another successful CS mission. Cowboy 567 was forced down by an engine compartment fire at position Castile. Several crewchiefs in the LZ quickly extinguished the fire saving the aircraft and preventing injury to the crew.

j. On 21 August, Major Clark and Captain Reeves made an emergency extraction of an LRRP being chased by the Viet Cong. There was not a suitable LZ available. The "Palmer Snatch" was employed for the first time by the Cowboys under combat conditions.

k. On 22 August, the Cowboys with Falcon cover lifted 360 U.S. and 180 ARVN troops in support of Operation Toledo. The MLD System (Mortar Aerial Delivery) deployed from a UH-1B of the 173rd Aviation Platoon attacked positions in "War Zone D" where Viet Cong elements had been sighted.

l. During the morning of 23 August, the Company, working with the 145th Aviation Battalion, lifted elements of the 173rd Airborne Brigade as Operation Toledo turns to the Southeast in pursuit of the Viet Cong. Just past noon the Cowboys were beginning resupply of elements of the Brigade. Cowboy 674 had an engine failure and was autorotated by Captain Troy Reeves into an open field two miles South of Xuan Loc. There were no injuries and the aircraft was lifted to Bien Hoa by CH-47.

m. On 24 August 1966, 356 troop of the 173rd Abn. Bde. were lifted in support of Toledo. The Cowboys are alerted for overnight stand-by to lift a reaction force for the Brigade.

n. On 29 August, a UH-1B received one hit in support of Operation Toledo. There were no injuries and only incident damage to the aircraft.

o. The month of August closed with the Cowboys continuing to support Operation Toledo in the dense jungle South of Xuan Loc.

# STATISTICS FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST

|               | <u>OH-13</u> | <u>UH-1B(A)</u> | <u>UH-1B</u> | <u>UH-1D</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Sorties       | 396          | 431             | 309          | 3021         | 4157         |
| Hours         | 292          | 398             | 187          | 1228         | 2105         |
| Pax           |              |                 |              |              | 4355         |
| Cargo (tons)  |              |                 |              |              | 242          |
| Aircraft Hits | 7            |                 |              |              |              |

## 2. TRAINING:

The training time this month was devoted to familiarizing the pilots and crews of the UH-1D's with the Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol infiltration and exfiltration tactics. Often these patrols are placed in or removed from locations requiring rappelling, use of rope ladders or use of the "Palmer Snatch." The "Palmer Snatch" is an emergency exfiltration method operated from a helicopter hovering over the jungle. A length of rope is lowered from the helicopter to the troops on the jungle floor. The troops are hooked onto the rope by a Swiss Seat and a Chest Harness. The helicopter hovers straight up until the troops are clear of the trees, and flies to the nearest secure landing area. All the methods were practiced and studied.

## 3. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS: (PREPARED BY Sp/4 Michael A. De Marco)

| <u>RANK</u> | <u>NAME</u>            | <u>AWARD</u> |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Major       | GIBBONS, Bruce H.      | D.F.C.       |
| Captain     | OVERHOLSER, William H. | B.S. ACM "V" |
| Captain     | PITCHARD, Donald G.    | B.S. BAM     |
| SSGT        | TILLEY, Rosco C.       | B.S.         |
| Sp/4        | KOZIOL, Theophil J.    | AM "V"       |
| Sp/4        | PLATT, Richard W.      | AM "V" BAM   |
| Major       | COCHRAN, Bruce S.      | BAM          |
| Major       | VICTOR, Henry J.       | BAM          |
| Captain     | REEVES, Troy Jr.       | BAM          |
| Captain     | ALBRECHT, Richard D.   | BAM          |
| 1/Lt        | BEASLEY, Lonnie S.     | BAM          |
| 1/Lt        | MURRAY, George W. Jr.  | BAM          |
| CWO         | DORF, Harold A.        | BAM          |
| CWO         | RICHARDSON, Harold F.  | BAM          |
| WO          | JONES, Kenneth R.      | BAM          |
| WO          | MC CORMAC II, Gordon   | BAM          |

|      |                        |             |
|------|------------------------|-------------|
| WO   | NORTON, Daniel S.      | BAM         |
| WO   | STOUDT, Charles F.     | BAM ACM "V" |
| WO   | LIND, Clarence R.      | BAM         |
| WO   | SANDERS, Gary G.       | BAM         |
| WO   | BASNEY, Ronald A.      | BAM         |
| WO   | CHASE, Robert A.       | BAM P.H.    |
| SSSG | RENNY, James           | BAM         |
| Sp/5 | PETE, Davis S.         | BAM         |
| Sp/5 | LUCAS, Delbert G.      | BAM         |
| Sp/5 | EMERICK, Thomas J.     | BAM         |
| Sp/5 | COOPER, Homer A.       | BAM         |
| Sp/5 | FERRALL, Frank V.      | BAM         |
| Sp/5 | ROBERTS, Curtis        | BAM         |
| Sp/5 | RAYNE, Melvin L.       | BAM         |
| Sp/5 | LAMPMAN, Richard R.    | BAM         |
| Sp/5 | LARSON, Larry          | BAM         |
| Sp/4 | NELSON, Gary M.        | BAM         |
| Sp/4 | BRECHT, William C.     | BAM         |
| Sp/4 | BELL, Philip G.        | BAM         |
| Sp/4 | TIPPETT, Jerry W.      | BAM         |
| Sp/4 | PATTERSON, Richard G.  | BAM         |
| Sp/4 | INGLES, Michael J.     | BAM         |
| Sp/4 | LUNECKAS, Peter T.     | BAM         |
| Sp/4 | NORRIS, Mickel J.      | BAM         |
| Pfc  | KEIL, David A.         | BAM         |
| Pfc  | PRICE, Larry D.        | BAM         |
| Pfc  | EPSTEIN, Lewis D.      | BAM         |
| Pfc  | ANTHONY, Everett       | BAM         |
| Pfc  | KINKELLA, Alan J.      | BAM         |
| Pfc  | PIKE, John V.          | BAM         |
| Pfc  | JACKSON, Walter C.     | BAM         |
| Pfc  | EBY, Benny E.          | BAM         |
| Pfc  | HANSHAW, David L.      | BAM ACM     |
| Pfc  | FRENCH, Ray            | BAM         |
| Sp/5 | SCHULTZ, Kurt E.       | ACM         |
| Sp/5 | SHATZER, John R.       | ACM         |
| WO   | DUMAS, Robert E.       | P.H.        |
| WO   | GEISH UDER, Anthony J. | P.H.        |

#### 4. COMPANY AREA:

Construction and beautification projects continued in the Company area. The Officers, under the close supervision of Major Victor, put the finishing touches on a Cowboy-Falcon-Casper Lounge joining the patios of the BOQ. The lounge will have a bar, TV, a hand painted helicopter aerial combat mural designed by 1/Lt. John Hoza and a Company Officers DEROS snapshot sequence.

The All-American club had its grand opening and is serving the Enlisted Men with a bar, Lounge and day room. The club building also houses a barber shop and a laundry which serves the entire Company.

5. CIVIL AFFAIRS:

a. On 19 August 1966 Company A, 22nd Aviation Battalion, working hand in hand with the 38th Artillery Battalion, ARVN, completed construction of a three classroom school in Duc Tu District of Ngu Phuc area, Republic of Vietnam. The school, now being used by the Vietnamese people, was completed under direction of First Lieutenants Guillot and Zabarsky with many hours of hard, voluntary work by the men of the Company.

The Vietnamese orphanage directly across the street from the school project in Duc Tu was treated to a party by the Cowboys. Food and drinks were provided for the children and staff of the orphanage. Major Johnson, Commander of the Cowboys, with Major Victor and 1/Lt. Zabarsky attended the big party to represent the Company and reported that the party was a tremendous success.

The 25th Medical Detachment of Company A continued MEDCAP operations in Duc Tu District. In conjunction with the medical work, articles of food, milk and clothing were distributed to needy Vietnamese people.

HISTORY OF  
335TH AVIATION COMPANY (AIRMOBILE LIGHT)  
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO 96250 San Francisco, California

1 September 1966 through 30 September 1966

Prepared By  
1/Lt GEORGE W. MURRAY

Approved By  
ERNEST H. JOHNSON  
Major Infantry  
Commanding

Headquarters  
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO 96250 San Francisco, California

335TH AVIATION COMPANY (Aml-Lt)  
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO 96250 San Francisco, California

AVBE-AM

1 October 1966

TO: Commanding Officer  
335th Aviation Company (Aml-Lt)  
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO 96250 San Francisco, California

I. OPERATIONS:

- a. The 335th Aviation Company (Aml-Lt) continued to support into September the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) on a search and destroy operation labelled Toledo being conducted near Xuan Loc, Republic of Vietnam. Light Cowboys with Falcon support flew four combat assaults as the Paratroops searched-out the Viet Cong.
- b. The second of September found the Cowboys and Falcons with elements of the 145th Aviation Battalion lifting 354 troops of the Brigade in a massive heliborne assault. Cowboy 902 loaded with troops lost power on departure from LZ Washington and was autorotated. Damage was suffered to the tail boom and tail rotor. 902 was evacuated to Bien Hoa by CH-47.
- c. The Cowboys, Falcons, and Caspers from 3 through 6 September supported the 173rd Airborne with resupply, courier service, reconnaissance, command and liaison and aerial fire support.
- d. The 7th of September marked the termination of Operation Toledo as the 335th led three airmobile companies in lifting the paratroopers from the operations area into the "Snake Pit" at Bien Hoa.
- e. Early morning the 9th of September found the Cowboys and Falcons winging Westward to support the 1st Infantry Division in the Phu Loi -- Lai Khe area. 216 members of "the Big Red One" were Eagle Flighted into a rough, brush landing zone. The proud Cowboys shamed 1st Infantry Airmobile Companies with their tight, exact formation flying and the deadly Falcons put on an impressive demonstration of aerial fire support.
- f. Operation Uniontown underway in the 173rd local TAOR was supported on 9 September by the 335th. Vietnamese National Elections are approaching and alertness is the word, for all allied intelligence sources expect maximum Viet Cong interference with the elections.



1 October 1966

g. The period of 10 September through 14 September was quiet for the 335th. The battalions operating in the local TAOR were provided hot "A" rations and other supplies each morning and evening by the UH-1D's.

h. On 15 September 4th Battalion moved Northwest to secure an airstrip at Dau Tieng for an operation by the 1st Infantry Division. The security operation was labelled Operation Atlantic City, and before this number of wounded, pulled an injured man from the jungles on the end of a rope, took three bullet hits, and flew a scary night emergency resupply of damaged radio parts to the 4th Battalion.

i. September 16th at 1015 hours CWO Dorf and WO Gregg working out of Dau Tieng in support of the 4/503 received three rounds of light automatic weapons fire as they were on short final to medevac wounded Americans. The hits ruptured the fuel cells, and by the time CWO Dorf nursed the crippled 701 into Dau Tieng, JP-4 was flowing ankle deep through the cargo compartment. A survival kit under the crewchief's seat caught one enemy round headed for Sp/5 Meredith. 701 was finally repaired by the maintenance crew on "Horse Thief" and was flown to Bien Hoa.

At noon the Cowboys and Falcons lifted elements of the Brigade into a landing zone in the TAOR. Cowboy 738 in formation at tree top altitude experienced an engine failure. WO Ron Jones, aircraft commander, and Captain John Wood, who was on his first heliborne assault in Vietnam, made a perfect zero airspeed autorotation into dense jungle. There were no injuries, but the jungle was so dense that a landing to rescue the crew was impossible. An emergency message was relayed to the Brigade Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol to prepare their rescue rope ladders for use. The LRRP responded instantly with the entire unit trying to climb on helicopters to rescue the Cowboys from the hands of the Viet Cong. However, the LRRP was finally convinced that only a rope ladder was needed to rescue the crew. A few nervous moments after plunging into the jungle, the crew scrambled up the rope ladders into the hovering rescue helicopter. Later in the afternoon 738 was evacuated to Bien Hoa by CH-47.

j. At 0800 on 17 September 1966 an Awards and Decorations Ceremony was held. Major Johnson, Commander of the Cowboys, decorated ten officers and enlisted men for acts of valor and periods of meritorious service. The Company received notice that the Cowboys, as of 1 September 1966, are redesignated the 335th Aviation Company (Airmobile-Light). Company A will be returned to its parent 32nd Aviation Battalion at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. This return to the United States involves only our name, a disappointment to every Cowboy.

k. The period of 15 September to 23 September was a period of training and experimentation with a new item of equipment. Col. Parmeter introduced us to a system deployed on the roof of the jungle by a UH-1D. This system was labelled the jungle canopy and CWO H. Dorf and WOR. Jones worked with Col. Parmeter in preparation for a demonstration to show how troops and equipment could be placed on this canopy by helicopter, then lowered to the otherwise inaccessible jungle floor.

1 October 1966

l. At last light on the afternoon of 20 September five LRRP teams were onfo;trated by UH-1D's into the hostile area North of Bien Hoa known notoriously as War Zone D. Two light fire teams from the Falcons provided cover for the operation; there was negative enemy contact.

m. The Cowboys and Falcons spent the day of 21 September on extraction stand-by for the LRRP teams working in D Zone. Three of the teams made contact with the Viet Cong and three times the Cowboys scrambled to snatch the patrols from the hands of the Viet Cong.

n. On 22 September, light fire teams from the Falcons were called upon to provide aerial fire support for LRRP's in contact with the Viet Cong. At 1030 Cowboys reacted to an urgent request for a patrol extraction, pulling the patrol in without incident. Again at last light two LRRP's were scheduled for infiltration into D Zone. The first Cowboy approaching his LZ spotted VC on the edge of the woods. A quick drawing Cowboy crewchief beat a VC with an automatic weapon to the draw. Partners of the dead VC opened fire and the LRRP mission was aborted. The second Cowboy began his approach and received fire, a hot gun battle ensued as the Cowboy pulled out of the approach and the Falcons rolled in with their guns blazing. Both LRRP's missions were aborted and returned to Bien Hoa because of the VC presence in primary and alternate LZ's.

The Casper's OH-13's armed with machineguns went out for the test fire of their new systems. The OH-13's are to be utilized as scout units to detect Viet Cong concentrations for destruction by quick reaction Cowboy - Falcon Eagle Flights.

o. At 0800 on the 23rd of September, CWO Harold Dorf and WO Ronald Jones flew the jungle canopy demonstration for the Brigade Staff. Col Parmeter gave the staff members an initial briefing on the uses and operation of the canopy. The net became fouled in the jungle and the demonstration was terminated with observers skeptical of the feasibility of the jungle canopy system.

At 1300 two UH-1D's conducted training with pathfinders from E/17 Cav.

The last light of day saw three Cowboys spiral down into the jungles of War Zone D with LRRP's to search for Viet Cong. WO Charles F. Stoudt and WO William M. Manker placed their patrol in a small rough jungle clearing. Immediately after the helicopter departed the LRRP engaged a platoon size VC force; an immediate extraction was requested. WO Stoudt and WO Manker went back into the LZ and picked up the patrol under fire. A rotor blade was damaged, but the aircraft returned safely to Bien Hoa.

p. LRRP's called for help at 1300 hours on 25 September. The Cowboys and Falcons snatched the patrols from the jungle and assaulted a reaction force into the area where the LRRP's had discovered the Viet Cong.

The 173rd Airborne Brigade began Operation Sioux City, aiming at the Viet Cong elements the LRRP had made contact with in D Zone.

Subject: Monthly History for 335th Avn Co (AML)

1 October 1966

q. 0800 hours, 26 September 1966 the Cowboys delivered 120 paratroopers into D Zone LZ's. The Falcons shot white phosphorous into a position that was directing ground fire at the Cowboys. Two VC with their clothes in flames sprinted into the open and were cut down by the "Saber" gunships.

r. Three assaults put 170 paratroopers into LZ's in support of Sioux City on the morning of 27 September.

s. On 28 September Eagle Flights were conducted in War Zone D as the 173rd Airborne continued to search for the elusive Viet Cong. OH-13's armed with their side arms conducted Aero-Scout training with E/17 Cavalry. Three LRRP's were placed in the Brigade operational area in D Zone. Thirty minutes after infiltration one team was calling for help. Captain Troy Reeves and Captain Don Moss made a daring extraction of the team under intense automatic weapons fire. The Falcon fire team led by Captain Vance Gammons provided ravaging fire support for the extraction. The LRRP's reported that Falcon fire was providing close-in support against VC only 20 meters from their position.

t. The Cowboys's, Falcons, and Casper's continued on September 29 and 30 to provide the Brigade with aviation support for Operation Sioux City. Eagle flights and assaults were made, supplies were delivered, LRRP's were supported and CS gas was showered on suspected Viet Cong targets. The month of September closed with the following monthly statistics:

|               | <u>OH-13</u> | <u>UH-1B(A)</u> | <u>UH-1B</u> | <u>UH-1D</u> | <u>TOTAL</u> |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Sorties       | 225          | 642             | 325          | 2552         | 3744         |
| Hours         | 127          | 450             | 162          | 964          | 1703         |
| Pax           |              |                 |              |              | 4381         |
| Cargo (ton)   |              |                 |              |              | 206          |
| Aircraft Hits | 3            |                 |              |              |              |

## II. TRAINING:

Training during the month of September was devoted to new pilots and crew members. Pilots were given the usual unit aircraft checkout and the area orientation. New gunners and crew chiefs were given the weapon checkout and briefed on crew procedures and responsibilities.

## III. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

Prepared by Sp/4 Michael De Marco.

Presented 17 September in ceremony by Major Ernest H. Johnson, Commanding Officer 335th Aviation Company (AML):

### Officers:

|                       |       |   |
|-----------------------|-------|---|
| MacPhail, William Jr. | Major | DFC, Bronze Star, AM w/"V",<br>Purple Heart |
| Addiss, Daniel A.     | Major | Bronze Star                                 |
| Bell, Glenn B.        | 1/Lt  | AM w/"V"                                    |
| Kuhblank, Richard C.  | 1/Lt  | AM w/"V"                                    |

Subject: Monthly History for 335th Avn Co (AHL)

1 October 1966

Sanders, Gary G.  
Peters, Donald L.

WO  
Captain

AM w/"V"  
AM

Enlisted Men:

Ferrall, Frank V. Jr.  
Klinefelter, John W.  
Houchin, Zelner M. Jr.  
McHugh, Leo P.

Sp/5  
Sp/4  
Pfc  
Pfc

AM  
AM  
AM  
AM

IV. COMPANY AREA:

Construction work in individual rooms continues at an enthusiastic pace. CWO Bill Easton persists in his running water project. A large water tower has been constructed and piping to deliver running water to the company area is being laid.

V. CIVIL AFFAIRS:

IEDC P and food distribution projects in the Bien Hoa area were carried out to aid the sick and needy Vietnamese people.

HISTORY OF  
335TH AVIATION COMPANY (AIRMOBILE-LIGHT)  
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO 96250 San Francisco, California

1 October 1966 through 30 October 1966

Prepared By  
1/Lt George W. Murray

Approved By  
Leyburn W. Brockwell Jr  
LTC Infantry  
Commanding

For  
ERNEST H. JOHNSON  
Major Infantry  
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS  
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO San Francisco, Calif. 96250

335TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY  
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO San Francisco 96250

AVBE-AM

12 March 1967

Subject: Monthly History for 335th Aviation Company 1 October  
1966 through 30 October 1966.

I. OPERATIONS:

a. The month of October began with the Cowboys, Falcons and Caspers continuing to provide the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) with dependable aviation support as the skysoldiers carried on Operations Sioux City and Uniontown. A Casper OH-13S darting across the operations area near position Fox picked up two rounds of small arms fire. The pilot was able to reach a secure area, where he found minor damage to his ship. The company made two small lifts to reposition the paratroopers as their unrelenting pursuit of the crafty Biet Cong in "War Zone D" continued.

b. On the 2nd of October two OH-13S' armed with machineguns provided overhead cover for E/17 Cav. The Viet Cong chose not to interfere with the Cavalry and thus avoided incurring the wrath of the Aero Scouts.

c. One hundred and sixty U.S. troops were lifted by seven Cowboys with cover from a Falcon light fire team on 4 October. Light contact was made but "Charlie" avoided major contact with the paratroopers of the 173rd.

d. The Cowboys moved two hundred troops of the Brigade as Operation Sioux City continued on 6 October.

e. On 7 October, 10 Cowboys with cover from two Falcon light fire teams repositioned 120 U.S. troops in War Zone D.

f. On 8 October 1966, paratroopers of the 173rd began to withdraw from the area of Operation Sioux City. 360 troops were extracted by the Cowboys. As the Cowboys approached the Song Dong Nai River, the Southern boundary of "War Zone D," the Viet Cong opened fire on the formation. Four ships were damaged. The Cowboys, in formation, returned the fire and the hungry Falcons rolled in to remind "Charlie" that the luxury of firing at the Cowboys can cost dearly. Later in the day, 5 Cowboys moved 60 cavalrymen into position to secure the route of travel for the Brigade convey moving out of "D Zone."

g. On 9 October, the Cowboys cleaned up the Sioux City area with an extraction of 92 U.S. troops in 4 lifts. Aerial reconnaissance for Operation Robin began as 5 aircraft checked Route #15 from Bien Hoa to Vung Tau to prepare for road clearing operations.

h. 10 October 1966 was the opening day of Operation Robin as the skysoldiers provided security for elements of the 4th Infantry Division moving from Vung Tau to Bear Cat.

12 March 1967

i. The morning of 11 October the "Cowboys" lifted troops of the 173rd into an LZ in the vicinity of the Brigade CP on Highway #15 South of Bien Hoa. Operation Robin continued as the 335th provided a light fire team, a courier ship and resupply ships used to supplement the road supply convoy.

j. On 12 October four UH-1D's and a light fire team infiltrated two LRRP's into suspected Biet Cong areas South of the Brigade CP. At approximately 1805 Casper #416, an OH-13S piloted by 1/Lt Douglas L Jones, departed the Brigade CP enroute to Bien Hoa. At approximately 1815, #416 hit the upper strand of power lines running through the Long Binh area. #416 fell 50 feet to the ground and burst into flames. 1/Lt Jones and his passenger S/Sgt E-6 Freeman were killed instantly. The accident investigation board was appointed and began its investigation at first light on the 13th of October.

At 1830 hours on the 12th five UH-1D's with a light fire team conducted night training. They landed in formation at Bear Cat, Vung Tau and the Snake Pit in Bien Hoa.

k. Early on the morning of 13 October 1966 two OH-13S were carried by Air Force C-130 to Da Nang. Two UH-1D's flew to Da Nang via the coastal route. These four helicopters were placed in support of the 173rd Airborne Brigade's 4/503 Infantry on Operation Winchester supporting allied operations in I Corp near the Demilitarized Zone. At 1700 hours three UH-1D's extracted a LRRP which had made contact with a Viet Cong force. The extraction was made without any enemy interference.

l. Again on 14 October a LRRP called for extraction at 1700 hours. The extraction was made with no enemy fire received. At 1800 hours a flight of six UH-1D's (the Mustangs) with a light fire team made a night formation training flight to Vung Tau, the Snake Pit and back into the COMRAIL.

m. At 0900 hours on 15 October, UH-1D's covered by a light fire team extracted 42 U.S. paratroopers from a pick-up zone in AO Robin. A second light fire team came on station at 0900 hours to provide convoy cover for Brigade vehicles traveling Highway 15 in the Robin area.

n. 16 October 1966 dawned with a Falcon fire team making a reconnaissance, repeated at last light of day, was a daily chore to observe any Viet Cong activity near the Crucial highway.

o. Termination of the 173rd Airborne Brigade's road runner operation on Highway #15 began at 0730 hours on 17 October as 7 "Cowboys" and 2 "Falcon" light fire teams extracted 126 U.S. paratroopers from the Robin area. A convoy began moving toward Bien Hoa with a "Falcon" team providing overhead cover. By the afternoon Operation Robin was terminated. The 335th "violation counts Operation Robin a loss because of the tragic accidental death of 1/Lt Douglas L. Jones.

12 March 1967

p. At 0730 hours on 18 October 2 UH-1D's began airborne refresher training with elements of E Troop, 17th Cav. At 0900 hours one UH-1D departed the CORRAL for Da Nang to provide additional support for 4/503 in Operation Winchester. At 2245 hours a Viet Cong unit attacked the armed helicopter parking area at the South boundary of the Brigade perimeter. A Claymore mine or fragmentation grenade was detonated under UH-1B #932. The resulting fire, and fuel-ammunition explosion completely destroyed #932 and severely damaged #930. Captain Vance Gammons and Sp4 Lyle Travis saved #930 from destruction by flying it off the pad. Both were later presented the Bronze Star with "V" Device for heroism by Major General Paul Smith, Commanding General of the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate). Falcon aircraft #919 parked next to #932 also was in danger and was evacuated by 1/Lt Willoughby Goin; Lt Goin received the Air Medal with a "V" Device for heroism.

q. At 0700 hours on 19 October 1966, seven (7) "Cowboys" and two (2) light fire teams departed Bien Hoa to support the 25th Infantry Division in the Cu Chi-Duc Hoa area. Combat assaults moved 150 ARVN and U.S. troops during the day. On the last extraction of the day the "Cowboys," on short final to an open, rice field pick-up zone, were ambushed by heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire. Cowboy door gunners whipped out white smoke to mark for the Falcons and opened fire with their own M-60's. The Falcons rolled in and the supposedly "Secure LZ" was engulfed in a wild fire fight. Airborne again, the "Cowboys" found five of seven ships carrying combat damage-no crew members wounded. Two of the ARVN extracted were seriously wounded by enemy fire and were flown to 7th Surgical Hospital at Cu Chi.

One light fire team at Bien Hoa conducted reconnaissance of the Brigade TACOR (Tactical Area of Operational Responsibility) at 0730 and 1930. These recons provide more security for the Brigade perimeter, which is obviously not as secure as everyone had previously hoped.

r. Before daylight on the morning of 20 October, seven (7) "Cowboys" and two (2) "Falcon" fire teams pulled hitch and headed into the Delta South of Saigon. Arriving at Ben Tri, the company joined the "Outlaws" and "Knights" of the Delta Aviation Battalion (13th Aviation Battalion) and lifted 280 ARVN in four assaults. On an extraction toward the end of the afternoon, the "Falcons" detected Viet Cong on a landing zone about to be assaulted. Rolling in the guns, put CS gas, machinegun fire and rockets on the enemy elements and successfully upset any plans the enemy had of firing on the incoming slicks.

The company returned to the CORRAL happy, as the units visited in the Delta expressed amazement at the excellent formation flying by the "Cowboys" and the spirited aggressiveness of the bloodthirsty "Falcons."

s. October 21 and 22 were spent in normal support of the 173rd Airborne in Bien Hoa and Da Nang. A number of recons were conducted in the TACOR and one recon covered Highway #15 from Bien Hoa to Vung Tau.



Subject: Monthly History for Company A, 82nd Avn Bn

12 March 1967

t. On 23 October 1966 light fire teams conducted recons in the TAOR. At 1300 a fire team from the Falcons went out to cover CH-47's (Chinooks) flying out of Xom Cat Special Forces Camp on the North bank of the Song Dong Nai River Northeast of Bien Hoa.

At 1800, 3 UH-1D's covered by a fire team positioned 2 LRRP teams in the Brigade TAOR.

u. At 1120 hours on 24 October three (3) UH-1D's and a "Falcon" fire team scrambled to extract a LRRP team that had been compromised. The extraction was successful with no combat damage received.

At 1800 hours another LRRP was positioned by the "Cowboys."

v. Just after day break on 25 October 1966, the "Cowboys" and "Falcons" received request for an emergency extraction of a LRRP team. The LRRP had made contact with a small Viet Cong element and had captured two of the enemy. The extraction was successful, and the two VC were delivered to Brigade Headquarters for interrogation. On departure from the pick up, the "Falcons" spotted sampans in the area and rolled in on firing crosses. When the smoke cleared there were two positively destroyed enemy boats.

In the afternoon one UH-1D flew a reconnaissance in the vicinity of Tanh Linh for possible operations on the 26th of October.

w. 26 October was spent in normal support of the 173rd Airborne in Bien Hoa and the Brigade's 4/503 at Da Nang.

x. On 27 October 1966 at 0045 hours 7 UH-1D's escorted by 2 light fire teams lifted 180 paratroopers of the 1/503. At 1500 hours 4 UH-1D's (Mustangs) and a team of "Falcons" repositioned 72 troops of the 1/503 in the TAOR. Two UH-1D's received hits and one gunner suffered minor neck wounds. Operation Trojan Horse (Joplin) began today for the 1/503.

y. At 0700 hours on 28 October, 7 "Cowboys" supplemented by 3 UH-1D's from the 145th Aviation Battalion and 2 "Falcon" fire teams lifted 600 ARVN troops into the Tanh Linh area to aid the 1/503 in Operation Joplin. One "Falcon" received a small arms hit in the main rotor blade and one of the "Falcon" door gunners was hit in the leg by ground fire. The gunner was taken to the 93rd Medical Evacuation Hospital at Bien Hoa for treatment. A week later he returned to duty.

z. 29 October 1966, the "Cowboys" with four(4) 145th Aviation UH-1D and a "Falcon" fire team in 4 lifts moved 219 troops in the Operation Joplin area. At 1400 hours, UH-1D #614, commanded by WO1 Ronald G. Jones showed fluctuations of transmission gauges and was landed safely near Dong Xoi Special Forces with a failing transmission. The ship was returned to Bien Hoa by Chinook.

Subject: Monthly History for Company A, 82nd Avn Bn

12 March 1967

AA. On 30 October 1966 1/503 terminated Operation Joplin as Chinooks lifted the troops from Tanh Linh to Bien Hoa.

BB. The month of October ended with 3 UH-1D's and 2 OH-13's supporting 4/503 on Operation Winchester in I Corp Area. The remainder of the "Cowboys-Falcons-Caspers" continued to provide the main force of the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) in Bien Hoa with the FINEST COMBAT AIRMOBILE SUPPORT IN THE WORLD!

### III. MONTHLY STATISTICS:

|               | <u>OH-13</u> | <u>UH-1B(A)</u> | <u>UH-1B</u> | <u>UH-1D</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Sorties       | 543          | 571             | 571          | 3238         | 4923         |
| Hours         | 204          | 250             | 307          | 1387         | 2148         |
| Pax           |              |                 |              |              | 7045         |
| Cargo (tons)  |              |                 |              |              | 206          |
| Aircraft Hits | 12           |                 |              |              |              |

### II. TRAINING:

Training time during October, in addition to the normal transition and initial new pilot briefings, included a night formation flight by each lift platoon escorted by the "Falcons." A new program of Officers Call was set up on a bi-monthly basis. This conference session is designed to emphasize pilots information pertinent to maintenance, operations, aviation safety, intelligence, company administration and any information that the Commander chooses to emphasize.

### III. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

An awards ceremony was not held during the month of October because of the heavy operational commitment of the "Cowboys." However, this month has produced many Air Medals as the Company participated in several combat assaults. Also, General Smith, Commanding General of the 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) decorated Captain Gammons and Sp/4 Lyle Travis with Bronze Stars with "V" Devices for the evacuation of the "Falcon" gunship from parking area during a Viet Cong attack.

### IV. COMPANY AREA:

The living area of the company improves each day as the Officers and men develop "Green Thumbs." Grass is growing and trees have been set out. Soon the area will look so much like home, that except for the VC, the men of the "Cowboys" will think they are back in the United States.

### V. CIVIL AFFAIRS:

Following the theory that the war will be won by diligent civil affairs work as well as by hot pursuit of the Viet Cong guerrilla, the 335th Aviation Company continued an active program of MEDCAP through the 25th Medical Detachment.

History of

335TH AVIATION COMPANY (AIRMObILE LIGHT)  
1 November 1966 - 30 November 1966  
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO 96250 San Francisco, California

Prepared by  
1/Lt George W. Murray

Approved by

HENRY J. VICTOR  
Major, Artillery  
Commanding

PROVIDING THE 173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)  
WITH THE MOST PROFESSIONAL AIRMObILE SUPPORT  
AVAILABLE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

HEADQUARTERS  
335th Aviation Company (Airmobile Light)  
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO 96250 San Francisco, California

335TH AVIATION COMPANY (AIRMObILE LIGHT)  
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO 96250 San Francisco, California

1 December 1966

SUBJECT: Monthly History of the 335th Aviation Company (Airmobile Light)  
1 November 1966 through 30 November 1966.

TO: Commanding Officer  
335th Aviation Company (Airmobile Light)  
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)  
APO 96250 San Francisco, California

I. ORGANIZATION AND DESIGNATION:

(A) Airlift Platoons: COWBOYS - 20 UH-1D "Slicks"

1st Airlift Platoon — Ramrods  
2nd Airlift Platoon — Mustangs

(B) Armed Helicopter Platoon : Falcons - 8 UH-1B "Armed Helicopters)

(C) 173rd Aviation Platoon: Caspers

2 UH-1D Command & Control  
1 UH-1B Command & Control  
1 UH-1B "12 O'Clock High" MAD System  
6 OH-13S "HOT STUFF" Aero Scouts

(D) Maintenance:

1 UH-1B - Horsethief

II. OPERATIONS:

(A) The month of November began as the longed for dry season seems never to be coming. Rain, thunder storms and poor visibility continued to be a nuisance, but the 335th continues to support the SKY SOLDIERS on Operation Uniontown. 3 UH-1D's and 2 OH-13's continue support at Da Nang.

At 1030 hrs a LFT was scrambled to provide the 120th Aviation Company with fire support in the Saigon area.

5 UH-1D's and a Light Fire Team move 145 US troops in three (#) combat assaults.

(B) At 0945 on the 2nd of November, 7 UH-1D with a LFT conduct 7 combat assaults in the Bear Cat area. In support of the 4/25 Infantry, 306 American troops are lifted into the landing zones in the Bear Cat area of operation.

(C) From 0730 to 1800 on the 3rd of November, 7 UH-1D's, a LFT and a UH-1B Command and Control ship from the CASPERS conducted 17 combat assaults for 453 troops of the 4/25 Infantry. The troops are resupplied by 8.9 tons of cargo by the COWBOYS.

(D) At 0800 hrs on the 4th of November, four (4) UH-1D's conduct combat assault training with the RVN. Training was extended to 480 Vietnamese during 16 practice assaults.

At 0800 hrs, Maj Johnson decorated ten (10) members of his command in ceremony. Other individuals were due awards, but were flying -- they will be decorated at a later date.

At 1030 hrs one (1) COWBOY conducted a Psy War leaflet drop in support of Brigade S-5.

At 1630 hrs five (5) UH-1D's covered by a LFT in 3 C's placed 90 paratroopers into ambush sites.

(E) 300 troops of the 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division were deployed by the COWBOYS in 10 C's on 5 November 1966. At 1600 hrs, the 90 troops of ambush patrol were extracted from local TAOR after twenty-four hrs of negative contact. Also at 1600 hrs 4 UH-1D's in 3 lifts placed 54 paratroopers of the 1/503 in the TAOR. At dusk four (4) UH-1D's and a LFT infiltrated two (2) Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols into the local TAOR.

(F) At 1700 hrs on the 6th of November, one of the LRRP working just East of the TAOR placed a call for an emergency extraction to escape a Viet Cong trap that had surrounded them. Three UH-1D's and a LFT scrambled to aid the LRRP and found the patrol in an area that did not offer a suitable LZ. The three UH-1D's employed the emergency rope rescue system, lowering ropes 120 to the jungle floor and lifting the patrol member clear of the jungle. There were no injuries and no aircraft damaged as the six man patrol was evacuated to the safety of the Bien Hoa Compound.

(G) 0700 hrs, 7 November 1966: Five (5) UH-1D's and a LFT supported the 3/4th Division at Bear Cat lifting 260 American troops. At 1000, two (2) UH-1D's and a LFT extracted 57 ambush patrol members from sites in the TAOR.

(H) At 0730 on 8 November six (6) COWBOYS and a FALCON LFT arrived at Bear Cat to support 3/4 Infantry Division. Twelve (12) assaults were conducted as 455 troops were moved; resupply was conducted at conclusion of the lift. In the TAOR, three (3) LRRP teams were extracted at the conclusion of their mission. Operation Meridian was initiated by 2/503 today.

(I) 9 November was devoted to Eagle flights as 8 UH-1D's and a LFT supported the 1/503 Infantry

(J) 10 November 1966: Operation Meridian in the Tay Ninh - Dau Tieng - Minh Thanh area North of Saigon near the Cambodian boarder has the COWBOYS FALCONS, and CASPERS working hard. Supplemented by 2 UH-1D's from the 145th Aviation Battalion from Bien Hoa, 700 ARVN and 180 US troops are lifted in the area of Operation Meridian.

(K) On 11 November, all company aircraft are working at the Minh Thanh Special Forces Compound in support of Operation Meridian. With the 2 UH-1D's from the 145th, the COWBOYS conducted six (6) assaults to deploy 460 American troops.

(L) On 12 November, 4 UH-1D's in the Minh Thanh area reposition 50 US troops. The company is now regulated to stand-by status at Minh Thanh through the 13th. Everyone is squirming for action as American units to the West of Minh Thanh are killing VC at a phenomenal rate. All 335th Action is limited to the Falcons making reconnaissance flight into the area of Operation.

(M) 14 November 1966 finds Operation Meridian renamed Operation Attleboro; as it becomes clear that this Operation is rapidly becoming the biggest operation to date in the Vietnam War. On this day the COWBOYS and FALCONS transported 486 American and Vietnamese troops to search for the enemy.

(N) Early in the morning on the 15 of November, a fake assault of two lifts follow the TAC Air into an LZ North of Minh Thanh. The feign is a block to contain the VC in an area where he can be destroyed. No fire received, but chalk 4 tries to chop down a tree with his main rotor - slight blade damage, and the tree is still standing. Later in the morning two (2) assaults receive fire going into an LZ - negative hits.

(O) 16, 17, & 18 November 1966 again find the company on stand by at Minh Thanh. Over three period only 239 US and ARVN troops are lifted.

(P) On the 19 November, the COWBOYS in seven (7) assaults moved 384 US and ARVN troops in support of Operation Attleboro. At 0830 hrs the CASPERS employed Psy Warfare against Viet Cong in the Minh Thanh area. A UH-1 with the MAD system aboard delivered a cargo of death dealing 81mm mortar rounds on an area suspected to harbor enemy elements.

(Q) The 20th November 1966 concluded the 173rd Airborne Brigades participation in Operation Attleboro. The Brigade moved from Minh Thanh to Bien Hoa by road. The FALCONS flew over head cover, and the COWBOYS and CASPERS provided ready reaction and C & C.

(R) At 2400 on the 21st of November, three (3) assaults lifted 144 paratroopers of the 1/503 into an LZ at TAOR. At 1700 hrs the Brigade Aviation Officer alerted the company the 3d Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division was heavily engaged with enemy elements in the Rung Sat Special Zone Southeast of Saigon. Five UH-1D's scrambled to the aid of the unit working from Nha Ehe Naval Base on the Song Dong Nai River. The COWBOYS breaking a cardinal rule by working without the FALCONS, all UH-1D's were

down for maintenance, moved 78 troops into reinforced positions in three (3) assaults. A gun team from the 145th Aviation Battalion covered the COWBOYS. Major Johnson flying lead drew fire and his ship, 884, took a hit in the left underside. The round stopped against the armor plate on which SP/5 Davis Trice was sitting. Major Johnson flew 884 safely back to Bien Hoa, but Trice was visibly shaken as he had only a few days to completion of his Vietnam tour. The COWBOYS flight returned to corral at 2200 hours.

(S) On 22 November 1966, three (3) UH-1D's and a LFT support 3/4th Infantry Divisions as 126 US troops and a large quantity of supplies were moved.

(T) 23 November 1966 was spent on LRRP stand-by, with several recons for Operation Waco being conducted. The COWBOYS - CASPER elements supporting the 4/503 at Da Nang was alerted for return to Bien Hoa.

(U) 24 November 1966: The FALCONS conducted morning and evening recons in the Brigade TAOR. One LRRP team in the TAOR was extracted without incident.

(V) At 0800 hrs on the 25 November, eight (8) UH-1D's and a LFT made five (5) assaults into the L's in the Operation Waco area, north of Highway #1 between Bien Hoa and Xuan Loc. At 1800 hours two LRRP teams were emplaced south of Bear Cat. Enemy fire was received, but there were no casualties or aircraft damage. Two (2) OH-13's returned by Air Force C-130 from Da Nang.

(W) 26 November was devoted in support of the 1/503 in Operation Waco and 4/503 at Da Nang.

(X) On 27 November normal support of Waco and LRRP was performed. Training was conducted by all flyable ships not committed to operational missions. (NOTE: See Item IV Training)

(Y) At 0800 hrs on the 28 November the company lifted 282 ARVN and US troops in support of Operation Waco. The landing zone being utilized was a roughly cultivated field with stumps and rocks. As the lift approached rotor wash stirred up dense clouds of dust and COWBOY 614, caught in the turbulence, ran out of power causing loss of directional control. The ship turned to the right approximately 270°, struck a stump shearing part of one tail rotor blade. The pilot cut the power and 614 remained upright. The tail rotor was repaired on the spot by HORSETHIEF and flown back to Bien Hoa. Major frame damage from the accident sent the ship to Depot Maintenance for overhaul.

At 1100 hrs two (2) LRRP teams were extracted from the Waco area without incident.

(Z) The closing days of November were spent in support of Operation Uniontown in the Brigade TAOR, Operation Waco east of Bien Hoa and the 4/503 at Da Nang.

### III. MONTHLY STATISTICS:

|               | <u>OH-13</u> | <u>UH-1B(A)</u> | <u>UH-1B</u> | <u>UH-1D</u> | <u>TOTAL</u> |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| SOFTIES       | 631          | 1086            | 540          | 5219         | 7476         |
| HOURS         | 206          | 475             | 171          | 1297         | 2149         |
| PAX           |              |                 |              |              | 11464        |
| CARGO (Tons)  |              |                 |              |              | 243          |
| AIRCRAFT HITS |              |                 |              |              | 2            |

### IV. TRAINING:

The training high-lights for November was the on-the-job type of training conducted as the COWBOYS and FALCONS supported the 3rd Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division. The Unit, just arrived in country, was conducting operations to the Southwest of Bear Cat as they prepared themselves for the demanding environment of the war in Vietnam. The 335th, provided academic introduction to helicopter operations and utilization and then provided the 3rd Brigade with the capability of conducting airmobile operations, resupplying by aircraft and using armed helicopters in support of ground operations.

Training with the LFRP's was conducted providing refresher training for aircraft crews and for patrol members. Finally, normal training of new pilots and standardization training for veteran pilots continued as a large number of hours were logged in extensive cross-country training. The COWBOYS ranged to Phan Thiet, Can Tho, and Vung Tau logging training time.

### V. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

A ceremony was held at 0800 hrs on 4 November 1966 in the company area as Maj Johnson decorated ten members of the unit.

| <u>NAME</u>            | <u>RANK</u> | <u>AWARD</u>  |
|------------------------|-------------|---|
| KUHBLANK, Richard C.   | Captain     | Distinguished Flying Cross                                  |
| ZABARSKY, Frederick G. | Captain     | Distinguished Flying Cross<br>Air Medal W/"V"<br>Bronz Star |
| SANDERS, Gary G.       | WO1         | Distinguished Flying Cross                                  |
| HAMMARGREN, Lonnie L.  | Captain     | Air Medal W/"V"<br>Bronze Star                              |
| VANCE, John D.         | 1/Lt        | Army Commendation W/"V"                                     |
| LOVGREN, Paul W.       | Captain     | Basic Air Medal   |
| PAYNE, Melvin L.       | SGT         | Basic Air Medal   |
| HANCOCK, William A.    | PFC         | Basic Air Medal   |
| LUCAS, Dolbert G.      | SP/5        | Purple Heart  |



HISTORY OF THE  
335TH AVIATION COMPANY (AIRMOBILE LIGHT)  
173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)  
Bien Hoa, Republic of Vietnam  
APO San Francisco 96250, California

1 December 1966 through 31 December 1966

ERNEST H. JOHNSON  
Major Infantry  
Commanding

PROVIDING THE 173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)  
WITH THE MOST PROFESSIONAL AIRMOBILE SUPPORT  
AVAILABLE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD

Prepared by

GEORGE W. MURRAY  
1/Lt Armor  
Unit Historian

HEADQUARTERS  
335TH AVIATION COMPANY (AIRMOBILE LIGHT)  
173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)  
APO San Francisco 96250

335TH AVIATION COMPANY (AIRMOBILE LIGHT)  
APO 96250 San Francisco, California

1 January 1967

SUBJECT: Monthly History of the 335th Aviation Company (Airmobile Light)  
1 December 1966 through 31 December 1966

TO: Commanding Officer  
335th Aviation Company (Airmobile Light)  
APO San Francisco 96250

I. ORGANIZATION AND DESIGNATION:

- (A) Airlift Platoons: COWBOYS  
20 UH-1D "slicks"  
1st Airlift Platoon -- RAMRODS  
2nd Airlift Platoon -- MUSTANGS
- (B) Armed Helicopter Platoon: FALCONS  
8 UH-1B "Armed Helicopters"
- (C) 173d Aviation Platoon: CASPERS  
2 UH-1D Command & Control, 1 UH-1B Command & Control  
1 UH-1B "12 O' Clock High" M/D System  
6 OH-13S HOT STUFF "Aero Scouts"
- (D) Maintenance 166th Transportation Detachment  
1 UH-1B -- HORSETHIEF
- (E) 25th Medical Detachment
- (F) 234th Signal Detachment

II. OPERATIONS:

(A) December began with the COWBOYS, FALCONS and CASPERS providing the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) with Army Aviation support on Operation Urdontown and Waco II. Three (3) UH-1D's continued to support the Brigade's 4th Battalion, 503rd Infantry operation out of Da Nang in the I Corps area.

Everyone feels that the month of December will be a slow flying month with very little enemy action. However, these optimistic predictions will by New Year's have proved very inaccurate.

(B) At 0700 hours on 2 December, a message from the element at Da Nang reported that COWBOY 902, a UH-1D, supporting the 4/503d sustained extensive

combat damage when a booby trap was detonated against it. WO Ted H. Bingham and WO Basil D. Freeman were resupplying an element in a secure landing zone. As the ship came to a hover on a rough PSP helipad, a scrap of paper on the pad was swirled up through the air by the rotor turbulence. This paper was attached to a wire that pulled the pin on a fragmentation grenade. The resulting explosion damaged the skids, fuselage and rotor blades. The pilots, although badly shaken, got the ship on the ground safely. One passenger had shrapnel in his leg, and the gunner, Sp/4 Mark Seabury, had minor wounds in one leg. Investigation revealed that one of the Vietnamese boys playing near the landing zone had been trained and paid by the Viet Cong to set the booby trap.

This incident was a costly reminder that the Viet Cong are determined to destroy aircraft and are extremely crafty and skillful in their methods. The landing area had been checked by the infantry for mines and traps, but the metal in the PSP disguised the grenade from mine detectors and the human eye was deceived by the ingenious camouflage and innocent firing method.

At 0800, 10 UH-1D's and a light fire team lifted 260 ARVN and US troops to Bien Hoa in termination of Operation Waco II. Additional support for the move was provided by 10 UH-1D's and fire teams from the WARRIORS, an airmobile company based at Soc Trang as a member of the 13th "Delta" Aviation Battalion.

(C) At 0800 on 3 December, an awards ceremony was held in the Company area. Major Johnson decorated 19 officers and 23 enlisted men (NOTE: Item V). Six UH-1D's and a light fire team worked out of Saigon transporting a 59 man security force ready to react to any trouble connected with a speech being made in Saigon by South Vietnamese Premier Nguyen Cao Ky. No trouble was encountered.

Two UH-1D's returned to Bien Hoa after supporting the 4/503d at Da Nang.

(D) December 4th and 5th were spent in support of the 173d Airborne Brigade on Operation Uniontown. On 5 December, five UH-1D's supported FFVII in the III Corps area.

(E) At 1400 hours on 6 December, a FALCON Light Fire Team flew convoy cover as the 4/503d moved from Bien Hoa to Position Lark (YS 173868) on Highway 15 South of Bien Hoa. This move opened the Brigade's Operation Canary/Duck, a road runner operation designed to secure the highway from Vung Tau to Bien Hoa for new combat units arriving in Vietnam.

(F) At 0800 on 7 December, 10 UH-1D's and a LFT moved 162 paratroopers into positions around Lark. At 1600 hours, 3 UH-1D and a LFT infiltrated two (2) LRRP teams into landing zones in the Canary/Duck area. All other missions on 7 and 8 December were in support of Brigade Operation's Uniontown and Canary/Duck.

(G) On 9 December normal support was flown with 62 troops repositioned in the Canary/Duck area. One (1) UH-1D supported Field Forces VII.

(H) On 10 December, 140 paratroopers were lifted in 3 assaults in the Canary/Duck area. At 0800, Major Johnson decorated fourteen members of the Company. 98 troops were repositioned in 3 CL's on 11 December.

(I) Ten (10) UH-1D's and a fire team conducted four (4) assaults from Bear Cat to Position Lark, moving 269 paratroopers. On one landing at Lark COWBOY 674 lost power on approach, turned 90° to the right, slammed into the road and struck his fast moving main rotor blades into the spinning tail rotor of COWBOY 557. Damage was sustained by both ships, but a little green tape in the right places and a change of tail rotors made them safe for maintenance flights to Bien Hoa. At approximately 1500 hours, a FALCON Light Fire Team testing weapon systems over War Zone "D" received a call from an Air Force FAC who had spotted men in black pajamas fleeing into a wood line. The fire team scrambled to the spot and put rockets and machineguns on the target with unknown results.

(J) At 0930 on 13 December, UH-1D 738 was hit in the tail boom by small arms fire while involved in a repositioning of troops in the Canary/Duck area.

(K) December 14th and 15th were normal support days. However, on the night of the 15th, 2 UH-1D's and a LFT conducted a night observation mission over the Rung Sat Special Zone to the Southwest of the Canary/Duck area. Sampans had been operating on the waterways at night, and with the aid of artillery and PUFF THE MAGIC DREGON thorough surveillance of the area was conducted. The results were not spectacular, the VC would not venture from hiding with the blood thirsty FALCONS prowling overhead.

(L) At 1300 hours on 16 December, the FALCON 87 fire team was scrambled to support a platoon of E Troop, 17th Cavalry in contact with the Viet Cong at Coordinates YS 305863. The fire team put in rocket and machinegun strikes, The Air Force fighters hit the area, then 12 O'Clock High brought smoke on the VC. DUSTOFF 104 came in to medevac the wounded. FALCON 87 covered as 104 did an outstanding job with a hoist and jungle penetrator. Contact apparently broken, FALCON 87 went to Lark to refuel as DUSTOFF headed to the 93d Evac hospital at Long Binh. TONTO II, an Air Force FAC, called that the Cavalry was in contact again and had more wounded. The Cavalry was now reinforced as six (6) UH-1D's rushed 36 Horse Soldiers into an LZ 200 meters South of the embattled force. DUSTOFF 104 came back on station and pulled three more wounded to safety. 104 put on an outstanding exhibition of flying skill as he hovered at the top of the jungle hoisting the wounded to safety. His skill was a tribute to Army Aviation and an example of the immeasurable aid these pilots provide to the American fighting man. The 335th Aviation Company (Airmobile Light) tips its hat to DUSTOFF 104 of the 254th Medical Detachment, (Helicopter Ambulance) Long Binh, Republic of Vietnam.

The harrassed platoon of E/17th Cavalry finally was extracted from the battle as the COWBOYS pulled them from a rough jungle landing zone.

(M) All missions on 17 and 18 December were in normal support of the Brigade on Operations Canary/Duck and Uniontown. 10 UH-1D's lifted 420 troops in seven (7) assaults.

(N) Early on the morning of 19 December 1966, five UH-1D's from the RAMRODS with a FALCON Light Fire Team began an Aero Rifle problem with E/17 Cavalry. The RAMRODS worked in the open, wet marsh land east of Bear Cat along the Dong Nai River. Placing troops into positions and reinforcing when contact was made, several Viet Cong were killed or captured. COWBOY 849 landed to pick up a prisoner and an automatic weapon opened up from a concealed position. Sgt Coley L. Andrews, 849's door gunner, mortally wounded by the fire was rushed to the 93d Medical Evacuation Hospital where he died several hours later. The aircraft had extensive damage to the fuel system.

CASPER 611, a UH-1D C&C ship, later in the day landed near the spot 849 had been hit. Surprise!! the Viet Cong shot him too, slight damage and no injuries.

333 troops of the 4/503d were extracted in the afternoon by ten COWBOYS with FALCON cover. Viet Cong were in the area, but there was negative fire. As the final extraction was made the infantry fired Claymore mines on four sides of the LZ toward the wood line.

(O) On 20 December at 0600 hours, seven (7) UH-1D's repositioned 143 paratroopers in support of Operation Uniontown.

(P) At 0800 on 21 December 1966, the 335th Aviation Company (Airmobile - Light) opened the Battle of Stump, a campaign that was to entail two assaults and two extractions from the same landing zone. The landing zone was an opening in dense jungle South of Bear Cat at YD 308 857. The area was approximately the size of a football field with 200 foot trees surrounding it; inside this hole, trees of various heights were scattered about and a thick carpet of underground covered fallen trees, stumps, ditches and pits. Running from North to South in the LZ was a belt of trees and brush 10 meters wide that cut the LZ in half. This LZ had been used by three COWBOYS in an emergency extraction of two elements of E/17th Cavalry on 16 December 1966.

The COWBOYS, using ten ships in two flights of five ships each, stormed into "STUMP" at 0800 hours with paratroopers of 4th Battalion, 503rd Infantry. Alpha flight cleared the LZ under the leadership of COWBOY 6, Major Ernest H. Johnson. Bravo Flight, led by Cowboy 5, Major Henry J. Victor, hit the LZ and the troops were leaping off from five to ten feet hovers. As Bravo flight lifted off, the radio crackled "Lead this is trail, we just lost our tail rotor and gear box." HORSETHIEF roared in from his eagle eye position above the flight, and the battle was under way. The COWBOYS poured troops onto the LZ to secure the aircraft under repair, and the Viet Cong, coming alive around the LZ sprayed automatic weapon and small arms fire up through the jungle at the COWBOYS and FALCONS. The gunships rolled in on firing passes as the slicks marked with smoke and suppressed. The Air Force sent in fighters to strike the enemy positions, and artillery hammered the approach and departure paths from the landing zone. However, the VC proved to be extremely tenacious as each lift received fire. UH-1D 910, commanded by WOI11 Rodney G. Heckerman, took seven (7) hits. One round exploded a smoke

grenade in the gunner's compartment, blinding Pfc Thomas A. Sanchez's eyes and burning Mr. Heckerman on the arm.

At the first fueling stop, Major Victor with several hits and suffering violent in-flight vibrations shut down 701, jumped into 674 and continued to lead his flight. Finally, after eleven lifts there were 563 paratroopers in Stump looking for Charlie, and 799 had been repaired to the point of being safe to fly to Bien Hoa.

(Q) An OH-13S, CASPER 419, flown by WO Bill Reynolds received two (2) hits in the vicinity of LZ Stump while marking enemy structures for ground troops. Mr. Reynolds made a precautionary landing at position Iark. A Chinook was called in, and 419 was sling loaded to Bien Hoa for repairs.

(R) On 23 December 1966, the COWBOYS began the day with 10 UH-1D's and two Light Fire Teams lifting 772 troops of the 1/503 Infantry and the 199th Infantry Brigade into LZ's South of Bien Hoa. At noon the COWBOYS returned to the "Corral" for a briefing and change of some aircraft commanders.

At approximately 1300, 10 UH-1D and 4 UH-1B's departed Bien Hoa for Pick up zone Stump (YS 308857). The 4th Battalion, 503rd Infantry was operating in the area of Stump and was to be extracted to Bien Hoa prior to night fall in order to be out of enemy contact prior to the beginning of the Christmas Truce at 0700 24 December. The pick up zone was entered five (5) ships at a time, and because of the extremely high barriers on all four sides of the PZ, limited fuel loads and five (5) troops per aircraft were scheduled. Two extractions by each flight were accomplished before any fire was received. On the third approach Alpha Flight began receiving intense automatic weapons fire. Flight routes, approaches and departures, were altered every possible way to avoid the intense ground fire, by Major Johnson in COWBOY lead. Shutting down for fuel after eight lifts from STUMP, Captain Tucker and WO Danitz found a .50 caliber hole in one blade of the main rotor. Captain Wood and 1/Lt Steed found fuel draining from a wound in the belly of their aircraft and a bullet hole in the fuselage behind Lt Steed's head. Both crews made quick repairs and were ready for the next lift. On take off Major Cochran and WO Legg lost power and put their ship back on the refueling field. Sp4 Paul White, their Crewchief, made a rapid survey and found the engine intake clogged with grass and dirt. After a rapid cleaning job, the ship was back in the flight.

The afternoon wore rapidly on as lift after lift brought the paratroopers out of the PZ. As the troops in the 4th Battalion area dwindled, the Viet Cong, in spite of TAC Air, Artillery and the armed helicopters, were closing into the very edges of all four sides of the PZ. Each lift into the PZ found the FALCONS pouring tremendous suppressive fire under the CO BOYS, suppressing several .50 caliber positions. The FALCON pilots flew suicide runs on the positions to draw fire away from the vulnerable "slick" aircraft. Many of these passes were made with little or no ammunition, one pilot flying and one pilot firing pistols out the cockpit windows.

On the last refueling stop, Pfc Newsome, accidentally was thrown from the Crewchief seat of his aircraft at 5 feet. He was evacuated to the 93rd Evac Hospital at Long Binh with a back injury. Lt Stribling, now had only one door gunner and was told to fly his ship to Bien Hoa for repair -- it was not capable of further flight. Lt Stribling, however, knowing that if he left the area the troop helicopters would be hurting for cover, explained the situation to his crew and then led his fire team back on station.

Rain was now falling in the area of the operation, and as the time passed it became obvious that the Viet Cong were doing their utmost to delay the extraction so that a small group of Americans would be trapped in the PZ overnight. The ground fire grew intense with each lift, the rain made visibility poor and the approaches and departures to the obstacle-studded pickup zone became a horrible nightmare. But the COWBOYS and FALCONS, following Major Johnson to the last man, were not to be denied the accomplishment of their mission. With sixty (60) paratroopers remaining on "STUMP", Major Johnson asked the COWBOYS if there was a ship that could not lift six (6) troops on the last lift. There was no reply to his question, the tense silence indicating that maximum effort was going to be expended on this last load, even though some of the weaker ships with only five troops had been barely staggering over the 200 foot trees around the PZ on previous lifts. As the two flights came in very close together, the Viet Cong fires were returned with marked violence. The troops on the ground, now forming a tight perimeter around the small rise the COWBOYS were using as a pickup point and placing M-79 fire behind them, attested to the deadly drama that was being played out in the jungle PZ. The last COWBOY cleared the troops safely, and the two flights joined for the trip to Bien Hoa. Heavy rain showers blocked the path home, Major Johnson, talking to the COWBOYS all the way, led the flight through a light spot in the storm. Just out of the storm, Lt Beasley and WO Hockerman reported an electrical fire aboard their ship. Making a precautionary landing in a Cavalry position South of Bien Hoa, the crew extinguished the fire and determined that the ship was safe to fly to Bien Hoa.

At final assessment, the COWBOYS had transported a total of 772 troops during the relatively quiet morning lifts and extracted approximately 700 troops from PZ Stump. The FALCONS and COWBOYS with the Air Force's nine F-100's and two (2) F-5's and the artillery's 105mm and 8 inch weapons expended: twenty (20) 500lb bombs, twelve (12) 750lb bombs (napalm), six (6) CBU's, 100 Rockets, 4,400 rounds of 20 mm ammunition, 89,000 rounds of 7.62 machinegun ammunition, 2,000 rounds of 40mm ammunition, 420 2.75 rockets, 457 rounds of 105mm ammunition, and 8 rounds of 8 inch ammunition.

(S) At 0700 hours on 24 December 1966, the 48 hour Christmas truce went into effect. Liaison, logistical and reconnaissance missions were flown on the 24th with no enemy initiated incidents reported.

Christmas Day was a quiet day as the truce continued with only light missions.

(T) The Christmas Truce ended at 0600 on 26 December 1966. Six UH-1D's repositioned 131 paratroopers in support of Operation Canary/Duck. Three (3) UH-1D's covered by a LFT lifted 30 troops in support of the 1/503d conducting operations in the Brigade TAOR.

(U) Normal support of the Brigade was flown during the day of 27 December.

(V) At 1430 hours the MUSTANG element was supporting E/17th Cavalry in the open rice paddies West of Bear Cat. UH-1D 567 received sniper fire while unloading troops in a LZ, one round struck the engine combustion section. WO John Legg lifted off to approximately 10 feet, but put his ship on the ground as the engine failed. HORSETHIEF came in to begin recovery work and a sniper hit one of the maintenance personnel in the hand. A Chinook was called to the rescue, and the ship was lifted to Bien Hoa.

At 1815 hours a LRRP extraction was called for in an area to the South-West of Bear Cat. Three UH-1D's covered by a LFT moved in to make a routine pick up. As a COWBOY let down to make the extraction, Viet Cong opened fire from positions around the pick up zone. The FALCON 81 fire team rolled in to suppress the enemy fire. As FALCON 82, flown by CWO Dan Norton and WO Gary Peyton, broke from his firing pass a heavy automatic weapon shot the engine away and destroyed the cyclic controls. CWO Norton entered autorotation at treetop level and plunged into a small, rough clearing, whipping off a pair of rockets as he crashed through the trees. WO Peyton, on the flex-machineguns, fired the weapons until the ship finally came to rest. All crew members were alive, but the crewchief, Sp/4 Luther, was severely burned and had to be helped away from the wreckage. SSGT Kilgore, the S-2 aerial observer aboard the ship, made two trips into the burning wreckage to obtain weapons for defense. Viet Cong in the area were firing at the downed crew, but a UH-1D flown by WO Ralph Hicks and WO William Hunker, swooped down and snatched the downed crew from the hands of the Viet Cong.

The aircraft was destroyed and totally consumed by fire. The crew was flown to the 93rd Evac Hospital, all returned to duty except the crewchief who was sent to the United States.

(W) On 29 December 1966, 300 troops of the 1/503 were lifted in 5 GA's in support of Operation Uniontown. Ten (10) UH-1D's and 2 LFT's lifted 545 troops of the 2/503 in support of Canary/Duck and the Battle of LZ "STUMP". The 2/503 was sweeping the area around LZ Stump.

(X) On 30 December at 1630 hours an assault was made on a tax collection point South of Bear Cat. No resistance was encountered. After this lift an LRRP was extracted, and elements of E/17th were extracted from positions West of Bear Cat. Small units were left in place as ambush patrols.

(Y) The year of 1966 ended quietly as the 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) continued to operate South of Bear Cat. The COWBOYS, FALCONS and CASPERS continued to provide the 173d with the finest Army Aviation support available in the world. Paratroopers of the Brigade continued to



search the area around the notorious position Stump. Very little enemy contact was made, however, the Viet Cong continue to snipe, booby trap and ambush. Promise of the COWBOYS returning to LZ Stump was strong and every man expects to encounter heavy resistance.

### III. MONTHLY STATISTICS:

|                 | OH-13 | UH-1B(A) | UH-1B | UH-1D | TOTAL |
|-----------------|-------|----------|-------|-------|-------|
| TOTAL SORTIES:  | 577   | 1206     | 591   | 5956  | 8330  |
| HOURS:          | 259   | 554      | 219   | 1650  | 2682  |
| PAX:            |       |          |       |       | 12031 |
| CARGO (tons):   |       |          |       |       | 177   |
| AIRCRAFT HITS : |       |          |       |       | 16    |

### IV. TRAINING

Training during December was restricted by the extreme operational commitments. The month recorded an exceptional number of flying hours plus many hours not logged while LRRP, Eagle Flight and Fire Teams stood by for any missions the Brigade might have. Normal standardization and orientation was conducted for new pilots arriving in the unit.

### V. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

(A) At 0800 on 3 December 1966, Major Johnson decorated CWO Daniel S. Norton with a Distinguished Flying Cross for actions in March of 1966. Captain Paul W. Lovgren was presented a Bronze Star for meritorious service as Aircraft Commander of the Brigade Commanding General's UH-1D. Eighty-two (82) other officers and enlisted men were presented Basic Air Medals in the Company.

(B) At 0800 on 10 December 1966, Major Johnson decorated fourteen (14) members of the Company. Included was an Air Medal with "V" device for heroism presented to 1/Lt Willoughby S. Goin III for his bravery in flying a fully armed UH-1B out of a parking area, at night, when the Viet Cong had sabotaged another armed helicopter.

(C) Colonel Robert C. Shaw, acting Brigade Commander, decorated sixty-four COWBOYS and FALCONS for their action on 23 December 1966 at the Battle of "STUMP". Crewchiefs and gunners were decorated with Army Commendation Medals with "V" devices and Aircraft Commanders and pilots were presented Air Medals with "V" devices. Major Johnson and Captain Wood are being recommended for the DFC as flight leaders on the mission. 1/Lt Stribling is pending a Silver Star for exceptional gallantry demonstrated while flying a battle-damaged gunship through heavy enemy fire.

PROVIDING THE 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)  
WITH THE MOST PROFESSIONAL AIRMOBILE SUPPORT  
AVAILABLE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.