

SUBJECT: VIETNAM HISTORY BRIEF - 158th Assault Helicopter Battalion

NOTE: Thanks to Captain David A. Moylan, Division Historian, Don F. Pratt

Museum, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Kentucky, we now have copies of the organizational history of the 158th Assault Helicopter Battalion. I am mailing a full set of copies for the VHPA historical files. I composed the following brief from the 99 pages of the organizational history. The numbers in the last paragraph (sorties, hours, cargo) were taken from an article appearing in TIME MAGAZINE, Mar 22, 1971.

The 158th Aviation Battalion (Assault Helicopter) was formed on 25 July 1968 at Fort Carson, Colorado, from two existing companies, the 246th at Ft. Carson and the 247th at Ft. Riley. After training, staffing, and equipping, lead elements arrived in Da Nang on 28 Jan 69. After all elements arrived in RVN and in-country training was completed by combat veterans of the 101st Airborne Division, the 158th became combat ready and operational on 1 Apr 69 with I Corps as the area of operation. The unit was stationed at Camp Evans and was one of two Assault Helicopter battalions of the 101st Airborne Division (the other being the 101st Assault Helicopter Battalion).

On 8 May 69, the 158th participated in its first major combat assault, Operation Apache Snow into the A Shau valley. The 158th went on to distinguish itself supporting fire support bases and operations such as Cleyborne Chute, Louisiana Lee, Richland Square, Republic Square, Hamburger Hill, Ripcord, O'Reilly, Tun Tavern, Henderson, Barnett, Vandergrift, Kentucky Jumper, Montgomery Rendezvous, Norton Falls, Lan Som 719, Blaze, Cannon, Fuller, Khe Sanh, Special Forces CCN, the DMZ, and more.

The 158th mainly supported the:

- 2nd Bde of the 101st Airborne Division,
- 3rd Bde of the 101st Airborne Division,
- 1st Bde of the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized),
- 1st ARVN Division

The 158th consisted of the following units:

HHC, 158th AVN BN (AH)

Company A, 158th AVN BN (AH) - GHOSTRIDER

Company B, 158th AVN BN (AH) - LANCER

Company C, 158th AVN BN (AH) - PHOENIX

Company D, 158th AVN BN (AH) - REDSKIN

159th Transportation Detachment (assigned to support Company A)

168th Transportation Detachment (assigned to support Company B)

273rd Transportation Detachment (assigned to support Company C)

169th Transportation Detachment (assigned to support Company D)

The 158th returned to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in January 1972. On leaving Vietnam, the 158th had racked up a total of 105, 358 combat hours with an accident/incident rate of 11.2%. In flying these hours, the 158th was awarded 3 Presidential Unit Citations, a Valorous Unit Award, 42 Silver Stars, 423 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 12 Soldier's Medals, 1,815 Bronze Stars, 2,023 Army Commendation Medals, 6,271 Air Medals, 150 Purple Hearts, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry w/Palm, and the Vietnamese Civic Action Honor Medal First Class.

The 158th was just one of the many courageous Combat Helicopter units in Vietnam that ALL IN TOTAL were made up of young men of an average age of twenty-two that flew eleven million hours in the air conducting thirty million sorties, killed tens of thousands of the enemy, destroyed thousands of pieces of enemy equipment, delivered hundreds of thousands of troops and four-and-one-half million tons of cargo.