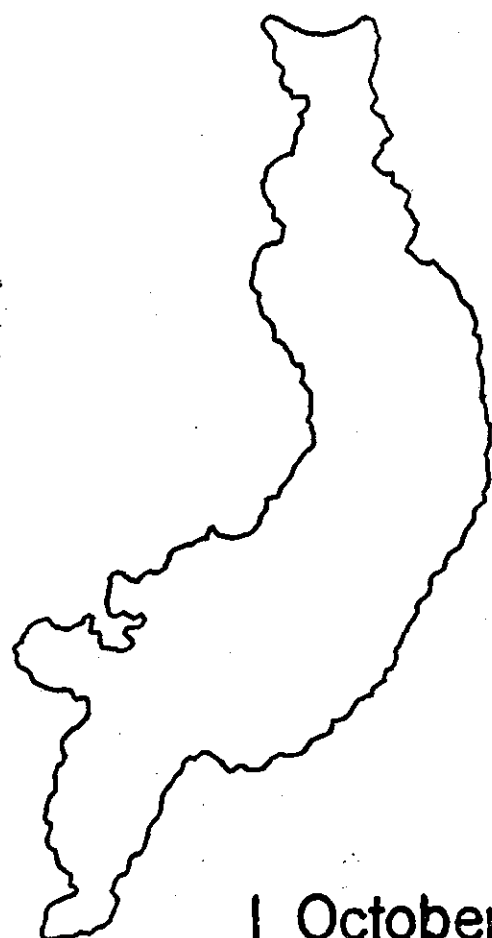


HISTORY OF 116 AVIATION COMPANY



1 October - 31 December 1966

HISTORY

OF

116th Assault Helicopter Company

1 October 1966 to 31 December 1966

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All dates, orders and TO&E's indicated in this text have been authenticated. All statements including facts, figures, and percentages made in the text were verified by conversations with responsible individuals or extracts from authenticated records. The author has reviewed all comments with prudence and feels there is no doubt as to validity and accuracy.


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116th Assault Helicopter Company

11th Combat Aviation Battalion

APO 96353

I. GENERAL

One January 1966 found the 116th Assault Helicopter Company, organized under TOE 1-77E, firmly entrenched at Phu Loi, Vietnam, approximately 12 miles NE of Saigon. The entire organization was fully operational for the conduct of combat missions. Attached units included the 392nd Transportation Detachment, the 283rd Signal Detachment, and the 431st Medical Detachment. Although the company reorganized under MTOE 1-77G in December of 1966, the unit and its detachments remained intact as part of the 11th Combat Aviation Battalion for the entire year. The organization structure as of 31 December 1966 is depicted in Appendix I.

1966 was a formative year for the 116th Assault Helicopter Company (Hornets) and many events of a nature other than combat were recorded. At the beginning of the year the only living quarters available were tents. Dissatisfied with that situation the officers and men of the 116th began a comprehensive construction program with the ultimate goal being to feed and house everyone in permanent buildings. The first building constructed was a company mess hall. Concrete was poured 15 January and the first meal was served in the new mess hall on 1 March 1966. CWO Tom Purser was the project officer and in honor of his outstanding contribution the building was dedicated Purser Hall.

In the following weeks, officer and EM billets were constructed on a do-it-yourself basis and by mid-summer adequate quarters were available for nearly all assigned personnel.

Other facilities and improvements in the 116th area included: (1) digging a well to provide adequate shower and washing facilities, (2) construction of a bunker in front of the armed helicopters to reduce accidental firing hazards, and (3) construction of a barber shop, laundry shop, post exchange, and EM club.

In September the 116th was officially alerted for a permanent move from Phu Loi to Cu Chi and plans were immediately begun to insure an orderly move without curtailing the unit's operational requirements. Forty-two tent frame type buildings, a double wing mess hall, a shower building, two latrines and a maintenance area were constructed for the unit by the 65th Engineer Battalion, 25th Infantry Division. The project had been underway since early June. The 116th furnished a 12 man detail to assist the 65th engineers from 1 August to 12 September and then provided an advance party of 40 men, headed

by SFC Samuel Fair, to complete construction of the unit area at Cu Chi prior to the arrival of the main body. The "Hornets" arrived in mass on 9 November 1966 and continued to improve the company area and cement relations with neighboring units. At year's end trees were being planted throughout the company area. EM, NCO, and officers' clubs were being constructed, and plans were being made to further improve the area by planting grass and flowers. Additional billets are needed and have been requested. However, living conditions are adequate for the present, morale is high, and in general it is felt that the transplant from Phu Loi to Cu Chi was advantageous to the entire organization.

II. PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION:

A. Strength. Due to the fact that the 116th Assault Helicopter Company arrived in Vietnam as a complete TOE organization, there was little personnel turnover during the first seven months of 1966. However, since the "Hornets" remained intact rather than participate in an "infusion" program, a serious personnel problem arose in August and September when approximately 35 per cent of the personnel of the company and detachments rotated. Replacements arrived in time to allow only the briefest training period, thereby causing a definite decrease in the experience level of both officer and EM personnel.

The aviator situation deteriorated to such an extent that on 30 September 1966 only 36 aviators were present for duty. 17 of these had less than 200 hours in-country experience. Only through an extremely vigorous training program was this problem defeated.

At Appendix II is a roster of all personnel assigned to the 116th Assault Helicopter Company and detachments during 1966.

B. Key Personnel. The 116th Assault Helicopter Company had three Company Commanders during the year. Major Richard A. Humes was replaced by Major Walter E. Parker on 2 January. Major Parker, in turn, was followed by Major James H. Patterson, who assumed command on 13 September 1966.

In addition, the 116th had four different 1st Sergeants throughout the year. They were: 1SG James W. Storm, 1SG Raymond D. Shanks, 1SG Robert A. Fowler, and PSG Ted M. Groupe. At Appendix III, IV, V, VI, are lists of key personnel as existed as of the last day of each quarter in 1966.

C. Promotions. Many officers and enlisted personnel were recipients of well deserved promotions during the year. At Appendix VII is a listing of those promoted.

D. Awards and Decorations. During the year many honors were earned by the 116th Assault Helicopter Company and the 11th Combat Aviation Battalion.

The Hornets played a major roll in earning the Battalion the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm for the period 1 January to 30 June 1966. In Operation Attleboro in November of 1966, the Hornets were the 1st airmobile company committed and spearheaded an army aviation performance that led to recommendation of the Presidential Unit Citation for the 11th Combat Aviation Battalion. In addition, the 116th was nominated for the Valorous Unit Award for its heroic action on a combat assault on 22 October 1966. Individual awards came in staggering numbers and were indicative of the outstanding support rendered by the Hornets and the professionalism with which assigned missions were conducted.

Quarterly Awards and Decorations

<u>Award</u>	<u>1st Quarter</u>	<u>2nd Quarter</u>	<u>3rd Quarter</u>	<u>4th Quarter</u>	<u>Total</u>
Silver Star		1	2	3	6
DFC		1	4	16	21
Soldier Medal		1		5	6
BS w/"V"				16	16
BS		2	12	22	36
AM w/"V"		4	26	61	91
Air Medal	180	448	211	1470	2309
ACM w/"V"			3	54	57
ACM			36	24	60
Purple Heart			10	37	47

Appendix VIII show a listing of all individual awards presented throughout 1966.

During the year the 116th suffered only five combat fatalities. In each case the men who were lost were a credit to their unit and their country and gave their life willingly in the defense of their country's ideals - they were:

1. Siverly, David L., 1LT, 05534923 - 28 November 1966
2. Davis, William R., Jr., WO1, W3153900 - 22 October 1966

3. Castle, Larry F., MO1, W3153369 - 28 November 1966
4. Gonzales, Merced PFC E3, US56408817 - 28 November 1966
5. Rogers, Carroll L., SSG E6, RA54342329 - 28 November 1966

III. MISSION

The mission of the 116th Assault Helicopter Company as indicated by TOE is to (1) provide tactical air movement of combat troops in an air-mobile operation; and to (2) provide tactical air movement of combat supplies and equipment within a combat zone. In this regard the 116th Assault Helicopter Company during 1966 supported all major units within the III corps area to include; 1st Infantry Division; 25th Infantry Division; 173d Airborne Brigade; 196th Light Infantry Brigade; Special Forces; 5th ARVN Division, Royal Australian Task Force; and the United States Marines.

IV. OPERATIONS AND TRAINING

A. General: During 1966 the 116th Assault Helicopter Company participated in nearly every important operation in III Corps including Abilene, Birmingham, Lan Kai, and Attleboro. Letters of commendation and words of praise were received from many sources and were too numerous to mention. At Appendix IX is listed the operational historical data for 1966.

B. Training: Aviation training was one of the most important areas of operations. All newly assigned aviators were given extensive in-country checkouts to include the Decca navigational system, formation flying, and sling loads. The training problem became acute during the 3d quarter due to the large percentage (75%) of rotatees. The same was true of mechanics and crew chiefs. An experienced company in August suddenly became a novice organization in October. To avoid what could have developed into a very serious condition an intensive officer and enlisted training program was initiated in the various critical MOS.

C. Competition: In late September 1966 gunship competition was conducted by Headquarters, 12th Aviation Group with the purpose of standardizing and improving Armed Helicopter employment techniques and procedures. The 116th Assault Helicopter Company was represented by the "Stingers" whose whole hearted support of the competition was commended by higher headquarters. The "Stingers", Lt Joe T. Stroud, 02324921 and CWO Paul D. Sadowski, W3150795, placed third among the 8 teams competing.

D. Operational Highlights: Following are highlights of significant operations conducted by the 116th Assault Helicopter Company during the year 1966.

The company participated in its first combat assault on the 1st and 2nd of January 1966. It was attached to the 145th Aviation Battalion. The company provided eight (8) UH-1D's and five (5) UH-1B's plus two (2) UH-1D's attached from the 128th Aviation Company. The 116th comprised the 3rd element of 5 elements used to airlift the 173rd Brigade, Royal Australian and New Zealand Troops. The staging area was Bien Hoa Airfield and the troops were airlifted into landing zones located approximately 20 miles southwest of Saigon. Four (4) company aircraft were hit by ground fire and this was the first time company aircraft had been hit by ground fire.

On 4 January the 116th conducted its first combat assault under the control of the 11th Aviation Battalion. The mission called for the air-lifting of one infantry company in two lifts from the loading area (YT055122) about 3 miles east of Bien Hoa to LZ Alpha (YT112176) approximately 7 miles northeast of the loading area. The infantry company was part of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. Two (2) heavy fire teams made a prestrike on objective Sue (YT117170) and objective Roy (YT115175). Roy and Sue were the objectives of the infantry company and were within 1000 meters south of the landing zone. Two light fire teams escorted the "slicks" on the lift. After the completion of the search and clear operation by the two companies (the other company had marched into the area the previous night and were the blocking force for the air lifted company) they were extracted back to the loading area. No company casualties were experienced nor did any aircraft receive any ground fire.

On 10 January Captain Ficklin and WO Asbell were on a re-supply mission in the Trung Lap area when they received three (3) hit in their aircraft from ground fire. One round went through the radio console throwing shrapnel throughout the cockpit and wounding WO Asbell on the left forearm. One round went through the fuel cell and Captain Ficklin returned the aircraft safely to Phu Loi. WO Asbell was the first person in the company to be wounded from hostile fire.

On 14 January CWO Sadowski and CWO Vandercar were on a fire support escort mission in a UH-1B. Enroute to the rendezvous point the tail rotor control cable was severed by enemy ground fire. CWO Sadowski maintained control and returned his aircraft to Phu Loi. He executed a long shallow approach and touched down with approximately 20 knots groundspeed. He maintained a straight ground track by gently rolling off the throttle and lowering the pitch. CWO Sadowski demonstrated superior flying skill during this emergency. His correct diagnosis of an emergency situation and the timely use of emergency procedures enabled him to make a successful forced landing thereby preventing injury to the four crew members and preventing further damage to his aircraft. A job well done.

On 30 January 1966 at approximately 1145 hours Phu Loi Airfield received its first mortar attack, with the 116th receiving the brunt of

the attack. Twelve (12) UH-1D's and five (5) UH-1B's received hits. As a result of the attack eight (8) UH-1D's and two (2) UH-1B's were grounded, thereby rendering the company ineffective for the better part of the next 10 days. Eight (8) mortar rounds landed in the company area which included both 60 and 81mm. During the mortar attack CWO Gibbs and WO Stroud volunteered and executed a medical evacuation and are to be commended for a highly professional job. This accomplishment further accentuates the company's progress toward maximum proficiency. No casualties were experienced in the company due to the mortar attack.

The following statistics were compiled for the month of

January:

Aircraft hit by ground fire	10 (8 UH1B's & 2 UH1D's)
Aircraft lost to combat	0
Aircraft lost by accident	1
Wounded in action	1
Total sorties flown	5248
Total combat assault sorties flown	3147
Total hours flown	1457
Total combat assault hours flown	776
Total other hours flown	681
Total troops carried	6336
Total cargo hauled	108.1 Tons
Total ammunition expended:	
7.62	154,185 rds
2.75	434 rds
40mm	1,270 rds
High aviator	78.5 hrs
Low aviator	.8 hrs
Average aviator time	57.2 hrs

Average aircraft time

59.0 hrs

The missions conducted in February were of the same variety as those flown in January. However, in February the 116th sponsored the incoming 162nd Aviation Company which was assigned to the 11th Aviation Battalion and stationed at Phouc Vinh about 15 miles north of Phu Loi. The 116th trained the 162nd crews in the same techniques that it had received when it first arrived in Vietnam in October 1965. During the training period of about 3 weeks the 116th crews flew with the 162nd crews on seven combat assaults to complete the training cycle.

February: The following statistics were compiled for the month of

Aircraft hit by ground fire	4 (3 B's & 1 D)
Aircraft lost to combat	0
Aircraft lost by accident	0
Wounded in action	1
Total sorties flown	3614
Total combat assault sorties flown	2936
Total hours flown	1381
Total combat assault hours flown	604
Total other hours flown	777
Total troops carried	4942
Total cargo carried	211.7 Tons
Total ammunition expended:	
7.62	142,325 rds
2.75	419 Rds
40mm	1172 rds
High aviator	79.8 hrs
Low aviator	1.0 hr

Average aviator time	49.9 hrs
Average aircraft time	55.2 hrs

On 7 March the company entered into a 30 day test period to evaluate a new proposed airmobile company TO&E. The objective of the test was to determine the feasibility of the beefed up TOE, plus the additional requirements (both personnel and equipment) that the present airmobile company would need to have the capability to airlift one combat infantry company (144 troops) in one lift. The 116th was augmented with seven (7) UH-1D's, 12 aviators, and seven (7) crew chiefs from the 162nd Aviation Company for the duration of the test.

On 30 March the company participated in Operation "Abilene" which involved troops of the 2nd and 3rd Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division and the Royal Australian Regiment. The objective of the operation was to search and clear the Phuc Tuy Province which is predominately controlled by the Viet Cong. On 30 March the company lifted the RAR troops into Courtenay rubber plantation airstrip (YS450915) which was to be the base camp for the first several days of operation. The 2nd Brigade was airlifted from Bear Cat Range to LZ Scott (YS352943) and LZ Ryan (YS390860). On 31 March the company lifted troops from the 3rd Brigade. The staging area was Vung Tau to landing zones 06 (YS355778), 05 (YS360712), and 02 (YS253752). The operational area encompassed approximately 20,000,000 square meters. It was bounded on the north by Xuan Loc, west by Bear Cat Range, south by Ba Ria and east by Xuyen Moc. No company casualties were experienced nor did any aircraft receive any hits from hostile fire.

The following statistics were compiled for the month of March

Aircraft hit by ground fire	9 (5 B's & 4 D's)
Aircraft lost to combat	0
Aircraft lost by accident	0
Wounded in action	0
Total sorties flown	5254
Total combat assault sorties flown	4741
Total hours flown	1743
Total combat assault hours flown	1224
Total other hours flown	519

Total troops carried	10,725
Total cargo hauled	246.7 Tons
Total ammunition expended:	
7.62	73,200 rds
2.75	104 rds
40mm	345 rds
High aviator	98.9 hrs
Low aviator	16.4 hrs
Average aviator time	79.0 hrs
Average aircraft time	56.0 hrs

On 4 April the 116th provided two (2) 10 ship elements (augmented by the 162nd), one (1) maintenance ship (Beekeeper) and two (2) light fire teams for combat assaults in continuation of Operation Abilene. Three lifts were scheduled from PZ Mike to LZ Lucy. On the first lift the lead aircraft of the 3rd element hit a steel utility pole beside the highway at PZ Mike (YS260665) with main rotor blade on landing. The aircraft was total loss. No injuries were sustained. On the second and third lift 3 additional 116th aircraft made precautionary landings and the maintenance ship assisted all three to a flyable status. One (1) aircraft continued the mission and the other two returned to the home station for additional repairs. Two of the precautionary landings were caused by hydraulic failures and the third was caused by a combination of damage received while hovering over a mine field and setting off an explosion and an engine seal leak. No casualties were experienced nor did any aircraft receive hits from enemy fire on this operation.

On 10 April the 116th provided nine (9) UH-1D's, Beekeeper, and one light and one heavy fire team to support the 173rd Airborne Brigade on Operation Denver. The company was attached to the 145th Aviation Battalion for the operation. In support of the operation the company made 2 lifts from the Brigade's home station at Bien Hoa to the tactical area at Song be airstrip. During the operation the heavy fire team destroyed 3 houses that contained suspected Viet Cong. There were no confirmed VC killed. There were no company casualties nor did any aircraft receive hits from enemy fire.

The completion of Operation Abilene and extraction of troops was accomplished on 13 April. The 116th provided 10 UH-1D's, two light fire teams, and Beekeeper for the mission. The 116th was placed under control of the 1st Aviation Battalion. Nine (9) lifts were required for the operation

and no enemy hits were received during the mission.

On 24 April the 116th became involved in its largest operation in its short, but colorful history. The company was deployed to Tay Ninh Airport Nr 2 (XT202508) to provide direct support to the 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division for the duration of Operation Birmingham. The company bivouaced in a field adjacent to the aforementioned airfield. The security was provided by a local ARVN unit. The service platoon accompanied the company to the field and assisted in intermediate inspections and performed limited repairs in the field. Periodic inspections and extensive repairs were performed at Phu Loi by the 392nd which did not accompany the 116th to the field. The unit mess accompanied the unit to the field and fed on the average of 1500 meals daily. In addition to the 116th personnel, the 162nd Aviation Company, 11th Aviation Battalion, and many transient personnel were fed by the company mess. SFC E6 Robinson, the mess steward and his cooks are to be commended on the support they provided. Major Bryan, Company Operation Officer and SSG Dexter, Intelligence NCO were the liaison personnel from the 116th and were attached to the 3rd Brigade during the period of operation. They both were awarded the Combat Infantry Badge for their participation in the ground operation of the maneuver. The 116th supported the mission with ten (10) UH-1D's, Beekeeper and three (3) light fire teams. Support rendered consisted of combat assaults, combat extractions, administrative troop repositioning, command and control, visual reconnaissance, reconnaissance by fire, starlight scope, psychological warfare, target attack and aerial escort.

The following statistics were compiled for the month of April:

Aircraft hit by ground fire	13 (9 D's & 4 B's)
Aircraft shot down	1 (D)
Aircraft lost to combat	0
Aircraft lost by accident	0
Wounded in action	0
Total sorties flown	6905
Total combat assault sorties flown	6823
Total hours flown	2320
Total combat assault hours flown	2181
Total other hours flown	139

Total troops carried	8873
Total cargo carried	319 Tons
Total ammunition expended:	
7.62	358,700 rds
2.75	1,032 rds
40mm	2,827 rds
High aviator	133.7 hrs
Low aviator	17.7 hrs
Average aviator time	90.0 hrs
Average aircraft time	92.2 hrs

On the return from the field the 116th was placed in a direct support role of the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi. The brigade had just recently arrived in the country and it was on its first combat mission. It was deployed north and northwest of Cu Chi to begin a search and clear sweep to the northwest. The brigade's objective was to join up with elements of the 2nd Brigade which the 116th had helped airlift into LZ's approximately 30 miles northwest of Cu Chi on the morning of 16 May. The 116th provided much valuable guidance to the 1st Brigade as pertains to; (1) setting up re-supply points, (2) proper marking of LZ's for medical evacuation and re-supply drop off sites, and (3) proper utilization of gun teams. Also the 116th briefed the Aviation Officer of the Brigade on the overall operational procedures of an airmobile company in an effort to obtain the most effective and efficient utilization. The company continued to support the 1st Brigade until 25 May.

The following statistics were compiled for the month of May:

Aircraft hit by ground fire	20 (11D's & 9 B's)
Aircraft shot down	0
Aircraft lost to combat	1
Aircraft lost by accident	0
Wounded in action	2
Total sorties flown	5293

Total combat assault sorties flown	4015
Total hours flown	2030
Total combat assault hours flown	1632
Total other hours flown	398
Total troops carried	10,039
Total cargo carried	393.1 Tons

Total ammunition expended:

7.62	310,800
2.75	1,158 rds
40mm	1,859 rds
20mm	20 rds
High aviator	137.4 hrs
Low aviator	5.3 hrs
Average aviator time	80.9 hrs
Average aircraft time	81.1 hrs

On 8 June the 116th provided 10 UH-1D's, one light fire team and Beekeeper in support of Operation Jersey being conducted by a battalion of the 25th ARVN Division. The 116th moved 220 troops in 3 lifts from the PZ (XT413242) to the landing zone at XT298290. The objective of the ground force to search and clear the village adjacent to the landing zone of a suspected 60 Viet Cong. LT Harrell and CWO Stroud were flying a gun ship in support of the ground forces after the completion of the combat assault. Their aircraft was hit several times by enemy ground fire causing a precautionary landing due to unusual vibrations. Also CWO Stroud was wounded in the leg. LT Harrell soon determined the aircraft was safe for a one time flight and took off and dropped CWO Stroud off at the hospital and returned his aircraft safely to Phu Loi.

The following statistics were compiled for the month of June:

Aircraft hit by ground fire	8 (6 D's & 2 B's)
-----------------------------	-------------------

Aircraft shot down	0
Aircraft lost to combat	0
Aircraft lost by accident	0
Wounded in action	3
Total sorties flown	4181
Total combat assault sorties flown	4136
Total hours flown	1563
Total combat assaults hours flown	833
Total troops carried	7181
Total cargo carried	123.6 Tons
Total ammunition expended:	
7.62	61,800
2.75	314
40mm	488
High aviator	108 hrs
Low aviator	2.6 hrs
Average aviator time	68.5 hrs
Average aircraft time	67.9 hrs

11 July 1966: The 116th supported the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 27th Infantry with 10 lift ships, 1 C & C aircraft, 2 light fire teams and one maintenance recovery helicopter. Twenty sorties were required to lift 140 troops from Ch Chi to five separate LZ's around the Bao Trai Woods at coordinates XT 4711. Following the initial assault two separate eagle flights were formed and their efforts resulted in three Viet Cong killed and eighteen captured trying to flee the objective area. No aircraft were damaged.

12 July 1966: The 116th was again in support of the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 27th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. Two companies were lifted into 7 LZ's around Bao Cahn Na (XT 5601) in 30 sorties. As a result 175 refugees

were freed from Viet Cong domination and subsequently air lifted to "new life" hamlets. The Armed Helicopter Platoon discovered several Viet Cong supply caches which were siezed by heliborne troops. A successful eagle flight commanded by Captain Robert D. Anderson resulted in 1 Viet Cong killed and 5 Viet Cong captured. No aircraft were damaged, but SP4 Dennis B. DeYoung (aircraft crewman) was wounded by hostile fire while attempting to capture a Viet Cong. For this he was recommended for and received the award of the Silver Star for gallantry.

19 July 1966: The 116th was involved in a emergency extraction of the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry from the vicinity of XT5102. Elements of the Battalion were under heavy Viet Cong attack. The extraction was completed without damage to aircraft or loss of life due to the heavy volume of suppressive fires laid down by the "Stingers". Upon checking the PZ after the final extraction a crew member of the flight saw four US Soldiers who had been inadvertently left in the area. A lift ship was immediately diverted and the four troops were recovered unharmed.

The following statistics were compiled for the month of July:

Aircraft hit by ground fire	6 (4 D's & 2 B's)
Aircraft lost to combat	0
Aircraft lost by accident	0
Wounded in action	1
Total sorties flown	7038
Total combat assault hours flown	1745
Total hours flown	2509
Total troops carried	15341
Total cargo carried	722 Tons
Total ammunition expended:	
7.62	250,000 rds
2.75	500 rds
40mm	700 rds
High aviator	140.2 hrs
Low Aviator	18.1 hrs

Average aviator time

89.2 hrs

Average aircraft time

93 hrs

4 August 1966: The Hornets were in support of the Special Forces at Tay Ninh with 11 UH-1D's and a light fire team. The mission was to conduct two combat assaults followed by extractions. Light enemy fire was encountered during both phases, but no hits were recorded. During the operation, numerous water buffalo, a source of food for the Viet Cong were killed. LTC Joseph Starker, Commanding Officer, 11th Combat Aviation Battalion was credited for six confirmed buffalo kills. LTC Starker was flying with the Armed Helicopter Platoon.

16 August 1966: The Hornets were in direct support of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry in the Cu Chi area. 713 sorties were flown to move 900 troops and large amounts of supplies. The landing zones in the vicinity of coordinates XT 540220 were covered by heavy enemy fire. Considerable amounts of small arms and automatic weapon fire was received. Two Viet Cong were spotted in the open and killed by "Hornet" door gunners. Two lift ships took hits and Captain Peter Smith the flight leader and SP4 Leon W. Maddux a crew chief received flesh wounds from enemy fire.

August: The following statistics were compiled for the month of

Aircraft hit by ground fire 6(2 D's & 4 B's)

Aircraft lost to combat 0

Aircraft lost to accident 0

Wounded in action 2

Total sorties flown 7571

Total combat assault hours flown 1612

Total hours flown 2173

Total troops carried 10292

Total cargo carried 290 Tons

Total ammunition expended:

7.62 250,000 rds

2.75 600 rds

40mm 700 hrs

High aviator	136.1 hrs
Low aviator	4.1 hrs
Average aviator time	73.5 hrs
Average aircraft time	80.5 hrs

1 September 1966: The 116th Assault Helicopter Company was in direct support of 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. Two companies of Infantry were lifted into six zones around the village of Hau Hoa (XT 577039). Before extraction the ground elements killed 9 Viet Cong, captured 22 confirmed Viet Cong and 29 suspected Viet Cong, 10 weapons, and various other items and supplies. This particular operation was the most successful pacification operation of the quarter. No aircraft were damaged although light sniper fire was encountered upon extraction.

12 September 1966: The "Stingers" finished a 3 day operation in support of the Special Forces units at Tay Ninh. They expended 68,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, 995 rockets (2.75), and 1000 grenades (40mm). They were credited with 13 Viet Cong killed by body count in the vicinity of coordinates 651876. In addition, 5 buildings, 3 sampans, and 2 reinforced bunkers were destroyed in the same general area. The fire team leader for the operation C-2 Paul D. Sadowski, was commended for this outstanding support of the ground force operation.

28 September 1966: The Hornets supported the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry (Manchu) on operation Lani Kai. On the final extraction from an LZ vicinity coordinates XS 685825 intense automatic weapons fire was encountered. Two UH-1D's were hit, but continued to fly. One gun ship was hit in the vicinity of transmission, severing the transmission oil line. The Aircraft Commander, WO Michael Kitchura landed in a hostile and uninhabited area. A security force was immediately placed around the aircraft. Beekeeper, the 116th maintenance aircraft was called to evacuate or repair the aircraft. Captain Lawrence R. Dewey Jr made the determination that he could repair the aircraft and fly it to a secure area. Captain Dewey then proceeded to Phu Loi, procured the necessary parts, returned to the downed aircraft, effected the repair and flew the aircraft home. This entire action took place in less than 1½ hours. For his outstanding efforts, Captain Dewey was recommended for the Army Commendation Medal.

The following statistics were compiled for the month of

September:

Aircraft hit by ground fire	10 (7 D's & 3 B's)
Aircraft shot down	0

Total hours flown	2296
Aircraft lost by accident	0
Wounded in action	0
Total sorties flown	7188
Total combat assault hours flown	1686
Total troops carried	12143
Total cargo carried	264 Tons
Total ammunition expended:	
7.62	250,000 rds
2.75	500 rds
40mm	600 rds
High aviator	129.1 hrs
Low aviator	4.9 hrs
Average aviator time	67.0 hrs
Average aircraft time	85 hrs

On 4 October the 116th Assault Helicopter Company reinforced by the 162nd Assault Helicopter Company supported the 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division in conducting combat assaults in the Ben Luc area. Nineteen UH-1D's and 2 light fire teams were committed to this mission. Lifts were made from Cu Chi and Ben Luc to LZ's in the vicinity of XS6767 and XT6768. A total of 356 troops and 14 tons of supplies were moved during the operation. On approach to the LZ's both units came under intense small arms and automatic weapons fire from all sides of the area. In the vicinity of XS6768, the 116th flight had 3 UH-1D's and 1 UH-1B hit by ground fire with all ships incurring multiple hits. One of the three was forced to land. One crew member was WIA. Fire was returned in the area resulting in an estimated 3VCWBAA. In the vicinity of XS6767, the 162nd flight had 2 UH-1D's and 1 UH-1B hit by ground fire from Viet Cong sighted along the sides of the LZ. One ship was forced to land. One crew member was WIA. Quickly recovering from the surprise attack and reacting rapidly, fire was immediately returned from the UH-1D door gunners and from the fire team escort. Engaging and pursuing the enemy with effective fire, they accounted for 15 Viet Cong KBAA by body count, 10 Viet Cong KBAA estimated and 5 Viet Cong WBAA body count. All downed aircraft were later recovered without further incident.

On 22 October the 116th Assault Helicopter Company was employed in support of the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. Combat assaults were conducted from a PZ in the vicinity of XT728147 to LZ's in the vicinity of XT752205, XT747206 and XT746201. Thirteen UH-1D's and 2 UH-1B's were committed to the mission. During the first lift of an extraction of the 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry from an LZ in the vicinity of XT752205 at approximately 1615 hours, intense small arms and 60mm mortar fire was received in the PZ. One UH-1D was hit by enemy fire and heavily damaged while in the PZ. Upon lifting from the PZ another UH-1D was force landed to the south of the PZ because the transmission oil line was severed by enemy fire. The aircraft landed in a secure area, was repaired and flown out. Medical evacuation of the wounded in the PZ was accomplished by a helicopter from the 116th Assault Helicopter Company. The damaged helicopter in the PZ was recovered utilizing 56th Transportation Company and a recovery ship from the 178th Combat Support Helicopter Company. Extensive helicopter gun team, artillery and tactical air support was placed in the area in support the defensive ground element of approximately 60 US Troops. Another extraction of the ground element was initiated at approximately 1815 hours. Nine UH-1D's from the 116th Assault Helicopter Company, 2 light fire teams and a UH-1B smoke dispensing ship were committed to the mission. All ground elements were loaded aboard the aircraft for departure. However during take off one UH-1D received damaging fire immediately after take off and was force landed approximately 200 yards SW of the PZ. And two more were shot down when they attempted to land by the first disabled craft. Wounded personnel were evacuated from the LZ by Hornet aircraft under intense fire. At approximately 1900 hours reinforcements were lifted into the LZ. At which time a UH-1D from the 118th Assault Helicopter Company was shot down. Additional wounded personnel were evacuated by the 116th Assault Helicopter Company under intense enemy fire until darkness and poor weather curtailed operations. A total of 10 UH-1D and 2 UH-1B helicopters from the 116th Assault Helicopter Company received hits from enemy fire during the operation. Friendly casualties from the 116th Assault Helicopter Company during the operation were 1KIA and 13 MIA. An estimated 5 Viet Cong were KBAA and 10 Viet Cong were WBAA during the operation. The 116th Assault Helicopter Company has been recommended for the Valorous Unit Award for this action.

The following statistics were compiled for the month of October:

Aircraft hit by ground fire	18 (17 D's & 1 B)
Aircraft lost to combat	5
Aircraft lost by accident	0
Wounded in action	14
Total sorties flown	6433

Total combat assault sorties flown	3678
Total hours flown	2370
Total combat assault hours flown	1364
Total troops carried	11,259
Total cargo carried	227.5 Tons
Total ammunition expended:	
7.62	170,000 rds
2.75	900 rds
40mm	1800 rds
High aviator	148 hrs
Low aviator	7.5 hrs
Average aviator time	78.8 hrs
Average aircraft time	91 hrs

On 4 November the 116th Assault Helicopter Company was committed to support of the 1st Infantry Division and 25th Infantry Division on a tactical emergency at approximately 1600 hours. As a result of contact with an estimated Viet Cong Battalion in the vicinity of XT4055, elements of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade were reinforced by units from Cu Chi, Lai Khe and Di An during the late afternoon, evening and well into the night. The operation included both troop and equipment lifts into Dau Tieng. Earlier in the day, the 116th had two UH-1H's hit while supporting the 196th. Intense small arms fire was received during a combat assault into an LZ in the vicinity of XT4445. One aircraft continued to fly, but the other aircraft received intense small arms fire from the vicinity of XT4248 and sustained a hit in the engine oil line. It was forced to land but was later flown out. Two passengers were WIA on the first ship hit and one on the second.

This was the start of Operation Attleboro, the largest land operation of the Vietnam War to date. The 116th Assault Helicopter Company played a significant role throughout the operation, having garnered many awards and decorations for outstanding performance.

On 28 November the 116th Assault Helicopter Company conducted operations in general support of US and RVN forces in the III Corps area.

Ten UH-1D's and one light fire team were committed to the mission. There were 457 personnel and 3 tons of cargo carried during the operation. At approximately 1530 hours, one UH-1B of the LFT, while enroute on a mission out of Bien Hoa, crashed and burned in the vicinity of YT070260. Four fatalities resulted from the crash. Cause could not be determined. Enemy ground fire was received while securing the area and recovering of bodies, but no hits were taken.

November: The following statistics were compiled for the month of

Aircraft hit by ground fire	5 (D's)
Aircraft lost to combat	1 (B)
Aircraft lost to accident	0
Wounded in action	0
Total sorties flown	6356
Total combat assault sorties flown	3089
Total hours flown	2330
Total combat assault hours flown	1364
Total troops carried	13,842
Total cargo carried	392.4 Tons
Total ammunition Expended:	
7.62	120,000 rds
2.75	500 rds
40mm	600 rds
High aviator	143 hrs
Low aviator	7.1 hrs
Average aviator time	79.6 hrs
Average aircraft time	86 hrs

On 9 December the 116th Assault Helicopter Company conducted operations in general support of US and ARVN forces in the III Corps area. Eleven UH-1D's and one light fire team were committed and hauled 488 passengers and 6 tons of cargo during the day. At approximately 1000 hours, during the extraction of a Recondo Patrol from the vicinity of YS2982, intense automatic weapons fire was received and one UH-1D sustained 7 hits. Although use of the tail rotor was lost, the aircraft was flown by LT Edward Malanowski to Bearcat and landed without further damage. Suppressive fire was put into the area and resulted in 2 Viet Cong KIA body count. At approximately 1630 hours small arms fire was received in the vicinity of YT5284 and YT5684, but no hits were sustained. In another action, a light fire team was credited with twenty Viet Cong KIA, estimated in the vicinity of XT4517.

December:

The following statistics were compiled for the month of

Aircraft hit by ground fire 3 (2 D's & 1 B)

Aircraft lost to combat 0

Aircraft lost to accident 0

Wounded in action 0

Total sorties flown 7520

Total hours flown 2523

Total combat assault sorties flown 1952

Total troops carried 14,339

Total cargo carried 254.5 Tons

Total ammunition expended:

7.62 280,000 rds

2.75 1,100 rds

40mm 1,500 rds

High aviator 157.7 hrs

Low aviator 1.5 hrs

Average aviator time 83.5 hrs

Average aircraft time 93 hrs

V. MAINTENANCE:

During the first quarter of 1966 the aircraft availability rate for the 116th Assault Helicopter Company was 67.5% for the UH-1Ds and 84.0% for the UH-1Bs. This compares to the Department of Army goal of 80% availability across the board based on a flying hour program of 60 hours per aircraft per month. As can be readily seen the unit was over it's goal on B models, but considerably short on the D models. The reasons for that situation are:

1. Delta models flew approximately 25% more hours than the Bravos thereby requiring more inspections and parts.

2. Grounding of several aircraft for a 10 day period because of damage received during a mortar attack on 30 January.

A breakdown by month of availability, hours flown, and inspections performed are as follows:

<u>Availability</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>
UH-1B	85%	84%	83%
UH-1D	63%	68%	72%

Average time per A/C per Month:

UH-1B	48 hrs	53 hrs	58 hrs
UH-1D	62 hrs	61 hrs	76 hrs

Periodic Inspections performed:

15	16	28
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The second quarter of the year saw some improvement in the availability of aircraft and the maintenance picture as a whole due to better parts support and a higher experience level within the maintenance personnel of the unit. Average availability for UH-1Ds was 71.5% and 78.5% for the UH-1Bs. Average hours flown per aircraft were considerably higher than first quarter figures. The overall availability would have been considerably higher, but for a TWX received 1 June requiring a one-time inspection of the tail rotor hub bearings. The inspection grounded 15 Ds and 4 Bs for about 10 days awaiting parts.

A break down by month of availability, hours flown, and inspections performed for the 2nd quarter are as follows:

<u>Availability</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>
UH-1B	81.3%	75.5%	78.8%

UH-1D	72.1%	78.2%	65.2%
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Average time per A/C Month:

UH-1B	83.8 hrs	56.6 hrs	46.1 hrs
UH-1D	97.1 hrs	95.1 hrs	81.8 hrs

Periodic Inspections performed:

18	20	15
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Percentages in aircraft availability rose somewhat during the third quarter again due to an ever-increasing experience level and smoother parts flow. The average availability for the quarter was 74% on the Ds and 80% on the Bs. Again the Delta model failed to attain the goal of 80%, but the flying hour program was over flown in excess of 50% which more than compensates for that small short coming. In addition several aircraft were victims to hostile fire during the quarter and required extensive down time.

A breakdown by month of availability, hours flown, and inspections accomplished for the 3rd quarter are as follows:

<u>Availability:</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>
UH-1B	89.1%	78.6%	73.9%
UH-1D	75.5%	70.5%	76.5%

Average time per A/C per Month:

UH-1B	87.9 hrs	71.7 hrs	71.3 hrs
UH-1D	101 hrs	78.5 hrs	91 hrs

Periodic Inspections performed:

29	20	24
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Also during the 3rd quarter 25 separate combat strikes were repaired by unit maintenance personnel requiring 1754 man hours of labor.

During the 4th quarter of the year, the unit's availability was 72.6% for the UH-1Ds and 69.3% for the UH-Bs. Although the 80% goals were not achieved the average time flown per UH-1D per month was 98 hours and 56 hours for Bravos. Factors precluding higher availability are:

1. Overflying the program causing parts shortage.

2. Heavy inspection requirements.

3. Combat damage.

A breakdown by month showing availability, hours flown, and inspections performed is as follows:

Availability:

UH-1B.	79%	79%	50%
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UH-1D	79%	64%	75%
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Average time per A/C per Month:

UH-1B	71hrs	54 hrs	43 hrs
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UH-1D	89 hrs	98 hrs	111 hrs
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Periodic Inspections performed:

	23	23	25
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At year's end the 116th Assault Helicopter Company's fleet of aircraft were reaching an advanced state of age. The average total hours flown per machine was 1053. At Appendix X is an organizational chart showing the structure of the Service Platoon.

VI. ATTACHED UNIT ACTIVITIES:

a. 283rd Signal Detachment

(1) Organization:

The 283rd Signal Detachment was activated on 5 July 1965 and attached to the 116th Assault Helicopter Company at Fort Bragg, North Carolina UP GO 200, Headquarters, Third United States Army, dated 12 July 1965. Upon arrival in Vietnam, the 283rd combined operations with the 285th Signal Detachment to provide third and fourth echelon avionics support for the 11th Combat Aviation Battalion. On 21 June 1966, the 283rd rejoined the 116th Assault Helicopter Company as an attachment. At Appendix XI is an organization chart of the Detachment.

(2) Mission:

The mission of the 283rd Signal Detachment consists of performing 3rd and 4th echelon maintenance on all radios and navigational aids currently installed in the aircraft of the 116th Assault Helicopter Company.

This mission encompasses any minor modifications to plugs and wiring of communications and navigational radios in the helicopter along with replacing and fixing damaged wiring.

(3) Accomplishments:

During the last six months of the year when the 283rd was performing exclusively for the 116th Assault Helicopter Company, the Detachment received 2080 work order requests. They were able to complete 2039 requests with only 41 being referred to a higher level maintenance organization.

During the year the 283rd assisted in wiring the 11th Combat Aviation Battalion Officer's Club as well as the 116th Assault Helicopter Company's EM club. They also dispatched an advance party to the "Hornets" new home at Cu Chi to accomplish all necessary electrical and communication wiring of the compound.

b. 392nd Transportation Maintenance Detachment:

(1) Organization:

The 392nd Transportation Maintenance Detachment is organized under the provisions of TOE 55-500R. At Appendix XII is an organizational chart of the Detachment.

(2) Mission:

The mission of the 392nd is to provide direct support maintenance and overall technical assistance to the 116th Assault Helicopter Company.

(3) Accomplishments:

During the year the 392nd has changed 43 aircraft engines, 128 main rotor blades, performed 54 hot end inspections, and has spent in excess of 4000 man hours on sheet metal work repairing combat damage. Numerous other statistical figures could be presented that are equally impressive, but not needed to show the tremendous importance to the 116th Assault Helicopter Company of the 392nd Transportation Detachment.

c. 431st Medical Detachment:

(1) Organization:

The 431st Medical Detachment is organized in accordance with TOE 8-500D and consists of one medical (Flight Surgeon) and eight enlisted men. At the end of the year no Flight Surgeon was assigned due to the shortage of Doctors theatre wide. At Appendix XIII is an organizational chart of the

Detachment.

(2) Mission:

The mission of the 431st Medical Detachment is to provide direct medical support for the 116th Assault Helicopter Company and its Detachments. This mission obviously can only be accomplished if a medical officer is assigned. However, nearly continuous support has been obtained through coordination with the 11th Combat Aviation Battalion Surgeon.

(3) Accomplishments:

The Medical Detachment has, in addition to its normal support activities, participated in many civic actions and has treated several thousand civilians throughout the year. Additionally a medic habitually accompanies the unit on combat assaults and is available to provide immediate medical attention if required.