

ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT
HISTORY OF
A TROOP
7th SQUADRON
1st AIR CAVALRY

1 January 1969 - 31 December 1969

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APO 96357

VHPA207

SOURCE: MIKE O'Rielly

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GENERAL BRIGADE
HEADQUARTERS
A TROOP
7th SQUADRON
1st AIR CAVALRY

1 January 1970 - 31 December 1970

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Unit Operations

of Line from 1 November 1968 thru 30 January 1969

Troop started the period assigned working detached plant in out of and Province and 7th Province. A Troop started immediately its missions with 44th special tactical zone, the remainder of the being divisional support of the 9th, 7th and 21st ARVN Divisions. worked with mercenary and special forces troops and on occasions were out of Rach Gia.

During the reporting period A Troop was involved with night missions in 7th Province. During the operation, emphasis was placed on the use of night light, employing a team of guns low level. Due to the terrain and other factors inherent in an aircraft mounted light 44th STZ advisors decided to further use of the bug ship. During this night period, added emphasis placed on first, and last reconnaissance missions. The results were limited, night operations were discontinued.

During the reporting period A Troop was called to support B Troop which conducting field operations with the 44th special tactical zone. Daily, lift elements provided resupply for Powder Valley, B Troop, 7/1 Air, with the guns covering movement to and from field locations.

A mission for A Troop, during the period, was one of reconnaissance of border area to detect movement of troops and/or supplies across the border Cambodia. A Troop was successful, in that numerous caches were uncovered Apache elements, the latest of which was on 2 January, and consisted approximately 40 tons of weapons and ammunition.

percent of the A Troop missions were conducted with PRU forces at Can (E4310) and Tra Vinh (XK09330), the A Troop elements worked as a hunter team with the lift platoon ready to insert troops as required. This operation met with a good deal of success.

Learned

Observation: Indigenous units are not always able to provide a reserve force for air cavalry operations.

Recommendation: That commanders effect coordination with units having total control of air cavalry troops to ensure that reserves are available and that a thorough mutual understanding is reached as to conduct of operations. This coordination should be made through ARVN channels as well as advisory channels. When the supported unit is not able to provide reconnaissance, the tactical employment of the aircraft should be modified to minimize the risk of losing aircraft to hostile fire.

Observation: Ground elements have a difficult time organizing their units when contact is established with an enemy force after insertion. Recommendation: LZ's be chosen at such a distance from the objective to maximize utilization to enhance the movement of ground elements.

FORWARD

1970 has been a rewarding year for Apache Troop. The emphasis during the first half of the year was on the Cambodian operation. Apache crossed the "Red Line" and left its mark in enemy KBA. After Cambodia, the Troop worked throughout the Delta in support of ARVN operations. Next came the U Minh Forest Campaign in support of the 21st ARVN Division and again Apache was well represented. In each case Apache answered the call in a highly professional manner and has become a highly respected unit throughout the IV Corps Tactical Zone.

THOMAS A. SMITH
CPT, AR
Commanding

Observation: Avionics difficulties have been found in the AHC-54

OS.

Recommendations: Transmissions be limited to 10 seconds with a cool-down interval prior to the next transmission. To prevent any surge of power radio, inverter checks were made and the load meter indicating .5 prior to turning radios on.

Observation: The FM antenna on the AHC is positioned in the pylon engine behind the engine oil reservoir. An oil film and accompanying dust that decreases the range and effectiveness of the FM radio.

Recommendations: That a sheet metal shield be placed between the engine and antenna or removal of the antenna to its outside position on the pylon.

Observation: The dust and sand problem that accompanies the dry season shortens the life span of exposed seals, bearing and blade grips.

Recommendations: That the lubrication interval on exposed moving parts be shortened during the dry season.

THE HISTORY OF A TROOP, 7th SQUADRON, 1st AIR CAVALRY IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM BEGINS WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE UNIT IN COUNTRY, THE MAIN CONTINGENTS OF WHICH ARRIVED BETWEEN 21st FEBRUARY AND 27th FEBRUARY 1966. THE BULK OF MEN AND EQUIPMENT WAS TRANSPORTED TO VIETNAM ABOARD THE USLS UNIFOR. IMMEDIATELY UPON DOCKING IN VIETNAM, THE MEN AND OFFICERS OF TROOP A BEGAN THE RIGOROUS TASK OF MOVING THE COMPLETE AIR CAVALRY TROOP, PACK, STOCK, AND BARRACK, TO DIAN. SO EFFICIENT AND DEDICATED DID THEY PROVE TO BE, THAT THEY WERE ABLE TO EFFECTIVELY BEGIN TACTICAL OPERATIONS BY THE 21st OF MARCH, NEARLY TWO WEEKS BEFORE THEIR TENTATIVE OPERATIONAL DATE.

FOR THE NEXT SIX WEEKS A TROOP OPERATED UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE 1st AIRBORNE DIVISION IN AREAS AROUND LAI NIEP, AND MUONG VENG. DURING THIS PERIOD THE TROOP GAINED MUCH COMBAT EXPERIENCE AND BUILT AN OUTSTANDING REPUTATION THROUGHOUT THE VIET CONG'S TACTICAL ZONE AS BEING ONE OF THE TOUGHEST FIGHTING UNITS TO ENTER THE WAR IN VIETNAM. WITH THE OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP OF MAJOR JAMES R. HILL THE TROOP QUICKLY OVERCAME MANY DIFFICULT PROBLEM AREAS, ONE OF WHICH WAS THE TACTICAL TRAINING OF RECON-16 "COMBAT" PILOTS. DUE TO THE LARGE LOSS OF TRAINED PERSONNEL QUALIFIED IN THE "C" MODEL HUEY GUNSHIP IN PLACE OF INEXPERIENCED COMBAT QUALIFIED PILOTS, A TROOP BEGAN OPERATIONS WITH MANY NEW, BUT NONE THE LESS, EMBOLDENED AVIATORS.

DURING THE PERIOD FROM MAY TO 23 MAY 1966, THE MEN AND OFFICERS OF A TROOP SO DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES BY REPEATED ACTS OF HEROISM. IN HELPING TO THWART THE SECOND VIET CONG OFFENSIVE OF THE SANGOM AREA, THAT THEY WERE RECOMMENDED FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION.

FROM 23 MAY UNTIL 6 JUNE 1966, A TROOP WAS AGAIN ENGAGED IN A GREAT UNDERTAKING. THIS WAS THEIR MOVE FROM DIAN TO VINH LONG. THE BULK OF THE MAINTENANCE AND PERSONAL EQUIPMENT WAS MOVED BY TRUCK CONVOY.

tations

time from 1 February 1969 thru 31 April 1969.

During the reporting period A Troop conducted reconnaissance missions along the border in Chau Doc Province in an attempt to establish a corridor for the movement of personnel from Cambodia into the RV Comm. A Troop was successful in these missions which uncovered several caches, the latest and most significant uncovered was on 7 April. A Troop supported the 9th US division with that emphasized maximum insertion of ground troops rather than the reconnaissance capabilities of an air cavalry troop. The remainder of the force was in support of the 7th, 9th and other ARVN divisions where they performed reconnaissance and security missions.

During the reporting period A Troop conducted 117 reconnaissance missions in support of the 9th US division force out of Dong Ha. Emphasis was placed on getting maximum number of insertions during the day light hours in areas of interest. Organic lift elements employing 4 aircraft were used to insert one lift (32 personnel) and up to 3 lift, depending on the situation and intelligence situations. Reserve forces were on standby in case situation warranted greater exploitation.

"People sniffer" was employed on several missions where civilian population was scattered. The machine was mounted on a UH-1H which flew over the area at approximately 50 feet with an air speed of 80 knots. When the machine indicated the possibility of personnel being in the area, the insertion would be made in the area. This technique proved extremely effective on 23 March 1969. After the machine indicated a high reading, one lift was inserted into the area along with reconnaissance of the area by aero scouts that found evidence of recent activity in the area. Quick reaction to intelligence provided by the "people sniffer" and the aero scouts later resulted in heavy contact by the ground elements which provided the lift elements for a very successful operation.

CS gas containers were used in several operations in conjunction with the "people sniffer". The gas containers carried on the C-26 aircraft were used to clear the area from 1000 feet. When the gas dispersed, the aero scouts performed a reconnaissance of the area to detect any movement. This technique worked very well although the aero scouts pilots find the mask very irritating for any length of time. The irritating is due to extremely high temperatures during the day causing the face to perspire under the mask.

A Troop conducted border surveillance missions in support of the 44th STZ. The Troop was placed on infiltration routes from Cambodia into Chau Doc Province. Efforts were placed on locating VC storage areas between the border Mui Gai and Mui Koto mountains. Ground elements from Ba Xoi were used to exploit possible cache locations.

Supply missions were conducted in support of 44th STZ. Supplies from Ba Xoi and Ba Bai were relocated to Mui Koto and Mui Gai mountains. The resupply missions required the use of all lift aircraft and some-what of several sorties to complete the mission. On several instances the mission interfered with normal combat operations due to the time required to complete the resupply which caused a delay in on-station time.

THAT SUCH A MOVE COULD BE MADE SO QUICKLY IS EVEN MORE REMARKABLE WHEN CONSIDERING THE FACT THAT A TROOP WAS STILL HEAVILY ENGAGING THE ENEMY IN THE DIAM AREA, WHILE ALL OF THEIR BELONGINGS AND MUCH OF THEIR EQUIPMENT WAS PRECEDING THEIR ACTUAL MOVE TO VINH LONG. ONCE AT VINH LONG, HOWEVER, THEIR JOB WAS FAR FROM OVER. THE TROOP SOON FOUND THEMSELVES LABOURING LONG HOURS BUILDING LIVING QUARTERS, MAINTENANCE AREAS, AND ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS BUILDINGS. A TROOP WAS SOON SETTLED IN VINH LONG, HOWEVER, AND WAS MAKING ITS PRESENCE FELT IN CHAU DOC PROVINCE.

EVER SINCE ITS ARRIVAL IN VINH LONG, A TROOP HAS BEEN AN UNDYING THREAT TO THE DELTA REGION. ITS CONSTANT SEARCH FOR AND DESTRUCTION OF ENEMY FORCES AND STRUCTURES HAS MADE THE CHAU DOC AREA ONE OF THE SAFEST PARTS OF VIETNAM.

Learned:

ervation: Ground elements waiting in a processed danger zone for mere minutes enables the enemy to organize themselves to strike aircraft extract.

ommendation: Ground commanders keep their troops in the tree lines contacted by the S C aircraft. This gives an added barrier of safety extracting aircraft.

ervation: Malfunction of the KY-6 crypto operation on days of high ture and/or high humidity.

ommendation: For proper operation of the KY-6 crypto elements in the was necessary to install an air conditioner to insure proper operation radio equipment.

ervation: Slow airspeed right turns (below 10 - 12 knots) can be ex-hazardous. (OH-6A)

ommendation: The possibility of this condition occurring in the over-area is greatly increased due to the flying tactics necessary to com-be missions. Therefore this condition should be more highly stressed operations manual and in transition training.

ervation: Main rotor blade and damper retaining pins are working their se during flight.

ommendation: That the pilot of the aircraft inspect the pins thour-on preflight and recheck them after the completion of each flight.

COMPLETING OFFICERS OF A TROOP

STANLEY E. GREFF, MAJOR, ARMOR
5 January 1970 - 19 July 1970

WILLIAM J. STANFA, CAPTAIN, FIELD ARTILLERY
19 July 1970 - 1 October 1970

GORDON W. TINGLE, CAPTAIN, ARMOR
1 October 1970 - 31 December 1970

erations

of time from 1 May 1969 thru 31 July 1969

During the reporting period, A Troop conducted both day and night surveillance missions along the Vietnam-Cambodia border in the 4th Corps area in an effort to curtail the movement of supplies and personnel in the IV Corps area. A Troop was successful with these missions which resulted in a significant decrease in troop movement and activities in the area. On several occasions night contact was made in large forces trying to infiltrate into Vietnam forcing them to withdraw into Cambodia. The 2nd and 3rd Divisions were in support of the 7th, 9th and 21st ARVN Divisions and the 1st Division where A Troop performed surveillance and security missions.

On several occasions a "people sniffer" was employed on the night-hunter missions. This machine was mounted on the C-47 aircraft which flew over the regions at 50 to 300 feet and 80 knots airspeed in search of personnel entering into Vietnam from Cambodia. This practice was considered unsafe for the team commander due to poor visibility at night and unidentifiable features.

On several occasions when a large positive reading was noted the gunships led in to make an interdiction strike into the area. While on these missions, it was SOP to employ incendiary grenades in or near the target to set the gunship strikes. The illumination of the burning grenade provided the pilots of the gunships a positive target thereby enabling accurate

Learned

Observation: A Troop has been faced with a rapid turnover in maintenance personnel.

Recommendation: The proper use of an infusion program throughout the troop will keep a high experience level in the troop. In the past, this practice has been lacking and we are again faced with the loss of experienced personnel.

Unit Operations: Significant Activities

(A) 1 January 1970 through 30 April 1970

This unit continued providing Air Cavalry Support for the Military Region IV area. A Troop conducted visual armed reconnaissance missions for the following units: 44th STZ, 21st ARVN, 9th ARVN and 7th ARVN Divisions. Utilizing as part of a task force concept, 50% of A Troop's missions were flown as part of Task Force Black Hawk. 23% of the missions were flown in support of Task Force Guardian for the 9th ARVN, 10% for the 7th ARVN under Task Force Cougar and 9% of the missions flown were in support of the 21st ARVN Division. The majority of the missions performed were armed visual reconnaissance over suspected enemy infiltration routes and known or suspected enemy locations.

- (1) During the month of January, A Troop worked mainly for the 44th STZ. While supporting operations in the 44th STZ A Troop was credited with 3 confirmed KBA's and while working for the 7th ARVN they were credited with 41 KBA's.
- (2) During the month of February A Troop was credited with 10 KBA's while supporting the 44th STZ, 9th ARVN and 7th ARVN Divisions.
- (3) On the 4th and 5th of March in support of the 21st ARVN Division, A Troop destroyed 24 enemy and a rear staging area used by a local VC Battalion. 800 lbs of rice and 23 motorized sampans were also destroyed during these two days.
- (4) On the 9th of March while supporting the 9th ARVN Division, A Troop engaged small groups of enemy soldiers in an attempt to track fleeing VC elements after an engagement. A Troop was credited with 11 KBA's and 20 enemy structures destroyed.
- (5) On the 17th of March A Troop was engaged in screening the flanks of advancing 9th ARVN Division troops in an enemy infested area. The troops had made heavy contact with NVA forces attempting to infiltrate to the U Minh Forest, a known enemy sanctuary. The screening Air Cavalry made contact with the elusive enemy force and eliminated 37 enemy personnel. A captured P.O.W. revealed that they were the support company of an NVA regiment attempting to resupply their troops in contact.
- (6) During the month of April A Troop was credited with 68 enemy personnel eliminated. Approximately 70% of that month's missions were flown for the 44th STZ in the Seven Mountains area. The remaining missions were flown for the 7th ARVN and 9th ARVN Divisions.

dit Operations

ried of time from 1 August 1969 thru 31 October 1969

During the reporting period, A Troop conducted both day and night reconnaissance missions along the Vietnam-Lao border in the 4th Tactical zone in an attempt to curtail the movement of supplies and personnel to the IV Corp. The reducing of enemy infiltration during the rainy season came a major problem because of the ease of movement on the narrow ravines approach from the border into the forested areas. Sensors in the field led by the Border Control Centers at Chi Lang and Moc Hoa gave indications troop movement but were unpredictable. The 9th ARVN Division accounted for approximately 51% of the enemy movements detected and the 21st ARVN Division 23%.

Insertions became a problem during the rainy season. Many rice paddies are filled with water up to 12 feet deep. Deep water in the LRs causes the LRs to hover an unduly long time trying to off load the troops. This causes a wet condition which enhances the possibility of accidents. The deep water necessitates the crew members helping the troops into the ship thus limiting their immediate firepower.

It has been noticed that when working with the same unit for a long period of time, the supported unit tends to work the same areas day after day. This strictly limits the combat effectiveness of such a mobile unit as the air cavalry. Because the element of surprise has been lost, the enemy either moves out of the area or goes into hiding, and ceases movement until the termination of the operation. This gives the enemy a chance to get up another possible LR. A well disciplined enemy has a distinct advantage when operations are run on a day to day basis in the same area.

Lessons Learned:

Observation: Within three months, A Troop will be losing 50% of its commissioned officers due to MEROS. Because of the shortage of experienced commissioned officers, it is impossible to fill troop vacancies such as Air Mission Commander, Operations Officer, and Liaison Officer with qualified personnel. The problem is a lack of replacement officers being assigned on a continuous basis.

Recommendation: The use of infanteries program within USAFV and a continuous flow of replacements would alleviate the problem of having large numbers of officer personnel rotate off one time.

1 May 1970 through 31 July 1970

(1) On the 2nd of May under Task Force Cougar, in support of the 9th Airmobile Division, A Troop made contact with a large VC/NVA element in the "Parrot's Beak" area of Cambodia. The enemy stronghold was supposedly a rear staging area, used by local Viet Cong units and newly assigned NVA personnel. The net results for the day's operations were 170 enemy personnel eliminated by A Troop's Aero-Scouts and Cobra gunships.

(2) On the 17th, 18th, and 19th of May while working under Task Force Cougar, A Troop made contact with several NVA company and platoon elements while reconnoitering suspected enemy infiltration routes. The net results of the three day operation were 53 structures destroyed and 111 confirmed enemy personnel eliminated.

(3) On the 13th of July while working in support of the 7th Airmobile Division, A Troop made a preplanned insertion of 498 troops. After taking the troops off, the A Troop elements worked a screening mission around the ground forces area of operations. While screening the area, A Troop made contact with a platoon size Viet Cong unit. The enemy weapons captured. The enemy personnel eliminated by the air assets were attempting to resupply their own troops, who were in contact with the previously inserted troops.

(C) 1 August 1970 through 31 December 1970

(1) During the month of August A Troop was credited with 66 confirmed enemy personnel eliminated while performing armed visual reconnaissance operations throughout Military Region IV.

(2) On the 10th of September under Task Force Guardian, A Troop was conducting a visual reconnaissance along a river when the Aero-Scouts discovered what was later determined to be a VC base camp. The decision was made to insert a battalion into the area. A Troop, aided by two light fire teams of Cobra gunships and four additional slicks, inserted an additional battalion reinforcing the ground elements, strength to two battalions. Combined results revealed 40 enemy personnel eliminated, A Troop's elements were credited with 15 enemy personnel eliminated by strikes. Eight of A Troop's KBAs were VC attempting to escape by using lily pads as cover and allowing the river current to move them from the contact area.

(3) On the 29th of September under Task Force Guardian supporting an Airmobile Division, area intelligence reported an ammunition factory. Due to the heavy vegetation in the area it was not possible to air lift ground troops into the suspected location. The U.S. Air Force dropped one 17,000 lb. bomb which provided a single ship LZ. Friendly ground elements were then inserted into the area for a ground reconnaissance.

Unit Operations

Period of time from 1 November 1969 thru 31 December 1969

1. During the reporting period A Troop conducted day reconnaissance missions with the following units: 44 STZ, 21st ARVN, 7th ARVN, 9th ARVN. Approximately 34% of the missions were with the 21st ARVN, 30% with the 44th STZ, 20% with the 7th ARVN, and 7% with the 9th ARVN. A Troop's reconnaissance missions with the previously mentioned units were to locate and curtail the movement of supplies and personnel into IV Corp and the divisional areas of responsibility.

2. It has been noticed that when working with the same unit for a lengthy period of time, the supported unit tends to work the same area day after day. In effect this drastically limits the combat effectiveness of such a mobile unit as the air cavalry. Because the element of surprise has been lost, the enemy either moves out of the area for the time or goes into hiding and ceases movement. This gives the enemy a chance to set up ambushes in possible LZs. A well disciplined enemy has a distinct advantage when operations are run on a day to day basis in the same area.

(4) On 5 October under Task Force Blackhawk, A Troop, along with 214th AHC, D Troop, 3/5th and HHT 7/1 ACS, made a four battalion assault on Nui Gao Mountain. It was a well planned and executed manoeuvre enabling the ARVN ground elements to exploit known NVA/VC strongholds.

(5) On 21 November A Troop elements took part in a flame munitions bombardment of an enemy mountain stronghold.

(6) During the month of December A Troop was credited with 23 confirmed enemy personnel eliminated.

Apache Troop has a total of 27 aircraft: 10 OH-6A, 8 UH-1H, 9 AH-1G. All the aircraft are identified by the distinctive Apache Indian Head.

The OH-6A plays the role of a "scout". It is a small aircraft equipped with a gas turbine engine which gives the aircraft a top speed of 120 knots. It is also equipped with a mini-gun. The aircraft is flown with a pilot in the right seat, and an observer riding in the left. A wide variety of grenades are carried on board for destroying bunkers and weapons as well as for burning huts and buildings and targets.

The AH-1G, or Huey Cobra, is used for aerial attack. It has a top speed of 190 knots. The cobra has a wide variety of weapons systems available. These include the mini-gun, 2.75 rocket and 40mm grenade launchers. When on the ground ground troops find the enemy the Cobra fly in and destroy the target.

The UH-1H, or Huey, is used for transporting troops and equipment. It has a top speed of 120 knots. In its Cavalry roll, it is used for quick response to ex. insertions. The Huey can carry 13 passengers and crew. It is considered the workhorse of the Army in South Vietnam.