

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 223D COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION;
APO San Francisco 96495

AVBAZ-SC

10 May 1971

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned, 223D Combat Aviation
Battalion, period ending 30 April 1971. (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Section 1. (C) Operations: Significant Activities:

a. General: This report covers the period 1 November 1970 through 30 April 1971, and is submitted in accordance with AR 525-15 and USARV Regulation 525-15. This report includes Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 223d Combat Aviation Battalion, 18th Utility Airplane Company, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, 61st Assault Helicopter Company, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, 163rd Medical Detachment, 173rd Assault Helicopter Company, 179th Assault Support Helicopter Company, 225th Surveillance Airplane Company, 235th Aerial Weapons Company, 238th Aerial Weapons Company, 286th Medical Detachment, 546th Medical Detachment, 759th Medical Detachment, B Troop, 7th Squadron, 1st Cavalry, and C Troop, 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry. Due to a complete Battalion reorganization, these units were members of this Battalion for varying periods of time. For a breakdown of Task Organization see Inclosures 5-1 and 5-2.

b. (C) Personnel:

(1) Current status of the 223d Combat Aviation Battalion is attached as Inclosure 1.

(2) During this reporting period replacements were received in sufficient quantities, however the quality of newly assigned personnel direct from service schools was lacking. A wider variety of support MOS's would have made it much easier to meet operational requirements. On the job training was used for some MOS's, however a critical shortage currently exists in the following areas:

| <u>MOS</u> | <u>AUTH/ASG</u> | <u>60 DAY LOSSES</u> |
|------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 67Z50 | 18/13 | 2 |
| 68A10 | 5/0 | 0 |
| 68F30 | 3/2 | 1 |
| 71B10 | 12/7 | 1 |
| 71G20 | 1/0 | 0 |
| 71H20 | 13/12 | 4 |
| 71T20 | 5/3 | 1 |
| 71T20 | 10/4 | 2 |
| 94B20 | 22/27 | 14 |
| 96B50 | 1/0 | 0 |

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DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS:
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.

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(3) The significant personnel changes within the command and staff for the report period are as follows:

(a) LTC Gerald W. Kirklighter, FA, 1981, assumed command of the 223d CAB on 31 January 1971, VICE LTC Anthony J. Adessa, AD, 1980.

(b) MAJ Myron D. Davis, IN, 1981, assumed duties as XO, 223d CAB on 25 January 1971, VICE MAJ Richard H. Knutson, IN, 1542.

(c) MAJ Charles D. Jochetz, SC, 1981, assumed duties as S3 on 25 January 1971, VICE CPT Edwin R. Robinson Jr., SC, 1980.

(d) CPT Jose A. Stevens, IN, 1981, assumed duties as S4 on 25 January 1971, VICE CPT James R. Brown, FA, 1980.

(e) CPT Joseph A. Germani, AR, 71981, assumed duties as S1 on 17 January 1971, VICE CPT Paul A. Piper, IN, 1980.

(f) CW2 Doyle D. Earles, AV, 100B, assumed duties as Asst S1 on 31 December 1970, VICE WO1 Robert H. Jackson, AV, 101C.

(g) CPT Ronald D. Heard, AR, 1980, assumed command of HHC, 223d CAB on 9 November 1970, VICE CPT Paul A. Piper, IN, 1980.

(h) 1LT Robert W. Hendry, FA, 1981, assumed duties as XO of HHC on 27 November 1970, VICE None.

(i) CPT Edward R. Robinson, SC, 1980, assumed duties as Asst S3 on 25 January 1971, VICE 1LT Edward J. Kelly Jr., CE, 1980.

(j) CPT George Francioni, AD, 1981, assumed duties as Asst S3 on 27 January 1971, VICE CPT Franklin T. Thornhill FA, 71981.

(k) CPT Edward C. Zaher Jr., SC, 1981, assumed duties as Asst S3 on 8 December 1970, VICE WO1 Burle M. Dawson, AV, 100B.

(l) MAJ John A. G. Klose, FA, 62162, assumed duties as S3 on 3 February 1971, VICE MAJ Charles D. Jochetz, SC, 1981.

(m) CPT Walter S. Dickinson, IN, 1981, assumed duties as Asst S3 on 15 February 1971, VICE CPT Edward R. Robinson, SC, 1980.

(n) CPT William R. Wilson, AR, 61203, assumed duties as XO, C Troop, 7/17 ACS on 10 February 1971, VICE CPT William T. Jones, AR, 61203.

(o) CPT Dennis J. Hoskinson, IN, 1981, assumed duties as XO 48th AHC on 22 February 1971, VICE CPT Patrick F. Morin, IN, 1980.

(p) CPT Robert D. Kerr, AR, 1981, assumed duties as XO, B Troop, 7/1 ACS on 1 March 1971, VICE CPT Robert E. Morin, IN, 1981.

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(q) MAJ Timothy C. Scobie, AR, 61204, assumed command of B Troop, 7/1 ACS on 6 March 1971, VICE MAJ James P. Hughes, IN, 1980.

(r) CPT Robert L. Bryant, CE, 1980, assumed command of HHC 223d CAB on 19 April 1971, VICE CPT Ronald D. Heard, AR, 1980.

(s) CPT James O. McLaughlin, IN, 1981, assumed duties as S1 on 26 April 1971, VICE CPT Joseph A. Germani, AR, 71981.

(t) MAJ Carl Mittag, AD, 67501, assumed command of the 48th AHC on 28 April 1971, VICE MAJ Willis R. Bunting, FA, 1981.

(u) MAJ Willis R. Bunting, FA, 62162, assumed duties as S3 on 28 April 1971, VICE MAJ John A. G. Klose, FA, 1981.

(4) The casualties sustained by this Battalion during the reporting period are contained in Inclosure 2.

(5) The Awards and Decorations received by this Battalion during this reporting period are contained in Inclosure 2.

c. (C) Intelligence:

(1) Enemy Situation: During the period 1 November 1970 through 31 January 1971, the enemy activity in the Second Military Region remained at the same low level as it had been in the previous reporting period. Upon becoming operational in the First Military Region, the 223d Combat Aviation Battalion was faced with the best equipped and supplied NVA units operating in South Vietnam. The enemy was conducting limited offensive operations against forward allied positions and increasing infiltration into the lowland areas of I MR. These operations were aimed at strengthening local forces and guerrilla units and to reestablish the effectiveness of the Viet Cong infrastructure. The enemy maintained an activity level short of a general military offensive to achieve propaganda, psychological and political victories. This level of activity enabled the enemy to maintain a credible military presence without complete exposure. The overall objectives were to disrupt allied pacification and development programs, discredit the ability of the GVN to protect the populace and to increase antiwar sentiment in the United States. The threat of a high intensity conflict is possible during the summer of 1971. The duration and timing of this threat is contingent upon the successful establishment of lines of communications and forward staging areas in the planned operational areas. Because of the Allied invasion into Laos, it appears the enemy will not elect to launch large scale military operations in the immediate future, but instead will concentrate on consolidating and resupplying his rear base areas while attempting to regain a hold on the civilian populace. The allied invasion into Laos has forced the NVA, VC and VCI units to postpone their spring campaign. During the invasion the NVA were forced to pull major units from the DMZ and other areas to contain the allied thrust. Heavy casualties, the loss of

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large amounts of supplies to include food, ammunitions and weapons and the interdiction of lines of supply and communications, have imposed on the enemy an additional time requirement for reorganization in order for him to regain the position held prior to the Laotian Invasion. With the termination of the Laotian operation, enemy units are redeploying to their former area of operation. Activity in these areas can be expected to increase during the coming months. There have been indications of a heavy artillery build-up in the DMZ, possibly in preparation for a summer campaign, however enemy initiated activity remains low in the northern area of I MR. It is expected that the operation now in progress in the A Shau Valley will cause a sharp increase in enemy activity in the near future. The enemy will try to remain undecidedly engaged to avoid losing what political value may be construed by the withdrawal of allied forces from Laos. Enemy forces remain vulnerable to detection and destruction by bombardment, combat assaults, and defeat in detail by allied combat operations.

(2) Ground Attacks: Attacks upon US installations where aircraft from this Battalion were in residence continued to remain at a low level. Most attacks have been stand-off attacks utilizing, 122mm rockets, 60mm and 82mm mortars. Four such attacks were reported during the reporting period resulting in two (2) WIA. During this period there was one direct ground attack conducted by sappers resulting in two aircraft destroyed. A higher level of activity is expected in the future as enemy units recover from Operation Lam Son 719.

(3) Air Activity: Units of the 223d Combat Aviation Battalion reported 212 aircraft hit by enemy fire during the reporting period.

(4) Collection Plan:

(a) The 225th Surveillance Airplane Company flew 752 SLAR missions, 394 infrared missions and 49 photo missions during the period 1 November 1970 to 25 January 1971.

(b) There were no special intelligence collection requirements levied upon the Battalion during this reporting period. A daily intelligence summary (INSUM) is continuing to be sent to higher headquarters.

(5) Administrative Intelligence Activities:

(a) Security Clearances: During this reporting period, the Battalion S2 has processed twenty (20) Secret clearances and eighteen (18) Confidential clearances. An additional sixty (60) Secret clearances were validated, and there are two (2) USAIRR verification checks pending.

(b) War Trophies: None

(c) Dissidence Reports: None

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(d) Survival, Escape and Evasion:

(1) All aviators assigned to this Battalion received a thorough briefing on survival, escape and evasion as part of their in-processing. Emphasis was placed on the type equipment available and the proper procedures for employment of these items to insure efficient and effective recovery of downed aircraft crews.

(2) Many newly assigned aviators have attended survival school while enroute to the Republic of Vietnam. Schools for enroute and assigned personnel are:

a. PACAF Jungle Survival School (PJSS), Clark AFB, Philippines.

b. PACAF Life Support School (PLSS), Kadena AFB, Okinawa.

c. FLEETUP Jungle Environmental Training (JEST), Cubic Point NAS, Philippines.

d. (C) Operations:

(1) The 223d Combat Aviation Battalion continued to provide fixed and rotary wing support to US and Free World Forces in the II Military Region during the first phase of this reporting period (1 November 1970 through 31 January 1971). During the second phase of this reporting period (1 February through 30 April 1971), the Battalion relocated to the I Military Region and came under operational control of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) for the purpose of supporting the 1st ARVN Division's invasion into the Kingdom of Laos on Operation Lam Son 719. After the completion of the operation, the Battalion has continued to provide general rotary wing support to US and Free World Forces in the northern sector of I MR.

(2) 18th Utility Airplane Company: The 18th Utility Airplane Company continued to fulfill its eleven (11) allocated missions throughout the four military regions of the Republic of Vietnam. The first platoon, located at Tuy Hoa Army Airfield, provided five (5) aircraft per day in support of the 5th Special Forces Group, First Field Forces, Vietnam, JUSPAC and 17th Combat Aviation Group. The first flight section of the second platoon was located at Da Nang and provided three (3) aircraft daily to the First Military Region Headquarters and one (1) aircraft three (3) days per week to the 67th Medical Group. The second flight section of the second platoon was located at Pleiku and provided two (2) aircraft daily to the II Military Region Headquarters and one (1) aircraft per day to "B" Company, 5th Special Forces Group. The 18th UAC was reassigned to the 7/17 Air Cavalry Squadron on 1 February 1971. During the reporting period, the units aircraft flew 1,143 flight hours.

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(3) 61st Assault Helicopter Company: During this reporting period the 61st Assault Helicopter Company continued to provide general rotary wing support in the coastal areas of Binh Dinh Province. The major supported units included 173rd Airborne Brigade and the 22nd ARVN Division. During the period 1 November 1970 through 31 January 1971 the unit flew 6,093 flight hours. The 61st AHC was reassigned to the 7/17 Air Cavalry Squadron on 31 January 1971.

(4) 129th Assault Helicopter Company: During this reporting period the 129th Assault Helicopter Company continued its assigned missions of providing rotary wing aviation support to the Capital Republic of Korea Infantry Division (CRID). There was a marked increase in the support provided by this unit to the 22nd ARVN Division and various other units throughout the II Military Region. The units aircraft availability rate was 78% and 6,320 hours were flown during the period 1 November 1970 through 31 January 1971. The 129th AHC was reassigned to the 7/17 Air Cavalry Squadron on 31 January 1971.

(5) 225th Surveillance Airplane Company: During the period 1 November 1970 through 25 January 1971, the 225th Surveillance Airplane Company continued to provide infrared, SLAR and photographic surveillance to units throughout II Military Region. Free World Forces supported by the unit included the 173rd Airborne Brigade, II ARVN Corps, 1st and 9th Republic of Korea Divisions, 7/17 Air Cavalry Squadron, "C" Company, 75th Airborne Rangers, and the United States Embassy, Laos. Through direct coordination with the 18th Special Forces Squadron, items of significance were reported immediately and were of great value to Tactical Air Force units interdiction of the tri-border supply routes.

(6) 48th Assault Helicopter Company: The 48th Assault Helicopter Company was attached to this Battalion on 1 February 1971 and reassigned to the Battalion on 30 March 1971. The unit became operational on 4 February 1971 in the I Military Region with predominant support going to the 1st ARVN Division. During Operation Lam Son 719 the unit provided mission support to include combat assaults, extractions, administrative troops moves, transporting VIPs, convoy coverage, reconnaissance, and medical evacuations. Since the completion of the Laotian operation, the unit has provided general rotary wing support to surrounding American and Vietnamese units. During this reporting period the 48th AHC has flown 5,628 flight hours with an average availability rate of 73%.

(7) 173rd Assault Helicopter Company: The 173rd Assault Helicopter Company was attached to this Battalion on 1 February 1971, and reassigned to this Headquarters on 30 March 1971. During the period 1 February 1971 to 2 April 1971 the unit provided support to the 1st ARVN Division for the Lam Son 719 operation in the Kingdom of Laos. Starting 3 April 1971, and continuing throughout the reporting period, the unit has supported the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), 1st

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Brigade, 5th Mechanized Infantry Division, and the 1st ARVN Marine Division. During the period 1 February 1971 and 30 April, this unit flew 5,462 hours with an average aircraft availability rate of 78%.

(8) 179th Assault Support Helicopter Company: The 179th Assault Support Helicopter Company received orders to move the unit from Camp Holloway, Pleiku, RVN, to Camp Eagle, Hue Phu Bai, RVN, on 24 February 1971. The major part of the move was completed in three (3) days and required twenty-two (22) CH-47C sorties, forty-one (41) C-130 sorties, and four (4) C-133 sorties. The 179th ASHC was attached to this Battalion on 27 February 1971 and then on 30 March 1971 was assigned to the 223d Combat Aviation Battalion. Since 27 February 1971 and throughout the reporting period, the unit has been under the operational control of the 159th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile). During Lam Son 719 the unit staged out of Khe Sanh to provide heavy resupply support to the 1st ARVN Division in the Kingdom of Laos. Since 18 March 1971 and continuing throughout this reporting period the 179th ASHC supported the 101st Airborne Division's Fire Support Bases with resupply. Minor support missions have also been flown for 24th Corps, 142nd Transportation Company, and Operation Lam Son 720. During this reporting period, the 179th ASHC has flown 1,749 hours with an average aircraft availability rate of 72%.

(9) 235th Aerial Weapons Company: The 235th Aerial Weapons Company was attached to this Battalion on 27 February 1971 and was placed under operational control of the 101st Aviation Group. The unit accomplished the move from Can Tho located in IV Military Region, to Hue Phu Bai located in I Military Region and was operational within three (3) days after receiving movement orders. Although the unit was stationed at Hue Phu Bai during Lam Son 719, Khe Sanh was used as the forward staging area for flights into Laos in support of the 1st ARVN Division. Missions performed daily by the 235th AWC included CH-54 and CH-47 escort, and cover for medical evacuation, insertions and extractions. In addition to the daily missions, the unit also provided nightly armed helicopter standby at Khe Sanh. The 235th Aerial Weapons Company was released from attachment on 9 April 1971 whereon returned to Can Tho and the 307th Combat Aviation Battalion. During the attached period the 235th AWC flew 2,535 hours with an average aircraft availability rate of 81%.

(10) 238th Aerial Weapons Company: During this reporting period the 238th Aerial Weapons Company was attached on 1 February 1971 to this Battalion to provide additional armed helicopter support for Lam Son 719. The unit operated in a general support role for the 101st Combat Aviation Group until 6 March 1971, at which it was tasked to provide pickup zone security for the assault helicopter companies of this Battalion. This mission continued until 18 March 1971, at which time the units mission was changed to supporting Quang Tri Dust-off and a standby fire team for Khe Sanh area defense. The 238th AWC received

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notice on 26 March 1971 that they were to start redeployment to Tuy Hoa, RVN. The unit was released from attachment to this Battalion on 27 March 1971 and they were closed into Tuy Hoa Army Airfield by 31 March 1971. During the time of attachment the 238th AWC flew 1,236 hours with an average availability rate of 69%.

(11) B Troop, 7/1 Air Cavalry Squadron: During this reporting period, B Troop, 7/1 Cavalry was attached to this Battalion from 1 February 1971 through 9 April 1971. The unit was placed under operational control of 2/17 Air Cavalry Squadron to support the 1st ARVN Divisions Operation Lam Son 719 into the Kingdom of Laos. B Troop provided general air cavalry support throughout the period of attachment. On 9 April 1971 the unit was released from attachment to this Battalion and returned to its original location at Vinh Long, located in IV Military Region, and its parent unit, 7/1 Air Cavalry Squadron. During the period of attachment to this Battalion, B Troop flew 2,648 hours with an average aircraft availability rate of 84%.

(12) C Troop, 7/17 Air Cavalry Squadron: C Troop, 7/17 Air Cavalry Squadron was attached to this Battalion on 1 February 1971 to participate in the joint allied invasion into the Kingdom of Laos, during Operation Lam Son 719. C Troop was tasked to conduct air cavalry missions while under operational control of 2/17 Air Cavalry Squadron. On 8 February 1971, C Troop aircraft crossed the Laotian Border assisting the 11th ARVN Armor Brigade by screening ahead of the column along QL-9. For the next two days, C Troop scouted and determined the suitability of proposed LZs 30, 31 and Aloui. February 16th through the 18th found C Troop aiding the advance along QL-9, locating and destroying a pipeline west of LZ Aloui. On 21 February 1971, C Troop aided the besieged ARVN Ranger Units on Firebase Ranger. During the first week of March, C Troop screened for the insertions of LZ Lolo and Sophia, and conducted economy of force missions in the vicinity of then abandoned LZs 30, 31 and Ranger. On 10 March 1971, C Troop screened around LZ Lolo during the emergency resupply of an ARVN Battalion in heavy contact. The following day, C Troop screened for the extraction of the troops at Lolo. Economy of force and screening missions were conducted through 30 March 1971, at which time all elements of the ARVN invasion had withdrawn from Laos. C Troop continued rear guard missions as all troops were pulled out of Khe Sanh until its release from the Battalion on 9 April 1971. During the period of C Troop's attachment, 1 February 1971 to 9 April 1971, they flew 2,198 hours with an average aircraft availability rate of 84%.

e. (U) Training: During the period 1 November 1970 to 31 January 1971, all quarterly training requirements were met by the units of the Battalion. The Battalion has continued to conduct individual training and cross-training to insure that all personnel assigned are capable of performing their primary duties and are able to assist in areas

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that are short of personnel. Heavy emphasis continues to be placed on aviation and vehicle safety. During the period 1 February 1971, through 30 April 1971, only minimum training requirements were met because of the tactical move of the Battalion to participate in Lam Son 719, and Lam Son 720. During this period the only training conducted, was that which was directly related to the combat operations being performed. The 225th Surveillance Airplane Company sent six (6) officers to the PACAF SEA Survival School. The Battalion continued to train and maintain Instructor Pilots for all types of aircraft within its organic units.

f. (U) Logistics:

(1) The Battalion S4 Section has continued to give command assistance to all companies within the Battalion. During the early portion of this reporting period the S4 section worked extensively with redeployment of the 196th Assault Support Helicopter Company to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. In late January 1971, the S4 section was faced with the task of acquiring the necessary equipment for the Battalion to relocate from a garrison type posture in Qui Nhon to a field location in Dong Ha. Emphasis has been directed to the turn in of unneeded equipment, the safeguarding of equipment, and assurance of proper accountability.

(2) Vehicle Maintenance: The Battalion Motor Maintenance Section has provided a considerable amount of help to all companies of this Battalion. Major areas of concentration during the reporting period have been the proper use of supply procedures, appropriate unit PLL for TO&E vehicles, and emphasis on a strong unit level motor maintenance program.

(3) Aircraft Maintenance: During Operation Lam Son 719, it has been noted that the increased flying hours brought on many problems. The increased maintenance, both scheduled and unscheduled, was handled by the units with help from combined Direct Support Units. The combat damage was handled by both individual units and the supporting DSU. With command backing, DSUs were able to speed up the turn in process of retrograde and combat damaged aircraft. This allowed our units to remain at a high fill level. Due to the expeditious redeployment of aviation units into this area for the operation, the DSU had great difficulty satisfying the demands placed on it for repair parts. In operations of this type, command influence should be used to insure that units are adequately supported. The use of SM&R flights helped to overcome this problem during the operation. Many items of unnecessary equipment were brought forward by redeploying units due to a lack of knowledge of the facilities available. Engine problems were to be expected due to operating out of unimproved airstrips. The program of flushing engines on a daily basis was established, and this, along with other unit engine care programs, significantly reduced engine malfunctions.

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g. (U) Organization: Organizational Charts and station listings appear as Inclosures 5-1 and 5-2.

h. (U) Chaplain: During this reporting period the Battalion Chaplain has conducted a total of thirty-three (33) Sunday Protestant religious services and 25 memorials, rites, sacraments, and ceremonies with an attendance of 2,469. In addition, the Chaplain supervised fifty-eight (58) denominational Sunday and weekday services with laymen leading. The Chaplain coordinated twenty-five (25) Sunday Masses with an attendance of 935. Routine visits were made to all locations where Battalion personnel were stationed. While stationed in the Qui Nhon area, the Chaplain attended all monthly Chaplain meetings. All money collected through offerings at Battalion services were designated for local charities as determined by the area Consolidated Chaplain's Fund Council. Charitable work during this period included food and salvaged items from the An Son Post Exchange, clothing collected from units of the Battalion, and teaching of the English language to the local populace.

i. (C) Aviation Safety: Battalion and Company safety meetings were held at least monthly, with some companies conducting weekly meetings. Topics most readily discussed were DER checks, pre-flights, post-flights, proper use of fuel sample bottles, and the 90 day standardization check rides. The Battalion Safety Officer attended the company safety meetings whenever possible, and made unannounced visits to all units. During this reporting period, there were 212 combat mishaps of which 193 occurred during Operation Lam Son 719. The following is a breakdown for the past quarters:

| | FEB | MAR | APR | TOTAL |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| ACCIDENTS | 4 | 3 | 2 | 9 |
| INCIDENTS | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| FORCED LANDINGS | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| AIRCRAFT RATE | 63.2% | 31.4% | 37.6% | 42.5% |

j. (U) Civil Affairs: The Battalion Headquarters Company continued to work with the Save The Children Fund Orphanage in Qui Nhon during the first part of this reporting period, 1 November 1970 through 31 January 1971. Also during the first ninety days of this reporting period, the units of the Battalion used maximum employment of Free World Allies by providing jobs on a daily hire basis and providing small services to needy people whenever possible. After the relocation of the Battalion on 1 February 1971, only a minimum number of allies were employed due to security precautions taken while in support of the major operation, Lam Son 719.

k. (C) Signal: During this reporting period the Communications

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Section was tasked with moving a complete communications network from II Military Region to I Military Region. The purpose of this move was to support the 1st ARVN Division drive into the Kingdom of Laos. A lack of advance notice as to the communications requirement for the mission caused some problems during the first week of Operation Lam Son 719. During the operation the Communication Section established a radio net between the base area at Dong Ha and the forward elements at Khe Sanh and LZ Kilo. The Communication Section also set up a field phone network within the rear area of Dong Ha and established a land line teletype circuit with Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade, located in Long Binh, RVN.

2. Section 2. Lessons Learned: Commander's Observations, Evaluations and Recommendations.

a. (C) Personnel

(1) Duplication of Requirements for Replacements.

(a) Observation: Units within the Battalion were filled to nearly 100% TO&E by parent headquarters immediately prior to movement. This placed most units in an excellent posture for Lam Son 719; however, the personnel assigned were not properly processed and did not appear on the deploying unit's PIR roster. This caused requisitions to be processed and vacancies that appeared on the PIR were filled. The results was a large influx of replacements placing the Battalion in an overstrength condition.

(b) Evaluation: Due to the influx of replacements, all units were burden with housing and administrative problems.

(c) Recommendations: Prior to a movement, the deploying units should conduct a 100% inventory of personnel by MOS to update the PIR and the unit Morning Report. Based on this, vacancies can be determined and replacements requisitioned to fill existing vacancies.

(2) Deployment of a Control Headquarters to Administer, Control, and Conduct Large Scale Combat Operations:

(a) Observation: The 223d Combat Aviation Battalion was the most available control headquarters to deploy for Lam Son 719. Most of the officers were new, therefore not accustomed to working together as a team on a staff.

(b) Evaluation: Nineteen (19) of the twenty-six (26) officers were assigned subsequent to 1 November 1970. The principal staff to include the commander were assigned after 25 January 1971. The Battalion deployed on 2 February 1971 to commence sustained combat in Lam Son 719. This situation created many problems in the beginning due

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to the lack of coordination among new staff members that would have been eliminated if an established control headquarters had been selected.

(c) Recommendation: A well established control headquarters should be selected for future operations to sustain combat from one Military Region to another.

(d) Command Action: Higher headquarters cooperated magnificently by selecting outstanding principal staff officers with considerable experience in airmobile operations, therefore overcoming the problem within a few days.

b. (C) Intelligence.

(1) Shortage of Maps:

(a) Observation: During Lam Son 719 there was a critical shortage of maps covering the operational areas.

(b) Evaluation: Since many aviation units were being employed in Lam Son 719 there were situations when the combat assault flight leader was the only person in the flight who had a map of the operational area. The utilization of normal supply channels for obtaining maps proved to be inadequate in this particular situation. It is believed the secrecy surrounding the operation and the desire not to give the location away was the cause of the lack of sufficient maps.

(c) Recommendation: Prior to a large scale operation such as Lam Son 719, the initial planning stages should include a 200% map requisition for the area of operation.

(d) Command Action: The Battalion S2 Section procured maps from all major headquarters and intelligence sections operating in I Military Region.

(2) Availability of Intelligence Information:

(a) Observation: Prior to the initiation of Lam Son 719 there was an extreme lack of intelligence data on the area of operation.

(b) Evaluation: Upon this Battalions arrival in the I Military Region there were two major problems associated with gathering intelligence information. First, the Battalion could not find a source who felt that there was a need to know. Secondly, after getting into the local intelligence community, it was discovered that there was very little immediate data available. This factor occurred because Lam Son 719 was very highly classified and only those with the need to know were briefed until after the operation began.

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(c) Recommendations: On operations where both US and Vietnamese troops are committed, a more joint intelligence collection system should be employed.

(d) Command Action: This Battalion continuously requested immediate data from all intelligence sources.

c. (C) Operations.

(1) Technique Used to Counter Antiaircraft Fire Near LZ's and PZ's:

(a) Observation: Normal approaches to LZ's and PZ's gave enemy antiaircraft (AA) gunners the advantage because they could acquire targets easily and use the same lead and sight pictures repeatedly on incoming and outgoing helicopters.

(b) Evaluation: It became essential to minimize base legs, final approaches, straightout departures and slow climbs or descents. To counter the regularity of aircraft arrivals and departures into and out of LZ's and PZ's, a minimum base leg final approach technique was devised. This technique, named the "Button Hook Approach", consisted of descents approaching autorotational velocity, with velocities along the roll, pitch and yaw axes. The resultant vector was a very tight 180 degrees side approach into an LZ and a climbing 180 degrees turn out of a PZ. The idea was to use the same approach and departure routes that had been neutralized by air strikes, artillery, and gunship suppression and to increase the difficulty for AA gunners to lead, track and shoot at helicopters.

(c) Recommendation: Base legs, final approaches, straightout departures, and slow climbs should be minimized around LZ's and PZ's. Aircraft commanders should be permitted to execute varied Button Hook approaches and departures, each to his own capabilities and limitations imposed by weather, terrain, loads and aircraft performance so as to make enemy AA gunners solve the track and lead problem for each arriving and departing helicopter.

(2) Escort Gunships Should Not Attack Point Targets in a Near Mid-Intensity Environment:

(a) Observation: UH-1C and AH-1G helicopter gunships would often engage point targets while performing escort duty.

(b) Evaluation: This practice should be avoided because point targets such as bunkers containing 12.7 AA machine guns which are very difficult point targets to engage successfully. In addition, the escorted troop/cargo carriers are left unprotected while the escort gunships are engaging point targets. The object of escort guns is to protect

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the aircraft they are escorting and the purpose is defeated while engaging point targets.

(c) Recommendation: Escort gunships should be briefed to avoid engaging point targets. In a near mid-intensity environment there are numerous point targets and a fixation on destroying one point target might well defeat the major function of the entire mission. Escort gunships should suppress areas where fire is received from, and continue their escort mission without an attempt to neutralize the point target. The object is to suppress and run, and to continue the assigned mission. Once an area is identified as "hot", air strikes or artillery should be shifted to them and escort gunships merely suppress the area on each pass to give the AA gunners second thoughts about staying on their weapons to shoot at helicopters.

(3) Adherence to Fixed Combat Assault Time Schedules Should be Avoided in a Near Mid-Intensity Environment.

(a) Observation: It is very risky to attempt to make a fixed time schedule on a combat assault in a near mid-intensity environment at the expense of adequate LZ construction and preparation using airstrikes and supporting fires.

(b) Evaluation: Combat assaults planned to a fixed time schedule simply will not work in a near mid-intensity environment. A higher priority mission might well get the artillery support and airstrikes that had been planned to support the combat assault. Even with the priority of air and artillery to the combat assault, the air mission commander and the airmobile task force commander might not be satisfied with the construction and preparation of the LZ or the air cav troop's visual reconnaissance might reveal additional targets requiring neutralization prior to the assault.

(c) Recommendation: Prudent commanders will not stick to inflexible pre-planned time schedules because they might well lead to heavy losses. In a near mid-intensity environment, it is essential to accomplish LZ construction and preparation and preparation of approach and departure routes. Pre-planned decision times can be scheduled effectively and all schedules must be capable of slippage to maximize the application of firepower at precisely the correct time to support the assault after the decision to commit troops has been made. Schedules should include sufficient time between events to allow for contingencies and protracted delays.

(4) Crew Fatigue In Combat.

(a) Observation: Aircrews on Lam Son 719 averaged 15 to 16 hours per day crew duty time. This became a problem and will continue

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to be a problem on sustained combat operations in a near mid-intensity environment.

(b) Evaluation: The leadership in aviation units is severely taxed during sustained operations because of aircrew fatigue. Aircraft commanders, pilots, crewchiefs, gunners, section leaders, platoon leaders, company and battalion commanders perform long hours of crew duty time and then each day are required to perform the routine administrative functions of their duty positions. This is not a new problem; however, recognition of this problem is the first step toward a straightforward solution.

(c) Recommendation: TO&E's of aviation units should base crewmember authorizations on the basis of two (2) crewmembers per duty position.

(5) Mid-Intensity Environment Flying Tactics.

(a) Observation: Flying tactics in a near mid-intensity environment have to be flexible and often irregular. The enemy's anti-aircraft capability has forced units in Laos to invent measures in order to cut exposure time to a minimum, with very successful results.

(b) Evaluation: Established traffic patterns, during Lam Son 719, were found to be completely ineffective. As a flight would become established in a pattern, the enemy had little trouble shooting aircraft down. Further problems were discovered in formation flying. As aircraft would land in formation, it was possible to destroy several with one round of artillery. Formation flying made it difficult for gunships to cover enemy fire from several different locations and increased the exposure time by limiting the mobility of individual aircraft. The common advantage in formation flying is increased fire power on the ground, however, in a near mid-intensity environment, the major threat on the ground was indirect fire, and anti-aircraft weapons during flight. Neither of these threats are conducive to formation flight.

(c) Recommendation: During an insertion or extraction in a near mid-intensity environment, aircraft should execute a high overhead approach directly over the landing zone, keeping their pattern as tight as possible. Gunships should form a corridor to the landing zone concentrating on the final approach axis. Weather and winds permitting, the lift ships should depart the same direction as they approached. This allows the gunships to concentrate fire over the area being flown. Upon departure, the lift ships should again orbit over the LZ until they reach sufficient altitude to break safely from their protective gunship escorts. An aircraft in a descending or climbing turn was found to receive very few hits despite the intensity of fire.

(6) UH-1C Aircraft

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(a) Observation: Although UH-1C armed helicopters have proven their worth during past insurgency type conflicts, their effectiveness was questionable during Lam Son 719.

(b) Evaluation: UH-1C's are too slow and present too large a profile to engage antiaircraft weapons. Losses in this command substantiate that fact.

(c) Recommendation: Units participating in a near mid-intensity environment should be supported by AH-1G aircraft only. If UH-1C's must be used, it should be strictly for suppression, not attack.

(d) Command Action: UH-1C's were employed primarily as escorts for UH-1H helicopters. When performing this mission they merely suppressed enemy fire and were instructed not to attempt to neutralize enemy gun positions.

(7) Controlling Resupply Missions.

(a) Observation: During a near mid-intensity type conflict it is necessary for resupply missions to be controlled by a command and control aircraft.

(b) Evaluation: During the Lam Son 719 operation in Laos, units that tried to resupply without proper control, experienced many losses and failed to complete the mission.

(c) Recommendation: In a near mid-intensity environment, a command and control helicopter must be in position to control resupply. The command and control aircraft should have, as a minimum, the air mission commander on board with the means to control tactical air support, artillery, and the ground unit being supported.

(d) Command Action: When the battalion conducted resupply missions during Lam Son 719, a minimum of one command and control aircraft was on station. If aircraft availability permitted an alternate command and control with the same capabilities as the primary, it was also on station.

(8) Alternate Landing Zones and Pick-Up Zones.

(a) Observation: During an extraction or insertion the ground element must be flexible enough to be able to move the landing zone or pick-up zone.

(b) Evaluation: During Lam Son 719, the enemy was capable of pin-pointing LZ's and PZ's. After several aircraft landed or departed an area, the enemy normally fired accurate indirect fire on touch down points.

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(c) Recommendation: The air mission commander and ground commander must select several possible pick-up and landing zones. The ground unit must (if there is an indirect fire threat) have troops positioned in several PZ's in order to avoid delaying the extraction. This permits the necessary versatility to force the enemy to shift fire, thus dampening his effectiveness.

(d) Command Action: During Lam Son 719, the Battalion included alternate PZ's and LZ's in the planning phases for all operations. All units involved in an operation were briefed of the necessity for flexible LZ and PZ locations.

(9) Recovering Downed Crews.

(a) Observation: During Lam Son 719, there was often an unnecessary delay in recovering downed crew members. In some cases this resulted in unnecessary deaths and persons missing in action.

(b) Evaluation: Basically there were two reasons for this delay. First, the enemy situation prevented the area from being secured; secondly, the reaction of a chase aircraft was not sufficient.

(c) Recommendation: In a near mid-intensity environment, there must be a chase aircraft allotted to escort the flight and rescue downed crews. These ships must be properly equipped and trained in recovery procedures. There must also be a security force in reserve that can react on a moments notice. This force would be airlifted to downed crews being engaged by enemy fire.

(d) Command Action: The Battalion normally kept a medical evacuation helicopter on station for all major operations in Laos. When an aircraft went down an armed helicopter fire team was placed on station and if the enemy situation permitted, a helicopter was landed at the crash site to recover the crew. Infantry troops used to secure downed aircraft and crews had to be obtained from the supported unit. All available fire power was used to suppress enemy activities.

(10) External Loads.

(a) Observation: During Lam Son 719, units learned the importance of external versus internal resupply loads.

(b) Evaluation: Often, during heavy enemy engagement or emergency resupply, aircraft that attempted resupply missions with internal loads suffered heavy losses. This was due to increased exposure time and the impossibility of unloading the aircraft in an emergency situation.

(c) Recommendation: Increased emphasis should be placed

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on carrying external loads whenever enemy contact is inevitable.

(d) Command Action: Loads were carried externally when the situation warranted it.

(11) Reorganization of an Aviation Battalion:

(a) Observation: The standard organization of a General Support Combat Aviation Battalion is not adequate to provide combat support in a near mid-intensity environment.

(b) Evaluation: When this Battalion moved north to support Lam Son 719, it was composed of an Aerial Weapons Company (UH-1C); two Air Cavalry Troops; and two Assault Helicopter Companies. As the campaign progressed an additional AWC (AH-1G) and a CH-47 Company were attached. The Battalion was placed under the operational control of the 101st Aviation Group, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) upon arrival. During the initial planning conferences with the 101st Division it was decided that the two Air Cavalry Troops would be placed under the operational control of the division's organic Air Cavalry Squadron and the AWCs would be placed in general support of the 101st Aviation Group. The CH-47 Company was also placed in general support. The 223d Aviation Battalion minus was assigned the task of supporting the airmobile operations of the 1st ARVN Division. Although orders stating the Battalion was in direct support of the 1st ARVN Division were never published, this was in fact, the case. Therefore at the beginning of the ARVN Campaign Lam Son 719, the 223d commander had operational control of only two Assault Helicopter Companies. In the course of thirty-nine battalion size combat assault/extractions one very important organizational shortcoming became very apparent; that being the General Support Combat Aviation Battalion, as currently organized, is incapable of supporting sustained ground combat operations. To do the job, the battalion must be reorganized to include as a minimum an Air Cavalry Troop, an Aerial Weapons Company, and the normal attachment of Assault and Assault Support Helicopter Companies. During Lam Son 719, this Battalion neither prepared nor was it issued written operation orders. Orders to aviation commanders were issued verbally either on the ground or in the air. Crewmembers, and commanders learned to expect last minute changes and to remain flexible. The capability to react to these last minute changes requires the optimum in team effort, however, the team or rather the command of the team was lacking. After the initial assaults on 8 February 1971, it became apparent that a successful airmobile assault could be accomplished only if the complete airmobile team was committed. A typical example of such an operation is described as follows: Subsequent to the order for an airmobile assault, the Air Mission Commander briefs the team leaders consisting of the Air Cavalry Troop Commander, the Assault Helicopter flight leads, the Air Liaison Officer, Aerial Weapons Company representatives, and the Aerial Medical Evacuation people. In all cases the Air Cavalry Troop Commander was given

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the responsibility of putting in the tactical air strikes and for low level recon of the intended landing zones. The Air Mission Commander came on station after the artillery preparatory fires and in time to discuss with the Air Cavalry Commander the placement of tactical air strikes. Following the low level recon by the Air Cavalry, the decision to commit the airmobile force was made by the Airmobile Task Force Commander. Air strikes would continue until the assault forces were several minutes from touch-down when attack helicopters were employed for the final preparatory fires. These same attack helicopters remained on station to provide the ground commander with close-in aerial defensive fires. The reorganization of the standard GS Aviation Battalion is necessary since we cannot expect to be OPCON or in support of a division having sufficient Air Cavalry or Aerial Weapons Companies to comprise the needed team members. This flexibility must be built into the standard General Support Combat Aviation Battalion, not attached. A team that is hastily thrown together will never perform at its peak as would a team of long standing association.

(c) Recommendation: That an Aviation Battalion consists of two (2) to six (6) Assault Helicopter Companies; one (1) Air Cavalry Troop; one (1) Aerial Weapons Company; and one (1) Assault Support Helicopter Company.

(d) Command Action: During Lam Son 719, these assets were made available through the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile).

(12) The Need for an Improved Attack Helicopter:

(a) Observation: During Lam Son 719, there were many instances when tactical air support was diverted or could not support the ground tactical plan due to weather or the ground tactical situation.

(b) Evaluation: When tactical air was diverted or could not support the operation due to weather or the ground tactical situation, the commander was forced to rely only on gunship support. The present AH-1G gunship's performance was barely adequate. It does not have the speed, station time, has inadequate destructive firepower, and inherent inaccuracies. The UH-1C as explained in another section was completely unsatisfactory. In some instances after a partial troop insertion was committed enemy firepower required that the operation be delayed until more firepower could be directed toward the enemy. Because of the close proximity of the ground unit, the air could not be used. In these instances AH-1Gs were utilized to support the ground unit.

(c) Recommendation: There is a need in Army Aviation for an attack helicopter with heavier ordnance, greater speed, greater station time, increased weapon accuracies, and the capability to support operations in weather conditions not conducive to the use of the air.

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(d) Command Action: During Lam Son 719, AH-1G gunships and ARH were employed in great numbers to fill the gap where tac air was not available or could not be used. In these instances the attack helicopter complements, but does not compete with tactical air support.

d. (C) Organization.

(1) Motor Pool TO&E

(a) Observation: Under the present structure of the TO&E for an assault helicopter company, it was found that a lack of effective control existed in the Motor Pool Section.

(b) Evaluation: A more immediate response and action was found to be necessary between the company commander and the vehicle maintenance section. Under the present system, the motor pool is under the control of the service platoon. As more emphasis was placed on aircraft readiness, a lack in motor vehicle maintenance was noted. Seemingly, the service platoon leader cannot effectively control both aircraft and motor maintenance, and when attempts to do so are made, the overall results are substandard.

(c) Recommendation: A motor officer should be appointed and should serve as a member of the company commander's staff, and the motor pool should be separated from the service platoon.

e. (C) Training.

(1) Training Restrictions:

(a) Observations: During Lam Son 719 training in the Battalion has held to a minimum. Only training that was essential to aviation safety and direct combat support was conducted.

(b) Evaluation: During the operation a total of eight (8) companies were attached to the Battalion and communications with all these units was a major problem. This factor coupled with the heavy daily commitments of aircraft and personnel and the burden placed on the Battalion staff to administer the combat activities in forward areas, collection, distribution, and supervision of training activities was very difficult and sometimes impossible.

(c) Recommendation: During situations such as Lam Son 719, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) specially written to cover minimized training programs, should be followed. The SOP should provide for safety, flight standardization, and combat essential activities.

(d) Command Action: The Battalion conducted sufficient

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training activities to enable the unit to accomplish its mission.

f. (C) Logistics.

(1) Motor Maintenance:

(a) Observation: Direct support units did not have the capability to provide adequate support for the large influx of units that moved into I Military Region for Lam Son 719.

(b) Evaluation: The Battalion's units located in the Dong Ha/Quang Tri area were supported by two DSUs, one at Dong Ha and one at Quang Tri. The DSU at Quang Tri provided direct support maintenance to the Quang Tri based units and tech supply support to the Quang Tri/Dong Ha area. The DSU at Dong Ha only provided direct support maintenance to the Dong Ha based units. Both DSUs provided satisfactory support when parts were available, but because of a chronic shortage of parts, direct support and organizational maintenance suffered.

(c) Recommendation: High demand items should be on hand and stocked in sufficient quantities prior to the beginning of large scale operations.

(2) Equipment and PLL Shortage:

(a) Observation: There was an equipment and PLL shortage due to standdowns.

(b) Evaluation: Many of the companies that participated in Lam Son 719 were in the process of standing down. In most cases a lot of TO&E items, PLL, special tools, ground support equipment and vehicles had been turned in.

(c) Recommendation: Certain units should be designated and maintained in a high state of readiness to deploy where needed based on contingency plans.

(3) Supply Procedures:

(a) Observation: Units with streamlined supply systems were unprepared for standard supply systems.

(b) Evaluation: Some units of the Battalion converted from streamlined PLL supply procedures, which is a DX parts supply system, to a standard supply system. This left these units without an operational PLL, causing low operational ready rates from part shortages.

(c) Recommendation: A unit on the streamlined PLL supply

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system should maintain a boxed PLL in storage in anticipation of a unit movement.

(d) Command Action: The Battalion maintenance officer informed the DSU of the pending changes in supply systems.

(4) D. S. U. Facilities:

(a) Observation: Direct support units could not handle the work load placed on them by organizational units.

(b) Evaluation: Due to expeditious redeployment of aviation units in the area for Lam Son 719, increased flying hours, and combat damage, the DSU had great difficulty satisfying the demands for maintenance and repair parts.

(c) Recommendation: Direct support activities should force issue parts, supplies, and additional well trained personnel prior to an operation of such magnitude.

(5) Aircraft Parts Allocations:

(a) Observation: The Battalion's parts allocation was based on projected flying hours. As Lam Son 719 progressed, it turned out that the projected figures were extremely low.

(b) Evaluation: It became necessary at times to "scrounge" parts from other units in order to keep aircraft flying. A campaign as important as Lam Son 719, should have received top priority on parts from the start.

(c) Recommendation: Better prior planning and greater flexibility on the part of supported units could have alleviated this problem.

(6) P/A&E and Engineer Support:

(a) Observation: Little to no support was provided by P/A&E or Engineers upon deployment to I Military Region.

(b) Evaluation: Untold man hours were spent preparing a flight line, maintenance facilities, and living quarters. This required the officers and men to fly all day and work excessive hours to construct essential facilities for survival.

(c) Recommendation: Future operations of this nature should receive much greater command emphasis on support and facilities, the lack of which, in this unit, impaired the survivability of the Battalion and the mission.

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(7) SOP's For Issue By Supply and Service Companies:

(a) Observation: The supporting S&S company had no SOP for issue to supported units using stock control, CEEF, and self-service supply centers.

(b) Evaluation: Delays in supply issue because of non-standardization hampered unit operation.

(c) Recommendation: SOP's should be written so that units utilizing the S&S's facilities may comply with their operational policies.

(d) Command Action: The Battalion requested a SOP or written guidance explaining how to follow the S&S's policies.

(8) Technical Supply Vans Upon Relocation:

(a) Observation: Upon relocation, the technical supply vans were some of the last items to arrive at the forward location.

(b) Evaluation: Technical supply vans were not given high priority movement or in many cases were delayed due to the heavy transportation commitment during Lam Son 719. Because of this, units were without spare parts for considerable time. In addition, the vans were handled very rough causing damage to many parts.

(c) Recommendation: Units should plan to arrive with sufficient repair parts to sustain operations in the event their PLL supply does not arrive as scheduled. They should also devise a means for accountability and replenishment of parts initially brought forward.

(9) Stockage Control:

(a) Observation: Stockage control personnel are not aware of many items in stock.

(b) Evaluation: Many needed items are on hand in the stockyards but not available to the requesting unit. Stock control is not aware of the availability and the lack of these needed parts hindered efficient operation.

(c) Recommendation: Regular inventories should be conducted to insure accurate stockage.

(d) Command Action: This problem was discussed with the supporting S&S company and consequently an accurate inventory of the stockyards was conducted.

g. (C) Communications.

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(1) Requirement for Secure Voice Communications for Airmobile Operations in a Near Mid-Intensity Environment:

(a) Observation: Captured enemy radios on Lam Son 719 revealed the enemy's capability to monitor all US UHF, FM, VHF, and HF communications. The nature of airmobile operations requires a rapid flow of information. There is an absolute requirement for secure voice communication system in each aircraft involved in an airmobile operation.

(b) Evaluation: Information given in the clear during airmobile operations in a near mid-intensity environment can be directly equated to casualties and aircraft losses.

(b) Recommendation: Every effort should be expended at all levels of command to insure that a secure voice capability be installed in every aircraft involved in airmobile operations in a near mid-intensity environment.

(2) Modification of Aircraft for ZYR/ZYS Program:

(a) Observation: Aircraft were lost for a complete day when it had to under go KY-28 and PX-72 modification.

(b) Evaluation: The team who performed the modification was located at one area (Qui Nhon) and all the aircraft had to be flown to that location for modification. This caused aircraft not to be available for considerable periods of time.

(c) Recommendation: The teams who perform the modifications should be mobile and travel to the location of the aircraft.

(3) Requirements for Liaison and Communication Often Exceed Capabilities During Combined Operations:

(a) Observation: During Lam Son 719, the Battalion was required to maintain constant liaison and communication with the following units:

- 1 101st Aviation Group at Khe Sanh
- 2 101st Aviation Group at Camp Eagle
- 3 1st ARVN Division forward at Khe Sanh
- 4 1st ARVN Corps at Dong Ha
- 5 24th US Corps forward at Quang Tri
- 6 223d CAB rear at Dong Ha

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7 223d CAB forward at Khe Sanh

(b) Evaluation: The communications requirements exceeded the TO&E capability of the Battalion and attached units when the following internal/external communications requirements are considered:

- 1 48th AHC at Dong Ha
- 2 173D AHC at Dong Ha
- 3 238th AWC at Dong Ha
- 4 C/7/17th CAV at Quang Tri
- 5 C/7/17th CAV forward at Khe Sanh
 - a. 2/17th CAV SQD at Quang Tri (OPCON)
 - b. 2/17th CAV SQD FWD at Khe Sanh (OPCON)
- 6 238th AWC forward at Khe Sanh
- 7 B/7/1st CAV at Quang Tri
- 8 B/7/1st CAV forward at Khe Sanh
 - a. 2/17th CAV SQD at Quang Tri (OPCON)
 - b. 2/17th CAV SQD forward at Khe Sanh (OPCON)
- 9 235th AWC at Phu Bai
- 10 235th AWC forward at Khe Sanh
 - a. 101st ARVN BN at Camp Eagle (OPCON)
- 11 179th ASHC at Camp Eagle
 - a. 159th ASH BN at Camp Eagle (OPCON)
- 12 Maintain pathfinders with radios at:
 - a. Khe Sanh
 - b. Heavy lift resupply pad at 1st ARVN DIV forward
 - c. Troop pad at 1st ARVN DIV forward
 - d. Command pad at 1st ARVN DIV forward

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(c) Recommendation: During combined operations it is essential to consider the total communications requirements and issue additional radios and RC 292 antennas to units over and above TO&E authorization to meet mission requirements.

h. (C) Material.

(1) Ingestion of Laterite Dust:

(a) Observation: The ingestion of laterite dust by the T53-L11 engine caused substantial loss of power and increased deterioration of Teflon bearings.

(b) Evaluation: The dust clouds created by helicopters around landing zones, POL points, and rearm points created excessive power loss.

(c) Recommendation: Responsible units should use soil combiners frequently to assist in dust control. In extremely dusty areas where aircraft are required to operate daily, provisions should be made to provide walnut shells for engine cleaning purposes and unit maintenance officers should be authorized to supervise this engine cleaning process.

(d) Command Action: Aircraft were shut down periodically during the day to clean particle separators and wipe bearing surfaces clean. Upon completion of daily missions, engines were flushed with solvent and/or water.

(2) Fuel Contamination:

(a) Observation: Throughout Lam Son 719 all units of the Battalion experienced fuel contamination problems.

(b) Evaluation: The area of operations during the Laotian campaign necessitated refueling in remote, improperly maintained POL points. Fuel contamination caused wasted "down" time and increased the maintenance workload. Much of the fuel was transported to the refueling sites by vehicle. The drivers continually left the tank hatches open while driving to these sites to reduce the possibility of explosion due to enemy fire and booby traps.

(c) Recommendation: POL points, regardless of location, should be checked daily for contamination and maintained in accordance with Army standards. The fuel truck drivers should be supervised closely and improvements made to lessen the danger of their mission in a combat environment.

(d) Command Action: Heavy emphasis placed on draining fuel

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sumps and taking fuel samples prior to refueling.

(3) Unimproved Landing Zones:

(a) Observation: Troops on the ground who were directed to prepare landing zones for extractions frequently failed to sufficiently clear the zones of barriers and obstacles.

(b) Evaluation: The combat soldier is generally not aware of the clearance required for a helicopter to land, particularly in a heavily vegetated area.

(c) Recommendations: It is recommended that ground commanders and their subordinates receive instruction on this subject.

(d) Command Action: The Battalion commander as well as his subordinate commanders briefed supported commanders prior to each mission that called for a landing zone preparation.

(4) UH-1C Gunship Limitations:

(a) Observation: UH-1C gunships were forced to conduct operations with a 75% usefull load of armament and fuel because of restricted facilities; ie, refuel points, rearm points, and parking areas.

(b) Evaluation: These landing areas were designed to accommodate AH-1G gunships. Due to the time limitations involved in establishing bases for operations during Lam Son 719 the limitations of the UH-1C were not provided for. The construction of more suitable areas was delayed because of higher priorities placed on engineer personnel and equipment.

(c) Recommendation: Areas which are to be utilized for landing zones for UH-1C gunships should be situated adjacent to runways or departure lanes.

(d) Command Action: The Battalion reduced maximum gross weights of UH-1C gunships by lowering the amount of fuel and ammunitions carried. This reduction in weight was dictated by both weather and tactical situation.

Gerald W. Kirklighter

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5 Incl

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2. Unit Casualties and Awards
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4. Aircraft Status
- 5-1. Organizational Chart (1 Nov 70-31 Jan 71)
- 5-2. Organizational Chart (1 Feb 71-30 Apr 71)

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