

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION

PROPOSED CITATION

THE 71ST AVIATION COMPANY (ASSAULT HELICOPTER) DISTINGUISHED ITSELF BY EXCEPTIONALLY HEROIC ACTIONS AT GREAT RISK OF LIFE DURING THE PERFORMANCE OF SUSTAINED COMBAT OPERATIONS AGAINST AN ARMED ENEMY FROM 3 MARCH THRU 24 MARCH 1971. ON 3 MARCH 1971, THE 71ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY LED AN ASSAULT FORCE OF OVER 100 HELICOPTERS THRU ONE OF THE MOST INTENSE ANTI-AIRCRAFT ENVIRONMENTS HERETOFORE OBSERVED IN THE HISTORY OF AIRMOBILE OPERATIONS. WITHOUT ANY TYPE OF COVERING FIRE, THE 71ST SUCCESSFULLY BREACHED LANDING ZONE LOLO IN LAOS AS THE INITIAL ASSAULT FORCE. FOUR UNIT HELICOPTERS WERE SHOT DOWN DURING THE MISSION DUE TO THE INTENSE ANTI-AIRCRAFT RECEIVED; TWO WERE DESTROYED AT LZ LOLO, AND TWO MANAGED TO LIMP BACK TO KHE SANH BEFORE THEY WERE ABANDONED. OVER FORTY HELICOPTERS IN THE ASSAULT FORCE ON LOLO WERE DAMAGED BE ENEMY ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE, AND THAT NUMBER WOULD HAVE BEEN GREATER HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE HEROISM, SKILL, AND DETERMINATION DEMONSTRATED BY THE 71ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY IN SECURING LZ LOLO FOR THE FOLLOWING FORCES. THIS SAME COURAGE AND DETERMINATION WAS SUSTAINED THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD AS THE UNIT SUFFERED SEVERAL CASUALTIES AND NUMEROUS AIRCRAFT DAMAGED BY ENEMY FIRE WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY COMPLETING THIRTY-FOUR COMBAT ASSAULTS IN WHICH 1,918 SORTIES WERE FLOWN AND 2,682 COMBAT TROOPS WERE AIRLIFTED. DIRECT COMBAT SUPPORT MISSIONS TO THE BELEAGUERED SOUTH VIETNAMESE FIREBASES RESULTED IN A COMBINED TOTAL OF 185 TONS OF CRITICAL RESUPPLY BEING MOVED THRU THE SAME DEVASTATING ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE AS WAS MET DURING THEIR COMBAT ASSAULTS. THE HEROIC EFFORTS OF THE 71ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY WERE EXEMPLIFIED BY THE

EVENTS ON 18 MARCH 1971 WHEN THE UNIT SUSTAINED BATTLE DAMAGE TO FOUR AIRCRAFT WHILE CONDUCTING EMERGENCY RESUPPLY, TROOP EXTRACTION AND MEDICAL EVACUATION OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE MARINE FORCES HEAVILY OUTNUMBERED BY NORTH VIETNAMESE REGULARS IN LAOS. ALTHOUGH THE UNIT WAS UNDERSTRENGTH IN ALL CRITICAL AREAS, COMPANY SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE PLATOONS PERFORMED A REMARKABLE FEAT IN SUPPORT OF THE COMBAT OPERATIONS, MAINTAINING AN AIRCRAFT AVAILABILITY RATE OF NINETY PERCENT DESPITE EXTENSIVE COMBAT DAMAGE SUSTAINED DURING THIS PERIOD. THE RESOURCEFULNESS AND DETERMINATION OF THESE SUPPORT PLATOONS EQUALY MATCHED THAT OF THE FLIGHT PLATOONS, AND WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN ACHIEVING THE UNIT'S COMBAT OBJECTIVE. ON 24 MARCH 1971, THE UNIT ONCE MORE DISPLAYED , TO THE UTMOST, THEIR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM AND DEVOTION TO DUTY AS THEY PERFORMED TACTICAL EMERGENCY INSERTIONS AND EXTRATIONS, SUFFERING CASUALTIES AND DAMAGED AIRCRAFT, ONE OF WHICH WAS LITERALLY SHOT DOWN IN FLAMES IN THE TRI-BORDER AREA OF QUANG TRI PROVINCE. THE ACTIONS OF THE 71ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO THE MISSION OF THE 14TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION (-) IN SUPPORT OF LAMSON 719, AND REFLECT GREAT CREDIT UPON EACH INDIVIDUAL, THE UNIT, THE 23D INFANTRY DIVISION, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY