

Deployment to Vietnam

Deployment to USARV (U.S. Army, Vietnam) The 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery (HAWK) arrived in Vietnam on 30 September 1965. The battalion was assigned to the 97th Artillery Group under the command of Col. Stephen C. Buchanan. The 97th Artillery Group was composed of the 6th Battalion, 71st Artillery (HAWK) and the 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery (HAWK). The 6th Battalion, 71st Artillery (HAWK) was first stationed at Qui Nhon and relocated to Cam Ranh Bay in 1966. The 6/71st Artillery (HAWK) left Vietnam in June 1971. The unit's previous station was Fort Bliss, Texas. The 97th Artillery Group (AD) was assigned to US Army Vietnam and under operational control of 7th US Air Force. The Group headquarters exercise command and administration of the two attached HAWK battalions and support detachments. The HAWK battalion's assigned missions were to provide air defense of the Tan Son Nhut/Bien Hoa and Cam Ranh Bay/Nha Trang vital areas. The 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery (HAWK) consisted of four line batteries, A, B, C and D and a Headquarters battery (HHB), which was located in the Long Binh and Bien Hoa area north of Saigon. 1. HHB was located in Long Binh 2. A Battery was located at Tan Son Nhut Air Base 3. B Battery 4. C Battery 5. D Battery The assigned missions of the 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery (HAWK) was to provide air defense of the Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa, Long Binh and Qui Nhon area. Tan Son Nhut served as Saigon's civilian airport, Tan Son Nhut served as the headquarters for the U.S. Air Force and Army in the Republic of Vietnam. Bien Hoa was located 15 miles north of Saigon and was the headquarters for the 173d Airborne Brigade, and the 1st Infantry Division, and military detachments from Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea. The Order of Battle of ADA Units in Vietnam Dusters 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery 4th Battalion, 60th Artillery 5th Battalion, 2nd Artillery Quad 50's Battery E, 41st Artillery Battery G, 55th Artillery Battery G, 65th Artillery Battery D, 71st Artillery Searchlights Battery B, 29th Artillery Battery G, 29th Artillery Battery H, 29th Artillery Battery I, 29th Artillery Hawks 6th Battalion 56th Artillery 6th Battalion 71st Artillery 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery (HAWK) Attached to the Americal Division In 1968 the 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery (HAWK) became the first and only HAWK battalion to be assigned to an infantry division in a combat zone (Americal Division). CHU LAI A unique and powerful artillery unit has brought added punch to the Americal. The 6th Bn., 56th Arty., recently assigned to the division, is different from all others in Vietnam. Instead of artillery rounds, it fires deadly swift HAWK missiles. Under Division Artillery Formerly part of the 97th Arty Grp., the air defense missile battalion will perform under the command of Americal Division Artillery with operational control vested in the 7th USAF. The battalion is commanded by LTC William R. Warren. The missile battalion's mission is to provide air defense protection against attacking low and medium altitude, high-speed hostile aircraft, by destroying, nullifying, or reducing their effectiveness. Civic Minded Too The unit also contributes to the Civic Action Pacification Program by supplying manpower and materials to assist villages near its sites. Yearly each battery must fire two HAWK Missiles at a jet drone target aircraft. As a result of this training, the battalion is ready if called upon to attack hostile aircraft. No newcomer to Vietnam, the 6/56 has been in country since Oct. 1, 1965. It withstood all communist offensives, including the TET offensive in the Saigon, Long Binh and Bien Hoa area. On July 26 last year the unit was presented the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period Nov., 1965 to June, 1966. Battalion Suffer Casualties Enemy activity in the battalion area was very light until TET, 23 February 1969. During the Post TET offensive, several 122mm rockets impacted within the battalion area destroying one SEA hut and damaging two others. As a result of hostile action during this period, 14 casualties were suffered by the battalion and three HAWK missiles sustained minor damages. Repair of all damaged missiles were accomplished in two days. *(SECRET, Operational Report ý Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery, Period ending 30 April 1969 (AD503958) The inactivation of the 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery (U) The 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery the first and only HAWK missile battalion ever assigned to an infantry division (Americal Division) was inactivated at Fort Bliss, Texas on 15 August 1969 after four years of duty in the Republic of Vietnam. The first members of the Americal Division unit (6th Battalion, 56th Artillery (HAWK) stepped onto Texas soil Saturday night August 2, 1969 at 7:53 PM after a 20 hour flight aboard eight Air Force C141 Starlifters, the 648 men were another phase of the 25,000 American troops withdrawal from the Republic of Vietnam which has been announced by President Richard M. Nixon. The first plane load of soldiers, led by Colonel Guertin and Sergeant Major Ernest Kovach were welcomed by Brigadier General Henry J. Schroeder, ATC commander. General Schroeder served as Major General Cassidy's representative for the touch down ceremony. The returning soldiers filed past a 6th Artillery Group honor guard and the 424th Army band to the waiting buses and trucks that shuttled them to Fort Bliss for processing. Colonel David H. Sudderth, 6th Artillery Group commander was also on hand for the arrival ceremony. His 6th Group was host for the returning battalion. Scores of dependents waited at Battery B, 8th Battalion, 7th Artillery mess hall where buses and trucks brought the soldiers for in-processing. The 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery (U) was inactivated, order read as follows: DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY HEADQUARTERS US ARMY AIR DEFENSE CENTER AND FORT BLISS Fort Bliss, Texas 79916 AKBAAC-T 1 August 1969 SUBJECT; Inactivation of the 6th Battalion, 56 Artillery (U) SEE DISTRIBUTION 1. (U) Reference: Message, ATOPS-TP-UA, USCONARC, dated 18 July 1969. 2. (C) An inactivation ceremony to retire the 6th Battalion, 56 Artillery organizational colors will be conducted at Memorial Circle, as soon as possible after arrival of subject unit at this installation. 3. (U) The Commanding Officer, 6th Artillery Group (AD) is responsible for the conduct of the ceremony and will insure necessary coordination with supporting commands and agencies. Direct coordination is authorized as appropriate. 4. (U) The Commanding Officer, Special Troops will provide the following: a. National color (4ý4ý by 5ý5ý). b. Army Flag (4ý4ý by 5ý5ý). c. Three-star General's boat flag d. Two-star General's boat flag. e. Police of Memorial Circle NLT one (1) hour prior to Adjutant's Call. 5. (U) The Adjutant General will provide an officer to read the inactivation order. 6. (U) The AGofS, C-E, will provide appropriate sound support, as required. Regraded UNCLASSIFIED upon Closure of last element of 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery. The Inactivation Ceremony of the 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery (U) Lieutenant General Harry H. Critz, Fourth Army commander, joined Major General Richard T. Cassidy, Fort Bliss commander,

and Lieutenant Colonel J. A. Richard Guertin, the battalion commander, compose the viewing party for the inactivation ceremony at Fort Bliss, Texas. Of the 648 men in the HAWK battalion, 551 have been reassigned to Fort Bliss, Texas. Their distribution finds 473 being assigned to the 6th Artillery Group; 34 to the Air Defense School; 27 to the 15th Artillery Group; 10 to the Air Defense Center; 6 to the Army Training Center, and one to Range Command.

provided by E7 John Mayfield.

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