A Company, 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion articles and etc. found in the Americal Division Veteran's Association data base.

161st AVIATION COMPANY

PELICANS

SCORPIONS

ROAD RUNNER

This is a page from the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion yearbok from 1967. At this time the Pelicans were the lift sections for the 161st AHC. The Scorpions were the gunships and the 406 Transportation Company provided maintenance support.

A Company, 123rd Combat Aviation Battalsion Articles and related materials compiled from the Americal Division Veteran's Association (ADVA) database.

ADVA Historian for 2022 comments. Compilation documents have been made for veterans who might not have computer skills or time to search the extensive files for materials about their unit.

This document was compiled for veterans of A Company, 123rd Aviation Battalion and other Americal Division Veterans from the ADVA Historical Data Base.

A yearbook for the 14th combat aviation battalion was created in 1967 with a section for the 161st Aviation Company which was later reorganized to form the 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion. Approximately half of the men shown in the photos from the 161st AHC section of the yearbook, would served in A Company, 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion. There is also a yearbook from 1969 for the 123rd Aviation Batalion that has a section for A Company, 123rd Aviation Battalion. And there was a 1970 16th CAG that has a small section for A Company, 123rd Aviation Battalion. Electronic or printed copies may be requested from the ADVA Historian. Maps of the Americal AO are available, but not part of the compilation.

A book entitled "Honorable Intentions" was published by Russ Jones.

A book entitled, "I should have Played the Flute" was published by Dick Elgin.

In 2020 a book About the 161st AHC, A Company, 123rd Aviation Battalion and B Company, 123rd Aviation Battalion entitled "Our Helicopter War" was published. The book is available online at the VHPA web-site or may be ordered through the 161stAHC web-site. A second printing included some additional stories and corrections after the first print was sold out.

Some home videos exist for Pelicans. I had made contact with over 200 veterans of the 123rd Aviation battalion in the 1980s. I was very worn out locating and re-locating men from the unit. I passed my list to be maintained by Larry Stoner, a veteran of the Warlords. Last year there was a reunion of 11 Pelicans in Texass (2020). I still may be able to contact several Pelicans.

Many Task Force Oregon/Americal Division Veterans owe their lives to the actions of the Pelicans crews.

Many pilots from A/123rd Combat Aviation Battalion received Distinguished Flying Cross valor awards during their one year tour. These awards are comparable to a Silver Star award for soldiers serving in the infantry.

There were numerous actions in which the Pelicans proved their worth in rescuing wounded, doing emergency ammo resupply missions to provide save units from going empty and being overrun.

The CMOH recipient, the late, LTC Charles S. Kettles beamed when I saw him at a Vietnam Helicopter Pilot Association reunion. At first I did not realize why. I later realized it was because, I was wearing a "Pelican patch". His 176th AHC unit was down to his last ship, so he led a flight of five 161st AHC Pelicans on the mission for which he was awarded the CMOH.

Personal Comments by ADVA Historian, Leslie Hines.

I have a personal connection to the Pelicans. I arrived in Vietnam in February 1968 with men I had attended classes with at Ft. Rucker. The men from my class and a sister class found themselves assigned to either A/123rd, B/123rd, or the 406th TC of the 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion.

When I arrived there was still a transition in progress for the unit to transform it self from the 161st Assault Helicopter Company into the 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion. The 161st AHC was an assault helicopter company which had slicks to carry troops and gunships to suppress enemy fires during the assaults. Many of the slicks were allocated to A Company, 123rd Aviation Battalion that became a general support aviation unit for the Americal Division. The unit call sign remained the Pelicans for this transition. Some slicks and gunships were allocated to B/123rd Combat Aviation Battalion. The "Scorpion" call sign used by the gunships was discarded in favor of the "Warlords". The 406th Transportation Company, "Roadrunners" performed maintenance on the 123rd Avn Bn helicopters. Until it was reorganized into E/723rd Maint. Bn. so that it could be authorized to do direct support maintenance function. The Huey was the most numerous type of helicopter used in the battalion. It required a lot of support, as they were torn down an inspected and put back together every 100 hours of flight time.

When I arrived in country I was put in the Americal Combat Center. I noticed that the 2"x4" studs in the hootches had been shattered by powerful explosions. During TET NVA rocket/mortar attacks had set off 300 tons of bombs at the Chu Lai ammo dump. The 161st AHC/123rd Cbt Avn Bn. base was so damaged and littered with debris that the unit was moved north to the Ky Ha peninsula.

In the beginning the companies were not defined. Everyone was in A Company. I had worked on Warlord OH-23G helicopters and lived in hootches with Warlord crews. However, I later found out I was a "Roadrunner" with the 406th TC.

At a higher level we were all in the 1st Aviation Brigade until one day we were called into a battalion formation and told we were in the Americal Division. We had 1-2 hours to move our 1st Aviation Bde patch over to the right shoulder and sew an Americal Division patch on the left shoulder. The action was retroactive, although I never received any orders nor do I recall the date of the formation.

Personal Background information.

I had tried to become a crewchief on an OH-23G Raven for the Warlords. It was very difficult for me to fit in the OH-23G. I was not a good fit at 6'2". So I stayed in maintenance. My job changed, I was moving up. I became a maintenance team member for UH-1D helicopters. I did this for a month or so, then volunteered to become a crewchief with A Company, 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion. I did this from June 1968-June 1969, where I left the unit to join E/723rd Maintenance Battalion. I have a lot of information in my head about A/123rd Avn Bn. But I do not want to contribute too much to this document. It really needs some input from some other Pelican veterans. Anyone out there want to contribute?

123rd AVN. BN.(COMBAT) (1970 16th Combat Aviation Group Album)

UNIT - HISTORY

The 123rd Aviation Battalion was activated on 8 December 1967 from a nucleus formed by the old 161st Aviation Company. The 406th TC Detachment and the 449th Signal Detachment, which had supported the 161st Aviation Company, were reassigned and attached to the 123rd Aviation Battalion in January 1968. The original makeup of the battalion had consisted of Headquarters Company, **A Company**, and B Company. Company B was organized from the Armed Helicopter Platoon of the former 161st Aviation Company and later given a provisional mission as Aero Scouts. During 1968, the 123d Aviation Battalion compiled an impressive record. **Company A** supported the Americal Division's ground units by hauling 1482 tons of cargo in over 3,736 sorties and in the process killed over twenty (20) VC/NVA and medevaced over ninety-four (94) persons. Company B learned their tactical lessons well, killing over seven hundred (700) VC/NVA in 77,510 sorties. On 15 December 1968, the 123d Aviation Battalion was attached to the 16th Combat Aviation Group.

The year 1969 marked a significant change in both the make-up and the mission of the Battalion. In January 1969 two CH-47 units, the 132d Assault Support Helicopter Company and the 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company, were attached to the Battalion.

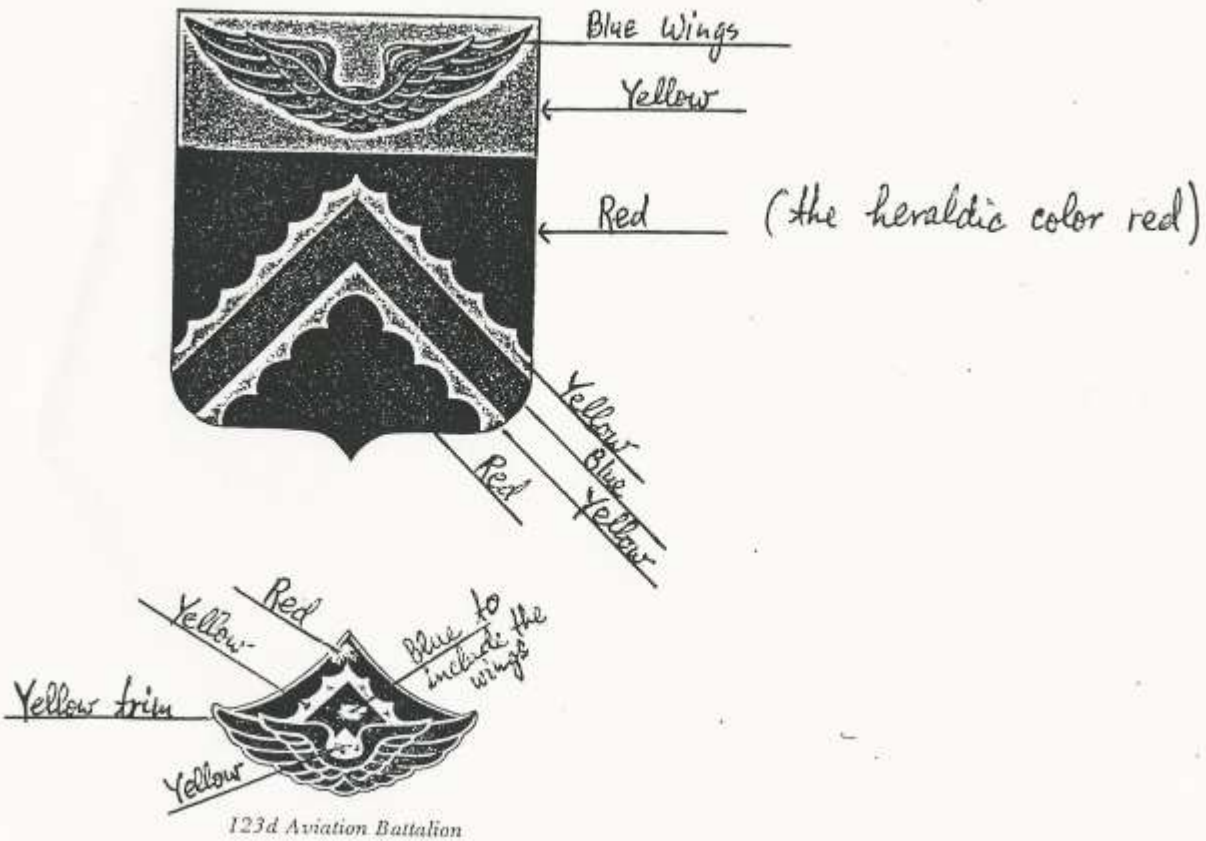
A short period after this reorganization the 406th TC and the 449th Signal Detachment were deactivated. E Company 723d Maintenance Battalion, which was formed from the assets of the 406th TC Detachmetn and the 449th Signal Detachment, was attached to the Battalion to provide the Battalion with direct Maintenance support.

The addition of F Troop, 8th Cavalry in May 1969, gave the Battalion a total of two Air Cavalry units. In October 1969, the 132d ASHC and the 178th ASHC were detached from the 123d Aviation Battalion and attached to the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion.

The additions of D Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry in October 1969, gave the 123d Aviation Battalion a third Air Cavalry unit. The three Air Cavalry units, B Company, F Troop, 8th Cavalry and D Troop 1/1st Cavalry, are used to support each of the three infantry brigades in the Americal Division. Assets from the 123d Aviation Battalion have been involved in every major operation that the Americal has undertaken since January 1968. The Battalion's mission was defined to extend by aerial means the reconnaissance and security of the Americal Division with three Air Cavalry units and to provide command and control aircraft for the General Officers, Special Staff and all Senior Commanders of the Americal Division.

Under its present make-up the 123d Aviation Battalion (Combat) consisting of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Company A, Company B, Company E, 723d Maintenance Battalion, F Troop, 8th Cavalry and D Troop 1/1st Cavalry has proved to be a most

(Not current after the yearbook was published in 1970).



123d Aviation Battalion

Stanton Order of Battle Vietnam reference book documentation on B Company, 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion.

123d Aviation Battalion (Divisional)

Arrived in Vietnam: 8 December 1967 (reorganized from 161st AHC) assets.
Departed Vietnam: 7 November 1971.
Previous Station: Vietnam

Authorized Strength:	1968	1970
	367	370

The 123d Aviation Battalion was created to fulfill the division-level normal aviation requirements of the Americal Division and was stationed at Chu Lai. The following companies were part of this battalion:

Company	Type	Battalion Service/Remarks
Co A	AM	Dec. 67-Nov. 71 – departed RVN
Co B	AM	Dec. 67-Nov. 71 – departed RVN
Co C	AM	Dec. 67-Nov. 71 – departed RVN
Trp F, 8th Cav	Air Cav	June 1971 – Nov 71 Transferred to 196th LIB

[Historian Comments: I do not believe the unit type was correct for Company B above (more Air Cavalry than Air Mobile). Also D Troop 1/1st Cavalry was omitted. They were part of the 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion beginning May 1969. Company C was based at Duc Pho, but 90 per cent of the pilots and enlisted men serving in the 123rd Avn Bn. battalion were not aware there was a sister C Company.]

According to the Coffelt Database, there were 13 crewmen who lost their lives related to their service with the A/123rd Pelicans in Vietnam. There were 4 crewmen from the 161st who died in incidents involving UH-1D helicopters. These are likely to have been Pelican crews.

UNIT CITATIONS AWARDED
TO A Company, 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion

SOURCE: Department of the Army Pamphlet 762-3

Unit Citation and Campaign Participation Credit Register
(1960-1978) Dated: May 1980

Awards:

123rd Aviation Battalion (Airmobile)
RVNGC24 Aug 69 - 31 Dec 69 DAGO 42, 1972
RVNGC31 Mar 70 - 30 Jun 70 DAGO 42, 1972
RVNGC8 Feb 71 - 31 Mar 71 DAGO 42, 1972

ABBREVIATIONS:
DAGO: Department of the Army General Order
RVNGC: Republic Of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm Unit Citation

This Distinguished Service Cross was awarded to a pilot who served with the 161st AHC. The 161st AHC was later reorganized to become A/123rd and B/123rd Avn Bn.

HOPKINS, PERRY C.
Chief Warrant Officer (W-2), U.S. Army
161st Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Brigade,
Date of Action: May 17, 1966
Citation:
The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Perry C. Hopkins, Chief Warrant Officer (W-2), U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with 161st Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion. Chief Warrant Officer Hopkins distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 17 May 1966 while leading a flight of two armed helicopters in support of a besieged American convoy near Phu Cat. Arriving over the battle, he immediately dove through the intense ground fire and attacked the well-entrenched Viet Cong. Although both aircraft were hit and damaged, Warrant Officer Hopkins dauntlessly pressed the attack until the ravaged convoy was able to withdraw. With their ambush broken, the insurgents concentrated their devastating fire on the two helicopters. Suddenly, a burst of automatic weapons fire ripped through the aircraft, killing the co-pilot and severing the control cables. Demonstrating composure and exceptional flying skill, Warrant Officer Hopkins successfully crash landed in a rice paddy. Jumping from the wreckage, he boldly fired his rifle into the charging Viet Cong, killing five. As the insurgents made repeated assaults, the crew dauntlessly held its position with devastating effect. Unmindful of the dangers, he courageously exposed himself to direct the fire of his gunners and extract the body of the dead co-pilot. With complete disregard for his safety, Warrant Officer Hopkins then shouldered his stricken comrade and, firing his weapon with one hand, he led his men across 70 meters of bullet-swept terrain to a rescue helicopter. Under his covering fire, they quickly boarded, and the aircraft extracted the beleaguered crew through a hail of bullets. His unimpeachable valor and profound concern for others saved his crew from certain death or capture, as they accounted for 55 dead insurgents. Chief Warrant Officer Hopkins' extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.
HQ US Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 475 (January 31, 1967)

This is a citation received by A/123rd pilot Dennis Dewine.

Warrant Officer Dennis M. Dewine is awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism while participating in aerial flight as evidenced by voluntary actions above and beyond the call of duty in the Republic of Vietnam. Warrant Officer Dewine distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 24 August 1968 while serving as pilot of the command and control helicopter for the squadron commander 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry. On that date, cavalry elements became heavily engaged with a well dug in enemy force of at least regimental size, reinforced by recoilless rifle and anti-aircraft companies, four miles northwest of Tam Ky. The enemy defenses were arranged in depth with at least six .51 caliber anti-aircraft companies integrated into their position. Warrant Officer Dewine, with complete disregard for his own safety, flew at low level to help spot enemy positions, enabling door gunners and helicopter occupants to place suppressive fire on the enemy. Although the aircraft sustained numerous hostile .51 caliber and smaller caliber hits and was in danger of malfunctioning, Warrant Officer Dewine disregarded the danger and continued to fly in order to allow the squadron commander to control the action. Sustaining hits to vital structural members, he landed the aircraft under hostile fire to evacuate four critically wounded troopers, since no medevac helicopters were immediately available. Despite the adverse conditions, he managed to fly while overloaded and with critical damage in order to evacuate the men. When the leading edge of the rotor blade took a .51 caliber hit, Warrant Officer Dewine brought the aircraft to a safe landing. Warrant Officer Dewine's personal heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the American Division, and the United States Army.

Excerpts from personal comments provided by Dennis Dewine:

We sustained a 51 cal round through the fuel cell, entered just under the fuel cap lock, missed everything else except the RMI box and kept going. Left a piece of the tip of the round stuck in the skin of the compartment just fwd of the fuel cell. Don't know how it got there. I think a round just nicked the windscreen from the side on the right and another round entered the D spar slightly below center of the nose and exited in 6" or so gash on the top of the blade about 4 feet (I guess) from the tip. We did not see the blade until we shut down after the dustoff. Wish I had a picture, now. Saw the hole in the fuel cap and only put in 800 lbs when we refueled before going back out; we were down to about 400 lbs when the call went out for the evac. I'm sure the lifting capabilities were diminished and I did not think we were going to fly out with the load we had, so the fear of fuel escaping via the .51 cal. hole was a good thing as I did not take on a whole fuel load. After flying at mach 1 or whatever it would do low level back to Chu Lai and landing at the evac hosp we returned to Hawk Hill and shut down. After discovering the hole in the blade the C/E wrapped it with 100 mph tape and we flew it home. Developed a 1/1 vertical on the way back and discovered upon landing that the end of the blade was flapping. God looks after fools and young WO's.

By the way, whoever wrote the citation had the sequence wrong as you can see. We took all the hits before the evac. Dodged fire all day, however. Blue Ghost keep telling us to watch where we were going that we were drawing fire all day. It gave them (Blue Ghost) something to shoot at and we were able to direct some fast movers onto hot spots. You could see NVA all over the place on the ground. To me the most impressive thing was taking off overloaded with a big hole in the blade. 1/1 Cav guys said they killed more NVA during my take off than they had all day, since all the bad guys came out of their holes to shoot at us coming out. We must've looked like guns-a-go-go with all the weapons being fired out he cargo doors by the 1/1 Cav, CO, S-3 and 1st Sgt and the crew. I don't know how many wounded we took out, just know that when I picked up the A/C to a hover with the 400lbs of fuel the RPM bled off. I told Rivera to beep it up, but he kept saying it was still bleeding. We backed up till the tail rotor was in the brush and we couldn't go back anymore with a 2 inch hover we had the RPM we needed and literally hovered out between two A Cav's and all hell broke loose. We had a very strong west wind at the time and that likely saved our asses as we rumbled through translational lift and started flying. It felt like we were going to have to hover back to Chu Lai.

[For this mission WO Bobby Rivera was the co-pilot, Leslie Richey was the crewchief, David Raikes was the door gunner. The helicopter was UH-1D, 66-01092. The commander of the 1st Squadron, 1st Regiment who was on board the helicopter was the late Lieutenant General Richard D. Lawrence, Retired. There were two days of action where this helicopter was shot up in a three day battle. This award only covers one of these two days.]

Historian Notes: Observations by Leslie Hines related to the August 1968 battle: I served with A/123rd Cbt Aviation Battalion as a helicopter crewchief. I knew the crew for the mission flown in support of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment.

The crewchief (Richey) and door gunner (Raikes) flying the mission on the 24-25 August, 1968 lived in my hootch. The door gunner, David Raikes, and I had flown many missions previously. He was solid and reliable with a calm "Indiana country boy" demeanor. His nickname was "Pops" because he was around 25 years old...and that was old to us 18-19 year old kids. He had served in the field with the 5/46th Inf. Bn.. He had some bad experiences having been overrun three times in the field. He thought he would take his chances and volunteer to serve as a door gunner with A/123rd so he could get out of the field.

David passed away several years ago from cancer. But he had recounted his story to me in Vietnam and again after we connected for a time before his death. This is what I recall of his story and my personal recollections for the 1st Squadron battle in August 1968:

On the first day of the battle Raikes was manning his M-60 machine gun when he suddenly felt he was being attacked by a swarm of bees. He heard buzzing and then felt what he thought were bee stings on his face. When he looked around to see what had happened, he was horrified. The officer sitting in a jump seat a foot or so from him had had his head blown off. The buzzing and stinging were from the officer's skull fragments flying through the air and striking him. This was from the first day of action. I believe that on this day his helicopter provided an emergency resupply of ammunition to the troopers on the ground who needed the ammo to stay in their desperate fight. LTC Lawrence was aboard the helicopter during this heroic action.

On the second day of the battle I was working on the flight line at our base at Ky Ha. I noticed an unusual sound then observed a damaged helicopter coming back into the base. The main rotor was making a whooshing noise and the helicopter had a very noticeable side to side motion ("one to one vibration"). This was the helicopter that crewchief, Richey, and doorgunner, Raikes, were on. After the pilot, Dennis Dewine, had landed the helicopter I observed the damage. One .51 cal. round had made a hole in the main rotor blade near the tip that was big enough to put a large grapefruit through. Luckily the round had gone through the honeycomb portion of the blade. If it had hit an inch more to the front of the blade it might have been a bad day for everyone on board. The second .51 cal. round hit was in the fuel cell on the underside of the helicopter. The fuel cell was a self-sealing type. It sealed the entry point. The exit point was nearly large enough to put my head through. But it was up around where the crewchief (Leslie Richey) sat. So it was high enough up so that the JP4 fuel did not drain out. The self-sealing fuel cell was to have been replaced after a few more hours flight time to save weight. If the fuel cell had not been self sealing the helicopter might have gone down in the middle of this fierce battle.

The pilot, Dennis Dewine, received a Distinguished Flying Cross for flying repeatedly into the raging battle. He related to me how he had made it back to Hawk Hill safely. He contacted a maintenance officer in our battalion for recovery instructions. DeWine described the battle damage to the maintenance officer. Then the maintenance officer instructed him to fly the helicopter about 20 miles back to our base. I was surprised that the helicopter was OK'd to be flown after I had seen it shaking and whooshing through the air. But apparently it was because they made it!]

Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96374

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 2167 31 March 1969

AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced.

MCCAIG, RICHARD D W3159763 (SSAN XXX-XX-XXXX), WARRANT OFFICER
Company A, 123rd Aviation Battalion APO 96374
Awarded Distinguished Flying Cross
Date action: 25 February 1969
Theater: Republic of Vietnam
Reason: For heroism while participating in aerial flight as evidenced by voluntary action above and beyond the call of duty in the Republic of Vietnam. Warrant Officer McCaig distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 25 February 1969 while serving with Company A, 123rd Aviation Battalion. On that date, an element of the 1st Cavalry came under heavy fire near Tam Ky, and two tanks of the unit were assaulted by the Viet Cong. While the tankers fought off the attack, Warrant Officer McCaig maneuvered his command and control helicopter over the area, allowing his gunners to support the tanks with machinegun fire. During the ensuing battle, he continued to provide supporting fire for the ground forces and marked attacking routes for the troops.

Disregarding the danger involved, Warrant Officer McCaig landed his aircraft in the battle area and evacuated a seriously wounded soldier. His timely and courageous actions contributed immeasurably to the success of the mission and reduction of casualties.

Warrant Officer McCaig's personal heroism, professional competence and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect great credit upon himself, the Americal Division and the United States Army.
Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of the Act of Congress, approved 2 July 1926.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL: JOHN W. DONALDSON
Colonel, GS
Chief of Staff

PAUL A. WILSON
1LT, AGC
Asst AG

[Historian Note: Louis Conners was the crewchief on this mission. He recalled that Mr. McCaig received the DFC on a mission he participated on soon after the February 23, 1969 general offensive by the NVA. In this action he recalled that 1st/1st Cav tanks had to buttoned up as Viet Cong climbed on the tanks. The crew then fired on the tanks shooting the NVA/VC that were on the tanks.

The mission also included an emergency resupply of ammunition to the 1/1st Squadron troops who were running low on ammunition and in danger of being overwhelmed. This was part of a three day action for the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry that resulted in 238 enemy killed in action.]

This section is made up of articles from the Army Reporter.

The articles often did not identify the units involved in the reported actions. I have tried to determine where actions involved B/123rd Avn Bn. In many cases I was not able to confirm the unit although it may have been B/123rd Avn Bn. With more time and records I might be able to verify more Warlords connections to the published articles.

The largest Army newspaper in the world
THE ARMY REPORTER is published weekly under the supervision of the Information Office. United States Army Vietnam and is an authorized Army publication. The command newspaper has a circulation of 85,000 and is printed by PACIFIC STARS AND STRIPES in Tokyo, Japan.

Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. This newspaper utilizes the facilities of the ARMED FORCES NEWS BUREAU and ARMY NEWS FEATURES. Contributions are welcome and may be sent to: THE ARMY REPORTER, USARV-IO, APO 96375 or telephone Long Binh 4204/4311.

Army Reporter:

14Jun66-Bronze Bell Given to 161st Aviation Company (161st was parent unit of A/123rd & B/123rd Avn companies)

PLEIKU, (17th AVN-IO) - The 1st Aviation Brigade's 161st Airmobile Company, 52nd Aviation Battalion, has received a big bronze bell from the citizens of Wyoming, Penn.

Their unusual donation will soon be ringing for the men of the 161st, and other units scheduled to make their homes at the newly constructed Lane Heliport complex in Phu Tai, near the central coastal city of Qui Nhon.

Shortly after the arrival of his chopper company in Vietnam, the 161st commander, Maj. Michael R. Thomas, began corresponding with his hometown mayor, Irving Hughes, of Wyoming, PA. He described the unit, its location and mission, and asked if the people of Wyoming would consider "Adopting" the company and its members.

His request was met with enthusiasm and Mayor Hughes soon has a resolution before the borough council. On Jan. 7, 1966, the resolution adopting the 161st was signed. It made each member an honorary citizen of the Borough of Wyoming.

Not satisfied with this alone, however, Mayor Hughes contacted the mayors of several neighboring cities and asked them to join in the adoption of the 161st. They in turn pledged their full support in the adoption of the company and the idea soon snowballed. Pennsylvania Governor William Scranton was contacted and plans are being made for the adoption of the 161st by the entire state of Pennsylvania.

One of the projects undertaken by the people of Wyoming was to secure a bell for a chapel-planned for construction by the 161st. A 1930 vintage bell was purchased by several Pennsylvania clergymen. Mayor Hughes arranged transportation of the war-bound bell via Eastern Airlines to Philadelphia, to be transferred to United Airlines for shipment to Oakland, Calif., and further transferred to World Airlines for movement to Saigon.

Shortly after the unit's adoption by Wyoming, and while plans were being made to ship the bell, Major Thomas was re-assigned to another unit and Major James N. Hembree., Knoxville, Tenn. assumed command of the company.

As a result of this change-of-command, Bob Kirchner, the president of the Wyoming committee responsible for shipping the bell; contacted Lt. Col. Robert L. Cody, 52nd Battalion Commander, to insure that the give would get to the 161st once it arrived at Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Airfield.

Placed aboard an Air Force C-130, and flown the 300 miles to Qui Nhon, the bell was then trucked to the 161st site at Camp Lane.

13Jan69-**Aviators stunned, find 'friendly' UFO**

CHU LAI - Except for a suspected sighting of a flying saucer, an Americal chopper would have been one of those routine hops.

WO Joseph E. Clark, a pilot with the division's 123rd Aviation Bn. (**A/123rd Avn Bn**) had turned the controls of his co-pilot, WO Roger Loomis, shortly after departing Da Nang. "We were flying over the ocean that morning and had just buzzed past the battleship New Jersey, about five miles south of Hoi An, when I spotted the thing out of the corner of my eye," Clark said, half smiling.

There in front of the chopper, and at about half its altitude of 16000 feet, was the strangest aircraft the aviator had ever seen.

Without further delay Clark, fighting an impulse to make a 180 degree turn, took control of the helicopter to seek out the unknown.

"As we watched, the UFO flew under the chopper. I did my best to keep close without risking a collision, but every time I approached it would move away and change course. After about twenty minutes of playing with the "saucer" I decided to report my sighting for further guidance."

With some reluctance, the 11 month Vietnam veteran radioed the artillery warning net (Save-A-Plane) located at division headquarters at Chu Lai.

As he had feared, the net came alive with the chortles of disbelieving pilots monitoring the unlikely conversation.

"Okay, UFO! Whaddya got up there anyway? I suppose you've seen little green men!"

Advised to refrain from further action with what was likely to be a monitoring craft from the New Jersey, the beleaguered pilot turned his craft south and headed for Chu Lai. Naval officials with the Naval Support Activity Detachment (NSAD) at Chu Lai later confirmed the UFO was probably a "DASH" (Drone Anti Submarine Helicopter) radio-controlled from a destroyer providing security for the big battleship. (Americal).

17Feb69-**Engineers pluck pilot from water**

CHU LAI - It was the Americal Division engineers instead of the cavalry that came to the rescue recently when Air Force F-100 pilot and his plane ditched in the South China Sea off Chu Lai.

The **26th Engineer Battalion's** command and control helicopter spotted the Air Force pilot after he had abandoned his aircraft and was parachuting into the sea.

The helicopter pilot, **WO John R. Elwell** a pilot with the 123rd Aviation Bn., (**1st flt plt A/123rd Avn Bn**) hovered over the downed pilot until Lt. Col. Matthew W. Hoey, commanding officer of the **26th engineer battalion**, and Spec. 5 Richard D. Melcher, a crew chief in the helicopter, managed to get the pilot into the helicopter.

"I heard the distress call and decided to see if I could help," Elwell said. "I sighted the pilot as he was parachuting down. I then went down close to the water and waited for the pilot's splashdown," he added.

"Elwell did an outstanding job," Hoey said. At one point, the helicopter pilot deliberately put his ship's left skid into the water and held it there while LTC Hoey climbed out on the skid to get a better grip on the jet pilot, who was encumbered by his flight gear.

According to Hoey, the Air Force pilot landed approximately two miles out in the harbor and the plane when in approximately one-quarter of a mile from the Lai beach.

"We didn't se the plane go in, but we could see the oil slick where it went in," the colonel said.

An investigation to determine the reason for the crash is being conducted.

The Air Force pilot was flown to the **312th Evacuation Hospital** where he was treated and released.

14Apr69-**Looked like tumbleweeds**

Americal chopper rakes camouflaged NVA

TAM KY- A camouflaged mass of NVA soldiers were discovered and eventually routed by the quick actions of an Americal Division helicopter crew in tan attack near here.

Twenty-nine enemy were killed, six enemy soldiers including an NVA battalion commander were captured, and numerous weapons and packs plus a .51-caliber anti-aircraft weapon were confiscated in the encounter.

A UH-1D Huey "slick" commanded by **WO Walter Seger** was flying a visual reconnaissance mission in support of the Americal Division's **1st Squadron, 1st Cav.** when he discovered a large mass of enemy soldiers being flushed from a treeline a short distance from the advancing cavalrymen.

"Enemy troops were moving down the opposite side of the hill, just out of range of the Cav," said Seger. "They all appeared to have weapons, back packs, and were well camouflaged. They had tree twigs attached to their helmets and back packs; they ran in a crouching, doubled-over position, so there appeared to be 35 or 40 tumbleweeds blowing in many directions over the side of the hill.

The chopper made its first pass through the center of the disorganized mass killing several enemy troops and continued circling the hill. Byu hat time, having gained some semblance of order, the Communists tried to work their way down the hill to a forested area.

"They didn't have a chance of getting away," said **Spec. 4 Terry Bennet**, crew chief of the 123rd Aviation Bn., **"Pelican" chopper (A/123rd Combat Aviation Battalion, 2nd Flight Platoon).**

"The NVA had to cross an open rice paddy to get to the trees, but our M60 machine gun fire made it impossible."

The helicopter made several passes around the hill until Bennet had expended all of his ammunition; then the helicopter was turned around so gunner Spec. 5 Randy Parks, on the opposite side of the craft from Bennet, had a clear lane of fire. As Parks began to get low on ammunition, co-pilot WO Garry Raymond took control of the aircraft while Seger called Cobra gunships of **F Troop, 8th Cav.** to finish the operation.

Firing as they retreated, the enemy tried to hide in some hootches at the top of the hill.

The Co. A "slick" took several hits as the action continued.

"We could feel the ship shudder as the rounds hit," said Bennet. They were firing armor-piercing .30-caliber shells and it appeared as if thousands of rounds were directed at us. I took one through the sleeve of my jacket and Mr. Raymond's neck was grazed as a bullet went through the roof.

"After we expended our machine gun ammo we continued to fire with our M16 rifles until the Cobras arrived."

Crew chief Bennet continued, "I dropped smoke grenades marking the hootches containing the NVA and the Cobras completely devastated them with rockets.

CHU LAI - The real Nighthawk flies the night skies in search of insects. Vietnam's Nighthawk flies the night skies, also. But, unlike the real Nighthawk, insects are not on its menu-VC and NVA are.

Nighthawk is the name given to hunter-killer teams of Huey helicopters. The teams fly a high and low ship concept to ferret out VC and NVA during the hours of darkness. High ships provide illumination and spot targets for low ships by dropping parachute flares.

Low ships have Xeon searchlights for pinpointing targets and miniguns, .50 caliber machineguns and M60 machineguns for handling anything they find while snooping around nightly in the 11th Brigade's area of operation (AO).

Cpt. Norman W. Hayes, a low ship pilot, explains how Nighthawk operates. "Low ships work at lower altitudes and we fly at slow speeds. Low ships are important members of the team, but people don't put enough emphasis on the importance of the high ships. They help by dropping flares and relaying communications. **Cpt. Douglas Delp**, a high ship pilot, more or less provides command and control, " Hayes said.

Spec. 4 James R. Carmean, a low ship crew chief, pointed out other important functions of the high ships. "They tell us if we are taking fire from directly underneath the ship and the high ships will act as recovery ships in case we go down."

Carmean worked in a gun store before coming into the Army. He attributes his ability to maintain the gun in the dark because "the first thing I learn to do is field strip a weapon and then I learn to fire it."

Working at night adds a new twist to flying and identifying targets. Carmean said it took him about two weeks just to get used to the radio. Then he said, I was along for the ride until I started finding targets. "The main thing is be observant and retain what you see."

Hayes added, "Darkness doesn't present a problem for the pilots. After you work an area you really don't need a map to get around. You just need the map to plot targets."

Hayes has high praise for some Jungle Warriors he knows only by their initials. The men operate a radar unit on FSB Liz. Hayes says, "Never in my Nighthawk career could I find anyone who utilizes their assets any better to find targets. One night they told us to move 25 yards to the left and you'll
be right over them-that's how good they are."

Nighthawk has to be a little deceptive every once-in-a-while to catch the VC off-guard. Hayes said Nighthawk has been successful because "we learned the VC's habits. Sometimes we leave an area and the VC think we have gone for the night, sometimes we come back and catch them."

The VC try to deceive Nighthawk, too. The VC will set out ambushes for us.

Nighthawk provides an important service for the 11th Infantry Brigade. And keeps the VC honest at night.

(The air unit was from the **123rd Avn Bn**.. Capt. Hayes flew with **F/8th Cav** and another unit within the 123rd Avn Bn. Delp is listed as only serving with **A/123rd Avn Bn**.)

28Sep70- After 2 tours totaling 77 days, 'Nam vet tries again

CHU LAI - The Army calls Vietnam a short tour. Most soldiers don't think it's short enough, but one combat veteran would like to make this visit last a little longer than his two previous tours in Vietnam.

Staff Sgt. Leo P. Scott, operations NCO for the Americal Division's **Co. A, 123rd Avn. Bn**., is approaching 45 days in-country. If he can make it to 46, it'll be the longest of his three tours.

"I came over here the first time in 1967," Scott said. "I was here 45 days in-country when I got hit with an AK47 round in an ambush just north of Saigon. I was one of three casualties and had to be dusted off. In 1968 I came back with the 196th Infantry Brigade. We had been in Kham Duc three days before it was overrun on May 12, and I was medevaced out again. I was in-country 32 days that time."

Before Kham Duc was evacuated recently, Scott was again there.

"I mentioned to the Support Command people one morning that we had a man in the company who had been out there in 1968," explained Lt. Walter R. Dockery, a platoon leader for the **Co. A Pelicans.**

"they just wanted me to show them were things were when we were out there in '68," Scott explained. "I told them where the aid station was and where the artillery and my company positions had been before the final extraction. I also showed them where a C130 had gone down from enemy fire.

"You know," Scott recalled, "I was supposed to be on that aircraft. That morning I'd been hit in the back with shrapnel from a mortar, but they couldn't medevac me out due to the intensity of the enemy fire, so I stayed in action with my unit because we needed every man available who could fire a weapon. About 2 p.m. I got hit again, this time in the face. One of the NVA got through our wire and set off a claymore mine. He didn't get away though," Scott said with a certain amount of satisfaction.

"The C130 was on the strip loading out wounded when the mortars really opened up on it. I had just been placed on the tailgate when the pilot attempted to take off to avoid the mortars. In the confusion, I was either pushed or fell on his takeoff roll. There I was lying on the runway watching
the aircraft take off and cussing him. The NVA really opened up on him with everything they had. The C130 seemed to get about 500 feet in the air when he took what appeared to be a B40 round and nosed over and went straight in. I stopped cussing the C130 when I realized that missing the aircraft had saved my life."

It's no surprise to Scott that the Kham Duc operation was such a success this time around. "We didn't have anything but small outposts up on the surrounding high ground in '68," he said. "We didn't have any fire support bases with artillery up there then. The NVA just overran those outposts one at a time and then were looking down our throats on Kham Duc."

Choppers kill 27 in MR 4 action

.....

23rd Inf

In Quang Nam Province of Military Region 1, on the evening of Aug 30, an element of the 196th Bde., 23rd Infantry Division was ambushed by an unknown-size enemy force 19 miles southwest of Hoi An. U.S. casualties were three killed and four wounded. Two armored personnel carriers and one Sheridan assault vehicle were destroyed. Enemy casualties are unknown. (Note: Americal
ORLL report states that **E/1st Cav** on Aug 30 had two incidents vic BT0018348 resulting in 3 U.S. KIA and 9 wounded. The first incident was a command detonated mine followed by Small Arms Fire (SAF)).

The same day in Quang Tin Province, helicopter gunships of the 23rd observed and engaged an estimated enemy squad 16 miles west-northwest of Tam Ky. Five of the enemy were killed. There were no friendly casualties. About four hours later, another gunship element of the division observed and engaged an unknown-size enemy force six miles west of Tam Ky. Eight of the
enemy were killed. There were no friendly casualties. *(Note: Americal ORLL report 20 Aug: 1230H vic BT078296* ***D/1st/1st Cav (Avn)*** *recorded 5 enemy KIA, then the* ***176th AHC*** *recorded 8 VC KIA vic BT215215).*

Military Region 1

In Quang Tri Province on the evening of Aug. 29, U.S. artillery fired counter battery fire at an active rocket site located in the northern half of the DMZ, five miles north of Gio Linh. The rocket site was observed firing rockets. A large secondary explosion was observed in the vicinity of the rocket site. There were no casualties or damage as a result of the rocket attack.

During the afternoon of Aug. 31, a US. Army OH6 helicopter received enemy ground fire, crashed and was destroyed 26 miles west-southwest of Quang Ngai in Quang Ngai Province. There were no U.S. casualties. *[Historian Note:* ***A/123 Avn*** *OH-6A received .51, RPG, and small arms fire at location BS262620. Downed OH-6A was destroyed in place by gunship from* ***B/123 Avn****]*

On the morning of Sept. 4 in Quang Tri Province, a U.S. Army OH6 helicopter received enemy ground fire, crashed, and was destroyed 15 miles north-northwest of Quang Tri City. Two crewmen were killed.

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Photo: UH1 helicopters approaching. Lead helicopter appears to have an Americal Division patch on the nose, with a white knight on a horse (**196th Bde Charger emblem**).

The following sections contains articles that were printed in the Pacific Stars and Stripes related to actions of the A Company, 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion.

Pacific Stars and Stripes An authorized publication of the U.S. Armed forces in the far east. Price 10 cents.

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PACIFIC
STARS AND STRIPES

This newspaper is an authorized unofficial publication for U.S. Armed Forces assigned to the Pacific Command. Contents of Pacific Stars and Stripes are not necessarily the official view of the U.S. Government or the Department of Defense.

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The appearance of displays in this newspaper concerning commercial publications does not constitute an endorsement by the Department of Defense, the Military Departments or the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific.

Many of the stories did not identify a specific unit. I have worked on researching materials we have and in some instances I was able to identify the unit that the action was reported for. With more time and additional information from the National Archives, I would likely find more articles that have a connection to A Company, 123rd Avn Bn.

27 & 31Dec68 **(A/123rd Avn Bn)**

Copter Tangles with Tiny 'UFO'

CHU LAI, Vietnam (Special) - Except for the flying saucer, the flight would have been one of those routine hops form Da Nang.

WO1 Joseph E. Clark, a pilot with the Americal Div.'s 123rd Aviation Bn., had turned the controls of his UH1B [sic UH1D 64-13737] (Huey) over to his co-pilot, WO1 Roger "Seymour" Loomis shortly after departing Da Nang.

"We were flying 'feetwet' (over the ocean) that morning and had just buzzed past the battleship New Jersey, about five miles south of Hoi An, when I spotted the 'thing' out of the corner of my eye," Clark said, half smiling.

There, in front of the chopper, and at about half its altitude of 1600 feet, was the strangest aircraft the aviator had ever seen.

It was first thought to be an H13 model helicopter, but as the Huey neared the UFO the two pilots, an unidentified passenger and the crew all noticed the absence of a tail boom and most conspicuously, a pilot.

Without further delay Clark, fighting an impulse to make a 180-degree turn, took control of the helicopter to seek out the unknown.

"It was heading toward the sea at about 30 knots so I slowed our speed from 110 knots," Clark continued, "dropped to 800 feet, and pulled right up alongside a gray, white, and silver tail-less aircraft with a rotor system and skids. There were no markings or a pilot visible.

"As we watched, the UFO flew under the chopper. I did my best to keep close without risking a collision, but every time I approached it would move away and change course. After about 20 minutes of playing with the saucer I decided to report my sighting for further guidance."

With some reluctance, the 11-month Vietnam veteran radioed the artillery warning net (Sav-A-Plane) (*comment ?Salvation was the name of the net?) located atChu Lai.

"I want to report a UFO five miles south and one-half mile east of Hoi An . . . looks like a little helicopter . . . . but no one's flying it."

As he had feared, the net came alive with the chortles of disbelieving pilots monitoring the unlikely conversation.

"Okay, UFO! Whaddya got up there, a flask? I suppose you've seen little green men!"

Advised to refrain from further action with what was likely to be a monitoring craft from the New Jersey, the beleaguered pilot turned his craft south and headed for Chu Lai. Naval officials with the Naval Support Activity Detachment (NSAD) at Chu Lai later confirmed the UFO was probably a "DASH" (Drone Anti-Submarine Helicopter) radio-controlled from a destroyer providing security for the big battleship.

Clark admits that after close observation of his UFO he was pretty certain it wasn't extraterrestrial.

"I was going to shoot it down at first, but I didn't want to risk and international . . . or interplanetary . . . incident!"

16Jan69-(Thursday) **Biggest Landing Of War**

By JO2 DAVE WARSH
and SPEC. 5 ERIC JOHNS
S&S Vietnam Bureau.

SAIGON - Storming ashore in the biggest amphibious assault of the Vietnam war, nearly 4,000 Marines moved onto a Communist-controlled peninsula near Quang Ngai, military spokesmen revealed Tuesday.

As the Marines came ashore, U.S. and Vietnamese Army troops moved in by land to set up a giant cordon around the peninsula.

The peninsula - known as Batangan - juts into the South China Sea about 10 miles above the coastal plain city of Quang Ngai, about 330 miles northwest of Saigon.

It has an area of about eight square miles and long has been a staunchly Communist area. The scheme behind the operation is to bring the area under government control. In the past, Viet Cong troops fighting on Batangan's fringes could retreat in safety to the peninsula, officials said.

Stars & Stripes Correspondent Spec. 5 Jack Benedict reported that five Viet Cong were killed in light action during the first day of the operation. One American was reported wounded.

The operation is really two operations, under two different commanders.

The first-dubbed Bold Mariner-was the amphibious landing and includes some units of the **2nd ARVN Inf. Div.** Leathernecks of the 26th Regimental Landing Team comprised most of the force.

The second - called Russell Beach - consists mainly of Americal Div. troopers.

Brig. Gen Howard H. Cooksey, who heads the Americal Div. task force, said heavier contact is expected when the cordon starts to tighten. He said at least two main force battalions were in the encircled area when the operation stared.

Early indications are that at least one of them has been trapped. The remaining task of flushing the enemy out will be prolonged by an extensive network of tunnels-some dug three stories deep - and numerous booby traps.

An impressive portion of the U.S. 7th Fleet - including the battleship New Jersey - stood offshore in the shallow green waters as the Marines hit the shore, wanting to help. But the Leathernecks landed without opposition.

The operation is expected to follow a pattern described by other big cordons. Residents of the closed area-an estimated 5,000 will be evacuated to an interrogation camp on the fringes of the circle.

Meanwhile, troops on the cordon's perimeter will slowly tighten the circle, searching for buried supplies and reluctant residents or Communist soldiers.

Photo caption-Marines board helicopters on the USS Tripoli for flight to the Communist-controlled Batangan Peninsula in South Vietnam. The action is the biggest amphibious assault of the war. (UPI)

Jersey Batters Bunkers

SAIGON (S&S) - The battleship New Jersey destroyed or damaged four enemy bunkers Friday in the northern sector of South Vietnam, Navy sources said Saturday.

(Personal reflections by a helicopter crewchief from the Americal Division's A/123rd Avn Bn. about the Batangan Peninsula operation by Leslie Hines.)

I observed an amphibious landing of tanks. All these years I had thought that these were marine tanks. It turns out they were 1st/1st Cav tanks brought in on Marine landing boats. I saw one of the tanks sink in the landing. It was driving in shallow water and hit a pot hole in the beach. It floated a little over to one side before it sank completely, but just under the water a little. At the Americal re-union in Chicago I overheard a 1st/1st Cav veteran telling the story of how his tank had sunk in the landing. I was surprised that I had found someone that had crossed my path years ago. He related that his tank was to be blown in place when the officer in charge ordered them to do better. They got it out. The rest of the story that the tanker didn't know was that when the tank was being towed up to Tam Ky, the bridge collapsed on them. I was flying with the for the 26th engineers the next day. They cursed the tankers. Although the river was nearly dry it was a big bridge and hard to get the tanks off the bridge. It seemed that there were three tracked vehicles on the bridge. I had thought that the tanks were headed south because their turrets were pointed south, but my pilot, Mr. McCaig, told me that they had the turrets pointed backwards from where they were going. He recalled this and confirmed the 1st/1st Cav veteran's story and added that there was an NBC filming the collapsed bridge repair. They eventually brought in a Sky crane to carry in materials to repair the bridge.

As far as the New Jersey being close by in the green waters, it seemed to be quite far out. I flew staff missions from the Americal out to visit the New Jersey three times. It was quite a flight out over the water to the Battleship. When we landed it was unsettling that we would set down, then the ship would go out from under us and we would have to land again and again until we were finally down for good. I was surprised that the Navy guys were interested in getting of me and our helicopter. One of the Navy guys showed me how I could see the 16" shells after they were being fired. It took me a while to catch on, but I could see the shells going out. I was told that it took between 300 and 600 lbs of gunpowder per shot. The shells fired could go as big as 2700 lbs. I could feel the ship move with the guns were fired. When we flew the staff around the impact zone before we went out. It was amazing how far away from the impact zone the rice paddies were taking shrapnel. I don't think I would have wanted to be standing up even if I was a mile and a half away. There was a submarine partially submerged offshore on the day of the amphibious landing. I recall the pilot saying that the submarine was one of ours. That was a relief.

Later during this operation we flew lots of loads of refugees to LZ CHIC. The LZ looked like a sandbar in the river near Quang Ngai. It was really tiring and stressful with lots of short hops and crowding the Vietnamese in the helicopters.
I was really beat when we returned at night. I don't recall flying flares missions for this operations, but I read that the area was being illuminated all night long by flares.

I also recall a little of flying some wounded out to a hospital ship named Sanctuary. Several of the wounded were Marines.

05Jan70-**Probers Search Homes, Sift Ruins at My Lai**

CHU LAI, Vietnam (AP) - Following a minesweep team and a scout dog trained to sniff out mines and boobytraps, Lt. Gen. William R,. Peers and his Army investigators poked through the ruins of My Lai hamlet Saturday.

The three-star general probing whether field commanders tried to cover up the alleged massacre of My Lai inhabitants by U.S. troops, made a house-to-house search of the hamlet and walked its perimeter ankle deep in mud. Rain fell steadily.

"The visit was extremely helpful," an aide said. "The general was looking for certain key areas and building that figure in the testimony." Peers may return to My Lai for another first-hand look, the aide added.

Peers was accompanied by South Vietnamese Sgt Nguyen Dinh Phu, who was an interpreter with the Americal Division company that swept through My Lai on March 16, 1968, and allegedly killed 109 or more civilians.

Phu was questioned by the Peers panel Thursday and Friday, and his presence in My Lai Saturday seemed to indicate that he was considered an important witness.

Tight security regulations were in force during the three-hour visit to My Lai, and newsmen were not allowed to accompany the investigators.

An Americal Division task force has been combing the area for several days, and suffered at least five men wounded by booby-traps. When the Peers team arrived its members donned flak jackets and helmets. Two helicopter gunships hovered overhead.

But there was no sign of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers who are known to roam the area.

Two weeks ago an American armored force killed 54 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong Troops in a battle 1 1/2 miles southeast of My Lai.

After Saturday's visit, sources close to Peers said he is "prepared to stay as long as possible in this area to make sure he leaves no stone untouched."

With Peers were three members of the Army investigating team, Robert McCrate and Jerome K. Walsh Jr., both New York Lawyers, and Army Lt. Col. Billy Stanberry.

There was a chance the Peers investigation in Vietnam would coincide with the visits by the trial and defense counsel in the forth-coming court-martial of 1st Lt. William L. Calley Jr., 26, of Miami, Fla., who is charged with murdering 109 civilians at My Lai. Staff Sgt. David Mitchell, 29 of St. Francisville, La., a former platoon sergeant under Calley, faces trial separately on a charge of assault with intent to commit murder.

Calley's military counsel, Maj. Kenneth Raby, and the Army prosecutor, Capt. Aubrey Daniel, left Ft. Benning, Ga., Friday for Vietnam.

"There will be no contact whatsoever should they come here," a spokesman for Peers said, however.

The Peers investigation is being conducted independently of the courts-martial proceeding.

(*Note - A/123rd Avn Bn flew inspection teams into the My Lai area. It took quite an effort by the infantry to secure the area. I and other A Company personnel were interrogated by CID in regards to what we might know about the My Lai massacre. I do remember being told it was a free fire zone around My Lai and to kill anything we saw, pigs or humans. It made me a little unsettled because of the investigation...as that was pretty much what Calley was on trial for doing..).

21Mar70-.....**Headlines**..... (Note-The ADVA has a copy of the Accident report)

Photo caption - MAJ. GEN. LLOYD B. RAMSEY

General Hurt, 2 Die in Copter

By SPEC. 4 JOHN CODY

S&S Staff Correspondent

DA NANG - Americal Div. commander Maj. Gen. Lloyd B. Ramsey was hoisted from thick jungle Wednesday morning seven miles west of Chu Lai where he had been stranded overnight following the crash of his command and control UH1 helicopter in which two men were killed and six injured, according to military spokesmen.

The military spokesmen said the general's left arm was broken.

The copter crashed into brush on the side of a steep mountain at 4 p.m. Tuesday, killing Lt. Col. Robert J. Thomas of Reston, Va., an officer newly assigned to the Americal Div., and Spec. 4 Ray Murhpy of Connersville, Ind., the helicopter crew chief (*from 3rd Flt. Plt. A/123rd Avn Bn*.)

The cause of the crash was not determined, but officials said it was not from enemy fire.

Army and Air Force rescue units flew to the area and an infantry company was airborne to within two miles of the crash site. It was not until 8 A.M. Wednesday that the wreckage was sighted through the heavy cloud cover and the survivors were medevaced by Air Force HH53 helicopters of the 37th Air Rescue Det.

Search aircraft picked up a beeper signal one-half hour after the crash. Then at 5:30 P.M. the helicopters made voice contact with the survivors.

Low clouds, fog and 15-20-foot visibility thwarted attempts to spot the downed aircraft which had landed upside down in 6-foot brush a mid a dense canopy of 50 to 100-foot tall trees.

Radio contact was lost at 4 a.m. Wednesday and was not regained until 8 a.m. when Maj. Tommy P. James, 34, of Bixby, Okla., arrived int the area in a helicopter.

James, commander of the **71st Aviation Co**., had searched Tuesday until nightfall "walking" his ship up the side of the mountain where the wreckage was thought to be.

He returned Wednesday morning, diving through the clouds into a valley below the mountain, then hovering once again up the side of the slope. The survivors picked up his rotor sound and directed him close to their position.

"We were within 50 to 75-feet of their position before we could see them. The chopper was upside down with the tail boom snapped off," said James.

James lowered battalion surgeon, Capt. Luis A. Oliver, on a jungle penetrator.

"The brush was so thick," said James, "that I had to talk Oliver over to the crash even though he had seen the wreckage from the air and had landed only 20-feet away."

James said it took Oliver 10 minutes to cross he 20 feet.

James then flew down the mountainside to the valley where the Air Force choppers were circling and led them back up to the scene where two paramedics, S. Sgt. Jules Smith and Sgt. Stephen Sano were lowered to aid Oliver.

The survivors were flown to Chu Lai for hospitalization. All were reported in good condition.

Besides Gen. Ramsey, the injured were his aide, Capt. Thomas Ruffing; Capt. John P. Tucker, of the division G-3 office, from Lima, Ohio; CW-2 Stephen C. Pike, helicopter commander, of Enterprise Ala.; WO-Ronald D. Franson, the pilot, from San Diego, Calif., and Spec. 4 Mickie L. Reed, a door gunner of Brownsville, Ind.

Spokesmen said Ramsey was returning from a series of visits to units in the field at the time of the crash.

[Historian Note: An amazing feet of flying skill by Tommy James to fly at night near the side of a cliff in windy conditions. For 18 hours radio silence was maintained until the Division Commander was rescued. Also on board the rescue helicopter was LTC Norman Schwartzkopf, then commander of the 1/6th Inf. Bn. Major General Ramsey was fortunate that an amored seat had been installed for him just a couple weeks prior. Two near misses struck had near his head which prompted the installation of the armored seat. Without the armored seat Ramsey would have been crushed and died in the crash. Major General Ramsey's injuries resulted in a change of command for the Americal Division. MG Ramsey became the Provost Marshall for the U.S. Army in a stateside position. He was retired early from the service because of the back injuries sustained in the crash.

02 Aug70- **44 Reds Killed,**
2 Helos Downed

S&S Vietnam Bureau

SAIGON – At least 44 enemy soldiers were killed and two U.S. helicopters were downed during a massive air-ground battle 226 miles north-northeast of Saigon late Thursday, the U.S. Command said Friday.

The battle started when crewmen of two aircraft from an aviation element of I Field Force called in helicopter gunships and tactical air strikes on 20 to 30 enemy about 22 miles south of Pleiku in Pleiku Province, official spokesmen said.

Rifle elements from I Field Force and an element of the ARVN 47th Regt. were airlifted into the area and immediately came under enemy fire, officials said.

While supporting the action, two U.S. Army OH6 helicopters were downed by enemy ground fire and crashed wounding three U.S. crewmen. No other U.S. casualties were suffered before the enemy withdrew. ARVN casualties were called "very light."

A third U.S. Army helicopter was downed by enemy ground fire **Thursday *[30JUL70]*** when it crashed in Quang Tin Province 50 miles south-southeast of Da Nang leaving two crewmen wounded*.[Historian Note: Helicopter from **A/123rd Avn Bn**.was shot down 30JUL70, but there were no casualties reported in this incident*]**.

On the ground elsewhere, U.S. forces made only light contact with the enemy, and took casualties from indirect fire attacks and mine and booby traps.

U.S. forces killed five enemy about 26 miles west-southwest of Hue when gunships of the 101st Airborne Div engaged the enemy. Four U.S. soldiers died and 26 were wounded in three mine and booby trap incidents in Quang Tin and Hau Nghia provinces Thursday and two Americans were killed and one wounded in ground contacts in Quang Tin, Quang Nam, Thua Thien and Binh Dinh provinces.

Pacific Stars & Stripes
03Sep71 Page 6
Friday

Enemy Barrage Falls Like Rain On ARVN Force

By SPEC. 5 STEVE MONTIEL
S&S Vietnam Bureau

SAIGON – Communist gunners unleashed a 500-round barrage of mortar and rocket fire against a mobile troop of ARVN armored cavalrymen Wednesday six miles from the Demilitarized Zone, South Vietnamese command spokesmen said.

....

American military spokesmen said a U.S. Army OH6 light observation helicopter crashed Tuesday 26 miles northwest of Quang Ngai after being hit by enemy ground fire, but there were no casualties. ***[Historian Note: Reported by 11th Brigade: A/123rd Avn Bn LOH was downed by .51 caliber and small arms fire. Air Strikes and gunships were immediately called in. Helicopter had to be destroyed by B/123rd Avn Bn gunships. Also D/1/1st Cav had a helicopter downed on the same day, but the type of helicopter was not identified. Helicopter was extracted successfully after D/1/1st Blues were inserted.]***

Americal Division Daily Newsheets were printed to be shared one to every eight soldiers in the field. For this document I am mostly selecting pieces of articles related to the **Pelicans of A/123rd Cbt Avn. Bn..**

AMERICAL NEWS SHEET
MG S.W. Koster, Commanding General
MAJ Gerald D. Hill jr., IO
Telephone: Chu Lai 3212 or 2414
This News Sheet is published daily under the supervision of the IO, Americal Division APO96374 as an authorized Army publication. This News Sheet is solely for personnel in the Americal Division and may not be duplicated or released to the news media.

Vol. 2. No. 151 Tuesday September 17, 1968

MIRACLE WEATHER REPORT

Fair to partly cloudy skies with afternoon and evening showers. High 95, low 78. Winds northeast at 5 to 10 knots. (B-6)

AMERICAL DIVISION NEWS

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO)--Action was light and scattered yesterday in the Americal Division's southern I Corps Tactical Zone as Division forces and supporting elements accounted for 13 VC killed and two individual weapons recovered.

"Charger" units of the 196th Inf. Bde. killed eight VC and recovered two individual weapons in scattered action in Operation Wheeler/Wallowa yesterday.

In two separate actions a 3d Bn., 21st Inf. company killed a total of three VC in an area 14 miles west of Tam Ky.

Another "Gimlet" company of the 4th Bn., 21st Inf. killed one evading VC with small arms fire eight miles south of Hoi An.

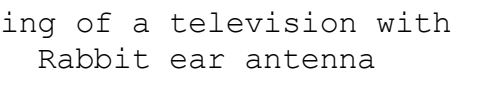
The Bde. command and control helicopter killed three evading VC 19 miles west of Tam Ky **(Note-A/123d Avn Bn Pelican helicopters took over the 196th Bde C&C mission sometime before March 1969 from the 196th Aviation Brigade Charger Aviation section. The pilots flying this mission were either Pelicans or soon to become Pelicans).**

Bde. aerial observers called artillery on suspected VC locations 17 miles northwest of Tam Ky, killing one VC.

CHU LAI TV SCHEDULE

MONDAY AUGUST 25, 1969

1400 NEWS
1405 Movie: Three Faces West
1530 TBA
1600 Dean Martin
1700 Wild Wild West
1800 Operation Entertainment
1900 Richard Diamond
1930 News and Sports
1940 Don Rickles
2005 Laugh-In
2100 Gunsmoke
2200 NEWS
2205 Carol Burnett
2300 Tonight Show



TUESDAY AUGUST 26, 1969

1400 NEWS
1405 Lost in Space
1500 SPECIAL: Elvis Presley
1600 Wrestling
1700 Mission Impossible
1800 Hollywood Palace
1900 Beverly Hillbillies
1930 News and Sports
1940 TBA
2005 Star Trek
2100 Jerry Lewis
2200 NEWS
2205 SPECIAL: Saga of Western Man
2300 MOVIE: Royal Scandal

For the latest in the world of sports, news, and weather around CHU LAI:
AFVN 13

Vol. 3 No. 261 Americal Daily New Sheet Thursday Sept. 18, 1969

SERGEANT RE-UP SAYS

Bored with your present assignment? Need a change? See your career counselor.

TV SCHEDULE 18-19 Sept.

1400: Movie: Carry on Nurse
1530: Issues and Answers
1600: News
1605: Special: Bill or Rights
1700: Jerry Lewis
1800: Star Trek
1900: News
1915: Gentle Ben
1940: Big Picture
2010: Perry Mason
2100: Lost in Space
2200: Dean Martin
2300: News
2310: Movie: Charlie Chan in Panama

19 Sept.

1400: Carol Burnett
1530: Laugh In
1600: News
1605: Tonight Show
1730: Big Valley
1830: Since Wars Began
1900: News
1915: Wide, Wide World
1940: To Be Announced
2010: Young People's Concert
2100: Combat
2200: Bewitched
2230: Detectives
2300: News
2310: Joey Bishop

Americal Division Magazine - May, 1968

This is the inaugural issue of the Americal Division Magazine. There were only two issues in 1968. This first issue has a different format from the subsequent issues. This issue appears to use 8"x10" paper folded over like a pamphlet. Nearly all the photos are B&W, unlike subsequent issues that had a full 8"x10" size and with abundant color photos and graphics.

Two combat aviation battalions help the Americal Division carry the war to all parts of its large area of operations.

The 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, attached to Task Force Oregon since April of 1967, contains four assault helicopter companies and one assault support helicopter company. Known as the "Fighting Fourteenth," the battalion furnishes aircraft facilities for combat operations.

The 123rd Aviation Battalion was activated as the division's aviation battalion when the 161st Aviation Company was deactivated last December. In a typical week, the **"slick" troop ships of the Company A "Pelicans"** and the **Company B "Scorpions" (note- later renamed to Warlords**). will spend some 280 hours in the air carrying about 2,800 soldiers to the enemy's doorstep. The Pelicans fly about 49 tons of cargo a week.

The unique Company B comes equipped with its own airmobile infantry section as well as light observation helicopters and gunships and is equally adept at providing reconnaissance support for infantry elements and at meeting the enemy on its own. It is the only aero scout company in Vietnam.

B&W photo - a flight of at least 12 helicopters appear to be on a combat assault. Nose art appears to be "Rattler's of the 71st AHC. Photo credit - us army

AMERICAL

D R A G O O N S

THE 1ST CAV BRINGS BACK SMOKE page 7

By CPT CARY S. SKLAREN

Thick red mud engraved with track marks lies naked to the Vietnam sky, as awesome machines with chunks of steel torn from their outer skin stand idle, waiting to take the offensive.

It seems as if they are almost pawing at the ground in anticipation like coal-black stallions or burly Brahma bulls. They appear to call out to their Dragoons to mount up and drive away from the stark desolation of Hawk Hill and meet the enemy. The proud, tough men and the mighty machines of the **1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry** are ready to do battle.

But the color, the drama, the tradition of the 1st/1st began on a different battlefield on the dusty plains west of the Mississippi River. There, in 1833, Congress authorized the formation of the First Regiment of Dragoons and for the next 65 years, except for one interlude of fighting with the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War, the unit never left the west.

In 1898, they were called to serve upon foreign soil in the Spanish American War and later to help put down the Philippine Insurrection. During World War 1, they served on the Mexican border.

In 1940, they were the first cavalry regiment to become completely mechanized and fought in the North African and Italian campaigns of the Second world war.

The most battle-honored unit in the U.S. Army with 68 battle streamers hanging from the squadron colors, the **1st/1st** was ordered to Vietnam in the summer of 1967. After leaving Ft. Hood, Tex., they landed at Chu Lai in early August, and two days later were committed to battle. They have been fighting the enemy ever since.

The most impressive feature of the cavalry's particular method of combat is its overwhelming firepower. In a single platoon there are 10 .50 caliber machineguns, 13 M-60 machineguns. three coaxial machineguns (7.62), three 90mm guns, one 81mm mortar, and seven grenade launchers, in addition to personal weapons. There are three of these platoons in every troop, and three troops in the squadron. They are supported by the unit's tactical air arm, **F Troop, 8th Air Cavalry**, which includes a Huey-Cobra weapons platoon and the Headquarters section.

When all of this firepower is put together there is little chance that an enemy can escape the sting of the

Cav. unscathed. The enemy may bite and scratch and throw a regiment at the **Dragoons**, but to no avail. The 1st/1st will stand there, accept whatever the enemy has to offer and then return the compliment tenfold, with few, if any, friendly casualties.

A fine example of the whole squadron working together in a battle and completely putting the North Vietnamese Army to rout occurred during late August of last year in the old Operation Burlington Trail area.

It began in the heat of the morning of Aug. 24. The 2nd **Plt. of A Trp.** was on a sweep with the **ARVN 3/4 Cav.** seven kilometers west of Tam Ky when the NVA struck.

The ARVNs had been reconnoitering a woodline in the midst of rolling rice paddies when they received heavy fire from recoilless rifles, RPGs, and automatic weapons. One ACAV was hit and started to burn. They called for the **"Dragoons."**

The platoon answered and drove into a valley below the ARVNs when they also began to receive fire. 1LT Thomas M. Ginz (Cheshire, Conn.), the platoon leader, called for the gunships of **F Trp., 8th Air Cav.**

As the **"Blue Ghosts"** hit the enemy with suppressive fire, 1 LT Ginz maneuvered his tracks around the rice paddy and hill to get on line with the **3/4 Cav.** The enemy was situated on an "island" in the midst of the paddies and the ARVNs decided to attempt a frontal assault.

"They tried to move in on the 'wool' (a forest bordering on paddies," said 1LT Ginz, "but the recoilless rifle and RPG fire was so intense they had to withdraw."

The second platoon continued to fire at the positions until ordered to withdraw and await help. Their fire had destroyed one 75mm recoilless rifle, and they had captured another.

"C Trp. arrived about 12:30" said MAJ James A. Logan (Park: Forest, Ill.), Sqdn. S-3. "They took operational control of the second platoon and tried to extend the flanks to cover more of the 'island.'

"The remainder of **A Trp.** then pulled in," he continued, "took over its positions and began to maneuver south of the fortified position. **C Trp.** maneuvered to the north." (See Map A)

Both troops parried and thrusted with the enemy for a few hours trying to maneuver into position to maneuver them out. The enemy was paying a heavy price for keeping the **Dragoons** outside their perimeter.

At one point during the afternoon, while **A Trp.** was in particularly heavy contact, the cavalrymen were forced to "circle the wagons" and fire from 360 degrees. Christopher Noble (New Canaan, Conn.), medical platoon leader who filled in for a crewman on **A Trp.**,s "bandaid"
(medical) track that afternoon, explained what happened.

"We were on the circle with the

Photos 1&2 - B&W (1) soldier firing an M-79. B&W (2) soldier with M-16 waling behind the armor Photo Caption - Joining the battle after the first day, the infantry played a vital role in assaulting enemy positions, ferreting the NVA out of spider holes, and pursuing the fleeing foe. A grenadier of **B Co., 4/21** fires at a trench line while a rifleman of **B Co., 2/1** moves out with the Cav. on line. Photo credits - Shingeldecker

Map A - First Day and Map B- Second day

troop when we saw a tank get hit with an RPG round. Four medics were immediately on the spot and found one man with part of his back blown off. The CO tried calling in a dustoff, but before they had a chance to arrive, another chopper descended into the middle of the troop." "It was LTC Lawrence in the Sqdn. C & C ship ***(Historian Note: A/123rd 1st Flt Plt helicopter crewchief was Leslie Richey & Gunner David Raikes, Pilot Dennis DeWine),*** and we immediately took the seriously wounded man over there, and the chopper took off. We later learned that the man survived," said the Medical Service Corps officer.

Realizing that the enemy was in a major position of great depth (later established to be large elements of two regiments of the 2nd NVA Div.), a decision was made to send in an infantry company to flush the NVA out of their spider holes. A landing zone southwest of the "island" battle area was chosen, and **C Trp.** was dispatched to secure it.

As the unit neared the proposed location, it became evident that no combat assault would be made there that afternoon. "We had to cross a small forest to get to the LZ," stated PFC Mark Bellis (Dundee, N.Y.), a gunner with the **2nd Plt., C Trp.**

"As soon as we were in the middle, we were right up ambush alley. 'Charlie' hit us." Once again, a "Dragoon" unit had to "circle the wagons" and fire from 360 degrees.

"The men never stopped fighting," remarked SP4 Wallace Colligan (Terryville, Conn.), a track commander with the 2nd Plt. "In one tank, everybody was wounded except one man, Huom, a Kit Carson scout. He just jumped up to the top of the tank and began firing that .50 cal. until he too got wounded."

The NVA threw everything they had at the Cav., but the Americal unit wouldn't budge. They returned whatever they received with dividends. As darkness approached, the troop was forced to break contact and take up night-laager (360 degree security) positions.

The infantry unit that was to land there, **B Co., 4th Bn., 21st Inf.** of the 11th Inf. Bde., and another unit, the 196th Inf. Bde.'s **B Co., 2nd Bn., 1st Inf.**, were sent to Hawk Hill to get ready for action the next day.

A Trp., which was still fighting in the vicinity of the "island," also broke contact at the approach of darkness.

At the end of the first day, 227 NVA soldiers were killed, while the **"Dragoons"** lost only two men.

The plan for the second day called for all three cavalry troops to join the battle with support from the two infantry companies. (See Map B)

C Trp., working with **B Co., 4/21**, was to move north of the island and attack a suspected enemy battalion

Map C - Fourth Day

headquarters area. **A Trp.** and **B Co., 4/21** were to move westward from a southerly position and attack the "island" from a different direction than the first day. **B Trp.**, which had not taken part in the action of the 24th, was to move south along the west side of the suspected positions and act as a blocking force. **"Blue Ghost"** scouts had reported that NVA were fleeing from the area the previous night.

A Trp. drew enemy fire as soon as it neared the woodline. "My platoon never did manage to get into it all day," said 1LT Ginz. "Everytime we got too near to it the fire became so intense we had to go back."

Other platoons had better luck. After air strikes by the **"Blue Ghosts"** pounded one area, **A Trp.**'s third platoon thrust into the woodline. "we pulled up on a hilltop waiting for the choppers to finish, "remarked 1LT Thomas Jackson (Houston, Tex.), then third platoon leader. "Then we went forward, but we advanced so far that we swept past the enemy's frontline." "We were getting hit from both sides and the rear. We had to fight our way out. But we really gave it to them."

To the north, **B Trp.** was working its way down to act as a blocking force, and received fire from many

B&W photo caption - "With .50 cal. blazing, an assaulting ACAV of **C Trp.** heads through a woodline

enemy positions. "They very nearly had to run through a gauntlet of NVA guns to get to their position," noted MAJ Logan.

It shortly became apparent, however, that there wasn't any need for a blocking force as the NVA were well dug in and weren't going anywhere. **B Trp.** kept driving to its objective when it suddenly discovered it was in the middle of a regimental headquarters. The cavalrymen started firing in every direction and formed a perimeter. **"Blue Ghosts "** continually came in with fire support and **B Trp.** stayed there till fading light forced them to break contact.

The assault on the regimental headquarters was a decisive blow to the enemy. So much commo wire was torn up and so much disorganization was caused by **B Trp.'s** attack, that the NVA communications and operations were completely disrupted. They were forced to withdraw during the night.

C Trp., meanwhile, had run into tough and well-planned defenses over the crests of the gentle hills of the area. They slowed the troop up but were unable to completely stop its advance.

About mid-afternoon of the 25th, a group of infantrymen had become detached from the ACAVs and were in a precarious position. They had moved to within 20 meters of a woodline when the NVA opened up. The patrol was pinned down and several men wounded.

A track from the **2nd Plt.** answered the call but was forced to stop 30 meters from the wounded " **Gimlets.**" There was heavy fire coming from the woodline.

SGT William A. Swoveland, scout section leader of the platoon, and SP4 Steven Nussbaumer, the platoon medic, dismounted. While the rest of the men in the area laid down a base of fire, the two "Dragoons" dashed to the wounded men and brought two of them back to safety.

Without regard for their own lives, Swoveland and Nussbaumer went back again to help the infantrymen. Both were mortally wounded.

During the second day, 259 NVA soldiers were dead, while seven Americans and one Kit Carson scout had been killed by hostile fire.

On the morning of the third day, the battle began with all three troops moving along the southern flank and hooking north. Artillery from **A Btry.**, **3rd Bn.**, **16th Arty.**, prepared the area with 20 minutes of fire prior to the cavalry-infantry assault.

After the former frontline of the previous two days had been penetrated, it was determined that the NVA had moved out during the night. The only action the "Dragoons" were to see that day was from
rearguard elements.

In one minor encounter, **B Trp.** got hit with automatic weapons fire and the ACAVs, tanks, and **"Blue Ghost"** gunships hit back hard. while this was going on, SP4 Ronald Keener (Tulare, Calif.), a gunner and tank driver from the 1st Plt., noticed an unusual occurrence.

"The infantry was out in front of us when the enemy hit. Then I saw an infantryman in front of my tank get shot...at least I thought he got hit," Keener explained.

Graphic photo negative- Caption "A "Guardian" rifleman fires across a rice paddy as "his" ACAV gets orders to maneuver. Below, the three elements that together brought victory work very closely in one phase of the operations. Photo credit - Shingledecker

B&W photo - helicopter drops off troops to augment ACAV operating in tall rice.

Combat Art: Men In War

Art By
SGT ALFRED ANTHONY JR
198th Inf. Bde.
SP4 ED GESERICK
Combat Center

1 . HELPING HAND by Geseric - Ink drawing of two soldiers with water color fill. a man in a beret is carrying an M60 machine gun through the bamboo and vine foliage. Second soldier is helping the first man up the hill.

2. BRINGING SMOKE by Anthony - Water color of men firing a howitzer. Dark and smokey mood.

3. M-60 POWER by Anthony - Ink drawing of a soldier clearing his machinegun. (The machine gun looks like a .50 caliber rather than an M-60 though).

4. WAITING - by Geserick - Ink drawing of a soldier waiting behind brush with M-79 at the ready.

5. GENTLY NOW - by Anthony. Ink drawing of a chinook bring in barrels. men in the dusty rotor wash are guiding the helicopter.

6. HERE COMES TROUBLE, CHARLIE - by Anthony. Ink or charcoal drawing of a Huey helicopter. **Americal Patch on the nose of the helicopter identifies the helicopter as a 3rd Flt Platoon A/123rd helicopter. Probably the commanding general's helicopter.**

7. PORTRAIT OF A SOLDIER - by Anthony. Ink drawing with water color fill. A soldier standing erect carrying a combat load and wearing the Americal patch on the left soldiers.

Americal Division Magazine - January, 1970

16th CAG Metal Angels Of Hope & Mercy

By SP4 CRAIG COUTURE

16th Cbt. Avn Grp.

Nineteen Hueys cast dark silhouettes against the lava-red South China Sea. The early morning sky was blazed scarlet and clouds formed delicate designs that a carefree mind could mold into anything it fancied. But to a number of men of Americal's 16th Combat Aviation Group (CAG) the significance of their mission left little time for such pleasant diversions.

On this particular morning, 500 infantrymen had to be lifted into an area where the Viet Cong were suspected of hiding. The operation was a fairly large one; there would be two assaults. The first involved carrying over 200 men of the **1st Bn., 6th Inf.**, 198th Inf. Bde. into a valley 15 miles west of Chu Lai. The second was an assault involving more than 300 men from the **1st Bn., 6th Regt., 2nd ARVN Div.** into the same general area.

Gunships approached the LZ first, firing their rockets and miniguns at any suspicious areas. The command and control ship dropped down and marked the LZ with smoke grenades. The smoke ship, affectionately called "Smokey" followed and circled the area with a protective ring of heavy smoke to conceal the approaching troop-carrying "slicks."

Despite small arms fire that kept bursting from the bushes of the surrounding hillsides, both assaults flown by the **176th Avn. Co.** were successful in bringing Americal and ARVN soldiers to the enemy's doorstep.

Providing such air mobility and direct air support for the Americal and 2nd ARVN Div. is only one of many services the 16th CAG renders to allied forces in the I Corps Tactical Zone.

The 16th Group was first activated and organized on Dec. 20, 1967 and became operational on Jan. 23, 1968, at the Marine Marble Mountain Air Facility, DaNang. This was just one week before the 1968 Tet Offensive exploded throughout Vietnam. The 16th Group, as their motto implies, was truly "Born in Battle."

Originally part of the 1st Avn. Bde., the 16th CAG was attached to the Americal Div. on Dec. 1, 1968. Within a week, the Group relocated from Marble Mountain to its present location at Chu Lai. The unit has the distinction of being the only aviation group in the U.S. Army assigned to an infantry division.

Intent upon carrying out its mission, the **16th CAG**, commanded by COL D. Townsend (Danbury, Neb.), is composed of a Hqs. and Hqs. Co., the 335th Trans. Co., and two battalions: the 14th CAB with units at Duc Pho and Chu Lai, and the 123rd CAB with units in the Chu Lai area.

The 14th Cbt. Avn. Bn. moved to Chu Lai from the Phu Bai Valley in 1967 to support Task Force Oregon. The battalion, commanded by LTC Jerry L. Teague (Alexandria, Va.), is comprised of the [**71st was omitted**] **174th** and **176th** Aslt. Hel. Companies (AHC) and the **132nd** and **178th** Aslt. Spt. Hel. Companies (ASHC).

The **71st** Avn. Co. known as the "Rattlers" arrived in Vietnam in 1964. Three years later, the company moved to Chu Lai with the 196th Inf. Bde. as part of Task Force Oregon and have consistently supported that unit in the Americal's northern area of operations. In recent months, the "Rattlers" have supported the 196th Bde. in numerous operations in the Que Son, Hiep Duc, Phouc Chau, and Phouc Cha Valleys.

Commanded by MAJ William M. Price (Fayetteville, N.C.), the **71st** set an envious record of 25 consecutive months of flying and over 50,000 combat hours without an accident in 1968.

Another unit with an envious safety record is the **174th AHC**, located at Duc Pho. The company has the best accident free record in the Americal Div. with not a single accident in the current fiscal year. The pilots have a combined total of 10,500 accident free flying hours. In that time, the company has carried 75,000 passengers and 2,500 tons of cargo. To the soldier in the field that means a hot meal everyday and a quick trop to the rear when stand-down comes. While compiling its record the **174th** has flown nearly 50,000 sorties, including night combat assaults, "dust-off" missions, and emergency ammo resupply.

Under the leadership of MAJ Virgil E. Blevins (Beeville, Tex.), the **174th** has three flight platoons and boasts a motto of "Nothing Impossible" in carrying out its mission to support the 11th Inf. Bde. The troop-carrying aircraft are called "Dolphins" and the gunships called "Sharks."

To the infantrymen, the sight of the "**Shark**" gunships working out on the enemy while the "**Dolphins**" bring in the much needed ammunition is a vision long remembered. As one infantry officer said, "The Sharks give a morale boost to us and scare the devil out of the enemy. After the Sharks shoot up an area, you can count on it being quiet the rest of the night.

Another constant source of support for troops on the ground are the "Minutemen" of the **176th AHC** commanded by MAJ O.R. Hite (Staunton, Va.). Since 1967, the **176th** has been supporting the 198th Inf. Bde.

During August 1969, aviators of

Graphics - Two drawings of helicopters with the Americal Division patch nose art on each of the helicopters. The drawings are credited to "Anthony". (Note-the nose art identifies the helicopters as 3rd flight platoon helicopters from A/123rd Cbt Avn Bn.).

the **176th** averaged 94 flying hours and was awarded the Americal Accident Prevention Award for the month.

To provide tactical air movement of combat, combat support, and combat service support units in the Americal area of operations is the mission of the **132nd ASHC**. The company, commanded by MAJ William Jones (Glendall, Calif.), started operations with its Boeing-Vertol CH-47B Chinooks in May 1968. Since then the **"Hercules"** Chinooks of the **132nd** fly an average of 1,000 hours a month lifting over 10,000 passengers and over 5,000 tons of supplies. Their motto of "Versatility, Reliability, and Endurance" describes the support the **132nd** gives daily to the Americal.

Invaluable support is also given to the combat soldier by the **178th ASHC** commanded by MAJ Robert W. Parker (Secane, Pa.). The **"Boxcars"** arrived in Vietnam in April 1966 and moved to Chu Lai as part of Task Force Oregon.

The **178th** have to their credit the distinction of being the first unit to move a complete 155mm howitzer battery in one lift. Once the troops are safely in a combat area, it is up to the "Hercules" Chinooks to keep them supplied and combat ready.

123rd Cbt. Avn. Bn., like its sister battalion, provides air mobility and direct air support to elements of the Americal Div. The battalion, led by LTC Richard K. Dietsch (Manchester, N.H.), prides itself on the professionalism and consciousness in supporting the division. The battalion is comprised of **A and B Companies; Hqs. and Hqs. Co. E Co., 723rd Maint. Bn; F Trp. 8th Cav; and D Trp., 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav.**

Providing the Americal with general aviation support is the primary mission of A Co., 123rd CAB. While B Co. essentially has the role of an air cavalry troop. Many of **B Co.'s** missions are visual reconnaissance operations in which a team of four aircraft, one Light Observation Helicopter (LOH), two Cobra gunships, and one Huey "slick" with five infantrymen aboard search an assigned area for signs of enemy activity. During the past year, B Co. accounted for 429 enemy kills.

Known as the "Blue Ghost," F Trp. 8th Cav. arrived in Vietnam in October, 1967. Commanded by MAJ Charles E. Ivey (Urbana, Ill.), F Trp. has the primary mission of gathering intelligence. The unit accomplishes this by means of aerial and ground reconnaissance making maximum use of its firepower, communications, and mobility.

An organic infantry platoon, nicknamed the "Blues," is used for insertions to perform detailed searches of an area. Normally with the insertion of the "Blues" the aerial recon teams consisting of two Cobras and a LOH, screen in the immediate vicinity and provide armed escort for the platoon.

A newcomer to the 16th Group is **D Trp., 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav.**, who arrived in Vietnam on May 1, 1969. D Trp., called the **"Sabres,"** extends the reconnaissance and security capabilities of ground units by aerial means. To find the enemy, fix his position, and then annihilate

him is the mission of the **"Sabres."**

Providing the Americal with aircraft direct support maintenance is **E Co., 723rd Maint. Bn.** The job of this unit like that of the **335th Trans. Co.** is to support and help maintain the aviation units assigned to the Americal.

The officers and men of the **16th CAG** pride themselves on the ability to do their jobs well regardless of any difficulties. With courage and determination and the professional competence of its subordinate units, the **16th CAG** supports the Americal in I Corps.

Graphic black ink drawing of a helicopter being pre-flight inspected. (Nose art identifies it as a **3rd Flt. Plt A/123rd Avn Bn** helicopter.)

AMERICAL LOG - Prologue

Combat activity in Southern I Corps increased considerably in the quarter of March, April and May. Major battalion and company-sized contacts again centered around Tam Ky and the resettlement village of Hiep Duc.

More than 2,000 enemy soldiers were killed by Americal Division units during the three-month period, while 503 weapons were captured, 28 of which were crew-served.

In March, combat action was quite heavy, though sporadic throughout the division as Americal units accounted for more than 680 enemy soldiers killed.

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By SP4 DENNIS SELBY

MARCH

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On March 19, Major General Lloyd Ramsey, commanding general of the Americal Division was hoisted from the thick jungle where he had been stranded overnight following the crash of his command and control UH1 helicopter in which two men were killed and six injured (One of the men killed was **Ray Murphy A/123rd Avn Bn**).

Army and Air Force rescue units flew to the area and an infantry element of the **1st Bn., 6th Inf.** was airborne to within two miles of the crash sight.

Radio contact was lost at 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 19 and was not regained until 8 a.m. when Major Tommy P. James (unit-**71st AHC**)(Bixby, Okla.) arrived in the area in a helicopter.

Major James was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his outstanding actions in the successful rescuing of the downed personnel.

On March 22, following the injury of General Ramsey, Major General A.E. Milloy (Fayetteville, N.C.) assumed command of the Americal Division.

MG Milloy, a distinguished combat veteran of three wars and a master parachutist, assumed command of the Americal following seven months as the commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division.

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[Historian Note: A/123rd's 3rd flight platoon had two crashes that involved the Americal Division's Commanding Generals. The 1st crash was with CG MG Charles Gettys along with Major Colin Powell. The 2nd crash was with CG MG Lloyd B. Ramsey. Future General Norman Swartzkopf was on the 1st recovery helicopter as the crash occurred in the AO for his 1/6th Infantry Battalion. The Colin Powell crash is more famous as several books on Colin Powell featured photos of the crash. The second crash may have changed history more. Lloyd Ramsey lost command of the Americal Division due to his injuries. He was later made Provost Marshall for the U.S. Army. Then medically retired out because of his injuries.]

There is an 87 page report on the Ramsey accident. The ADVA historian can provide a copy of the report by email on request. Since A Company mainly had Huey helicopters this might be interesting:

CO E 723RD MAINTENANCE BATTALION
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96374

24 MARCH 1970

SUBJECT: ESTIMATED COST OF DAMAGE FOR HELICOPTER UH-1H, 68-16262
TO: COMMANDING OFFICER
123RD AVIATION BN. APO 96374

FSN	NOMENCLATURE	U/I	ACTUAL COST
1615-919-1351	TRANSMISSION, MAIN	1 EA.	$11,620.00
1560-073-8203	MAST ASSEMBLY	1 EA.	954.00
1615-957-7316	SCISSORS & SLEEVE ASSY.	1 EA.	676.00
1560-624-2721	SWASHPLATE AND SUPPORT	1 EA.	2,755.00
1615-472-7308	BLADES, TAIL ROTOR	2 EA.	579.00
2840-911-7685	ENGINE, AIR	1 EA.	63,800.00
1615-072-5799	BLADE, MAIN ROTOR	2 EA.	6,036.00
1615-918-2676	GEAR BOX 42 DEGREE	1 EA.	1,144.00
1615-919-2677	GEAR BOX 90 DEGREE	1 EA.	1,538.00
1615-833-1556	HUB ASSY. MAIN ROTOR	1 EA.	3,237.00
1615-933-6825	HUB ASSY. TAIL ROTOR	1 EA.	535.00
1560-996-3905	ELEVATOR, RIGHT HAND	1 EA.	177.00
1560-996-3906	ELEVATOR, LEFT HAND	1 EA.	177.00
1560-830-9754	COLLECTIVE LEVER	2 EA.	77.70
1615-866-6015	STABILIZER BAR ASSY.	1 EA.	1,005.00
1680-633-0811	SERVO CYLINDER	3 EA.	1,257.00
1615-832-8951	HANGER ASSEMBLY	4 EA.	752.00
1560-739-2554	HORN ELEVATOR	1 EA.	93.66
2925-878-1136	STARTER GENERATOR	1 EA.	492.00
1680-871-8736	QUILL ASSEMBLY	1 EA.	1,000.00
1560-863-3819	SHAFT ASSEMBLY, MAIN	1 EA.	1,459.00
1560-649-8266	TUBE ASSY. TAIL BOOM	1 EA.	40.70
1560-967-7624	TUBE ASSY. CROSS	1 EA.	220.00
1620-076-9036	TUBE ASSY. CROSS	1 EA.	178.00
1620-759-4838	SKID TUBE ASSY. R/H	1 EA.	239.00
1620-795-0678	SKID TUBE ASSY. L/H	1 EA.	307.00
1560-995-6503	BAFFLE ASSEMBLY	1 EA.	94.62
1660-992-6504	BAFFLE ASSEMBLY	1 EA.	46.43
1560-014-1448	PAN ASSEMBLY	1 EA.	25.34
1560-967-1751	TRI-POD ASSEMBLY	1 EA.	48.97
1560-078-8698	CONNECTING LINK RIGID	1 EA.	21.58
1560-967-1952	BI-POD ASSEMBLY	1 EA.	32.02
2945-027-3022	FILTER ASSEMBLY R/H	1 EA.	113.00
2945-027-3025	FILTER ASSEMBLY L/H	1 EA.	154.00
2945-027-3016	FILTER ASSEMBLY TOP	1 EA.	219.00
1560-923-2879	FAIRING ASSY. TRANSMISSION	1 EA.	303.00
1560-079-8944	LINK ASSEMBLY	1 EA.	25.73

(CON'T)

SUBJECT: ESTIMATED COST OF DAMAGES TO HELICOPTER UH-1H, 68-16262

FSN	NOMENCLATURE	U/I	ACTUAL COST
1560-879-0851	TAIL BOOM	1 EA.	4,538.00
1560-674-4185	FITTING, TAIL BOOM	1 EA.	33.87
1560-739-4568	PYLON MOUNT	4 EA.	118.00
1560-963-1018	MOUNT ASSEMBLY	1 EA.	100.00
1560-739-4569	PYLON MOUNT	1 EA.	29.68
TOTAL COST FOR PARTS			$186,630.30
ESTIMATED 2200 MAN HOURS @ $5.00 PER HOUR			11,000.00
TOTAL COST OF REPAIR			$197,630.30

MELVIN D. RADFORD
SP/6 AVN
QUALITY CONTROL

[Historian Note: Wowee Kazowee! These are pretty cheap prices especially the labor. This is not a full listing. I am not seeing plexiglass windows, instruments, a battery, structural repair materials, and etc. I think they just put down enough to demonstrate that the helicopter would cost more to fix than just replace it.]

Americal Division Magazine - Fall 1971

4th Photo caption. Soldier directing team as they advance. Helicopter in background is flying by. Helicopter has white skid tips and a nice paint job (might be an Americal VIP helicopter from A/123rd 3rd flt platoon).

This section of A Company 123rd Avn Bn materials comes from various Operational Reports and Lessons Learned reports:

AVDF-CG 6 August 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 30 April 1967. (RCS-CSFOR-65 (U)

g. (U) On 9 April the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion was notified that they would come under the operational control of Task Force Oregon effective 20 April. The advance party of the battalion arrived at Chu Lai on 14 April and made arrangements for one assault helicopter company to park temporarily at Ky Ha Heliport. Of the two remaining assault helicopter companies, one would deploy to English Airfield in support of the 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div; this company could not fully deploy to Duc Pho due to the lack of maintenance facilities and local security. The other assault helicopter company would move temporarily to the cross-wind runway at Chu Lai Airfield until adequate parking facilities could be constructed.

h. (U) The 161st Assault Helicopter Company arrived 18 April *[1967 from Lane AHP]* to assume the general aviation support of the Task Force and the 71st Assault Helicopter Company arrived as the direct aviation support of the 196th Inf. Bde. [*The 161st AHC was later reorganized and removed from the 14th Combat Aviation Company to form A and B Companies of the 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion*.]

AVGD_BC
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period 31 July 1967 (RCS_CS FOR 65)

Section I: Significant Organizational Activities

1. (C) General

a. The mission of the **14th CAB** is to provide timely direct and general aviation support to the elements of Task Force Oregon and selected units within I CTZ and to maintain a Provisional Aviation Battalion Headquarters to provide command, control, administration and logistics for separate aviation units assigned to the Task Force.

b. Major organizational changes during this quarter were:

(1) The permanent attachment of the 71st and 178th Aviation Companies per G.O. 15, Headquarters 17th CAG, dated 20 Jun 67, effective 21 April 1967.

(2) The attachment of the **14th CAB with assigned units to Task Force Oregon pe**r C.O.'s 3209 dated 27 June 1967, and 3568 dated 15 July 1967, Headquarters, USARV, effective 1 July 1967.

(3) The 534th Medical Detachment was assigned to the 14th CAB 1 July 1967.

c. The 534th Medical Detachment closed at Chu Lai on 1 July 1967, and began immediate operations under control of the Battalion Surgeon.

d. Aircraft assets and their location at the close of this reporting period are as follows:

UNIT	NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT	HEADQUARTERS LOCATION
HHD, 14TH CAB	**1 U6A**	**Chu Lai, RVN (BT 572 035)**
14th Sec Plt		
348th Avn Det		
534th Med Det		
71st Avn Co	**21 UH1D, 7 UH-1C**	**Chu Lai, RVN (BT 541 064)**
94th Sig Det		
151st TC Det		
161st Avn Co	**21 UH-1D, 7 UH-1B**	**Chu Lai, RVN (BT 575 033)**
406th TC Det		
449th Sig Det		
756th Med Det (-)		
174th Avn Co	**20 UH-1D, 8 UH-1C**	**Duc Pho, RVN (BS 812 382)**
409th TC Det		
452nd Sig Det		
756th Med Det (-)		
176th Avn Co	**20 UH-1D, 8 UH-1C**	**Duc Pho, RVN (BS 845 370)**
411th TC Det		
454th Sig Det		
178th Avn Co	**16 CH-47A, 1 UH-1C,**	**Chu Lai, RVN (BT 547 057)**
400 TC Det	2 OH-23G	

g. Command.

(1) **During this period the *[14th Avn]* battalion was commanded by LTC William R. Ponder, Armor.**

(2) Major Thomas W. Wheat Jr., Artillery, assumed command of the 174th Avn Co on 26 June 1967.

(3) Major Joseph F. Rutkowski, Infantry, assumed command of the 178th Avn Co on 8 June 1967.

(4) Major Donald W. Phillips, Artillery, command of the 176th Avn Co on 1 June 1967.

(5) **Major Donald S. Galla, Infantry, assumed command of the 161st Avn Co on 26 July 1967.**

2. (C) Intelligence and Counterintelligence

a. During the period 1 May -31 July 1967 the **14th Combat Aviation Battalion** had 142 aircraft hit by hostile fire. This represents an increase of over 400% from the preceding quarter.[2]

b. Analysis of the hostile fire report to determine the number of aircraft hit by altitude and aircraft action reveals the following:

ALT	ON GROUND	T/O	LNDG	ENRT	TARGET ATTACK	TOTAL BY ALTITUDE
0	29	9	12	3		53
100		4	4	2	2	12
200		1	2	2	2	7
300		1	1		3	5
400		2		2	2	6
500		1	3	4	6	14
600			1		6	7
700				1	1	2
800		2	2	4	3	11
900					2	2
1000			2	4	3	9
1100			1			1
1200		1	1			2
1500		1		1		2
2000				3		3
2300				1		1
2400				1		1
4000				1		1
Unknown				2	1	3
TOTAL BY ACTION	29	22	29	31	31	142

(3) In order to give the best possible combat support, units of the battalion were dispersed as follows:

AVN UNIT	UNIT SUPPORTED
71st Aviation Company	DS to 196th Light Infantry Brigade
161st Aviation Company	**GS to Task Force Oregon**
174th Aviation Company	DS to 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne
178th Aviation Company	GS to Task Force Oregon

(4) The 1/101st Infantry Brigade has been employed as the primary maneuver brigade of Task Force Oregon, thus the two indicated major operations. All brigades have, however, conducted daily airmobile combat assaults, extractions and resupply. Assault missions are normally controlled by a DS company reinforced when necessary by the **161st** and on occasion other DS aviation units. Assaults involving 13 or more lift ships were habitually planned and controlled by the [14th} battalion.

.....

(8) **On 15 May, aircraft of the 176th Avn Co were called upon to extract casualties for the 1/101st Airborne Brigade. The initial pick up ship, on landing, was hit by a mortar round and totally destroyed. In the subsequent action to extract wounded, a total of 11 UH-1D's and 7 UH-1C/B's from the 176th and 161st Aviation Companies were committed. Eight of the slicks and all gunships were hit by intense ground fire. Five crewmembers were WIA. With the exception of the first ship, all reached secure areas before being forced to land. Five required extraction by CH-47. A total of 22 U.S. wounded were evacuated in the operation. Total casualties in the 14th Battalion this day were 19 aircraft hit and 7 crewmembers WIA. This was by far the worst day ever suffered by the Battalion.** ***[Historian Note: This action resulted in the award of the CMOH to LTC Charles S. Kettles, the commander of the 176th AHC. Five of the helicopters in the final extraction were from the 161st AHC (Pelicans) as they had replaced 176th AHC too damaged to continue.]***

(9) On 19 May the **161st Aviation Company** began construction of aircraft revetments in their new area VIC BS 575 033. Work progressed rapidly and the company closed there on 13 June. No loss in combat effectiveness was experienced by the move.

(10) During the periods 12 - 31 May and 18 June - 31 July the **161st Aviation Company provided 2 UH-1B gunships** for a classified mission in support of Operation Prairie Fire.

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(16) On 24 July, HHD, 14th Aviation Battalion began the move to a new CP location next to the **161st Aviation Company** (BT 572 035). Personnel moved from tents into temporary buildings. The unit closed 26 July.

AVHGC-DST
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1967 (RCS-CSFOR-65) (U)

TASK FORCE OREGON ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AS OF 31 JULY 1967

TASK FORCE OREGON TROOPS

HHC, Task Force Oregon (Prov)
14th Avn Bn
71st Aslt Heptr Co
161st Aslt Heptr Co
174th Aslt Heptr Co
176th Aslt Heptr Co
178th Aslt Heptr Co
39th Engr Bn (Cbt)
509th Sig Bn, HHD (-)
Co C, 459th Sig Bn (Cmd Op)
Co A, 36th Sig Bn (Spt Op)
Plt (+), 167th Radio Relay Co.
258th AG Pers Svcs Co
148th MP Plt
3d Mil Hist Det
Task Force Military Intelligence Detachment (Prov)
Task Force Radio Research Co (Prov)

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 14TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO San Francisco 96374

AVGD_BC **14 November 1967**

SUBJECT: Operation Report for Quarterly Period 31 October 31, 1967 (RCS-CS FOR 65)

1. (C) General

a. The mission of the 14th CAB is to provide timely direct and general aviation support to the elements of Task Force Oregon and selected units within I CTZ and to maintain a Provisional Aviation Battalion Headquarters to provide command, control, administration and logistics for separate aviation units assigned to the Task Force.

b. Major organizational changes during this quarter were:

(1) Task Force Oregon redesignated the Americal Division effective 22 2400 September 1967. 1967.

(2) The 756th Medical Detachment (-) was detached from the 161st Aviation Company attached to the 174th Aviation Company effective 4 August 1967.

c. Aircraft assets and their location at the close of this reporting period are as follows:

UNIT	NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT	HEADQUARTERS LOCATION
HHD, 14TH CAB	**1 U6A**	**Chu Lai, RVN (BT 572 035)**
14th Sec Plt		
348th Avn Det		
534th Med Det		
71st Avn Co	**19 UH1D, 8 UH-1C**	**Chu Lai, RVN (BT 541 064)**
94th Sig Det		
151st TC Det		
161st Avn Co	**19 UH-1D, 8 UH-1B**	**Chu Lai, RVN (BT 575 033)**
406th TC Det		
449th Sig Det		
756th Med Det (-)		
174th Avn Co	**21 UH-1D, 8 UH-1C**	**Duc Pho, RVN (BS 812 382)**
409th TC Det		
452nd Sig Det		
756th Med Det		
176th Avn Co	**19 UH-1D, 8 UH-1C**	**Duc Pho, RVN (BS 845 370)**
411th TC Det		
454th Sig Det		
178th Avn Co	**16 CH-47A, 2 OH-23G**	**Chu Lai, RVN (BT 547 057)**
400 TC Det		

e. Transportation and Signal Detachments continue to remain attached to each Aviation Company to facilitate aircraft and avionics maintenance support.

f. Medical support assets have been divided to afford aviation medical support at both Chu Lai and Duc Pho.

g. Command.

(1) **LTC Carroll C. Isaacs**, Armor, assumed command of the [14th Avn] battalion on 7 August 1967.

(2) Major Joe K. Bell, 04 031 035, Armor, assumed command of the 71st Aviation Company on 8 September 1967.

(3) The 161st Aviation Company was commanded by **Major Donald S Galla,** Infantry.

(4) The 174th Aviation Company was commanded by Major Thomas W. Wheat Jr., Artillery.

(5) The 176th Aviation Company was commanded by Major Donald W. Phillips Artillery.

(6) Major John M. Kalina Infantry assumed command of the 178th Aviation Company on 19 October 1967.

AVGD_BC 14 November 1967
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period 31 October 1967 (RCS_CS FOR 65)

2. (C) Intelligence and Counterintelligence

a. **During the period 1 August - 31 October 1967 the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion had 188 aircraft hit by hostile fire. This represents an increase of 33% from the preceding quarter.**

b. Analysis of the hostile fire report to determine the number of aircraft hit by altitude and aircraft action reveals the following:

ALT	ON GROUND	T/O	LNDG	ENRT	TARGET ATTACK	TOTAL BY ALTITUDE
0	12	13	16	9		50
100		15	7	1	2	25
200		9	3	2	1	15
300		5	2	1	2	10
400		1	3	2	0	6
500		3	6	1	4	14
600		0	0	0	10	10
700		2	0	1	4	7
800		4	0	1	3	8
900		0	0	1	2	3
1000		2	2	4	3	11
1100		0	0	1	2	3
1200		2	0	0	0	2
1500		1	0	3	0	4
1600		2	0	1	0	3
1700		0	0	1	0	1
1800		2	0	3	0	5
2000		1	1	4	0	6
2200		0	0	1	0	1
2700		0	0	1	0	1
2900		0	0	1	0	1
Unknown		0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL BY ACTION	12	62	41	42	31	188

d. Weather has had an impact on operations during this quarter particularly during the latter half of September and early October. Although relatively few missions have been cancelled, there have been frequent mission delays especially in the early morning hours. The most serious impact has been that low ceilings have forced all aircraft to fly at lower altitudes thus increasing exposure time to enemy ground fire.

e. Units of the battalion and particularly the 174th Aviation Company in the Duc Pho area have contributed to the psychological warfare effort by dropping several hundred thousand leaflets each week and flying loudspeaker teams on numerous broadcasting missions. In the latter part of October, effort in the Duc Pho area has concentrated on the "CHIEU HOI" program.

.....

(3) In order to give the best possible combat support, units of the battalion were dispersed as follows:

AVN UNIT	UNIT SUPPORTED
71st Aviation Company	Direct Support to 196th Light Infantry Brigade
161st Aviation Company	**General Support to Americal Division**
174th Aviation Company	Direct Support to 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division
176th Aviation Company	Direct support to 1st Brigade 101st Airborne Infantry Division
178th Aviation Company	General support to Americal Division.

..

(5) On 10 August one gunship from the 71st Aviation Company and one gunship from the **161st Aviation Company** scrambled to the vicinity of BS7578 to assist two Navy Swift Boats that were being fired on. The gunships made repeated runs on the enemy position until all ground fire had ceased. Only one enemy KBA was confirmed, however friendly forces did not move into the area and therefore no body count was made. (It is felt however that there were many more enemy casualties).

[Historian Note: the 161st Aviation Company crews would soon become the Pelicans and Warlord crews...]

AVDF-CG 26 November 1967
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 October 1967. (RCS-CSFOR-65) (U)

k. (C) On 300057H August 1967, Subsector VIII received 40 rounds of enemy 60mm and 82mm mortar fire near the **14th Aviation** Battalion helipad. Firing positions for the 82mm mortars were located at coordinates BT578019 and 60mm mortar positions at BT572020. Positions were confirmed by packing debris and misfires left at the sites. Thirty-nine craters were located between co-ordinates BT578028 and BT576032. Twelve to fifteen rounds impacted in the **161st Aviation Company** refueling area. Two refueling hoses and one nozzle were punctured. The nearest rounds were 30 meters short on the gun target line. Two rounds fell near Bunker 880, coordinates BT578028. On 82mm mortar round landed 6 feet in front of the bunker. The two men occupying the bunker climbed into the Armored Personnel Carrier flame thrower vehicle killing the driver and wounding the other individual. Two more rounds impacted ten meters from tents occupied by personnel of the 1st Brigade, 101st Air-borne Division, vicinity of BT576028. One individual received a light wound in the buttocks. Two more rounds landed near the base of Tower 82. Personnel in Tower 82 upon sighting muzzle flashes at an azimuth-of 205 degrees and a range of 500 meters, opened fire with an M-60 machine gun expending approximately 1200 rounds. The Chu Lai Defense Sector was placed on alert condition YELLOW at 0101 hours and remained on YELLOW alert until 121 hours at which time it return-ed to normal conditions. Flare and gunships were used within the area of attack.

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 14TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO San Francisco 96374

AVGM_AC
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period 31 January 1968 (RCS_CS FOR 65)
Section I: Significant Organizational Activities

1. (C) General

a. The mission of the 14th CAB is to provide timely direct and general aviation support to the elements of the Americal Division and selected units within I Corps Tactical Zone.

b. Major organizational changes during this quarter were:

(1) The 161st Aviation Company was redesignated A Company 123d Aviation Battalion and released from assignment to 14th Combat Aviation Battalion and assigned to the Americal Division effective 15 January 1968 per General order #300 Hq USARPAC, dtd 2 December 1967.

[Historian Note: There was only A Company at this time. The separation into A and B Company was still being worked out. At this time the 123rd Cbt Avn Bn was part of the 1st Aviation Brigade]

(2) Troop C, 7 Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry was attached to 14th Combat Aviation Battalion and OPCON to the Americal Division effective 3 December 1967 per General Order #30, Hq 17th Aviation Group, dated 30 November 1967.

AVGM_AC
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period 31 January 1968 (RCS_CS FOR 65)

c. ***[14th Combat Aviation Bn]*** Aircraft assets and their location at the close of this reporting period are as follows:

UNIT	NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT	HEADQUARTERS LOCATION
HHD, 14TH CAB	1 U6A	Chu Lai, RVN (BT 572 035)
14th Sec Plt		
348th Avn Det		
534th Med Det		
71st Avn Co	18 UH1D, 7 UH-1C	Chu Lai, RVN (BT 541 064)
94th Sig Det		
151st TC Det		
174th Avn Co	17 UH-1D, 8 UH-1C	Duc Pho, RVN (BS 812 382)
409th TC Det		
452nd Sig Det		
756th Med Det		
176th Avn Co	17 UH-1D, 8 UH-1C	Chu Lai. RVN (BT 527 116)
411th TC Det		
454th Sig Det		
178th Avn Co	14 CH-47A, 1 UH-1C,	Chu Lai, RVN (BT 547 057)
400 TC Det		
Trp C, 7th Sqdn,	5 UH-1H, 10 UH-1C	Chu Lai, RVN (BT 527 116)
17th Air Cav	10 OH-6A	

[Note: the 161st Avn Co is no longer listed with the 14th CAB]

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d. Transportation and Signal Detachments continue to remain attached to each Aviation Company to facilitate aircraft and avionics maintenance support.

e. Medical support assets have been divided to afford aviation medical support at both Chu Lai and Duc Pho.

f. Command.

(1) The 14th Combat Aviation Battalion was commanded by LTC Carroll C. Isaacs, Armor.

(2) Major Robert D. Fitzgerald, Infantry, assumed command of the 71st Aviation Company on 18 January 1968.

(3) The 174th Aviation Company was commanded by Major Thomas W. Wheat Jr., Artillery.

(4) Major Paul E. Jackson, Artillery, assumed command of the 176th Aviation Company on 3 November 1967.

(5) Major Ernest M. Wood Jr., Artillery, assumed command of the 178th Aviation Company on 19 December 1967.

(6) Troop C, 7th Sqdn, 17th Air Cavalry was commanded by Major James D. Marett, Armor.

2. (C) Intelligence and Counterintelligence.

a. During the period 1 November 1967 - 31 January 1968 the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion had 142 aircraft hit by hostile fore. This represents a decrease of 24% from the total of the preceding quarter.

AVDF-CG **8 February 1968**

SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 January 1968 (RCS-CSFOR-65) (U)

D. (C) Plans, Operations, and Training

1. G3 Section

a. General: AMERICAL DIVISION units conducted continuous offensive operations in assigned AO during the reporting period. Contact varied from light to heavy. The Americal Division continued Operations WHEELER/WALLOWA and initiated Operation MUSCATINE. Operations WHEELER and WALLOWA were combined on 11 November.

b. Organization. All units of the AMERICAL Division were either activated, assigned or received during the reporting period except the Division HHC which had been previously activated and organized. The Division troop list, as of 31 Jan 68, is attached as inclosure 1. the following organization actions were completed.

(1) USARV General Order 5712, 5 Nov 67, assigned the **196th and 198th Lt Inf Bdes to the Division, effective 26 Oct 1967.**

(2) AMERICAL Division General Orders 1187, 1190, 1191 and 1192, 7 Nov 67, activated and organized the following provisional units, respectively, pending formal activation by USARPAC general orders:

(a) 23D Administration Company
(b) HHC and Band, 23d Inf Div Spt Comd
(c) HHB, 23d Inf Div Arty
(d) 23d MP Company

(3) USARV General Order 6108, 27 Nov 67, relieved the 335th Trans Co from attachment to the AMERICAL Div, effective 17 Nov 67.

(4) AMERICAL Division General Order 13412, 22 Nov 67, activated and organized the AMERICAL Long Range Patrol Detachment (Prov), effective 22 Nov 67, pending formal activation by USARPAC general orders.

(5) The AMERICAL Combat Center (Prov) was organized, effective 1 Dec 1967, by AMERICAL Division General Order 1298, 25 Nov 67.

(6) Troop C, 7th Sqdn, 17th Air Cav became opcon to the Division on 3 Dec 67.

(7) The following divisional base units were activated by USARPAC General Order 300, 2 Dec 67, effective 8 Dec 67.

(a) HHB, 23d Inf Div Arty
(b) HHC and Band, 23d Inf Div Spt Comd
(c) 23d Admin Co
(d) 26th Engr Bn
(e) HQ and Co A, 23d Med Bn
(f) 23d MP Co
>>>>>>+ **(g) 123d Avn Bn**
(h) HQ and Main Spt Co, 723d Maint Bn
(i) **23d Sup and Trans Bn**

(8) The same USARPAC General Order inactivated the following units, effective 15 Jan 68.

(a) 221st Sup and Svc Co
(b) 163d Trans Co
(c) HQ and Main Spt Co, 188th Maint Bn
(d) 554th Engr Co
>>>>>>- **(e) 161st Avn Co**
(f) Co A, 8th Spt Bn
(g) Co A, 9th Spt Bn
(h) 265th MP Platoon
(i) 544th MP Platoon
(j) 175th Engr Co
(k) 55th Engr Co

(9) USARPAC General Order 308, 12 Dec 67, activated and organized **Company E, 51st Inf** (Long Range Patrol), effective 20 Dec 67. USARV General Order 6621, 27 Dec 67, further assigned the unit to the Americal Division, effective 20 Dec 67.

(10) The **11th Lt Inf Bde** arrived in country and joined the Americal Division during the period 15-25 Dec 67.

(11) USARV General Orders 6641, 28 Dec 67, assigned the **406th Trans Det (Hel Fld Maint) and 449th Sig Det (Avionic Maint)** to the AMERICAL Div, effective 24 Dec 67. Americal Div General Order 168, 25 Jan 68, attached these units to the **123d Avn Bn**, effective 24 Dec 67.

(12) USARV General Order 102, 9 Jan 68, attached the 14th Avn Bn to the Americal Div, effective 1 Jan 68.

(13) USARV General Order 86, 8 Jan 68, assigned the **1st Sqdn, 1st Cav to the AMERICAL Div,** effective 10 Jan 68. This unit had previously been attached to TASK FORCE OREGON.

(14) USARPAC General Order 3, 2 Jan 68, **activated and organized the 523d Sig Bn**, effective 10 Jan 68. This is the Divisional Signal Bn.

GPOP-DT (8 Feb 68) 2d Ind (U)
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, Americal Div, for Period Ending 31 Jan 68, RCS CSFOR- 65 (R1)

AMERICAL DIVISION TROOP LIST
(AS OF 31 Jan 68)

1. HQ AMERICAL DIVISION
HHC, Americal Div
14th Cbt Avn Bn (Attached)
71st Aslt Hel Co
174th Aslt Hel Co
176th Aslt Hel Co
178th Aslt Hel Co
[161st Aslt Hel Co is now the 123rd Avn Bn]
1st Sqdn, 1st Cav
26th Engr Bn
39th Engr Bn (Cbt) (Attached)
123 Avn Bn
496th Trans Det (Attached)
449th Sig Det (Attached)
523d Sig Bn
23d Admin Co
23d MP Co
258th AG Pers Svc Co (Attached)
E Co, 51st Inf LRP
Trp C, 7th Sqdn, 17th Cav (Attached)
3d Mil Hist Det (Attached)
4th Plat, 29th CA Co (OPCON)
6th Plat, 29th CA Co (OPCON)
O/L6, Det 31, 5th Weather Sqdn (USAF) (OPCON)
Americal Combat Center (PROV)
Tactical Air Control Party (USAF) (OPCON)
601st Radio Research Det (Attached)
Military Intelligence Det (PROV)

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 16TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP
APO San Francisco 96337

AVGM-SC 14 February 1968

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned During VC/NVA TET Offensive

TO: Commanding General
1st Aviation Brigade
ATTN: AVBA-C
APO 96348
.....

e. Item: Counter Mortar Operations
Discussion: In all cases of mortar attacks on group airfields, emergency standby gun teams were launched for counter mortar operations. When used in conjunction with base defense plans these light fire teams provide a constant retaliatory threat to enemy mortar crews.
Lesson Learned: Although the effort expended in maintaining emergency standby gun teams is considerable, these aircraft provide a valuable means for active defense of installations.
Recommendations: That continued use of standby light fire teams be emphasized as an integral part of all base defense activities.

3. Logistics

Item: Aircraft Revetments
Discussion: Although an extensive revetment building program had been completed, extensive damage to parked aircraft was sustained during mortar and rocket attacks. Almost all damage to helicopters was to rotor blades and wind shields which is, of course, to be expected.
Lessons Learned: Aircraft revetments will minimize the effects of shell fragments to the major portion of parked helicopters; however, rotor systems and windshields remain vulnerable.
Recommendation: That continued emphasis be placed on construction of aircraft revetments as necessary protective requirement for all parked aircraft.

AD392384 Confidential Department of the ARMY
Office of the Adjutant General
Washington D.C. 20310

AGAM-P (M) (8 Aug 68) FOR OT RD 682317 26 August 1968
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 16th Combat Aviation Group, Period Ending 30 April 1968 (U)

1. (C) SECTION I, OPERATIONS: SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

a. (C) GENERAL

(1) The quarter commenced with the 16th Group's two battalions, the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion and the 212th Combat Support Battalion heavily engaged in providing aviation support to suppress the enemy's Tet Offensive in the I Corps Tactical Zone. The heaviest fighting was concentrated in and near the City of Hue, which was one of the main objectives of the VC and NVA forces. The gunships of the 212th Combat Support Aviation Battalion were extensively instrumental in providing support to the ground forces during this battle.

(2) In addition to the many extra flying hours required, each unit was required to increase its internal security to protect their assets against enemy ground and stand off fire attacks. Additionally, concurrent effort was applied to improving the defensive posture and alert procedures of all units.

(3) A warning order attaching the 308th Combat Aviation Battalion was received on 9 March 1968. The order called for the 308th Battalion to be attached to the 16th Combat Aviation Group effective 15 March 68, with operational control invested to the 101st Airborne Division. Attachment became effective as the units passed North of 14 degrees 30 minutes North latitude. The 308th Combat Aviation Battalion completed its move from the III Corps area to the vicinity of Hue Phu Bai in the I Corps area and was declared fully operational on 12 April 1968.

(4) C Troop 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry was redesignated F Troop, 8th Cavalry on 1 April 68. With the change of designation, the unit became organic to the Americal Division.

(5) Corps Aviation Company (Provisional) was assigned to the 16th CAG on 12 March 1968.. It was further attached to the 212th CSAB on 14 March 1968. The unit is stationed at Hue Phu Bai with the mission to provide aviation support for the headquarters element of the Provisional Corps Viet Nam.

(6) Throughout the quarter, the Group Headquarters continued to fill its personnel vacancies and improve its facilities. As equipment became available, the need to depend on subordinate units was decreased. Due to the Group having command less operational control of the assigned battalions, planning of operational activity was minimal. Primary effort continued to be directed towards the development of complementing OPLANS in support of those issued by higher headquarters. Key staff officers and non-commissioned officers continued to visit each of the assigned units to obtain first hand information relative to problems, status and condition of equipment and overall personality of the commands.

[Historian Note: The 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion was not part of the 16th Combat Aviation Group at this time. However, it had control of F/8th Cavalry which was operating along side the Warlords at Ky Ha.]

SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 30 April 1968. (RCS-CSFOR-65) (RI) (U).

11. (C) Personnel Status 123rd Aviation Battalion:

a. Throughout the quarter, "A" Company enlisted and officer service and support personnel were gradually attached to various sections of the battalion. This change reduced "A" Company to three complete airlift platoons and necessary company headquarters personnel. The company strength averaged approximately 75 per cent of authorized officers and warrant officers.

b. **The Aero Scout Company was activated 1 February**. Unit strength on 31 January was one officer and eighteen (18) enlisted men. During the month of February the total strength grew to twenty -two (22) officers and 112 enlisted men. Strength at the end of the reporting period was twenty-five (25) officers and warrant officers, and 126 enlisted men.

c. The following is a listing of the consolidated battalion strength on 30 April.

AUTHORIZED/MTOE			AUTHORIZED/AMCL GO			ASSIGNED		
OFF	WO	EM	OFF	WO	EM	OFF	WO	EM
39	59	350	41	59	390	32	43	303

b. Significant data for the 123d Avn Bn for the reporting period are:

	FEB	MAR	APR	TOTAL
Hours	2,082	2,807	1,889	6,778
Troops	12,253	13,312	13,030	38,595
Cargo Tons	632	206	191	1,029
Sorties	6,433	6,707	8,842	19,982
Med Evacs	11	0	1	12
VC KBA	277	12	28	317
VC Captured	0	1	29	30
Structures destroyed	237	43	5	285
Ordinance expended:				
7.62mm	353,000	365,823	281,200	1,000,023
40mm	4,820	5,221	3,304	13,345
2.75" rockets	1,421	1,351	786	3,558

Aircraft availability during this quarter was as follows:

	UH-1B	UH-1D	UH-1H	OH-23G
FEB	73%	88%	98%	60%
MAR	8?%	86%	97%	77%
APR	83%	80%	91%	40%

[Historian Note: The statistics above are not broken down by A and B Company as I suspect there was not yet a clear separation of the men into A Company, B Company or the 406th Transportation Company. However, most of the categories reported except the Troops, Cargo and Med Evacs would be dominated by the helicopters and crews that would become A Company (Pelicans). The Hours and Sorties might have been fairly even. The expenditure of ordinance and destruction of enemy forces and structures would have been dominated by crews and aircraft that were to become "Warlords". Thelmer Moe and Randolph Sabre were the commanders that had seen the "Warlord" artwork drawn by Crewchief, John Christine. They then moved to get the Scorpion Call sign replaced by "Warlord".]

(As of 1 Apr 68)

1. HQ, AMERICAL DIVISION

HHC, Americal Div
1st Sqdn, 1st Cav
26th Engr Bn
123d Avn Bn

[The Americal Troop list should have shown Companies A & B and probably the mysterious C Company that operated out of Duc Pho. It was never corrected. So in the Americal Reporting they were always missing 2/3rds of the 123rd Avn Bn with their troop lists]

406th TC Det
449th Sig Det
F Troop 8th Cav
523d Sig Bn
23d MP Co
258th Pers Svc Co (Attached)
Co E, 51st Inf (LRP)
63d Inf Plat (Combat Tracker Team)
3d Mil Hist Det
Americal Combat Center (PROV)
408th RR Det
415th RR Det
601st RR Det
14th Avn Bn (OPCON)
71st Aslt Hel Co (OPCON)
174th Aslt Hel Co (OPCON)
176th Aslt Hel Co (OPCON)
178th Aslt Hel Co (OPCON)
Americal CA Co, PROV (OPCON)
4th Plat, CA Co (OPCON)
6th Plat, CA CO (OPCON)
9th Plat., CA CO (OPCON)
O/L6, Det 31, 5th Weather Sqdn (USAF) OPCON)
Tactical Air Control Party, Americal (OPCON)
39th Engr Bn (Area Support)

AVGM_SC
SUBJECT: Operational Report of Headquarters, 16th CAG for period 31 July 1968, (RCS, CSFOR 65 (RI) (U)

(c) Recommendations:

1 **To reduce the deficit of utility helicopters within the ICTZ, an additional four AHC should be assigned to the 16th Combat Aviation Group to provide general support to PCV units, two ARVN division, CORDS and the Special Forces.**

2 Further recommend that one armed helicopter company be assigned to the 16th Combat Aviation Group for general support of tactical operations within I Corps.

b. Paragraph 2b(2), page 6. This headquarters is unable to evaluate the requirement for additional AHC in the ICTZ. Assignment priorities for AHC are determined by MACV based on recommendations made by major tactical headquarters.

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(1) Surgeon

(a) Ballistic Helmets

1 Observation: **The greatest problem with the ballistic helmet seems to be in the sizing which does not correspond with that of the APH-5. Few can wear the medium-sized ballistic helmet and find it comfortable. This problem has resulted in a near depletion of the stock of large ballistic helmets and abundance of medium and small sizes.**

2 Evaluation: The role of the ballistic helmet in the prevention of head injury seems to have been fairly well established since its introduction into Vietnam. It has been found, however, that many crew members do not wear this helmet, preferring the older APH-5. The most common reason given for not wearing the ballistic helmet is discomfort. It has been learned that the helmet can be modified for better fit and better wearability with no decrease in protection. By cutting out a semicircle in the polystyrene liner so the earphone can recess more completely, and removing a coil or two of the earphone springs, a more comfortable fit is possible. It also helps to tie the earphones fully cut and to use the older sizing pads. A block of wood may be placed between the earguards when the helmet is stored to effect a slight increase in lateral size.

c. Paragraph 2f(1)(a), page 7. Research on the anti-fragmentation helmet has been and is being conducted by the appropriate Department of the Army agency. Recommended individual modification to the ballistic helmet is contained in DA MWO 10-8415-202-30/4 which has been reproduced in the October 1967 Supply and Maintenance letter of the 1st Aviation Brigade.

AVDF-GC **7 August 1968**
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1968 (RCS-CSFOR-65) (RI) (U)

(7) During May Chu Lai received six 122mm rocket attacks. The first attack was on 5 May and on 6 May Chu Lai Airfield received two 122mm rockets at 1734H. **This is the first time that Chu Lai had been rocketed during the day.** On 11 May the airfield received three 122mm rockets with neg casualties or damage. On 14 May, which was a period of high illumination, Chu Lai received two 122mm rockets. This was the first time since TET that the enemy had rocketed the airfield during a period of high illumination. On 23 May, Chu Lai received ten 122mm rockets, and seven more rockets on 26 May. The last attack occurred on 9 Jun when Chu Lai received seven 122mm rockets, which were launched from vic BT 440 045, using one conventual launch system and one improvised launch system.

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(17) On 26 Jun, a platoon of CIDG from Minh Long SF/CIDG camp engaged an unidentified NVA unit, the **Aero Scouts** assisted in the contact, resulting in 8 KIA and 8 IWC.

....

(20) On 2 Jul, **Aero Scouts**, vic BS 592 412, observed an unknown number of VC. Infantry was inserted at 1400H and contact resulted in 18 VC KIA. The unit appeared to be a transportation unit.

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(27) On 18 Jul at BS 434 393, B/3-1 Inf found a base camp with partially completed bunkers and three mess halls large enough to feed two Cos. They also found a document identifying the 511 unit (aka for 400 Mortar Bn 3 NVA Div). At BS 290 601, the **Aero Scouts** acting on the advice of an informer at Ha Thanh SF/CIDG Camp, conducted an operation and recovered 3x120mm mortars, 20,000 rds of SA Ammo, 75 bicycles each with a carrying red for 10XSA, and documents from the 208 Arty Regt.

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(3) **Major Junius I. Tanner, Infantry, assumed command of Aero Scout Company, 16 June 1968.** ***[There is no mention of a B Company 123rd Aviation Battalion the reporting yet...but Aero Scouts are mentioned as a separate entity from A Company.]***

AUTHORIZED/MTOE			AUTHORIZED/AMCAL GO			ASSIGNED 31JUL68		
OFF	WO	EM	OFF	WO	EM	OFF	WO	EM
39	59	350	41	59	390	35	49	413

(4) The following lists the strength of F Troop, 8th Cavalry and attached units:

AUTHORIZED/MTOE			ASSIGNED 31 July 1968		
OFF	WO	EM	OFF	WO	EM
13	35	189	14	29	208

c. (C) Intelligence.

(1) Sixty (60) aircraft were hit by hostile fire during the reporting period. Analysis of hit reports are as follows:

ALT	ON GROUND	T/O	LNDG	ENRT	TARGET ATTACK	TOTAL
0	1					1
100				25	4	29
200				4	1	5
400			2	7		9
600				4	1	5
800				1		1
1000			1	4		5
1500				3		3
2000				1		1
3500				1		1

d. (C) Plans, Operations, Training and Organization.

(1) Plans: **The Aero Scout Company has received diversified missions to include airmobile support and gunship support. The Aero Scout concept of reconnaissance remains the primary method of employment. Indoctrination of ground user units to employ the company in its primary role will continue to be emphasized to brigade and division headquarters.**

AVDF-GC **7 August 1968**
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1968 (RCS-CSFOR-65) (RI) (U)

(2) Operations.

(a) The breakdown of aviation activity for the **123d Aviation Battalion** and **F Troop, 8th Cavalry Follows:**

	MAY	JUNE	JULY	TOTAL
HOURS	4,202	3,712	3,964	11,878
TROOPS	17,417	14,228	16,224	47,869
CARGO TONS	168	206	95	471
SORTIES	10,560	9,004	9,653	29,217
MED EVACS	5	15	6	27
VC KBA	141	150	168	459
VC CAPTURED	35	29	13	77
STRUCTURES DESTROYED	10	21	46	85

(b) Ammunition expended:

	MAY	**JUNE**	**JULY**	**TOTAL**
7.62	878,495	39,165	724,289	1,996,949
40MM	8,272	2,515	1,024	11,811
2.75" rockets	3,335	1,435	1,864	6,634

(c) "A" Company continues in general support of the division with two (2) UH-1D helicopters being provided for support of Special Forces operations.

(d) **The Aero Scout Company provided support to both the 11th and 198th Light Infantry Brigades during the period 1 May through LIB, [sic] 1 July 1968. The most significant activity during this reporting period occurred 2 July 1968 at BS 592412, where a reconnaissance team located an unknown number of enemy in Khaki and green uniforms. The aero-infantry were inserted resulting in 23 KIA.**

(e) F Troop, 8th Cavalry continues under operational control of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry.

[Historian Note: F Troop, 8th Cavalry appears to be partly in the 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion, but also under the influence of the 16th Combat Aviation Group. The Aero Scout Company is not yet known as B Company, 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion, but it is now a separate entity with their own commander, Junius Tanner. The 123rd is still probably part of the 1st Aviation Brigade, but will eventually be retroactively moved to the Americal Division...]

e. Logistics.

(1) The Aero Scout Company converted from XM-16 to XM-21 helicopter gunship armament subsystems.

(2) Two (2) UH-1C gunships were received as replacements for damaged UH-1B's.

(3) Three (3) JP4 refueling points and one (1) 115/145 aviation gasoline refueling point were established at Minh Long Special Forces Camp.

AVDF-GC 7 November 1968
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 October 1968. (RCS-CSFOR-65)(RI)(U)

14. On 17 Sep, vic BS 664 889, **Aero Scouts from the 123d Aviation** Bn contacted an unidentified enemy force, estimated to be a VC company, killing 22 and capturing 2 M-1 Carbines.

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14. On 24-25 Sep, vic BT 245 165, A, B-1/1 Cav, elements of the 1-52 Inf, F-8 Cav and D-4/21 Inf engaged an unknown NVA force. The enemy was in a defensive position. After breaking contact, the enemy forces withdrew to vic BT 268 168. A sweep of the battle field revealed that the enemy has lost 300 KIA, 10 individual weapons and 8 crew served weapons. One unit in contact was later identified as the 90th Bn, 1st MF Regt, 2d NVA Division.

15. On 26 Sep, vic BT 180 199, 123d Avn Aero Scouts and D-1-52 Inf engaged an unknown size enemy force north of LZ Young (vic BT 180 190). The results of the action were 76 NVA KIA, 13 individual weapons and one crew served weapon captured.

[Historian Notes: Art Reese, had been a Pelican crewchief. For some reason he volunteered to become an Aero-Scout infantryman with the Warlords and was severely wounded in the following action: This was a terrible day for the Warlords. Major Tanner was recuperating from injuries sustained after he had been shot down a few days prior to this action. Another officer was in charge. The Aero-Scouts were brought in and used like regular infantry. SP4 Arthur Reese recalled coming upon NVA in hammocks. They were rotating their men in and out of the battle. Several Warlords were wounded and killed in this action. It was thought that if Major Tanner had been in command he would have gotten the Warlords out before nightfall. As it was they were left to fight to survive overnight surrounded by swarms of enemy soldiers. Warlord, Art Reese, was wounded severely in the leg. Yet he managed to carry out a fellow Warlord who survived, but without the use of his legs. Art Reese's family were mistakenly told that Art had been killed in action. When his parents were told there son was alive, they had a severe car-train accident in their rush to go home to get more complete information. When Art returned from the hospital he reported in to the 1st Sergeant. His 1st Sergeant told him, "You're supposed to be dead!".

It was hard on our crews from A Company. Our crews had flown insertions and then carried out the wounded and dead from the Aero-Scouts. When I came back from a mission that day there were A Company men crying in my hootch. They were used to carrying dead and wounded infantrymen in an out of battles, but the Warlords were there drinking buddies. It was just a lot harder to deal with when it was your friends killed or all blown up.

The Aero-Scout headquarters was not so far away. They had piled a bunch of bloodied equipment from the battle out in front of their headquarters. It was a sickening sight.

Prior to this action the Warlords were a very effective team. It took months to get the Warlords rebuilt, retrained, and back to doing what they had done so well.

Warlord Donald Brown was KIA from wounds incurred in the 26SEP68 battle.

Personlly I still feel the loss of Donald Brown. He was a classmate in AIT at Ft. Rucker. He was a real jerk, with a chip on his shoulder when I first met him. That was until he got his clocked cleaned by a fellow classmate. He was hit so hard that there was still a knot on his cheek ten months later. After that fight he was the most pleasant person to be around. He had gone to Hawaii to R&R with his girlfriend. Not too much later he was wounded (September 26, 1968). An AK-47 round had come through a gap in the armor plated seat of his OH-6A, hit near the anus, then hitting his chest protector as it was coming out of his body, it then richocheted back in to his lungs. I had just come into our hootch where a group of A/123rd men were reading a letter sent from a hospital in Japan by Don. Don wrote that he doing much better and was looking for his return to the states. Everyone was breaking out with big grins upon hearing that news. Just seconds after special moment, someone came by the door and announced that Don had died. Talk about going from high to low....The Warlords had a service for the men they had lost. There were helmets placed on M-16s planted by their bayonets stuck in the ground. It was very depressing. I never attended another memorial service, it was just too hard to deal with.]

A Company, 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion Aircraft

(Some helicopters are missing. They were only listed with the 161st AHC before they reorganized into A and B company of the 123rd Avn Bn.)

List of Pelican Helicopters used in Vietnam -

Model	Tail Number	Purch. Date MMYY	Begin in Unit YYMM	Begin Hours	Finish in Unit YYMM	Finish Hours	Total Hours in Unit
UH-1B	62-02059	0763	6808	3135	6808	3223	88
UH-1B	62-12547	1163	6808	2273	6808	2354	81
OH-23G	63-12821	0664	6808	1092	6811	1178	86
OH-23G	63-12868	0964	6808	1733	6809	1787	54
UH-1D	64-13549	0265	6808	2146	6809	2359	213
UH-1D	64-13564	0265	6809	1789	6810	1985	196
UH-1D	64-13630	0565	6808	1700	6810	1997	297
UH-1H	64-13721	0765	6811	1572	7006	3013	1441
UH-1B	64-14043	0665	6808	1454	6808	1536	82
OH-23G	64-15146	0265	6808	1025	6810	1154	129
UH-1C	65-09473	0266	6808	1226	6808	1276	50
UH-1C	65-09491	0366	6808	1193	6808	1216	23
UH-1D	65-09814	0466	6808	1765	6808	1850	85
UH-1D	65-09862	0566	6808	2214	6809	2421	207
UH-1D	65-09874	0566	6903	1593	6908	1979	386
UH-1D	65-09934	0666	6808	2001	6808	2100	99
UH-1D	65-10000	0766	6808	1253	6903	1908	655
UH-1D	65-10063	0766	6901	1413	7003	2390	977
UH-1D	65-10076	0866	6808	1141	6808	1228	87
UH-1D	65-12849	0866	6808	1122	6811	1518	396
UH-1D	65-12860	0966	6902	1913	6904	2058	145
UH-1D	65-12871	0966	6808	852	6908	1768	916
UH-1D	65-12886	0966	6808	1459	6811	1928	469
UH-1D	66-00801	1066	6808	1531	6903	1998	467
UH-1D	66-00812	1066	6908	2173	7010	3547	1374
UH-1D	66-00884	1166	6808	1371	6902	1958	587
UH-1D	66-00915	1166	6808	893	6812	1413	520
UH-1D	66-01092	0167	6808	1055	6906	2056	1001
UH-1D	66-01169	0167	6810	1116	6905	1918	802
UH-1D	66-01190	0167	6808	1249	6903	2084	835
UH-1D	66-01192	0167	6808	937	6906	1949	1012
OH-6A	66-07838	1167	6906	275	7003	865	590
UH-1C	66-15030	0267	6808	646	6808	735	89
UH-1D	66-16054	0267	6808	978	6905	1858	880
UH-1D	66-16075	0267	6902	1055	7010	2439	1384
UH-1H	66-16094	0267	6812	317	6906	884	567
UH-1D	66-16106	0267	6808	1153	6809	1391	238
UH-1D	66-16148	0367	6901	1738	7002	2718	980
UH-1H	66-16270	0467	6906	1317	7108	3474	2157
UH-1H	66-16272	0467	6910	2159	7112	3849	1690
UH-1H	66-16737	0867	6812	287	7001	1295	1008
UH-1H	66-16867	0967	6902	1073	6908	1707	634
UH-1H	66-17022	1167	6910	845	7012	2087	1242
UH-1H	66-17132	1267	6808	356	7004	1673	1317
OH-6A	67-16002	0468	6903	241	7003	893	652
OH-6A	67-16171	0768	6808	0	6808	32	32
OH-6A	67-16172	0768	6808	0	6808	16	16

OH-6A	67-16185	0768	6808	0	6808	15	15
OH-6A	67-16203	0768	6903	173	6906	470	297
OH-6A	67-16468	1168	6904	133	6906	281	148
OH-6A	67-16627	0269	6903	0	6910	691	691
UH-1H	67-17175	0168	6808	354	6905	990	636
UH-1H	67-17231	0268	6808	439	7110	2991	2552
UH-1H	67-17281	0268	6812	428	7112	2850	2422
UH-1H	67-17345	0368	7107	3259	7108	3464	205
UH-1H	67-17444	0468	6904	429	6906	539	110
UH-1H	67-17786	0968	6810	0	6810	46	46
UH-1H	67-17834	1068	6902	270	7102	2011	1741
UH-1H	67-18568	1068	7105	1280	7112	1960	680
UH-1H	67-18577	1068	6812	0	6905	388	388
UH-1H	67-19486	1168	6811	0	7006	845	845
UH-1H	68-15228	1268	6909	140	7112	2308	2168
UH-1H	68-15243	1268	6901	0	7112	2205	2205
UH-1H	68-15434	0369	6904	0	7112	1932	1932
UH-1H	68-15595	0469	6905	0	7108	1945	1945
UH-1H	68-15653	0569	6908	72	7112	2061	1989
UH-1H	68-15693	0569	6906	0	7112	2471	2471
UH-1H	68-15749	0769	6908	0	7112	2503	2503
UH-1H	68-15761	0769	6908	0	6909	257	257
UH-1H	68-16220	0969	6909	0	6911	253	253
UH-1H	68-16262	0969	6910	0	7002	391	391
UH-1H	68-16404	1069	6911	0	7112	2139	2139
UH-1H	68-16473	1169	6912	0	7112	2033	2033
UH-1H	68-16544	1269	7002	0	7104	897	897
AH-1G	68-17111	0170	7005	85	7005	172	87
OH-6A	68-17259	0769	6908	0	6911	233	233
OH-6A	68-17309	1069	6912	1	7003	317	316
OH-6A	68-17312	1069	6912	1	6912	25	24
OH-6A	68-17313	1069	6912	18	7003	286	268
UH-1H	69-15017	0170	7003	0	7112	958	958
UH-1H	69-15053	0170	7003	0	7112	1615	1615
UH-1H	69-15116	0270	7005	0	7104	681	681
UH-1H	69-15292	0570	7006	0	7112	1289	1289
UH-1H	69-15366	0570	7007	0	7112	1093	1093
UH-1H	69-15372	0570	7007	0	7104	543	543
UH-1H	69-15711	0970	7011	0	7112	539	539
UH-1H	69-15768	1070	7011	0	7104	433	433
UH-1H	69-15952	0171	7102	0	7112	534	534
OH-6A	69-15966	0170	7003	1	7003	84	83
UH-1H	70-15744	0371	7105	42	7112	605	563
UH-1H	70-15761	0371	7105	0	7112	297	297
UH-1H	70-15783	0371	7105	0	7112	487	487
UH-1H	70-15791	0371	7105	0	7112	475	475

Total helicopters = 93 Total number of hours = 69713

Note: This list only includes helicopters that were in this unit after September 1966. The primary source of this information is the U.S. Army Goldbook. Accuracy is estimated to be about 80% to 95%.

Please send additions or corrections to: Gary Roush; 43 Overbrook Road; Painted Post, NY 14870

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Note: This list only includes helicopters that were in this unit after September 1966. The primary source of this information is the U.S. Army Goldbook. Accuracy is estimated to be about 80% to 95%.

The following section will include articles from the Americal Division's weekly newspaper, "The Southern Cross" that reference the A Company, 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion. The first issue was published in May 1968 and the final issue was in the fall of 1971. The newspapers were usually eight pages with cartoons and world events included. Approximately 120 issues have been located with perhaps 40 that are still missing.

17Aug68-Southern Cross Vol. 1 No. 5. Page 4-5 Full Page Spread
H i g h F l y i n g S u p p o r t

Photo Captions-
1- Gunship banks to start run (flex guns and small rocket pods, might be an older B-Model gunship; rather than the more common C-Models.)
2- Painted crest of the 123rd Avn Bn.
3- Smoke guides in resupply chopper (These markings look like a 14th Avn Bn helicopter instead of the 123rd Avn Bn.
4- Gunship crew sights weapon (One is wearing a "Warlord" pocket patch from B/123rd Avn Bn)
3. "Warlord" OH-23 searches for traces of the enemy. (Helicopter #15280 is shown with a door gunner wearing chicken plate armor and flight helmet using a cut-down M-60 hung out with bungee chord.)
4. Air traffic controller watches chopper land (view is from the perimeter area looking back to the South China Sea at Ky Ha heliport).
5. Maintenance is a never-ending task. (evening silhouette of a crew chief working on the main rotor with the engine cowling opened out for post- flight inspection.)

Courier run leaves Chu Lai daily

6. Courier run leaves Chu Lai daily. (Americal Patch with Pelican painted on the helicopter nose (nose art) identifies it as A/123rd Avn Bn helicopter. The skid tips appear to be red. Red tipped skids identify it as a 1st flight platoon helicopter. Blue tipped skids would identify it as the 2nd flight platoon).

(Continued)

(Continued)

Story and Photos
by
Southern Cross
Staff

CHU LAI--The men of the 123rd Avn. Bn. make their presence known daily to both enemy and friendly troops throughout the Americal Div. area of operations.

Their duties range from finding the enemy to destroying him and from resupplying isolated landing zones to providing transportation for division personnel.

The battalion is made up of the **Co. A "Pelicans**," the Co. B "Warlords," the Trp. F, 8th Cav. "Blue Ghosts," a signal detachment, a transportation detachment and a headquarters element. (Note by Leslie Hines: Co C 123rd Avn Bn was often omitted and most people in the unit did not realize it existed. This was a small unit stationed at Duc Pho.)

continued

17Aug68-Southern Cross Vol. 1 No. 5. Page 4-5 Full Page Spread continued

Organic Aviation

It was organized early this year as the division's organic aviation unit from outfits already in the area (Note: formed from the 161st AHC of the 14th Avn Bn., 1st Avn Bde. At the time it was unusual for a division to have organic aviation not under the 1st Avn Bde. It may have been the first one set up this way in Vietnam.). It is commanded by LTC John N. Brandenburg (Note: John N. Brandenburg later commanded a Bn in the 196th Inf Bde. He retired as a Lieutenant General).

The **Co. A "Pelicans**" are responsible for general air support for the division. Their duties include resupply (Note: Mainly for Division Artillery), road patrol (Note: Mainly for 26th Engineers & 9th Marine Engineers), the transportation of VIP's and the providing of aircraft for the various courier flights from Chu Lai. (Note: 1 special forces mission was supported at Phu Bai, 1 special forces mission at Da Nang, 1 mission to provide reconnaissance for the Marines at Da Nang, Nightly flare mission, & Command & Control missions for 1st/1st Cav and other units were omitted from this article.)

Their efforts are often unsung, but nonetheless represent a vital cog in the air support of the fighting soldiers of the Army's only named division.

For instance, they fly nearly 50 tons of cargo each week.

Take War to VC

The high-flying "Warlords the only aero-scout company in Vietnam, are equipped to take the war right to the enemy's doorstep.

The company carries its own infantry, reconnaissance and firepower support elements in one neat, three-helicopter package.

Using the standard OH-23 observation helicopter, the Co. B "Warlords'" primary mission is reconnaissance. Teams of two gunships and one OH-23 scour the division area for traces of the enemy, and the mobile aerial-rifle section is available for closer inspection when it is needed.

Though the company's duties are primarily reconnaissance, and not combat, its members have accounted for more than their share of kills in action which has been centered mainly in the southern part of the division's area of operations.

Other Support

The "Blue Ghosts" of Trp. F, 8th Cav., though assigned to the battalion for organizational purposes, are attached to the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav., and more will be said about them in a later issue.

The 449th Sig. Det. provides avionics support for the battalion's aircraft. Though the scope of the signalmen's mission has greatly increased as the size of the battalion has increased., they have never failed in the vital job of keeping the aviators "on the air."

The 406th TC Det. "Roadrunners" (Note: reorganized to Higher Level Direct Support function as E/723rd Maint. Bn in 1969) keep the battalion in the air and on the go. The detachment provides direct support for the battalion, and calls no job short of entirely rebuilding an aircraft too large or too small.

Personnel from the battalion also are responsible for the operation of the Ky Ha tower, which controls much of the helicopter traffic coming and out of Chu Lai.

Photo Caption-TRACKING DOWN the enemy, the 1st Sqdn., 1st. Cav. defeated two NVA regiments in a recent action near Tam Ky. "Dragoons" left 473 enemy dead. (Photo by Bull Guerrant, Photo Editor)

NVA Mauled
By 1st Cav
By 1LT MIKE WOLFGANG
Asst. Div. IO

HAWK HILL -- A bloody three-day showdown between Americal troops and two NVA regiments near Tam Ky left a badly mauled enemy force limping off the battlefield, leaving behind 473 dead.

Spearheaded by the division's mobile armored strike force, the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav., the Aug. 24-26 action began as a single platoon encounter before raging into a full-scale battle in Operation Burlington Trail.

The 2nd Plt. of the Cav.'s A Trp., commanded by 1LT Thomas M. Gintz, along with the ARVN 3rd Sqdn., 4th Cav., came under heavy RPG, recoilless rifle, and automatic weapons fire to start the initial contact.

Air Strikes

Air strikes were called in while C Trp. and the remainder of A Trp. were rushed to the scene. Meanwhile, the ARVN cavalry unit, after losing two vehicles, moved to provide flanking fire.

"As C Trp. moved in an started to work the area over, we discovered this was a major position in great depth," explained Squadron Commander LTC Richard A. Lawrence.

The size of the force turned out to be the major element of two regiments of an NVA Div., well-equipped and heavily-armed with recoilless rifles, RPGs, and .51-caliber anti-aircraft guns.

360 Degree Fight

"As it turned out, we were not able to do any blocking or cordoning off the area. In just about every area we moved into, we were surrounded by NVA, so we just had to fight in 360 degrees," LTC Lawrence said.

"Most of our contact was at 25 yards. Tank guns were firing at less than 50 yards!" the Cav. commander stated.

The first day's action lasted until nightfall, when the tracks pulled back into a more secure night position.

The "Dragoons," supported by units of the 196th and 11th Inf. Bdes., F Trp., 8th Cav. gunships, and tactical air and artillery, had racked up an impressive 177 enemy kill total.

Only two cavalrymen died in the first day-long battle.

Second Day

The continuing battle on the second day differed little from the first day's action--a series of vicious, independent troop fights with the Cav. in control.

"The fighting became so intense, we had two NVA soldiers who Chieu Hoied to us. They came out of their spider holes with their hands up, stripped to their underwear," related CPT George R. Kaczer, A Trp. commander.

(continued)

"I had a lot of good men wounded--not seriously-but they refused to be dusted off, and remained to fight throughout the day," the captain said.

After the second day of intense fighting, possibly the most fierce the "Dragoons" have yet encountered in Vietnam, the enemy bodycount stood at 259, with only six division soldiers killed.

Third Day

On the morning of the third day of battle it soon became apparent that the enemy had had enough and fled the battlefield during the night.

Only 27 NVA were killed during the day in a sweep which turned up a few rear elements of what had been an imposing enemy force.

"It would appear from captured enemy documents and prisoners," explained LTC Lawrence, "that the enemy's original objective was an attack on Tam Ky.

"The meeting engagement of the first day uncovered their position, allowing the Cav. to move into and break up the enemy positions and destroy the major portion of this force."

High Praise

The colonel had high praise for the men who participated in the fighting and he stated, "We took the enemy apart."

(ADVA 1999 Historian Leslie Hines personal notes: For additional details refer to the January 1969 issue of the "Americal Magazine". Also in Vol. 1. No. 9 of the Southern Cross there is mention of the 1st/1st Cav awards for this action. This battle is described in these Three books: (1) "Search and Destroy" by Keith Nolan. The story of an Armored Cavalry Squadron in Vietnam. 1/1 Cav, 1967-1968. (2) "The Illustrated History of ARMOR The Vietnam War" by JAMES R. ARNOLD; (3) Armored Combat in Vietnam by General Donn A. Starry isbn 0 7137 1166 3.

Colonel Lawrence later became Lieutenant General Lawrence. From my diary on 24Aug68 two friends (Richey & Raikes) from my 1st flight platoon A/123rd Avn. Bn. took two .51 caliber hits on helicopter "092" flying Command and Control for Colonel Lawrence. It was a miracle they made it back. One round through the fuel cell and one round through the rotor blade each exit hole was large enough to stick your head through. Fortunately the helicopter had a an old self-sealing fuel cell which sealed the entrance hole (This may have been the only helicopter in our unit that still had this type of fuel cell, as they were being replaced by non-self-sealing fuel cells.). They flew the mission through these three days. They still have terrible memories of being spattered by flesh from a 1st/1st Cav officer who was hit in the neck during another incident where they took AK-47 hits. Years later as ADVA historian I discovered photos of an award ceremony that identified the pilot as Dennis DeWine of A/123rd Avn Bn.

Also on 24Aug68 from my diary I dropped 15 flares down by Quang Ngai, then later we flew out to drop more flares near Tam Ky. So there must have been action all throughout the AO, not just around Tam Ky. I flew a C&C mission for the 1st/1st Cav that I believe may have been after this action. The Regimental Commander exited the helicopter and sent some officers and sergeants out to capture a prisoner for intelligence. This was early morning not a long flight from Hawk Hill. I was surprised to see 20-25 Vietnamese dressed in black running splash splash through large open rice paddies. There were lots of them! They were pretty well spread out through a large rice paddy and seemed to be running in slow motion. It looked like more had passed before and more might be ready to come out of the wooded islands around the rice paddy. When we came down to make our capture we were told not to fire on any of the enemy. (If we had been going for kills we could have easily gotten 5-10 and probably more with help from the men inside. We might have also trapped more VC on the wooded island from where they were streaming from.). As we got down lower we could see that the Viet Cong soldiers had apparently dropped their weapons and fled from battle. I could see the faces, every VC face had a look of mortal terror. We had their lives in our hands, they were caught out in the open without weapons, tired and full of terror. We hovered down alongside a VC selected by an officer on board. With my M-60 covering from about 5 yards away, plus a bunch of M-16s from the men inside the ship the VC quickly surrendered. We hauled him aboard and took him back to Hawk Hill.) I think we could have captured more, but then they wanted the information in a hurry and it probably wasn't smart to hang around out in the open as eventually we might have drawn some heavy fire. As it was there were no shots fired from either side.

Photo Caption-Gail Burnett

(Comments by Leslie Hines-A lovely blonde poses in a bikini on the Chu Lai beach. In the near background are rocks, in the far background is the cap Batagnan. Bearing down overhead is a helicopter from 3rd Flt Plt A/123rd Avn. Bn. Comment made by the pilot of the helicopter in the photo:

Hi Les,
I thought I'd set the record straight. Joe Clark and I were test flying General Cooksey's A/C, I guess it would have been 231. The number on the nose was 77 that was blocked out in the photo as Cooksey was the ADCM. I was in the right seat, Joe was flying low level south along the beach and we were just below the area where the nurses were on the cliff above the water. I saw the girl and pointed her out, Joe turned right for her, flared and did a left pedal turn. The picture must have been taken just before he flared and turned. I didn't see the photographer until we were nearly at a hover he was in close to the rocks below the cliff; when I spotted him I could see him snapping away and told Joe to get out. The next time we saw the photo it was on Gen Cooksey's Desk. To my knowledge, the General never said anything about it to either of us. We didn't mention it to him either. I don't know if he knew who the pilots were. by Dennis DeWine

(Continued)

(Continued)

Gail Burnett

What a combat assault! We can understand why the slick pilot wanted to checkout this unique South China Sea scenery. Actually, it is 22-year-old Gail Burnett, an Australian entertainer appearing in Chu Lai will the Ray Harris Network. (Photo by SP4 Bill Guerrant, Photo Editor)

What a combat assault! We can understand why the slick pilot wanted to checkout this unique South China Sea scenery. Actually, it is 22-year-old Gail Burnett, an Australian entertainer appearing in Chu Lai will [sic-with] the Ray Harris Network. (Photo by SP4 Bill Guerrant, Photo by SP4 Bill Guerrant, Photo Editor)

Suspected Interplanetary Visitor Teases Perplexed Huey Crew

By 1LT MICHAEL E. WOLFGANG
Americal IO

CHU LAI--Except for the flying saucer, the flight would have been one of those routine hops from Da Nang.

WO-1 Joseph E. Clark (Miami, Fla.), a pilot with the 123rd Avn. Bn. **(A/123rd Avn Bn)**, had turned the controls of his UH-1B [sic UH1-D] over to his co-pilot, WO-1 Roger "Seymour" Loomis (Miami, Fla.) shortly after departing Da Nang.

"We were flying 'feetwet' (over the ocean) that morning and had just buzzed past the battleship New Jersey, about five miles south of Hoi An, when I spotted the 'thing' out of the corner of my eye," Clark said, half smiling.

There, in front of the chopper, at about half its altitude of 1,600 feet, was the strangest aircraft the aviator had ever seen.

Pilotless UFO

It was the first thought to be an H-13 model helicopter, but as the Huey neared the UFO the two pilots, an unidentified passenger, and the crew all noticed the absence of a tail boom and, most conspicuously, there was no pilot!

Without further delay, Clark, fighting an impulse to make a 180-degree turn, took control of the helicopter to seek out the unknown.

"It was heading toward the sea at about 30 knots so I slowed our speed from 110 knots," Clark continued, "dropped to 800 feet, and pulled right up alongside a gray, white, and silver tailless aircraft with a rotor system and skids. There were no markings or a pilot visible.

Report Saucer

"As we watched, the UFO flew under the chopper. I did my best to keep close without risking a collision, but every time I approached it would move away and change course. After about 20 minutes of playing with the 'saucer' I decided to report my sighting for further guidance."

With some reluctance, the 11-month Vietnam veteran radioed the artillery warning net (Sav-A-Plane) located division headquarters.

"I want to report a UFO five miles south and one-half miles east of Hoi An.....looks like a little helicopter...but no one's flying it."

Skeptical Reply

As he had feared, the net came alive with the chortles of disbelieving pilots monitoring the unlikely conversation.

"Okay, UFO! Whaddya got up there a flask? I suppose you've seen little green men!"

Advised to refrain from further action with what was likely to be a monitoring craft from the New Jersey, the beleaguered pilot turned his craft south and headed for Chu Lai.

Naval officials with the Naval Support Activity Detachment (NSAD) at Chu Lai later confirmed the UFO was probably a "DASH" (Drone Anti Submarine Helicopter), radio-controlled from a destroyer providing security for the big battleship.

Avoided Incident

Clark admits that after close observation of his "UFO" he was pretty certain it wasn't extraterrestrial.

"I was going to shoot it down at first, but I didn't want to risk an international...or interplanetary incident."

Combat In Review

PLUCK PILOT FROM SEA

CHU LAI-Americal engineers came to the rescue recently when an Air Force F-100 pilot ditched his plane in the South China sea near here.

While flying over Chu Lai, the **26th Engr. Bn.**'s command and control helicopter spotted the Air Force pilot after he had abandoned his aircraft and was parachuting into the sea.

The helicopter pilot, **WO1 John R. Elwell** (Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.), a pilot with the 123rd Avn. Bn. (A/123rd Avn Bn), hovered over the downed pilot until LTC Matthew W. Hoey (San Antonio, Tex., commanding officer of the 26th Engrs., and SP5 **Richard S. Melcher** (Portland, Ore.), a crew chief in the chopper, managed to pull the pilot aboard.

At one point, WO1 Elwell deliberately put his ship's left skid into the water and held it there while LTC Hoey climbed out on the skid to get a better grip on the jet pilot, encumbered by his flight gear.

The pilot was flown to the 312th Evac. Hosp., where he was treated and released.

[Historian Note: This helicopter and crew was from A Co. 123rd Avn Bn.]

Division Blunts Enemy's Post-TET Drive

Combat In Review

Nab Enemy Trying To Elude Cav

Chopper Crew Leads Rout of Fleeing NVA

By SP5 JERRY HARRIS
16th Cmbt. Avn. Grp

TAM KY--A camouflaged mass of NVA soldiers were discovered and eventually routed by the quick actions of an Americal helicopter crew in a post-TET attack near here.

Twenty-nine of the enemy were killed, six enemy soldiers including an NVA battalion commander captured, and numerous weapons and packs plus a .51 cal. anti-aircraft weapon were confiscated in the encounter.

Cav Flushes NVA

A UH-1D Huey "Slick" commanded by WO Walter Seger (Warren Mich.) **[Historian Note: Helicopter and crew were from A 123d Avn Bn.]** was flying a visual reconnaissance mission in support of the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. when he discovered a large group of enemy troops fleeing from a tree line a short distance from the advancing cavalrymen.

"Enemy troops were moving down the opposite side of the hill, just out of range of the Cav," Seger said.

"They had tree twigs attached to their helmets and back backs, and they ran in a crouching, doubled-over position so there appeared to be 35 or 40 tumbleweeds blowing over the side of the hill in all directions."

The chopper made its first pass through the center of the disorganized mass, killing several NVA.

Firing as they retreated the enemy tried to hide in hootches at the top of the hill. The **A Co.** "Slick" took several hits as the action continued.

"We could feel the ship shudder as the rounds hit," said SP4 Terry Bennet (Veneta, Ore.), crew chief of the 123rd Avn Bn. chopper (Note: Terry was in **A/123rd Avn Bn**. 2nd Flt Plt.)

"They were firing armor piercing .30 cal. shells and it appeared as if thousands of rounds were directed at us. I took one through the sleeve of my jacket and the co-pilot's neck was grazed as a bullet went through the roof.

Cobras Clean Up

"After we expended our machinegun ammo we continued to fire with our M-16 rifles until the Cobras arrived.

"Then I dropped smoke grenades marking the hootches containing the NVA, and the Cobras completed devastated them with rockets."

When the Cobras finished, 1st Cav. armored cavalry assault vehicles attacked the hill, completing the job.

MG Ramsey New CG,
MG Gettys Off To DA

CHU LAI--MG Lloyd B. Ramsey, former Deputy CG of the 1st Log. Command, assumed command of the Americal Division June 1, replacing MG Charles M. Gettys.

MG Gettys became director of individual training, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Headquarters, Department of the Army. (***Historian Note: there is no mention of his helicopter crash that caused the change of command. Along with Gettys was Col. Treadwell and Maj. Colin Powell future JCS. It is ironic that the general that replaced him would also be replaced because of a second crash. Both crashes occurred with 3rd flt plt. A/123d Avn Bn helicopters***)

Fourth CG

As Americal's fourth commander since the division arrived in southern I Corps in April 1967 as Task Force Oregon, MG Gettys served 11 months here.

Among the highlights of the general's tour were 15 combat operations directed against NVA and VC forces throughout the Americal operational area, and increased goodwill and cooperation between Americal forces and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

MG Ramsey is a graduate of the University of Kentucky. After graduation he was commissioned a 2LT in 1940.

By 1943 he was a major and aide-de-camp for Gen Alexander, Ground Commander under GEN Eisenhower in North Africa.

In 1946 he attended a course in psychology at Yale University in preparation for a teaching assignment at the Infantry School.

War College

Other academic endeavors include the Command and Staff College, Army War College, and Harvard University.

The sixties have seen MG Ramsey in a variety of positions.

In 1966 he was Deputy Chief of Information, and in late 1967 until 1968 he served as the Chief of Staff, Third U.S. Army, Fort McPherson, prior to his arrival in Vietnam. (Americal IO)

MG Lloyd B. Ramsey

Photo Caption: MG Lloyd B. Ramsey (Note standing in front of his C&C chopper with the Americal Division patch above the number 6. Call sign Sabre 6 (3rd flight platoon, A/123rd Avn Bn.)

BG, Chopper Pilot
In Daring Rescue

CHU LAI -- The major was up to his ears in the water when the general dropped in unexpectedly.

An Air Force major and his co-pilot from the **366th Tactical Fighter Wing** (Da Nang) issued a MAYDAY call after their F-4 Phantom was hit by ground fire, forcing the aircraft into the South China Sea.

The command and control chopper of BG Edwin L. Powell (Cocoa, Fla.), Asst. Div. Com, answered the call flying fast and low over unfriendly territory to the jet pilot's watery predicament.

With general's and **WO1 Michael W. Jacobs** (Miami) deft maneuvering, door gunner, **PFC Salvatore Amorello** (Jackson Heights, N.Y.), was able to snatch the downed pilots from the water. (Americal IO) ***(Note: helicopter was from 3rd Flt. Plt. A/123rd Avn Bn).***

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

AIR MEDAL W/ "V" DEVICE-

SP4 Terry L. Bennett, 123rd Avn Bn[A/123rd Avn Bn 2nd Flt Plt]:
SP4 Charles W. Cronin, (1st OLC), 123rd Avn Bn; WO1 Oscar Goodman, (2nd OLC), 14th Avn. Bn; WO1 David B. Haugen, 14th Cbt. Avn. Bn; SP4 Frank Mayorga Jr, (1st OLC), 123rd Avn. Bn; CW2 Harold F. Nicely, Jr. (7th OLC), 14th Cbt. Avn. Bn; WO1 Robert J. Redmond, (1st OLC), 123rd Avn. Bn; 1LT John L. Sutler, (1st OLC), 123rd Avn. Avn. Bn; CW2 John E. Wiley Jr., (1st OLC), 123rd Avn. Bn.

AWARDS & DECORATIONS

AIR MEDAL WITH "V" DEVICE

WO1 Barry K. Alexander (1st OLC), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; SP4 Timothy M. Healy (1st OLC), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; CPT William J. Shugrue (1st OLC), 123rd Avn Bn (A/123rd); MAJ Thomas B, Vaughn (Ist OLC). 11th Bde; CPT Banta M. York II, 198th Bde.

A W A R D S
&
D E C O R A T I O N S

SILVER STAR MEDAL

SP4 Lonnie J. Lincoln, 198th Bde; MAJ Wilford A. Phelps, 11th Bde; MAJ Lawrence J. Remener, 196th Bde; SP4 Charley L. Rogers, 196th Bde.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

WO1 Michael W. Reed (1st OLC), 123rd Avn Bn. (A/123rd Avn Bn)

SOLDIER'S MEDAL

SP4 Napoleon Black, 198th Bde; 1LT Michael D. Clark, 196th Bde; SP4 Edwin A. Jensen, 198th Bde.

BRONZE STAR MEDAL WITH "V" DEVICE

SP4 Ellwood Anderson (1st OLC), 11th Bde; SP4 Ronald E. Baysinger (1st OLC), 196th Bde; SGT James R. Broadfoot, 123rd Avn Bn (Warlords); SP4 Carlos L. Brock, 196th Bde; SP4 Garnett Brooks Jr., 11th bde; SP4 Paul J. Coriddi, 11th Bde; PFC Nathaniel Dease, 198th Bde; SSG Danny Dingus (1st OLC), 196th Inf; SP5 Robert E. Dontion, 196th Bde; SGT Gary J. Eldridge, 26th Engr Bn; SP4 Danny R. Ellison, 26th Engr Bn; PFC Tony L. Flynn, 11th Bde; SP4 Larry B. Gabriel, 196th Bde; SP4 Robert P. Gleason, 196th Bde; SP4 Pruitt B. Googe, 26th Engr Bn; SP4 Winston B. Harris, 26th Engr Bn; 1LT Kim J. Henningsen, 198th Bde; SP4 Willie Jackson, 196th Bde; SGT Jack W. Johnstone, 196th Bde; 2LT Bruce Kai, 11th Bde; CPT Frank W. Koleszar (4th OLC), 11th Bde; SP4 James C. Lawson, 11th Bde; SP4 Alfred Lopez, 11th Bde; 1SG William J. Martin, 196th Bde; PFC William B. Matson, 196th Bde; SP4 Charley Mayberry, 11th Bde; SGT Jeffrey M. Narcotta (1st OLC), 11th Bde; SGT Harvey M. Pace III, 11th Bde; SSG Barry J. Quigley (1st OLC), 196th Bde; SGT John K. Riggleman, 11th Bde; CPT John S. Walker (3rd OLC), 11th Bde; SSG Michael H. Wallace (1st OLC), 196th Bde; 1LT David A. Waltz (2nd OLC), 196th Bde; PFC Carlton E. Webb, 198th Bde; SP4 Willard R. Williams Jr. 196th Bde; SP4 Larry P. Zimmerman 196th Bde.

AIR MEDAL WITH "V" DEVICE

CPT James Adams (1st OLC), 14th Cbt Avn Bn: **SP4 Michael I. Bridges (1st OLC), 123rd Avn Bn (A/123rd); PFC Richard C. Giamanco (1st OLC), 123rd Avn Bn (A/123rd); WO1 Donald F. Farris (1st OLC), 123rd Avn Bn;** WO1 Harold A. Jackson, 14th Cbt Avn Bn; Donald K. Kramer (1st OLC, 14th Avn Bn; SP4 Jerry L. Littlefield, 11th Bde; PFC Bruce Petrie (1st OLC), 14th Cbt Avn Bn.

(Graphic of a football player) Americal Sports

Americal 4-Wall Handball Champions

Division Special Services held a division wide four- wall handball tournament 6-14 Nov. 69. There were 25 entries in the singles tourney and 11 teams in the doubles tourney. Winners were recognized with trophies presented by BG Edwin Powell. Left to Right, Back Row: CPT Barry Nickerson, MAJ Michael Downes, Gen. Powell, CW2 Harry Groppel. Front Row: CPT James G. Hergen and CPT William Horton. (U.S. Army Photo)

Photo Caption: **Americal 4-Wall Handball Champions**

Division Special Services held a division wide four-wall handball tournament 6-14 Nov. 69. There were 25 entries in the singles tourney and 11 teams in the doubles tourney. Winners were recognized with trophies presented by BG Edwin Powell. Left to Right, Back Row: CPT Barry Nickerson, MAJ Michael Downes, Gen. Powell (BG Edwin; Note: the general is wearing a "Pelican Patch" of **A/123rd Avn Bn**, the unit that provided his helicopter.), CW2 Harry Groppel. Front Row: CPT James G. Hergen and CPT William Horton. (U.S. Army Photo)

[Historian Note: BG Edwin Powell often took controls of the helicopter and flew his own C&C helicopter. According to the pilots that flew the Assistant Division Commander from the 3rd Flight platoon of A/123rd Avn Bn.]

AWARDS
&
DECORATIONS

SILVER STAR MEDAL
AIR MEDAL WITH "V" DEVICE

CW2 Robert E. Bailey (15th Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; **SP5 Terry L. Bennett (3rd Awd), 123rd Avn Bn (Note:A/123rd Avn Bn 2nd Flt Plt);** SP4 Frank R. Brown Jr (2nd Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn: SGT Ralph B. Burchfield (2nd Awd) 123rd Avn Bn; (Note: B/123rd Avn Bn); SP4 Horace M. Cassels (2nd Awd), 14th Avn Bn (Note: 174th AHC);

SP6 Richard O. Colgate, (10th Awd), 14th Avn Bn: SP4 Michael D. Deahl (11th Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; SP4 Peter Gudz (2nd Awd), 123rd Avn Bn; WO1 John T. Haselden (2nd Awd), 123d Avn Bn; WO1 Richard F. Hutson, 14th Cbt Avn Bn; WO1 Richard S. Jones (23rd Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; WO1 Raymond L. Jopes (18th Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; WO1 James R. Leech (2nd Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; SP5 John L. May (3rd Awd, 14th Cbt Avn Bn; 1LT Kenneth E. Mayberry, 26th Engr Bn: SP4 Daniel C. Moody, 1st Cav; SP4 Peter Walsh (2nd Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn.

A W A R D S & D E C O R A T I O N S

SILVER STAR MEDAL

PFC Nicholas M. Ah Yo, 11th Bde; SSG Fredrick I. Ferguson, 11th Bde; SP4 Javier A. Velazquez, 11th Bde.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

WO1 Humphrey F. Collin, 123rd Avn Bn; WO1 Byron H. Disney (1st OLC), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; **WO1 Donald F. Farris, 123rd Avn Bn [A/123rd]** ; CPT Donald R. Hawkins, 123rd Avn Bn; LTC Cecil M. Henry, 196th Bde; WO1 Michael C. Hurst, 14th Cbt Avn Bn; WO1 James D. Jessee Jr, 14th Cbt Avn Bn; MAJ Reginald A. Neuwien, 123rd Avn Bn; CPT Thomas F. O'Hara, 123rd Avn Co {B/123rd]; CPT Theodore J. Shulsen (1st OLC), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; **SP4 Kim A. Strickler, 123rd Avn Bn(1st Flt Plt. A/123rd)**,WO1 William D. Wagner, 14th Cbt Avn Bn; SP-4 Donald T. Wyper, 123rd Avn Bn.

A day with General Baldwin

Story and photos by Sp4 William Hutchison

CHU LAI, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) -- "The Old Man." How many times have you heard that expression? Well, you can stop using it when you refer to the commander of the 23d Infantry Division. If you could spend a day with him, you would believe Major General James L. Baldwin to be anything else but.

The General's working day begins at 7 a.m., or there abouts, and ends whenever the work of the day is finished--which is usually quite late. His week is seven days long, determined by a tight and usually quite full schedule. For a man who tries to see every one of his battalion commanders-each on his own distant LZ; our Vietnamese allies; and the division support commanders at least once a week, there do not seem to be enough hours of daylight.

Unexpected and expected VIP's must be seen, important problems hashed out and an occasional reporter appeased. Two full staff briefings and numerous special briefings take many hours. And yet the General can still log over 250 miles a day in his chopper to visit his outlying commands ***[A/123rd Avn Bn. 3rd Flt Plt. provided the general's helicopter daily plus a chase ship.]***.

On a typical day, with an Army reporter tagging along (dragging by the end of the day), MG Baldwin attended nine tactical briefings and three special intelligence briefings. During each of these briefings--the smallest dealing with the movements and strategy of four companies; the largest dealing with three full brigades-the facts and figures flowed quickly. Even so, he was able to retain and recall what he had been told.

"The General has a truly remarkable ability to retain facts. Facts which I have trouble keeping straight on paper," remarked Captain Peter F. Verga, Folsum, Pa., who is the General's aide de camp.

The day. It begins, as every day, with the General's arrival at his office, where he is confronted with a multi-page folder containing the happenings of the division in the rear and in the field. A brief summary of friendly and enemy locations, movements and activities is also included.

At 7:50 a.m., General Baldwin, accompanied by his aide, attend the morning General Staff briefing. Here, seated in his huge leather chair, facing the divisional situation map, the General is informed of friendly and enemy initiated action, and specifically what happened in the entire division during the previous night. If something troubles him, he questions the appropriate staff officer or comments as to the changes needed.

From the staff briefing, the General goes to a special intelligence briefing, so special that only a dozen or so people ar permitted to attend.

At 9:30 a.m. on this day, after a short chopper ride, the General presented impact awards to valorous members of the **116th Aviation.**

(Continued)

(Continued) **A day with General Baldwin**

Battalion (?116th Assault Helicopter Company?). As the General pinned on each medal, he questioned each recipient in an attempt to know him better. He feels such awards are of the utmost importance for individual morale.

General Baldwin, accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Alfred B. Pursell, the G-2, Lieutenant Colonel Crosbie E. Saint, the G-3, and Verga flew to Da Nang, home of the 196th Infantry Brigade

The General's party was briefed on the operations of the brigade-much more in detail than was given at the Division briefing.

General Baldwin was especially concerned with the different Battalions and their tactical problems. Toward the end of the briefing, the question of drugs was brought up and the General suggested that an Allied effort be intensified to get the pusher.

Very rarely during the whole day did the General actually tell one of his commanders how to do something. He usually suggested a course of action or described a hoped-for outcome. Implementation and basic strategy is left largely to the individual commanders.

After lunch and an aerial tour of Da Nang, the General flew to LZ Linda, home of the **1st Battalion, 46th Infantry**, where Lieutenant Colonel Clyde J. Tate, battalion commander, gave the briefing. The Tactical Operations Center was small and cramped--more boxes than chairs for seats. The numerous radios made listening difficult. In one ear you could hear the briefing; in the other you could hear a company requesting resupply.

In rapid succession, Landing Zone Chloe, home of the **2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry**, and **Yonkers home of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry**, were visited. While enroute to each base, the General was updated on the Division tactical situation. Once again, the General was airborne-destination Tien Phuoc.

Nestled in a valley and flanked by a river, Tien Phuoc is a forward base for the **2nd ARVN Division**. There, General Baldwin was brought up-to-date on the situation of the RVN operating in or near the Division AO (area of operation). Refreshments were served as the General asked for an evaluation of the overall enemy situation. The outlook was favorable.

Later when asked to comment on the ARVN's ability to go it alone. General Baldwin remarked: "They have made great strides forward and with only direct air support, they are fending for themselves in their areas of responsibility."

The 198th Infantry Brigade was the next objective. At LZ Professional, home of the "Old Guard" (**4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry**), the General along with Colonel Charles R. Smith, 198th commander, and Colonel Rutland D. Beard Jr., the commander of the 196th Brigade, were briefed on the battalion situation and then given a look at the 198th's over-all picture. The General stressed that cooperation with the local province chief was essential. He suggested that the chief be invited over for a

(Continued)

(Continued) **A day with General Baldwin**

few "beers".

The question of drugs was again brought up. General Baldwin felt that narcotics constitute one of the division's greatest problem.

"Many military offenses, like falling asleep on guard, not reporting for duty, and violence against officers may often times be correlated with drug use," he said.

Concluding his travels, the Commanding General visited the **1st Battalion, 6th Infantry** in Chu Lai. Then back to Division Headquarters for a brief respite, before the evening briefing.

At the final briefing, the General is once more bombarded with all the facts and figures concerning the situation of the Division for the day. Future plans are presented as well as an Allied wrap-up.

Amazingly the General easily recalls needed information he has gathered that day to enlighten a cloudy tactic problem.

With that final briefing the "reporter's" day ended. The General returned to his office for more meetings while this reporter dragged himself off to ponder a day with the General.

Photo Captions:

1) ABOVE: General Baldwin buckles up in preparation for a day of firebase hopping.
2) BELOW: The General pauses for a personal minutes with Sp/ Maruicio O. Morales, who had been awarded a Silver Star. (**116th AHC crewchief?)**
3) General Baldwin confers with Colonel Clyde J. Tate, commander of the 1/46th Battalion inside LZ Linda's TOC.
4) At LZ Professional the General attends a briefing on the activities of the **4[/]3rd Battalion**. He is flanked by Colonel Charles R. Smith 198th commander (left) and Colonel Rutland D. Beard Jr., the 196th commander.
5) BELOW: General Baldwin opens the breech of a Chicom 70mm Howitzer (model 92) at LZ Professional. The weapon was captured by the "Old Guard" **(4/3rd Bn.)**
6) ABOVE: Donning his cap, General Baldwin leaves the **2/1st Battalion** TOC on LZ Chloe after being briefed on the Battalion's situation.
7) The General "raps" with an infantryman on LZ Yonkers. Accompanying the General is Lieutenant Colonel L.W. Roberts, **3/21st Battalion** commander.

Nighthawk's menu includes VC, NVA

By Cpt. John J. Hollingsworth

FSB BRONCO, (11th Brigade IO) - The real **Nighthawk** flies in search of insects. Vietnam's **Nighthawk** flies the night skies also; but unlike the real Nighthawk, insects are not on its menu--VC and NVA soldiers are.

Nighthawk is the name given to hunter-killer teams of Huey helicopters. The teams fly a high and low ship concept to ferret out VC and NVA soldiers during the hours of darkness. High ships provide illumination and spot targets for low ships by dropping parachute flares.

Low ships have Xenon searchlights for pinpointing targets and miniguns, .50 caliber machineguns and M-60 machineguns for handling anything they find while snooping around nightly in the 11th Infantry Brigade's area of operations (AO).

Captain Norman W. Hayes West Barnstable, Mass., a low ship pilot, explains how **Nighthawk** operates. "Low ships work at lower altitudes and we fly at slow speeds. Low ships are important members of the team, but people don't put enough emphasis on the importance of the high ships. They help by dropping flares and relaying communications. Captain Douglas Delp (**A/123rd Avn Bn.**), Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., a high ship pilot, more or less provides command and control," Hayes said."

Specialist Four James R. Carmean, Chesapeake, Va., a low ship crew chief, pointed out other important functions of the high ships. "They tell us when we are taking fire from directly underneath the ship and the high ships will act as recovery ships in case we go down."

Carmean also operates the low ship's minigun. He had to clear and readjust the minigun three times in a short time. All repairs are done in the dark or by the light of flares from the high ship. "It's kind of embarrassing," he said about the gun's failure, "just before we picked you up, I fired 300 rounds through the minigun."

Carmean worked in a gun store before coming into the Army. He attributes his ability to repair the gun in the dark because "the first thing I learn to do is field strip a weapon and then I learn to fire it."

Working at night adds a new twist to flying and identifying targets. Carmean said it took him about two weeks just to get use to the radio. Then, he said, "I was along for the ride until I started finding targets. The main thing is be observant retain what you see."

Hayes added, "darkness doesn't present a problem for the pilots. After you work an area you really don't need a map to get around. You just need the map to plot targets."

Hayes has high praise for some of "Jungle Warriors" he knows only by their initials. The men operate a radar unit on FSB Liz. Hayes says, "Never in my Nighthawk career could I find anyone who utilizes their assets any better to find targets. One night they told us to move 25 meters to the left and you'll be right over them--that's how good they are."

Nighthawk has to be a little deceptive every once-in-a-while to catch the VC soldiers off guard. Hayes said Nighthawk has been successful "Because we learned the VC soldiers' habits. Sometimes we leave an area and the VC soldiers think we have gone for the night, sometimes we come back and catch them."

The VC soldiers try to deceive the Nighthawk, too. The soldiers will set out ambushes for us.

Nighthawk provides an important service for the 11th Inf. Bde., and keeps the VC soldiers honest at night.

Membership plaques for the members of the 1000 Hour Accident Free Flying Club hang on the wall of the 123d Aviation Battalion's briefing room. These club members presently account for more than 67,000 hours of accident free flying. (Photo by Sp4 Randy Bombard)

Photo Caption: Membership plaques for members of the 1000 Hour Accident Free Flying Club hang on the wall of the 123d Aviation Battalion's briefing room. These club members presently account for more than 67,000 hours of accident free flying (Photo by Sp4 Randy Bombard) (Note: Insignia for the 123rd is a circle inscribed with 123rd Aviation Battalion Griffins. Insignia has a Griffin the center. Army pilot wings are next, then an Americal patch.
The sign reads "1,000 HOUR ACCIDENT FREE CLUB" Names of the pilots are:

LTC VISSERS	MAJ JOSEPH DREW	MAJ RUSHATZ	MAJ POPE	CPT THILL
MAJ CARTER	CW2 GILLESPIE	MAJ WALLACE	CPT DAYLEY	CPT WILBURN
CPT GORECKI	CPT KIMMELL	CPT BARNES	CPT MARION FARRAR	CPT MORELAND
MAJ LETCHWORTH	CPT LINDSEY	CPT BERRYHILL	CW2 MONTGOMERY	CPT MACLEOD
MAJ PHELPS	CPT MERTKE	CPT BRIGHTWELL	CPT KINDRED	CPT MYERS
CW2 CRAIG	CPT MEOLA	CPT BRYAN	CPT PARR	
CW2 DEAN	CPT NICHOLS	CPT COX	CPT LAPOINTE	
CPT DOBBS	CPT RILEY	CPT CRAIG	CPT KUCERA	

WO Anderson joins club with accident free flying

By SP4 Randy Bombard

CHU LAI, (23d Inf. Div. IO)

- Warrant Officer 1 Jeffery Anderson (Pasadena, Calif.) has become the newest member of the **123d Aviation Battalion's** "1000 Hour Accident Free Flying Club." One thousand hours of accident free flying is an accomplishment that anyone who has flown an aircraft can appreciate.

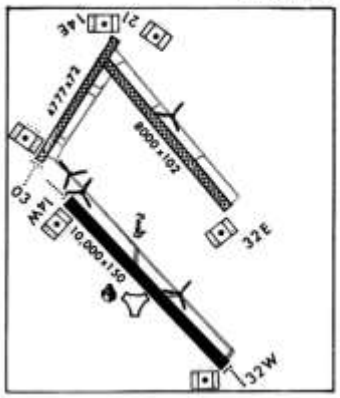
Anderson was presented a "Certificate of Achievement" by the commanding officer of the 16th Combat Aviation Group, Lieutenant Colonel Martin R. Visser, commander of the 123d Aviation Battalion, representing his membership in the "1000 Hour Accident Free flying Club." His plaque will join the others which hang on the wall of the battalion briefing room.

The 1000 hours of accident free flying is truly an outstanding accomplishment, when you consider that most of this time has been logged while under combat conditions, which would not normally be found anywhere else in the world today.

The objective of the club is to give recognition to the pilots who have, through skill and conscientious flying, attained the 1000 hour accident free flying mark. Club members presently account for 67,000 hours of accident free flying, a clear statement in itself of the high quality and standards of the men of the 123d Aviation Battalion.

Available information of interest:

1) The Pilot's guidebook. There are guidebooks for 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970 and 1973 available from the ADVA historian. These have descriptions of bases that were capable of supporting the Caribou fixed wing cargo planes or greater. Each base is described and usually there is a photo of the base. Interesting comments are found, like "do not use the approach on the west or you will receive enemy fire".



°CHU LAI AB, VIETM BT537062 15°25'N 108°42'E
MC 25 B④, L4, 5, 7⑤, 10① 80(AM-2) 102 14E-32E (SWL-27, PSI-400) **(VVCI)**
H100(CON) 150 14W-32W
48(AM-2) 72 03-21 (SWL-27, PSI-400)

JASU - (NC-5), (NC-10A), (GTC-85), (NCPP-105)
FUEL - A+, J4, 0-156, SP②, PRESAIR, LOX
A-GEAR

RWY 14E		M-21(B)② RWY 32E (3500')
RWY 14W E-28(B), M-21(B) (1300') (3500')	M-21(B), E-28(B) (3500') (1300')	RWY 32W
RWY 03 M-21(B) (700')	M-21(B) (700')	RWY 21

AERODROME REMARKS - CAUTION: Due to obst aja to 14W-32W, C-141/B707 acft advs not to touchdown prior to 750' fr thld and to avoid ldg left or rgt of centerline. U. S. controllers on duty 24 hrs dly. Ltd tran maint and prkg. Catapult installed on Rwy 03-21. OLS oval all rwy. C-130 and larger acft use W rwy only. 4 engine acft taxi with outboard engines off. Extv vehicular tfc on rwys. No ovrns Rwys 14E-32E and 03-21. Extv heli and lt acft tfc E rwy, extreme ctn advs. CAUTION: unlgtd 30' power poles and lines 1750' S of Rwy 14E-32E. SEE VIETNAM SPECIAL NOTICES. ① 800' short of thlds Rwys 14W-32W, extreme ctn adv to avoid short ldgs. ③ Aval 15 min ntc. ⑤ Ltd SP and A-4 probe hot refueling aval to tran acft O/R to Twr. ④ Opr SR-SS IFR cond only. ⑤ Rwy 14W-32W only.

COMMUNICATIONS (SFA)
A/G(N) VOICE: Call RASPBERRY CHU LAI - 6723 USB② 3109 USB⑧
⑧APP CON - 383.1 118.3 **(U)** **⑧DEP CON** - 316.0
TOWER① - 340.2 360.2 118.3 **(E)** **GND CON** - 360.2
ALCE© - 281.8 140.4 8134 USB **PFSV: METRO** -

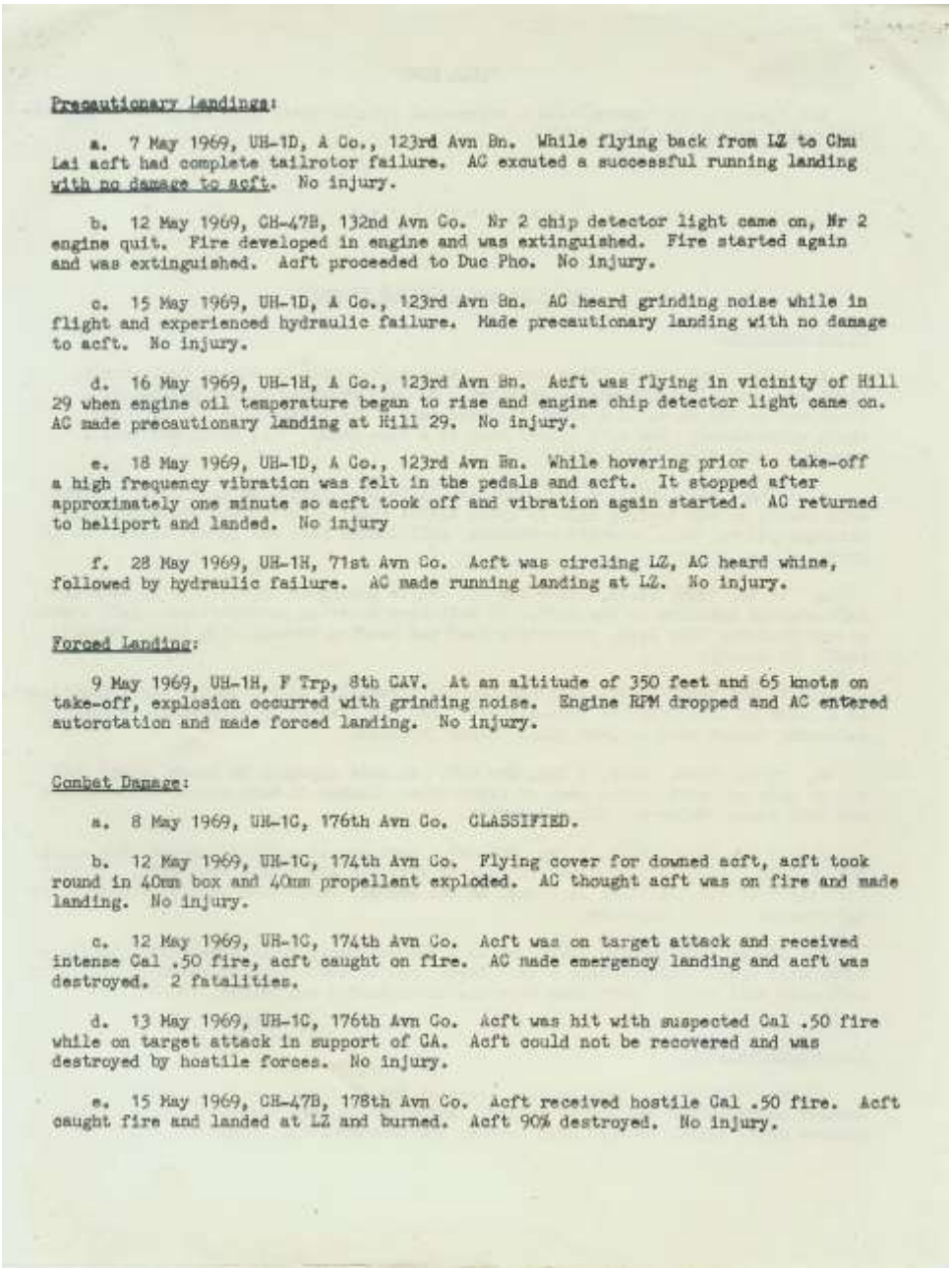
RADIO AIDS TO NAVIGATION
(H)TACAN⑧ CHU Chan 50 At Field
RBn CHU 277.2 At Field

RADAR ④ - Call APP CON 375.2 329.4 316.0 260.5 230.6 119.2 118.3 **(E)**

	RWY	CATEGORY	MDA	RVR	HAA	CEIL-VIS
ASR	14W, 32W	A, B, C	540		515	(600-1)
	14W, 32W	D, E,	540		515	(600-1¼)
PAR	**RWY**	**CATEGORY**	**DH**	**RVR**	**HAT**	**CEIL-VIS**
	14W, 32W	A, B, C, D, E,	225		200	(200-½) G. S. 3°

RADIO/NAV REMARKS - ④ Circle to E, mountainous terrain to W. IFF/SIF svc aval. ⑤ Unusable below 9,000' 155-215 Rad, below 20,000' 215-240 Rad, below 12,000' 240-310 Rad. © Airlift acft ctc 15 min prior to landing. All inbound transport acft ctc and give inbound/outbound load report. ② 2200-1000Z. ⑧ 1000-2200Z. ① Inbd acft ctc prior to 15 NM for tfc advsys and App Con radar separation. All tfc Rwy 14W-32W use 340.2 primary, 360.2 secondary. All tfc Rwy 14E-32E use 360.2.

2) The Americal Division Safety Newsletter. Only one example is available. It covers the quarterly period ending in June 1969. It lists incidents by date and unit with a short description.



Precautionary Landings:

a. 7 May 1969, UH-1D, A Co., 123rd Avn Bn. While flying back from LZ to Chu Lai acft had complete tailrotor failure. AC excuted a successful running landing with no damage to acft. No injury.

b. 12 May 1969, CH-47B, 132nd Avn Co. Nr 2 chip detector light came on, Nr 2 engine quit. Fire developed in engine and was extinguished. Fire started again and was extinguished. Acft proceeded to Duc Pho. No injury.

c. 15 May 1969, UH-1D, A Co., 123rd Avn Bn. AC heard grinding noise while in flight and experienced hydraulic failure. Made precautionary landing with no damage to acft. No injury.

d. 16 May 1969, UH-1H, A Co., 123rd Avn Bn. Acft was flying in vicinity of Hill 29 when engine oil temperature began to rise and engine chip detector light came on. AC made precautionary landing at Hill 29. No injury.

e. 18 May 1969, UH-1D, A Co., 123rd Avn Bn. While hovering prior to take-off a high frequency vibration was felt in the pedals and acft. It stopped after approximately one minute so acft took off and vibration again started. AC returned to heliport and landed. No injury

f. 28 May 1969, UH-1H, 71st Avn Co. Acft was circling LZ, AC heard whine, followed by hydraulic failure. AC made running landing at LZ. No injury.

Forced Landing:

9 May 1969, UH-1H, F Trp, 8th CAV. At an altitude of 350 feet and 65 knots on take-off, explosion occurred with grinding noise. Engine RPM dropped and AC entered autorotation and made forced landing. No injury.

Combat Damage:

a. 8 May 1969, UH-1C, 176th Avn Co. CLASSIFIED.

b. 12 May 1969, UH-1C, 174th Avn Co. Flying cover for downed acft, acft took round in 40mm box and 40mm propellent exploded. AC thought acft was on fire and made landing. No injury.

c. 12 May 1969, UH-1C, 174th Avn Co. Acft was on target attack and received intense Cal .50 fire, acft caught on fire. AC made emergency landing and acft was destroyed. 2 fatalities.

d. 13 May 1969, UH-1C, 176th Avn Co. Acft was hit with suspected Cal .50 fire while on target attack in support of GA. Acft could not be recovered and was destroyed by hostile forces. No injury.

e. 15 May 1969, CH-47B, 178th Avn Co. Acft received hostile Cal .50 fire. Acft caught fire and landed at LZ and burned. Acft 90% destroyed. No injury.

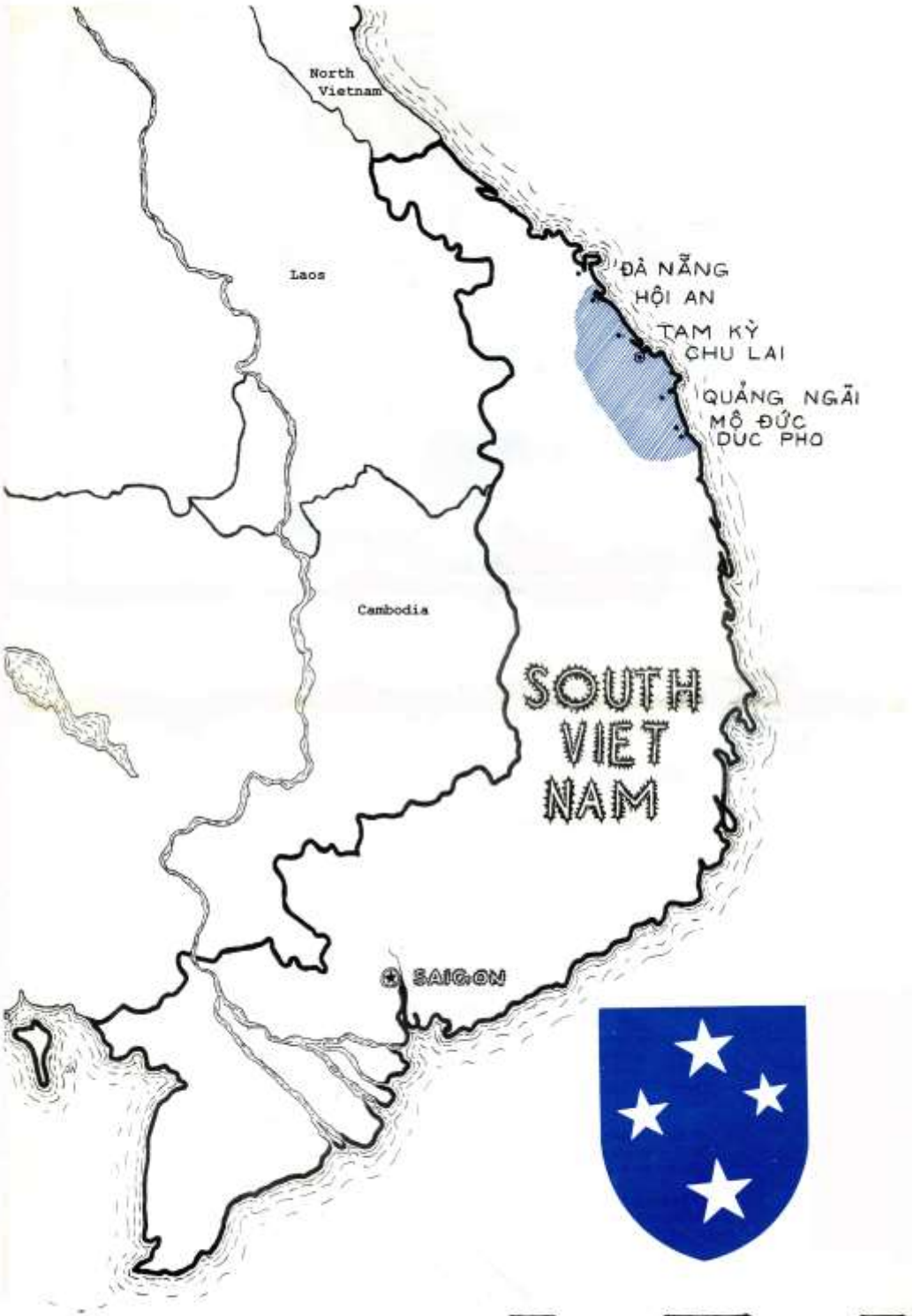
2) Maps. Maps of the area from Chu Lai to LZ Charlie Brown have been pieced together. A map of the Kham Duc, Da Nang area, Nhi Ha, Lam Son 719, Hiep Duc Valley, Chu Lai areas and any place the Americal Division units served are available. Maps could be made for any location in Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia if a grid coordinate or with the name of a FSB or landing zone can be provided. Major LZs have been marked and then the maps have been printed. The color maps have been provided to hundreds of veterans at this point. The maps are usually done in a size that is around 35" inches in width so they fit in a mailing tube. Custom maps are often done to show the location of incidents. These are done on a local printer at a "13 x 19" size.

5) Some 21"x21" size **3D maps** of Vietnam have been done for the Americal Division Veterans' Association. Set up work has been done so that reasonably priced copies can be made. The ones that might be of most interest to the 174th AHC are San Juan Hill, LZ Cork, and Kham Duc. Also, LZ Mary Ann, Hiep Duc Valley, LZ Professional-East, LZ West have been done. A copy might be made for under $150.00. A map can literally be made of any location in the world. The maps are great if the AO has steep terrain, but are not much of an improvement over 2D maps if the terrain is flat. 3D Maps have been loaned or given to support reunions and we are looking to place some maps in military museums.

6) We have a set of Americal Division Casualty Reports from January 1970- through January 1971. It will list the names of men who were wounded including their unit. For those who died while in service during the Vietnam conflict we have a Coffelt Data Base file. It has been updated using our Division's S2/S3 information so for nealy all Americal Division men lost in action, there is information regarding the incident and the location.

The Americal AO

After September 1969 the Marine boundary was shifted south to give the Marines LZ Baldy and LZ Ross. Then After April 1971 the Marines left I Corps, leaving the Americal to defend Da Nang and areas in Thua Thien and Quang Tri provinces.



This map was printed in the first issue of the Americal Division's "Southern Cross" newspaper in May 1968.

This is a bad photo of a 21″x21″ 3D Map made of Kham Duc. May 12, 1968 the base was evacuated. This became the site of the largest number of missing in action for a one day battle in Vietnam. The Warlords participated in this battle that resulted in an estimated 1,200 NVA soldiers KIA.

Comments by ADVA Historian: I was a helicopter crewchief for one year and observed a few things in two years with an Americal Division Aviation Battalion. Pilots had to be highly skilled, but there were things that were really pushing the edge.

1. Gunships. Crazy how the Charlie models had to bounce and slide down the active to get airspeed up to transition to fly off. Spraying sparks from the skids, they would eventually stagger into the air.
2. Slicks. UH-1Ds were underpowered. On hot days we had to slide out over the edge of hilltops and basically free fall to make transition airspeed. The UH-1H helicopters with 300 more horsepower were a lot more tolerant especially for center of balance issues.
3. Night time flare missions and monsoon weather made difficult flying situations. Vertigo issues and getting lost over the South China Sea added a lot of stress.
4. There were issues with ground control systems that we trusted when we were lost in IFR situations. These resulted in pilots being guided into mountains or out to sea. The high number of incidents that occurred made me feel that the enemy had something affecting our systems that we were not aware of.
5. It was dangerous to be in the air after a couple weeks of our units not taking fire. The pilots would become careless and fly like they were stateside. Then after a flare up in action with helicopters in their unit shot up, the pilots were a bit more careful. Something like birds that are more careful following an attack on their flock.
6. I often have heard from pilots that the 105mm howitzers were not as effective as the 2.75 inch rockets. The 105mm rounds we were using were made in WWII with an old type of explosive. The 2.75 inch rockets had an explosive material that was 1,000 times more powerful as from WWII. Initially I had read an article that stated the 2.75 inch rockets were equivalent to a much larger 105mm round. It didn't make sense until I found that the explosive was much more powerful.
7. I have seen more than one 2.75 inch rocket accidently fired off from parked helicopters in their revetments. I remember being told that the rockets only needed 1.5 volts to fire. Each time the rockets hit and penetrated a 55 gallon barrel filled with sand. It was a little amazing how the rocket accelerated right through the barrels. The barrels were mainly there to protect our helicopters from mortar and rocket attacks. The impact with the barrel at least stopped the warhead from arming. On a couple of these incidents that was very fortunate. This was because the rockets landed very close to an open door leading to ammo dump for my Battalion.

[I ordered materials from the National Archives for the Warlords regarding a B/123rd Avn Battalion incident. Perhaps there is similar material on file for the Pelicans as what follows:]

B Company Flight Roster - 6 September 1968 Page 1 of 2

030 - FNMR ARMAMENT
491 - PE
059 - GASN IN TR
169 - STANDOWN
547 - FNMR SHEET METAL

ASC (AERO SCOUT COMPANY)

		A/C	Pilot	Crewchief	Gunner
Guns					
043	A-2	Pearcy	Gray	Lopez	Gilchrist
059	B-L	Rock	Lord	Steinseifer	MEGRATH
547					
491					
030	B-Lead	Livingston	Mehaffey	Christine	
735	A-Lead	Tanner	Lackey/ Brandenburg	Hallett	McCormick
473		Rock		Wilkinson	Kobs

Richard M. Williams

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B Company Flight Roster - 6 September 1968 Page 2 of 2

ASC

185 - EDP

		A/C	Pilot	Crewchief	Gunner
Slicks					
169	A-2	Pearcy	Gray	Lopez	Gilchrist
814		Williams	Reel	Burts	McLaren
934		Pankratz	Cothran	Burchfield	Bustamonte
076		Kellenbenz	Wise	Lefler	Williams
LOHs					
171		(ALFA)	Levy	Kottyan	Burns
172				Bennett	Boutte
174					
175					
176		(BRAVO)	Danforth	Chapin	Hill

185

11BDE EOM Richard M. Williams

OH-6A helicopters lost later.
*6716175 December 9, 1968
*6716171 December 29, 1968
*6716176 January 2, 1969
*6716174 April 17, 1969

AERO SCOUT COMPANY
123RD AVIATION BATTALION
APO 96374

6 Sep 1968

FROM: Aero Scout Company To: S-3, 123rd Avn Bn
SUBJECT: After Action Report (U)
6 Sep 68 attached to 11th LIB

(C) 1. Acft at beginning of days operations:
A. 3 UH-1B Armed Helicopters
B. 1 UH-1C Armed Helicopters
C. 3 UH-1D Armed Helicopters
D. 4 OH-6A Observation Helicopters

(U) 2. NVA KIA: 1330 to 1600 hrs 10 NVA KIA with khaki uniforms at BS565766.

(U) 3. VC/VCS Detained: None
A. 0815 hrs 3 males snatched for questioning at BS788362.
B. 0910 hrs 2 draft age males evading at BS915263.

(C) 4. Reconnaissance Missions:
A. 0800 to 1045 hrs General recon North and South of Duc Pho along the coast. 5 snatches, see 3A&B.
B. 1230 hrs recon area Northeast of Minh Long. 1330 hrs Aero Infantry inserted at BS565766, to search a village. Results of Aero Inf; 10 KIA with khaki uniforms and web gear, captured; 1 RPG 7, dest 10 rnds of RPG ammo, 1 AK-50 machine gun, 1 M-2 carbine with 2 magazines, 5 Chicom grenades, 1 US grenade, 4 M-16 magazines with ammo, 1 knife, medical supplies, 1 wallet with papers, 4 pistol belts (2 with star on buckle), 3 US canteens, 1 other canteen, 1 US ammo pouch, and 6 hammocks. Aero Inf had 1 WHA, shot in arm with small cal, at 1430 hrs and 1 KHA at 1600 hrs. Aero Inf extracted at 1600 hrs. Acft received fire during extraction, small arms and automatic weapons fire, 1 aircraft, utility, was hit in the tail boom.

(C) 5. Weapons Captured:
A. 1 RPG 7 #AE239
B. M-2 Carbine #1221218 with 2 magazines.
C. 1 AK-50 machine gun #EA9106.
D. 5 Chicom and 1 US grenades.

(C) 6. Problems: None

RICHARD M. WILLIAMS JR
1/LT ARTY
Operations Officer

Downgraded at 3 year intervals:
Declassified after 12 years,
DOD DIR 5200.10

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2. Night time flare missions and monsoon weather made difficult flying situations. Vertigo issues and getting lost over the South China Sea added a lot of stress.
3. There were issues with ground control systems that we trusted when we were lost in IFR situations. These resulted in pilots being guided into mountains or out to sea. The high number of incidents that occurred made me feel that the enemy had something affecting our systems that we were not aware of.
4. It was dangerous to be in the air after a couple weeks of our units not taking fire. The pilots would become careless and fly like they were stateside. Then after a flare up in action with helicopters in their unit shot up, the pilots were a bit more careful. Something like birds that are more careful following an attack on their flock.
5. I often have heard from pilots that the 105mm howitzers were not as effective as the 2.75 inch rockets. The 105mm rounds we were using were made in WWII with an old type of explosive. The 2.75 inch rockets had an explosive material that was 1,000 times more powerful as from WWII. Initially I had read an article that stated the 2.75 inch rockets with a 10-17 lb warhead were equivalent to a much larger (33 lb) 105mm warhead. It didn't make sense until I found that the explosive was much more powerful.
6. I have seen more than one 2.75 inch rocket accidently fired off from parked helicopters in their revetments. I remember being told that the rockets only needed 1.5 volts to fire. Each time the rockets hit and penetrated a 55 gallon barrel filled with sand. It was a little amazing how the rocket accelerated right through the barrels. The barrels were mainly there to protect our helicopters from mortar and rocket attacks. The impact with the barrel at least stopped the warhead from arming. On a couple of these incidents that was very fortunate. This was because the rockets landed very close to an open door leading to ammo dump for my Battalion.
7. Cobra helicopters. On my second tour I became the Shop Leader for the Engine Shop of E/723rd. I was required to take test flights to perform a vibration test on the Cobras. I was always a bit afraid of flying in the Cobras because they had a SAS system that replaced the stabilizer bars and etc. like we had on the Hueys. I had been told that it was almost impossible to survive a SAS failure on the Cobra.

8. The worst job: Burning crap. 55-gallon drums cut in half collected the crap under the two hole outhouses. When they filled up someone had to take them out and replace them. A piece of wood was placed through the holes cut at the top of the barrell to lift the heavy barrell out. It was a two man job. Then a replacement empty was inserted. The full barrell was taken to a place where the crap could be burned out. I forget how much diesel fuel/kerosene was poured in. Then someone had to paddle the crap to mix the crap with the fuel. When it was mixed well, then it was set on fire. Man oh man did this stink up the base! The other thing was that old rocket pods from a gunship were used for a piss tube. They were set in the ground so you could piss on the end of the rocket pod. They had some plywood up around most of them to allow some privacy. They smelled awful ripe after a while.
9. The Chu Lai base was always noisy and busy. Helicopters were always coming and going at Ky Ha. At the main base their were jet fighters taking off at all hours. It was difficult to sleep, except you were usually bone tired...flying missions, flying flare at night, pulling guard duty, or KP which sometimes started at 2:00 a.m. and didn't finish until late in the evenings. I received a video from Kurt McFadden from his return trip to Vietnam. In the video was a scene of the Ky Ha base back in 1998. The base was just vacant sand dunes. It shocked me that a place so active and noisy would become a peaceful quiet place.

Photo of the 123rd Combat Aviation Battalion area at Ky Ha.

The Americal Division Veteran's Association obtained the 50 months of Americal Division S2/S3 Daily Tactical Operations Center reports from the National Archives in a five year effort. An additional five years was spent transcribing the documents so they are computer searchable. These documents are currently being shared with many veterans. Copies reside online at the AmericalFoundation.ORG web-site and also at the Americal Division portal at the online Vietnam Archives maintained by Texas Tech. University. Although the information is there it takes a minimal computer skill to successfully search entries for B/123rd Avn Bn.. One problem is that the helicopter units are often not identified in the reporting. If they are identified they might be identified by the unit name, the call sign, or whatever.

The extraction of entries from May 1968, 1969, 1970 and 1971 follow:

These are the Americal Division S2/S3 Pelican entries for May 1968:

sub_unit	Date	Entry	Text
A/123	680509	56	**1/1, CC A/C** vic BT176150 at 1010H eng'd by sniper, returned fire, Res: 1 VC KIA

These are the Americal Division S2/S3 Pelican entries for May 1969:

sub_unit	Date	**Entry**	Text
A/123	690502	**45**	(U) 1-1 Cav, Stiltner, CC/1-1, BT220250, BT220240 at 1520H rec'd approx 80 rds SAF. Neg hits or cas. 1500 ft alt, 80 knots speed. Passed to AAE: LT Lyons.
A/123	690507	**45**	(C) AMCAL, MAJ Doms, G2 DTOC. Request 1xUH-1 Purpose: coord w/2d ARVN Div & VR two LRRP OZs. Duration of msn: 2 hrs. 6xPAX. Time: 080900H May 69. Target area: BS5168 & BS6058. Note: Pick up PAX at Div Admin Pad at 080900H May 69. Approved by G3, MAJ Wagner, 1605H, Passed to AAE. MAJ White 1630H.
A/123	690524	**21**	(C) 1-1 Cav, MAJ Merthens, CC/1-1, Hill 35, (en) BT211239 at 0845H. Rec frag wounds fr H/gren while preparing to land on Hill 35. Co & XO evac to Chu Lai, 27th Surg. CO/1-1 Cav rec minor wounds. XO/1-1 Cav rec minor wounds. Expect XO to rtn for duty today. H/gren set up as BT by A/1-1 Cav, at NDP was det when CC/1-1 came in for landing. Wind fr rotors caused H/gren to explode. Acft dam, frags in fuel tank. Res: 2xUS NBW (E). Notified: C/S SFC Drosdick; G-3, SP Baucum; G-2, LTC Nelson.
		21	[Historian Notes: Former WO1 (Retired Col. Frank StCyr) was the pilot for this 1/1st Cavalry Command and Control mission. LTC Bolte (now Retired BG) was saying good by to each of his troop commanders as he was clearing command of the unit. The last stop was where four booby trapped grenades had been set up on the landing pad by enemy who were assumed to have crawled through the concertina wire around the pad the previous night. The four grenades were at the front, back and sides of the helicopter were triggered by the rotor wash of the helicopter. WO St. Cyr was the only one who did not receive some fragment wounds. BG Philip Bolte received minor wounds smf his XO received more severe wounds. In some reports it states that LTC Dure took command of the 1/1st Cavalry Squadron after BG Bolte was wounded. This is true, but was already scheduled. WO Frank StCyr flew away from the helipad about half a Klick where they and the helicopter was recovered.]

These are the Americal Division S2/S3 Pelican entries for May 1970:

sub_unit	Date	Entry	Text
A/123	700502	48	196th Bde, Sp Goodfriend, **A/123d Avn**, LZ Siberia, at 1350H. UH-1H made precautionary landing because of fuel system failure. Ntfy AAE, CPT Mikesell.
A/123	700519	69	196th Bde, Sgt Fox, **A/123d Avn**, AT905260 at 1745H. Resupply ship for 4-6 ARVN rec SAF on approach w/6xhits. Alt: 1000xft. Res: 1xUS WIA(E). D/O compl 1830H. Acft landed at LZ West. 1xacft made it into LZ, msn aborted. Ntfy AAE, LT Tomlin.
A/123	700521	82	196th Bde, Sgt Fox, **A/123d Avn**, AS943247 at 1655H. Rec unk amt of 51xcal fire w/NCD & neg hits. Alt: 1000xft. Speed: 90xknots. Arty fired w/unk res. Ntfy AAE, CPT Fisher.

These are the Americal Division S2/S3 Pelican entries for May 1971:

sub_unit	Date	Entry	Text
A/123	710505	29	11th Bde, LT McGruder, 1300H. **A/123 UH-1H** while taking off (w/COL Nelson) struck blades w/B/123 UH-1H. Both ships shutdown on SJ (San Juan) Hill. There were neg cas. SJH req a CH47 to lift ships to CHL. Also need ship to pick up COL Nelson and take him to CHL. **A/123 bird** extr at 1500H & B/123 bird extr at 1500H.
A/123	710527	108	(DELAYED) 198th Bde, CPT Basen, US MAT I 59 / RF937, BS743807, 262245H. RF leaders left area & remaining RF's began drinking & discharging wpns. The 7xUS Advisors req permission to be extr fr area & were extr to Son Tinh. Advisors rtn to their position this morning. Extr compl by **A/123** Avn UH-1H & 176 AHC G/S at 2315H Tm reinserted 270939H.

Men who lost their lives in service with A/123rd Avn Bn. Vietnam.
Note: The 161st AHC Pelicans are not included in this listing).

lname	fname	suf	rank	pp	mos	incident	casdate	event	grid loc.
BATEMAN	JAMES		WO		100B	02/17/1970	17-Feb-70	UH-1H 67-17175 MECH FAILURE 8 KM SW OF QUANG NGAI AFLD	BS560660
BATES	BRIAN		PFC		11B2F	02/18/1968	18-Feb-68	LIFT UH-1 SHOT DOWN 6 KM EAST OF LIBERTY BRIDGE 19680218 Go Noi Island.UH-1 680218-12	AT986533
BYRNE	JEFFREY		WO		062B	02/18/1968	18-Feb-68	LIFT UH-1 SHOT DOWN 6 KM EAST OF LIBERTY BRIDGE 19680218 Go Noi Island.UH-1 680218-12	AT986533
CARGILE	CLAUDE		1LT		1981	05/13/1970	25-May-70	UH-1H 66-17132 LOST RPM DURING T/O, 5 KM S-SW OF DIEN BAN	BT035542
HECK	DAVID		SGT	+	67N2F	02/18/1968	18-Feb-68	LIFT UH-1 SHOT DOWN 6 KM EAST OF LIBERTY BRIDGE 19680218 Go Noi Island.UH-1 680218-12	AT986533
HOOPER	WARD	JR	WO		100B	12/09/1969	09-Dec-69	UH-1H 68-16220 HIT HILL, BAD WX 5 KM S-SW OF MINH LONG AFLD	BS508466
MARTINEZ	LE ROY		PFC		67A1F	05/13/1970	25-May-70	UH-1H 66-17132 LOST RPM DURING T/O, 5 KM S-SW OF DIEN BAN	BT035542
MC CLANE	MICHAEL		SP4		67A10	12/09/1969	09-Dec-69	UH-1H 68-16220 HIT HILL, BAD WX 5 KM S-SW OF MINH LONG AFLD	BS508466
MUELLER	STEPHEN		PFC		11B2F	01/27/1968	27-Jan-68	MORTAR ATTACK ON CHU LAI AFLD 19680127	BT537062
MURPHY	RAY		SP4		67N20	03/17/1970	17-Mar-70	UH-1H 68-16262 CRASHED BAD WX, 12 KM W-SW OF CHU LAI AFLD	BT428015
OLIVER	THOMAS		CPT		1981	02/07/1968	07-Feb-68	VICINITY LE NAM, 4 KM E-SE OF LIBERTY BRIDGE 19680207 Goi Noi Island	AT960518
WHITE	DONALD		WO		100B	05/13/1970	13-May-70	UH-1H 66-17132 LOST RPM DURING T/O, 5 KM S-SW OF DIEN BAN	BT035542
WILLIAMS	NOEL		WO		062B	02/18/1968	18-Feb-68	LIFT UH-1 SHOT DOWN 6 KM EAST OF LIBERTY BRIDGE 19680218 Go Noi Island.UH-1 680218-12	AT986533
								Note: WX = Weather....	

[Historian comments:

Bateman was flying a Warlord helicopter that was on a demonstration mission. I had lived in the same hootch with Jack Drye the Warlord crewchief who was also killed with this crash that killed 11 men from the 123rd Aviation Company. The helicopter had been red-"X" for a bad transmission. The red "X" was signed off. A friend of mine from the Warlords threatened to kill the non-aviation sergeant who he believed had signed off on the red-X. It was a big shock to learn of 11 men dying in this crash. Jack Drye had been very depressed when he lived in my hootch while we were both in E/723rd. I was the hootch NCO in charge of the men in the hootch (a crappy job if ever I had one) Jack had gotten a "Dear John" letter from his wife. He was transferring into the Warlords as a crewchief with the Warlords at this time. I had tried to take his .38 caliber pistol away from him as I thought he might commit suicide. But he was not about to let me take his pistol away from him. A short time later Jack Drye moved out into a hootch for Warlords. It is sad that he is listed as having died while in E/723rd Maintenance Battalion when he was already performing missions as a Warlord and had moved in with the Warlords.

McClane was at the NCO club the night before his accident. He was a SP4, but wearing SP5 rank ensignia. I had gone to the NCO club to see what it was all about. It may have been my first time. I knew McClane was only an E-4 and was not supposed to be in the NCO club. I started telling him he should leave before he got in trouble. But he just smiled and kept on drinking. He had me laughing so hard, that I had to leave for fear of giving him away. It was very upsetting to learn of his accident the following day. It had been so much fun the night before. I had talked to his brother. When I told him the story, he said that was just the thing that Michael would have done. The door gunner for this mission was a volunteer door gunner from E/723rd Maintenance Battalion. I had known Edward Fratus, but not very well. Volunteer door gunners from the maintenance area often flew missions. In this case it really hurt. It was pretty scary flying in the monsoon weather.

Murphy was from Connersville, Indiana and was hometown friends with Mickie Reed. Mickie Reed, a Pelican crewchief, got Ray Murphy set up to get a nice safe job as door gunner on the Commanding General's helicopter. Mickie felt responsible for the death of his friend after Ray died from injuries from the crash. MG Ramsey was pleasant enough officer, but he could also be pretty intimidating. The mission was running a bit longer than expected. The Commanding General asked the pilots if they would have enough fuel to make it back OK. They told him they were good. But the commanding general had them fly a bit more after this. When they were ready to go, they were a bit lower on fuel than they planned. Since they had told the general they were good they decided to fly a short cut through some bad weather. I had asked the General about this, and he got pretty sore pretty quick. So I shut up.

They needed ground control to guide them safely using the short cut. The ground control directed them into the side of a mountain. The pilot saw the mountain before impact and flared but the helicopter struck hard. It took 18 hours to locate and recover the injured. It is thought that Ray Murphy would not have died if he had made it to treatment sooner. It took the heroic efforts by the 71st AHC commander, Major Tommie James, to locate the wreck on the mountainside at night in high winds. Radio silence was maintained so the NVA would not be aware that the Americal Division commander. The general's life was spared because the helicoipter had taken two rounds that struck near his head a couple weeks earlier. Because of this armored seat was installed for him. The armored seat protected him from being crushed. A story that seems plausible is that Norman Schwartzkopf was on the first rescue helicopter with a doctor. The helicopter had crashed in the 1/6th Infantry battalion AO and Schwartzkopf was the 1/6th Battalion commanding officer. The crash site was on a steep mountain side. The doctor was told to reppel down to the crash site. He had refused/hesitated. Schwartzkopf supposedly told the doctor he was going to go down one way or the other. He could either repel or Schwartzkopf would throw him out.

Oliver flying on a mission with WO Langford Carpenter. They had landed the helicopter and taken fire. When they were trying to take off they didn't control of their tail rotor. A round had cut the tail rotor control cable. Captain Oliver got out of the helicopter to check this out and was killed by a sniper. Mr. Carpenter was about to step out to help when some infantrymen got to him and took him to cover. It was upsetting to Mr. Carpenter that his fellow Pelican pilots reacted to Captain Oliver's death initially by blaming him for the death of Captain Oliver. That all went away after they learned what had actually happened.

Pelican War Stories by Les Hines. These are some items that I had written down in the 1980s. Some of these came from memory others from a small booklet that I made notes in. Since this compilation is a bit smaller than the other units I have done I will add my stories here. It may be a good thing to keep them all togehter at the end here so they can be ignored if you want. I had over 300 pages written down. Here are ten pages I typed out this morning:

The missions we flew: Engineers Command and Control, 1 Squadron, 1st Cavalry Command and Control, Courier, Adminstration, Brigade Command and Control, Flare missions. When needed we did medevacs, Combat assaults, emergency resupply and basically anything that anyone needed. We were flying a modern version of a jeep.

I slept in a tent soon after I arrived, until there was a hootch I could live in. It was very cold at night in the tent even though it was very hot during the day. I moved in with men mostly Warlords from my AIT classes. There was electricty, but you had to find a socket and bulb if you wanted light. I found someone to sell me one. It was a bit touchy to wire it up as the wires were hot and you couldn't shut the power off. We had showers. They were up in a area where we had to walk a ways from the hootch to get there. Not always warm water.

We had hootch mades to clean and do laundry for us. Barbers came on base to cut our hair. There was more than one barber that we had that was found to be a spy.

I had worked on a maintenance team for the Warlord OH-23G. There were only 4 of us on the one OH-23G team. We worked in the sun and rain some until we got a maintenance tent. Life in the maintenance team was pretty good compared to being a flight crew member, except you didn't get to see much except the base area and maybe a trip the PX once in a while. As a crewmember you would be getting to see what the war was all about. I had tried to become a Warlord crewchief on an OH-23G, but I was too big at 6'2" to fit in the cramped OH-23G. I went out on a test flight with an M-60 to see what I could do. It just did not work out. I had been recruited by Dennis Chapin from the Warlords, a wonderful terribly brave young man with no fear of death.

The OH-23s were being replaced by OH-6A helicopters. So I was moved to a UH-1 maintenance team. I learned a lot about the Hueys on the team. An opening came up in A Company for a UH-1H crew chief. I volunteered. But there was a problem. I had received an appointment to attend the Military Academy, but I had failed the physical because I was color blind. Same thing happened here. But what happened was two pilots took me out and threw out five different smoke grenades and ask me which colors the grenades were. I missed three of the five colors. When they told me, I hung my head. They asked me why I was hanging my head.....I was in. It took me a while to catch on...the Army was desperate for door gunners and crewchiefs. Infantrymen could get out of the field if they volunteered to become a door gunner!

Once I was in the Pelicans it was truly a different life. I did know a lot about the UH-1 helicopters by the time I joined the Pelicans. But there was a lot to learn. I was paired up with Daniel Inmon. He taught me what a crewchief had to do. It was like getting on a roller coaster it was pretty scary and like a roller coaster you weren't going to get off while it was moving. We went out to exotic places. Low leveling was often required. One of the first pilots we flew with was Lance Carpenter. We loved flying low-level with him. He hit a tree and broke out a chin bubble which red 'X'd the ship. With this he temporarily lost his AC commander certification. He quickly regained it, but again he hit another tree with us on board. This one we could really feel the helicopter almost seem to stop and then continue on. Again Mr. Carpenter temporarily lost the Aircraft commander's certification. But we loved Mr. Carpenter! He was so cool and it was great fun to low-level. And we understood that the enemy would not hear or see us until we were pretty much gone by low-leveling.

The M-60s were hard-mounted by the time I became a crewchief. Most of the crews before me had used bunji cords and would even get out on the skids to fire under the helicopter. This was pretty intense and sometimes stray rounds would hit the rotor blades or the floor or even some rounds came near the head of pilots. It was just hard to control firing when the pilots are jinxing around trying to avoid being hit themselves. The M-60s needed a brass bag to keep spent cartridges from flying back and damaging the tail rotor. But more importantly The crewchief's gun wss on the left side. That meant the slip stream would cause the M-60 to jam without the bag. We locked up the brass bags in a conex. But without a diligent door gunner to help guard the conex while you were working on your helicopter another crew would steal your brass bag. The brass bags were not easy to come by. We wore a flight helmet with a mike cord and a mike. We had to adjust the mike about a quarter of an inch from our mouth. If we did not have it right there would be too much wind noise for anyone to understand. We were able to push a button and talk to the pilots. Our biggest job was to yell, "clear left" as we landed. We also were to be on the lookout for aircraft that we might see, especially if they might be on a collision course. We wore an 18 pound chest protector. It was made of a nylon laminate and was to be able to stop .30 caliber rounds. We also sat on a flat square padded piece of armor. After Donald Brown had been killed I added another piece of armor that I sat on. We carried asbestos gloves. When we fired the M-60 we sometimes kept firing too long and it would overheat the barrell. So the gloves were to replace the red-hot barrell with a barrell we carried with us. Before I became a crewchief there was a chute system to feed the

linked ammunition to the M-60. But these had jammed up so frequently they were removed. We then had to hand feed the M-60 from a large ammo box. One of the problems with this was that when we loaded and unloaded the M-60 sometimes we would drop the belt of linked ammo. The ammo would start zzzzzing out of the ammo box. If you were quick you could catch it in time, but if not the ammo links would zzzz out so fast you could not. Then all your linked ammo would fall out into a rice paddy. Then you would beg to share some ammo from your door gunner. Shooting the M-60 from a helicopter you trailed the target to compensate for the helicopter moving forward. At Ft. Rucker the Army let us shoot down some trees with an M-60. It only took a couple seconds at 550 rounds a minute.

One of the door gunners I had was a newby. The door gunners were responsible for cleaning both guns. We had sat down for quite a while at the administrative pad. I noticed that my M-60 was starting to show rust on the outside. I took the M-60 off the mount and tipped it from side to side. I didn't hear the gas cylinder plug moving. So I used my tools to open the access to the gas cylinder. I then spent 10-15 minutes pounding with a 3/4" extension and heavy hammer to free the gas cylinder plug. When I was done the gas cylinder plug was freed up. It would have been a big surprise to find out I had a single shot M-60 in a combat situation. I checked the door gunners M-60 as well. It had the same problem. I chewed out the door gunner. He had not hooked up with another door gunner to learn how to clean the M-60s. I showed him how to clean the weapon myself. I may not have done the best job, as he nearly lost his eye when he tried to disassemble the M-60 for cleaning while weapon was still cocked. The spring had popped out and nearly got his eye.

Another problem for us was our M-16s. They needed to be kept clear of sand and dirt to operate. The Army came up with a cap to put over the end of the barrell. This made life a lot easier for me. There was a lot of sand and dust swirling around when we landed. Before the cap came along we had a lot more effort to keep the M-16 clean.

When we first arrived in country we were issued an M-14 rifle but no cleaning kit. I used "Bryl Cream", Dental Floss, a patch of cloth from a T-shirt, and a tooth brush to do what I could do to keep it from rusting. I got the materials from a sundry pack they gave us when we arrived.

The UH-1D was underpowered especially on a hot day in the mountains. We would often find ourselves overloaded and out of balance. The helicopter didn't have the power to hover off a hill top. So they would slide forward on the skids and literally fall off the hilltop. As we fell the heliocpter would get enough airspeed to transition and off we would go. One day on LZ Cork (November 7, 1968) we did the "Fall". But this time we got caught in a down draft. We were in a misty cloud and I could not see the end of the M-60. The pilot got vertigo and the other pilot had to take over. It was pretty scary as we didn't have enough power to pull out of the down draft. We had nearly hit the end of the line before the helicopter came out of the down draft. That night I found a bat stuck in the left wiper blade. I assumed that the bat had been caught in the wiper blade during the fall.

The 1st flight platoon officer, Captain Jackie Webb, appreciated my hard work and I received the 1st UH-1H helicopter in the 1st flight platoon. The pilots went crazy. They began racing and blowing the doors off the other UH-1D helicopters. Mr. McCaig was one of the worst abusers. The extra 300 horse power was like a drug to the pilots. In short order the quill on the transmission blew a seal. When we got up to losing 2 quarts of fluid in half an hour I red "X"d the ship and 64-13721 went in to maintenance.

When we started the helicopter up in the morning we sometimes had problems with the lead-nicad batteries. Someone would bring a replacement battery and we would be off. But sometimes it could take a while. What we figured out was that as long as the voltage stayed at or above 11.5 volts while the starter was engaged we were OK. The door gunner and I could help by spinning the main rotor prior to engaging the starter. If the voltage dropped below 11.5 volts we had to shut down right away or we would have a hot start which would required that the engine be pulled and repaired to fly again.

There was something about the sound of the Huey starting up. A crackling of the igniter plugs, the increasing pitch in the whine of the engine, the increasing whup whup sound of the main rotor, the flame kicking in the turbine engine, and the 1-1 vibration bouncing the helicopter. Yep you were ready for another day. Flying the missions could be very different depending on the mission. If I was assigned a mission like the engineers we could be in high stress fear for nearly a week. Or if we were flying a mission like the "Courier Mission" we would be so bored we had trouble staying a wake. If I had a week of flying the Engineers I would be so stressed out I could hardly stand it. I wanted something less stressful. But then when we got the courier mission I became so bored I wanted back on a more exciting mission.

One of the stories I had heard was that a Pelican helicopter had taken fire. The pilots couldn't raise the door gunner on the radio. When they landed, they discovered the door gunner had been sleeping. The door gunner was fired from his door gunner position.

Everyone wanted to fly the 26th Engineer mission with LTC Hoey. He used our helicopters to attack bunkers and etc. One day CE Bill Campbell flew the mission and impressed LTC Hoey. Bill had thrown two grenades. One went right into the enemy bunker, the second bounceed first then also went in. From that point on no one else got the mission as crewchief except Campbell.

March 3, 1969 LTC Stinson was killed on Pelican 737 with our Platoon Sergeant Timothy Smith flying as crewchief. The mission was to fly the 198th Bde commander that day. LTC Stinson the battalion commander for the 1/52nd Infantry borrowed the helicopter to get an emergency resupply of ammo to his men and carry out some critically wounded men. LTC Stinson was holding a dead body from falling out of the helicopter when he was hit in the femur artery and bled to death before they could reach medical facilities. I remember this because Sgt. Smith took three days off and had me take over as acting platoon sergeant. I was also to fly his mission on Pelican 737. The helicopter had taken two hits in the tail boom. The sheet metal shop stop drilled the area and riveted patches which were painted with yellow Zinc-Chromate paint. It was late before sheet metal was done. I then took the helicopter to the wash rack and washed and washed and washed to get the blood out. It was around 4:00 a.m. before I finally had enough. I could not get all the blood out. But I had to sleep. I slept on the helicopter for an hour or so before the day started.

I remember that the soldiers from the 1/52nd really cared about LTC Stinson. LZ Buff was renamed to LZ Stinson. That caused me to be confused. The name change was confusing to others as well. The 1/52 Inf. Battalion was having a hard time. A Company had sustained a 70% casualty rate and the battalion was replaced by the 1/46th Inf. Bn. after having been declared combat ineffective. The U.S. Army considered a unit to be combat ineffective when they reached a 40% casualty rate).

March 7, 1969 Russ Jones was the pilot and CE Wolfe was the crewchief. They were doing an emergency ammo resupply and medevac for soldiers of D 3/21st Inf. Battalion with the 196th Bde Commander, future General Fritz Kroesen. They took a mortar or rocket near the helicopter when it landed. A soldier from D 3/21st absorbed a lot of the blast or it would have probably killed General Kroesen. Pilot Russ Jones was severely wounded and medevaced to Japan. He was medically discharged from the service from his wounds. CE Wolfe was sent off to a hospital at Cam Ranh Bay. Months passed before Wolfe returned. I asked why he had been gone much longer than we had expected. He explained that he was hiding out in the hospital. He was not so keen on flying missions anymore. He gave me the "Are you crazy look" when I expressed my surprise at his answer.

I did not connect the dots at the time, but I was his replacement for the Brigade commander mission. I began flying with a KY-28 console for General Kroesen. Then we did some missions for Col. Tully and later for Col. Tackaberry.

The KY-28 was used to encrypt communications. If we were down and there was a chance the KY-28 was to be captured we were to pull an encryption board out of the console to clear the encryption code that was set every morning before we took off. Then we were to destroy the console as best we could. Shoot it up or frag it or whatever.

I was not used to the VIP stuff required for a brigade commander. On the first mission for Kroesen, the colonel left his flight helmet sitting in his seat when he left the helicopter. The helmet fell out when we went to refuel at LZ Baldy. I do not know if the pilots were playing a trick on me or not, but they told me the helmet had fallen out in a mine field. I had to retrieve the helmet standing out on the skids. After thay I had to be careful of the Colonel's flight helmet.

General Kroesen surprised me by coming back and talking to me. He told me to be watchful and report to him anything unusual. Wow! Most of the officers never spoke to me. On some missions we did not get to eat because we were not allowed in an officer's mess, unless our pilots stuck up for us. Not only that but he was counting on me!

I flew on command and control missions for both the 198th and 196th Brigade commanders. I didn't realize it at the time, but the 196th and 198th Brigade aviation sections had been taken over by A/123rd Avn Bn. We got their pilots and the missions for a time. Then, I think the Brigades got their aviation sections back later.

This is from an assault we did for the 3/21st in May 1969 near Nui Yon. A lot was going on in May of 1969. The KY28 council was removed from my helicopter and we did a Combat Assault into LZ Professional the day after they killed 48 sappers in the wire. We were advised to clear the helicopter if we were hit by a recoilless rifle firing on the pad to the south from Hill 497. Then somone would bulldoze our helicopter off the side. I laughed to myself, as I thought this was so absurd. Who would drive a bulldozer if they were able to hit a helicopter? And doing an assault into a battalion headquarters what is up with that. We did a lift for some ARVNs who were trying to retake Nui Yon. We carried 18 ARVNs on the lift which amazed me. Normally 11 Americans would be really be pushing the envelope. I recently read some documentation that might indicate that all the ARVNs we inserted had been killed.

We had come into an area near Hau Duc shortly after an ambush had hit a unit of the 1/52nd Infantry Battalion. The NVA had used tear gas in their attack which we could still see in the air, although I assumed it was odd colored fog. A helicopter and crew from my company was already there. The Pelican door gunner on that helicopter had been tasked to police up after the battle site. He was nearly in tears as he explained that he had picked up pieces of brain and put them in a helmet. I became a bit emotional after this story. After this I heard the Brigade commander telling the 1/52 commander something about losing 18 men, how bad he had it out there, and that he would put in a good word with the general. This made me upset. I had mistakenly thought there were 18 men killed in the action. It was bad but not that bad, I was emotional and had this story wrong in my head for over fifty years.

We flew some drunken officers back from parties held at Chu Lai. It was pretty intense stuff. We were flying into different LZs. These were some bad places at night. We couldn't use our landing lights. So we had to guide the helicopter in among a bunch of radio antennaes with only a small light in a bean bag to show us where to land. And the officers were needed to be steadied so they didn't fall out of the helicopters. It might have been OK if we were doing a medevac to save someone's life, but I thought this was a bit much for officers who were just partying.

On a mission we flew to LZ Judy the base was being laid siege. My pilot Mr. McCaig began calling on a field phone to determine where the NVA positions were. He planned to fly out where they weren't. When we were ready to go, my gunner, refused. He would not fly out with the dead bodies in the helicopter. He had come from the infantry and had no problems staying on a fire base that was under siege. But I wanted to get out before someone mortared our helicopter. He just had a bad feeling and could not be persuaded. It took 15-20 minutes before another Pelican helicopter showed up. We then exchanged door gunners and the mission went on. Everyone liked the door gunner and I am pretty sure nothing much was made of this event.

On a mission with the 1st/1st Cavalry there was a convoy lead by M-48 tanks headed to Fiddler's Green near Thang Binh during Operation Hardin Falls. I watched as the convoy approached a disturbed patch in the road. The lead tank stopped, the tank commander observed the situation for a little while, then they pulled off to the right and bam. The hit a mine that disabled the tank's tracks. Wow, my head hurt processing what had happened. The NVA knew the tank commander would stop, how far away they would stop from the disturbnce, and then they knew the tank would turn right.

On a mission with 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry I observed an M-48 tank hit a 500 lb bomb booby trap in a rice paddy. The 17 ton turret was blown into the air so high that I could not see it until it starting falling back down. All the crewmen in the tank were killed.

We did a snatch mission for the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry. The commander sent out an officer with us to the scene of a recent battle. All around us were enemy troops running through rice paddies as fast as they could. If I had wanted to I could could have had 5-10 kills, but the officer told us to focus only on getting the prisoner. We came up along side of this Vietnamese beating feet through a rice paddy. I had the M-60 pointed at him and their were a couple M-16s pointed at him. His expression was haunting. He looked as though he knew he was about to be killed. We picked him up and brought him back.

The Pelicans from the 161st AHC did Special Forces missions. This continued with A/123rd Pelicans. There were three helicopters assigned to Khe Sanh, Phu Bai, and Da Nang. It was mysterious stuff. The crews for these missions were sworn to secrecy. So not even the commanders in our company knew what was really going on for these missions. Only recently some information has come out in the book, "Our Helicopter War".

One of the crewchiefs who flew the Special Forces missions was always acting like he was better than the rest of us. We all had a good snicker when his helicopter was peppered with schrapnel from head to toe from an M-26 grenade. No one was hurt seriously. He had dropped a grenade out of the helicopter. The grenade carried by the momentum stayed with the helicopter and went off under the helicopter. You needed to throw the grenade not drop it...I tried to contact him years, later and his family would not let me talk to him, because he was having PTSD issues.

Hines Photo: Nungs we picked up from LZ Prep. Dropped off in Laos. They received $800 for each set of ears.

I flew one mission into Laos with Nung mercenaries. I was told that they were to be paid $800 per set of ears. They really did look tough.

Two friendly fire incidents.

1) We test fired our guns shooting sharks in the South China Sea. One day Mr. McCaig was contacted by the USO lifeguards. They wanted a helicopter to kill some sharks in the USO beach ares. Mr. McCaig positioned me over several sharks. I opened up on one and had cut him in half with about 70 rounds from the M-60, when Mr. McCaig started shouting stop, stop.

It turned out that the rounds were richocheting off the water into the base at Chu Lai. We came back to Ky Ha and landed. Mr. McCaig red "X"'d the ship and told me to leave the area and stay low for a while. I did and we never heard anymore about the incident.

2) We were called in on some action involving H/17th Cavalry arrmor. They had been fired on by an RPG. When we arrived the tracks were moving out pretty quickly away from the source of the RPG fire. We circled around and were directed to shoot up a wooded area. The pilot directed me and adjusted my M-60 fire. He was telling me I was firing exactly where he wanted me to fire. Suddenly there was a call telling us to cease firing. Then the pilot started asking me what I had done? Apparently, I was going to be scape goated and things didn't look very good. Then we found out that no one had been hit by my fire. As we continued to orbit overhead I saw the NVA soldier on a rice paddy dike with an RPG launcher. I asked if we could fire on him as he was a couple hundred yards away from cover and and easy target. However, the soldiers on the ground were still upset with us and said they would take care of it.

In January 1969 there was a sapper attack on LZ Center. This is a photo of a Russian flame thrower captured. The officer who showed us some of the weapons, said this was better than the U.S. flamethrowers. I had a funny feeling hearing that the NVA were using flamethrowers on us. This was not one of the weapons and munitions we flew out over the South China Sea and dumped in deep water.

In the 1980s I had made a huge effort to locate men I had served with in the 123rd Aviation Battalion. I was able to locate about 200 men. I was surprised that a great number of them were having issues and did not want to make contact or face some of the terrible events they had experienced.

The first door gunner I had had been wounded standing in line for the mess hall from a rocket during Tet. The doctor told him he had a million dollar wound. He would be going home. The next day the doctor told him because of the Tet Attack more men were being called up for Vietnam service. As a result he was not going home. I felt that because of this he always had a chip on his shoulder. I will always remember October 11, 1968. We had been flying a mission with the 1/1st Cavalry. But we were not needed and let off the mission early. The pilots decided to make a run to the PX in DaNang. This apparently was not authorized, so we couldn't call "Salvation" to find a route safe from artillery fires. So we flew at a lower altitude than normal, but not low-level. I heard a burst from an AK-47 followed by a solid thump. My door gunner wasn't certain if he had been hit or not. He checked and found the round had hit the gun mount where his left foot was resting. To my surprise we swung around to go back. Another burst and another thunk again at the end of the burst. This round hit under the jump seat of a passenger sitting an arms length away. Some pieces of aluminum schrapnel from the floor gave him some minor wounds. The bullet went on up and hit the ceiling. I was on deck to shoot back. The M-60 kept jamming and finally my door gunner took over. He killed a young girl who had been firing an AK-47. I connected with my door gunner in 2015 at a ceremony at Ft. Benning. He told me that he had given me the bad gun. I was thinking, "Whaat!" "Bad Gun!" ..... I did not say anything to him about it. It had been over forty years ago. But I was thinking, "All we needed to do was go to the armorer and they would fix or replace our guns." I was really freaking out trying to keep the gun firing.

On another Barrier Island sweep we had landed our helicopter close to the South China seashore. We were waiting for the 1st Cavalry Commander to finish his meetings with the troop commanders. We had been shut down for a short and I had just tied down the main rotor and moved into an artillery crater near the helicopter to be more out of sight from any enemy in the area.

Then a couple cavalrymen came to me and asked for assistance. There was a sniper to the north of our position. They asked me if I would use my M-60 to help them. One of the pilots was nearby and he cleared me to help them. So I got back into my back seat in the helicopter. One of the cavalrymen moved out about 200 meters closer to the sniper location. He positioned himself behind some young trees and a mound of dirt. Then two of the soldiers coordinated my firing by voice and hand signals to adjust my fire. After a couple hundred rounds they gave me the all clear. I could see by the wide grins on their faces that they were happy with the results. The result was that the sniper had been driven off or killed. It really seemed unreal to fire from a Huey that was shut down. I had my door gunner take the photo while I was firing. The haze in the photo is the smoke from the M-60 firing. See below:

We were flying out in front of a 1st Squadron, 1st Regiment sweep going north on Cigar Island. the 1st Squadron, 1st Regimental Command Sergeant Major was CSM Matthew Ogas. He had borrowed by M-16 and was firing at enemy scurrying away from the oncoming track vehicles. He directed me to fire at a hootch where he had seen an enemy enter. I began firing and had put in hundreds of rounds into the hootch when my gun jammed. In a split second a young Vietnamese boy scrambled out and ran away before I could clear my M-60. I was pretty amazed that anyone in the hootch could survive the fusilade I had poured into it. Suddenly, the tracks that behind us opened up and my amazement changed to fear. There was a wall of tracers from richochets coming up all around us. Our pilot quickly moved us out of harms way. Then I again was amazed. This time because we had not taken any hits from the massive firepower unleashed by the online troops. The photo below shows CSM with my M-16 a couple minutes before this incident occurred:

In January 1969 the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry participated in the largest Amphibious assault since the landing at Inchon Korea. The Army was able to borrow LST craft from the Marines in DaNang. There was a submarine that surfaced off shore which was pretty impressive. Also there were Navy seals that had come ashore prior to the landing. Perhaps they stirred up a large Manta Ray that we observed in the water prior to the amphibious landing. A large number of the 52 ton M-48 tanks came ashore in the LST landing craft. Once the got into shallow water the tanks drove off out from the LSTs to shore.

However, one tank had driven out a little way from the LST and then started drifting in the water like it was floating. Only it slipped under the water and sank. I did not see the rest of this story personally, but I had met a group of 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment veterans at a reunion in 1995 in Chicago. They explained that the men had tried to pull the tank out of the water with 2-3 vehicles. They failed, so they were preparing to blow the tank in place. An officer stopped them and got more tracks involved in the recovery process. So the tank was rescued. Later this day I observed three tracks on the large bridge that had collapsed over the Son Tra Khuc river. According to the 1st Squadron, 1st Regiment veterans I spoke to in Chicago this was the tank that had been recovered along with a couple tracks that were towing it back to Hawk Hill. I was confused about the direction the tracks were going as the gun on the tank was pointing to the rear. But they explained that was how the tank would have had the gun pointed while on the recovery trip. The bridge collapse was a great embarrassment as there were lots of news coverage of the amphibious assault. It took the 26th Engineers most of the day to clear the three tanks from the bridge and set up a bypass bridge. The operation was called "Bold Mariner" by Marines participating in the operation and "Russell Beach" by the Army.

This is a photo of the bridge shown before or after it had collapsed. The bridge had collapsed so that the tracks were not dumped into the water. The water level at the time was about the same as shown in this photo.

I was 18 when I arrived in Vietnam and 21 when I left. One mission we had was to fly out to a Montagnard camp. We were told not to stare at the women, even though they were bare breasted. The Montagnard men might be provoked if they saw someone staring at their women. I tried pretty hard but I could not avoid staring.

I have a photo taken during a mortar attack at Tien Phuoc. When they start walking the mortars in you need to get the helicopter cranking and get out or you won't have a ride out. In the photo there is an ARVN soldier running for cover. He is just a blur. We made it out.

I was there from Feburary 1968 through April 1970. In 1968 it was different than serving 1969. We were still trying to win the war. After January 1969, our new President was comitted to getting our troops out. So everyone knew we were only buying time, there was not going to be a victory. More men were getting drunk, using drugs and etc. Their morale was not so good. April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated. I had many Negro friends before that date, and the day after I am not so sure that any Negro below the rank of sergeant would even speak to me. It was really hard.

As an example of something that I would never have thought possible in 1968 happened in 1969. I was serving as sergeant of the guard doing rounds on the flight line. A call came for the flare ship to go up to support a medevac for a wounded Marine in the Hoi An area. In 1968 the crews were with the ship while on call. When this call came down, the crewchief did not show up. I left my post as sergeant of the guard and went up on the flare mission. The mission was cancelled shortly after we got in the air. I was called in to see the 1st Sergeant the following day. I explained what had happened fully expecting to be busted or worse. However, I was surpised that the 1st Sgt. simply said OK. That was it.

Kurt McFadden a 1/6th Inf. Bn. provided me with a video from his return to Vietnam in 1997 and 1998. One part of the video is our base at Ky Ha. It shows women digging around in the sandy beach area for food. It is hard to believe that a place so busy with helicopters flying around day and night could be this peaceful today.

Well this is enough of stuff from me. I hope this might help you understand better from this what it was like for an enlisted man to serve with the Pelicans in 1968-69.