



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (7 Mar 58) FOR OT RD-674137

13 March 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 269th
Combat Aviation Battalion, Period Ending 31 October 1967 (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 5b, AR 525-15. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT RD, Operational Reports Branch, within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

1 Incl
as

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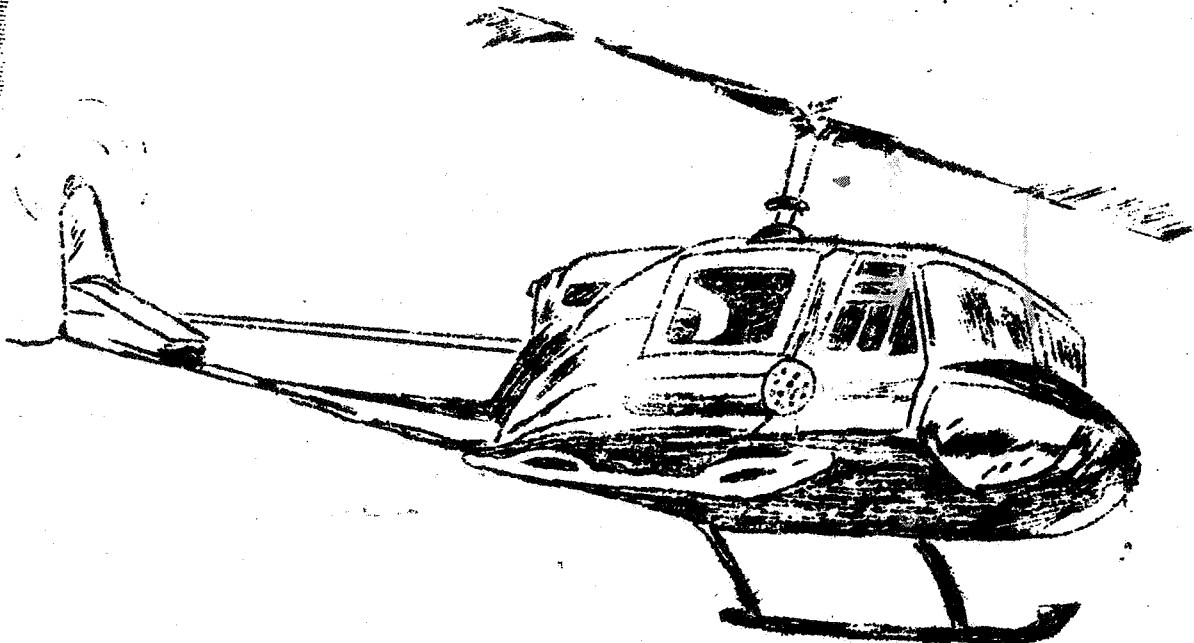
NARA, Date

9/92

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 269TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO 96353
"DISCIPLINED PROFESSIONALS"



**OPERATIONAL REPORT
LESSONS LEARNED (U)**

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Group 4; Downgraded at
3 yr. intervals. De-
classified after 12 yrs.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 269TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO 96353
"DISCIPLINED PROFESSIONALS"

AVGC-F

1 November 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned for Quarterly Period
Ending 31 October 1967 (U)

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

INTRODUCTION

(U) The success of ground operations in VIETNAM is directly proportional to the prudent management of aviation assets. Never in the history of modern warfare have ground forces been so completely dependent on air mobility as they are today on the helicopter in this ASIAN environment. The employment of helicopters and heliborne forces is predicated on a doctrine which is still in the formative stages even today. Army Aviation has taken immense strides forward in brief increments of time. Its growth has been at least hyperbolic. With a concept so new and so extremely vital to the success of the tactics of ground commanders in VIETNAM, it is of paramount importance that an understanding of aviation management and air mobility be possessed not only by aviation officers, but also, and in equal depth, by the commanders and staffs of the supported units of the combat arms.

(U) It is my sincere hope that the comments included in this document will benefit aviation and ground commanders and staffs, both those here in the combat theater, and those training in the deployable units in

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INTRODUCTION

the continental UNITED STATES. The topics of discussion reflect problems encountered through the last three months of continuous combat operations by this command. I assure you that no topic is fictional. Rather, our "lessons learned" have been taught us by the wisest of mentors, experience.

(v) It is with immense pride and satisfaction that I invite your attention to the Operational Report - Lessons Learned of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion. It is, by far, the Combat Aviation Battalion most intensely committed to the conduct of airmobile operations in the REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM.

James H. Merryman
JAMES H. MERRYMAN
LTC, Arty
Commanding

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

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SECTION I--SIGNIFICANT UNIT ACTIVITIES

A. (C) Significant Events

1(c) The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, proven the most aggressive and effective Combat Aviation Battalion in the Republic of Vietnam, has continued its incessant offensive operations against enemy forces in the III Corps Tactical Zone. Primarily in support of the three Brigades of the 25th Infantry Division, the 269th has conducted twenty-four airmobile operations during the ninety-day period of this report.¹ Against enemy forces the 269th has statistically pitted its helicopter companies in Battalion assaults once every eighty-nine hours during the entire span of the three month time frame. Upon completion of Battalion operations, subordinate units were generally released to continue airmobile operations at smaller unit level.² This recurrent operational cycle has afforded this Battalion ample opportunity to establish itself indubitably as the Combat Aviation Battalion conducting the most frequent and most successful airmobile operations in the combat theater today. Composed of three assault helicopter companies, one assault support helicopter company, and one reconnaissance airplane company, the 269th has sufficient resources to complete nearly any mission assigned to a combat aviation unit.

¹ Battalion operation: Combat assault comprised of a minimum of 2 assault helicopter companies, TAC Air, and Artillery support. The 269th has conducted large scale operations ranging from 2 to 6 assault helicopter companies, frequently requiring non-organic company and battalion attachments to come under the operational control of this headquarters.

² During the time frame of this report, the subordinate assault helicopter companies of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion flew a total of 192 company size combat assault missions in addition to the Battalion controlled operations.

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2.(c) Since the termination date of the last quarterly report, no changes have been made in the location of units. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion Headquarters remains at CU CHI, as does the 116th Assault Helicopter Company. The 187th Assault Helicopter Company and the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company, the Battalion's O-1 unit, are co-located at TAY NINH. The 188th Assault Helicopter Company, on 1 August temporarily located at PHU HIEP, Republic of Vietnam, supporting two Republic of Korea Divisions, has returned to its home of origin, DAU TIENG. The 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company remains at BIEN HOA, pending completion of construction of CH-47 facilities at CU CHI.

3.(c) The geographical location of the assault helicopter companies has permitted a nearly permanent mission assignment of each company to a specific Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division. Whenever possible, it has been the Battalion's policy to assign the 116th Assault Helicopter Company missions supporting the 2d Brigade, the 187th missions supporting the 1st Brigade, and the 188th missions supporting the 3d Brigade. The proximity of the base camp locations of the assault helicopter companies to the supported infantry units' Areas of Operations is the least of the benefits derived from such an association. Of greater importance is the rapport established between Assault Helicopter Company Commanders and the supported Infantry Battalion Commanders. The policy establishes a mutual confidence between aviation commanders and the units and ground commanders and units, a confidence which is of utmost importance in maintaining operational stability during critical combat situations.

4.(c) The 188th Assault Helicopter Company, committed at PHU HIEP to

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the support of the 9th Republic of Korea "White Horse" Division and the Capital Republic of Korea "Tiger" Division from 7 July 1967 through 21 August 1967, returned to its home base at DAU TIENG on 24 August 1967. During its assignment at PHU HIEP the 188th Assault Helicopter Company was under the operational control of the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion, 17th Combat Aviation Group. From 1 August through 24 August the 188th had compiled a cumulative total of 6,054 sorties, logging a total of 1,780 flying hours in support of the Republic of Korea forces. 8,571 passengers were carried, and 1,013 tons of cargo were moved. Since the unit's return to III Corps Tactical Zone, its mission has been the same as the mission of the other assault helicopter companies of the Battalion, that of supporting the 25th Infantry Division's airmobile operations.

5(c) The 116th and 187th Assault Helicopter Companies remained the primary airmobile support for the 25th Infantry Division. The 187th on many occasions supported elements of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, on one occasion as part of a larger Battalion controlled effort. All airmobile companies within the Battalion have conducted operations in conjunction with the 1st and 9th Infantry Divisions, ARVN forces, and personnel from Civilian Irregular Defense Groups. The 116th Assault Helicopter Company took part in joint exercises with the Australian Forces located in the BA RIA-VUNG TAU area of III Corps.

6(c) The 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company, newly arrived in country at the start of this reporting period, became fully operational on 15 September 1967. Lack of proper CH-47 parking and maintenance facilities at CU CHI, coupled with a general unpreparedness for a physical relocation of the 242d, has to date precluded the unit's movement from

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BIEN HOA. Construction of revetments, preparation of parking and maintenance areas, and troop billeting arrangements are well astride the programmed progress schedule, however, and immediately upon the projects' completions the CH-47 unit will close on its new station. Presently, in support of the 25th Infantry Division, the CH-47 sorties are flown from CU CHI base camp to forward field sites. This requires daily flight time to be logged from BIEN HOA to CU CHI to BIEN HOA, to and from the unit's primary staging area. The company's physical movement to CU CHI will not only be a considerable convenience, but will also serve as a cumulative flight time controlling factor. During the 30 days following the 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company's becoming operational, the unit had flown 1,602 hours for an average of 53 hours per day on the 16 organic aircraft. During the month of September, the other assault support helicopter companies assigned to the 12th Combat Aviation Group had flown the following hours and averages:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>HOURS</u>	<u>DAILY AVERAGE</u>
205th	1120	36
213th	1154	37
200th	929	30
147th	988	32

The 242d, in its initial 30 days of operation, exceeded the highest time flown by any other assault support helicopter company in 12th Combat Aviation Group by nearly 500 hours. During the last sixteen days of October the average hours flown by the 242d has continued to rise. On a daily basis the 242d has committed an average of more than six CH-47

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per day. Considering that this unit arrived in country less than two months ago, and all its ASL and PLL were not at 100% fill on arrival, the 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company's performance has truly been outstanding.

7.(c) The 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company, having arrived in country during the previous quarter, has had its aircraft and crew fully operational for some time. Of primary concern to the unit was the construction of aircraft revetments. The 21st completed construction of aircraft revetments at TAY NINH Base Camp on 18 August 1967. Twenty-two aircraft parking spaces and four aircraft maintenance areas have been revetted. Six parking spaces and all maintenance areas have been improved by adding roofs over the center portion of the revetments, extending over the engine and wings of the parked aircraft. This provides protection from general weather conditions, thereby enhancing maintenance activities. Additional construction recently completed at the flight line has been an avionics repair shop, four platoon headquarters buildings, a technical supply office, and flight operations and administration building. Construction in the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company contonement area continues, with a supply building, orderly room, and four barracks completed. A mess hall has been rehabilitated and four additional barracks are under construction.

8.(c) During the quarter of concern, 1 August through 31 October, the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion has again demonstrated, in directly supporting infantry ground forces fighting in one of the most hotly contested areas of Vietnam, that as a Combat Aviation Battalion, it

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stands second to no other unit in the execution of its mission. The resolve of each individual within the Battalion is attested to by the statistical summation of the Battalion's achievements.

9(c) From 1 August through 31 October 1967, the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion flew 132,553 sorties, logging a total of 37,261 accumulated flying hours. 146,984 passengers were carried and 15,161 tons of cargo were moved in support of ground forces. 216 Viet Cong were killed during the period by Army Aircraft of this Battalion. The 269th evacuated a total of 315 medical casualties.

10(c) During the period the Battalion itself suffered 3 KIA and 59 WIA. 178 aircraft received combat damage from hits by enemy ground fire. Most of the hostile fire taken was so taken during a total of 90 days of combat assault missions in support of ground forces.

11(c) The figures shown are continual evidence that the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion supports some of the most aggressive action in the war today. A further statistical account follows for your interest and perusal:

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12.(v) The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion's principal operations during the quarter have been described quite briefly thus far. A more detailed and precise account follows.

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B. (U) Command.

1.(v) The primary mission of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion Headquarters is to provide command, control, staff planning, and administrative supervision for its assigned aviation units. Subordinate assault helicopter companies have as their primary mission the airlifting of combat troops in airmobile operations, while the extension of surveillance and target acquisition capabilities of ground units is the purpose of the reconnaissance airplane company. The Battalion's assault support helicopter company provides a logistical and tactical airlift capability for movement of troops and supplies.

2.(v) Organization.

a. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion is composed of a Headquarters and Headquarters Company, three assault helicopter companies, one reconnaissance airplane company, and one assault support helicopter company (see Inclosure 1).

3.(v) Personalities.

a. Commander. During the entire period covered by this report the Battalion Commander has been Lieutenant Colonel JAMES H MERRYMAN, 087566, Artillery.

b. Staff. At the close of the reporting period the principal staff officers were:

(1) Executive Officer: Lieutenant Colonel IRWIN K COCKETT, 01930924, Infantry.

(2) S-1: Major STEPHEN J FERSCH, 0330196C, Infantry.

(3) S-2: Captain LYNDON E HOLLOMAN, 05309136, Signal Corps.

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COMMAND

(4) S-3: Major JOHN F ZUGSCHWERT, 094972, Artillery.

(5) S-4: Major GEORGE W MOSES, 073576, Infantry.

c. Unit Commanders. At the close of the reporting period the unit commanders of subordinate units were:

(1) Headquarters Company: Captain ERNEST D SPRINKEL, 04031017,

Armor.

(2) 116th Assault Helicopter Company: Major CHARLES D FRANKLIN,

077026, Artillery.

(3) 187th Assault Helicopter Company: Major WILLIAM F BAUMAN,

068430, Infantry.

(4) 188th Assault Helicopter Company: Lieutenant Colonel

JOHN H MCWHORTER, JR, 0F106186, Infantry.

(5) 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company: Major ERNEST C STRUM,

04016954, Corps of Engineers.

(6) 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company: Lieutenant Colonel

PAUL L STANSEL, 01931035, Armor.

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C. (U) Personnel and Administrative

1.(u) Maintenance of unit strength:

a. Battalion strength as of 31 October 1967: (See Inclosure 3).

b. Summary of projected gains and losses for the next 90 days:

(See Inclosure 4).

2.(u) Personnel reports: Personnel reports are submitted in accordance with 269th Combat Aviation Battalion Regulation 335-1.

3.(u) Replacements: Replacements have been requisitioned in accordance with USARV Regulation 614-185 for officer personnel (5 months prior to DEROS for non-aviators and 11 months prior to DEROS for aviators); and USARV Regulation 614-202 for enlisted personnel (8 months prior to DEROS for senior enlisted personnel and 6 months prior to DEROS for grades E-1 through E-6 personnel). Replacements are requisitioned on the basis of authorized strength only.

4.(u) Personnel management:

a. Reclassification: Administrative MOS reclassification during the quarter totalled 138.

b. Assignments: Personnel assigned during the quarter were as follows:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
29	40	221

c. Promotions: Promotions during the quarter were as follows:

<u>OFFICERS</u>					
<u>LTC</u>	<u>MAJ</u>	<u>CPT</u>	<u>1LT</u>	<u>2LT</u>	<u>CWO</u>
2	2	2	1	0	1

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PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION

ENLISTED

<u>E-9</u>	<u>E-8</u>	<u>E-7</u>	<u>E-6</u>	<u>E-5</u>	<u>E-4</u>
0	0	2	18	119	165

d. Retirement/reversion to retired status: 2.

e. Rotation to CONUS during the quarter:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
12	5	131

f. Leaves during the quarter:

	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
Emergency	1	1	16
Compassionate	0	0	4
Special	0	0	17
Ordinary	1	4	18

5.(v)R & R for the quarter:

a. Forecasted/requested: 1.

b. Received: 312.

6.(v)Reenlistment program:

a. There were 6 reenlistments during the quarter.

b. The reenlistment program is published in the Battalion paper,

"BLACK BARON RELEASE."

7. Casualties during the quarter:

a. Return to duty:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
5	14	23

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b. Evacuated from combat zone:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
1	1	4

c. Killed in Action:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
3	1	2

8.(v) Prisoners of War. Prisoners of war are turned over to the G2, 25th Infantry Division for safeguarding, processing and evacuation.

9.(v) Civilian personnel. Civilian personnel are hired from the abundant resources of indigenous personnel. The local nationals are hired through two distinct categories, permanent hire and direct daily hire.

a. Permanent hires. Each unit, after submitting requisitions through this Headquarters to 12th Combat Aviation Group, is authorized to employ local nationals on a permanent basis. These people are employed in numerous positions to include kitchen police, carpenters, handymen, extorminators, and secretaries.

b. Permanent hires are employed as follows:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>Number of Permanent Hires Employed</u>
HHC, 269th Cbt Avn Bn	36
21st Recon Apl Co	8
116th Aslt Hel Co	20
187th Aslt Hel Co	18
188th Aslt Hel Co	9
242d Aslt Spt Hel Co	<u>0</u>
TOTAL.....	91

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c. Direct daily hires. Direct daily hires are employed on a daily, as required, basis. They are used primarily for unskilled labor such as filling sandbags, general police, etc. Currently all units employ daily hires to aid in constructing aircraft revetments. Authorization to hire daily hires is obtained from 12th Combat Aviation Group Headquarters. Funds are allocated on a quantity basis to the Battalion. Each unit employed an average of 28 direct hires each working day during the 3d quarter, CY 1967. The wages paid vary from \$VN 70 to \$VN 85 per 8-hour work day. Local agreement requires 1 Vietnamese supervisor to be employed for each 20 Vietnamese laborers employed. In addition, it is necessary to have 1 US Army individual to supervise each group employed.

10.(v) Morale and personnel services.

a. Character Guidance. The Character Guidance Program is supervised by the Battalion Chaplain. Classes are held for the EM in those companies requesting them. Those who cannot attend are provided a written briefing sheet on each month's topic. This sheet is initialled and returned to indicate that it has been read. While this is not ideal, it allows the widest possible coverage when men cannot be released from essential duties to attend classes.

b. Religious services. Religious services of the three major faiths are available to all personnel within the command. There are also denominational services provided for some personnel.

(1) Catholic Chaplains from adjacent units provide services for our Catholic personnel in all units. Catholics in HHC attend Confessions and Mass in the 2d Brigade Chapel at 0830 or 1030 hours on Sundays.

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Those in the 187th Assault Helicopter Company and the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company may attend at 1400 hours on Sundays in the Memorial Chapel at TAY NINH. Mass is held at 1600 hours on Sundays in the Memorial Chapel at DAU TIENG and can be attended by men from the 188th Assault Helicopter Company. Personnel of the 116th Assault Helicopter Company attend Mass in the 25th Division Memorial Chapel on Sundays at 1030 hours. Several Masses are available to Catholics of the 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company at BIEN HOA.

(2) Jewish personnel may attend services in the 25th Division Memorial Chapel at CU CHI on Fridays at 1900 hours and Saturdays at 0900 hours. Provisions are made to allow Jewish personnel to attend services for High Holy Days in SAIGON on TDY at no expense to the government.

(3) The Battalion Chaplain conducts Protestant services for the units as follows:

(a) 188th Aslt Hel Co: 1930 hours on Saturdays in the company mess hall.

(b) 187th Aslt Hel Co and 21st Recon Apl Co: 0830 hours on Sundays in the 187th Briefing Room.

(c) HHC, 269th Cbt Avn Bn: 1100 hours on Sundays in the Battalion Conference Room.

(d) Protestant personnel of the 116th Assault Helicopter Company attend services in the 25th Division Memorial Chapel at 0830 hours on Sundays. Protestants of the 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company attend services in the mess hall of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion in BIEN HOA.

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(4) The denominational services available are:

(a) Episcopal Holy Communion: 1130 hours on Sundays in the 25th Division Memorial Chapel.

(b) Lutheran Worship: 1300 hours on Sundays in 25th Support Command Chapel at CU CHI.

(c) Church of the Latter Day Saints: 0930 and 1030 hours on Sundays in the 116th Assault Helicopter Company Officers Club. Latter Day Saints services are also available in TAY NINH at 1800 hours on Sundays, and at DAU TIENG at 1400 and 1430 hours on Sundays in the Chapel.

c. Postal service. Postal service is provided by the 25th Infantry Division APO. Mail is delivered twice daily.

d. Special Services. An abundance of Special Services equipment is available to all the companies. Due to the 24 hours per day operations conducted by these units, a regularly programmed sports schedule is impossible. However, as much recreational time as possible is devoted to sports and crafts. In addition, movies are shown nightly to all companies.

11.(v) Discipline, Law, and Order.

a. There have been 8 Special Courts Martial during the 3d quarter CY 1967.

b. There have been no cases referred to General Court Martial.

c. There have been no Summary Courts Martial.

d. There have been two cases of confinement, both of which have been suspended.

12. Headquarters management.

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a. The Battalion maintains a daily courier, utilizing a UH-1D helicopter. This helicopter's normal schedule is 0800 to 1710 hours. Its route of flight includes two stops daily at 12th Combat Aviation Group Headquarters and at each of the subordinate companies, one before noon and one after noon.

b. Publications. A continual review of publications necessary but not on hand is being made. All requisitions more than 6 months old are being discarded and new ones are being drawn up.

c. Reproduction activities. Each unit has its own manually operated mimeograph machine which is constantly being used for numerous jobs. No backup is provided in the event of a breakdown. Each unit should have available a standby machine in order to preclude the halting of operations due to a breakdown.

13.(v) Miscellaneous.

a. Safety program. The effectiveness of the unit's safety program is evidenced by the paucity of vehicle accidents.

b. General education development. Facilities within the 25th Infantry Division for education development are adequate. (However, in the outlying subordinate units it is scarce).

c. Exchange facilities. Adequate exchange facilities are available to all units within the command. All exchanges are constantly improving.

d. Clubs and messes. At present all organic organizations have their own messing facilities. All companies have EM/NCO Clubs and two companies have Officers Clubs and two others have requests in at present

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PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION

to establish Officers Clubs. The remaining two companies are awaiting moves to permanent locations prior to establishing their Officers Clubs.

14.(v) Command Information. The Command Information program of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion is extremely effective. Dissemination of Command Information material is accomplished largely through the Message Center facilities available. Material received from higher headquarters is broken down proportionately into unit distribution. Pertinent material from higher headquarters is extracted from the fact sheets and written in a journalistic style for incorporation into the Battalion newspaper, BLACK BARON RELEASE. At unit level, the Command Information topics are given in several ways: through formation briefings, bulletin board postings, and through the unit and Battalion newspapers. Under the tactical situation here in Vietnam, it has been difficult to conduct regular classes on Command Information. The most effective system is the one presently employed.

15.(v) Public Information. The Public Information program is oriented towards giving maximum coverage to the Battalion and the individual soldier. Daily aviation summaries are submitted by the units assigned. The summaries are combined and phoned into the USARV IO. The USARV IO in turn publishes a daily news report that is distributed to several large newspaper syndicates.

a. The summary often incorporates stories on individual feats as well as unit accomplishments. The results thus far have proven effective with considerable coverage being given to the BLACK BARONS.

b. There are several papers published throughout the chain

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of command. Stories of a feature type and/or immediate news release stories are written to include names of units and individuals, and are forwarded through channels.

c. In the past it has been found that it is difficult to get stories published in higher echelon papers other than Group and Division level. Some stories have been published in magazines or higher level papers, but not enough to satisfy the stringent requirements self-imposed upon the Information Office.

d. A new system of forwarding copy to two and three separate sources in order to get maximum coverage is being initiated. All sources have proper authority to have stories "Cleared for Release." In addition, a local Battalion newspaper is published on a bi-monthly basis. The paper includes local items of interest, current news releases, Command Information, and a Chaplain's section for the purpose of Character Guidance.

16.(u) Home Town News Program. The Home Town News Release program has been inadequate in the past. The reason for this was the non-availability of the proper form, DA Form 1526. Present the program is being emphasized. The unit IO have been properly briefed and have available sufficient forms, guidelines, and materials to increase the Home Town program. The entire program is under a thirty-day observation period in an effort to ascertain what specific areas need to be stressed.

17.(u) Public Relations. There is not an effective public relations program as such. There has been minimum contact between local nationals and this Headquarters.

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D. (U) Intelligence and Security.

1.(v) Production of Intelligence.

a. The detailed and comprehensive Intelligence SOP, published just prior to the beginning of this reporting period, has invaluable benefitted the battalion and assigned companies in establishing a sound and positive program encompassing all intelligence and security matters.

b. The Battalion Intelligence Section maintains very close liaison with the Intelligence Staffs of the 25th Infantry Division to obtain timely and essential elements of information. The latest reported information is obtained from these staff sections just prior to Battalion briefings. The Battalion S-2 obtains all available enemy information during the coordination briefing with the supported Brigades or Battalions. The enemy situation is verbally passed on to all commanders during Battalion briefings. Collecting information from various echelons provides the Battalion with fairly accurate information on enemy locations and strengths.

c. Aviation personnel continue to provide instant information on enemy activity and movement by rendering spot reports to the Battalion Operations Center when sightings are made. This information is relayed to the Intelligence Staffs of the 25th Infantry Division for evaluation and action as is deemed necessary.

d. Procurement of adequate photo coverage of selected landing zones continues to be a problem area. The photo coverage inventory in the 25th Infantry Division photo library only covers about one half of the DTAO. If Division cannot provide the desired coverage a visit is made to the III Corps Intelligence Section in SAIGON. Normally the coverage can be obtained from this office; however, a minimum of 3 to 5

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days is usually required. Very often the tactical situation does not allow this much advance notice.

e. The Battalion Intelligence Section discussed the problem of obtaining photo coverage with J3 Reconnaissance, 7th US Air Force Headquarters, which has the responsibility of flying aerial photo missions in this area. The Air Force does maintain complete coverage of this Battalion's AO. With the high priority assigned an aviation battalion, a complete photo mission of the desired area can be obtained in 24 hours. The coverage is dispatched by courier to the Battalion and the desired coverage is removed and mounted by the Intelligence Section, 25th Infantry Division. The unused portion of the mission is placed in the Division Photo Library.

f. Weather data received by this Headquarters often arrives too late to be passed to and used by the companies. Weather data received through the Signal channel has been discontinued because of its validity upon receipt. The most accurate and most frequently used source of weather information continues to be the Air Force Detachment located at CU CHI. A weather aircraft is dispatched each morning that a Battalion exercise is scheduled to provide the Air Mission Commander with immediate accurate weather information. This data is utilized by the commander in making his decision on weather delays.

2.(v) Use of Intelligence and Information.

a. The Battalion has had many aircraft hit by ground fire in support of exercises being conducted by the 25th Infantry Division. To provide both the Battalion and the Division coordinates of the exact locations at which aircraft drew fire the intelligence section maintains

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special hit maps covering key areas. Information plotted on the charts is:

- (1) Aircraft location.
- (2) Type of aircraft.
- (3) Altitude.
- (4) Air speed.
- (5) Date/time group.
- (6) Distance and direction of fire from aircraft.
- (7) Aircraft heading.
- (8) Type of fire received and number of hits.

(9) The above information affords the Battalion S-3 the opportunity of readily identifying areas from which concentrated fire has been received. This also results in guidance being issued not to over-fly certain areas unless necessary. The special hit maps are periodically shown to the Division Staff for study and action.

b. The intelligence information obtained from Division, Brigades, Battalions, and other sources continues to be of moderate benefit. Very rarely is intelligence data available confirming the presence of enemy forces in a landing zone area.

c. Weekly or bi-weekly intelligence reports or bulletins are not published by this headquarters. Intelligence must be timely and accurate in order to assist the commander. To provide him with the latest possible information, however, the Battalion has had its intelligence distribution disseminated daily. Distribution is made to all subordinate units by this headquarters. If items of interest are received by the Battalion

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Intelligence Section, and sufficient copies for redistribution are not available, the information is reproduced and then distributed.

3.(v) Counterintelligence.

a. Destruction of unclassified waste continued to present occasional problems. The base camp has initiated a trash pick-up service resulting in printed matter being taken to an incendiary dump. To preclude this occurrence a large screened area has been constructed and all waste from the Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company is destroyed by burning within this enclosure. This system is very effective with much time saved in that trash does not have to be separated.

b. Recently the Battalion has been given the authority to grant SECRET clearances providing a favorable Local Files Check and a National Agency Check have been completed. Stringent control must be exercised in granting clearances on a "need to know" basis and only after a thorough check of an individual's records have been made. In some instances the National Files Check was completed nearly two years ago. The individual's 201 file should reflect any derogatory information recorded since the National Check was made.

c. To insure that the Battalion Intelligence Section has properly implemented counterintelligence requirements, CI visits are made periodically by the 25th Division MI Detachment.

4.(v) Miscellaneous.

a. Escape and Evasion quotas to attend the Jungle Survival School controlled by the Navy Department in the Philippines are not of sufficient quantities to adequately provide trained personnel within the Battalion. A possible solution to this problem would be for the Army to establish

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a similar course in some secure area within VIETNAM. Quotas could then be increased to Aviation Battalions, resulting in more trained personnel to implement this emphasized and very necessary program.

b. Prior to all Battalion Combat Assaults a coordination briefing is conducted by the supported unit. At this time an aerial reconnaissance is made of the selected landing zones. Intelligence reports, normally indicate the presence of Viet Cong forces within the vicinity of the landing zones. During the aerial reconnaissance, conducted eighteen to twenty-four hours prior to the scheduled combat assault, the landing zones are orbited for extensive periods of time to obtain necessary information to finalize the forthcoming plan. The enemy forces are certainly aware of the US tactics employed and, realizing a combat assault will be conducted in the area at some future date, probably withdraw their forces to prevent contact. Once helicopters begin circling a landing zone the element of surprise is lost. One possible solution to the problem would be to introduce large scale, detailed photographs into the photo system. Photos of the selected landing zones could be studied prior to any reconnaissance being made to determine the approach azimuth, obstacles, and other necessary information. If an aerial reconnaissance is still deemed necessary, this could be accomplished by making one flight over the landing zone area.

c. The Battalion Intelligence Section has initiated a program within the Battalion where 35mm slides and prints taken during Battalion Combat Assaults are displayed. Reproduction orders are received from all interested personnel who have not had the opportunity to view a combat assault or to take photographs while participating in one. The reproduction is done by Kodak for a reasonable fee.

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E. (U) Operations and Training.

1. (U) Operations.

a. Operations plans and orders. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion fully employs the standard five paragraph OPLAN/OPORD for all Battalion controlled operations. Standardization of annexes and of the distribution system has facilitated preparation, reproduction, and distribution of plans and orders in as short a time as 90 minutes. Specific annexes have been added in the form of sketches of pick-up and landing zones, items determined necessary to be inserted in the OPORD from lessons learned. The habitual use of complete written orders for multi-company operations greatly simplifies the integration of non-organic aviation elements into an operation and insures the closest coordination of the aviation plan with that of the ground commander.

b. Supervision and coordination of tactical operations. In addition to the normal command, control, and coordination facilities found in all battalions, the 269th employs a permanent Battalion Operations Center (BOC) and a Battalion Command and Control helicopter. The Command and Control helicopter, commonly referred to as "C & C ship," is a UH-1H rotorcraft modified by the addition of a commander's console, AN/ASC-10, providing one additional UHF and two additional FM transceivers. This system affords commanders the luxury of much greater control through a selection of added communications channels.

c. Planning and integrating.

(1) Fire support in all airmobile operations conducted by this Battalion is coordinated through the Ground Commander and his Artillery Liaison Officer in the planning phase of an airmobile operation. Most expeditious control of artillery support has been found to be maintained

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through direct contact between the supporting artillery FDC and the ground commander aloft in the C & C ship. It has been found, also, that to insure continuity in command, the use of an alternate C & C is imperative.

(2) Pathfinder operations have continued on a basis consistent with tactical requirements. Pathfinders continue to organize pick-up zones for airmobile operations and maintain constant liaison between ground elements in the PZ and the Command and Control personnel. Pathfinders have been found more able to insure a successful operation in the PZ when they have been inserted into ground elements' positions on D-1. This affords the Pathfinder personnel sufficient time to brief ground forces on the location of loads, number of loads, pick-up formations, etc. This also insures that an aviation representative is present should any change arise affecting the tactical plan within the 12-24 hour period preceding the scheduled assault.

d. Overall command security. The physical security plans of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion and all subordinate units are integrated with the base camp defense plans of the major units garrisoned at CU CHI, TAY NINH, and DAU TIENG. Within the company areas themselves bunker complexes are constantly improved as are revetments for aircraft.

3.(v) Battalion Operations Center (BOC). The BOC operates on a continuous 24 hours per day basis. One officer and one enlisted man is on duty at all times during this period. Both are provided with FM-AM-UHF radio communications. These transceivers are a link to the Battalion's subordinate units, to the Army Aviation Element (AAE), to II Field Forces Vietnam Tactical Operations Center, and to the Assistant Division Aviation Officer (ADAO) at the 25th Infantry Division's Tactical Operations Center (TOC). Communication with the 25th Infantry Division is by sole-user

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telephone. Missions are received from AAE and assigned to the units by BOC. Daily operations are constantly monitored by the BOC, insuring that all necessary action to coordinate activities, react to emergencies, and submit required reports, is, in fact, taken.

4.(v) Training.

a. Training program.

(1) Training of Battalion personnel is in keeping with the operational requirements continually arising in an aviation unit. During the three month time frame the Battalion has received nine AAMTAP quotas for courses in the B, C, and D models of the UH-1 helicopter, and one quota for instruction in the T-53 engine. Two supply school quotas were received, and one quota for CH-47 maintenance. Two allocations were received for Jungle Environmental Survival Training (JEST), a survival course held at Manila in the Phillipines. One quota was given an aviator from the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company, and one to an aviator from the 116th Assault Helicopter Company.

b. The programming of personnel to attend the special COBRA courses has begun. Four allocations were received in October, two for the AH-1G Avionics Maintenance Course, and two for the AH-1G NETT Course. Two allocations are programmed for November, both for the SAS COBRA Course.

c. On the 23d and 24th of October a training program was run at the 12th Combat Aviation Group Headquarters, LONG BINH, for company armorers. Special emphasis was placed on the M-16A1 rifle.

d. One individual from the 116th Assault Helicopter Company and one from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, attended a twenty hour course of instruction with the 25th

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Infantry Division Artillery. The course studied was Adjustment of Artillery Fire, with a course duration of four days.

e. Aviation Training and Standardization.

(1) Primary training to newly assigned aviators is given at subordinate unit level. In-country orientations are given by company level instructor pilots, as are the various stages of training required to insure an aviator's proficiency in the techniques peculiar to combat operations in Vietnam.

(2) Standardization is maintained throughout the Battalion through 90-day standardization checkrides. These rides are given by company and battalion instructor pilots who insure adherence to the Battalion flight policies. Battalion standardization pilots continually monitor the standardization program by an aggressive policy of frequent flying with subordinate units.

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F. (C) Logistics

1.(C) Supply.

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a. Supply procedures by Class.

(1) Class I supplies are still drawn from support units located at the base camps where the units of the Battalion are stationed. Most unit personnel consume all three meals at the unit mess hall except for the aircrews on missions. These personnel generally consume a "C" ration for the noon meal.

(2) Class III and IIIA supplies continue to be drawn from 25th Infantry Division and 1st Logistical Command facilities located at CU CHI, TAY NINH, and DAU TIENG. The 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company in its present location at BIEN HOA Airbase obtains its Class III from the 64th QM and Class IIIA from the Air Force at BIEN HOA. During tactical operations Class IIIA is obtained primarily from the three main base camps at CU CHI, TAY NINH, and DAU TIENG, and a refueling point at DUC HOA. These refueling points are operated by the 25th Infantry Division with the 269th providing personnel to assist at DAU TIENG and CU CHI. On all operations out of the 25th Infantry Division area, Class IIIA support is provided by the supported unit. During the past three months, the 269th has participated in two operations requiring a forward refueling and re-arming point. The 116th Assault Helicopter Company provided a 4 man team and pumping equipment while the supported Brigade provided the required fuel and ammunition.

(3) Supported units continue to maintain their own property records and draw their Class II and IV supplies from DSU and Depot units of the 1st Logistical Command. The principal problems have been:

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(a) The time delay in moving vehicles from DAU TIENG and TAY NINH to CU CHI. This delay is caused by the requirement for these vehicles to move in scheduled convoys. The 188th Assault Helicopter Company stationed at DAU TIENG draws its support from the 228th DSU at TAY NINH, and all of the units located at TAY NINH draw their aircraft repair parts at the 20th Transportation Company in CU CHI, and bulk issues of supplies for their officer and EM Clubs are generally drawn in SAIGON.

(b) The shortage of Ballistic Helmets and Aircrewman Body Armor. The 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company became operational on 15 September 1967 and has not received any Ballistic Helmets. Body Armor was provided by reapportionment of assets within the Battalion. Additional Body Armor is not forecast to be available until the 3d quarter of FY 68. A definite date for availability of Ballistic Helmets has not been established.

(4) Class V support for tactical operations is furnished primarily from refuel and rearm points operated by the 25th Infantry Division at CU CHI, TAY NINH, DAU TIENG, and DUC HOA. Class V other than that for aerial weapons systems and aircraft mounted machine guns are drawn by the units from ASP located at CU CHI, DAU TIENG, and TAY NINH.

b. Shortages of several critical items of equipment required redistribution within the Battalion to meet minimum operational requirements. These items were:

- (1) Aircrewman Body Armor.
- (2) M-24 Aviator Protective Masks.

c. The units of the Battalion have requested permission to turn in

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unnneeded TOE or MTOE equipment in accordance with USARV Regulation 310-32. Other excess equipment has been turned in or redistributed within the Battalion to meet existing shortages.

(1) Since the Battalion's mission is primarily combat support, very little enemy equipment is captured by organic units. Those items which are picked up by unit personnel are turned in to the supported unit or disposed of through S2 channels.

(2) Transportation and Troop Movement.

(a) The 188th Assault Helicopter Company returned to DAU TIENG from PHU HIEP during the week of 21 August. Their equipment and personnel, except aircraft and aircrews, were transported by Air Force C-130 and C-123 Aircraft.

(b) The 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company arrived in country during the month of August. Personnel and 70,000 pounds of RED TAT equipment arrived between 9 and 12 August in C-141 aircraft. Transportation to the unit's temporary location at BIEN HOA was provided by the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion. The CH-47 aircraft and 12 conex containers containing RED TAT equipment associated with aircraft maintenance arrived on the USS Core at VUNG TAU on 10 August. The aircraft were off-loaded and remained at VUNG TAU until 11 September due to engineer work in progress on the parking and maintenance areas at BIEN HOA. The 12 conex containers were moved to BIEN HOA by organic aircraft. The remainder of the unit's TOE equipment arrived at SAIGON port on 22 August and was moved to BIEN HOA primarily on organic transportation as the area transportation command was able to provide only two vehicles. WABTOC equipment was not diverted when the unit's stationing was changed and arrived at QUIN NHON. The equipment was trans-shipped to NEW PORT by LST.

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No major damage or loss of equipment was incurred by the 242d during their deployment. This was primarily due to the outstanding manner in which the unit prepared its equipment for shipment, supervised the loading and off-loading, and provided security for their equipment during all phases of off-loading and trans-shipment.

c. The Battalion does not normally engage in unit movements except for change in stationing of a unit. As a result all movement of vehicles is normally controlled by the unit or on an individual vehicle basis. Vehicles moving from DAU TIENG and TAY NINH are included in regularly scheduled convoys operated and controlled by the 25th Infantry Division.

3.(c) Maintenance and repair, except aircraft.

a. The principal problem area encountered in maintenance of vehicles and power equipment has been the lack of qualified personnel at the unit level, particularly motor sergeants. Three of the companies do not have qualified motor sergeants at the present time and replacements have not been available through personnel channels.

b. The supply of repair parts for both vehicles and power equipment has not prevented accomplishment of unit missions. However, deadline for parts rates are high for vehicles and generators, running 22-25% for generators and 18-20% for 2½ ton trucks. Supply of repair parts other than deadline items has been a problem. As an example, the 116th Assault Helicopter Company, upon completion of a reconciliation with their DSU on 14 October, had 563 valid due-ins for 37 supported vehicles. Close coordination with DSU and periodic reconciliations are being utilized to attempt to remedy this situation.

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4.(C) Services.

a. Emphasis has been placed on utilization of proper priorities in requisitioning of equipment. The priority 02 requisition does not fulfill the intended purpose due to obvious past abuse by many units in the Republic of Vietnam.

b. Civilian labor has been utilized with the Battalion primarily to construct aircraft revetments and personnel shelters.

c. Permanent construction plans have been submitted for all units of the Battalion and have been approved by the base planning boards. The facilities for an assault support helicopter company have been constructed at CU CHI during this period. The 554th Engineer Battalion provided MER to include a mess hall, latrines (burn-out type), showers, access roads, maintenance hardstand, aircraft revetments and parking areas, landing pads, and materials for self-help construction of billets. Aircraft revetments and sandbag protection of troop billets were two major projects accomplished by all assigned units during this period.

d. The majority of repair and utility requirements are still accomplished by the units since unit mess halls and the Battalion Headquarters are the only permanent buildings which have been accepted by PA&E for R & U responsibility. A major problem area has been the supply of water for showers and unit mess halls. The water trailer provided each unit is totally inadequate for this purpose, and support units do not have the capability of providing this service. The requirement has been met by converting fuel trucks to water trucks. In addition, the recommended MTOE for units submitted to 1st Aviation Brigade in October

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includes a 1,000 gallon water truck for each company size unit.

e. The permanent construction plans for the units assigned to the Battalion include billets, latrines, central power supply, and maintenance facilities such as wash racks, grease racks, etc. Aircraft maintenance hangers are also on request for all units. Hangers and wash racks will not be built at DAU TIENG and TAY NINH, however, until the contonement areas are upgraded from their present status of field contonement areas.

f. Property on reports of survey has been primarily individual weapons and equipment lost from aircraft which have crashed or have been forced down by hostile fire. Command emphasis has been placed on these two areas in an attempt to reduce loss. The loss of individual weapons has occurred at TAY NINH and DAU TIENG where security problems are greatly increased by the Base Commanders' requirement that all personnel have their weapons on their persons or immediately available at all times.

g. The quality and quantity of Class I rations and food service support has been excellent throughout the Battalion during the reporting period.

h. Fire protection is provided by extinguishers or water barrels located in the unit areas. Base fire fighting sections are located at all posts. There has been no loss of life or equipment due to fires during the past 3 months.

5.(c) The supply and logistical support within the Battalion is decentralized with each company maintaining its own property books and dealing directly with its support activities. This system has been

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dictated by the dispersion of the units which makes consolidation of supply activities impossible. As a result, the S4 serves primarily to consolidate reports, advise and assist the units, and plan for future operations. The decentralized system does present problems in control and proper supervision of unit supply activities. Centralization, however, is impossible because of the separation of the units and the number of supporting units involved.

6.(c)Rear area security and area damage control are incorporated into the base defense plans at each unit's location, and are under the control of the installation commander.

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G. (U) Signal.

1.(v) Communications installation and operation.

a. Installation of the KY-8 into the Battalion FM Net was established with the 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company on 26 September 1967. The Battalion Net, including all companies, is scheduled to be operating in the secure mode upon the arrival of the KY-8. The use of the secure net with the one company has afforded the BOC the luxury of immediately retransmitting daily missions without encoding the contents. This has eliminated the possibility of error in addition to saving critical time. The non-secure FM net will be discontinued upon the complete transition to the secure means. The Battalion and each company will continue to operate a separate station on different frequencies, allowing aircraft to contact the desired station. This concept will change once the aircraft are equipped with the KY-28. The KY-28 are being introduced into the supply system on a listed basis and this Battalion is scheduled to receive eleven on 1 November 1967.

b. An AN-VSC-2 single side band radio has been issued to the 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company, and the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company is scheduled to receive one set under the new concept of issuing radio equipment. The Assault Helicopter Companies are to be issued one MRC-119.

c. To preclude the excessive noise generated by the VRC-24, an Aircraft UHF (providing excellent results) has been installed in the Battalion Operations Center. The VRC-24 is maintained for back up and contingency plans the Battalion may become involved in.

d. Telephone communication within the Battalion has changed very little. One sole-user circuit from the BOC to 242d Assault Support

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Helicopter Company Operations has been installed. Direct lines from the CU CHI switchboard have been installed to the Battalion S3 and S4.

e. A work order has been approved authorizing the installation of an air conditioner in the Battalion Communication Center upon the availability of the set. This should preclude some of the maintenance problems experienced in the past.

2.(v) Accuracy of SOI creates constant problems. The 12th Combat Aviation Group's SOI contain frequencies all divisions within the Group area. Very often these frequencies are changed without 12th Group's receiving notification. A possible solution would be for each Aviation Battalion to report all frequencies changed by units operating in its area immediately to 12th Group. A time delay of two to three days would still be experienced before the published change would be issued or entered into all SOI.

3.(v) Avionics.

a. Personnel strength assigned to the Avionics Detachments presents a very bleak outlook. Each detachment is short two to three of the authorized eight or nine enlisted men. To temporarily alleviate extreme personnel shortages in some detachments and to maintain an equal strength in all detachments, personnel have been transferred between detachments. If school trained personnel are not assigned in the near future, avionics will begin to lag below the accepted standard.

b. The Avionics Detachments have established excellent shop areas. The four authorized vans are positioned in a square with a predetermined distance between them. A structure has been built over all vans, allowing a much larger maintenance area. The entire area is air

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conditioned by using authorized air conditioners.

c. Calibration of avionics test equipment continues to be a problem area. Calibration teams have been scheduled to visit the detachments for the purpose of calibrating all test equipment; however, these visits have never been made. Arrangements have been made in the past with the calibration team at BIEN HOA to calibrate necessary items. The BIEN HOA team prefers that the Mobile Calibration Team calibrate equipment in the field.

d. Obtaining repair parts through normal channels is almost impossible in some instances. On many occasions Avionics repair parts have been found collecting dust in bins at certain supply levels. Experience indicates that some personnel receiving these items do not know what to do with them and store them somewhere out of the way. Items being referred to are forced issue repair items accompanying new equipment. These items definitely should be entered into the supply system. This would prevent cannibalization of many items of equipment.

4.(v) Communications Security is practiced in the Battalion with average results. To provide for more stringent communications security the changing of call signs and frequencies, on a monthly basis, has been proposed. It is felt that the benefit gained by changing frequencies and call signs would be lost in the confusion created. The crucial final minute of a combat assault prior to landing is hardly the time to check an SOI for a unit's new call sign. This problem could very easily exist if several companies were participating in a combat assault shortly after the call signs had been changed.

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H. (U) Aviation Safety.

1.(U) Plans and Programs. The present safety program differs little from any other program with the exception of the outstanding degree of command emphasis and support given to it. This is evidenced in the sharp reduction of accidents from the month of July, with 10 major accidents, to September, when only 2 accidents occurred. This feat is remarkable when you consider that the flight hours of exposure have risen from slightly over 7000 hours to a high of 12,059 hours. Correspondingly, the accident rate per 100,000 hours has dropped from 128.2 to 43.6.

2.(U) Procedures. Safety is a command responsibility. From the Battalion Commander the Aviation Safety Officer obtains the limits of his authority. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion Commander has given his full support and actively takes part in the aviation safety program. He regularly sets aside a portion of his Commander's Conference to identify a probable accident causation. He demands the highest standards in combat operations, striking the keynote of professionalism and discipline at all times. The Battalion Aviation Safety Officer directs his energies in numerous directions. Close liaison must be maintained with operations, training, maintenance, and the Flight Surgeon, to mention a few. Review of aircraft accidents is a vital source of ideas for the future prevention of accidents, and a source that is the most time consuming. Regular overnight staff visits acquaint the units with the latest flight safety information. These visits also provide a mutual exchange of ideas between the Aviation Safety Officer and the personnel of subordinate companies.

3.(U) Publications. In the past quarter the Aviation Safety Officer has begun publishing a bi-monthly letter that includes safety areas of interest, notes on -10 changes, safety slogans, etc. It has been well received.

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The major publication, however, was entitled "A Guide to Management of the Accident Investigation," a document the contents of which the title depicts quite well.

4.(v) Training. The individual companies have instituted an adequate training program to qualify pilots for in-country missions and as Aircraft Commanders. Safety in training is integrated into this program.

5.(v) Inspection. The Aviation Safety program was rated satisfactory in a recent AGI.

6.(v) Accident Investigation (Summary). A total of 9 major accidents were sustained during the reporting period. Two of the accidents resulted in fatalities. A summary of accidents is included in this document as Inclosure 2.

7.(v) Escape and Evasion. Regular classes have been given on this subject. To date there have been no actual E and E.

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I. (U) Aviation Medicine.

1.(v) Treatment - Aid Station operations. The 431st Medical Detachment operated an aid station at CU CHI rendering aviation medical support to aviation personnel on an area basis. The 154th Medical Detachment operated a medical dispensary at DAU TIENG rendering aviation medical support in that area. Also during this period the 541st Medical Detachment was assigned to the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion with the mission of providing aviation medical support in the TAY NINH area. The 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company received its medical support from outside the Battalion, from the consolidated flight dispensary at BIEN HOA.

2.(v) Preventive Medicine and Immunizations. Preparation for an AGI brought preventive medicine measures to a peak during this period with immunizations being brought very nearly to the desired 100% level throughout the Battalion. Also, the flu shot, recommended by the Surgeon General for October, was given throughout the command. The weekly program of malaria prophylaxis of USARV has been complied with. All companies resorted to the issuing of condoms for VD control during this same period. Further observation was made by company commanders and the Battalion Flight Surgeon that flying requirements placed upon the companies above the recommended 2500 aircraft hours per month resulted in pilot fatigue, maintenance personnel fatigue, and aircraft fatigue. Recommendations were made through Battalion to 12th Combat Aviation Group and aircraft hours were reduced until no company exceeded 3000 hours in September. Subsequently, there has been much improvement of morale and aviators have appeared far less fatigued. However, there remains tremendous stress on maintenance units to keep old and worn aircraft flyable when almost insurmountable problems exist in doing so.

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3.(v)Flight Physical Qualification. Annual flight physicals continue to be waived throughout USARV. However, persons entering flight status for the first time are expected to complete the required physical examination. All persons entering units must be cleared by a flight surgeon before participating in aerial flights. CU CHI, because of the availability of medical facilities, is the center for flight physical examinations for the CU CHI, TAY NINH, and DAU TIENG areas.

4.(v)Medical Evacuation. Aeromedical evacuation continues to be the primary and almost exclusive mode of medical evacuation. The clearing company continues to be habitually by-passed in favor of the evacuation or field hospital. Slicks from combat assault helicopter companies seem to be more readily available and able to evacuate casualties in a more timely and efficient manner than the Dust-off aircraft. Pilots act very knowledgeably in carrying out this serious responsibility.

5.(v)Training. All companies have models posted in their operations, demonstrating the contents of airplane aid kits. During this twelve week period approximately sixteen corpsmen from Battalion medical resources received extensive on-the-job training in intensive and pre-operative care techniques while spending three weeks at the 93d Evacuation Hospital in LONG BINH. This program has contributed substantially toward increasing the proficiency of the Battalion's medical support. All personnel are licensed ambulance drivers. The two flight surgeons attended two Group Surgeons meetings during this period. They were brought up to date on the fitting of ballistic helmets, reporting of casualties, the treatment of venereal disease with its peculiar resistance in Vietnam, and the uniqueness of aviation medical support with its need to remain organic

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to aviation units.

6.(v) Medical supplies and equipment. All standard, expendable medical supplies are readily available through either the 25th DMSO or directly from the newly opened 32d Medical Depot in LONG BINH. Non-standard, non-expendable items have been difficult to obtain during this quarter because of the unpredictable course medical organization is taking in Vietnam as to the duplication of medical resources.

7.(v) Sanitation. Throughout the Battalion the tremendous and constant problem of disposal of human waste has been placed upon the medical detachments and section. During the past quarter the three detachments have needed only to supervise the burning of waste and the cleaning of latrines since Vietnamese civilians have been hired to do the labor. All companies have constantly been making improvements in their mess operations, latrines, urinals, drainage, and living conditions. Inspections are carried out monthly, informally, and recommendations made for further improvements. For the most part these recommendations have been complied with.

8.(v) Public Health. Aviation personnel going on R & R or DEROS are checked to be free of communicable disease and issued prophylactic malaria tablets as necessary. Dogs have been reduced in number throughout the command in accordance with USARV direction. General procedures of public health are outlined and implemented by the Preventive Medicine Officer of the 25th Infantry Division.

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SECTION II-- LESSONS LEARNED

INTRODUCTION

(v) The LESSONS LEARNED, the section of this report which constitutes the major portion of this document, have been obtained primarily from debriefings held immediately following each operation conducted by the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion. Present at these debriefings were the Battalion Commander, the Battalion Executive Officer, the Battalion S3, and all other members of the Battalion primary and special staffs who participated in the conduct of the operations.

(v) Many LESSONS LEARNED were also submitted by subordinate elements of this Battalion. Reference to the unit submitting the comment has been made prior to each item's listing. Other references, you will find, identify the debriefing of a specific operation. By identifying the source it is hoped that the reader will be more able to discern information which is applicable generally to Battalion operations from information which would be more pertinent to a Company or a smaller unit's efforts. Certainly, however, most entries are inter-related, and all well worthy of note.

(v) The LESSONS LEARNED, the section of this report which constitutes the major portion of this document, have been obtained primarily from debriefings held immediately following each operation conducted by the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion. Present at these debriefings were the Battalion Commander, the Battalion Executive Officer, the Battalion S3, and all other members of the Battalion primary and special staffs who participated in the conduct of the operations.

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A. (U) Planning.

1.(u)Source: Lessons learned, 269th Combat Aviation Battalion Headquarters.

Item: Operations-SAIGON/ORIENTAL RIVERS.

Discussion: The SAIGON and ORIENTAL RIVERS are the two primary waterways in the WESTERN sector of III Corps. Recent company size operations disclosed that in conducting combat assaults into landing zones adjacent to these rivers, approaches by the lift ships are being made directly over the rivers themselves. Certain tactical considerations may require that this be done; however, such requirements occur much less frequently than we, in fact, commit the error. The primary concern, of course, is in the fact that the larger waterways and their tributaries are the transport routes for Viet Cong supplies and personnel. Subsequently, these rivers and canals, as the VC lines of communication, are VC infested. Inbound to a landing zone an approach over a river bend or parallel to a river at a constant rate of descent or low level accomplishes at least the following. It initially exposes the flight over an area which has a higher enemy count per 100 square meters than would otherwise be the case. Secondly, it affords the VC an unnecessary advantage in point targets. Also, well placed rounds into a helicopter over water create innumerable problems in aircraft recovery. Thirdly, and of most importance, a tactical blunder of this type could conceivably reap such havoc on a flight confronted with heavy automatic weapons fire, that crewmember survival could be expected to be minimal. The increased use of the .50 caliber machinegun in WESTERN III Corps makes such an occurrence far from an improbability.

Observation: Commanders should insure that, when planning flight routes into landing zones in the proximity of waterways, overflights at low level or on final approach not be made. An alternate route in nearly all cases can be found.

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2.(v)Source: Debriefing, Operation 25-67, in support of 2d Bde, 25th Inf Div, 30 August 1967.

Item: Continual indoctrination.

Discussion: While in orbit over a selected landing zone, a ground commander informed the Air Mission Commander that the ground troops would be inserted into the landing zone in 15 minutes. This was impossible to accomplish since the ground commander had his forces in a pick-up zone on standby, aircraft were shut down, also on standby, and the pick-up zone was 19 flight minutes away. The problem was soon resolved when the existing conditions were reassessed and a new landing zone time selected.

Observation: It is continually apparent that even though Army Aviation has come of age, the doctrines and intricacies of airmobility are not yet thoroughly understood. The case in point is merely a token reminder that constant guidance to supported ground elements is necessary to insure the success of airmobile operations.

3(v)Source: Debriefing, Operation 26-67, in support of 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div, 30 August 1967.

Item: Use of "H" hour.

Discussion: A series of weather delays in the operation resulted in subsequent time changes in the Sequence of Events. The new times were transmitted in the clear over UHF and FM Battalion frequencies during the ensuing attempts to effect a new coordination. Recent intelligence reports indicate a growing radio transmission intercept capability possessed by the VC in III Corps Tactical Zone. Our transmitting of critical airmobile assault times, coupled with the VC intercept capability, combine to create a potentially serious security threat.

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Observation: The use of the coded "H" hour in a Battalion OPORD, and its subsequent "H plus," should a delay occur, would deny the enemy knowledge of the exact time of an insertion.

4.(u)Source: Debriefing, Operation 26-67, in support of 2d Bde, 25th Inf Div, 30 August 1967.

Item: Discretion changing plans.

Discussion: The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion had recently acquired a smoke dispensing aircraft which was used on all Battalion operations. The ship was not available for this assault, however, due to required maintenance having to be performed. Efforts were made to obtain smoke assistance from an adjacent unit with no immediate results. During the conduct of the operation a smoke ship reported to the Command and Control aircraft that it was in the AO and available. Not having been briefed on the tactical plan, the smoke ship crew required excessive guidance over the air to determine what was to be its part. Once the assault force was on final for the LZ, the smoke aircraft began its run. Instead of emitting a full stream of smoke screening the LZ, the smoke crew jettisoned two smoke pots which served no purpose whatsoever.

Observation: Since no smoke ship was planned to participate in the operation, the arrival of one with a crew having no knowledge of the concept of the operation lent little more to the tactical success than unnecessary confusion. Radio traffic was transmitted in excess at the expense of command and control, and no benefit was gained from the presence of the aircraft in the AO. The point to consider is not specifically referenced to the smoke ship, but rather to the acceptance into an operation of an element not briefed nor in any way ready to take part in the conduct

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of the assault. It is generally more prudent to conduct an airmobile operation strictly in accordance with published OPORD than it is to vary these plans, adding or deleting elements.

5.(u)Source: Debriefing, Operation 27-67, in support of 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div, 1 September 1967.

Item: Adjacent Aviation Battalion unit representation at briefings.

Discussion: Airmobile support to the 25th Infantry Division is given by the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion. On recent operations extensive efforts were required to brief the 25th Aviation Battalion aircraft flying in the tactical area where the 269th was conducting operations. On occasions the 25th Division's observation aircraft would fly dangerously close to artillery preparations, airstrikes, etc, requiring repeated advisories from the 269th C & C element.

Observation: Representatives from aviation units habitually having aircraft in the planned AO should be invited to attend operation briefings. These representatives, upon returning to their units, can brief the tactical situation to all crews expecting to fly in the operational area on D-day.

6.(u)Source: Debriefing, Operation 29-67, in support of 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div, 11 September 1967.

Item: Coordination of artillery in adjacent AO.

Discussion: The flight routes planned for the insertion of 3d Bde elements during this operation were routed in close proximity to the geographical boundaries of an adjacent artillery advisory zone. Since

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the flights were not actually taken into the other advisory area, no attempt was made to check for possible artillery or airstrikes near the zone borders. While the lift aircraft paralleled the advisory control zone limits, an airstrike and artillery preparation began in two locations uncomfortably close to the flight route. Of particular danger was the presence of high performance aircraft making bombing runs through a scattered cloud condition in generally the same airspace as the airmobile force.

Observation: In all instances when Battalion operations are conducted in close proximity to the boundaries of adjacent artillery advisory zones, information on airstrikes and artillery preparations being conducted or planned to start during the time frame of the operation should be obtained by the C & C element. Since it is difficult for the C & C personnel to stay abreast of the artillery advisories from two zones, the alternate C & C may be given the responsibility to monitor the adjacent warning net and advise the primary C & C of any potential problems.

7.(v)Source: Debriefing, Operation 31-67, in support of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, 12 September 1967.

Item: Map coverage.

Discussion: Following today's mission a subsequent mission was assigned to one aviation company of the Battalion. At the coordination briefing the unit commander failed to have map coverage of the area since the AO was in a completely different sector of the III CTZ.

Observation: Lead aircraft of company flights should be equipped with map coverage of the complete AO in the III Corps Tactical Zone. The reasons are obvious.

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8.(v)Source: Debriefing, Operation 33-67, in support of 1st Bde, 25th Inf Div, 17 September 1967.

Item: Weather and aircraft concentration.

Discussion: The insertion of the 1st Brigade into the HOBO WOODS area, NORTHWEST of CU CHI, required 93 Army aircraft. A one hour weather delay caused 93 aircraft to be parked at CU CHI for approximately 50 minutes while waiting for weather to change. Since CU CHI has been the recipient of a number of mortar attacks in the past, the possibility of an attack at such a time, with such a lucrative target, is worth consideration.

Observation: Weather delays create a situation wherein Army Aviation elements are highly vulnerable to mortar or recoilless rifle attacks. When planning weather delay increments, serious consideration should be given to the amount of ground time resulting once all aircraft finally close at the staging base. Extended time brackets may be invitations to disaster.

9.(v)Source: Debriefing, Operation 33-67, in support of 1st Bde, 25th Inf Div, 17 September 1967.

Item: Time hacks.

Discussion: Though time hacks were given continually prior to and during the conduct of this operation, not all of the supporting elements participating were still aware of the correct time. Some elements, including the Artillery, were as much as one and one-half minutes off.

Observation: In airmobile operations a necessity exists for precise accuracy in complying with the time schedule published in Operation Orders. A one and one-half minute's error in an artillery preparation's termination is totally unacceptable. In the event incorrect timing is evident during any portion of an operation, all possible efforts must be made to rectify

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the situation.

10.(v)Source: Debriefing, Operation 34-67, in support of 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div, 22 September 1967.

Item: S3 Sub-sections.

Discussion: The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, in its rapid expansion in size and responsibility, has realized a requirement for staff separation in the S3 section of Battalion Headquarters. Too often in recent operations, LNO instruction required key staff personnel to attend coordination briefings for upcoming operations at the same time as these same key officers were, in fact, controlling combat assaults as the Command and Control elements. The inability to accomplish both assignments simultaneously predicated the decision to establish two distinct S3 sub-sections, arbitrarily entitled "A" and "B," each armed with equivalent delegated authority.

Observation: The establishment of two S3 teams has provided the Battalion Headquarters with the flexibility of not only conducting successful airmobile operations, but also simultaneously guaranteeing responsible representation at coordination conferences held by the supported infantry elements planning other operations. A policy, resultant from the establishment of a two-team system, requires that the team attending the coordination briefing be the team which prepares and publishes the Operations Order and mans the Command and Control aircraft and alternate during the conduct of the assault. This insures definitive continuity in the planning and execution of the operation and establishes a mutual confidence between the AMTF Commander and the respective Team "A" or Team "B" Air Mission Commander.

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11.(v)Source: Debriefing, Operation 34-67, in support of 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div, 22 September 1967.

Item: Refueling priority.

Discussion: In forward refueling locations set specifically to operate during airmobile operations, gunships arriving to refuel are frequently cut out of refueling positions by other ships with a less important mission. Gunships are generally at refueling points to refuel as quickly as possible and to return on station.

Observation: Gunships should be given a refueling priority at all POL locations. When a fire team arrives, other aircraft with individual ship missions waiting for fuel should permit the gunships immediate access to the POL points.

12.(v)Source: Debriefing, Operation 34-67, in support of 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div, 22 September 1967.

Item: Contingency POL.

Discussion: An operation involving aircraft from six companies, numerous fire teams, and numerous C & C aircraft, required that a supply of POL be stored in advance at a forward POL point. The operation ran into extensive contingency plans, however, and a shortage of fuel was soon realized. Prior planning could readily have alleviated the situation through the use of the Battalion's organic aircraft and organic refueling capability.

Observation: Had a Ch-47 from the 242d ASHC been placed on standby with two 500 gallon donuts of JP-4 rigged for slinging, the fuel shortage would never have existed. As soon as required, two donuts could be deposited at the forward position. Two more could be prepared at a base

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POL point to be taken to the forward position immediately upon the return of the CH-47. In this way there need never be a shortage of fuel in any available operation. The CH-47 supply train affords the required speed and flexibility to establish POL points any place at any time.

13(v) Source: Debriefing, Operation 37-67, in support of 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div, 9 October 1967.

Item: POL.

Discussion: In Battalion operations conducted from DAU TIENG, a requirement frequently exists to refuel a company prior to the start of an airmobile assault. Three fuel pumps are located at DAU TIENG serving six fuel lines. These pumps, hand-crank started, often are difficult to put into operation when fuel is initially required. A delay of 5 minutes resulting from a crew chief's inability to start a pump can cause an unacceptable delay in the start of an airmobile assault.

Observation: In the event refueling will be a known requirement prior to an operation, an S-4 representative will accompany the Pathfinder elements to the staging area on D-1 to insure that upon the arrival of the assault helicopter company on D-day all pumps are running and JP-4 is available in sufficient quantity to satisfy all the needs of the operation.

14.(v) Source: Debriefing, Operation 37-67, in support of 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div, 9 October 1967.

Item: Attendance at coordination briefings.

Discussion: The company gun platoon representative sent to the Battalion coordination briefing and reconnaissance was not the individual responsible for the gun platoon during the combat assault the following

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day. It is felt that full advantage of the coordination briefing and reconnaissance flight cannot be realized without the presence of the gun platoon leader, or assistant platoon leader, whoever, in fact, will lead the gun platoon or lift aircraft into the landing zone on the assault.

Observation: Since it is the Battalion policy that either the gunship platoon leader or his assistant will lead the gunships on every Battalion size combat assault, logic dictates that the individual leading should attend the briefing. It is therefore mandatory that the individual who will lead the assault will also attend the briefing.

15.(v)Source: Debriefing, Operation 37-67, in support of 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div, 9 October 1967.

Item: "Daisy Cutters."

Discussion: In III CTZ, in operations NORTH of DAU TIENG, TAY NINH, and in WAR ZONE C, geographical features are such that good landing zones can be located merely by a map reconnaissance. The terrain is generally dense jungle with clearings of various shapes dispersed sporadically throughout the area. Some of these clear areas are what could be best described as "perfect" landing zones. It has been the tragic experience of aviation companies in the past, however, that these "perfect" landing zones are the probable locations of a network of Viet Cong mines and boobytraps. These mines, often command detonated, have been placed in trees as well as on the ground to counter heliborne assaults. To detonate such mines in a landing zone before an airmobile operation is conducted is the best defensive measure against these weapons. The usual method, of course, is to employ an airstrike and/or artillery preparation in hopes that round impact and fragmentation will detonate the mines.

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One very effective weapon is the Air Force's "Daisy Cutter." This weapon, designed to detonate just above the ground, shears trees, shrubbery, and generally razes any vertical object in the landing zone, including mines.

Observation: During coordination conferences or whenever contact is made with an Air Force FAC or LNO, the "Daisy Cutter" should be requested by name as a type of ordnance to be expended in any landing zone suspected to be mined.

16.(v)Source: Lessons learned, 1st Assault Helicopter Company.

Item: Use of standard release points on eagle flights.

Discussion: Whenever eagle flight operations are planned for a prolonged period of time in one area but landing zones are not definite, specific points on the periphery of the operational area are chosen in advance as release points and designated by number. This facilitates the dispatch of the flight to the most opportune point to begin the final approach to the landing zone. It also eliminates confusion and wasted time in issuing instructions to both the flight leader and the fire team leader. After the proposed landing zone has been identified by both the mission commander and the fire team leader, the essential instructions to be issued by the mission commander are shown in the following example:

"BLACKHAWK LEAD, proceed to RP-2. Turn to a heading of 270 degrees. The gunships will lead you in. Formation is heavy left. Right-break out of the LZ."

Observation: This method is in keeping with the principle of simplicity. Because the release point is known in advance even though the landing zone is not, extended radio conversations and coordinating

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instructions for the slicks and gunships are eliminated. This allows the Mission Commander to devote more time and attention to the full range of his duties. Multiple planned release points also afford flexibility to the mission commander to change approach routes quickly and easily when changes in landing zones are dictated by weather conditions, the enemy situation, or the desires of the Airmobile Force Commander.

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B. (U) Command and Control.

1.(v)Source: Debriefing, Operation 30-67, in support of 2d Bde, 25th Inf Div, 12 September 1967.

Item: Unity of Command.

Discussion: As airmobile operations become more complex and involve multiple infantry battalions, infantry battalion commanders, in the habit of having their own C & C aircraft, still request individual ships.

Observation: During large-scale airmobile operations involving 2 infantry battalions or more, the Air Mission Commander, at coordination meetings, should stress the importance of one C & C aircraft with only the Brigade Commanding Officer and his staff on board. This accomplishes, first, assured unity of command, in that one and only one commander is at the helm of the airmobile assault, and second, logistically, two more aircraft, aircraft which would have been assigned to Battalion Commanders, can be released to support the insertion. Once the airmobile assault is completed, aircraft can then be assigned to individual Battalion Commanders in support of their smaller unit missions.

2.(v)Source: Debriefing, Operation 31-67, in support of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, 12 September 1967.

Item: Phase out time.

Discussion: During this operation, the C & C aircraft had direct control over both UH-1 and CH-47 units. Once the airmobile operation terminated for the UH-1, effective control of CH-47 still had to be maintained. No time had been defined to indicate when CH-47 control would be turned over to the infantry. As a result, the C & C ship was required to stay on station a full 45 minutes past what was planned as a departure time by aviation elements.