

History of The
119th Aviation Company (AML)

1 January, 1964 - 31 December, 1964

APO San Francisco 96295

Pleiko.

Republic of South Vietnam

HISTORY OF :

**115TH AVIATION COMPANY
(AIR MOBILE LIGHT)**

1 JANUARY 1964, THRU 31 DECEMBER 1964


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**52ND AVIATION BATTALION
U.S. ARMY SUPPORT COMMAND, VIETNAM**

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I COMMAND

Major Donald A. Smith, 0669521 was Commanding Officer during the period 1 January 1964 to 1 June 1964. On 1 June 1964 Major Glenn L. Farmer, 02210383 took command of the unit, which had fallen to an almost unbelievably low ebb in terms of aircraft and manpower. Under his command the unit, in spite of serious handicaps, has risen to new heights of achievement.

On 4 November 1964 Major Hayward M. Hall Jr., 070743 took command. Under his firm but fair guidance the 119th rapidly gained esprit and efficiency. He was not long in acquiring the high respect from both his superiors and subordinates required of any outstanding unit. The Company has risen to the point that numerous senior officers consider it among the tops in Vietnam.

II INTRODUCTION

The 119th Aviation Company and part of the 52nd Aviation Battalion, located near the town of Pleiku, Vietnam, has spent the previous twelve months of its existence proving itself to be one of the hardest working aviation units in Vietnam.

Located in the ARVN Second Corps Area, equal in size to the state of Florida, the 119th has been carrying the brunt of the resupply and assault responsibility. The vast Second Corps Area consists of varied terrain but is dominated by rugged mountains covered with jungle and rain forests.

During the first half of 1964 the unit was plagued with aircraft accidents, major and minor. Seven occurred during the last half of April and the month of May, with the last one on 1 June. Four of the aircraft were total losses while three were hard landings requiring extensive fourth echelon repair.

One of Major Parmeter's first moves as he assumed command of the company was a positive safety program. The spirit of safety was received by all and has resulted in a very fine record during the last seven months. During the last week in September four UH-1B's were destroyed. 1st Lt Danny E. Pope, 05315547 was shot down in a Viet Cong infested area, one crashed while at a hover attempting to locate a spot to drop off some passengers. The third was a mid-air collision over Camp Holloway, Pleiku,

Vietnam. Both helicopters were guided to a controlled crash thereby allowing the crew members to escape with only minor injuries. No major injuries were received in any of the accidents. Major Parmeter's best safety quotation was "DGIFH", meaning "Don't get in a f_____ hurry". The 119th then accomplished 5278 flying hours from 1 October 1964 through 31 December 1964 with no aircraft accidents. This record is presently carrying on into 1965.

III WEATHER

Because of the vast area in which the 119th operates one cannot say when the "rainy season," as it applies to flying, begins and ends. While it may be pouring at Holloway, one of our aircraft 30 miles to the south might perhaps be encountering blinding sunshine and blistering heat. This is largely due to the fact that Fleiku is located on a 2,500 foot plateau surrounded by mountains and hills.

Generally, the weather in the immediate proximity of Camp Holloway may be described as "fair" 80% of the weather is characterized by fair skies, good visibility, and low humidity. The aviators are often greeted by an early morning ground fog which usually clears by 0900, and can almost always count on finding huge Cumulus clouds, which sometimes become thunderstorms, all over the area which they encounter on their way home in the afternoon.

IV GENERAL EMPLOYMENT

During the 1964 calendar year, the 119th Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light) has been organized with three platoons of eight UH-1B aircraft each. The first and second platoons have had unarmed cargo UH-1B's. The third platoon had all armed UH-1B's to give the unit its security and added "punch" for assault missions.

The slicks have been used predominately in their designed roles of internal and external cargo, troop lifts, medical evacuation, reconnaissance and administrative personnel movement. They have been flown at or near their gross weight capabilities a majority of the time. The unit has stressed precision flying in all areas of operations. Proper formation flying has been deemed a "must" for all assault operations or any mission utilizing three or more aircraft.

The third platoon of Armed Hueys began the year equipped with the XM-6 machine gun system with jury rigged rockets. The unit received the XM-3 kit with the circular rocket pods, six rockets each, twelve per aircraft, which permitted simultaneous installation of the M-6 Machinegun Kit. The Mark VIII sight was added to give more accuracy in engaging point targets.

The tactics of the armed platoon has been as follows:

Pre-Strike: On most assaults the armed platoon is split into three teams. Each team consists of two armed helicopters. The first

two teams are the pre-strike element. The third team is the escort element. The pre-strike teams arrive in the landing zone 20 seconds prior to the cargo helicopters. When approximately one mile out, the pre-strike elements go on line. Approximately 1000 meters out they start their firing run. Each helicopter of the pre-strike element fires all ordnance possible on the firing run over the landing zone. The first element then sets up a daisy chain pattern on each side of the LZ with two armed ships in each pattern. The escort element escorts the cargo helicopter to the landing zone. They are responsible for engaging any targets missed by the pre-strike elements. The escort element splits and enters the daisy chain with the first two teams for one orbit. On order from the flight leader they will continue the orbit or return to the staging area with the transport helicopter. We have expanded the use of fire teams to enable one ship to protect the other on firing passes. We also utilize the same crews when possible to increase their effectiveness.

Double Pre-Strike: The armed platoon has used a double pre-strike on several combat assaults which has proven very effective. Four armed ships precede the cargo ships to the landing zone by approximately two minutes and pre-strike (60 seconds after VNAF Fighters) the landing zone in a down wind direction expending about 1/3 of the ammunition. The four armed ships then overfly the LZ and do a circling 180 degree turn. They then form on line again and pre-strike the LZ in an upwind direction, expending another 1/3 of the ammunition. The slick ships follow the second pre-strike within 30-60 seconds, escorted by two more gun

ships. At this time the armed ships set up a delay chain pattern on each side of the LZ with three armed ships in each pattern. (See diagram Tab A)

Gloverleaf: The name is derived from the pattern described by the aircraft during the maneuver. Two fire teams of two aircraft each are utilized. The teams fly in an echelon left, with the second aircraft approximately 100 meters to the left and 500 meters to the rear of his leader. Team two enters the maneuver at twice team 1's distance from the target. This puts one team in a position to be firing at all times. As team one breaks right, team two is just entering the effective part of its firing pass. The cycle continues as depicted until the target is annihilated. (See diagram Tab B)

Armed Escort: When escorting a resupply mission, the primary difference in armed helicopter employment is that suppressive fire is not used in the landing zone. However, an armed ship usually precedes the supply aircraft and makes a low pass through the area to reconnoiter the approach path. If the armed aircraft is fired upon, the resupply ships will normally circle away from the area until the anti-aircraft fire can be neutralized. On escort flight with three resupply helicopters, the armed aircraft normally flank the column of transports.

Single ship escorts: in a few instances, a fire team is split and

only one armed helicopter is used for escort. Two examples of this are the mission of escorting the psychological warfare aircraft and the medical evacuation aircraft. When escorting the psychological warfare aircraft, the armed helicopter will fly on the left approximately 100 meters, 50 meters lower and 500 meters to the rear. When either are fired on, both should climb to a higher altitude and move out of the area.

If the mission is to speak to the Viet Cong, the armed helicopter may be ordered to respond by firing into the general area considered to be the enemy positions terminating its pass by breaking off at least 100 meters from target.

Single ship attacks on known targets are broken off much earlier, being limited to one pass unless the nature of the target is of such high priority that no other solution exists. When escorting the medical evacuation helicopter, the armed helicopter will fly the same location as when escorting the psychological warfare helicopter. Before the medical evacuation helicopter can land for a pick up, the armed helicopter will make a low pass through the area to reconnoiter the approach path and the landing area. The armed helicopter will make contact over the radio with an American on the ground while the medical evacuation helicopter will orbit overhead.

When the landing area is safe, the armed helicopter will climb back and be in a position to support the medical evacuation helicopter as he

makes his landing and will orbit overhead until the medical evacuation helicopter is ready to take off. The armed helicopter will have him wait until he is approximately 600 meters to the rear before telling the medical evacuation helicopter to take off.

A typical unit operation begins with a reconnaissance of the area by the Battalion S-3, Unit Commander, Armed Platoon Commander and the vector aircraft commander. The landing zone (s) are selected, with alternates, if deemed necessary. The size of the selected landing zone does much to determine the slick formation to be used and the time interval between elements. Both a high and low recon has been necessary due to the numerous critical landing zones which must be used.

The vector aircraft now used is an Ol-F, which leads the flight to the landing zone and marks it. This aircraft serves as the coordinator between the VNAF Forward Air Controller, Armed Hueys and the cargo aircraft. During the first portion of the year a UH-1B was used as a command and control aircraft. The use of the Ol-F has proven to be more satisfactory for this type mission.

During the first part of the year the target or landing zone was hit by VNAF with only one pre-strike. The pre-strike was terminated approximately twenty to thirty seconds prior to the arrival of the cargo helicopters. The armed hueys flew only flank escort for the cargo ships. At mid-year the VNAF pre-strikes were increased and added firepower was

placed on the target area (a). The armed hueys then followed the VNAP strikes and placed even more firepower on the objective. This method enables the cargo ships to follow directly behind the armed hueys and touch the landing zone only seconds behind the firing passes.

V MAINTENANCE

During the year many events and changes took place in maintaining our fleet of UH-1B's and OH-1F's. At the beginning of the year the Service Platoon was under the leadership of 1st Lt Calvin H. Carr, 05405653. Most of the helicopters had only a few hundred hours, and few major problems had developed from the heavy flying schedule. Most of the unit's mechanics and crew chiefs were still being cross trained from the CH-21. Replacements received were in most cases fresh from 675.20 school at Fort Rucker. Therefore a large scale, concurrent, training program took place during the first four months of the year.

One problem which plagued the unit during the first six months was hot starts. This problem was virtually eliminated by a strong indoctrination program to all aviators by Captain Charles H. Crowe, 04021343 and 1st Lt Tomas Castro, 05312384. Another major problem which developed with the UH-1B throughout Vietnam was Mast Bearing Failure. This required a one-time inspection, with all the masts having to be lifted out of the transmission. The inspection had to be performed every fifty hours until failure was detected and was replaced by an improved bearing. This cost the unit a lot of down time and third echelon man hours.

The unit suffered the hardest from hydraulic servo failures which reached their peak during September. This problem was eased by a repair kit put out by Bell Helicopter which permitted the third echelon level

to repair the servos in a few hours and put them back in use.

The item which has caused the most down time has been the constant shortage of main and tail rotor blades. The blades are easily damaged by enemy fire, debris in landing areas, ammo links, 7.62 cartridges and main rotor blade doubler separation.

Maintenance quality and effort sank to its lowest level during May and June. Added to this was the four Hueys destroyed in crashes and three hard landings requiring evacuation for fourth echelon repair. During this same period a large turnover of maintenance personnel was experienced. 1st Lt Calvin H. Carr, 05405653, who was one of the best qualified maintenance officers on the UH-1B in Vietnam, departed the unit in May. Lt Castro had just arrived in the unit and took over the leadership of the Service Platoon from Lt Carr. Without hesitation, Lt Castro took the initiative and began to rebuild and reorganize the platoon to handle the requirements of the unit.

On the 1st of June Captain Crowe arrived and took command of the platoon, making Lt Castro his assistant. Swift, positive leadership was employed and by the end of June the quality and quantity of maintenance had improved considerably. In addition to the heavy loss of Hueys in May, the unit had to hand receipt aircraft to the 145th Airlift Platoon in Saigon, Vietnam

During early August the unit took over operational control and maintenance responsibility for four UH-1B's of the 52nd Airlift Platoon, which was moved from Danang, Vietnam to Pleiku. A fifth Huey was added in October. During this period the unit operated and maintained 29 UH-1B's.

The shortage of maintenance personnel hit another low in September, when the Service Platoon was down to 50% of authorized strength. During the last half of the year the unit maintenance personnel worked many long hard days. Hardly a night passed that the hangar lights did not burn until near midnight. On many occasions crews worked until dawn to have aircraft available for assault missions.

All maintenance personnel and crew chiefs did an exceptionally fine job which is reflected in the high aircraft availability rate and flying hours. One person who was responsible for this record was SP6 Joseph Belovich, RA17511846, who arrived in early July and took over the job of Technical Inspector. He had been an Instrument Repairman up to this time. Through his diligent efforts he quickly learned his duties and responsibilities. His continuous efforts to insure the highest quality control is one of the prime reasons for this sustained record. (See Tab C). The unit has sustained the highest record for the longest period of time during 1964 than any helicopter unit in Vietnam.

VI OPERATIONS

The first assault conducted by the unit during the historical period took place on 3 February 1964. Although the weather precluded a "pre-strike" by VNAF, the assault was carried out by the 119th, with additional support provided by our sister unit, the 117th Aviation Company at Qui Nhon. Utilizing 14 cargo aircraft and 6 armed AH-1B's, 380 troops and 3,000 pounds of cargo were airlifted from Kontum Airfield to the Landing Zone.

On 10 February 1964, the unit, once again augmented by the 117th, staged an operation from Cheo Reo. This time VNAF could not find the landing zone, so once again there was no pre-strike. However, during the entire lift, which involved 20 cargo and 6 armed aircraft, no ground fire was received. A total of 245 ARVN soldiers were lifted to the Landing Zone.

29 February saw the 119th supporting the 117th in an airmobile assault utilizing the Vin Hy staging area. The 17 aircraft involved received enemy ground fire as close as one-half mile from the staging area. There were 3 lifts, in which 385 troops were carried.

On 8 March the 119th took what might be called a "kick in the teeth." The operation, involving both the 117th and the 119th Aviation Companies, was to begin at 0900. At 0835 VNAF made a successful pre-

strike on the Landing Zone, but it started large fires all around the area. The aircraft began unloading troops exactly on time, and with the first lift completed, all aircraft returned to the staging area. The last aircraft on the first lift had made a hard landing in the Landing Zone, causing serious damage. By the time the other 15 aircraft had landed and taken off, the fires had been whipped into a frenzy, and the Landing Zone was covered with smoke.

The 16th aircraft had landed with zero visibility and in severe turbulence. 3 additional ships sustained rotor damage from tall bamboo in the area before the day ended.

The enemy didn't help the situation either. One of the 6 armed AH-1B's was hit in the throttle linkage which required a precautionary landing in a secure area nearby, while a cargo ship was hit but continued the mission.

After the airlift was completed, the 339th Transportation Company at Nha Trang recovered the aircraft which had been damaged on the first lift, using a CH-37 Mojave.

An operation was conducted on 30 March utilizing 16 cargo aircraft and 6 AH-1B's. Qui Nhon was the staging area, with the Landing Zone in the Quang Ngai area. 350 troops were airlifted in 4 sorties. There was no ground fire following a successful pre-strike by VNAF. Only one aircraft

was damaged, that as a result of a hard landing.

On 6 April, an assault was staged at Tan Canh, utilizing 14 cargo aircraft and 5 armed ships. Part of the Binh Tri campaign, this operation lifted 350 troops into the Landing Zone in 4 airlifts. One aircraft was damaged by ground fire, while another sustained minor damage due to a hard landing in the Landing Zone.

The Binh Tri campaign continued, and 8 April saw the 119th at Tan Canh with 7 UH-1B's and 5 AH-1B's. Five troop lifts and one ammunition lift put 189 troops in the Landing Zone, 22 miles northeast of Tan Canh, before the day was over. Thanks to excellent work by our AH-1B's, no ground fire damage was reported.

One of the most profitable operations conducted in this area took place on 14 April. 15 UH-1B's and 6 AH-1B's transported 480 ARVN troops from the Kanh Dong airstrip to the Landing Zone. VNAF made an extensive prestrike of the area at 0900, followed by arrival in the Landing Zone of the cargo ships at 0915. A great deal of ground fire was received on all lifts, resulting in two aircraft sustaining hits. One pilot and one gunner were injured by ground fire. The results of the assault were that 2 Viet Cong were killed, 7 captured, and an unknown number injured. 11,900 rounds of 7.62 mm ammo were expended, as well as 255 rockets.

On 28 April the 119th assisted the 117th and 118th Aviation Companies

in an operation conducted in the Quang Ngai area. We lifted 365 troops from the 5th Airborne Battalion to the Landing Zone in 3 airlifts. On this mission, in support of Operation Quyet Thang 202, 2 UH-1H's were hit by enemy small arms fire.

On the 29th, the remainder of the 5th Battalion was lifted by the same units. This day was one that made all prior operations seem like child's play. The toll at the day's end: 10 aircraft hit by ground fire, some seriously, and 2 damaged in the Landing Zone. 197 troops and 8 tons of cargo were lifted.

Still licking their wounds, the 3 aviation companies were airborne again, now with only 15 cargo aircraft and 6 armed ships. The date was 30 April 64, and our numbers had been reduced from 38 aircraft to 21. Two hundred seventy nine troops were lifted in the morning, and a resupply operation was conducted in the afternoon. One aircraft was damaged in the Landing Zone and later destroyed, while a CH-37 Mojave was hit by small arms fire while recovering an aircraft still in the Landing Zone from yesterday's operation.

On 14 May the 119th and 117th met at Gia Lang to lift 208 troops into an Landing Zone 12 miles northwest of Gia Lang. This mission was in support of Quyet Thang 202, the same operation which previously badly reduced the number of flyable aircraft in the two units. However, the

119th's maintenance teams had been hard at work, and supplies 11 UH-1B's and 6 AH-1B's for the assault, which was completed in 2 lifts.

"Cuyet Thang 202" was still in full swing on the 18th, and the 119th was called upon once again to assist the 117th in its troop-lift and resupply role. Beginning at 0930, 134 troops and 2-75mm pack howitzers were transported in 3 lifts, utilizing 9 UH-1B's.

On 3 June the 119th, 117th and the Marine Helicopter Detachment from Da Nang staged an operation in the Oak To area, utilizing Oak To airstrip as a staging area. A total of 421 troops and 10.5 tons of cargo were carried in 4 airlifts. 1 UH-1B was hit by ground fire.

Eighteen June found the 119th at Plateau Gi airfield with 4 UH-1B's and 1 AH-1B, in support of an ARVN Company on Cuyet Thang 203. 5 tons of cargo and 15 troops were airlifted in 18 flying hours. It was while on this mission that an ARVN soldier walked upslope into the rotor blades of the aircraft that had carried him into the Landing Zone. This was an unfortunate incident, but one which has resulted in more thorough briefings of ARVN troops by their commanders.

On 20 June 3 UH-1B's of the 119th returned from a support role in the I Corps area. Unfortunately, little was accomplished during their 3 days stay at Da Nang due to weather, but on the final day, with typical

fervor, the aircraft accomplished their mission. This mission involved airlifting troops and supplies into a 5300 ft. landing zone, and the Marine Commander was very pleased with the way the 119th's pilots conducted their role.

1 July was a day of celebration in the 119th. Upon receiving word that an ARVN convoy had been ambushed west of An Khe, the operations officer, Captain Raymond H. Carlson, 085973, dispatched 3 OH-1A's and 2 AH-1A's to the area to assist the convoy and provide aeromedical evacuation.

While the cargo aircraft were evacuating casualties, they were taken under fire by a Viet Cong 50 calibre machine gun. Lt Danny L. Pope, 05315547, carrying a photographer from Life magazine, spotted the weapon emplacement, and guided Lt Walter G. Mitchell Jr., 05315069, flying an armed ship, into the area. Lt Mitchell made a strafing pass on the emplacement, with no observable results. He did note that the emplacement was a deep hole, well protected and almost impenetrable by his guns. He also noted that on his first pass, his ship had taken several hits, one of which, notably, ruined his gun and hydraulic systems.

Flying a OH-1A without hydraulic power is tantamount to balancing a marble on an oyster shell. But Lt Mitchell, typically, decided to make a rocket pass. This he did, but his rockets were 10 or 15 feet to one side of the emplacement, which provided protection from anything but a direct hit.

"Hitch" wasn't beaten yet by any means but he knew that even one more pass would place him in extreme danger. However, he swung his ship "down the groove" toward the target, and called upon all his "Irish luck" to make those 2.75" rockets true.

At the last possible instant before he had to turn away, Hitch depressed the rocket button. There was a seemingly eternal silence as 119th aircraft all over the II Corps area listened for the results. And then it came! Lt Pope, watching from above, said "Direct hit! That rocket went right down the hole!"

Pilots and crew chiefs everywhere who had heard these words turned and smiled knowingly at each other, for one of "our boys" had once again shown that no matter what the odds, how slim the chances, the 119th Aviation Company will accomplish its mission.

On the fifth of July at 1200 hours 6 AH-1B's prestruck two LZ's near Dak Rotan and 14 clicks then proceeded to lift 300 troops from the 42nd Battalion into the area. The LZ's were tight and weather was bad but five lifts were made that day and all were 100% successful.

Two days later, working out of Plei Ta Nangle, 16 OH-1B's lifted 120 into 2 Landing Zone's on a 3,500 foot mountain ridge about 18 miles west of Plei Ta Nangle. Due to an early start the entire operation was accomplished by 1000 hours and all ships returned to Holloway.

400 troops of the 22nd Division were airlifted by 119th UH-1B's into two LZ's at the foot of the mountains about eight miles Northwest of the old airfield at Plei Soba. A successful prestrike was made by VNAF and our own UH-1B's. This was on 11 August and the weather that day was good until after the operation was completed.

On 13 August working out of Chao Koo as the staging area, the 119th, using 23 aircraft pulled off a very successful operation in the treacherous mountains south of there. The Viet Cong were numerous in the area but a thorough prestrike did a nice job of suppressing ground fire and the slicks moved the 381 troops into the two LZ's with precise ease. Four lifts were necessary.

The only major assault in September took place on the 19th of that month. We airlifted troops of the 22nd Division from Kanhak, a Special Forces Camp, into a mountain river valley 20 miles north west of there. Two lifts of 15 UH-1B's carried the 120 troops into an LZ that had been prestruck with 5 AH-1B's.

On 7 October 1964 20 of our UH-1B's, staging out of Ban Xe Thuot carried 152 troops of the 22nd Scout Company on to the southeastern slope of a mountain that lies about 25 nautical miles south west of Ban Xe Thuot, near the Cambodian border. The operation began at 1000 hours that morning and after a good VNAF prestrike and two complete lifts in poor visibility we returned to holloway, another successful mission under our belts.

In support of the 22nd Recon Company the 119th lifted 90 troops in two lifts into an area southwest of Ple Me. The entire operation was hampered by light rain, poor visibility and low ceilings. Although this operation on the 24th of October was small, it proved very effective because the troops lifted in were well trained, crack troops.

During the first part of November the coastal area of Vietnam from Tuy Hoa north was hit hard by 3 typhoons and severe rain storms. The result was that the entire coastal lowlands were flooded as far inland as Cheo Koo and as far north as Bong Lon. The 119th and 117th played major roles in saving many lives and preventing much famine as they tirelessly lifted thousands of stranded people to higher ground and resupplied them with food. The maximum weights allowed were thrown out as our pilots filled their ships with as many people as they could pile on.

Needless to say, acts like these go far in proving our friendship and goodwill intent to the people of South Vietnam.

On the 11th of November 135 Special Forces troops were dropped into an area near Cong Tre. 11 UH-1B's and 3 gun ships accomplished this mission with relative ease. The weather was good and 3 lifts into the area was made. No ground fire was encountered.

Once again the mountains south of Cheo Koo were used and once again heavy ground fire was received by the 4 gunships making the prestrike.

2 LZ's were used and both were well traefed. We took 300 troops into the area in four separate lifts. The date was 22 November.

The last month of the year proved a busy one indeed as we flew a total of 2188 hours, well surpassing our monthly average. Rotary wing sorties alone totaled 3,870. A good deal of this took place in a week long village resupply operation in the lowlands near Phan Rang. The entire rice crop in that area was destroyed by the flood. The weather was excellent in the Pleiku area as we moved into the dry season.

On 5 December 1964 the Plei Do Lim Special Forces troops were supported by the 119th when we lifted 142 troops into as LZ on a mountain near Ple Ta Nangle. 12 OH-13's were employed on this small but effective assault. Three lifts were made and all ships returned safely to holloway.

On 12 December the 119th with 4 gun ships and 14 slicks lifted 2 CIDG Special Forces companies into an area near Dak Nhotha. Two lifts were required to move the 150 troops into position. Although moderate to severe turbulence was encountered in the LZ, the seasoned pilots dropped the troops off without incident, although some sweat was undoubtedly expended.

The next day, the 13th of December, 21 aircraft from the 119th and her sister company the 117th grouped together on the runway at Bong Son while the gun ships launched an extensive airstrike on an LZ up the valley near

An Lao. An LZ had recently been overrun and we were lifting troops onto a nearby hill in an attempt to regain it. The valley proved to be saturated with V.C. and heavy losses were reported by both sides. Air support was added and VNAF and our own gun ships fired on the valley sides all afternoon. Tragedy struck when PFC Arthur Shelton, RA19760875, from our unit who was flying as a gunner on a gun ship was hit by a 30 caliber round from enemy ground fire. He died enroute to the hospital at Nha Trang.

On the 15th another operation took place near Boun Mega. In this operation the 119th moved about 185 troops into a small LZ cut in the mountains east of the airstrip there with the use of 15 slicks. 2 lifts were accomplished. The real effectiveness of our unit was being shown as we progressed through the excellent flying weather afforded by the dry season.

Two days before Christmas another assault was carried out in the Lao area, in an attempt to kill or capture the V.C. remaining in the area. Again Song Son air strip was the staging area from where we lifted 375 troops in 3 lifts with the use of 20 aircraft into a mountain ridge LZ that had been prestruck by VNAF and our own gun ships.

Christmas passed without incident and two days later our unit with 16 aircraft carried 150 troops of the 42nd regiment into an area 18 miles north of Dak To.

On 30 December we staged our last assault of the year when 18
UH-1B's carried 140 troops in two lifts into an area northeast of Buon Ho.
Time on target was 1000 hours. Last successful mission for 1964.

VII SUMMARY

The 119th has done more than her share of the work involved in this country. Men, both enlisted and officers have often been pushed to the limits of their endurance and skill but have always come through with flying colors. Under such fine leadership as Major Farmer and Major Hall as well as our platoon leaders, the 119th has accomplished a great deal of work quickly and efficiently. Although no doubt more trying times lay ahead the men of the 119th knew they will take the worst in stride.

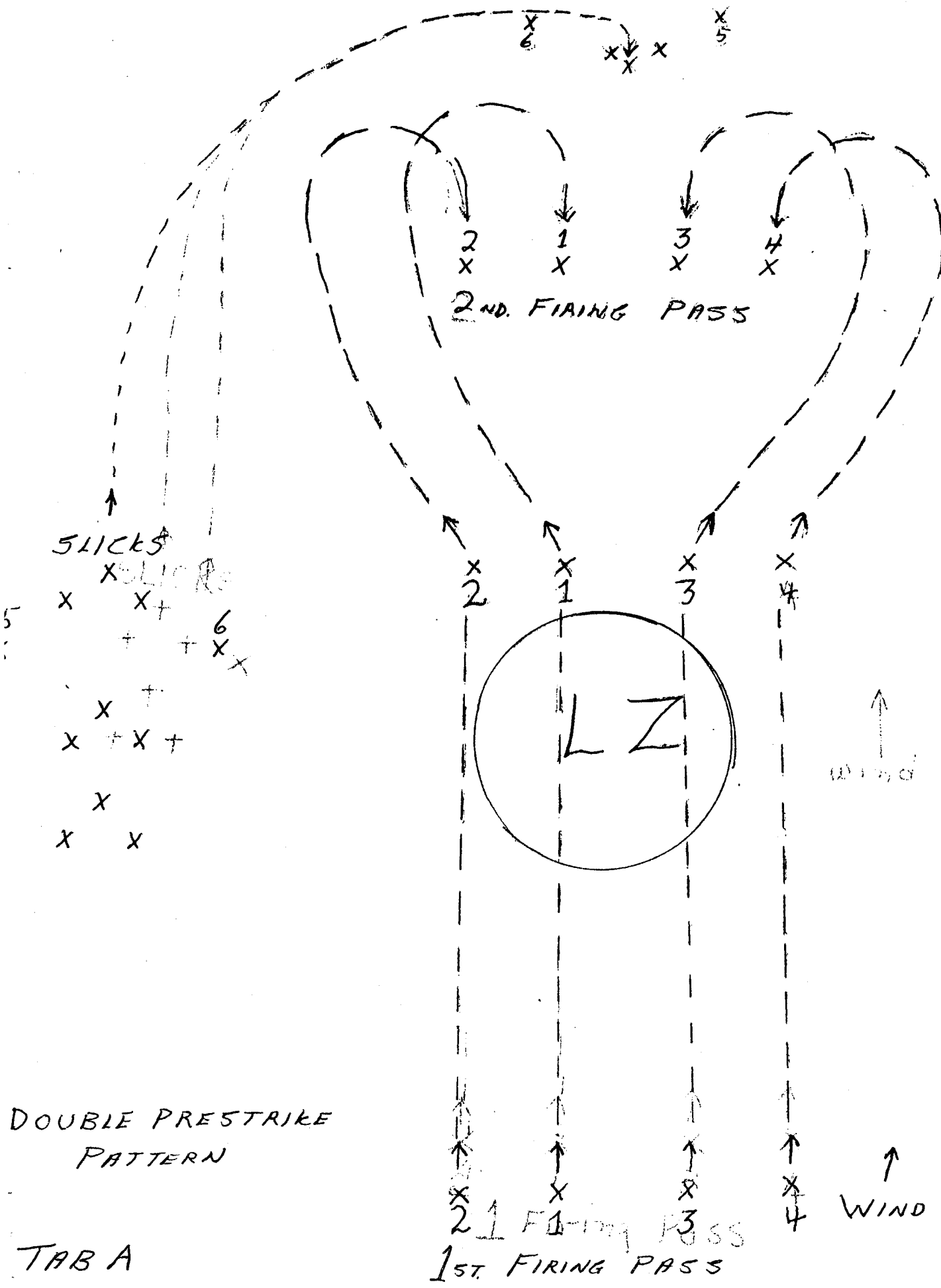
VIII GLOSSARY

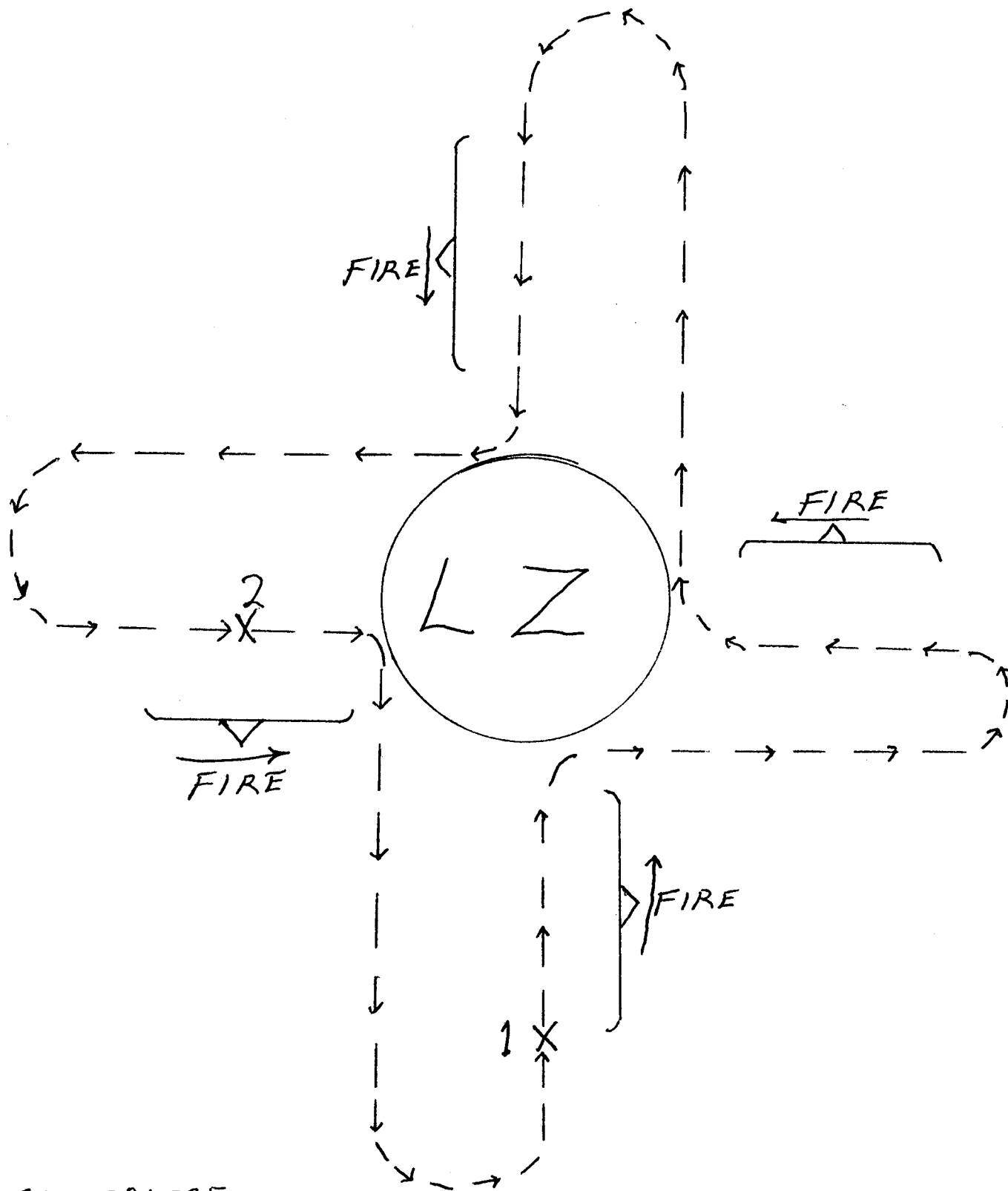
ARVN - Army Republic of Vietnam

LZ - Landing Zone

CLICK - standard UH-1B helicopter, unarmed

VNAF - Vietnamese Air Force





CLOVERLEAF

TAB B

HOURLY FLOWN AND AVAILABILITY RATES DURING 1964

UH-1B's

O-1F's

| MONTH | HOURLY FLOWN | AVAILABILITY | HOURLY FLOWN | AVAILABILITY |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| January | 1230 | 76% | 136 | 90% |
| February | 1202 | 85% | 50 | 91% |
| March | 1365 | 86% | 110 | 95% |
| April | 1418 | 89% | 121 | 96% |
| May | 1104 | 74% | 47 | 87% |
| June | 1164 | 72% | 70 | 84% |
| July | 1366 | 85% | 88 | 76% |
| August | 1176 | 91% | 74 | 100% |
| September | 1095 | 92% | 124 | 97% |
| October | 1443 | 92% | 183 | 94% |
| November | 1554 | 96% | 70 | 98% |
| December | 1963 | 92% | 65 | 89% |
| Total | 15,845 | | 1138 | |
| | 1,138 | | | |
| | 618* | | | |
| Grand Total | 17,601 | | | |

* Five helicopter of the 52nd that we maintained

Tab C