

History of The
119th Assault Helicopter Company
1 January 1968 - 31 December 1968

APO San Francisco 96314

Plerku

Republic of South Vietnam

SUPPLEMENT TO THE HISTORY OF THE

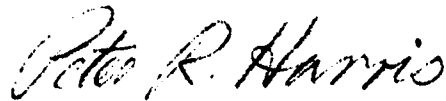
119th AVIATION COMPANY
(Air Mobile Light)
400 San Francisco 96318

1 JANUARY 1968 - 31 DECEMBER 1968

PREPARED BY:

WO PETER N. TAYLOR

APPROVED BY:



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MAJ, CG
COMMANDING OFFICER

52D COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
17TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP
1ST AVIATION BRIGADE
UNITED STATES ARMY, VIETNAM

PREFACE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS HISTORY IS TO OUTLINE THE EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED IN THE 119TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY DURING THE CALENDAR YEAR 1968. IT IS INTENDED TO GIVE AN ACCURATE, FACTUAL PORTRAYAL OF THE COMPANY, ITS PERSONNEL, AND EQUIPMENT AS WELL AS A CONCISE PICTURE OF THE COMBAT OPERATIONS IN WHICH THE UNIT PARTICIPATED.

FOREWARD

This supplement to the history of the 119th Assault Helicopter Company is respectfully dedicated to those Officers, Warrant Officers, and Enlisted Men of the 119th who gave their lives in the defense of their country.

1968

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| WO MARTIN G. GIVEN | 21 November 1968 |
| WO ROBERT L. STOREY | 21 November 1968 |
| SCT EUGENE V. SONNER | 10 February 1968 |
| SP5 BILLIE J. ONTIS | 21 November 1968 |
| SP4 EDDY G. SIMPSON | 21 November 1968 |

COMMANDING OFFICERS
OF THE
119TH AVIATION COMPANY
(Air Mobil Light)

Major Joseph R. Campbell, III

20 November 1967 - 24 April 1968

Major Warren R. Porter

24 April 1968 - 24 October 1968

Major Kenneth R. Cary

24 October 1968 - 24 April 1968

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Mission and Organization

Mission

The mission of the 119th Aviation Company is to provide tactical air movement of combat troops and combat supplies and equipment within the combat zone. The company is attached to the 52nd Aviation Battalion, 17th Aviation Group, which provides aviation support to the 1st and 2nd Brigades of the 4th Infantry Division troops in the II Corps area.

Organization

The 119th Aviation Company is organized under TO&E 1-77G, dated 10 November 1965. The company consists of a Company Headquarters, two Airlift Platoons, one Armed Escort Platoon, a Service Platoon, and the following detachments:

- 545th Transportation Detachment (CHEM)
- 70th Signal Detachment (Avionics)
- 94th Medical Detachment

COMMAND

Outstanding Commanders have continued to lead the 119th Aviation Company throughout 1968. Major Joseph R. Campbell III commanded the company during the latter portion of 1967 and into 1968.

On 24 April 1968, Major Warren R. Porter took command of the company from Major Campbell. Major Porter continued to gain recognition for the 119th.

On 24 October 1968, Major Porter relinquished his command to Major Kenneth R. Cary. Under his leadership the company refined the tactics learned in the past and a feeling of professionalism prevailed.

Because of the leadership and stabilizing influence of this past years commanders, all obstacles were overcome and every mission completed successfully.

Weather

The tropical climate and topography of South Vietnam produce only two basic seasons: the dry season, and the monsoon. In the Central highlands around Pleiku, the monsoon season starts in May and lasts through September. During the monsoon, the winds are generally out of the southwest and the humidity is high. Although there are periods of sunshine and scattered clouds, the weather is usually overcast and rainy. Flying is restricted in the early mornings and late afternoons and often times prohibited all day.

During the dry season, the winds are out of the northeast and good flying weather prevails. Dust, however, is a major problem especially in unprepared landing zones. The temperature at Pleiku is always moderate due to its elevation of 2,460 feet MSL. During the coolest nights the temperature may drop below 50 degrees while 90 degrees is maximum for a hot afternoon.

UNIT HISTORY SUPPLEMENT OF THE 119TH AHC

1 Jan - 25 Jan Classified missions.

26 Jan - 2 Feb The Viet Cong hit Camp Holloway repeatedly the last several days. Several of our aircraft were damaged by mortars. A mortar also fell in front of Fort Biggs, one of our bunkers, and wounded several personnel.

3 Feb While supporting the 1st of the 8th Infantry of the 4th Division, an aircraft was damaged by incoming mortars.

4 Feb - 5 Feb The extraction of the 1st of the 8th Infantry began. In all, there were ninety sorties. All was going smooth till the last few sorties when "Charlie" began to move in. One aircraft from the 119th AHC was damaged with no injuries.

6 Feb - 16 Feb Informal missions were the rule of thumb for these days. The 1st Brigade of the 4th Infantry was the unit mainly supported.

17 Feb A major combat assault was performed at Dak To. In 3 campaigns, 480 troops of the 3rd of the 12th were inserted without incident.

18 Feb - 29 Feb Normal missions were resumed in support of the 1st Brigade.

1 Mar While extracting the final elements of the 3rd of the 8th Infantry from Dogbone, the pick-up zone was mortared each time an aircraft landed.

2 Mar - 4 Mar Ash and trash missions were the supporting role played.

5 Mar - 6 Mar Charlie hit both nights. He walked his mortars through the 119th's company area and knocked all electricity and communications.

7 Mar - 10 Mar Normal missions were resumed.

11 Mar Croc 6 recieved a May Day call from an Avenger aircraft of the 189th AHC. When Croc 6 arrived over the scene, the distressed aircraft had crashed and was burning. The pilot and door gunner were the only crew members rescued.

12 Mar - 15 Mar Resupply missions to Dak To were made. Truck convoys were having a difficult task of making it to this out post.

16 Mar One of the Croc gunships had an engine failure four miles west of Mang Yang pass. The aircraft commander made a successful autorotation with no damage to the aircraft.

17 Mar - 28 Mar The performance of normal resupply missions to the 4th Infantry Division was the duty of the day.

29 Mar On this day Charlie hit us again and damaged three aircraft before he could be stooped.

1 Apr - 4 Apr Spring must be here due to the nice, quite, normal missions that we are performing.

5 Apr Lieutenant Weller was injured, while making a gun run, when the M-5 system (grenade launcher) malfunctioned. Fragments of a grenade injured him.

6 Apr - 23 Apr Normal ash and trash missions were performed in support of the 1st Brigade.

24 Apr Major Campbell relinquished command of the company to Major Porter.

25 Apr - 30 Apr We continued to support the 1st Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division.

1 May - 2 May Ninety-two troops of the 1st of the 8th Infantry were airlifted in nineteen sorties.

9 May Long Range Recon Patrols were the order of the day. Intense small arms fire was received by slicks extracting the teams.

25 May While supplying elements of the 1st Brigade, a single slick received small arms fire.

26 May - 27 May A combat assault was conducted by the 3rd of the 8th Infantry. In all the 119th inserted 330 troops.

11 Jun The 119th inserted 320 troops of the 3rd of the 8th Infantry. Negative enemy fire was received.

14 Jun A ten minute artillery prep preceded the insertion of 306 packs of the 3rd of the 8th Infantry.

16 Jun Another combat assault by the 3rd of the 8th Infantry produced 195 troops airlifted by the 119th. The 119th also conducted the final extraction for the 3rd of the 22nd Infantry.

22 Jun The 3rd of the 12th Infantry received our share of helicopters in their combat assault located at Dak Pek.

25 Jun Dak To was the scene of a combat assault staged by the 1st of the 8th.

6 Jul - 9 Jul During this period the 119th supported the 268th Combat Aviation Battalion.

30 Jul The 119th supported the 1st of the 503rd Infantry. The landing zone was prepared by Air Force jets.

1 Aug - 31 Oct During this period, the 119th supported the 1st Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division, the 52nd Artillery Group, the 5th Special Forces, FOR II, and ITW. A great many experienced aviators, crew chiefs, and gunners were lost due to DEPOS. Even though hammered, we still managed to maintain 81% of our aviators, 70% of the crew chiefs, and 80% of the gunners. This period was highlighted by the arrival of Major Kenneth R. Cary, who succeeded Major Warren R. Porter as company commander.

1 Nov - 31 Dec The 119th supported the 4th Infantry Division, Republic of Korea Capital (Tiger) Division, 5th Special Forces Group, and the 1st Artillery Group in combat support missions within the II Corps Tactical Zone during this period of operations. Because of the number of personnel that DEPOSED in the previous months, there was still a lack of experienced personnel in the company. The continued efforts of the S-1 section of the 52nd CAB kept the company at 87% of its TO&E strength of authorized aviators. The weather was bad to say the least. The monsoon was in full swing. Late morning take-offs were the rule rather than the exception.

A platoon minus was sent OPGON to the 268th Combat Aviation Battalion for 45 days. The platoon worked out of Lane Army Airfield, An Son, and in direct support to the Republic of Korea Capital Division.

12 Dec The company moved into its new company area next to the Christmas Tree.

23 Dec A Christmas party was held for the "Mama-sans" and their children.

31 Dec Heavy action was expected around the "Dragon's Den" and MCC and BM clubs on post.

APPENDIX

LINEAGE AND HONORS

Constituted 14 June 1944 as 81st Transportation Corps Composite Company.

Activated 5 July 1944 at Brisbane, Australia.

Redesignated 1 March 1945 as 81st Transportation Corps Harbor Craft Co.

Deactivated 15 May 1946 in the Pacific Theater.

Activated 20 December 1946 in Manila with Philippine Scout Personnel.

Redesignated 9 August 1947 as 81st Transportation Company.

Deactivated 1 June 1949.

Redesignated 16 August 1957 as 81st Transportation Company.

Activated 12 September 1957 at Fort Riley, Kansas.

Redesignated 14 June 1963 as 119th Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light) at Pleiku, Republic of Vietnam.

Redesignated 15 August 1966 as 119th Assault Helicopter Company at Pleiku, Republic of Vietnam. This designation is used for administrative functions within the 1st Aviation Brigade but is pending as official title.

(The company is not related historically to the 81st Transportation Co. (Boat))

Campaign Silver Bands

Constituted 14 June 1944 as 81st Transportation Corps Composite Company, New Guinea

Activated 5 July 1944 at Brisbane, Australia.

Redesignated 1 March 1945 as 81st Transportation Corps Harbor Craft Co.

Deactivated 15 May 1946 in the Pacific Theater.

Activated 20 December 1946 in Manila with Philippine Scout Personnel.

Redesignated 9 August 1947 as 81st Transportation Company.

Deactivated 1 June 1949.

Redesignated 16 August 1957 as 81st Transportation Company.

Activated 12 September 1957 at Fort Riley, Kansas.

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