History of the 119th Assault Helicopter Company
January 1968 - 31 December 1969
APO San Francisco 96211

Pleiku
Republic of South Vietnam
SUPPLEMENT TO THE HISTORY OF THE
119th AVIATION COMPANY
(Air Mobile Light)
APO San Francisco 96318

1 JANUARY 1968 - 31 DECEMBER 1968

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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, FACIAL PROTRAYAL OF THE COMPANY, ITS PERSONNEL, AND EQUIPMENT AS WELL AS A CONCISE PICTURE OF THE COMBAT OPERATIONS IN WHICH THE UNIT PARTICIPATED.
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 C. GIVEN  
21 November 1968

WO ROBERT L. STOREY  
21 November 1968

Sgt EUGENE V. SONNETT  
10 February 1968

SP5 ELLIE J. ONTIS  
21 November 1968

SP4 TEDDY G. SUMPTER  
21 November 1968
COMMANDING OFFICERS
OF THE
119TH AVIATION COMPANY
(Air Mobil Light)

Major Joseph R. Campbell, USA

Major Warren R. Porter

Major Kenneth R. Cary

20 November 1967 - 24 April 1968

24 April 1968 - 24 October 1968

24 October 1968 - 24 April 1968
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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 TECRE 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 (CHTM)
- 70th Signal Detachment (Avionics)
- 94th Medical Detachment
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 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 Rings, 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 HC 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 received a May Day call from an 'Avenger' aircraft of the 189th HC. 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 sunshines had an engine failure four miles west of 
Hano 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 8th 
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 stopped.

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

5 Apr. Lieutenant Heller was injured, while making a run 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 8th 
Infantry Division.

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

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

25 May. While surviving 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 720 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 Pak.

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 269th 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 52d Artillery Group, the 6th Special Forces, FOR II, and TFW. A great many experienced aviators, crew chiefs, and gunners were lost due to POPC. Even though hampered, 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, 6th Special Forces Group, and the 11th Artillery Group in combat support missions within the I Corps Tactical Zone during this period of operations. Because of the number of personnel that transferred 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 CMB kept the company at 87% of its TO 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 on OCONUS to the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion for 45 days. The platoon worked out of Ia Drang 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-ams" and their children.

31 Dec Heavy action was expected around the "Dragon's Den" and VAC and VC clubs on post.
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 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. (Reen))

Campaign Silver Ranks

Constituted 14 June 1944 as A-P-MV II Transportaion Corps Composite Company, New Guinea
Activated 5 July 1944 as 81st Transportation Corps Company, New Guinea
Redesignated 1 March 1945 as 81st Transportation Corps Harbor Craft Co., New Guinea
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.

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