ARCTIC SUPPLEMENT
UNIT HISTORY
155 ASSAULT COMPANY (ASSAULT HELICOPTER)
1 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER
1969
A YEAR OF SERVICE
ANNUAL REPORT

HISTORY OF THE
196TH ASWABLE HELICOPTER COMPANY
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96297
1 JANUARY 1969 - 31 DECEMBER 1969

Written By

CH2 MURG I MARSH
UNIT HISTORIAN

Approved By

GERARD H. LUCI
Lt. J. G.
Commanding
Serving in direct support of the Free World Forces and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, the 155th Aviation Company is similar to the many other aviation units of the same size and structure. Formed originally as Co A, 1st Aviation Battalion, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas, the unit arrived at Phu Yen, Vietnam on 1 May 1966. Moving immediately to Ben Ho Thanh, with an aircraft complement of 24 UH-1D's the advance party was welcomed by LTC Delbert Townsend, former commander of the 52nd Aviation Battalion. After much preparation and many training hours through which the men of Co A became proficient in the new and demanding techniques of flying in a combat zone, the company was declared operational on 1 Jun 66. On 20 Nov 66, Co A was redesignated as the 155th Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light). Unofficially the 155th was directed by 1st Aviation Brigade to designate itself the 155th Assault Helicopter Company. At that time that designation was in effect for all Air Mobile Light Aviation companies throughout Vietnam. In 1969, the 155th was directed to redesignate itself the 155th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter).

From the first, the 155th's two airslit platoons were known as the "Stage Coaches", while the third Platoon was called the "Falcons". Under these names the men of the 155th have spread their reputation for accomplishing their mission while maintaining the highest of safety standards and aircraft availability throughout Vietnam. Flying from silicon in the north to Dak Pek and I Corps in the north, from the coastal plain to the Cambodian border, the Stage Coach - Falcon team has flown over 113,000 hours in support of the allied forces combating the threat of Communism in southeast Asia.

This history is dedicated to all those men who have served and are serving with the 155th Aviation Company and its attached unit since its arrival in the Republic of Vietnam, with special tribute to those officers, warrant officers, and enlisted personnel who gave their lives for a free world.
On 26 December 1969, I assumed command of the 155th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter). Since that date, I never cease to be amazed by the professionalism, dedication and Esprit De Corps that exists within this unit.

A unit history is non-existent without the daily, often times mundane, activities of flying. These missions run the gamut from VIP support, command and control to providing a transportation service to indigenous tribesmen. Periodically though, the ultimate test for any unit must be experienced—combat. Throughout the pages of this history for 1969, the officers and men of the 155th continually met the test and never faltered in denying the communist forces victory.

This unit is comprised of machines and equipment, but rather a unit consists of men. These men, for the most part non-careerists, come from all walks and stations of life. Their education, ethnic background and religious beliefs may differ but as soldiers they have arrived in the Republic of Vietnam and make this unit what it is—a cohesive, aggressive team.

It is to these men, who daily make history, that this document is dedicated. It is also dedicated to future members of the 155th so that they too may see what their predecessors accomplished and strive them to continue carrying forward the ideals of freedom.

[Signed]

[Name]

Cpt R. H. LUXST
m'd, Lt
Commanding
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<tr>
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<td>SP4 John W. Wood</td>
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<td>WO1 Paul W. Larson</td>
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6. CPL Herbert Hayashida 19 Apr 68
7. SP4 John R. Brooks 19 Apr 68
8. SP4 Oran L. LeCardel 19 Apr 68
9. LLT Fred O. Pratt 26 Aug 68
10. WO1 William P. Barwood 8 Sep 68
11. WO1 Redlich S. Koppel 6 Sep 68
12. WO1 Richard C. Pugh 26 Dec 68
13. SP4 James D. Butchney 24 Jun 69
14. SP4 Willian Martin 6 Feb 69
15. SP4 Edward Milan 4 Mar 69
16. SP4 James Oden 4 Mar 69
17. SSG Robert Pinkston 13 Mar 69

1969

1. WO1 Ronald McGary 3 Jan 69
2. SP4 Richard See 6 Jan 69
3. WO1 Terry L. Crawford 27 Feb 69
4. SP5 Izrandro Ramiros 23 Mar 69
5. WO1 Santiago Quinitana 23 Mar 69
6. SP5 Rich H. Bedoris 5 Nov 69
7. SP5 John A. Payne 5 Nov 69
8. SP4 Richar d G. Bauer 5 Nov 69

DECLASSIFIED
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By: G. H. R. Date: 12/11/41
Group Convall, home of the 155th Aviation Co (AT), and the facilities and atmosphere it provides are largely responsible for the success of the 155th. The 155th Company area, designed for tactical convenience, is abundant with lemon trees, flowering plants and in general has a green garden-like atmosphere. There are three up-to-date, well equipped clubs in the company area to provide entertainment and relaxation for the personnel of the company. Sports facilities are present within the area, affording personnel the opportunity to play softball, basketball, and volley ball. Most treasured of the recreation-oriented facilities is the large swimming pool located in the center of the 155th area. A cool swim after a hard, hot day is one of the best morale builders available.
The mission of the 155th Aviation Company was to provide tactical air and ground support to combat troops, providing medical evacuation and maintenance support. The company was organized to support the 4th Division and was equipped with the following units:

- 255th General Support Helicopter Company
- 255th Support Group
- 255th Aviation Support Battalion

The company was based in Thailand.
REQUIDENT ANALYSIS

TERRAIN

The II Corps Tactical Zone, in which Tan Ne Tinh is located and in which the 155th Aviation Company renders the majority of its support, covers an area of 32,725 square miles or 49% of the land area of South Vietnam. Its western border is 342 miles long and in common with Laos and Cambodia. The eastern border is approximately 400 miles of coastline bordering the South China Sea. The area is 40 miles wide in the north and 342 miles wide in the south. This area is politically divided into the provinces of Kontum, Binh Dinh, Pleiku, Phu Yen, and Phu Yen in the 22nd ARVN Division Tactical Zone, and Dac Lac, Khanh Hoa, Quang Duc, Tuyen Du, Ninh Thuan, Lam Dong, and Binh Thuan in the 23rd ARVN Division Tactical Zone. Geographically, this area may be divided into three major areas.

1. The coastal plain is a narrow strip of long flat, often marshy terrain not more than twenty miles wide from the sea inland. This area is formed by a series of numerous river deltas interrupted by a rock ridge line running steeply to the sea. This area is almost entirely under cultivation, with four rice crops a year.

2. The mountain region extends from north to south almost the entire length of the II Corps Tactical Zone. Elevation range from 3,000 to 8,000 feet, with the eastern slopes quite steep and the western more gradual. Rain forests cover three quarters of this area with most of the remainder covered with open, deciduous growth. Cultivation is limited to small, cleared areas on relatively flat land. Flying in this area is very hazardous with forced landing areas practically non-existent, ceilings frequently very low and winds unpredictable.

3. The plateau region is located west of the mountains and is comprised of the Kontum Plateau in the north and the Dac Lac Plateau in the south. This
region has altitudes ranging from 1,000 to 3,000 feet with gently rolling hills and much open area. Where the soil is not under cultivation, a thick growth of grass to a height of eight to ten feet, covers the ground. Where adequate drainage is provided, this area will support four vegetable crops yearly.

The principal cities of this area are Phan Thiet, Phan Rang, Nha Trang, and Qui Nhon on the coastal plain; Dalat in the mountains; and Ban Me Thuot, Pleiku, and Kontum on the plateaus. The major routes of this area are:

- Route #1 Saigon - Damrang (coastal route)
- Route #11 Dalat - Phan Rang
- Route #14 Saigon - Ban Me Thuot - Pleiku - Kontum
- Route #19 Pleiku - Qui Nhon
- Route #20 Saigon - Dalat
- Route #21 Ban Me Thuot - Nha Trang

The Republic's major rail line parallels Route #1 along its entire length with one spur line from Phan Rang to Dalat. The logistical and communications complex at Can Hau Bay is located between Phan Rang and Nha Trang.

WEATHER

Weather throughout this area can be divided into the summer monsoon, June through September, and the winter monsoon, November through April, with the months of May and October as periods of transition. During the summer monsoon the wind is westerly, causing cloud buildup on the western slopes of the mountains. This results in a rainy season for the plateaus and mountainous areas during the summer months while the coastal provinces have clear skies and good flying weather. The winter monsoon brings a northeasterly flow with the conditions reversed. The coastal provinces of Binh Thuan and Phu Yen are little affected by either monsoon and have generally clear weather the year round.
Average rainfall in the mountain and plateau areas is 90 inches, and on the coastal plain 27 inches. The temperature on the coastal plain ranges from the mid 70's to the high 80's during the rainy season and low 60's to high 90's during the dry season. The mountains and plateaus experience temperatures from the mid 60's to mid 80's during the wet season, and low 60's to low 80's during the dry season. Winds are normally gusty at 10-15 knots with velocity increasing with altitude. Surface winds up to 25 knots are frequently encountered.

INDIGENOUS POPULATION

The II Corps Tactical Zone has a population of approximately 2.5 million people, or just over 20% of the population of the Republic of Vietnam. The majority of this population is located along the coastal plain in the vicinity of the cities. The majority of these people are Annamites.

The mountain and plateau regions are inhabited chiefly by Montagnard tribesmen. There are thirty-nine major tribes and some 150 subordinate tribal groups of these people living in the highlands of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Ben Ho Tract is the traditional capital of these people. The II Corps Area is inhabited by approximately 500,000 Montagnards. The largest tribe in this region is the Rade, whose influence extends from Kontum to Ben Ho Tract.
The new year started off with a bang at Camp Coryell, in keeping with the expected pre-Tet offensive. At 0100 hours on 2 January 1969, Camp Coryell came under its first hostile attack of the year when ten rounds of 60mm mortar fire fell on or near the compound. This attack resulted in negative casualties or damage to equipment or structures. On 3 January, at 0150 hours, less than five hours after the first attack, four rounds of 120mm rockets struck the compound, also with negative damage or casualties.

On 6 January, Camp Coryell again came under enemy mortar attack; fourteen rounds of 60mm mortars struck the compound from unknown enemy positions. Six UH-1's were damaged and one vehicle damaged in the attack. Attacked again on 8 January at 2310 hours, by an unknown size enemy force using 60mm mortars, twenty rounds struck the compound, damaging three structures and wounding two men, one of whom died as a result of his wounds.

During the month of February, Camp Coryell was relatively free from enemy attacks. However, on 23 February, at 0100 hours, 20 rounds of 60mm mortars impacted on the compound from unknown enemy locations, resulting from this attack.

In March the tempo picked up again, with Camp Coryell receiving six mortar and rocket attacks. The first on 4 March, occurred at 2310 hours. Twenty mortars were fired with no casualties and no damage. Later that night, on 5 March at 0130 hours, fourteen rounds of 75mm recoilless were received, damaging five aircraft. At 2145 hours on 12 March the 155th again came under light attack. Negative damage resulted from the two 120mm rockets received. The same night, at 0015 hours on 13 March, we were attack again. This time seven rounds of 60mm mortars struck the compound, resulting in damage to 5 UH-1's and UH-1C.

On the morning of 21 March at 0130 hours, fifteen rounds of 75mm recoilless rifle landed in the compound, damaging one UH-1C. On Sunday, 23 March, the
155 was attacked in the midst of a cease-fire party. 40 personnel were breaching, stealing and opening hooch, six rounds of 120mm unичес landed in the compound.
Four enlisted men were wounded during this attack.

During the entire year of 1968, Camp Cuyahoga came under attack 20 times. During the quarter 1 January to 31 March 69, there were 12 enemy attacks directed at Camp Cuyahoga, a 40% quarterly increase.
The 155th Aviation Company during the period 1 January - 31 March 69 continued to provide support for the 23rd ARVN division and other units with operations in Long Bien,谐龙, Tuyen Duc, Ninh Hoa, and Phu Yen provinces.

In addition, the 155th supported Special Forces, and 4th Infantry Division elements in the Phuoc-Yen Province area.

Highlights of the period were:

On the third of January a 155 aircraft crashed into a mountain between Boi Ho Thao and Dalat, after going IMR in low clouds. The pilot died in the crash and the aircraft commander, crewchief and gunner were seriously injured.

On 5 January the 155th participated in a multibattalion combat assault just north of Boi Ho Thao. Providing ten aircraft and four guns, the company airlifted 611 troops in 304 sorties in support of the 23rd ARVN Division and 2/35, 4th Infantry Division.

On 17 January the 155th provided nine aircraft and two guns to the 45th ARVN Regiment, 23 ARVN Division for a combat assault south of Boi Ho Thao. The assault was continued on 18 January because of weather delays the previous day with six aircraft and two guns. The 155th lifted 1141 troops in 415 sorties during the two day operation. Following up with daily logistic and gun support, the 155th Falcons were credited with 6 enemy killed by aircraft and four structures destroyed.

During the January - March quarter, the 155th provided combat assault support to units of 5-27 (AP) and 45th Infantry Regiment (ARVN) in areas near Gia Nghia, Dau Go, Dau Long, Dao Thien, Ho Xuan, Duong Ho, Duong District, and Quang Duc. The result of the 155 support activities for the quarter ending 31 March are as follows:

- SPECIAL MISSIONS: 6,235
- ARTILLERY MISSIONS: 2,317
- FAS: 32,015
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Growth Of The 155th
1 January - 31 March 1969

In order that the 155th keep up with the ever-increasing workload and provide for optimum support capability, in addition to improving conditions for assigned personnel, the following programs and projects were initiated during this quarter.

- Renovation of the refueling area and airship
- Continued improvement in perimeter defense
- Stepped up harbor construction
- Renovation of the company dayroom
- Expansion of 9th Vod Det Laboratory facility
- Increased emphasis on personnel training program
- Initiation of night flight training program to increase each individual's proficiency and provide increased overall mission readiness capability.
155 In Vietnam 1969 - The Enemy
1 April - 30 June

On 6 April 1969, at 2320 hours, Camp Coryell came under enemy attack. Fourteen rounds of 82mm mortars, fired from unknown enemy locations, struck the compound, damaging eight UH-1H aircraft and two UH-1G gunships. Also damaged were two vehicles.

Again, on 25 April, the 155 was the target of enemy attack. Ten rounds of 82mm mortars struck the compound, damaging four UH-1H aircraft, two vehicles and two structures.

During the month of May, Camp Coryell fell victims to enemy mortar attack on only two days, being hit three times in the same day in an instance. On 16 May, at 0005 hours, 14 rounds of 82mm mortar struck the compound, fired from unknown positions. Three UH-1H's and two UH-1G gunships were damaged at this time. One Ki was wounded and hospitalized. At 0130 hours, five rounds of 82mm were received, this time with negative damage. Again, at 2000 hours, the 155 received incoming mortars, 15 in number. In addition, small arms fire was directed at the compound. The POL storage facility received minor damage as a result.

On 22 May, at 0115 hours, Camp Coryell came under combined mortar and cannon attack. A total of 56 rounds of 82 and 88mm mortars, 81 and 81mm rockets, and 75mm recoilless struck the compound. A small cannon team entered the compound in the POL area, and were able to damage or destroy eight structures and nine vehicles. The aircraft received minor damage, and two received minor damage. One civilian guard was slightly wounded.

June of 69 was the first month since September of 68 that the enemy failed to attack Camp Coryell. The 155 remained alert, however, because of the continuing attacks on Dan Hoa Tho City and outlying areas.
195TH IN VIETNAM 1969 - THE MISSION

1 APRIL - 30 JUNE

In April, the 155th flew its aircraft in its normal support role for units throughout II Corps Tactical Zone.

The second half of April, however, was marked by a tremendous upsurge of enemy activity. This resulted in the 155th providing aircraft for 22 combat assaults for D-23, (SF) 45 Regiment, 23rd ARVN Division, and Durlac Sector. The 155th also began supporting D-50 Special Forces in their operations. Most of the support for Task Force Wood, operating in the vicinity of Dan Prang, came from the 155th.

May brought about the end of our support to Task Force Wood, with 155th "Stargoose" slicks and "Falcon" gunships removing the last of TFV's troops from the Dan Prang area on 10 May. A total of 10 combat assaults were conducted throughout May in support of TF Wood, 2 MSF, D-23 (5 SFG) and 45 Regiment (23 ARVN Division).

On 23 May, three ships supporting D-50 (SF) were hit by ground fire, causing one to be a total loss with the loss of two crewmembers and two passengers. The company had a total of eight aircraft damaged on combat missions in May.

During the month of June, in addition to steady daily support of units in its normal area of operations, the 155th provided aircraft for a total of 16 combat assaults. The largest of these occurred on 21 June, when the 155th provided 5 slicks and 2 gunships, moving over 900 troops to an area southeast of Dan No Thunt.

The 155th also provided two Stargoose slicks and 2 Falcon gunships in support of daily intelligence-gathering "Sniffer" operations.

Although Camp Carroll did not come under enemy attack in June, Dan No Thunt City and outlying hamlets and installations were hard hit by the
enemy. These attacks necessitated the launching of four gunships and a flare ship on round-the-clock support of the besieged villages South of Ban No Thost at Loe Thien.

During one of the night support missions, a command and control aircraft with several passengers on board ran into IMI conditions on approach to Loe Thien airstrip. The aircraft crashed into the lake and overturned. Miraculously, no one was injured, although the aircraft was completely destroyed. In a daring rescue, the 155th commander hovered near the wrecked aircraft and allowed the wet survivors to board his aircraft.

Statistics for support provided April-June 1969, are as follows:

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The 155th, during the second quarter of 1969, did much work aimed at improving living and working conditions for its assigned personnel at Camp Coryell. Some of the more significant improvements were:

The COC (Combat Operations Center) was renovated and further protected with a chain link fence.

All the structures on post were completely repainted.

Flare pots were installed to light the runway at night.

All the swab tanks were topped with ECP.

The defensive perimeter was strengthened with additional wire barriers and the introduction of a .50 Caliber machine gun on top of the Air Force observation tower.

Many new bunkers were constructed so that there is sufficient bunker space for all personnel during attacks.

The recreation area and many areas of the cantonment area were resurfaced with pumice.

A gas chamber was constructed for gas mask tests.

A 25 meter small arms test firing range was instituted.

A new dayroom was built and stocked with recreational equipment and books.

The company swimming pool, inactive for the past year, was relined, refilled, and the area around it was renewed.

It was officially reopened the last week in May, with 155 Commander, Major Bobby L. Moore, being the first to take a plunge. To his regret, he forgot to get his clothes off in time.

The above improvements plus additional internal improvements in operations, administration, and the service platoon, helped to increase the
pride of the individual in his unit and further mission accomplishment.

On 25 June 1969, Major Bobby L. Neace relinquished command of the 155th Aviation Company (LVT Hal) to Major Dean H. Down, formerly assigned to IPPW headquarters. The change of command ceremony was held at Camp Carroll and was attended by dignitaries of the 23rd ADW Division, Barlae Sector, Detachment B-25 (5th Special Forces Group), Colonel Nelson Malone, Commanding Officer of 17th Aviation Group (Combat), and LTC Juvic L. Stanley, 10th Aviation Battalion (Combat) Commander. Major Neace was presented the Bronze Star for Service and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.
1959 IN VIETNAM 1969 - THE STORY
1 JULY - 30 SEPTEMBER

After a period of seven weeks without an enemy attack on Camp Coryell, the longest period of relative the 155 had seen in two years, the night quiet was again broken by incoming rounds. On 23 July at 2333 hours, five B-40 rockets and ten 82mm mortars struck the compound. Due to increased bunker facilities, and the overuse nature of the attack, the rounds inflicted negative damage to personnel or equipment.

Again, there was a long period without enemy attack on Camp Coryell in July and August. Finally, the compound was attacked on 12 August. Early in the morning, a total of 37 rounds struck the compound, landing not only in the general and dust bowl but in the billeting areas as well. Ten B-40 rockets and 27 82mm mortars impacted, causing damage to four UH-1D's, and one UH-1, two structures, and four vehicles. Eleven personnel were wounded during the attack. Trench gambits and a flamethrower were launched, but because of difficulty encountered in getting clearance to fire, returned with negative results.

The 155 was not subject to enemy attack during the entire month of September.

In late August and early September of 1969, the 155-supported areas of Bu Don and Tan Iap were the targets of a long, hard-hitting offensive by the enemy. Tan Iap in particular was the focal point of enemy activity in the 155th's area of operations during that year.

All sources of information gathered thus far in 1969 indicated that the enemy was planning a 1969 offensive similar once again at the Iap.

The end of the summer season and the beginning of the winter monsoon brought about a great increase in enemy activity in large parts of the 155th's area of operation. Although the rainy weather precluded any large scale
enemy activity during July and August, toward the end of September the lessening rainfall afforded the enemy greater ease of mobility, as was indicated by large troop buildups in the border area West and Southwest of Dac Lay.
An enomy buildup quite similar to that which occurred just before the battle of Due Lap in 1960 had been evidenced by intelligence reports received from the Due Lap - Bu Prang area.

To increase our information concerning enemy activities in the areas around Bu Prang and Due Lap, the 155 conducted numerous sniffer missions in those areas in support of the 23rd ARVN Division and D-23 (Special Forces). Much valuable intelligence was gathered and many significant sightings were made. Several ground operations were conducted by the supported units as a result of these sniffer findings, with good results.

As a result of information gathered regarding a probable enemy offensive in the Due Lap area, the 155 was becoming increasingly committed in an attempt to provide adequate support to the units in the Ban Me Thout support zone. Due to increased mission requirements, the 155 was given operational control of as many as twenty additional aircraft during this period. This more than doubled the mission capabilities of the 155, but put the 155 operations under a severe strain as a result.

July also marked the return of the company's support to D-50 operations. In addition a commitment to 2nd, 3rd, and 5th MSF (Rike Strike Force) was added at this time.

The resupply, sniffer, D-50, and command and control requirements placed on the 155 at this time precluded supporting any great number of combat assaults. A total of 27 were conducted within the July-September quarter. Some of the highlights of this period:

On 13 July, after being imported by 155 aircraft south of Ban Me Thout, two LRM teams came into contact with an enemy force. One Stagewench and two Falcons were dispatched to the area. One gunship received damage from
ground fire but the Falcon team was credited with 13 enemy killed by air during the action.

On 25 July, while supporting four slicks on a B-23 troop movement, a pair of 155 gunships expended, killing five enemy soldiers.

The month of August was marked by the intensive increase of sniper operations conducted for intelligence gathering purposes. Two sets of sniper missions were run daily in and around Dalne and Quang Duc Province. These missions were given high priority due to the need for gathering as much intelligence as possible on enemy movements and activities. Although hampered by deteriorating weather conditions, the results of these missions proved later to be of great assistance in planning for the coming enemy offensive.

In September the 155 was again given the commitment to support B-50 operations. Four slicks and four gun were provided each day for the entire month for this mission.

As in July and August, September was characterized by the presence of a great number of aircraft from throughout II Corps operating in the Ban No Thuan area. This was due to the need to provide increased tactical and logistical aviation support to units operating in the Da Nang - Cam Lych - Da Lai triangle. Consequently, as many as 25 aircraft from other units were working in the Ban No Thuan area, with 155 operations acting as controlling agency, placing an additional workload on the 155 for operational and maintenance support.
The 155th continued in its efforts to improve facilities and conditions for its personnel during this quarter. Some of the notable improvements:

Old and inadequate bunkers were torn down and replaced with new and larger structures.

Concrete pavement was poured to connect all living areas with a paved surface.

A new above surface minipart area was constructed to replace the old underground system. A single line system with seven UH-1 and one CH-47 refueling stations was put in use. The minipart now has a 20,000 gallon capacity.

Renovation of the dog kennels in anticipation of the return of a K-9 security detachment.

Construction of guard bunkers along the south perimeter fence.

Installation of a minefield inside the northeast perimeter.

An interior guard tower was equipped with a 50 caliber machine gun and a xenon light.

Rewiring of all billets.

Morale during this third quarter decreased to a certain degree. This was caused by several factors. The RCO-21 club was closed in early August due to management difficulties, leaving the enlisted personnel without facilities for recreation during off-duty hours.

Additionally, many ships and crew from other units were staying with the 155 on an indefinite "ROCM" basis. The presence of these "OPCOM" crews created a certain amount of friction between the men. Most of these problems were quickly resolved by introducing additional billeting facilities.
Although perhaps a contradiction in terms, the absence of the always expected enemy attacks on Camp Caggell made for an uneasy time of waiting. However, as external enemy activity increased, so did morale and spirit, with the men of the 155 anticipating participation in the tactical defense of the Pan Ne Thanh - Dan Lap area.

During this period, a new set of requirements was devised for the awarding of AC (Aircraft Commander) orders. Since the unit is safety-minded, and a direct parallel to aviation safety and pilot proficiency can be made, the requirements for becoming an aircraft commander were broadened to:

300 Hours In-Country
Five Hours Minimum Night Time
Five Hours Of Road Time
A Minimum Of Two Maintenance Test Flights
A Grade of 90% or Better on Each Of Two/Five-Ten Tests.
An Aircraft Commander Checkride with Company Instructor Pilot
Two Mission Checkrides with Instructor Pilots

This program proved to be a basis for similar programs instituted in many other aviation units.

The 155th continued in its tradition of maximum support and highest aircraft availability within the 10th Aviation Battalion. Average UH-1H availability July-September was 97.1%. Average UH-1C availability for the period was 96.7%.

In addition to the unique requirements and increased pressure placed on it by the tactical situation, the 155th prepared for and passed with a satisfactory rating, the annual AGI (Annual General Inspection) which was conducted on 3 September.

In view of the increasing workload of the company in the area of tactical mission support, the passing of the AGI at this time was a tribute...
to the general state of preparedness of the unit.

Statistics for 155 support for the July - September period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>19,191</td>
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<td>Passengers</td>
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<td>Cargo (Tons)</td>
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<td>Emergency Helicopters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enemy killed by air</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures destroyed</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
155 in Vietnam

The Enemy at Home

October - December

The last quarter of 1969 left Camp Coryell only slightly damaged by the enemy in relation to the first nine months.

Although attacked five times during the period the compound suffered comparatively little damage.

On 25 October, in the early morning hours, 15 rounds of 82mm mortars, fired from unknown positions, struck the compound. The result was two ML-111S and one ML-1C gunship, two buildings and two vehicles damaged. Five personnel were injured, two of whom required medical evacuation.

On 10 November, the 155 was again attacked. Eight B-40 rockets and 17 82mm mortars struck the compound, damaging one ML-111, five structures and one vehicle, and wounding six personnel.

The compound was attacked three more times during the quarter, on 16, 25, and 30 November. All three attacks resulted in negative damage, although a total of 37 mortar rounds impacted in the 155 area.
Due to the tremendous increase in enemy activity during the first part
of October, and due to the buildup of resources and the strengthening of
the defensive posture of friendly units, it is impossible at this time to
divide the mission performed from the enemy situation.

Following is a background of friendly efforts to meet the coming off-
ensive, included to offer a complete picture in order that the reader may
fully understand the gigantic proportions of the preparations made. It
must be remembered that the 155, being the local unit and main provider
of aviation support in the Duc Lap-Da Prang area, played a significant role
in the building of a successful defense against the soon-to-come enemy
onslaught.

The weather has been the most significant natural factor relating to
the buildup of enemy forces. The summer monsoon, and the rain it brings,
continued through August and September, hindering any large scale enemy
activity. October brought with it good weather and a tremendous upsurge
in enemy activity throughout the area of operations, and especially in the
areas around Da Prang and Duc Lap.

Intelligence reports indicated massive buildups of enemy forces
along the western boundary of Quang Duc sector between Da Prang and Phan
Co. Large size enemy units were reported in Cambodia north of Da Prang
and west of Duc Lap.

Great emphasis was put on gathering further information in these areas.
This was accomplished by conducting two separate daily sniffer missions
around Duc Lap, Da Prang, and areas south in an extension of II Corps known
as the "Death Valley of Da Gia Map". Intelligence gathering by the 155
continued in an attempt to fix locations and sizes of individual enemy units.

The questions of the intentions of the enemy were answered on 22 October when it became clear that the enemy was on the move. Large size units moved across from Cambodia into positions south of Da Prang and south of Da Lai. Large units were still moving along the Cambodian border posing a substantial artillery and standoff attack threat to the outposts of Da Prang and Da Lai.

On 25 October the enemy began his offensive. The entire sequence of events follow:

One of the 195-supported units in the area, 5/22 Artillery, in preparation for the offensive, built six firebases in the Da Lai-Da Prang-Gia Xin triangle. Their positions can be determined from the insert. These fire support bases were named: Fire support bases Dairy, Helen, Susan, Annie, Kate and Huckle. These firebases provided support for Da Prang and Da Lai.

Work on these firebases began in early September and continued through October. Initial work was hampered by marginal weather and the difficulty of providing continuous Chinese support to transport loads and equipment.

Annie and Kate were set up within six kilometers each of Da Prang. While these firebases could provide artillery support for Da Prang, it became clear that they would be vulnerable to any determined enemy attack. In addition everything depended on resupply by air because the roads were not adequate enough for transport. Security for these firebases was provided by CIDG (Civilian Irregular Defense Group) and elements of the 180th Strike Force. All units in the area of operations were under the control of the 23rd ARW Division and a divisional light combat post was set up at Gia Nghi. 7/17 Cavalry was assigned the mission of conducting "Hunter-Killer" operations in the Da Prang-Gia Xinh area. Thus the stage
was not for what developed during the last part of October.

The 155 and several other units in the 10th and 59th Aviation Battalions were now responsible for inserting, exchanging and supporting the troops at these new firebases.

On 25 October, the enemy began his offensive. Helen (the firebase came to be known by the prefix LZ for landing zone) came under attack by a multiple-attack sized unit which had begun crossing the border on 22 October. Personnel and equipment were extracted in total from LZ Helen on 25 October by the 155 and OCON units. During the extraction a large size enemy force again attacked the LZ inflicting heavy casualties. The extraction was completed on the 26th and that afternoon a regimental size enemy element moved into Helen and claimed it as theirs.

During this time LZ Judo and LZ Kato were being threatened by another regimental size unit. 155 Stinger aircraft continued to make rendezvous under heavy fire at these firebases. On the 30th, LZ Murtha was to be removed to reinforce Nui Lap and because it was under constant small arms attack. On the evening of the 30th Murtha was relocated to Nui Lap by aircraft of the 155 and OCON units under heavy mortar fire. Every time a ship came in to remove troops the LZ was pounded with mortar fire. The troops were moved into LZ Mike Smith, a new ESB located in Nui Lap.

LZ Kato then became the major target of the enemy. Every .50 caliber and 20mm antiaircraft positions were active all around the firebase, and they took their toll of aircraft. At 0930 hours on 30 October Kato came under sustained enemy ground attack by at least 500 NVA (North Vietnamese Army regulars).

Two Joker gunships from the 49th Aviation Company were diverted to LZ Kato. One Joker was shot down, crashed and was destroyed. There were no survivors. During that same day, three additional gunships and 1 CH-47 were hit by enemy ground fire in the vicinity of Kato.
The situation deteriorated rapidly and on the 31st Kate was low on food and ammunition.

Aircraft were not able to get into Kate due to heavy ground fire and mortars. One CH-47 was hit by heavy ground fire and had to abort its emergency resupply, dropping its load in the jungle short of Kate.

Thus the stage was set for an emergency night resupply into Kate. At 0200 in the morning of 1 November, five slicks and four gunships from the 155th Aviation Company departed Run wa Thuet for LZ Kate. Each slick carried 1,000 pounds of the much needed resupply.

Under cover of darkness and heavy suppressive fire by the gunships, the slicks made the resupply without incident. The month of October ended with Lü's Annie and Kate still under siege and the camps at Du Prang and Duc Lap under eminent danger of attack.

On 1 November, LZ Kate began receiving continuous artillery fire from Cambodia. In addition, the enemy was conducting massive ground and mortar attacks. On the afternoon of the first, after all of Kate's big guns were damaged or destroyed by enemy artillery, the FSB was declared no longer capable of operation. The decision was made to evacuate Kate.

The 155 airlifted two companies of the 5th HSF into an area one kilometer northwest of Kate on the night of the first. The troops at Kate successfully walked out and united with these units. Immediately after the evacuation of Kate, 155 and GPGC units extracted Lü's Annie and Susan, also while under continuous fire.

On 2 November, while 155 aircraft were providing suppressive fire for a convoy that had been ambushed just northeast of LZ Dory, an emergency call went out to all aviation support in the Duc Lap area.

While on a "Hunter-Killer" reconnaissance mission north of LZ Helen, two observation helicopters (Leachus) and one Cobra of the 7/17th Cavalry had been shot down within minutes of each other. All aircraft in the area responded. Cavalry ground troops were inserted and one pilot was extracted.
One pilot died in the crash, and two pilots and two observers were captured by the enemy. (One pilot and one observer were released some time later.)

Later on 2 November, four attacks and two guns from the 155 conducted an emergency resupply of 4,000 pounds of food and ammunition into LZ Dory, which was under attack and unable to be supplied by road.

The main offensive now shifted to Duc Lap, where LZ Mike Smith (set up from the extraction of Martha and Kulan), began receiving 122mm rockets. At the same time Dak Sak (Duc Lap Special Forces Compound) received incoming rounds and revealed rifle fire.

Late in the morning of the 6th, friendly units set up a defensive perimeter on the rim of the volcano overlooking Bon Sec Ru, south of Duc Lap.

On November 9th while flying a hot resupply into the volcano, two 155 aircraft were hit by .50 caliber fire and 2.40 rocket fragments, resulting in one pilot wounded. He was later returned to OCEUS.

On 11 November another aircraft was hit by 12.7 mm anti-aircraft fire southeast of Bu Prang, wounding one crewman. Later that morning one passenger was killed and two wounded when their aircraft took hits from 37mm anti-aircraft fire near Bu Prang.

One of the more significant actions took place on 17 November when 155 Falcon gunships expended five times on enemy locations near Bu Prang. As a result of Falcon gunship and the air support, 72 enemy were killed, more than half of which were credited to the Falcons.

In separate actions on the 17th, two Falcon gunships received damage from enemy fire.

On the 21st, Falcon guns expended three times on enemy locations, receiving credit for 23 enemy killed by air. During this action three gunships were hit by ground fire.

On 22 November, two Falcon gunships on standby at Ch. Nghia were called to Duc Lap where they engaged enemy targets. Both ships took damage from
On 25 November, another 155 ship took hits from ground fire while resupplying the volcano, wounding the pilot.

The activity at the volcano had now reached the point where the Stagg Co., supporting the troops on the rim would always receive ground fire, either enroute to or from the volcano, or from within the crater of the volcano itself. Launching out of L5 Mike Smith, these resupply helicopters had to alter their routes and landing patterns every time they ran a mission. There were confirmed .50 caliber positions around three sides of the volcano, with heavy small arms and troop concentrations on the fourth side.

In addition there was only one small spot on the rim suitable for landing and this p.d. was constantly shelled with direct mortar, rocket, and artillery fire. An aircraft landing on the volcano had to be fast. If the cargo couldn't be kicked off or the wounded loaded within 27-28 seconds, they would have to wait for the next trip, because within 29-30 seconds after touchdown, a mortar round would strike the pad. Thus a Stagg Co. aircraft got an added boost on take-off from the concussion of a mortar round directly behind it.

This resupply and evacuation mission put the crews under a great strain. Going into the volcano as many as four, five or six times in one day under these not-so-friendly conditions put the crews under so much pressure that the US ground commander insisted that the crews be changed daily so as not to overtired the same people day after day.

On 27 November, a gunship covering a volcano resupply mission received heavy ground fire and was forced to make an emergency landing in enemy territory. The crew destroyed the radios and other equipment before being
safely extracted by another gunship. The gunship was destroyed in place.

On 28 November, another pilot from the 155 was wounded when his ship received fire on the volcano.

On 4 December, while extracting a wounded ARVN from the volcano, the rescue command and control helicopter drew heavy ground fire, wounding a pilot.

It must be remembered that the battle of Bu Prong - Duc Lap was a full scale effort by the enemy. Although not mentioned in this history, the events and circumstances surrounding all operations 28 October - 28 December required aviators and crews to daily risk their lives in an effort to provide support to the Saigon firebases and outposts.

Many more missions than are recorded were actually flown. Many more enemy were killed than the Falcons were given credit for. This is a result of the fluid maneuvering of both friendly and enemy units.

The constant enemy activity, the fact that it took to pull a medevac a Stage Coach aircraft would go into an area that had been the target of over 200 enemy artillery rounds that day, the fact that though enemy mortars were sure to follow a medevac by seconds, all confirm that under the most severe of conditions the 155 Stage Coach-Falcons team can and will provide optimum support, without reservation and without delay to the units which it serves.
155 in Vietnam 1969
The Company Nulls the Mission

The last and by far the busiest quarter of 1969 left in its wake a great sense of accomplishment, and a feeling of relief that the ordeal of two months was over. Although acting as controlling agency in conjunction with Vungrad Forward, the 155th operations had handled as many as fifty additional aircraft daily during November and December. This put quite a strain on 155 operations.

In addition, the company flew more hours than any other company in the 10th Aviation Battalion for long periods, still maintaining an extremely high aircraft availability record.

Although 28 aircraft from the 155 received damage from ground fire the knowledge of the enemy and terrain proved to be a major factor in minimizing damage to aircraft. Aircraft from other units, in trying to support the 155, proved that anything less than a complete knowledge of terrain and tactics creates a dangerous situation. Hour for hour, the 155 took less damage from ground fire than outside units unfamiliar with the area of operation.

Statistics for 155 Support October - December

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<td>Structures Destroyed</td>
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Aircraft availability was maintained throughout the quarter.

October - December average UH-1H availability............. 97.5%
Average UH-1C availability for the period was............. 96.2%

On 26 December 1969 Maj Donn J. Owen relinquished command of the 155 Aviation Company (ARVN) to Maj Gerard K. Laisi, formerly assigned as Assistant Division Aviation Officer of the 25th Infantry Division.

The change of command ceremony was held at Camp Coryell and was attended by dignitaries of the 23rd ARVN Division, Service Sector, Detachment D-23 (Special Forces), COL Bill J. Wright, 17th Aviation Group (Combat) Commander, and LTC Samuel V. Patellas, Commanding Officer, 10th Aviation Battalion. Major Owen was presented the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry by Colonel Karch of the 23rd ARVN Division.