

MAY-JULY  
1967

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, NND 873541

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

~~SECRET~~

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 269TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION  
APO 96353

OPERATIONAL REPORT - LESSONS LEARNED

1 MAY - 31 JULY 1967

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3

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By RA, NARA, Date 8/1/90

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By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

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

AVGC-F-SC

1 August 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned for Quarterly Period  
Ending 31 July 1967

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

## SECTION I

## SIGNIFICANT UNIT ACTIVITIES

## A. (C) Significant Events.

1. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, composed of two assault helicopter companies at the onset of the time frame covered by this report, has increased in size to its present composition of three assault helicopter companies, one reconnaissance airplane company, and one assault support helicopter company. The Assault Helicopter Company gained, the 188th, was assigned to the Battalion on 2 May 1967. The 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company, a fixed wing unit, had its main body close in the Republic of Vietnam on 29 June 1967. Finally, the 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company, a CH-47 unit, had its advanced party arrive in country on 27 July 1967. These units, all new in country, trained for overseas deployment at Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Fort Lewis, Washington; and Fort Benning, Georgia, respectively. The 188th was subsequently assigned to DAU TIENG, the 21st to TAY NINH, and the advanced party of the 242d to BIEN HOA. The location of the 242d is temporary, pending engineer completion of its ultimate location at CU CHI.

2. The 187th Assault Helicopter Company, whose arrival in Vietnam and assignment to this Battalion occurred in March of this year, is

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stationed at TAY NINH, as was reported in this Battalion's previous ORLL. The 116th Assault Helicopter Company, the oldest company in the Battalion, remains at CU CHI.

3. During the period under discussion, the 116th and 187th Assault Helicopter Companies primarily supported the three brigades of the 25th Infantry Division. Major operations in which the Battalion's assault helicopter companies participated included Operations MANHATTAN, BARKING SANDS, KOLE KOLE, and DIAMOND HEAD. Infrequent requirements sent both assault helicopter companies to the southern portions of the III Corps Tactical Zone and northern portions of the IV Corps Tactical Zone, in support of the 9th Infantry Division.

4. Numerous operations were conducted in conjunction with ARVN troops as well as CIDG personnel. All operations supporting our own forces and Vietnamese troops proved highly successful from an airmobile standpoint.

5. During the period of interest, the 188th Assault Helicopter Company, operational on 15 June, sustained considerable damage to its aircraft while under a heavy mortar attack on 24 June at DAU TIENG. Immediately upon becoming operational again, the unit was moved to the II CTZ on a temporary basis in direct support of Korean units located in the TUY HOA-PHU HIEP area, just north of NHA TRANG. The date of movement was 7 July, with a return date estimated to be on or about 1 September 1967.

6. The 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company became operational on 15 July. The last two weeks of the month found this unit's aircraft dispersed throughout the III CTZ in support of numerous tactical operations.

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7. The advanced party of the 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company arrived in Vietnam during the last week in July. The key personnel that this unit sent forward are establishing the basic unit functions necessary as a foundation for supporting the main body due to close in early August.

8. The units established in country and presently operational, i.e., the 116th, 187th, and 188th Assault Helicopter Companies and the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company, supported ground forces to an extent well worth noting. A composite tally of the Battalion's efforts follows. The figures, it is felt, warrant close scrutiny since they are directly indicative of the proud accomplishments of this Battalion for the quarter of interest. Further statistics for the period, on a "per company" basis, will show that the companies of this Battalion are second to none in the entire 1st Aviation Brigade. Efforts expended and successes achieved are borne out below. Your attention is invited to the following.

9. During the quarter of concern, 1 May to 31 July, the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion flew 68,885 sorties, logging a total of 23,819 accumulated flying hours. 119,637 passengers were carried and 4,247 tons of cargo have been moved in support of ground forces. 232 Viet Cong were killed during the period by Army Aircraft of this Battalion. The 269th evacuated a total of 433 medical casualties.

10. During the period the Battalion itself suffered 13 KIA and 26 WIA. 147 aircraft received combat damage, while the total number of hits received from ground fire was 118. Most of the hostile fire taken was so taken during a total of 101 days of combat assault.

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in support of ground forces.

11. The statistics indicated substantiate an indisputable fact. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, in support of ground offenses launched against the PARROT'S BEAK, and WAR ZONE C, both in the 25th Infantry Division's Area of Operations, is supporting operations in two of the most hotly contested areas in the Republic of Vietnam. Both are recognized geographically as well fortified and well defended Viet Cong strongholds.

12. Further, the figures shown are evidence that the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion is supporting the most aggressive action in the war today. A study comparing the Battalion's statistics with those of any other battalion in the 1st Aviation Brigade will indicate that the 269th is far more involved in airmobile operations, has carried more troops, has flown more hours, carried a greater tonnage, has physically accounted for more VC forces killed, and has evacuated more wounded from its tactical operational area, than any other aviation unit in the entire 1st Aviation Brigade. This Battalion takes deep satisfaction from these accomplishments.

13. A further statistical breakdown follows for your interest and perusal.

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

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B. (U) Command.

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

2. Organization.

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

3. Personalities.

a. Commander.

During the entire period covered by this report the Battalion Commander has been Lieutenant Colonel James H. Merryman, 087566, Artillery.

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

(1) Executive Officer: Lieutenant Colonel Arthur A. Dalone, 094453, Infantry.

(2) S-1: Captain John B. Pearson, Jr., 05301157, Adjutant General's Corps.



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- (3) S-2: Captain Matthew R. Kambrod, 095999, Artillery.
- (4) S-3: Major John F. Zugschwert, 094972, Artillery.
- (5) S-4: Major George W. Moses, 073576, Infantry.

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

- (1) Headquarters Company: Major Dick E. Roach, 0996308, Artillery.
- (2) 116th Assault Helicopter Company: Major Harold I. Small, 094344, Transportation Corps.
- (3) 187th Assault Helicopter Company: Major William F. Bauman, 068430, Infantry.
- (4) 188th Assault Helicopter Company: Major John H. McWhorter, Jr, OF106186, Infantry.
- (5) 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company: Major Ernest C. Strum, 04016954, Corps of Engineers.
- (6) 242d Assault Support Helicopter Company, Major Paul L. Stansel, 01931035, Armor.

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C. (U) Personnel and Administration.

1. Maintenance of Unit Strength:

- a. Battalion strength as of 31 July 1967 (see Inclosure 2).
- b. Summary of projected gains and losses for the next 90 days (see Inclosure 3).

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

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

4. Personnel management:

a. Reclassification: Administrative MOS Reclassification during the Quarter totalled 226.

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

<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>ENL</u>
40	17	296

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

<u>OFFICERS</u>					
<u>LTC</u>	<u>MAJ</u>	<u>CPT</u>	<u>1LT</u>	<u>2LT</u>	<u>CWO</u>
0	3	2	5	1	1

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ENLISTED

E-9

E-8

E-7

E-6

E-5

E-4

d. Retirement/reversion to retired status: 1.

e. Rotation to CONUS during the Quarter:

OFF

WO

ENL

5

5

70

f. Leaves during the Quarter:

OFF

WO

ENL

Emergency

4

3

12

Compassionate

0

0

9

Special

4

1

5

Ordinary

9

2

16

5. R & R for the Quarter:

a. Forecasted/requested: 381.

b. Received: 182.

6. Reenlistment program:

a. There was one reenlistment during the Quarter.

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

BLACK BARON RELEASE.

7. Casualties during the Quarter:

a. Return to duty:

OFF

WO

ENL

5

12

42

b. Evacuated from combat zone:

OFF

WO

ENL

0

2

3

12

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c. KIA:

OFF
WO
ENL

5

2

8

8. Civilian Personnel. All units within the Battalion, out of necessity, employ Vietnamese nationals. There are two categories of employment, indirect and direct.

a. Indirect hires:

(1) Each unit, after submitting a request through command channels, is authorized to employ Vietnamese nationals on a permanent basis. These people are employed as kitchen police, carpenters, general handymen, and secretary/interpreters.

(2) There has not been, up to the time of this report, any serious problem in the procurement, utilization, administration, or control of local nationals.

(3) The processing time from receipt of authority to hire to actual employment is approximately 6 weeks.

(4) Indirect hire Vietnamese are employed as follows:

UNIT
NUMBER OF INDIRECT HIRES  
PERMANENTLY EMPLOYED

HHC, 269th Cbt Avn Bn

14

21st Recon

19

116th AHC

18

187th AHC

10

188th AHC

5

Total Number of indirect permanent hires: 66

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b. Direct hires: Direct hires are employed on a daily, as needed basis. Direct hires are used primarily to fill sandbags and to perform other unskilled labor. Currently, all units employ daily hires to construct aircraft revetments. Authorization to hire daily hires is obtained from 12th Combat Aviation Group Headquarters. Funds are allocated on a quarterly basis to the Battalion. Each unit employed an average of approximately 20 daily hires per working day during the 2d quarter CY 1967. The labor wage paid varies from \$VN 70 - \$VN 85 per 8 hour day. Local agreement requires 1 Vietnamese supervisor to be employed for every 20 Vietnamese laborers employed. In addition, it is necessary to have 1 US Army individual to supervise each group employed.

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

10. Special Services. Units have access to A & R equipment. Movies are shown daily to all companies. There is not any actual sports program due to the 24 hour operations conducted by aviation units.

11. Discipline, law, and order:

a. There have been 8 Special Court Martials during the 2d quarter CY 1967. Two individuals have been court martialled twice for different violations. None of the individuals court martialled were higher in grade than E-4.

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

c. There was one Summary Court Martial (individual refused to accept non-judicial punishment under Article 15, UCMJ).

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d. There are two cases pending board action under the provisions of AR 635-89 (Homosexuality). Both individuals are in the grade of SSG E-6. The matters are currently awaiting administrative referral from USARV Headquarters.

12.(v) Headquarters management. One helicopter is detailed to fly as the Battalion courier. The courier reports daily to Battalion Headquarters by 0800 hours and is usually released by 1630 hours. The courier stops at higher headquarters and each subordinate unit once prior to noon and once in the afternoon daily.

13.(v) Publications and forms supply.

a. Subordinate units are arriving in country without sufficient blank forms and publications. This imposes the problem of lending out the Battalion reference file copies. These are often mutilated, and at best, unavailable to the Battalion Headquarters for extended periods of time while subordinate units await their individual shipments.

b. Large amounts of publications and forms, some pertaining only to operations and functions in CONUS, seldom used in Vietnam, have been brought and received by newly arriving units; while, on the other hand, publications and forms of high usage factors have been received in insufficient quantities.

14.(v) Reproduction Activities. Each unit has its own manually operated mimeograph machine. One machine is not adequate. It is recommended that each unit have 2 mimeograph machines in the event one breaks down. Also, units would benefit if they had an electric mimeograph machine.

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15.(v)Exchange activities. Adequate exchange facilities are available to all units within the command.

16.(v)Character Guidance. We have found it very difficult to find times when men can leave their combat essential duties to attend a formal class in Character Guidance. It might be advisable for the officer charged with the Character Guidance Program to prepare a mimeographed sheet on the month's topic. This sheet would be read and initialed to signify completion of reading by each person in the command.

17.(v)Religious services.

a. Religious services of the three major faiths are available to all personnel within the command.

b. Catholic services are provided by chaplains from other units in the areas where our units are located. Catholic personnel of the 187th Assault Helicopter Company and 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company can attend Mass at 1400 hours on Sundays in the Brigade Chapel at TAY NINH. Those of the 188th Assault Helicopter Company at DAU TIENG can attend Mass in the chapel there at 1630 hours on Sundays. Personnel of the 116th Assault Helicopter Company attend Mass in the 25th Division Chapel on Sundays at 1030 hours. HHC Catholic men attend Mass in the 2d Brigade Chapel at 0830 Or 1030 hours on Sundays.

c. Jewish personnel can attend services in the 25th Division Chapel on Fridays at 1900 hours or Saturdays at 0900 hours.

d. The Battalion Chaplain conducts Protestant services for the units as follows:

(1) 188th AHC - 1930 hours on Saturdays in the company mess hall.

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(2) 187th Assault Helicopter Company and 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company - 0830 hours on Sundays in the 187th's briefing room.

(3) HHC 269th Combat Aviation Battalion - 1100 hours on Sundays in the auxiliary mess.

(4) Protestant personnel of the 116th Assault Helicopter Company also attend services at the 25th Division Chapel on Sunday mornings at 0830 hours.

e. Denominational services are available at CU CHI to Episcopalians at 1130 hours on Sundays in the 25th Division Chapel, and to Lutherans at 1300 hours on Sundays in Support Command Chapel.

18. Awards and decorations.

During the period the following awards were made within the Battalion:

	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Awarded</u>
Silver Star	11	9
Bronze Star Medal (Valor)	4	6
Distinguished Flying Cross	44	44
Bronze Star Medal (Service)	9	15
Legion of Merit	4	0
Purple Heart	43	30
Air Medal (Valor)	96	81
Army Commendation Medal (Valor)	7	35
Air Medal	1340	810

In cases above where awards received exceed the number recommended, recommendations were submitted in the previous Quarter.



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19. (u) Command Information.

a. Command Information torpics, Information sheets, and newspapers are normally distributed through Message Center Facilities. It has been found effective if the material to be disseminated is placed in a folder and addressed to the attention of the unit Information Officer by name. This insures that the unit IO receive and are able to use the material at hand.

(1) Stars and Stripes newspapers are distributed through the Message Center on a one copy per every three men ratio. There has been no problem with quantities received or dissemination of the papers.

(2) Because of the commitments of the units and their distance from the parent organization, it is sometimes difficult to ascertain the effectiveness with which pamphlets and fact sheets are used.

(3) To insure that Command Information subjects are brought to light, the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion Information Office initiated publication of an informal commanders notes titled BLACK BARON RELEASE. The system proved effective, covering a variety of subjects and effectively disseminating Command Information topics to all of the units. In order to enhance the program, the first issue of an authorized army newspaper was published. The name BLACK BARON RELEASE was utilized for this publication also. It was felt that news items of local and command interest would attract a larger reading audience. Verbal reports filtering back to the Information Office indicated that the use of a newspaper to disseminate Command Information and local news was extremely successful. Plans were made to extract pertinent Command Information from pamphlets, fact sheets, etc., and

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to localize them for publication. The articles are to be written in a journalistic style for appeal to the reader.

(4) It is felt that style and layout of the BLACK BARON RELEASE contributed significantly to its acceptance and effectiveness.

b. Posters. Periodic posters which are received from Higher Headquarters proved to be beneficial to the Command Information Program. The simplicity in which a poster conveys its message is an important factor.

c. Plans for orientation booklet.

(1) Incoming personnel receive a briefing upon arrival in country and again when they reach their unit destination. These briefings are usually short and cover a variety of general subjects. They accomplish their intended purpose, but because of the rapidity with which the information is disseminated, there is room for improvement. Pamphlets that are received upon in country processing are of a general nature, and a need to localize has been evidenced.

(2) Plans are being made to publish a booklet on local in country orientation. There will be a wider range of pertinent local subjects covered as well as a review of the general topics covered by the initial briefing. Sufficient copies will be reproduced to supply copies on a 1 per man ratio. It will be designed to be explicit in detail and intended to be read at leisure.

d. Information Officers Conference. Information Officer Conferences are held periodically on an as needed basis. They are valuable because all of the unit Information Officers are required to attend, and many problem areas may be discussed. Through these conferences it is easy

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to ascertain which areas of Command Information and Public Information need more emphasis.

e. Public Information.

(1) Release of all public information is controlled by the Battalion IO. News to be released is forwarded to USARV IO through 12th Group. USARV Daily Aviation Summaries are called directly to USARV IO office, and cleared by them for release.

(2) The most effective system for reporting USARV Daily Aviation Summaries is to have the unit IO report verbally by phone each day after missions have been completed. This insures at least a factual report on statistics each day and gives the Battalion IO an opportunity to extract news for the Battalion publication.

(3) A Guideline for releasing information, and the type of news to be released, was distributed to each unit. The report is consolidated and forwarded to USARV.

(4) Unit IO are required to give a narrative report using names and home towns whenever possible.

(5) An aviation summary is extracted from USARV news releases and published in the bimonthly unit newspaper. Plans are being made to emphasize human interest and feature type stories in order to publicize the individual soldier more often. Units are encouraged to publish authorized army newspapers on a company level to enhance their own Command Information and Public Information programs.

f. Home Town News Releases.

(1) DA Form 1526, Home Town News Releases, are sometimes difficult to obtain, thus limiting the effectiveness of the Home Town

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News Release Program. The goal of the Information Office is to release two hometowners on each man per tour.

(2) Cover stories and photos accompany each release when possible. Unit IO largely control the release of 1526 forms. The unit IO are responsible for screening the releases and getting maximum coverage in this area. Plans are being made to have each individual being in-processed pick up a worksheet and a 1526 form, complete the form, and turn it in upon his arrival at his assigned unit. This will assure that 50% of the goal has been accomplished at Battalion level. Due to time limitations for forwarding the forms, the current policy is to forward directly to the ARMY HOME TOWN NEWS RELEASE CENTER in Kansas City, Missouri, unless there is significant local interest in the story to be published in any of the newspapers published within our chain of command.

(3) Unit IO have been briefed on material which must be cleared through MACV-IO. Unit IO have been provided with sufficient instructional pamphlets describing the New Release Program.

20. (v) Medical.

a. Treatment - Aid Station Operations. During the quarter 1 May - 30 July 1967 the following aid stations were operated within the Battalion: one at DAU TIENG in support of the 188th Assault Helicopter Company and one at CU CHI in support of HHC 269th Combat Aviation Battalion and the 116th Assault Helicopter Company. There was no aid station at TAY NINH until July when 3 medical personnel were stationed there while the flight surgeons from Battalion commuted to TAY NINH 3 days a week.

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b. Preventive Medicine and Immunizations: Malaria prophylaxis was accomplished throughout the command and immunizations were maintained at 100%.

c. Flight Physical Qualifications: Flight physical qualifications were maintained and completed to 100% throughout the command.

d. Medical Evacuation: Medical evacuation means remained helicopter and are efficient and rapid.

e. Medical Training: At present we have an OJT program in conjunction with the 93rd Evacuation Hospital at LONG BINH. 3 personnel are placed on 30 days TDY for on the job training.

f. Medical Supplies and Equipment: Medical equipment and supplies were adequate.

g. Sanitation: Base camp progress brought improvements in drainage, latrines and urinals, and in mess hall operation throughout the command.

h. Public Health: Venereal disease continues to be difficult to treat because of the resistance of the Gonococcal organism in Vietnam.

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D. (U) Intelligence and Security.

1. Production of Intelligence.

a. In order to establish a systematic operation of the Intelligence Section of Battalion Headquarters and the intelligence sections of all subordinate units, an SOP has been written for this command and is presently in the process of publication. The SOP will be disseminated to subordinate units not only to serve as a guide toward the establishment of their own procedures, but also to point the intelligence and security efforts of the Battalion in one common direction.

b. Essential elements of information required in the accomplishment of the Battalion's missions are provided primarily by the intelligence staffs of the 25th Infantry Division and at lower echelons, by the supported Battalion's intelligence sections.

c. Spot reporting continues to be an essential activity from which the Battalion obtains timely intelligence data. The spot report system has proven quite valuable to the operations of our supported units since these reports are rendered on sight to ground commanders for immediate action.

d. During the quarter covered one problem area has been realized in the acquisition of photo intelligence from outside sources. In planning for weekly operations a necessity exists for accurate and timely photo coverage of the designated area of operations, specifically pick up zones and landing zones. This coverage is available, but to a quite limited extent. The procedure presently followed to obtain the desired photo coverage consists of submitting a request to G-2 Air at 25th Infantry Division level. This request is then submitted to the

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Division photo section which in turn requests support from either Army OV-1 unit equipped for such a mission, or Air Force reconnaissance elements. Once a request is submitted by this Battalion, should photo coverage not be immediately available from access files at Division level, an estimated 3 to 5 days are required before a return can be expected unless a high priority is granted by G-2. Since airmobile operations are planned most frequently two to three days prior to an operation, insufficient time exists to obtain photo coverage in many cases. Such coverage has proven to be a most desirable function, the lack of which results in a necessity to resort to extensive drawings which invariably lend to an inaccuracy hardly tolerable in combat operations. A possible solution would lie in the stationing of an OV-1 unit at CU CHI, in direct support of the 25th Infantry Division.

e. Weather data is presently obtained by this Headquarters through multiple channels. A daily distribution is made to all units at this location by supporting Air Force elements. In addition, signal channels provide sequence reports at six hour interval for the major areas of South Vietnam. A final source of weather information is the Air Force Detachment's duty forecaster whose information bears directly on the planning and preparation of each operation.

## 2. Use of Intelligence Information.

a. The intelligence information available to this Headquarters has been of moderate benefit. Photo coverage of selected landing zones has afforded the luxury of choosing a formation best suited to terrain and man-made obstacles. Knowledge of these often dictates the direction of approach and formation on entry. Intelligence data confirming the

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positive occupation of a landing zone by enemy forces is still rarely available. The first aircraft flown into the area of operations remains the best intelligence source for obtaining the enemy situation at the time of the operation.

c. Intelligence compilation. Intelligence data has been compiled by USARV agencies and has been made available to this Headquarters. This data has been in various forms to include sophisticated photo studies, intelligence overlays, etc. In conjunction with data acquired from supported units this information is compiled prior to each operation and disseminated to all commanders at tactical briefings.

### 3. Counterintelligence.

a. National agency checks are continually being requested for newly assigned personnel requiring security clearances. An active control is maintained to insure clearances are granted on a strictly need to know basis.

b. To assure strict compliance with the requirements of counterintelligence directives, a CI inspection was held on the 28th of June by members from the 25th Division M. I. Detachment. No deficiencies were noted.

### 4. Miscellaneous.

The Battalion S-2 has assumed the duties of the Escape and Evasion Officer. To obtain maximum experience in this capacity the Battalion S-2 will attend the Jungle Survival School instituted by the Navy Department in the Phillipines. The Escape and Evasion Officer was previously the unit Safety Officer. Predicated on the obvious association of intelligence and security and escape and evasion, additional duty was transferred.



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E. (U) Operations and Training.

1.(v) Organization.

a. Recommendations for organization and equipment.

(1) Preparation of draft MTOE for all elements of the Battalion continued during the reporting period; however, submission of the formal requests for MTOE are being held in abeyance pending receipt of further instructions from higher headquarters. Requests for assignment/attachments of teams were submitted for the augmentation of the Battalion by two cellular teams. A Quartermaster Petroleum Bulk Storage and Issue Detachment (semi-mobile) (Team KD, TOE 10-500) was requested to provide refueling facilities necessary to support operations throughout the Battalion's primary area of responsibility. A Medical Detachment (Team OA, TOE 8-500) was requested to provide medical support to the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company and the 187th Assault Helicopter Company, both of which are stationed at TAY NINH, presently without primary medical service. As of the end of the reporting period no answer had been received to either request.

(2) Requests for emergency authorization of several items of equipment, communications items for command and control, and automatic weapons required by base camp security commitments, were acted upon expeditiously, thus relieving critical situations in these areas.

2.(v) Operations.

a. Operations plans and orders. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion has settled on the use of a standard 5 paragraph OPLAN/OPORD for all Battalion controlled operations. Standardization of annexes and of the distribution system has facilitated preparation, reproduction, and

distribution of plans and orders which have been published in as short a time as 90 minutes. The habitual use of complete written orders for multi-company operations greatly simplifies the integration of nonorganic aviation elements in an operation and ensures the closest coordination of the aviation plan with that of the ground commander.

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

c. Planning and Integrating.

(1) Fire support in all airmobile operations conducted by this Battalion is coordinated through the ground commander in the planning phase of an airmobile operation. Most expeditious control of artillery support has been found to be maintained through direct contact with the supporting artillery unit and the ground commander aloft in the C & C aircraft which is normally in orbit over the area of operations. This unit has found also that to insure continuity in command the use of an alternate C & C ship is imperative.

(2) The use of chemicals has most recently been extended to the employment of a UH-1C helicopter as a smoke ship. The employment of

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this aircraft is studied in a later portion of this document as a special topic.

(3) Pathfinder operations have continued on a daily basis consistent with the tactical requirements of this period. Pathfinder personnel continued to operate pick up zones and landing zones as required. Pathfinders have been inserted by helicopter on most occasions. However, on several occasions these personnel entered pick up zones overland with the ground forces.

One problem area in the pathfinder detachment's operations lies in communications. It has been found that the PRC-25 FM radio has not been an adequate communications system for the pathfinder detachment. On numerous occasions the detachment has been charged with the operation of fixed wing airfields having a variety of aircraft using its facilities. These included Air Force transport aircraft and Army helicopters. Communications were insufficient and as a result the amount of traffic that could be served was very limited. Attempts to secure UHF and VHF portable radios have been unsuccessful since the TOE does not authorize any radio equipment other than the PRC-25. However, pathfinder TOE 1-168E does authorize the needed equipment, but attempts to have this Battalion's TOE changed to accomodate this requirement have not been successful.

d. Overall command security.

(1) The physical security plans of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion and all subordinate units are integrated with the base camp defense plans of the major units garrisoned at CU CHI, TAY NINH, and DAU TIENG. Within the company areas themselves bunker complexes are

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still a priority item for construction. The frequency of mortar attacks dictates that constant improvements be made in personnel bunkers and aircraft revetments.

(2) A serious problem exists in the physical security requirement at TAY NINH and DAU TIENG. At TAY NINH the unit commander is required to man the perimeter bunker line of the base camp with 9 enlisted men each night. Requirements placed on personnel leave no choice of selection for this task but to utilize maintenance personnel. This loss of maintenance power directly affects the efficiency and output of the maintenance detachment assigned.

(3) This problem was created essentially when the major unit located at TAY NINH was withdrawn, leaving primarily support units in the area. A subsequent requirement for guards was created.

(4) One possible solution to alleviate this drain of manpower was the submission of a modification to the TDA, recommending the addition of a security platoon. This procedure, however, would not have been satisfactory, since approval of an MTDA would have taken considerable time, during which time the 187th AHC may have relocated. A similar problem exists in the 188th base camp at DAU TIENG.

(5) Presently no solution to this problem can be found, and the manpower drain of maintenance personnel occurs nightly.

3. Battalion Operation Center (BOC). The BOC operates on a continuous 24 hour basis. One officer and EM Operations Specialist are on duty during this period. They are provided with FM and AM-UHF radio communications, linking them to the Battalion's subordinate units, to the Army Aviation Element (AAE), to II Field Forces Vietnam Tactical Operations Center, and to the Assistant Division Aviation Officer (ADAO), 25th Infantry

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Division Tactical Operations Center (TOC). Communications with the 25th Infantry Division is by sole-user telephone. Missions are received from AAE and assigned to the units by the BOC. Daily operations are monitored by the BOC, thus insuring that all necessary action to coordinate activities, react to emergencies, and submit required reports, is, in fact, taken. The BOC:

a. Coordinates the efforts of resources of the Battalion to insure accomplishment of assigned missions.

b. Maintains a current aircraft status chart and keeps AAE informed of any changes.

c. Receives, checks, consolidates, and forwards to higher headquarters all information required to be reported as an integral part of the OPREP/5 report.

d. Maintains a NOTAM file, artillery fire support base file, and insures dissemination of these to subordinate elements.

e. Initiates necessary action to recall appropriate aircraft in the event of a Tactical Emergency.

f. Coordinates and notifies appropriate elements in the event of a mortar attack on any location where elements of this command are located.

g. Coordinates the search, rescue, protection, and recovery of downed aircraft.

h. Maintains a log of all events that transpire over a 24 hour period.

i. Flight follows assigned Battalion aircraft to include maintaining flight plans, and issuing SOI and survival kits.

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#### 4. Training.

##### a. Training Program.

(1) A branch training program for aviators has been established to function in conjunction with our supported ground units. The program consists of aviators being assigned to ground units on a voluntary basis to serve in capacities commensurate with their grade. The program serves primarily as a refresher in basic branch responsibilities. The period of attendance is normally five days, and this time is normally taken only after an aviator has flown his maximum allowable hours and is required three days rest.

(2) Your attention is invited to Inclosure 6, the basic document on Branch Qualification Training sent to all aviators, and Inclosure 7, "Implementing Instructions," which is attached to each basic letter upon dissemination. It is felt that these two documents will best express the full scope of this training plan.

##### b. Aviator Training and Standardization.

(1) The Battalion policy in the training of aviators arriving in newly assigned units such as the 188th and the 21st continues to be distributing these personnel throughout aviation units within the 12th Combat Aviation Group. The period of assignment is generally 14 days and serves to thoroughly orient the aviator in the peculiarities of airmobile operations in the Republic of Vietnam.

(2) Standardization is maintained throughout the Battalion through 90 day standardization check rides. These rides are given by Battalion instructor pilots who insure adherence to the Battalion flight policies.

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c. Schools.

(1) Throughout the period of interest personnel of this Battalion have attended supply, signal, maintenance, and weapons courses, whenever this unit has been in receipt of allocations. During the period, also, three officers were sent to Jungle Environment Survival Training, a 4 day course held by the Navy Department at Manila, in the Phillipines. The last course is primarily in the interest of furthering the Battalion's individual aviator's escape and evasion capabilities.

(2) The following quotas were received during the period:

- (a) Aircraft Maintenance School--9.
- (b) Aircraft Weapons Systems School--2.
- (c) Supply School--3.
- (d) Jungle Environment Survival Training (JEST)--3.

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F. (U) Logistics.

1(v) Supply.

a. Classes I, III, and IIIa supplies are drawn through the 25th Infantry Division at CU CHI for units located at this station. The 187th Assault Helicopter Company with all attachments, and 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company draw their rations and fuel at supply points in TAY NINH. The 188th Assault Helicopter Company normally draws its supplies from a supply point at DAU TIENG. The 188th is presently operating at PHU HIEP and draws its classes I, III, and IIIa at PHU HIEP. During tactical operations class IIIa is drawn from SKYBOLT facilities located at four points within the normal area of operations. These points are the responsibility of the 25th Infantry Division. When units operate out of the 25th Division area, class I support during operations usually consists of one "C" ration meal, since very few operations prevent unit personnel from eating two meals a day at home station. On extended operations out of the 25th Division, coordination is made for class I support from the unit being supported. During the reporting period none of the units of the Battalion have conducted intense field operations requiring displacement of the company base to a field site.

b. Units of the Battalion maintain their own property accounts and are satellited onto DSC and depot units of the 1st Logistical Command for class II and class IV items. HHC and the 116th Assault Helicopter Company have accounts with the 506th depot in SAIGON. The 187th and the 188th Assault Helicopter Companies and the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company draw their supplies from the 228th DSU at TAY NINH. Barrier materials and construction materials can be drawn from supporting engineer units at each unit's location. Free road travel between SAIGON



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and CU CHI during daylight hours has precluded any major problems for units dealing with the 506th in SAIGON.

c. Class V support for tactical operations is provided from SKYBOLT refuel and re-arm points located at CU CHI, TAY NINH, DAU TIENG, and DUC HOA. These points are operated by the 25th Infantry Division. On operations outside of the 25th Division's area, support is furnished by the supported unit. ASP are located at each major installation in the 25th Division area.

d. The units arriving in country during the reporting period arrived with the majority of their authorized equipment and have received most of their critical shortages since arrival. All units have been capable of achieving operational status by required dates.

e. Jungle boots and jungle fatigues have been in short supply during the reporting period. Units are not able to outfit replacement personnel.

f. Excess equipment has been identified and turned in or justification for retention by submission of MTOE has been directed.

g. The decentralized supply system within the Battalion does present problems in control accountability and reporting. Centralization of property records at Battalion level, however, would be highly impractical.

## 2. Transportation and Troop Movement.

a. The 188th Assault Helicopter Company arrived in country during the reporting period. Transportation of their equipment and personnel was accomplished as follows:

(1) Personnel arrived by air at BLEN HOA and were transported by Air Force aircraft to DAU TIENG.

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(2) TOE equipment less aircraft, some tools, and repair parts for aircraft, arrived at SAIGON and was moved to DAU TIENG by convoy. Assistance was provided by the SAIGON Area Transportation Command.

(3) Aircraft and some tools and repair parts (11 CONEXes) arrived at VUNG TAU. The aircraft were ferried to DAU TIENG by unit pilots and the CONEXes were transported by Air Force aircraft. The only major loss of equipment occurred during shipment. One CONEX containing repair parts and a Hydraulic Set unit was diverted during shipment and has not been located.

(4) WABTOC equipment (75 tons) arrived at SAIGON and was transported by vehicle to DAU TIENG.

b. The 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company arrived in country in June. A summary of their arrival follows:

(1) Personnel, RED TAT, and YELLOW TAT arrived at VUNG TAU by ship. Personnel and YELLOW TAT were flown to TAY NINH by Air Force aircraft. RED TAT was barged to a port outside of SAIGON and then transported by vehicle to TAY NINH. Vehicles were furnished by SAIGON Transportation Command.

(2) O-1 aircraft were assembled at VUNG TAU and flown to TAY NINH.

(3) The remaining TOE and TA equipment arrived in SAIGON by ship and was transported to TAY NINH by organic vehicles supplemented by vehicles furnished by the SAIGON Area Transportation Officer.

(4) WABTOC equipment arrived by ship in SAIGON and was transported by vehicle to TAY NINH.

(5) The 21st incurred no loss of equipment and only minor damage to several vehicles during off-loading.

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c. Transportation of supplies has not presented any serious problem of road travel accounts for the relative ease of transporting supplies.

d. The 188th Assault Helicopter Company moved to PHU HIEP from DAU TIENG for a thirty-day temporary assignment. Movement was accomplished by 16 C-130 sorties. A U-1A provides courier service on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from DAU TIENG. Special requirements have required two CH-47 sorties.

### 3. Preparation for Incoming Units.

a. The principal problem associated with arrival of incoming units is the lack of sufficient advance warning for sponsor units to coordinate and obtain area allocations and required engineer support for MER construction. Most base development boards have programmed their assets prior to the arrival of aircraft. The establishment of a team of liaison officers at USARV Engineer level to conduct on site survey of requirements when stationing plans are initially formulated would help alleviate much of the delay in planning and in allocating of required assets.

### 4. Aviation Maintenance and Repair.

a. During the period of interest the back-up direct support mission for all units was shifted from 605th Transportation Company, APO 96289 (PHU LOI) to 20th Transportation Company, APO 96353 (CU CHI). This change is a potential improvement once the DS unit accumulates sufficient experience and parts stocks to achieve its peak effectiveness. The location is more central to units supported than that of the 605th. It is, however, still necessary at the close of the period to get some of the less routine support from the 605th Transportation Company. This is particularly

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true of armament repair.

b. Oil consumption of UH-1H helicopters of the 188th Assault Helicopter Company began to be a problem on 15 June 1967. A number two bearing seal was leaking excessively. Since that time, other ships have developed the same problem, and a repair kit has been assembled. Modification of engines will be accomplished as kits become available on an as required basis or in conjunction with hot-end inspections. Necessary tools are only available at VUNG TAU.

c. A pre-AGI inspection of all units was conducted in mid-June. Results were left with the units.

d. Special tools for L-13 turbine engines have been ordered by 188th Assault Helicopter Company. Some have started arriving. A list was also furnished to the 116th and 187th for these units to requisition tools in anticipation of receiving L-13 engines during FY-68.

e. Gunships have presented a considerable problem, specifically in the armament area. Another problem exists with the Depot Exchange Program for UH-1B aircraft.

(1) A consistent shortage of spare parts such as intervalometer, firing relays and converters existed throughout the period. These are apparently high mortality items for which adequate stock levels have not been achieved in the theater. It is considered an operational necessity that steps be taken to speed the issue of armament spare parts.

(2) The Depot Exchange Program for UH-1B helicopters has been particularly unsatisfactory due to the lack of armament and

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avionics wiring installations. UH-1B 63-8558, 63-8639, 63-8695, and 63-8721, issued to the 116th Assault Helicopter Company were not wired for M-16 or M-5 armament systems which were essential to mission accomplishment. Aircraft were either equipped only for M-3 or for nothing at all. Considerable time (36 days) was lost in general support maintenance locating and installing necessary wiring and mounting fixtures for the above armament systems on the first two aircraft requiring the work. The second two ships are not yet mission ready because of armament problems. All four ships exchanged were received with ARC-44 radios installed. This FM radio does not include proper frequencies for communications with supported ground units; and for that reason aircraft equipped with the ARC-44 cannot serve as lead aircraft for fire teams. Ships equipped with the ARC-44 can be used only in a secondary role with another ship equipped with the ARC-54 FM radio. MWO should be procured as soon as possible for all UH-1B aircraft to be used as gunships.

5.(U) Maintenance and Repair (Less Aircraft).

a. Vehicle and equipment maintenance has been complicated by the arrival of the rainy season. Proper lubrication and prevention of rust and mildew are major problem areas. Maintenance facilities for all units meet the minimum specified requirements except for the 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company. Hardstand for vehicles and aircraft maintenance for this unit has not been completed. Adverse weather has delayed filling, compacting, and surfacing operations at TAY NINH for this unit.

b. Tool and repair parts supply has not seriously impaired operations.

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c. Direct support maintenance is provided by 5 units of the 1st Logistical Command located at TAY NINH, CU CHI, and DAU TIENG. This has proven adequate to date. Support maintenance for generators and office machines is provided by the 1st Logistical Command facilities located in SAIGON and LONG BINH. The principal problem encountered has been transportation of the items to and from SAIGON, since the various repair shops are widely dispersed throughout SAIGON and LONG BINH.

#### 6. Services.

a. Local Vietnamese employees have been authorized for mess hall employment. In addition special funds were allocated to hire personnel to fill sandbags for aircraft revetments. The hiring of mess hall help has been a positive morale factor.

b. Construction and coordination has been made with Base Development Offices at CU CHI, TAY NINH, and DAU TIENG to establish requirements for permanent construction. Unit permanent construction is completed. Those permanent buildings which have been constructed have been accepted by the engineers. Maintenance of these facilities is now furnished by PA & E.

c. All troop and officer billets are of temporary construction. Personnel bunkers have been constructed.

d. Except for loss of weapons from helicopters in flight, loss or damage to equipment has been exceptionally low. Command emphasis has been placed on securing weapons and equipment during flight, and losses have been reduced during the later portion of the reporting period. Action has been taken to obtain a weapon mount used to secure

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rifles in 1/4 ton trucks. The intent here is to determine whether  
can be mounted in UH-1 helicopters for security of crew-  
members weapons.

e. The quality of food service support has been excellent  
throughout the Battalion.

f. Fire protection is furnished through the use of fire ex-  
tinguishers or water drums as outlined by USARV and installation  
directives. PA & E, in conjunction with local engineers, has established  
fire stations at each installation.

7. Miscellaneous.

a. Battalion level planning for logistical support is minimal  
because of decentralization of supply to unit level. Administrative  
orders are not issued for most operations away from base camps since  
units themselves conduct most operations. The majority of support is  
furnished by SKYBOLT refueling and rearming points within the 25th  
Infantry Division area. Rear area security and damage control plan-  
ning is done at the installation level.

b. The logistics and maintenance organization at Battalion  
level is shown in Inclosure 4. The construction office has been added  
to coordinate the planning of facilities for incoming units as well  
as preparation of permanent construction plans for all units.

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G. (U) Signal.

Installation and operations.

a. FM radio.

(1) The following radio nets are operated by the Battalion.

(a) Battalion Command Net: This net is established between the BOC (NCS) and all subordinate aviation companies. The net operates 24 hours daily and is tuned to allow aircraft radios to enter the net when key personnel are operating away from the Battalion area. The net is used for normal command and operational control in coordinating missions assigned to this Battalion.

(b) Battalion Courier Net: This net is established between the Battalion S-1 and the helicopter designated as the daily courier. The net is used for the sole purpose of controlling the courier aircraft.

(2) The Battalion operates in the following nets:

(a) 12th Combat Aviation Group Command FM Net for command and administrative traffic. This net is available for key personnel to enter, via aircraft radio, when operating away from the respective Headquarters.

(b) II FFV-AAE Operation Net: This net is established utilizing the KY-8, an encryptive machine, to allow CONFIDENTIAL traffic to be passed. This secure net has provided invaluable results.

(c) The 25th Infantry Division Command Net for tactical information.

b. AM radio.

(1) UHF Battalion Command Net. The Battalion Operation



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Center, as well as aircraft radios within Battalion, is in this net. The net is used primarily as the Battalion Command Net during Battalion operations.

c. RATT: Recently the Battalion was issued the VSC-21 Single Sideband Radio. The Battalion communication section operates the radio and enters a 12th Combat Aviation Group Administrative and Logistics net at prescribed times. Teletype traffic is passed, but the secure equipment has not been installed. Installation date for the secure crypto equipment is 1 September 1967. A net has also been established between the Battalion Headquarters and the 188th Assault Helicopter Company. This is only a temporary net and will be discontinued when the 188th returns to its home station. The doublet antenna provides the best results for this radio.

d. The land line teletype circuit has operated at maximum efficiency. Due to the increase in traffic the Battalion Communication Center operates 24 hours daily. The patching capability at 12th Group to obtain direct teletype lines from one battalion to another continues to be very useful.

e. Telephone Communication.

(1) A SB-86 switchboard has been installed to replace the SB-22's operating in the stacked position. The new system provides common battery Signalling, thus rendering more efficient service.

(2) Sole-user circuits providing direct communication between the BOC and the Headquarters listed below:

(a) AAE, II FFV TOC.

(b) ADAO, 25th Infantry Division DTOC.

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- (c) 21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company.
- (d) 116th Assault Helicopter Company.
- (e) 187th Assault Helicopter Company.
- (f) 188th Assault Helicopter Company.

(2) Common-user trunks have been established between the Battalion switchboard and the switchboards listed below.

- (a) CU CHI.
- (b) LIGHTNING.
- (c) 25th Aviation Battalion.
- (d) 116th Assault Helicopter Company.
- (e) 188th Assault Helicopter Company.
- (f) The 187th Assault Helicopter Company and the

21st Reconnaissance Airplane Company are utilizing the same circuit.

(3) There are eight trunks which terminate in the Battalion switchboard.

(4) A direct line has been installed from the CU CHI switchboard to the Battalion Commander with extensions to the Executive Officer and S-1.

(5) The Battalion Headquarters and HHC has a total of 30 field type telephones installed within the area. The SB-86 has the capability of connecting 30 lines into the board. Of these 30 connections, eight are used for trunk lines, leaving a total of 22 connections for the Battalion Headquarters area. In order to install the desired number of telephones, the party system has been developed, wherein two telephones were put on the same line and each assigned a certain number of rings. This system has proven to be effective.

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2.(v) SOI are published by the Signal Officer, 12th Combat Aviation Group. Ten SOI are issued to Battalion Headquarters and twenty-five to each assigned company. Changes are published as required by Group. SSI and KAC Codes are received from Group. Battalion distributes these items to the companies.

3.(v) The Signal detachments attached to the companies possess the necessary facilities and equipment to maintain the avionics equipment in the aircraft. A shortage of personnel exists in all detachments which have severely affected the overall maintenance. Some detachments have test equipment to repair radar equipment. The need does not exist for these items and permission has been obtained to turn in the unneeded items. An MTOE is being developed and should be submitted in the very near future.

4.(v) The 94th Maintenance Company has replaced the 61st Maintenance Company and is providing excellent maintenance in minimum time. A DX system has been established providing a minimum loss of equipment for the Battalion. Signal supply is adequate on the existing equipment.

5.(v) Communication Security is practiced throughout the Battalion and adequate results are obtained.

6.(v) Crypto facilities are only available at the Battalion Headquarters. Crypto equipment will, however, be issued in the near future in secure FM nets. On line crypto facilities are not planned to the subordinate companies.

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H. (U) Aviation Safety.

1. Policies and Programs.

a. Each unit now has a full time primary duty Aviation Safety Officer.

b. Aviation safety meetings are held monthly in each unit.

c. Unit Aviation Safety Officers are making periodic inspection of facilities, parking procedures, and taxiing procedures.

Reports are being rendered to Battalion Aviation Safety.

d. Units are making safety bulletin boards.

e. Safety is being allotted time at all mission briefings.

f. Visits to all units are being conducted by the Battalion Aviation Safety Officer.

2. Procedures.

a. Use of Force Trim, clear visors down, shoulder harness locked and Pilot and/or Aircraft Commander near the controls to safely take control in case of emergency during all combat assaults, extractions, and combat resupply missions, are now Battalion SOP.

b. During administrative flights, upon landing, the crew chief and gunner will exit the aircraft and insure that personnel do not get close to the tail rotor and that vehicles approaching the aircraft do not come within the radius of the main rotor blades.

3. Publications.

a. A Battalion Aviation Safety SOP has been published.

b. The receiving and disseminating of weekly and monthly accident summaries is being accomplished.

4. Training.

a. Units are now entering safety meetings on training schedules.

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b. Standardization rides are given to all aviators every 90 days.

5. Inspections. The Battalion Aviation Safety Officer spends a minimum of 2 days each month with subordinate units. During this time he reviews the USABAAR Safety Summary with the unit Safety Officer.

6. Accident Investigations (Summary). During the period of interest, units of the Battalion had 4 precautionary landings, two of which were attributed to combat damage. Of 12 forced landings, 6 were attributed to combat damage. Of 8 aircraft incidents, 1 was attributed to combat damage. One minor accident was attributed to combat damage; and of 10 major accidents, 1 was attributed to combat damage. For a summary of major accidents, see Inclosure 5.

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## SECTION II

## COMMANDER'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## PART I

## OBSERVATIONS—LESSONS LEARNED

## A. (U) Operations 1 May through 31 July 1967.

## 1. Item: Aircraft in operational area.

Discussion: Operation 4-67, 2 May 1967. This operation was in support of the 1st Australian Task Force in the BA RIA area SOUTHEAST of SAIGON. A number of unidentified aircraft were operating in the area, causing considerable concern to the air mission commander. Several calls on the emergency frequency failed to clear the area. Contact with the artillery controlling agency (KANGAROO CONTROL) did result in two of the three aircrafts' leaving. The third aircraft, an OH-13, proceeded low level through the area, still in interference of the air-mobile force.

Observation: If flight control agencies are notified at coordination meetings of an impending operation, aircraft can be advised to remain clear of the operational area during the time frame of the assault.

## 2. Item: Alternate Command &amp; Control aircraft.

Discussion: Operation 5-67, 14 May 1967. In support of the 2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, the requirement existed for the C & C helicopter to perform liaison and reconnaissance of a desired LZ while the movement of troops from CU CHI to DUC HOA was performed in two lifts. A refueling of the supporting companies was also a requirement during the troop movement. A second C & C ship was utilized to

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coordinate not only the troop movement, but also the refueling, and positioning of aircraft and troops to insure the proper posture for the initial assault. This was accomplished while the primary C & C ship was performing the reconnaissance of a possible landing zone.

Observation: The procedure of using an alternate C & C ship saved approximately 45 minutes on two occasions during the exercise and eliminated untold confusion that may well have existed. The subsequent result was the continued use of an alternate C & C aircraft on all Battalion size operations.

3. Item: Operating in vicinity of TAN SON NHUT.

Discussion: During the operations discussed in Item 2 above, the assault force was in the vicinity of BEN LUC, which is in line with TAN SON NHUT Air Base runway 07. This caused an additional flight hazard in the area.

Observation: TAN SON NHUT tower should be advised when units conduct activities in area interfering with VFR, and especially IFR traffic. The stress on IFR traffic is so placed because of the length or distance of the inbound approach course from the actual runway end itself.

4. Item: Location of friendly elements.

Discussion: Operation 6-67, 24 May 1967. In operations supporting 1-27th Infantry Battalion of the 2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, information received from the ground commander indicated that no friendly elements were operating WEST of the Oriental River, a river in the WESTERN zone of the Brigade's Area of Operations. Artillery and gunship preparation of the LZ was planned and executed. Full suppression by outside door gunners for a 20 ship simultaneous

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insertion was planned and executed. After the insertion of the initial company size force was observed approximately 2000 meters SOUTH of the LZ. The company was displaying air to ground panels and was standing in the middle of rice paddies to preclude misidentification as Viet Cong.

Observation: Coordination problems in this area are sometimes existent. This incident was discussed with the 2d Brigade and 1-27th Infantry Battalion Commander. No similar incident has occurred since.

5. Item: Multiple battalion operation.

Discussion: Operation 9-67, 18 June 1967. A two-battalion operation was conducted by the 269th and the 25th Aviation Battalion. Results indicated that excessive coordination was required to accomplish the assault.

Observation: This operation was used as a concept vehicle to determine the feasibility of two battalion headquarters conducting operations in support of one infantry brigade on one objective. The concept was considered feasible providing the following prerequisites were met:

- (a) Sufficient planning time was available for detailed coordination.
- (b) The mission of each aviation battalion can be specifically delineated.
- (c) Enemy action is expected to be minimal or non-existent.

6. Item: Weather delays.

Discussion: Operation 10-67, 25 June 1967. This operation in support of the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, was scheduled to start at 0704 hours on 25 June 1967. Monsoon weather had set in and



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extreme weather conditions prevented the take off of the assault force. from II FFV required a release time of both assault helicopter companies by 0900. Some confusion ensued from a responsibility standpoint.

Observation: It is essential that a firm commitment be established on weather delays due to bad weather encountered during the rainy season. It is felt that AAE, II FFV, and the unit supported, establish one of the following courses of action:

(a) The combat aviation battalion supporting the ground element be allowed a definite number of weather delays or a specific cancellation time. This would allow the aviation element planning time to fulfill other missions assigned to the Battalion.

(b) A firm commitment be established to accomplish the mission regardless of the time involved in weather delays.

7. Item: Reconnaissance flight.

Discussion: Operation 12-67, 11 July 1967. A reconnaissance was conducted 9 July 1967 in support of the 3d Infantry Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. S-3, 3-22d Infantry and the Asst S-3, 2-12th Infantry were both present. The landing zones and the flight formations were agreed upon. The 2-12th Infantry, however, the unit whose coordination representative was the assistant S-3, changed the flight formations at 1900 hours, 10 July 1967. This caused considerable alteration of flight plans at a critical time in the final planning phases of the operation.

Observation: It is recommended that an individual authorized to make the final decision on all aspects of an operation be present at the coordination meeting and conjunctive reconnaissance flights.

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B. (U) Miscellaneous Lessons Learned.

1. Item: Auxiliary fuel tank for C & C aircraft.

Discussion: A requirement for a longer on station time exists for the C & C aircraft on larger battalion size operations. One solution to increase the time aloft is the installation of a 55 gallon auxiliary fuel tank beneath the rear seating row on the UH-1 helicopter.

Observation: The weight factor involving a commander's console, all personnel on board, and the additional 55 gallons fuel and container, is worth noting. It is recommended that the additional fuel tank be placed on board aircraft equipped with -13 engines.

2. Item: BOC Operations.

Discussion: In certain instances during the quarter supported units inquired of the status of the aircraft assigned in their support. In other instances aircraft on single ship missions were downed for engine failures, bullet damage, etc. To expedite the obtaining of critical information in emergency situations, the BOC includes the call sign of the aircraft supporting the mission in question, and posts this information on the daily mission sheet.

Observation: This policy, since instated, has proven of considerable value in emergency situations.

3. Item: BOC Operations.

Discussion: For a period of time there appeared to be a definite lack in continuity of effort whenever shifts were changed. To preclude a slip or failure in effort, the shifts in enlisted personnel and officers have been staggered with a one and one-half hour separation in the times the personnel assume their duties.

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Observation: This system has definitely improved the situation which existed early in BOC operations. The flow of information from shift to shift is now smooth and unaltered.

5. Item: Medical Assistance;

Discussion: In the movement of our units it has come to the attention of medical personnel that medical support to units in the field is not completely satisfactory.

Observation: An aviation company should have an OA Medical Detachment and doctor in its support when located away from its base camp. Otherwise medical problems arise which cannot be handled by the commanding officer.

6. Item: Publications and Forms Supply.

Discussion: Numerous publications and forms, some inapplicable in Vietnam, others seldom used in country, have been brought by and received by newly arriving units. At the same time, other publications and forms essential to operations and functions in Vietnam have been available to newly arriving units in insufficient quantities.

Observation: Some kind of check list should be established to denote which forms and publications are required in country; and these forms and publications should be made readily available to deploying units.

By

JB/mg

NARA, Date

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C. (U) Special Topic--Smoke Ship UH-1C.

1. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, in the conduct of airmobile operations, realized a need for the screening effect offered by an aircraft converted to dispense smoke. Initially, smoke ships were requested from the 25th Aviation Battalion and adjacent units in the III CTZ. The employment of a smoke ship proved beneficial to such an extent that recently the Battalion converted one UH-1C helicopter for smoke missions in support of airmobile operations. A recent venture, this unit has not yet had time to fully exploit the use of this machine. However, thus far, in the two weeks of its operation, this unit has made substantially sound observations.

2. The smoke ship was initially programmed to be used as a screening device in the assault phase of an airmobile assault. On several early operations in conjunction with assault helicopter companies, the smoke emitted by the smoke ship served as a visual barrier between the suspected enemy locations and the approaching helicopter force. It is extremely difficult to determine the benefit derived from the employment of this ship in such a role. The best indication of success, of course, is the lack of hostile fire received by the incoming helicopters.

3. In the employment of the aircraft it has been found that close coordination between the smoke ship and the supporting gunships is imperative. A visual reconnaissance of the planned landing zone, though not of absolute necessity, is of much benefit prior to a smoke run. In this unit's operations, when possible, the smoke ship will reconnoiter the area with the gunships and under the scrutiny of the command and control ship. This method or system best lends itself to

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the insurance that maximum coordination and understanding of the assault plan has been attained.

4. The smoke ship, having been briefed on the LZ location, the direction of flight of the airmobile force, the suspected enemy location, and the area the ground commander and the air mission commander desire to be smoked, returns to the RP and orbits, awaiting the arrival of the troop carrier aircraft. The smoke ship will then position itself abeam the lead ship on the approach to the LZ. Coordinating with the gunship leader, the smoke ship will at this time descend to ground level in position for the smoke run. Timed just ahead of the airmobile assault force and just behind the leading gunship escort, the smoke ship will emit the smoke screen.

5. Having used the smoke ship in four operations in an area where this Battalion had habitually drawn heavy fire, it is reported that not one time did the airmobile force receive fire. In one operation, however, while supporting another unit, due to a lack of intelligence and unsatisfactory wind conditions, smoke was not utilized as effectively as it might have been. In this instance fire was drawn from the unscreened side of the landing zone. It is felt, due to the width of the LZ, that the smoke ship could have sealed both sides of the landing area by reversing the course of the smoke ship and coming back on the opposite side of the landing zone. This was realized too late, however, but will be given serious consideration in all future operations.

6. The smoke ship was further used by the ground commander as a diversionary effort. Supporting the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, the smoke ship could not be practically utilized in the assault phase of the airmobile plan. To insure full use of available resources, the

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ground commander requested that the smoke aircraft be used in a diversionary role by sealing the periphery of a town on the approach course of the inbound airmobile force. The primary intent was to divert the attention of the enemy, thus creating the question of the exact location of the landing zone. Additionally, by hampering the vision of the enemy forces positioned along tree lines surrounding a hamlet on the approach course, the smoke ship afforded added security to the entire flight.

7. Again, on an operation supporting the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, the smoke ship, in conjunction with the gun teams from the 116th Assault Helicopter Company, was used most effectively in the support of ground troops in the WESTERN zone of the 1st Brigade's Area of Operations.

a. A Battalion from the 1st Brigade was air landed parallel to a NORTH-SOUTH tree line through which the infantry was to advance to the EAST to conduct a search and destroy operation. The heavily wooded area extended 1500 meters to the EAST, after which another clear area, rectangular in shape, running NORTH and SOUTH, and approximately 900 meters wide, was located. The infantry moved to the EAST edge of the wooded area and halted.

b. At this time the 116th Assault Helicopter Company gunships made a suppression run from NORTH to SOUTH down the centerline of the open area. The smoke ship, at grass level, layed a thick stream of smoke in a NORTH-SOUTH path following the gunships. The infantry moved to the center smoke screen. Simultaneously, the gunships and smoke ship made a second run, again from NORTH to SOUTH, but this time on the WESTERN edge of the tree line. Sealed by a solid layer of

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white smoke, the infantry reached the next wood line, never once

aftering the Viet Cong the luxury of a point target.

8.(v) To date this unit's experience with the smoke ship is still limited. It is certain, however, that during the next quarter sufficient data will be compiled to give a much more thorough study of the employment of this aircraft.

By

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D. (U) Special Topic--Use of a 20mm Cannon by the 116th Assault Helicopter Company.

1. Operation of BIG DADDY.

a. BIG DADDY is an M-39 20mm cannon that has a cyclic rate of fire of 1900 rounds per minute with a maximum effective range of 3500 yards.

b. The ammunition is M-56AZ high explosive incendiary #12 link. It weighs almost one pound per round and has a bursting radius of 9 meters. It is spin-actuated at about 50 meters. It detonates upon contact with anything.

c. It is mounted on the underside of UH-1D 996 on the forward hardpoints in an inverted position. It is fed out the left cargo door through a chute to the weapon.

d. Various tactics have been employed, depending on the tactical situation.

(1) On several occasions the 116th has used the 20mm to cover one side of the slicks and prepare the LZ simultaneously. This is done by joining on to the side of the flight at the RP and preparing the LZ and areas to the side all the way down final (with care to avoid being shot at by the slicks). On this type of attack, great care must be given to the gun team operating in the LZ area, as they will be low and difficult to see.

(2) BIG DADDY has proven effective when used as the 3d ship in a heavy fire team. The fire power put out by the 20mm is considered by the STINGERS, the 116th Assault Helicopter Company's gun platoon, as more than sufficient to cover the ship ahead, and at the same time wreak havoc on the target area.



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(3) It has been SOP to carry 4 gunners, which with the 20mm provides an abundance of fire power to cover breaks.

(4) A low-level type attack has been used on bunker lines with a good deal of success. It consists of locating and pin-pointing the target area, then turning out, dropping down to about 50 feet (at 120 knots) and when about 500 meters from the target, popping up to about 150 feet, turning hell, death and destruction onto the target, turning off, and being gone before Charlie recovers from the shock. This is best done with a cover ship at about 500 to 1000 feet.

(5) The 116th successfully employed the 20mm on bunkers and tree lines. It is most effective on huts or heavily wooded tree lines. A hut is almost totally destroyed, i.e., to the point of setting it on fire and reducing it to ashes, and a tree line is so effectively covered that many of the trees are defoliated or limbs, etc., blown off. In situations where the enemy is using less than bunker-type cover, the 20mm coverage is so effective that it is quite reasonable to assume that those individuals who were in the area are either dead or severely wounded.

e. As far as problems are concerned, the 116th had many, as it has no personnel who are trained to maintain or trouble-shoot the weapon. By trial and error and a great deal of hard work, the 20mm is now a reliable, operational weapons system that has proven itself time and again to the STINGERS.

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

## PART II

## RECOMMENDATIONS

## A. Personnel.

During the quarter covered by this report, three new companies arrived from CONUS for assignment to this Battalion. Of the three company commanders, I replaced two within sixty days of their respective companies' arrivals because they had proven to be totally unacceptable. One of the two was passed over for selection to Lieutenant Colonel and I have little doubt that the other will also be passed over when he becomes eligible for consideration. I highly recommend that action be taken by appropriate authority to insure that qualified officers be selected for command of units being formed in CONUS for movement to Vietnam. In this regard, and based on the number of officers meeting the qualifications, I further recommend that priority be given to 2d or 3d time returnees to Vietnam.

## B. Operations, Tactical Considerations.

1. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion primarily provides support for the 25th Infantry Division. Other Combat Aviation Battalions in Vietnam are given similar support missions, i.e., they back up a particular division. The key to success in supporting a division is to operate as if your battalion were assigned to that particular division. A battalion commander should orient his people and his units to think and act like the division they are supporting. Further, he should place a particular assault helicopter company in habitual support of a brigade. To operate as a separate entity gains nothing for the battalion except disinterest from its supported division and stymies progress in the development of better airmobile methodology.

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

The Battalion Commander should attend the Commanding General's daily staff meetings and maintain a close working relationship with the ADC's and Chief of Staff. His staff should work on a daily basis with the division's staff. His company commanders should be closely allied with their respective brigade commanders. I have found that working in conjunction with the divisional personnel has afforded my subordinate commanders and my staff considerable insight into the problem areas peculiar to the division we support. This insight has lent itself favorably to the establishment of a rapport between the Division and this Battalion, which I feel is somewhat unique in command relationships. We are keenly aware of the specific needs of the Division. Divisional elements, on the other hand, are thoroughly knowledgeable in the capabilities and limitations of this Battalion. The results have been most rewarding and the product has been the development of the finest "Air Mobility Team," i.e., the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion and the 25th Infantry Division, in all of Vietnam.

2. During my tour as Battalion Commander, I have observed that the most successful operations are those for which sufficient planning time has been allotted. In fact, the only way to insure that an operation will be successful is to take sufficient time for planning. In a number of instances where insufficient time was given to preparing for an operation, errors, sometimes serious ones, resulted which could well have been avoided. Some of these errors resulted in loss of life and aircraft.

3. In planning an airmobile operation it is mandatory that sufficient stress be placed during the planning phase to insure that all parties are aware of certain necessary details. Some of these

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are the location of gun-target lines, length of artillery preparations, the specific location of the mark for the lead aircraft of the airmobile force, the assignment of key personnel to specific aircraft, and emergency procedures. The more detail that is covered, the more detail that is comprehended, the more successfully is the mission executed. The primary requirement for detailed planning, however, is time. This commodity should be used to the maximum extent.

4. In the planning phase, one point which should be stressed is the care to be given in the determination of routes into and out of a pick up or landing zone. The primary consideration in flight routing should be given to the enemy situation; however, maximum attention should be given to selection of alternate routing. In this Battalion it is SOP that the same route into and out of an LZ will never be used twice. To do so invites disaster.

5. In the conduct of a combat assault, the employment of a helicopter equipped to disperse smoke has proven to be of significant value. Primarily of importance as a screening device in airmobile operations, it has served on different occasions in a diversionary role, e.g., sealing a town adjacent to the area of operations. Additionally, the smoke seems to confuse the enemy. A case in point was the sealing of a small town four mile SOUTHWEST of CU CHI. As the airmobile assault force approached its landing zone, a number of Vietnamese were seen running toward the town. Simultaneously, the smoke ship blocked their path with a thick stream of smoke. The confusion that ensued among the people of the village resulted in their being trapped between the assault force and the smoke screen, for the natives seemed fearful of entering the thick smoke cylinder which

would have completely engulfed them. Another bonus effect from using a smoke ship is the psychological effect on our own aviators and crews. Timed right, the smoke screen creates a visual shield between the airmobile force and the possible enemy entrenched below. It has been my observation that units in Vietnam have not used this machine to its full capacity.

6.(u) Consideration should be given to conducting combat assaults on targets at varied times during the day. Times for initiating assaults are too often the same, usually early in the morning. It is my contention that the Viet Cong are geared for early morning assaults, and, if not assaulted, are of the opinion that an attack is not pending. I strongly recommend a variance in the time of combat assaults and feel that frequent mid-morning, noon, and afternoon assaults would keep the Viet Cong off balance, a condition which could be exploited to the ground commander's advantage. We have recommended this approach to the 25th Division. They concurred and we are now conducting combat assaults at various times during the day.

C(u) Training.

1.(u) A program I consider of significant importance to aviators in this command was the establishment of a Branch Qualification Training Program (see Inclosures 6 and 7). Not only do the aviators gain important branch training and experience, but it is gratifying to receive comments from commanders of units to which the 269th has sent officers. All comments reflected a high degree of proficiency and an exceptionally high degree of professionalism among our aviator commissioned officers. Of great importance, also, is the realization by our aviator officers that they are, in fact, equally as proficient

in their basic branch as their ground oriented contemporaries.

... constant reports of successes achieved in ground assignments is a constant source of pride and an amplification of my faith in the caliber of the Army officer-aviator.

2.(v)A recent investigation disclosed that fixed wing aviators trained primarily on aircraft having tricycle landing gear are experiencing difficulty in maintaining directional control of O-1 aircraft in a tactical environment. A short time ago, three fixed wing aviators, all recent graduates from the same fixed wing class at the Aviation School, ground looped their aircraft (O-1). It is doubtful if the 50 hours allotted to transitioning aviators into conventional gear aircraft is sufficient training prior to sending a new aviator to Vietnam. I recommend a re-evaluation of the present transition program and tactical O-1 indoctrination with an eye on adding additional conventional gear training.

JAMES H MERRYMAN  
LTC, Arty  
Commanding

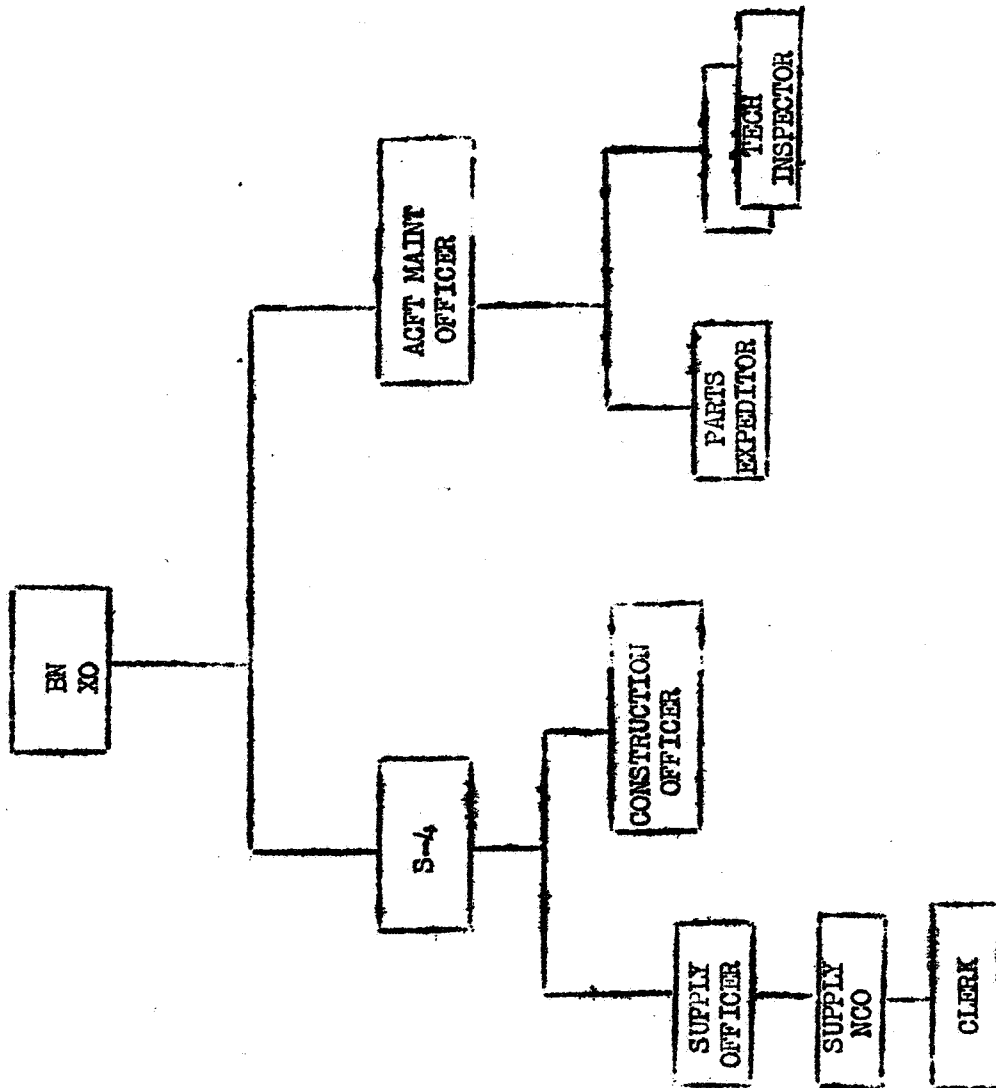
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CO 11th Cbt Avn Bn  
CO 145th Cbt Avn Bn  
CO 210th Cbt Avn Bn  
CO 214th Cbt Avn Bn  
File (3 cy)

Inclosures:

- 1-Composition of 269th Cbt Avn Bn
- 2-Strength Status--31 July 1967
- 3-Gains and Losses for Next 90 Days
- 4-Logistics and Maintenance Organization
- 5-Summary of Major Accidents
- 6-Letter, Branch Training for Officers
- 7-Letter, Implementing Instructions for Branch Training

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92



LOGISTICS AND MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATION

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, NND 873541

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 269TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION  
APO 96353

AVGC-F-SC

6 June 1967

SUBJECT: Implementing Instruction- Branch Training for Commissioned Officers.

TO: Commanding Officer, HHC, 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, APO 96353  
Commanding Officer, 116th Aslt Hel Co, APO 96353  
Commanding Officer, 187th Aslt Hel Co, APO 96216  
Commanding Officer, 188th Aslt Hel Co, APO 96268  
Commanding Officer, 21st Recon Apl Co, APO 96216  
Commanding Officer, 242d Aslt Spt Hel Co, APO 96227

1. Reference: Letter, Headquarters 269th Combat Aviation Battalion.  
Subject: Branch Qualification Training for Commissioned Officer, dated 31 May 1967.

2. As a one time requirement each unit will submit a roster of the officers interested in participating in this program. Roster will include name, rank, SN and DEROS. The report will be submitted to arrive at this headquarters, ATTN: S-3, not later than 15 June 1967.

3. Only officers who volunteer for branch material training will be so assigned. Interested individuals will complete the form letter attached as Inclosure 1 hereto and forward in one copy through the unit commander to this headquarters, ATTN: S-3. Request may be submitted at any time but at least three days lead time is normally required for coordination.

4. Only one commissioned officer will be allowed to be absent from his unit for this training at one time. Training will be for a minimum of three days and a maximum of seven days. The unit commander's approval is required and priority will be given to those personnel who have flown or are approaching 140 hours flying time in the last 30 day period. No funds will be involved and training will be scheduled with a local unit normally supported by this battalion. Training is expected to be limited to operating in a position or rank equivalent to that performed by contemporary non-rated officers.

5. Responsibilities:

a. Individuals volunteering for program:

- (1) Submit request and state intention to participate.
- (2) Provide own personal equipment needed during training (i.e., weapons, field gear, etc.).

INCLOSURE :



DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, NND873541

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

AVGC-F-SC

6 June 1967

SUBJECT: Implementing Instructions - Branch Training for Commissioned Officers.

b. Unit commanders:

(1) Forward request from personnel interested. Initialling of THRU: addressee line indicates approval; add indorsement including reason if disapproved.

(2) Provide transportation for officers to designated units and return.

(3) Monitor program within units.

(4) Insure that appropriate remarks are included in the next officer efficiency report rendered on individuals participating in the program.

c. S-3:

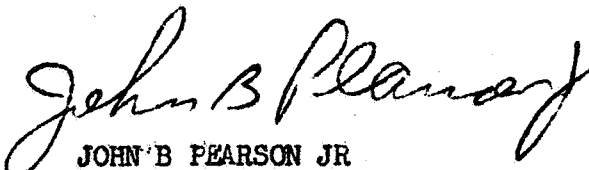
(1) Make required arrangements with units for training, giving preference to the desires of the participating officer.

(2) Provide coordinating details to officer concerned.

(3) Monitor the program at battalion level.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

1 Incl  
as

  
JOHN B PEARSON JR  
Captain, AGC  
Adjutant

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, NND873541

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

APO

SUBJECT: Request for Branch Material Training

THRU: Commanding Officer

APO 96353

TO: Commanding Officer

269th Cbt Avn Bn

ATTN: S-3

APO 96353

1. Request that I be scheduled for branch material training.
2. The following information is submitted:
  - a. Name:
  - b. Grade and Service Number:
  - c. Branch:
  - d. Available dates (from - to):
  - e. Branch experience and type of unit/position to which attachment is desired:
  - f. Supplementary information (as Appropriate):
3. I understand that this program is voluntary and will be undertaken at no expense to the government.

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, NND 873541

By

JB/mg

NARA, Date

9/92

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 269TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION  
APO 96353

AVGC-F-

31 May 1967

SUBJECT: Branch Qualification Training for Commissioned Officers

TO: All Commissioned Officers  
269th Combat Aviation Battalion  
APO 96353

1. Since the beginning of the Army Aviation Program the commissioned Army aviator has had to be able to accomplish a dual role. First, he must be a branch qualified officer and second he must be a highly trained specialist in the complex field of aviation. While this requirement might seem to be impossible to achieve, the contrary has been proven. For years the commissioned aviator has demonstrated his ability to excel not only as an aviator but also as an officer of his basic branch.

2. With the advent of the war in Vietnam and the increased requirement for Army aviation personnel, many of the programs which previously provided for branch qualification of commissioned aviator personnel have been terminated. Today, few aviators are assigned to ground duty. Many are far behind their non-flying contemporaries in branch service school attendance. Overall, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the aviator to maintain his branch qualification, yet the requirement to do so still exists.

3. The easy way out would be to say "to heck with it - it can't be done". This is no solution however, plus the fact that the Army aviator does not pursue the easy out. We must find a way to do that which is required of us and the remainder of this paper will tell you how I think we can achieve that goal.

4. Duty in Vietnam can provide unlimited opportunities to the commissioned aviator who desires to remain branch qualified - the only thing required is that he be given the time to do so. In this regard, I intend to provide the necessary time for any commissioned officer who desires to take advantage of the combat environment in Vietnam to improve his branch qualifications. It will be a two way street however, the time will be partially yours. No one can be released for branch material duty unless they can be spared from their duty assignment. With the shortage of assigned aviators and heavy mission commitment this is no simple matter. For example, officers in the assault companies will normally be allowed to go on branch material assignment only in conjunction with their three day stand down resulting from an excessive number of flying hours.

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, NND 873541

By JB/mg NARA, Date 9/92

AVGC-F

SUBJECT: Branch Qualification Training for Commissioned Officers. 31 May 1967

5. The program will be strictly voluntary and will involve only those officers who express a desire for branch material duty. A letter of instructions will be issued in the near future. In general it will include the following guidelines:

a. On a strictly voluntary basis, one commissioned officer per company will be allowed to be absent from his assigned unit for a period of 3-7 days to work with a co-located unit of his branch.

b. The unit commander's approval will be required for an officer to participate in this program.


c. Priority for participation will be given to those aviators who have flown or are approaching 140 hours in the past 30 day period.

d. The battalion S-3 will handle all requests for branch material duty and will accomplish appropriate arrangements. Preferably the officer should serve with a co-located unit and one which his unit supports.

e. No funds will be involved.

f. Unit commanders will insure that appropriate remarks are included in the Officers Efficiency Report to indicate that branch qualification training has been achieved.

6. I consider the above program to be one which offers an outstanding opportunity to remain branch qualified in a time of diminishing opportunities to do so. The choice is yours. If you are interested, contact your commanding officer and request that you be allowed to participate in branch material training. Remember this one most cogent fact, we are and shall remain officers first - aviators second.

  
JAMES H MERRYMAN  
LTC, ARTY  
Commanding