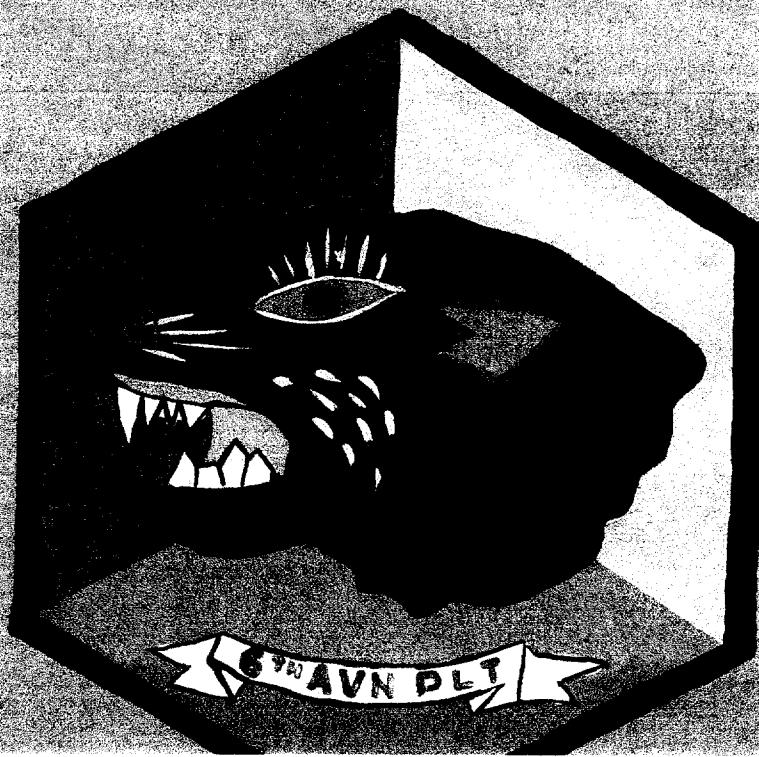


7 Aug - Dec 19

UNCLASSIFIED

**HISTORY OF THE
6th AVIATION PLATOON (AIRLIFT)
7 AUGUST 1964 - 31 DECEMBER 1964**



HISTORY OF THE
6th AVIATION PLATOON

12th AVIATION BATTALION

7 August 1964 - 31 December 1964

Prepared by
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and
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Ward
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III.	DATA PREPARATION
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I. PRE-VIETNAM

On 9 August 1964, the Commanding General, Fort Riley, Kansas, was directed to activate two identical aviation units for ultimate shipment to the Republic of Vietnam.

One of these units, the 6th Aviation Platoon, was organized by General Order Number 101, Headquarters Fifth United States Army, dated 7 August 1964. (Appendix A).

On approximately 8 August 1964, a mandatory meeting of all 1st Aviation Battalion personnel was held by the commanding officer. At this meeting the battalion commander notified all personnel of the notification of activation. Volunteers were then requested from within the battalion. The number of personnel were selected from A Company, 1st Aviation Battalion; B Company, 1st Aviation Battalion; and C Company, 701st Maintenance Battalion. The new 6th Aviation Platoon consisted of thirteen commissioned officers, nine warrant officers, and thirty-one enlisted. (Appendix B). All were under the command of Major Charles A. Liles, 0995562.

Equipment was drawn under TDR 1-772 dated 1963. (Appendix C). All aircraft fell under the responsibility of Post Consolidated Supply. Aircraft and motor vehicles were laterally transferred from within the 1st Aviation Battalion.

Platoon personnel worked without rest for approximately six days readying the equipment for overseas shipment. Also during this period, personnel within the unit involved overseas physical,

complete dental checks, and were afforded time to complete their personal affairs. On 12 August, a total of seventeen US - 15's departed Port Riley to Fort Dix and for shipment to Oakland, California for overseas processing. The seven vehicles were to accompany the transports aboard the U-124 to their final destination. The plateau involved the movement ended on the 20th of August 1964. (Appendix C). At this time the units final destination was still unknown.

Once the equipment, vehicles, and auxiliary equipment were removed away, the Commanding Officer of the 6th Flotilla authorized limited leave for all personnel. Leave status for most of the men started on the 25th of August. All personnel were to report back to Port Riley not later than 3 September 1964. During the period of authorized leave for the platoons the crew detachment shipped all authorized equipment with the exception of motor vehicles.

II. OVERSEAS MOVEMENT:

The advance party consisting of two officers and one enlisted man departed CONUS for Vietnam on 5 September 1964. They were given the job of establishing necessary coordination prior to the platoon's arrival and to make contact with their still unknown parent unit.

On 9 September the first element of the main body was split into four flights, the last arriving closing on 11 September. As each arrival reached Forbes AFB they were immediately ushered on C-124 aircraft for the transfer overseas. The flight of the C-124's arrived in Saigon, Vietnam on 14 September. Intermediate stops were made at Travis AFB, California; Honolulu, Hawaii; and Clark AFB in the Philippines Islands. By the 15th of September all vehicles and personnel had arrived in Saigon. Upon arrival they were met by members of the advance party and by a G-1 representative of the United States Army Support Command. All personnel were then given an in-country orientation and further informed that the platoon was to be assigned to the 13th (Delta) Aviation Battalion and attached to the 121st Aviation Company for actions and quarters. On the afternoon of the 15th of September, the platoon once again boarded aircraft. This time, Army OV-10's, with destination and first duty station in Soc Trang, Vietnam. Upon arrival in Soc Trang the unit received a warm welcome by members of the 121st Aviation Company. They were issued quarters and bedding for their first night in Vietnam.

III. MISSION PREPARATION:

The following day the 13th Battalion Commander assigned the unit the mission of aviation support for IV Corp Headquarters. This included support for 3rd Special Forces and USAF (United States Army Air Force) liaison.

The platoon was issued their aircraft on 19 September 1966. The units newly assigned aircraft differed in number from the original 200. Originally they shipped seven UH - 1B's and three U - 6A's. While at Da Nang the unit received eight UH - 1B (slicks) and two UH - 1C's (armed with the T-14 .50 caliber system) and two U - 6A's. The two armed aircraft and one slick were the only original aircraft retained from the Fort Riley unit.

When the unit arrived in Vietnam there were seven officers that had no previous time in the UH - 1H aircraft. They were required to have a minimum of 25 flight hours of aircraft transitioning before becoming qualified. They were given a target date of 10 October to complete the transition and be combat mission ready. This demand was placed on the 131st Aviation Company. This was accomplished by integrating the 6th Platoon into the 131st Aviation Company operational missions. During this training period the 131st enjoyed many major successes in combat assault operations. The 6th Platoon personnel were involved in all these operations as co-pilots on 131st aircraft. Training in all phases was completed on schedule and the unit was declared combat ready on 10 October. The unit then assumed 1st mission.

IV. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED:

The following weeks the platoon encountered a few problems that they quickly solved or adapted to with a positive attitude. One of these problems was the training of gunners for the armed ships. This was solved by on the job instruction given to the units own chiefs and other assigned enlisted men within the platoon.

Another problem was the assigned aircraft came without armor plating and M-60 machine gun door mounts. It was not until late December before the platoon received armor plating and gun mounts for these aircraft. During this time the unit still performed its missions. Also, the unit had no qualified personnel to perform maintenance of the X-14 system. The armed section, with the help of the 121st Aviation Company, trained themselves on the intricate mechanics.

Still another problem that enhanced the platoon was the fact that all of the personnel within the unit arrived in-country within a three day period of time making the DEMOS a concerning personnel problem. It was decided by the 13th Aviation Battalion that to overcome this problem some of the 5th Platoon officers would be transferred to other units within the battalion. The platoon was disbanded and eleven of the original officers were exchanged within the composite of the battalion. (Appendix D).

V. PLATOON ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Soon after the Platoon's arrival plans were initiated for construction of a compound at Can Tho for Battalion Headquarters and the 6th Platoon. In the interim period the unit completed its mission by maintaining a rotary wing section consisting of three clicks with pilots and support personnel at Can Tho. The remaining personnel were quartered at Soc Trang until the plans and construction of the compound at Can Tho would be completed. Target date for the unit to close Can Tho was set for 1 May 1965.

Platoon Headquarters, maintenance and supply were all located at Soc Trang. A joint operations was set up with the 121st Aviation Company, with the exception of platoon headquarters and maintenance which were maintained separately. Close coordination and a fine working relationship was enjoyed between the 6th and 121th. Both units were short of personnel but with the outstanding relationship between units they were able to mutually support each other and carry out their missions in a superior manner.

The armed section of the platoon, under the able supervision of Capt Terry Oliver, quickly developed into an outstanding and respected fire unit. The XM-14 shins were used in general support of all combat operations in IV Corps. The section, normally escorted by a five team from one of the armed platoon's when making target attacks with the XM-1A aircraft, occasionally operated independently when the tactical situation dictated. One of these tactical support

situations arose on a combat assault operation out of Da Nau in the 21st Division area. All the armed ships expending their arms left their station to rearm and refuel. The AH-14 section remained on target. During the absence of the Armed Ships, the ground units were pinned down by heavy automatic weapons fire. The ground commander requested fire support from Capt Terry Oliver and his AH-14 section. With complete disregard for anything except the desperate need of the ground forces, Capt Oliver's aircraft delivered three suppressive fire attacks on the heavily infested VC position. The ground commander credited Capt Oliver's swift action as saving many lives within his unit and the destruction of a reinforced VC platoon. After the AH-14 strikes, the ground commander reported moving through the objective area without opposition and picking up many individual and crew served weapons. The commanding officer recommended Capt Oliver for the Distinguished Flying Cross for his heroic and timely action.

Capt Oliver's section, consisting of Lt Gary Steele, 40 Keesee and C Harvey Carr, deserved special recognition for their action during this highly successful operation. Over 100 VC were counted dead and many weapons captured during this operation.

On 27 November 1964, Major Licha and Capt Oliver were reassigned to 13th Battalion Headquarters. Capt Billy ... and assumed command of the 6th Aviation Platoon (airlift).

During the month of December, the unit continued its outstanding support of IV Corps. In addition to normal command and liaison type

missions the platoon participated actively in an average of three combat assault operations a week. During this period the platoon maintained eight mission ready helicopters out of ten assigned. This outstanding support was achieved through the dedicated efforts of the maintenance personnel. They worked day and night in order to keep the aircraft mission ready to meet mission commitments. A high tribute to their professional ability and competence was highlighted when an outpost was under attack and the 50 caliber ships were needed. The tail rotors of both aircraft were damaged during the operation. The damage was found on landing and both tail rotors changed and aircraft were mission ready to continue the operation in thirty minutes. Much outstanding professional ability and dedication contributed greatly to the units achievements.

Another accomplishment was the completion of a periodic inspection in one night in order to meet a combat assault requirement at 0600 hours the following morning. Lt Frank Readinger's maintenance personnel continually made the impossible seem routine. His section was the heart of the units accomplishments.

The H-14 50 caliber ships had another day of glory during December 1964. All available 13th Aviation armed platoons were in support of ground forces at Vi Tanh. During this operation a relief convoy of vehicles was ambushed by the VC. The VC were in control of the convoy and were in the process of destroying the vehicles when the 50 caliber ships were called on for support. The armed section lead by Capt Billy D. Ward immediately proceeded to the area and engaged the VC. Ground units counted thirty-one VC dead along the

road following the 50 caliber ships strikes. The quick reaction of the AH-14 ships completely routed the VC ambush and saved many military vehicles and much equipment.

VI. CONCLUSION:

These and other "routine" missions were a constant requirement throughout the remaining days of the year 1964. The unit never failed to place the mission first, over and above all other commitments. The long working hours sustained by every member of the unit will be a challenging effort to surpass in the units future operations.

APPENDIX B

- A. CRIMINAL COMBINE NUMBER 101**
- B. PLATOON NUMBER, 19 AUGUST 1964**
- C. DIVISION ORDER NUMBER 33**
- D. PLATOON NUMBER, 31 DECEMBER 1964**

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 101

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH UNITED STATES ARMY
Chicago, Illinois 60615, 7 August 1964

ACTIVATION OF CERTAIN FIFTH UNITED STATES ARMY UNITS

1. TC 001. Following Fifth United States Army Strategic Army Forces units ACTIVATED.

<u>TPSN</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>TOE</u>	<u>STATION</u>	<u>PRIORITY STATUS</u>
35195	28th Signal Detachment (Radio Repair) (Avion)	11-500D, 62 w/C 4 (300-26) (SRC 11-500D 1501) Team: RL Plus: SC 64415 LC	Fort Riley, Kansas	D1 (2.08)
	Aviation Platoon (Platoon): (Airlift):	1-77E, 63 To consist of the following only:	Fort Riley, Kansas	D1 (2.08)
	6th		Fort Riley, Kansas	D1 (2.08)
	7th		Fort Riley, Kansas	D1 (2.08)

<u>Br MOS Code</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Para</u>	<u>Line No</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
HO Section				
AM 1983	Capt	08		1 Plat Comdr
NC 67370	E-7	08		1 Plat Sgt
90710	E-5	08		1 Sr Plt Op Sp
71120	E-4	08		1 Clk Typist
90710	E-4	08		1 Plt Op Sp
67000	E-3	08		1 Lt Trk Drvr

<u>Br MOS Code</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Para</u>	<u>Line No</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Acft Maint Sec				
7710	NO	09		1 Acft Maint Tech
NC 67940	E-6	09		1 Acft Tech Insp
67560	E-6	09		1 Maint Supv
67950	E-6	09		1 Hel Tech Insp
67520	E-5	09		2 Sr Util Hel Mech
67110	E-5	09		1 Sr Single Eng Acft Mech
67110	E-4	09		1 Single Eng Acft Maint
52510	E-4	09		1 Crash Rescue Sp

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APPENDIX A

06-01

<u>PSN</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>TOE</u>	<u>STATION</u>	<u>PRIORITY STATUS</u>
<u>Br MOS Code Grade Para Line No Remarks</u>				
<u>Acft Maint Sec (Cont)</u>				
67520	E-4	09	2	Util Hel Mech
71120	E-4	09	1	Clerk Typist
76610	E-4	09	1	Acft Parts Sp
67000	E-3	09	2	Util Hel Mech Hlpr
67000	E-3	09	3	Aflt Svc Crmn
<u>Br MOS Code Grade Para Line No Remarks</u>				
<u>Airlift Section (RW)</u>				
AM	1981	Capt	10	1 Sec Comdr
	628	WO	10	13 Util Hel Pilot
	67520	1+5	10	2 Crew Chief
<u>Br MOS Code Grade Para Line No Remarks</u>				
<u>Airlift Section (FW)</u>				
AM	1980	1	11	3 Section Comdr
	061B	WO	11	3 Utility Acft Pilot Single Eng
	67110	E-5	11	3 Util Airplane Cr Chief
<u>Equipment Augmentation</u>				
<u>Line Item No</u>	<u>Description</u>		<u>Amount</u>	
229910	Ext Fire Carbon Diox Charged Hand 15 lb		2	
401088	Bayonet Knife with Scabbard		6	
429280	Pistol Automatic cal .45		1	
435964	Rifle 7.62mm Semiautomatic		5	
475110	Trailer Amphibious Cargo 1/4-Ton 2-Wheel		1	
457190	Trailer, Cargo 3/4-Ton 2-Wheel		1	
461790	Truck Utility 1/4-Ton 4 x 4		1	
460050	Truck Cargo 3/4-Ton 4 x 4		1	
529100	Goggles Sun 2 Plastic Lenses 1 Colorless 1 Polarized Green		2	
541075	Paulin Ctn Duck FMMWR OD 17 Ft Lg 12 Ft W		1	
565600	Tent Command Post FMMWR with Cover Liner Pins and Poles		1	

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<u>Line Item No</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
449104	Radio Sec AN/VRC-10 Mtd In Truck 1/4-Ton	1
649804	Radio Sec AN/LRC-18 Mtj in Truck 3/4-Ton	1
678260	Telephone Set TA-212/P	1
712730	Computer Air Navigation Dead Reckoning Ty MB-4	1
744650	Lift Preserver Set Vest Mark 2	1
763200	Plotter Acft Scale 1/500000 Amb 1/100000	1
(Acft Maint Sec)		
7232542	Filter Separator Liq Fuel 50 GPM 75 PSI	2
7229910	Ext Fire Carbon Diox Charged Hand 15 lb	2
7401088	Bayonet Knife W/Scabbard for 7.62mm Rifle	20
7428279	Pistol Automatical .45	19
7435965	Rifle 7.62 Semiautomatic Lt Barrel	19
7437110	Trailer Amphibious Cargo 1/4-Ton 2-Wheel	1
7457190	Trailer Cargo 3/4-Ton 2-Wheel	2
7457220	Trailer Cargo 1 1/2-Ton 2-Wheel	1
7460080	Truck Cargo 3/4-Ton 4 x 4 W/Wn SF	2
7460140	Truck Cargo 2 1/2-Ton 6 x 6 W/Wn	1
7461328	Truck Tank Fuel Servicing 2 1/2- Ton 6 x 6	2
7461790	Truck Utility 1/4-Ton 4 x 4	1
7507681	Cabinet Tool and Spare Parts 39H 46 3/4W 23 9/16 In D	1
7510320	Case Field Office Machine 18 1/2 22 1/2 26 1/2 or 34 1/2 L 1D	1
7519800	Diagnosing Pump Hand Driver Gas- oline 12 Gal Per 100 Rev	1
7524300	File Visible Index Book Metal 40 to 120 Pockets	1
7529100	Goggles Sun 2 Plastic Lenses 1 Colorless 1 Polarized Green	15
7541075	Paulin Ctn Duck FMWR OD 17 Ft Lg 12 Ft W	4
7567480	Repair Kit Tentage	1
7588495	Tent Maint Frame Type with Light Frame Pins	1

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Line Item No.	Description	Amount
576310	Table Folding Legs Wood Solid Top Wood Legs 36 L 24 W 27 25/32 H	3
575900	Typewriter Nonptbl 11 or 12 in. Elite Rica or Bulletin type	1
678260	Telephone Set TA-312/Pt	1
784030	Tool Kit Aircraft Inspection Technical	2
785240	Tool Kit Organizational Maintenance Army Aircraft Set 5	1
5636113	Parachute Personnel Back 28 Ft Dia Canopy	18
784040	Tool Kit Aircraft Mechanics General	10
7329941	Flashlight Plastic Baton Ty 2 Cell Miniature Glange Lamp Water Proof	4
M01088	Bayonet Knife with Scabbard for 7.62mm Rifle	21
429280	Pistol Automatic Cal .45	14
435965	Rifle 7.62mm Semiautomatic Lt Barrel	7
7329100	Goggles Sun 2 Plastic Lens 1 Colorless 1 Polarized Green	7
638600	Radio Set AN/URC-2	7
712730	Computer Air Navigation Dead Reckoning Type MH-4	16
732600	Helicopter Utility Tactical Transport	7
744650	Life Preserver Set Vest Mark 2	28
744420	Life Preserver Under Arm Parachutist Gas or Oral Inflation B-7	56
763200	Plotter Acft Scale 1/500000 & 1/1000000	14
704040	Tool Kit Aircraft Mechanics General	7
722941	Flashlight Plastic Baton Ty 2 Cell Miniature Glange Lamp Water Proof	4
M01088	Bayonet Knife with Scabbard for 7.62mm Rifle	9
429280	Pistol Automatic Cal .45	6
435965	Rifle 7.62mm Semiautomatic Lt Barrel	3

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Line Item No	Description	Quantity
529100	Goggles, Sun 2 Plastic Lens 1 Colorless 1 Polarized Green	
1638600	Radio Set AN/URC-10	3
700950	Airplane Utility	2
712730	Computer Air Navigation Dead Reckoning Type MB-4	6
744650	Life Preserver Set Vest Makr 2	6
744420	Life Preserver Under Arm Parachute Gas or Oral Inflation B-7	12
763200	Plotter Aircraft Scale 1 to 5000000 and 1 to 10000000	6

Assigned to: Fifth United States Army and further assigned to headquarters of station indicated.

Effective date: 7 August 1964.

Authorized Strength:

WARRANT	
OFFICERS	OFFICERS
1	0
3	19
3	19

ENTITLED MEN

28th Signal Detachment

6th Aviation Platoon

7th Aviation Platoon

6

32

32

Equipment: See message, DA 981255, 6 August 1964.

Personnel: See message, DA 981255, 6 August 1964.

Morning Reports: Initial and subsequent Morning Reports for above units will be prepared and submitted in accordance with Army Regulations 335-60.

Mission: In accordance with table of organization and equipment indicated above.

Fund obligation: In accordance with current fiscal procedures.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

B E Balmer

B. E. BALMER
Colonel, AGC
Adjutant General

GEORGE M. JONES
Brigadier General, GS
Chief of Staff

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6

Army, HQ USA (50914)

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6th AIRLIFT PLATOON
13th AVIATION BATTALION
APO San Francisco 96296

SUBJECT: Platoon Roster

15 August 1964

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>SERIAL NUMBER</u>
LICHA, Charles A	Major	0995562
CATRON, Robert L	Capt	05501453
DA SAVILLE, Curtis R	Capt	088042
AURLEY, Paul L	Capt	01915959
OLIVER, Robert	Capt	086593
WILLIAMS, William H	Capt	0226590
CAMPBELL, Paul M	1st Lt	02304549
FRENCH, George D Jr	1st Lt	05306407
HARRINGTON, Lawrence	1st Lt	05513500
READINGER, Frank M	1st Lt	05414110
STEARL, Gary L	1st Lt	05315207
BELLAMY, Mark L	2nd Lt	05406128
ROHR, Michael M	2nd Lt	05217684
WITZMANN, Ferdinand A	WO-W1	W3151757
KLOWICKI, Thomas	WO-W1	W3151656
NIAS, Richard B	WO-W1	W3151791
SAMUELS, Thomas A	WO-W1	W3151803
SCHMIDT, John M	WO-W1	W3151804
WAGONER, Bruce E	WO-W1	W3151812
ELFARE, Bradley L	WO-W1	W3151813

SUBJECT: Platoon Roster

15 August 1964

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>SERIAL NUMBER</u>
WHITE, Ronald L	WO-W1	W3151125
ZERNAZ, Angelo A	SFC E-7	RA 27 881 948
DORAN, Wilson Jr	SFC E-6	RA 43 007 099
LAFFERTY, Tom	SFC E-6	RA 35 653 619
REED, Jack D	SFC E-6	RA 16 495 311
COLLINS, William D	SFC E-5	RA 18 381 163
TAYLOR, William S	SFC E-5	RA 16 756 067
ALLEN, Louis A	SFC E-4	RA 16 722 865
BARIL, William C	SFC E-4	RA 16 758 988
BAZZANI, Richard J	SFC E-4	US 55 336 174
COX, Daniel T	SFC E-4	RA 14 788 547
FLITS, John H	SFC E-4	RA 13 758 544
POWERS, Thomas S Jr	SFC E-4	RA 12 663 487
RATHERICK, Dale J	SFC E-4	US 55 739 867
ABYO, Alce Jr	PPC E-3	US 50 202 255
BANFIELD, John H	PPC E-3	RA 19 748 364
CANTU, Emil J	PPC E-3	US 55 768 800
DEVENS, Phillip J	PPC E-3	US 55 727 138
EMERY, Leonard C	PPC E-3	US 55 759 470
FORTINOT, David W.	PPC E-3	RA 19 778 496
KACER, Albert J	PPC E-3	US 54 338 208
LAFORD, Warren D	PPC E-3	US 52 585 926
LAWRENCE, George R	PPC E-3	US 55 759 468