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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 12TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP
APO San Francisco 96491

15 August 1966

AVGC-SC

SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 July 1966,
~~Headquarters, 12th Combat Aviation Group~~
Headquarters, 12th
Combat Aviation Group (U)

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

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SECTION I

SIGNIFICANT UNIT ACTIVITIES

A. (U) GENERAL: Headquarters, 12th Combat Aviation Group displaced from TAN SON NHUT Air Base to the Plantation Base Area at LONG BINH on 29 June 1966. This movement placed the Group Headquarters in convenient proximity to Headquarters, II FFORCEV. This allows closer coordination with Headquarters II FFORCEV and results in more responsive aviation support. In addition to the immediate advantage in tactical operation, the movement has also allowed for expanded communication capabilities with, and more responsive staff support for, the battalions. Other accomplishments during the reporting period include the initiation of a Group Training Program, publication of a Group flight standardization SOP and development of VFR flight corridors to allow aircraft safe passage between artillery fires. Significant problem areas include the need for increased aircraft availability, better "quick reaction" air traffic control at forward airfields, more aviator personnel, and the need for construction of aviation facilities particularly helicopter maintenance areas for outlying companies present and programmed.

B. (U) MISSION:

1. The 12th Combat Aviation Group provided Army Aviation support to CG, II FFORCEV, Senior Advisor III ARVN Corps and Senior Advisor IV Corps TZ. At the direction of CG, II FFORCEV, provided support to US, RVN and FVMAF Forces in III CTZ.

2. The unit provided Army Aviation Support forces as directed by COMUSMACV for support of US, RVN and FVMAF Forces in IV CTZ.

3. The unit commanded (less OPCOM where specified) and administered assigned and attached Army Aviation and Support units.

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GROUP - 4
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after 12 years.

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C. (C) ORGANIZATION:

1. Organization of 12th Combat Aviation Group during the reporting period included the following units, headquarters located as indicated:

- a. 12th Combat Aviation Group Headquarters, LONG BINH.
- b. 11th Combat Aviation Battalion, PHU LOI.
- c. 13th Combat Aviation Battalion, CAN THO.
- d. 145th Combat Aviation Battalion, BIEN HOA.
- e. 222nd Combat Aviation Battalion, VUNG TAU.
- f. 120th Aviation Company, (AML) TAN SON NHUT.

In addition, these units had sub-elements stationed at SOC TRANG, PHUOC VINH, LAI KHE, VINH LONG, as well as at field positions when called for by operations.

2. On 1 July 1966 the 120th Aviation Company (AML) was reassigned to the newly organized Capital Aviation Battalion, directly under 1st Aviation Brigade.

3. On 30 July 1966 1st Aviation Brigade assumed direct command of the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion, leaving only three battalions assigned to 12th Group.

D. (U) COMMAND: Significant changes of command in 12th Combat Aviation Group during this reporting period were:

1. On 2 May 1966 Colonel Raymond P. Campbell, Jr assumed command of 12th Combat Aviation Group from Colonel Raymond G. Jones.

2. On 20 May 1966, LTC Joseph B. Starker assumed command of the 11th Combat Aviation Battalion from LTC John W. Lauterbach.

3. On 17 June 1966, LTC Walter F. Jones assumed command of the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion from LTC Horst K. Joost.

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E. (U) PERSONNEL

1. Administration: During the reporting period, the S-1 section provided administrative and personnel support for the four Battalions and one separate company assigned to this headquarters. An increasing amount of correspondence was processed through this headquarters. A determined effort has been made to cut down on administrative requirements and eliminate non-essential reports. Telephonic reports have been initiated as a means of reducing the time required for preparation. Errors in correspondence received from subordinate headquarters are corrected at this level where possible, thus eliminating added indorsements and additional labor.

2. Awards - Decorations: In the area of awards and decorations, an increasing volume of recommendations was received from subordinate commands. During 4th Quarter 1966, 1705 recommendations were processed to USARV. Units are improving in manner of filling out of the USARV 157 forms; however, many recommendations must be delayed for needed correction.

3. Special Service: Special Service support has been satisfactory throughout the reporting period. Existing requisitions have been filled and equipment distributed to subordinate units.

4. Courts and Boards: One officer and one EM attended a course of instruction given by the USARV SJA to improve procedures and administration within the Group. A total of three USAR direct commission boards were held with 12 applicants appearing; two regular Army Officer Boards with seven applicants and two OCS boards with nine applicants were also convened.

5. Personnel: The personnel situation in the 1st Group is continuing to improve. The influx of field-grade officers has continued to be a major problem. This headquarters has distributed the rank and is currently balancing field grade averages within the subordinate units. In addition, this command has been authorized WOCG liaison officers to the various major commands within III Corps, thus relieving some senior officers from duty within aviation companies. With this headquarters now in LONG BINH, newly arrived officers are met and briefed by the 12th Group Liaison Officer in Saigon. The infusion program with the First Cavalry Division was satisfactorily completed during the reporting period. A similar program has also been completed with the 25th Infantry Division. At the present time the officer strength is above the manning level directed by Department of the Army; projected replacement levels are encouraging. The actual and projected gains and losses of aviators during 1st Quarter FY 1967 is as follows:

	GAIN	LOSS
July	84	73

	August	88	30
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6. Courts and Boards: One officer and one EM attended a course of instruction given by the USARV SJA to improve procedures and administration within the Group. A total of three USAR direct commission boards were held with 12 applicants appearing; two regular Army Officer Boards with seven applicants and two OCS boards with nine applicants were also convened.

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b. Enlisted: The main problem area in enlisted strength lies in the current and projected shortage of 71P operations personnel. There appears to be no apparent relief in sight. The actual and projected gain and loss of enlisted personnel during 1st Quarter FY 1967 is as follows:

	<u>GAIN</u>	<u>LOSS</u>
July	406	342
August	141	384
September	453	358

c. The personnel section was able to remain operational throughout the move from TAN SON NHUT to LONG BINH. The major additional responsibility assumed by the section during this period was the control of returnee bookings to CONUS for the entire command. A system has been developed to provide timely notification of shipment date to individuals at least 10 days in advance of DEROS.

d. A reduction in the total of "No Shows" on R&R flights was noted. This command is allocated an average of 250 spaces per month, which is adequate.

e. The re-enlistment counselor has continuously visited all subordinate commands throughout the period. Fifty personnel re-enlisted during the 4th Quarter, 1966. However, averages are below those expected by DA. First term RA enlistments are averaging 5% while the US re-enlistments are negligible.

6. Civic Action: During the reporting period, the 12th Combat Aviation maintained a second place standing in civic action projects among like size units in Vietnam. The Group was 4th overall in comparison with all other major subordinate commands for total projects conducted. The Group submits 50-70 projects a week. With the loss of the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion during the present quarter, however, a significant drop will be noted in number of projects. The Group headquarters on the other hand, has become increasingly interested in projects since moving to the LONG BINH area. The Group coordinated and contributed to the rebuilding of a new compound atop NUI BA DEN Mountain for Cambodian families residing there, after a CH-47 crash caused major property damage and loss of life. The Group is also adopting a Vietnamese High School (HO NAI) located two Kilometers north of the Group compound. Three volunteers are teaching English once a week to the children and average 100 students per session. New emphasis has been placed on the MEDCAP program within the Group and achieving 100% participation in the group.

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7. Information Program: Through the 4th Quarter, 1966, the following hometown releases, news releases and photos were released:

- a. Hometown releases----- 68
- b. News Releases----- 87
- c. Photos----- 95

Orientation pamphlets for newly arrived personnel were prepared by all elements of this command. These pamphlets with the orientation edition of Stars and Stripes are used in conjunction with commander's orientations. All elements now publish "Commanders Combat Notes" which deal with highlights of operational missions, civic action activities and general topics of interest to the troops.

8. Goals For The Next Quarter:

- a. Correct the imbalance of field grade aviators presently existing in the three subordinate battalions by the end of this quarter.
- b. Pursue a vigorous officer and enlisted infusion program to achieve a balance of experienced personnel in each company and to eliminate DEROS "humps" within each subordinate unit, both intra - and inter - Battalion.
- c. Continue an intensive effort to reduce reports and unnecessary correspondence from subordinate units. Continue to represent this problem to higher Headquarters.
- d. To establish individual unit non-appropriated unit funds, now non-existent.
- e. To maintain an efficient system of processing awards and decorations and to initiate a program for recommending Vietnamese decorations for meritorious service.
- f. To further the education program within this command through USAFI, participating colleges and universities.
- g. To expedite requests for special service items.
- h. To conduct a vigorous re-enlistment program in a determined effort to bring percentages to desired levels.
- i. To refine CONUS returnee flight scheduling.

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j. To continue the reduction of "No Shows" on scheduled R&R flights.

k. To complete the current study examining the desirability of organizing an administrative company at Aviation Group level.

l. To further increase emphasis on civic action programs not only within subordinate units but also within this headquarters. The Group Chaplain, recently assigned to the Headquarters, will coordinate the program. An added emphasis will be placed upon the MEDCAP program. We will seek 100% participation by all units of this command.

m. To increase the output of command information topics. In addition, to emphasis operational type public information releases since Army Aviation now flies more combat hours and missions than all the other services combined.

n. To increase the officer and warrant officer retention rates in the Group by demonstrating good personnel and career management within units of the Group. A series of informational letters has been initiated and will be continued in this regard.

o. To recognize outstanding performance of any duty, not just aircrew duties, with appropriate decorations.

F. (C) INTELLIGENCE.

1. NARCO ADF 30 test: By direction of MACV J-2, the NARCO ADF 30 system was installed in aircraft belonging to the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion and controlled, classified tests of the equipment were conducted. The tests were completed in June and the results reported directly to MACV J-2 by the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion. This testing was monitored by the S-2 Section, 12th Combat Aviation Group.

2. Cross Training of Army/Air Force Surveillance Pilots: As a result of a joint Army/Air Force O-1 aircraft surveillance test conducted in the IV CTZ, which was completed in April 1966, MACV J-2 directed that a TIP (Target Identification Personnel) training program be conducted. This was to be reciprocal training in which Army pilots received training in target identification while Air Force pilots were trained in Artillery adjustment. The training was conducted at sector level in order to achieve maximum utilization of aircraft and to maintain continuity in the accomplishment of the surveillance mission. Initial training was completed in June 1966, and a continuing program will be effected to insure that O-1 aircraft pilots arriving in-country will receive similar training. The results of this training have been apparent in the increased effectiveness of our surveillance effort while substantially reducing duplication in the commitment of O-1 aircraft assets, both Army and Air Force. Incorporation of this training in the POI of the Army Aviation School and in Air Force O-1 training should greatly enhance the contribution of pilots arriving in-country from the moment they are assigned, and reduce the expenditure of valuable operational time and aircraft assets in this command.

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3. Photo Reconnaissance: All OV-1 photo reconnaissance operational control has been centralized in MACV J-2. Due to the resulting inadequacy of the photo reconnaissance capability at aviation battalions level, this headquarters took action to establish a minimal interim capability through the use of hand-held Polaroid cameras. Approval to requisition cameras of the type considered suitable was received in May 1966, and the aviation battalions have them on requisition. The actual cameras have not been received.

4. Intelligence Reports: Last quarters inadequacy of dissemination of intelligence information documents to the lower echelon aviation elements was effectively corrected to the point that the S-2 Section now receives, on a recurring basis, virtually every intelligence report produced within the area of interest of the 12th Combat Aviation Group. The inadequacy of intelligence was the causal factor in previous requests directly to the various producing headquarters for inclusion of the Group on the distribution for all intelligence documents currently being generated. The S-2 Section is now receiving, in sufficient copies for battalion dissemination, reports from MACV, USARV and every US and RVN tactical headquarters in the III CTZ.

5. Intelligence Production and Dissemination: During the period, a trial effort was conducted in the production and dissemination of intelligence information by subordinate elements of the command. This involved requiring all pilots on all flights to seek and report daily visual reconnaissance sightings. Presented in the form of a daily INTSUM, with the project designated HOT ROCKS, this requirement was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the collection effort of lower echelon aviation units. After a suitable trial period, it was determined that, while our aviation activities, particularly in the area of visual and sensor reconnaissance, are a significant contributing factor to the success of the overall intelligence collection effort, the perishable nature of the intelligence acquired by aviation units generally reduces its value to an unusable degree when delayed reports are rendered. We determined that the established and completely functional methods of reporting information, immediately as it is obtained, to supported units and to all other immediately interested users are effective. The requirement for an intelligence summary, originally directed by the CG, 1st Aviation Brigade, was discontinued on our recommendation in July. However, all elements of the Group have been encouraged to maintain, and have been given considerable guidance in stimulating, an attitude of intelligence consciousness. They spare no effort in reporting meaningful aviation intelligence, in fact, any military intelligence that may be profitably injected into the collection effort, to higher, lower, and adjacent headquarters.

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6. Security:

a. The S-2 Section provided guidance to the staff and subordinate units on internal physical security of classified defense information and control of indigenous personnel. Written directives outlining procedures to be followed in both these areas were published during the period.

b. The S-2 Section processed approximately 900 separate administrative actions in connection with personnel security activities.

c. The S-2 Section continued operation of the Classified Central Files Facility and the classified document control and distribution center. During the period, approximately 2000 classified documents were handled by the section.

7. Movement of Headquarters: The movement from Ellis Compound, TAN SON NHUT to Plantation Compound, LONG BINH was accomplished in one day, 28 June 1966, with minimum interruption of normal activities of the section. Many adjustments have been necessary to tailor the operation to the new surroundings and the remoteness of the location. The improved working area has substantially offset any inconvenience caused by the relocation and should result in increased production. Effort continues toward improvement of physical facilities, made easier by a well planned basic lay-out and the inter-related functional characteristics of the building shared by the S-2 Section and the Communications Section. The most readily apparent advantage of the present location is the marked increase in physical security for the classified files, with the potential for increased security with a minimum of expense and effort.

8. Problem Areas:

a. A considerable number of personnel security actions are necessitated by failure of CONUS units to comply with existing regulations. Frequently personnel who obviously have been granted clearances, specifically officer personnel, have no evidence of such action in the field military 201 file. Two field grade officers were recently assigned whose DA Form 873 reflected BI Completion dates over 15 year old. A discouraging number of replacement personnel arrive in the command whose last investigation completion date is over 5 years old, necessitating the processing of records checks through intelligence channels to the US Army Investigative Records Repository, a time-consuming process that can be accomplished in the CONUS much more expeditiously and economically. Another minor irritant is the number of obsolete forms that must be replaced. Current regulations require that immigrant aliens have BI's started at time of induction, and such personnel are not to be assigned to certain positions and organizations until such action is completed. We have several such people in the command on whom our intelligence people have had to initiate the action after the individuals arrival. These examples reflect inefficiency on the part of CONUS unit personnel that we in this theater can ill afford the time to correct.

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b. The S-2 Section operates the Classified Control Files Facility and Classified Documents Control and Distribution Center, activities which are not normally conducted by the intelligence staff section of any headquarters. Having been established as an S-2 function, however, altering these arrangements would be awkward and the service now provided would undoubtedly suffer. Therefore, such a change does not warrant consideration. However, due to the unique situation existing in this theater, an unusual amount of classified material is generated by headquarters at every level of command, and the volume and frequency of classified material received, processed and distributed, by the personnel of the S-2 Section represents a considerable administrative burden. Inasmuch as these functions are not provided for in the Group TOE, and only one enlisted man has been provided to augment authorized personnel, a noticeable degeneration of productivity in those areas of responsibility peculiar to S-2 operations frequently occurs. The problem is most acute in the strictly clerical aspects. In order to support the headquarters properly, it is necessary to maintain operational stature, especially in the classified control and distribution facilities, from 0700 to 1930 hours daily, thus allowing little relief from tedious and demanding duties for the limited number of people currently available.

c. Nonavailability of suitable filing equipment for maps and charts has seriously detracted from the efficiency of maintaining properly catalogued and systematically stored basic operational quantities and types of cartographic material. Requisitions for such filing equipment were submitted on 8 March 1966.

9. Goals For The Next Quarter:

a. To participate actively in the planning of operations employing the proposed 12th Group Air Cavalry Task Force. Effort will be directed primarily at gathering, evaluating and disseminating information of enemy activity which might present appropriate targets for attack by this type task force. Targets considered suitable for attack by the Air Cavalry Task Force may include VC tax collection points, clandestine radio stations, VC meeting places, lightly-held road blocks and similar targets, where destruction, neutralization or capture is dependent on a rapid-reaction, highly mobile force. Collection effort will be coordinated with the intelligence activities of Headquarters, II FFORCEV, US divisions and separate brigades, III ARVN Corps and other appropriate agencies.

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b. In coordination with the Group Signal Officer, initiate a program to improve communications security within the headquarters and subordinate units. This program will include communications monitoring by the 17th Radio Research Unit, publication of a classification guide for telephonic discussions, dissemination of examples of possible telephonic and radio security violations and conferences with battalion S-2's and Signal Officers.

c. Completion of interior construction of S-2 section office, storage and distribution space to facilitate the expeditious processing and dissemination of material passing through the classified distribution facility.

d. Improvement of cartographic material storage and retrieval facilities.

e. More frequent liaison visits with higher headquarters and inspection/guidance visits to subordinate units.

f. Review current reporting requirements in an effort to reduce duplicating of non-essential reports and improve remaining required reports.

g. Comprehensive inventory of all controlled classified material, coupled with an effort toward reduction in the volume of classified files maintained.

G. (C) OPERATIONS:

1. Establishment of Air Corridors: The unit build-up of both artillery and aviation units has caused considerable difficulty in coordinating artillery fires with aircraft flight paths. An interim solution to this congestion problem has been responsive area artillery warning centers operating on published FM frequencies. A proposal was sent forward from this headquarters recommending that corridors between common installations be established for aircraft flights. Approval of these corridors was received on 23 July 1966 and is now in use by all aviation units in III CTZ. This directive was published as II FFORCEV Regulation Number 385-2. Division Artillery Air Control Agencies, (DAACA) established by each division serve as sources of US artillery information for all areas of III CTZ not covered by TAOR or areas of operations. Pilots using the corridors are required to monitor the radio frequency of the appropriate DAACA to receive broadcast warnings of US artillery firing through corridors. Corridor width is 2000 meters either side of a center line (normally a well-travelled road) and are routed directly over artillery positions and airfields when possible. The width of the corridor over artillery positions and airfields narrows to 1000 meters on either side. Corridor altitudes are from the surface to 3000 feet, except over artillery positions and airfields where minimum altitude is 2500 feet MSL and maximum altitude is 3000 feet MSL.

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2. Co-location: The rationale of co-location of aviation units with supported ground units was further implemented by relocating one aviation company and plans for the relocating of others as follows:

a. Movement of the 68th Combat Aviation Company (AML) from VUNG TAU to BIEN HOA during the period 10 through 17 July 1966, resulted in this unit being more centrally located in the III Corps Tactical Zone and in a better position to support operations, by elimination of a significant amount of daily dead-head flying time. Command, control, and administration were facilitated as the new location coincided with the location of the parent 145th Combat Aviation Battalion.

b. Planned movement of the 116th Aviation Company from PHU LOI to CU CHI will place that unit at the same location as two brigades of the 25th Infantry Division. Construction of facilities to accommodate the unit is under way with an expected completion date of 20 August 1966. Status on that date will determine the movement date of the unit during the last week of August.

c. Planned movement of the 128th Aviation Company from PHU LOI to BEAR CAT will co-locate them with the 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. This plan may well be changed due to probable change in location of 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division.

d. Planned movement of the 147th Medium Helicopter Company from VUNG TAU to PHU LOI will locate it more centrally within the III CTZ and again reduce dead-head time to and from daily operations. It is also essential to reduce aircraft crowding at VUNG TAU, thus improving safety of operations there.

3. Air Traffic Control: The 125th Air Traffic Control Company was unable to provide sufficient air traffic control teams at forward air fields during combat operations, particularly in rapid reaction situations. This inability to provide adequate air traffic control resulted in numerous near misses and some collisions involving both Army and Air Force aircraft at these congested airfields. Accordingly, our aviation battalions have been directed to have their organic pathfinders establish rapid reaction control facilities when their units use forward airfields. This has proven to be effective. A letter was forwarded to 1st Aviation Brigade requesting that additional quick reaction air traffic control teams be made available to the 12th Combat Aviation Group. Considerable coordination between the Army and the Air Force is still required to insure effective air traffic control during joint operations. A command letter has been sent to 1st Aviation Brigade outlining four cases in which USAF aircraft flew or taxied into parked, motionless Army aircraft and requesting command action to educate USAF pilots to their part of this joint safety responsibility.

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4. Security Force: A requirement exists for organic security guards within aviation units. Every other man has a distinct, full-time commitment to the aviation effort. As a result, a MTOE action has been submitted recommending that security detachments be included in each aviation battalion. Experience has shown that use of aviation personnel in a full-time security role reduces the combat effectiveness of aviation units in the accomplishment of their primary mission.

5. Flight Standardization: The influx of large number of aviators into country during the period pointed out the need for standardized flight procedures and techniques. This requirement was partially satisfied by the publication of a 12th Combat Aviation Group Flight Standardization SOP for all types aircraft. A program, recently instituted, of follow-up visits by a qualified flight standardization officer will help keep operational proficiency at a high level.

6. Special Projects:

a. All airmobile light companies are being augmented with an additional airlift platoon (Seven aircraft). MTOE action has been forwarded for approval with this change included. The requirement exists for each airmobile company to be capable of airlifting the assault elements of one rifle company. The addition of one airlift platoon should provide the required aircraft. No additional personnel, however, have as yet been authorized.

b. The 53rd Aviation Detachment (PROV), (three (3) armed CH-47 helicopters), was attached to the 12th Combat Aviation Group for evaluation purposes. The detachment was further attached to the 11th Combat Aviation Battalion for test and evaluation for a 60 day period commencing 28 June 1966. Much valuable information should result.

c. Two battalions conducted test and evaluation of a proposed fire-proof flight suit. The issue of a uniform of this type is deemed essential in a hostile environment.

d. The requirement for a hoist and litter device for the UH-1D helicopter was realized during recent combat actions in jungle terrain. Four modification kits per airmobile company are currently slated for test.

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7. Armed Platoon Requirement: The requirement for additional armed helicopter platoons in IV CTZ was solved by the addition of one armed platoon to the 114th Aviation Company, 13th Combat Aviation Battalion. MTOE action was initiated for this change in organization.

8. The following are operational goals for the next quarter.

- a. Improvement of aircraft availability.
- b. Organization and employment of an Air Cavalry Task Force under operational control of 12th Combat Aviation Group.
- c. Continued implementation of the co-location of aviation companies with brigade-size units.
- d. Continued improvement of airfield facilities and techniques of operation.
- e. Completion of a 12th Combat Aviation Group Operations SOP.
- f. Continued investigation of means to reduce the current high rate of aircraft damage due to hostile gunfire.

H. (U) TRAINING:

1. Training Circular #1: Training requirements in the 12th Combat Aviation Group range from that needed by the individual soldier in basic military subjects to unit training of aviation units arriving in-country. To meet these requirements, Training Circular #1 was published and distributed in late July to all subordinate units. This publication combines into one document a listing of required training subjects and establishes the priorities for accomplishment of the required subjects at the unit level. In addition to the recurring training requirements of assigned personnel, several special training commitments have been assigned to or have originated in the 12th Combat Aviation Group.

2. Assigned Training Tasks:

- a. The training of 24 US Navy Pilots and 24 Navy enlisted men to assume the Sea Wolf/Market Time mission. This training includes transition in the UH-1 helicopter, gunnery training, tactical training and maintenance instruction.

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b. Training of four VNAF pilots commencing on 8 August and terminating 4 September. Training includes transition in UH-1 aircraft and 90 days tactical training with the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion. Future objectives of this training are to train sufficient VNAF pilots to man their own UH-1 aircraft and to also alleviate the current shortage of Army Aviators.

c. A CH-47 Mobile Training Team has been formed in the 11th Combat Aviation Battalion to train ground personnel in rigging and loading of external loads for the CH-47 aircraft. During past operations there have been excessive delays in getting resupply missions airborne due to lack of this knowledge by ground personnel.

d. US Army and US Air Force O-1 Aviator Cross-Training. By direction of USMACV, a training program was established to train USAF Pilots in missions normally flown by USA aviators. Further, the program was to train USA aviators in FAC procedures. This program began in May and is continuing at the present time.

e. In July, a command letter was sent to all combat aviation battalions confirming previous verbal instructions on the establishment of one aerial gunnery range per battalion, to be located in a free strike zone. Battalions also published aerial gunnery training programs.

f. Maintenance Training. An advance maintenance training base has been established at VUNG TAU. 12th Combat Aviation Group presently has requested 210 quotas for the courses offered; however, only 26 quotas have been authorized up to the present time. There is a very definite need for a mobile training team to give on-site instruction in maintenance due to the influx of semi-trained replacement maintenance personnel. At the present, resources are not available to form the team in Vietnam; however, a request has been forwarded to provide teams from CONUS.

3. Training For Next Quarter:

a. Improved training for newly arrived personnel and units in accordance with 12th Combat Aviation Group Training Circular #1. An especially well qualified outgoing Company Commander will act as inspector to be sure policies are being realistically applied so as not to interfere with the combat mission.

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b. A better aerial gunnery capability, fostered through an invitational aerial gunnery meet which 12th Combat Aviation Group is sponsoring at VUNG TAU on 15 September.

c. Better training for all maintenance personnel through mobile training teams.

d. Use of mobile training teams from Group units to provide better training of ground forces, particularly new units, in loading and unloading cargo aircraft.

I. (C) LOGISTICS

1. Summary of S-4 Activities:

a. The reduction of responsibilities from eight battalions in 2nd Quarter to four during 3rd Quarter FY 66 has enabled the S-4 and the Aircraft Maintenance Officer to give closer attention to the problems of the battalions, to include assistance down to company and detachment level. This was particularly noteworthy in the field of aviation maintenance.

b. Shortages of essential items of equipment are still a problem. Through contact with the Processing for Overseas Movement Center, Fort Mason, California, this organization was able to determine the shipping document number and carrier of numerous items of essential equipment. Many of these items were, however, either mis-shipped or lost in shipment and failed to arrive at final destination. This necessitated new requisitions being placed in-country with a resultant loss of six months time in several instances.

c. Pre-stock points for ammunition and POL have been in existence in III CTZ over a prolonged period. Stockage levels are determined by III ARVN Corps for emergency support of ARVN operations. Class IIIA and Class V supplies are controlled by III ARVN Corps, with replenishment requests being forwarded for Class IIIA by III ARVN Corps and Class V being requested by the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion. The supplies are handled at the pre-stock points by ARVN troops under supervision of USMACV advisory personnel. Within the reporting quarter the trend has been toward increased use of the pre-stock points in support of US Army operations by Divisional and non-Divisional aviation elements, frequently without prior coordination. This has resulted in over-saturation of the pre-stock points with aircraft, depletion of supplies and inability of operating personnel to resupply and refuel combat assault aircraft in a timely manner.

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The problem has been alleviated to some extent by education of the using units as to the purpose of the pre-stock points and by temporarily positioning additional personnel and POL dispensing equipment from the aviation battalions at pre-stock points for support of planned operations. However, now that the problem has been recognized, re-assignment of responsibility for stockage and operation of the points is under study. The decision must include consideration of the capabilities of the selected command to operate them. In this respect, Headquarters, 12th Combat Aviation Group is not organized, manned, or equipped to handle the mission. This headquarters would have to be augmented sufficiently to provide at least two TOE KD Teams, POL Handling, complete with equipment, for daily operation plus an additional KD Team for surge requirements along with a responsive means of transportation for that team and its equipment. There would also be a need for supervisory personnel and a significant change in operating procedures. Assistance from USMACV and ARVN personnel would be a continuing requirement.

2. Supply:

a. The availability of supplies in each class continues to be on the increase. The shortage of air crew member flight clothing and equipment reported as a problem in the last quarter continues. Limited quantities of flying gloves and helmets were received although sufficient quantities to supply the demand are due-in. The new family of protective personnel armor commenced to arrive in-country and was issued on a priority basis.

b. The availability rate of munitions continued to meet unit requirements. During the month of June, USARV placed a hold on several thousand rounds of 2.75" Rocket HE, located in III and IV CTZ Pre-Stock Points. This hold was brief and thus did not affect the accomplishment of unit missions.

c. During the quarter, six 100 GPM KEMCO Pumps were received and issued to the 13th and 145th Combat Aviation Battalions. Badly needed additional pumps and Mini-Port Refueling Systems are reportedly due-in during the 1st Quarter FY 67 in quantities sufficient to satisfy known requirements for the III and IV CTZ.

d. The delivery of munitions from the LONG BINH area to the IV CTZ improved considerably during the past quarter. The 3rd Ordnance Battalion has kept requisitions flowing smoothly. A problem that exists at present is the stacking up of munitions for shipment at 8th Aerial Port, BIEN HOA Air Force Base. This should be alleviated somewhat upon completion of C-130 parking and loading ramp at BIEN HOA Air Force Base.

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3. Construction: Contractor construction of five headquarters metal type buildings, 10,000 square feet, was completed on 22 June 1966 for the 12th Combat Aviation Group headquarters. In addition, the 56th Engineer Battalion constructed shower and latrine facilities, a troop mess and graded the Group Headquarters cantonment area to LONG BINH. Future plans are for initiation of construction of hutment type barracks to house the enlisted and officer personnel of the headquarters and headquarters company. This will be a unit self-help project.

4. Aircraft Maintenance:

a. Older UH-1 aircraft, except for 540 systems, were grounded during the quarter for inspection of the tail rotor system. Some parts required replacement and a large number of tail rotor retaining nuts were found to be under-torqued. Aircraft were inspected on a unit basis, with an assistance team from the 765th Transportation Battalion working with each unit. Repair parts and necessary special tools accompanied the team. Number requiring repair/replacement was 90.

b. Availability rate of CH-47 aircraft was low during the latter part of the quarter. This was caused by directed grounding inspections of engine-transmissions and combining transmissions, resulting in numerous EDP parts, not stocked in-country. Cracked bulkheads at station 482 and 534 resulted in six aircraft being grounded for a month awaiting local manufacture and installation of parts. The unscheduled maintenance workload is rapidly increasing on the CH-47's of the 147th Aviation Company. It is apparent that these aircraft should be retrofitted through modernization programs in the near future. Three CH-47's have been received by the 147th Aviation Company to be exchanged for older aircraft.

c. This headquarters conducted aircraft staff maintenance and supply assistance visits in over half of the companies during the quarter. We were able to provide increased assistance as a result of first-hand information obtained, to help expedite parts and satisfy maintenance requirements.

d. Group Aircraft Maintenance Officer conducted numerous meetings during the quarter between operations and maintenance personnel to correct reporting procedures and statistics on availability, maintenance status (EDM, EDP) and flying hour reports. This has resulted in more standardized reports at all levels for command management.

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e. Some progress was made during the quarter in modernization of the aircraft fleet. Four U-1A and eight O-1F aircraft were exchanged. A modernization program is now beginning to replace the oldest UH-1 aircraft. This action will greatly reduce the unscheduled maintenance workload and EDP rates in those areas.

f. The critical shortage of aircraft armament systems greatly improved during the quarter. Four complete XM-16, three M-5 and 120 XM-23 Armament Systems were received and installed. In addition, approximately 60 M-6 Systems were modified to the XM-16 configuration. This progress greatly increased the armed helicopter capability in airmobile units.

g. In the latter part of July, this headquarters became aware that time required for in-country movement of aircraft parts for CH-47's in an EDP status was excessive. As an example, parts arriving in-country were taking as long to get from Saigon to VUNG TAU as the whole EDP requisition and supply process from the ZI to Saigon. Through documentation of the time required for a selected list of parts to make the trip has been completed. The results of this research will be forwarded with recommendations for corrective action.

h. A problem brought to the attention of this headquarters concerning high and medium pressure hoses for CH-47 helicopters is being resolved by direct coordination with the AMMC contract officer, who has direct coordination for work orders to Air Vietnam and the 1st Transportation Battalion (Seaborne). Problems of this nature concerning local manufacture of parts and assemblies can normally be solved by full use of all local manufacturing facilities in-country.

i. The lack of adequate facilities, such as proper lighting and hangar space, and shortages of TOE items required for aircraft maintenance, greatly hampered the maintenance effort during the period, particularly in the 162nd and 173rd Aviation Companies. This matter was stressed in at least two command letters requesting assistance. The results were negative at the close of the quarter.

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j. A low fill of requested UH-1B/540 EDP repair parts has considerably affected their availability during the period. This is partially due to a high percentage of zero balances in unit PLL's and ASL's. Units are also experiencing unusual demands for parts requiring premature removal and replacement, such as main feathering bearings, hub assemblies and teflon bearings throughout the aircraft. These parts are generally failing to meet prescribed TBO's. This problem resulted in an average UH-1B/540 EDP rate of approximately 19% during the quarter.

5. S-4 Goals For The Next Quarter:

- a. Obtain satisfactory maintenance and parts support for airborne night lighting equipment being employed.
- b. Increase aircraft availability through continued emphasis on maintenance management.
- c. Increase the frequency and effectiveness of staff visits in all areas of responsibility, i.e. supply, motor maintenance, aircraft maintenance, ammunition and POL, and food service.
- d. Obtain satisfactory maintenance and parts support for aircraft armament sub-systems.

J. (U) SIGNAL

1. Command Post Movement: During the reporting period, major efforts were devoted to the coordination, planning and physical relocation of the command post. Identifying signal requirements, terminating existing communications and the expansion of signal facilities were major accomplishments of the section. Communications, to enhance command control, took a giant step forward. Growing from a single AM radio net, which provided only marginal radio communications to four subordinate battalion headquarters, communications were broadened to include an extremely reliable FM radio net and point-to-point sole-user teletype facilities. FM radio communications were provided to three of the four subordinate battalion headquarters, five separate liaison teams and other separate units operating at distances up to 50 miles from the Group Command Post. Only one distant station, the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion had to continue to operate on HF SSB radio communications.

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2. Teletype: In addition to the extensive radio capability, a multipoint sole-user teletype network was activated to provide a rapid means of handling the large amount of administrative traffic generated between the major headquarters of the Command. The efficiency of this teletype facility is particularly noteworthy considering the time usually lost in handling administrative traffic through normal distribution channels.

3. Air Traffic Control: Noted during this period was a need to establish quick-reaction Airfield Control Teams within the command. Although portable UHF radios were not available through Army supply channels, two AN/PRC-41, portable, 4-channel UHF radios were procured from the Air Force for each pathfinder detachment as back-up equipment. Better control of all Army and Air Force aircraft operating into and out of forward airstrips during the conduct of airmobile operations has been effected through the use of these portable radios. This effort must continue and be expanded.

4. Projects: Three major projects listed below, initiated by this Headquarters in 1965, will require continuous monitoring of their progress.

a. A request for command communications equipment to supplement the organic capability of non-divisional aviation units was submitted and approved by Department of the Army, with all equipment scheduled to arrive in-country by 1 December 1966. Necessary shipping instructions have been forwarded to CONUS so that the equipment will be consigned direct to the using units, thus reducing cumbersome supply accounting procedures in the field. The consignment of the equipment will be monitored to insure that maximum flexibility and utilization is realized throughout the Command.

b. An initial requirement was submitted, and an in-country program is being established to retrofit all 1963 and older model aircraft with all new airborne avionics systems. The program is scheduled to begin in September/October 1966 on a small scale, and expand as assets become available in January 1967. An actual avionics configuration inventory of our entire fleet, by tail number and model, has been completed in order to identify exact requirements once the retrofit program begins.

c. A conversion program to exchange all of the old series FM ground radios for the new VRC-12 FM family is presently underway. Total requirements for the 12th Combat Aviation Group have been submitted and the equipment is scheduled to arrive in August/September 1966. The responsibility for the conversion rests with the 1st Logistical Command.

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5. Message Traffic: Although this headquarters is still in its communications infancy, marked results in progress and accomplishments are easily identified. Radio traffic has grown from 5-10 messages per day to more than 25 per day. The volume of teletype traffic, increasing daily, was 25 messages sent and 15 received during the first month of operation. In the last three months the average has reflected 65 messages sent and 75 received.

6. Problems encountered:

a. The most prevalent problem encountered during the last quarter, as in the previous quarter, was personnel shortages within the Signal Section. Critical MOS shortages in the section were 72B20 (teletype operators) and 36A10 (wiremen/switchboard operators). At the end of the quarter, eight enlisted personnel were assigned against a proposed authorization of fifteen. Two of the eight assigned were within seven days of rotation to CONUS.

b. Another problem area encountered was the initial lack of support from the supporting area signal battalion at the time of the physical relocation of the command post. Prior to the relocation, teletype circuit requirements had been coordinated for termination at LONG BINH on the date of closing. Control of these circuits was to be relinquished from one supporting area signal battalion to another. There was an apparent lack of coordination, since the circuits were not terminated. As of 31 July, more than one month after the relocation, only three of the five required teletype circuits were operational.

7. Objectives For The Next Quarter:

a. Throughout fiscal year 1967, the overall objectives of the signal section are to expand and improve all communications facilities of the command in supporting combat operations in Vietnam. These major objectives are directed towards the improvement of both air-to-air communications (avionics) and ground communications for command control.

b. In the field of avionics, major efforts must be directed to the retrofit of all aircraft with the new airborne systems. The conversion to the new UHF (ARC-51BX) and FM (ARC-54) radios will greatly extend operating ranges, provide for faster, more efficient radio maintenance, and more than double the number of frequencies available to our aviation units. In addition to the retrofit program, avionics supply and maintenance functions must be improved in order to provide better avionics direct support to subordinate aviation units. Reducing the number of zero balance ASL items to a minimum and maintaining a sufficient supply of repair parts are definite goals for avionics. An increased number of liaison visits is planned by the Group Avionics Officer to all avionics teams to insure that progress is being made.

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c. In the area of ground communications, improvement of existing means and the expansion to the lowest possible level are prime objectives. Conversion to the new family of ground FM radios, as early as possible, is a must if the command is to maintain compatibility with the airborne system.

d. During the next quarter, several important events are scheduled to occur which will have a marked improvement on communications throughout the Command. These events are:

(1) The conversion of the ground and airborne radio systems to the new family of radios. This conversion will require continuous and close monitoring to insure compatibility.

(2) Secure Teletype. Action has been taken to provide, on a continuous basis, secure teletype service to the subordinate battalion headquarters in addition to that being provided from this headquarters to the 1st Aviation Brigade.

(3) Command Communications. The command communications equipment to supplement the present limited capability of the non-divisional aviation units will be arriving during the next quarter. The consignment of these items of equipment, planned for the last quarter, will require close monitoring to insure that the desired degree of flexibility is maintained throughout the command.

e. The loss of the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion will remove the requirement to establish an HF SSB Radio net as the primary means of radio communications to a subordinate battalion headquarters. All subordinate battalions will be linked by radio with the extremely reliable FM radio net, utilizing HF SSB radio as the alternate radio command net.

f. The Signal Section building will be converted into an emergency command post. The building will be fortified with sand bags and an emergency supply of rations and water will be maintained inside the building. All primary means of communications to elements of the Command and subordinate headquarters, as well as the alternate means of communications to those elements, will be permanently mounted in a command console and the necessary emergency electrical power will be installed, also fortified with sand bags.

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K. (U) SAFETY

1. Accidents, Incidents, And Losses: During the reporting period the 12th Combat Aviation Group Aviation Safety Section recorded, reviewed and analysed:

- 21 Accidents
- 11 Combat losses
- 20 Incidents
- 18 Forced landings
- 39 Precautionary landing
- 5 Other type mishaps

The section investigated thirteen operational hazard reports, participated in an airfield survey of VUNG TAU Army Airfield and conducted a special investigation as a result of an inadvertent firing of 2.75" Folding Fin Aerial Rockets at VINH LONG on 6 May 1966. Section strength was reduced from three officers to one and from four clerical personnel to two by 31 July. This was in keeping with the directed reduction of aviator personnel to 85% of authorized in the Headquarters.

2. Significant Events During This Quarter:

a. In May a CH-47 accident resulted in 21 fatalities. After extensive investigation by the accident board, assisted by personnel from Boeing-Vertol and USABAAAR, the cause was pinpointed as internal failure of the combining transmission. Recommendations stemming from this accident have required better quality control at the factory and more frequent inspection of the transmissions in the field.

b. A precautionary landing for low oil pressure by a CH-47 resulted in the discovery of a bearing problem in the engine transmission. CH-47's, world wide, were grounded until inspected. Six aircraft in the Group fleet were found with a potentially hazardous condition.

c. Another CH-47 accident resulted in one fatality when fore and aft cyclic control was lost during flight. The true cause of this accident is still not known, but several parts of the flight control system are suspect. Analysis of failed parts at ARADMAC produced no significant findings. Analysis continues at the Boeing-Vertol factory. A lesson learned from this accident is that whenever parts are sent to a facility for analysis, a member of the board should accompany the parts to insure that all information about the accident is available to the technician performing the tear down and analysis so that all theories are investigated.

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d. In June three aircraft were damaged when Vietnamese personnel walked or ran into the tail rotors of UH-1 aircraft. Action was taken to disseminate information to the III & IV Corps Advisors to educate the Vietnamese about this hazard, as well as insuring that flight crews took all possible precautions to keep personnel away from the tail of the aircraft. Units which support ARVN units on a regular basis have painted "Danger" in Vietnamese on both sides of the vertical fin.

e. Tail rotor failure on UH-1's became a major problem area. Failures were caused by maintenance error at the organizational level, poor quality control at general support and factory levels, and metal fatigue. Two messages describing the most common errors in installation and maintenance of the tail rotor were disseminated to all units. Close coordination between Bell Technical Representatives and safety personnel has brought the quality control and fatigue problem to the attention of the manufacturer.

3. Goals For The Next Quarter:

a. To set up a workable notification system which will allow the timely dissemination of information regarding airfield radio frequencies, airfield condition and artillery advisory information (NOTAMS).

b. Conduct a detailed analysis of Group accident experience for Fiscal Year 1966, as a basis for comparison of First Quarter Fiscal 67 data.

c. Conduct a safety survey of all heliports and the airstrip in II FFORCEV Plantation complex, and present recommendations on flight landing patterns, ground taxiing, hovering and general operating procedures.

d. Publish an Aviation Pre-Accident plan for the Plantation complex.

L. MEDICAL

1. Summary of Medical Activity:

a. Transfer of 85th Medical Detachment (OA) from 765th Transportation Battalion to 222nd Combat Support Battalion was accomplished in July 1966.

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b. Recommendation has been made to Chief of Staff, USARV, by USARV Surgeon's office that the Command Health Reports no longer be consolidated above the battalion level. Approval of this proposal will eliminate an enormous administrative work load at group and brigade levels.

c. Request has been made through channels to designate all examining facilities in Group as FAA flight-physical approved facilities. Final approval is pending receipt of additional equipment within these units.

d. Consolidated dispensaries have been planned and money appropriated for their construction at USARV level. Construction has begun in the 145th Combat Aviation Battalion. Equipment for these dispensaries can now be requisitioned "in excess of TOE" and approval of said requisitions is assured, provided justification is reasonable.

e. In the CAN THO area medical coverage has been a problem because the Flight Surgeon of the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion supports primarily 1st Logistics Command troops. Coordination and liaison was made with the 74th Medical Battalion, and it was agreed to situate a Logistics Command dispensary in the CAN THO area on or before 1 Oct 66.

2. Goals For The Next Quarter:

a. Establish consolidated battalion dispensaries at PIEN HOA (145th Combat Aviation Battalion) and PHU LOI (11th Combat Aviation Battalion).

b. Re-evaluate MEDCAP throughout Group to insure that MEDCAP is carried out under provisions of USARV Regulation 40-39.

c. Supervise compliance by unit flight surgeons and hospitals to insure proper completion and disposition of forms for "wound analysis in aviators".

d. Increase emphasis on area sanitation and environmental sanitation.

e. Establish medical orientation to Vietnam for newly arrived aviators in all units.

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f. Increase frequency of staff visits throughout Group to improve rapport and communication with flight surgeons of subordinate units, provide guidance in clinical and preventive medicine and to assist with solution of local problems.

g. Establish a small dispensary in the Group Surgeon's office to provide first echelon medical care for members of Group.

h. Obtain an enlisted preventive medicine specialist to Group Surgeon's office to assist in supervision and provide technical advice to field units in preventive medicine areas. This will require an MTOE.

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SECTION II

COMMANDERS OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PART I OBSERVATIONS (LESSONS LEARNED)

A. (U) PERSONNEL

DEROS Losses

a. ITEM: Infusion of personnel among aviation elements of this command.

b. DISCUSSION: In several units, there has recently occurred serious DEROS "hump" losses of experienced officer and enlisted personnel. This reflects previous improper personnel management. This situation can be alleviated by a continuous infusion program to encompass experience level and DEROS losses.

c. OBSERVATION: This headquarters has directed an immediate infusion program at battalion level to include immediate infusion of newly arrived units. This will be backed up by a similar program at Group level. The end result will be homogeneous level of experienced personnel throughout the Group. In addition, the program will insure that no more than 20% of the officer or EM strength of a unit will be returning to CONUS in a given month. A bonus effect of rotating experienced personnel into newly-arrived units will be to shorten the time required for their in-country orientation, thus making such units operational sooner after arrival.

B. (U) OPERATIONS

1. Air Traffic Control

a. ITEM: Air traffic control at forward airfields.

b. DISCUSSION: Rapid deployment of aircraft, both Army and Air Force, to forward airfields has saturated the air space and resulted in numerous near misses and some collisions. Sufficient numbers of mobile air-traffic-control teams do not exist, nor does the equipment. Employment of unit pathfinders as an interim safety measure has been partially effective. Frequencies and types of radios used are not normally coordinated between Services, especially on short-notice operations. The need exists for standardized operations plus dissemination and use of standardized frequencies. Coordination of procedures is now being handled by a committee at the highest level. PRC-41 and PRC-71 radios (UHF) have been borrowed from Air Force sources for use in airfield control.

c. OBSERVATION: Development of supporting aviation air traffic control units and procedures has not kept pace with development of aviation and associated combat support units.

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SUBJECT: Part I Observations (Lessons Learned) (CONT'D)

2. CH-47 cargo slings

a. ITEM: A-22 containers, cargo slings and related equipment for CH-47 cargo movement are in critical short supply.

b. DISCUSSION: Shortage of A-22 containers, straps, devices, and nylon doughnuts is a problem in transporting heavy equipment by CH-47's. Unit proficiency in the rigging and loading of artillery and ammo in these containers is low. During combat operations, considerable time is lost, particularly in artillery displacement. An in-country team from this group is conducting orientations for new units. The resulting knowledge is continually diluted by rotation of experienced personnel, thus putting a continuous burden on CH-47 - qualified instructors.

c. OBSERVATION: Ground units are not proficient in rigging and loading heavy equipment by CH-47's. A shortage of A-22 containers and cargo slings exist in most units.

3. Communications

a. ITEM: Signal support

b. DISCUSSION: The present equipment used by Signal Corps units to provide area communications to units of the 12th Combat Aviation Group is not adequate. One example of this is the Hurricane Switchboard, serving this command, as well as other units in the area. On a peak day, five times as many telephone calls are initiated by subscribers than the switchboard is designed for, resulting in excessive delays in the actual completion of the telephone calls. This will be a continuing problem because new units are moving into Vietnam, or are relocating in other area, faster than the required communications equipment is arriving. The required area communications support will be provided when the necessary equipment arrives in-country.

c. OBSERVATION: Signal support is not keeping pace with the troop build-up.

4. Helicopter Illumination System ("Lightning Bug")

a. ITEM: "Lightning Bug" missions and equipment.

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SUBJECT: Part I Observations (Lessons Learned) (CONT'D)

b. DISCUSSION: During the past quarter the "LIGHTNING BUG" missions have increased in effectiveness. Missions were flown on a nightly basis when weather permitted. The chief result has been the sinking or destruction of over 400 sampans. Since these are the heavy haulers of VC traffic, this has been a very damaging, little-recognized operation. Performance of the few in-country-fabricated lighting systems available has been satisfactory, but could be improved by improved fabrication. Current sets use seven C-123 landing lights each, replacements for which are not readily available to Army units. Efforts to increase the capability of "LIGHTNING BUG" missions are dependent upon receipt of additional lighting systems. There are currently no lighting system being manufactured in-country, and the original ones are being held together literally with baling wire and nails.

c. OBSERVATION: OCRD could develop and AMC produce more and better lighting systems for increased effectiveness. This is an example wherein the expeditious processing of an SDR could produce an item of immediate and demonstrated usefulness for use by the troops. Lacking this, an in-country procurement should be expedited. Night vision devices at present are not adequate to replace the light, and LLLTV is not yet practical.

5. Preparatory and Suppressive Fire Planning.

a. ITEM: Preparation of landing zones and suppressive fire instructions.

b. DISCUSSION: During pre-mission planning, mission commanders normally decide on the type fire support required, including:

(1) Placing fires on areas affording cover and concealment to enemy forces adjacent to selected landing zones, pick-up zones, and at critical points along the intended flight routes.

(2) The closest possible timing of preparatory fires and the landing to afford maximum surprise and protection to the lift formation. A short, violent preparation is best, so as to preclude withdrawal of the enemy or compromise of the intent of the airmobile force.

(3) Timely follow-on, "gap-filler", or diversionary fires when the airlift phase of the operation is delayed by weather or other circumstances.

(4) The control means and method for shifting or lifting of supporting fires during the assault.

(5) Identification of last round/bomb.

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SUBJECT: Part I Observations (Lessons Learned) (CONT'D)

(6) Means to identify friendly ground positions and means of air-ground communication.

One recent example involved a unit following a B-52 strike into a landing zone (known to be a VC area) after a weather delay. Inadequate preparation was fired after the weather delay. The delay without adequate preparation resulted in numerous aircraft being hit. Thorough planning for suppressive and preparatory fires during all phases of a combat helicopter lift is required. Lacking this, intelligence available must support attacking without preparation. In cases where the supported commander insists on requiring an assault with what appears to be inadequate preparation or intelligence, it becomes necessary for the Air Mission Commander to communicate this fact to his next higher commander immediately so that command action can be taken to reassess the situation. A very difficult problem has arisen where helicopters have been fired at, and in some cases shot down by VC from areas generally occupied by "friendly natives". Air Mission Commanders in these conditions have been forbidden to shoot back by ground unit commanders, until "intense fire" is received.

c. OBSERVATION: Preparatory and suppressive fire, artillery and/or air delivered, are essential to most successful airmobile operations. Only when intelligence fully supports going in without a preparation can such an air assault be considered acceptable.

6. Navigational Aids

a. ITEM: Non-directional beacons.

b. DISCUSSION: Air Navigation in the northern portion of III CTZ is extremely difficult because of the lack of extensive land marks and navigational aids. Airmobile units operating in this area in marginal weather conditions must rely on dead reckoning, or the use of the DECCA navigational system. Use of a mobile non-directional beacon is required in many operations. DECCA navigation, often available in new helicopters, should be supplemented by these beacons. However, some companies do not have these beacons.

c. OBSERVATION: Non-directional beacons are needed in every aviation unit for use in emergency situations and during selected company operations.

C. (U) TRAINING AND ORGANIZATION

Aerial Gunnery

a. ITEM: Accuracy of Aerial Fires:

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SUBJECT: Part I Observations (Lessons Learned) (CONT'D)

b. DISCUSSION: Cases of "hosing down" targets with airborne weapons have been observed in many armed helicopter units. Inadequate gunnery training and training facilities have been the primary cause of poor gunnery techniques. Definite targets, good range estimation, bore sighting, zeroing, knowledge of the functioning of weapons, and a knowledge of where the rounds hit so that gunners can correct their errors, are the fundamentals of good gunnery training. Wide use of suppressive fire and the practice of "hosing down the area" have led to acceptance of inaccurate fires. Several cases of firing on friendly positions can be attributed to these poor techniques.

c. OBSERVATION: Gunnery training in ZI and in-country should stress hitting small targets.

D. (U) INTELLIGENCE

Polaroid Cameras

a. ITEM: Polaroid cameras to record intelligence and other data.

b. DISCUSSION: A vital need for Polaroid cameras exists within airmobile units. Equipment of this type can be effectively used to obtain current data pertaining to landing zones, pickup zones, and enemy targets suitable for quick-reaction helicopter heliborne operations. Short lead-time of most airmobile operations and long lead-time required to obtain any OV-1 support now precludes detailed aerial photography, processing and interpretation of areas of operational interest. The use of camera equipment with an immediate processing capability will provide airmobile units with a valuable and immediately available picture of terrain, obstacles, fortifications and enemy activity when time is of essence. Accident investigators also need this capability.

c. OBSERVATION: Polaroid cameras are listed as available through supply channels. Use by airmobile units in the conduct of their numerous, short lead-time operations would assist in satisfying the requirement for the most current information relative to planned and quick reaction operations. Approved requisitions now held by units of this command are not being filled.

E. (U) LOGISTICS

1. Direct Support Maintenance for Aviation Companies

a. ITEM: Aircraft Availability

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SUBJECT: Part I Observations (Lessons Learned) (CONT'D)

b. DISCUSSION: The aircraft availability of non-divisional aviation units has consistently been above that of divisional aviation units. This is attributed in part to non-divisional aviation units having DS aircraft maintenance detachments directly under the command of each unit. Where DS aircraft maintenance is co-located with, and attached to, the aviation unit, responsiveness of the maintenance organization to the unit's overall flying mission is greatly increased. Direct support and organizational personnel and equipment are readily available to support the unit maintenance and accomplish the 3rd echelon work. During the 4th quarter 66, the availability of aircraft in divisional and non-divisional aviation units was studied. Non-divisional units had approximately 15% continuously higher aircraft availability.

c. OBSERVATION: Two ways to improve this situation exist, these are:

(1) Place a portion of the aircraft maintenance company of the support command, maintenance battalion in direct support of the aviation companies.

(2) Attach a DS aircraft maintenance detachment to each divisional aviation company.

2. Flying Hour Program

a. ITEM: Aircraft availability versus flying hour program.

b. DISCUSSION: 12th Combat Aviation Group has exceeded the monthly flying hour program as prescribed by SB 1-1 by approximately 5000 total hours per month. This aircraft utilization has provided maximum support for ground units from available aircraft. Due to the increased requirements for maintenance repair parts and time-change parts are procured based on the present flying hour program. The maintenance impact, plus current high battle damage rates, have required round-the-clock operation of the units of the 12th Combat Aviation Group to accomplish scheduled and un-scheduled maintenance. However, due to the increased repair parts requirements, it is almost impossible to maintain the command availability goals when the flying hour program is being greatly exceeded.

c. OBSERVATION: The necessary practice of committing all the available aircraft each day to supported units precludes maintenance management and scheduling by the aviation unit. EDP rates are higher than desirable.

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SUBJECT: Part I Observations (Lessons Learned) (CONT'D)

F. (U) SAFETY

1. ARADMAC Analysis of Aircraft Parts.

a. ITEM: Suspect parts from a CH-47 aircraft were sent to ARADMAC for analysis. Analysis did not yield information the accident board required.

b. DISCUSSION: The accident board shipped large sections of the aircraft control system to ARADMAC in an attempt to determine what caused the failure. A DA Form 2407 accompanied the parts and stated that the board wished to determine and which parts it wished analysed. The technicians at ARADMAC did not determine all the board required, primarily because their interpretation of the sequence of events differed from that of the board. Interpretation of the board's written requirements or choice of words used in the DA Form 2407 may have led the ARADMAC personnel astray.

c. OBSERVATION: In important cases, where failure sequences and testing of theories may provide a clue to the cause of an accident, a member of the accident board should accompany failed or suspect parts to the testing agency, even to CONUS, if necessary.

2. Survival Equipment

a. ITEM: In two recent CH-47 accidents, all survival equipment was destroyed in the post crash fire.

b. DISCUSSION: Survival kits and aircraft first aid packets are located in the cargo compartment. This area was engulfed by the post-crash fire. Survivors exited the aircraft without this equipment since they are primarily concerned with their own safety and their fear of fire.

c. OBSERVATION: Kits and packets should be in fireproof wrapping. Follow-on aircraft designs might have kits stored in fuselage wells and ejected a safe distance from the aircraft by a unit that senses crash impact forces.

G. (U) MEDICAL

1. Gonorrhea

a. ITEM: Resistant strains of gonorrhea.

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SUBJECT: Part I Observations (Lessons Learned) (CONT'D)

b. DISCUSSION: Resistant strains of Gonorrhea have been increasing in frequency throughout the command. This situation is the result of the unfortunate and scientifically worthless practice of giving routine injections of low doses of penicillin to bar girls working around U.S. troop compounds. Since this makes individual cases far more difficult to cure, intensified efforts need to be directed toward prevention.

c. OBSERVATION: Difficulty in treating emerging strains of resistant gonorrhea makes it imperative that increased emphasis be placed on preventative measures to include troop education, encouragement of mechanical prophylaxis, and counselling of active cases.

2. Preventive Medicine Surveillance.

a. ITEM: Potable Water

b. DISCUSSION: A recent survey of water used in the Project 78 area (Bien Hoa) by the 20th Preventive Medicine Company revealed water to be below minimum standards for potability. A civilian engineering firm had been in charge of treatment of this water and their techniques proved to be inadequate.

c. OBSERVATION: All medical units within Group must have the capability to test water at their local level for chlorine residual. Steps will be taken to obtain and distribute chlorine residual test kits to all medical units within Group.

PART II RECOMMENDATIONS

A. (U) PERSONNEL: NONE

B. (U) OPERATIONS:

1. Assets should be made available to create Air Traffic Control units and deployment of these units should be on a priority basis. Alternatively, aviation units should be given the capability.

2. Inter-Service SOP's for Air Traffic Control now in development should be expedited.

3. Ground units deploying to Vietnam should have aerial delivery equipment with them when they arrive in-country and be thoroughly trained in its use. Every attempt should be made to supply all artillery units in ZI with an abundance of A-22 containers and cargo slings. Artillery units should specifically bring their own unit slings for CH-47 movement of artillery pieces.

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SUBJECT: Part II Recommendations (CONT'D)

4. Better area communications, in particular telephonic ~~max~~ s, should be provided. Signal support should keep pace with unit build-up.

5. The US Army Limited War Laboratory should give priority attention to the limited production of a standard Helicopter Illumination System identical in operation to present home made systems, using Army standard components. This system should be issued to armed helicopter platoons. Alternatively, in-country fabrication of new lights plus availability of spare lights, should be done on a crash basis.

6. Joint Planning conferences for airmobile operations should include plans for positive control of adequate, timely and coordinated supporting fires.

7. Two (2) Tridea or more improved non-directional beacons should be assigned to each airmobile company.

C. (U) TRAINING AND ORGANIZATION: Aerial Gunnery training of new aviators should emphasize accuracy in hitting point targets.

D. (U) INTELLIGENCE: Supply agencies should expedite availability of Polaroid cameras and film.

E. (U) LOGISTICS:

1. Consideration should be given to attaching a small Direct Support Aircraft Maintenance Detachment to each divisional aviation company in Vietnam. The colocation of DS aircraft maintenance with the operating unit would provide immediate support and response to these aviation company commanders. (This question is being studied now by Divisions)

2. The programmed flying hour rate should be adjusted upward to provide the necessary repair parts availability.

F. (U) SAFETY:

1. Where failure sequences and testing of theories may provide a clue to the cause of an aircraft accident, a member of the accident board should accompany failed or suspect parts to the testing agency.

2. Survival equipment kits and packets should be in fire proof wrapping. Consideration should be given for follow-on aircraft designs to have kits stored in fuselage wells and ejected a safe distance from the aircraft by a unit that senses crash impact forces.

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SUBJECT: Part II Recommendations (CONT'D)

G. (U) MEDICAL: Medical officers assigned to Vietnam should be informed of the bad results of the practice of treating gonorrhea with routine injections of low doses of penicillin, thereby creating resistant strains of gonorrhea.

ANNEX A: 12th Avn Gp
Statistics

R.P. Campbell
RAYMOND P. CAMPBELL, Jr
Colonel, Armor
Commanding

DISTRIBUTION:

- 1 copy to CG, USARPAC
- 3 copies to DCG, USARV
- 2 copies thru II FFV to ACSFOR
- 1 copy thru channels to ACSFOR

INFO COPY

CG, II FFV
CG, 1st Avn Bde
CO, 11th Cmbt Avn Bn
CO, 145th Cmbt Avn Bn
CO, 222nd Cmbt Avn Bn

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ANNEX A

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12TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP STATISTICS

Operational Hours

<u>RW</u>	<u>FW</u>	<u>Total</u>
74,110	31,576	105,686

Sorties Flown

<u>RW</u>	<u>FW</u>	<u>Total</u>
153,765	38,914	192,679

Combat Sorties Flown

<u>RW</u>	<u>FW</u>	<u>Total</u>
101,945	10,518	112,463

Passengers Carried

<u>RW</u>	<u>FW</u>	<u>Total</u>
313,880	155,037	468,917

Cargo Transported (tons)

<u>RW</u>	<u>FW</u>	<u>Total</u>
18,716	13,281	31,997

A/C Hit by Ground Fire

<u>RW</u>	<u>FW</u>	<u>Total</u>
282	60	342

Combat Losses (Acft)

<u>RW</u>	<u>FW</u>	<u>Total</u>
9	1	10

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Ammunition Expended

7.62mm	40mm	2.75" FFAR
9,154,517 rds	66,366 rds	52,921 rds

*Enemy Losses/Damage Inflicted

Killed by air- - - - -394

Killed by air (est)- - -838

Structures destroyed- - 1,156

Sampans damaged- - - - -40

Sampans destroyed/sunk- 347

Casualties Medically Evacuated (ARVN & US)

1,354

Casualties (12th Cmbt Avn Gp)

	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>Total</u>
KIA	6	3	9	18
WIA	38	18	75	131

*Due to a disparity in reports for the first half of the reporting period, figures shown reflect only losses/damage inflicted during the period 19 June 1966 to 31 July 1966.

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