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AGO D/A ltr 29 Apr 1980 ; AGO D/A ltr 29 Apr 1980

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310**



*B*

IN REPLY REFER TO  
AGAM-P (M) (21 Feb 67) FOR OT

~~24 February 1967~~

**AD 386506**

**SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, HQ, 223d Combat Aviation Battalion**

**TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION**

1. Forwarded as inclosure is Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 223D Combat Aviation Battalion for Quarterly Period Ending 31 October 1966. Information contained in this report should be reviewed and evaluated by CDC in accordance with paragraph 6f of AR 1-19 and by CONARC in accordance with paragraph 6c and d of AR 1-19. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

2. Information contained in this report is provided to the Commandants of the Service Schools to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations, and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

*C. A. Stanfield*

**C. A. STANFIELD  
Colonel, AGC  
Acting The Adjutant General**

1 Incl  
a/s

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(Continued on page 2)

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6 Lessons

Learned, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY HEADQUARTERS, 223D COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION [U], APO 96240

AVGD-DE

9

11 12 Nov 1966

SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 Oct 1966. (RCS CSFOR-65)

TO: See Distribution



12 19 p.

SECTION 1: SIGNIFICANT ORGANIZATION OF UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. GENERAL:

a. Mission. To provide fixed wing aviation support as directed by the Commanding Officer, 17th Combat Aviation Group, to US Forces, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces, and Free World Military Assistance Forces in developing and maintaining an effective conventional and counter-insurgency capability. To exercise command and control over assigned and attached units as directed by Commanding Officer, 17th Combat Aviation Group.

b. Organization. General Order 103, Headquarters US Army Pacific, dated 13 May 1966, activated the battalion at Nha Trang, Vietnam and prescribed its organization under TOE 1-76E 1963. In-country resources were the primary source for personnel and the only source for equipment. When the battalion became operational it had acquired 52% of authorized officer and warrant officer personnel, 66% of TOE equipment. All key positions were filled and all essential equipment, except an adequate quantity of typewriters, were on hand before the battalion was declared operational.

(1) Prior to becoming operational, it was recognized that TOE 1-76E as augmented by the general order was conspicuously deficient in certain areas. It included no provisions for mess personnel and equipment, security personnel, mission support aircraft and maintenance personnel. To correct these deficiencies an MTOE was developed and submitted.

(2) On 4 September 1966, the battalion became operational. General Order 32, Headquarters 17th Combat Aviation Group, dated 30 Aug 1966, assigned to the battalion all of the Group's fixed wing assets except one company, the 92nd Aviation Company (Air Mbl FW CV-2). This company was assigned to the battalion on 23 Sep 66, by 17th Cbt Gp CO number 36. Assigned companies, their detachments and locations are:

- (a) 18th Avn Co (Air Mbl FW) (UL-A) Qui Nhon
- 163d Med Det
- 256th TC Det

11/21 (003 650)

- (b) 131st Avn Co (AS) (OV-1)

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Inlosure 1 FOR OT RD 660349

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Hue Phu Bai DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVANS DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS. DOD DIR 5200 10

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- (c) 135th Avn Co (Airmbl FW) (CV-2)      Dong Ba Thin  
    258th TC Det
- (d) 183d RA Co (O-1)                      Dong Ba Thin
- (e) 219th RA Co (O-1)                      Pleiku
- (f) 220th RA Co (O-1)                      Hue Phu Bai  
    134th Med Det  
    231st SC Det  
    Det B, 1/125th ATC Co

c. Command Relationship. (Personnel) Maj Charles H. Drummond Jr, Artillery, was the battalion's first Commanding Officer. LTC William K. Gearan, Armor, the current Commander, assumed command of the battalion on 22 Sep 1966. Command changes within subordinate units during this period were:

(1) 14 Sep 1966, Maj William A. Ackerman, Artillery, assumed command of the 131st Avn Co vice Maj Gerald H. Hanson, Infantry.

(2) 5 Oct 1966, Maj Robert V. Dunne, Infantry assumed command of the 220th RA Co vice Maj William O. Schmale, Artillery.

d. Operational Control. MACV Dir 95-4, and letter, Subj: Army Aviation Allocations dated 20 Jul 66, relegates operational control of subordinate units/aircraft as follows:

- (1) Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force.  
    220th RA Co (O-1)  
    Det 18th Avn Co (3 U-1A)  
    Det 92nd Avn Co (4 CV-2)
- (2) Commanding Officer, United States Army Special Forces,  
Vietnam.  
    Det 18th Avn Co (2 U-1A)  
    Det 92nd Avn Co (6 CV-2)
- (3) Joint US Public Affairs Office  
    Det 18th Avn Co (1 U-1A)
- (4) Commander US Military Advisory Command (Thailand)  
    Det 18th Avn Co (1 U-1A)
- (5) Commanding General, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
(General Support)  
    131st Avn Co (AS) (OV-1)

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(6) Commanding General, I Field Forces, Vietnam.

(a) 135th Avn Co (CV-2)

(b) 183rd RA Co (O-1)

(c) 219th RA Co (O-1)

## 2. OPERATIONS AND UNIT ACTIVITIES:

a. Combat support operations. During this reporting period, 58 days, the 223d Combat Support Aviation Battalion supported US Forces, Free World Military Assistance Forces, and Republic of Vietnam Forces throughout I Corps and II Corps tactical zone. I Corps tactical zone encompasses approximately 24,500 square kilometers and II Corps tactical zone encompasses approximately 77,000 square kilometers. In order to lessen the command and control problem and provide for effective support, all of the companies except the 131st have elements permanently stationed with the units they support.

(1) In the I Corps Tactical Zone, aviation elements are located in three provinces with specific location as:

Quang Ngai	220th RA Co (O-1)
Da Nang	18th Avn Co (U-1A)
	220th RA Co (O-1)
	92nd Avn Co (CV-2)
Hue Phu Bai	Hq 131st Avn Co (OV-1)
	Hq 220th RA Co (O-1)
Hue Citadel	220th RA Co (O-1)

(2) Aviation elements are stationed in each Province in the II Corps Tactical Zone. Specific locations and parent organizations are:

Bao Loc	183rd RA Co (O-1)
Phan Thiet	183rd RA Co (O-1)
Dalat	183rd RA Co (O-1)
Phan Rang	183rd RA Co (O-1)
Gia Nghia	183rd RA Co (O-1)
Ban Me Thout	183rd RA Co (O-1)

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Dong Ba Thin	Hq 183rd RA Co (O-1) Hq 135th Avn Co (CV-2)
Nha Trang	18th Avn Co (U-1A) 183rd RA Co (O-1) 92nd Avn Co (CV-2)
Tuy Hoa	219th RA Co (O-1)
Cheo Reo	219th RA Co (O-1)
Pleiku	18th Avn Co (U-1A) 135th Avn Co (CV-2) Hq 219th RA Co (O-1)
Qui Nhon	Hq 18th Avn Co (U-1A) Hq 92nd Avn Co (CV-2) 219th RA Co (O-1)
Kontum	219th RA Co (O-1)

(3) A total of 18,481 sorties, in 19,569 flying hours were performed by the battalion during the period of this report. This figure represents the consolidation of sorties expended under two general categories; cargo/passenger and reconnaissance/surveillance. A total of 4,223 tons of cargo and 32,859 passengers were carried. Sorties by category are listed below.

(a) Cargo and Passenger (U-1A & CV-2)

7203 Sorties

(b) Reconnaissance/surveillance, and others which includes; artillery adjustment, combat observation, radio relay and command/control.

1 O-1 aircraft

<u>Visual Rec</u>	<u>FAC</u>	<u>Other</u>
6,854	126	2,376

2 OV-1 aircraft

SORTIES

<u>Visual Rec</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>INFRA Red</u>	<u>SLAR</u>
438	442	176	836

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## b. Training.

(1) General. During the period, personnel within the battalion conducted familiarization firing with individual and crew served weapons. Due to the broad dispersion of units, and their elements mandatory training required by battalion TC 350-1 was conducted on a decentralized basis. On-the-job training was continuous with emphasis on incoming personnel.

(2) Aviator training. Due to the shortage of aviators and extensive mission requirements, aviator training is integrated where practicable with operational missions. This method of training has been satisfactory with no major shortcomings. Both CV-2 units have devoted major efforts in this area during the quarter to meet the training load imposed by operation "Red Leaf".

## c. Logistics.

(1) Aviation elements that are stationed at places other than their home bases receive most of their logistical support from the supported unit. Aircraft spare parts and some class II items are supplied by the parent organization. Major aircraft maintenance is performed at the home base. Consequently, units so dispersed fly approximately 20 hours monthly in support of internal logistical functions.

(2) Both the 131st Aviation Company (AS) and the 220th RA Co (O-1), stationed in the I corps area, receive some logistical support from two services at three location. The Navy provides class I and III and limited class II and IV supplies on a fill-and-kill basis from Hue Phu Bai and the Army, through Da Nang and Qui Nhon, provides the balance.

## d. Personnel.

(1) During the reporting period the battalion suffered two casualties, one as a result of an aircraft accident and one KIA. There are also two personnel missing.

(2) The following is a list of authorized and assigned strength of the 223d Combat Aviation Battalion as of 2400 hours 31 Oct 1966.

	<u>Auth:</u>			<u>Assigned:</u>		
	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>
HHD, 223d Avn Bn	21	2	86	16	1	97
18th Avn Co	12	29	178	18	16	169

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	<u>Auth:</u>			<u>Assigned:</u>		
	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>
92nd Avn Co	12	30	204	10	11	195
131st Avn Co	37	3	252	35	2	249
135th Avn Co	12	30	204	14	9	198
183rd Avn Co	41	1	104	29	6	103
219th Avn Co	50	1	124	38	6	116
220th Avn Co	34	1	124	19	9	135

(3) Decorations and Awards submitted during the period.

(a) Silver Star	2
(b) Distinguished Flying Cross	24
(c) Bronze Star	2
(d) Bronze Star (Meritorious Service)	63
(e) Soldiers Medal	1
(f) Army Commendation Medal (Valor)	1
(g) Air Medal	76
(h) Air Medal W/OLC	347
(i) Army Commendation Medal	17

e. Combat Losses. Two aircraft were lost during the period while performing combat missions. One of these is missing. The other aircraft was lost when the pilot was killed and the observer crash landed the aircraft.

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## SECTION 2 COMMANDER'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Part I, Observation (Lessons Learned)

#### 1. Personnel.

##### Aerial Observers MOS

ITEM: Effective performance of combat observation in support of tactical operations requires a well trained observer from the supported unit continuously available for aerial observation duties only.

DISCUSSION: During the past quarter USMC units have been heavily committed in ground action along the DMZ. Aerial observers (AO's) were in Army aircraft constantly during daylight hours issuing spot reports, ferreting out enemy positions, adjusting artillery and Naval gunfire, and controlling airstrikes. AO's averaged 130 hours flying time per month. This is a full time job and should not be given as an additional duty to intelligence NCO's etc., as US Army units now do. The USMC recognizes the value of the trained AO and authorizes an MOS and spaces in each division. There is an Aerial Observation Section within the G-2 Section of each Marine division. The AO's are all officers who have attended a ten week training course to qualify and possess a high esprit and justifiable pride in their competence.

OBSERVATION: The US Army should consider establishing a similar program for aerial observers. The need has been adequately proven by the achievements of the USMC aerial observers in Vietnam. A competent observer frees the aviator from observer responsibility except during peak activity and allows him to concentrate on safe operation of his aircraft and accurate navigation.

##### Assignment of OV-1 Qualified Aviators

ITEM: Assignment of OV-1 qualified aviators.

DISCUSSION: Aviators are assigned to OV-1 units by virtue of their qualification in the aircraft. In some cases this qualification may have been obtained as long as 4 to 5 years ago with no subsequent OV-1 assignment.

OBSERVATION: Aviators being assigned to OV-1 units who have not had recent OV-1 assignment should attend an OV-1 refresher course prior to departing CONUS.

#### 2. Operations.

##### Target Marking

ITEM: Target marking capability of O-1 aircraft.

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DISCUSSION: Due to the absence of reference points in most jungle areas, it is almost impossible to keep track of target location. This makes control of air strikes and adjustment of artillery fire exceedingly difficult. Consequently, the target must be marked for reference. There are two accepted methods of accomplishing this purpose. One method is to fly low over the target and drop a smoke grenade. The other method is to fire 2.75 rockets with white phosphorus warheads.

OBSERVATION: The 2.75 rockets are far more accurate than dropping smoke grenades and the crew and aircraft are exposed less to hostile fire.

## Buddy System of Flight Following

ITEM: Flight following during area reconnaissance in mountainous regions where following by Air Traffic Control elements is not feasible.

DISCUSSION: In the visual reconnaissance program all areas must be kept under constant surveillance. It is therefore necessary to operate over extensive areas and often out of touch with ATC. Most of these mountainous areas are covered with dense jungle foliage characterized by double or triple foliage canopies. This jungle cover precludes immediate detection of downed aircraft.

OBSERVATION: Dual aircraft missions in such "void" areas employing one ship in an over watching role while the other conducts reconnaissance at low level have proven effective in both accuracy of coverage and in security of the aviator and observer in the event of forced landing.

## Identification of Target Marking Aircraft (O-1)

ITEM: Positive identification of target identification aircraft.

DISCUSSION: Tactical fighter aircraft must find and identify the aircraft which will mark the target. Jet aircraft normally stay on station at high altitudes and the Army reconnaissance aircraft are difficult to see from these altitudes.

OBSERVATION: Mounting smoke grenades under the wings and employing them once the general area rendezvous is made facilitates immediate detection. Additionally the upper surface of ailerons and flaps of aircraft are marked with distinctive white markings.

## Techniques of Visual Reconnaissance

ITEM: Techniques of visual reconnaissance.

DISCUSSION: It has been observed that the majority of hits taken on visual reconnaissance missions has been received at altitudes of 200-700 feet. Hits also increase if repeated passes are made over one area in order to verify sightings.

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OBSERVATION: During training, aviators should not be trained to make 360° turns over an area under observation. If an area must be given a closer look, the flight path must be altered to retain surprise and the altitude reduced to 50 ft or less. This requires training in selection of terrain reference points and practice in maintaining orientation at low altitudes.

## Hostile Fire

ITEM: Hostile ground fire.

DISCUSSION: Numerous transport aircraft have received hits from small arms while enroute to destinations at low altitude. Steps to be taken to prevent or minimize hostile fire damage are:

- a. Maintain current hostile fire NOTAMS and maps at each aviation operations.
- b. Avoid over-flying known or suspected hostile areas.
- c. When at low altitude because of low overcast conditions make all climbs over secure areas.
- d. Contact ground personnel prior to attempting landings at all strips for hostile fire advisories.
- e. When unable to fly above the range of small arms, contour fly to deny the enemy observation and to minimize exposure time.

OBSERVATION: Adherence to the above techniques has resulted in fewer hits by ground fire.

### 3. Training.

#### Evasive Maneuver Training

ITEM: Maximum performance descents in OV-1's.

DISCUSSION: The constant threat of surface to air missiles in some areas of operation dictate a requirement to train aviators to employ maximum dives with steep turns under both visual, night and instrument conditions as evasive maneuvers.

OBSERVATION: Aviators attending the mohawk transition course should be trained in the proper techniques of making a maximum performance dive "to the deck" under the conditions cited.

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## Night Training

ITEM: Night flying.

DISCUSSION: Night operations by O-1 aircraft have been necessary on many occasions, especially when outposts are attacked at night. Radio relay, artillery adjustment, flare drops and overall control of air activities over the outpost become critical.

OBSERVATION: Night checkouts and familiarization with the local area during darkness are essential to effective night operations. Emphasis in training should be placed on flare drops, minimum light landings, and target marking by firing 2.75 rockets under illumination (flares).

5. Logistics.

## Defective Points

ITEM: Regapping or replacing points.

DISCUSSION: Maintenance has run into the problem of spark plugs fouling and excessive magneto drops in O-1E's, due to improper point gapping.

OBSERVATION: Considering the rigid flying program it is recommended that points be regapped or replaced every 300-400 hours. This has increased engine performance and decreased plug fouling.

Part II, Recommendations.

1. Personnel. None
2. Operations.

PROBLEM: Reference Part I, paragraph 2, Target Marking Capability of O-1 Aircraft. There is a continuous need to mark surface targets from an aerial platform, yet no standard device has been developed for this purpose.

RECOMMENDATION: That action be taken to expedite the development of a standard target marking device adaptable to the O-1 aircraft.

3. Training and Organization. None

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4. Intelligence: None.

5. Logistics: None



WILLIAM K. GEARAN  
LTC ARMOR  
Commanding

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APO 96307
  
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1st Aviation Brigade  
ATTN: AVBA-C  
APO 96307

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AVGD-SC 1st Ind  
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 October 1966  
(RCS CSFOR - 65) (U)

HEADQUARTERS 17TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP, APO 96240 12 November 1966

TO: Commanding General, I FFORCEV, APO 96240

1. (U) The 223rd Combat Support Aviation Battalion's operational report for quarterly period ending 31 October 1966 is forwarded for information and action.

2. (U) Recommendations part II

a. Reference paragraph 2, operations, concur.

3. (U) The Lessons Learned and Commanders Recommendations will be disseminated to the Combat Aviation Battalions assigned this Headquarters.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

*Franklin L Wilson*  
FRANKLIN L WILSON  
LTC, Infantry  
Adjutant

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AVFA-GC-111G (12 Nov 66) **2nd** Ind  
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 October 1966,  
RCS CSFOR-65

Headquarters I Field Force Vietnam, APO US Forces 96350 2 DEC 1966

THRU: Commanding General, 1st Aviation Brigade ATTN: AVBA-C,  
APO US Forces 96307

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVC-DH,  
APO US Forces 96307

The Operational Report of the 223d Combat Support Aviation Battalion  
is adequate. Concur in comments contained herein.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

*William H. James*  
WILLIAM H. JAMES  
Colonel, AGC  
Adjutant General

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15  
AVBA-C (12 Nov 66) 3rd Ind  
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 October 1966  
(RCS CSFOR-65)

HEADQUARTERS, 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE, APO 96307 2 DEC 1966

TO: Commanding General, United States Army, Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC-DH,  
APO 96307

The Operational report - Lessons Learned For the 223rd Combat Support Aviation Battalion is forwarded with the additional comments.

a. Reference section II part 1 paragraph 1: Aerial Observers MOS. The US Army established a 33 hour training course for aerial observers. DA did not feel it was justifiable to establish a separate MOS for an aerial observer. Also, with the present troop limitations, there isn't sufficient personnel to allow the luxury of an aerial observer without other duties.

b. Reference section II part 1 paragraph 1 and part 2 paragraph 2: Target marking capability of O-1 aircraft. The NA2A, Rocket System 2.75" is a standard item authorized for target marking use on the O-1 aircraft.

c. Reference section II part 1 paragraph 5: Regapping or Replacing Points. Points are a conditional item. They only need to be inspected and replaced as necessary.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



W. RIVERA  
Captain, AGC  
Asst Adjutant General

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AVHGC-DH (12 Nov 66) 4th Ind  
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending  
31 October 1966 (RCS CSFOR-65)

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96307  
06 JAN 1967

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-OT  
APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the period ending 31 October 1966 from Headquarters, 223d Combat Aviation Battalion as indorsed.

2. Pertinent comments are as follows:

a. Reference Paragraph 1, Part I, Item: Assignment of OV-1 Qualified Aviators, Page 7: Nonconcur with comments concerning the Assignment of OV-1 Qualified Aviators for the following reasons:

(1) There is no OV-1 refresher course currently being conducted in CONUS. OV-1 aircraft would be required to support course if established. This would require that production aircraft scheduled for distribution to tactical units be diverted to the training base for this purpose. In view of the above and the critical shortage of OV-1 aircraft in tactical units this is not the optimum time to request that DA establish an OV-1 refresher course in CONUS.

(2) USARV Regulation 95-6, dated 25 June 1966, requires that all newly assigned aviators be given an area of operation flight orientation and flight proficiency check prior to their operation of aircraft in Vietnam. The flight time used for this purpose will normally be sufficient to get the new aviator current in the aircraft that he will fly. Any additional training required before aviator can be judged current has the advantage of being conducted in the environment that he will be operating and by an instructor pilot experience in unit mission accomplishment.

(3) The flight standardization officer of this headquarters will insure that all members of the flight standardization board are again informed of the requirement to conduct refresher training.

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**SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending  
31 October 1966 (RCS CSFOR-65)**

b. Reference Paragraph 3, Part 1, Item: Evasive Maneuver  
Trainings: Concur.

(1) The aviator attending the OV-1 transition course  
is required to demonstrate, under simulated conditions, proficiency  
in all of the flight maneuvers stated before graduating from course.

(2) USARV Regulation 95-6, dated 25 June 1966, requires  
that all new aviators demonstrate proficiency in each of the maneuvers  
listed prior to completing orientation training.

**FOR THE COMMANDER:**



Assistant General

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GPOP-OT (12 Nov 66)

5th Ind (U)

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SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending  
31 October 1966 (RCS CSFOR-65), HQ 223d Cbt Avn Bn

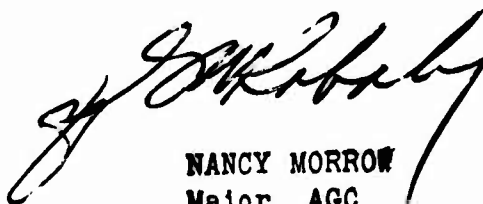
HQ, US ARMY, PACIFIC, APO San Francisco 96558

14 FEB 1967

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the  
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters concurs in the basic report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:



NANCY MORROW  
Major, AGC  
Asst AG

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