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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**



IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (5 Mar 68) FOR OT RD-674058

8 March 1968

**SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 14th
Combat Aviation Battalion, Period Ending 31 October 1967(U)**

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 5b, AR 525-15. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT RD, Operational Reports Branch, within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.
2. Information contained in this report is provided 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:

Kenneth G. Wickham
**KENNETH G. WICKHAM
 Major General, USA
 The Adjutant General**

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 14TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO San Francisco 96374

AVGD-BC

14 November 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period 31 October 1967 (RCS-CS FOR 65)

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

Section I: Significant Organizational Activities

1. (C) General

a. The mission of the 14th CAB is to provide timely direct and general aviation support to the elements of the Americal Division and selected units within I Corps Tactical Zone.

b. Major organizational changes during this quarter were:

(1) Task Force Oregon redesignated the Americal Division effective 22 2400 September 1967.

(2) The 756th Medical Detachment (-) was detached from the 161st Aviation Company and attached to the 174th Aviation Company effective 4 August 1967.

c. Aircraft assets and their location at the close of this reporting period are as follows:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>HEADQUARTERS LOCATION</u>
HHD, 14th CAB	1 U6A	Chu Lai, RVN (BT 572 035)
14th Sec Plt		
348th Avn Det		
534th Med Det		
71st Avn Co	19 UH-1D, 8 UH-1C	Chu Lai, RVN (BT 541 064)
94th Sig Det		
151st TC Det		
161st Avn Co	19 UH-1D, 8 UH-1B	Chu Lai, RVN (BT 575 033)

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>HEADQUARTERS LOCATION</u>
406th TC Det		
449th Sig Det		
174th Avn Co	21 UH-1D, 8 UH-1C	Duc Pho, RVN (BS 812 382)
409th TC Det		
452nd Sig Det		
756th Med Det		
176th Avn Co	19 UH-1D, 8 UH-1C	Ky Ha, RVN (BT 527 116)
411th TC Det		
454th Sig Det		
178th Avn Co	16 CH-47A, 2 OH-23G	Chu Lai, RVN (BT 547 057)
400th TC Det		

d. Transportation and Signal Detachments continue to remain attached to each Aviation Company to facilitate aircraft and avionics maintenance support.

e. Medical support assets have been divided to afford aviation medical support at both Chu Lai and Duc Pho.

f. Command

(1) LTC Carroll C. Isaacs, OF 100 091, Armor, assumed command of the battalion on 7 August 1967.

(2) Major Joe K. Bell, 04 031 035, Armor, assumed command of the 71st Aviation Company on 8 September 1967.

(3) The 161st Aviation Company was commanded by Major Donald S. Galla, 04 031 301, Infantry.

(4) The 174th Aviation Company was commanded by Major Thomas W. Wheat Jr., 04 009 596, Artillery.

(5) The 176th Aviation Company was commanded by Major Donald W. Phillips, 08 425 40, Artillery.

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(6) Major John M. Kalina, O1 936 675, Infantry assumed command of the 178th Aviation Company on 19 October 1967.

2. (C) Intelligence and Counterintelligence

a. During the period 1 August - 31 October 1967 the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion had 188 aircraft hit by hostile fire. This represents an increase of approximately 33% over the preceding quarter.

b. Analysis of the hostile fire reports to determine the number of aircraft hit by altitude and aircraft action reveals the following:

<u>ALT</u>	<u>ON GROUND</u>	<u>T/O</u>	<u>LNDR</u>	<u>ENRT</u>	<u>TARGET ATTACK</u>	<u>TOTAL BY ALTITUDE</u>
0	12	13	16	9		50
100		15	7	1	2	25
200		9	3	2	1	15
300		5	2	1	2	10
400		1	3	2	0	6
500		3	6	1	4	14
600		0	0	0	10	10
700		2	0	1	4	7
800		4	0	1	3	8
900		0	0	1	2	3
1000		2	2	4	3	11
1100		0	0	1	0	1
1200		2	0	0	0	2
1300		0	0	1	0	1
1400		0	1	0	0	1
1500		1	0	3	0	4

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<u>ALT</u>	<u>ON GROUND</u>	<u>T/O</u>	<u>LNDG</u>	<u>ENRT</u>	<u>TARGET ATTACK</u>	<u>TOTAL BY ALTITUDE</u>
1600		2	0	1	0	3
1700		0	0	1	0	3
1800		2	0	3	0	5
2000		1	1	4	0	6
2200		0	0	1	0	1
2700		0	0	1	0	1
2900		0	0	1	0	1
UNKNOWN		0	0	1	0	1
	12	62	41	42	31	188

c. Weather has had an impact on operations during this quarter particularly during the latter half of September and early October. Although relatively few missions have been cancelled, there have been frequent mission delays especially in the early morning hours. The most serious impact has been that low ceilings have forced all aircraft to fly at lower altitudes thus increasing exposure time to enemy ground fire.

d. Units of the battalion and particularly the 174th Aviation Company in the Duc Pho area have contributed to the psychological warfare effort by dropping several hundred thousand leaflets each week and flying loudspeaker teams on numerous broadcasting missions. In the latter part of October, effort in the Duc Pho area has concentrated on the "CHIEU HOI" program.

3. (C) Operations and Training:

a. Plans

(1) Contingency plans for air and sea movement were prepared.

(2) Continuous planning and coordination were accomplished with ground commanders in preparation for conduct of operations outlined below.

b. Operations

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(1) This battalion was engaged in combat or combat support operations every day of the reported period.

(2) Aviation companies of the battalion participated in the following major operations:

<u>OPERATION</u>	<u>SUPPORTED UNIT</u>	<u>DATES</u>
Hood River	1/101st Abn Inf Bde	2 Aug - 13 Aug
Benton	1/101st Abn Inf Bde	13 Aug - 29 Aug
Raid	1/101st Abn Inf Bde	1 Sep 67
Cook	1/101st Abn Inf Bde	4 Sep - 9 Sep
Wheeler	1/101st Abn Inf Bde	11 Sep - Present
Wallowa	3/1st Air Cavalry Div	4 Oct - Present
Prairie Fire	5th Special Forces Group	1 Aug - Present

(3) In order to give the best possible combat support, units of the battalion were disposed as follows:

<u>AVIATION UNIT</u>	<u>UNIT SUPPORTED</u>
71st Aviation Company	Direct support to 196th Light Infantry Brigade
161st Aviation Company	General Support to Americal Division
174th Aviation Company	Direct support to 3rd Brigade 4th Infantry Division
176th Aviation Company	Direct support to 1st Brigade 101st Airborne Infantry Division
178th Aviation Company	General support to Americal Division.

(4) The 1/101st Airborne Infantry Brigade has continued as

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the primary maneuver brigade of the Americal Division, thus the numerous major operations involving that unit. All brigades have, however, conducted daily airmobile combat assaults, extractions and resupply. Assault missions are normally controlled by a Direct Support company reinforced when necessary by the 161st or another Direct Support aviation unit. Assaults involving 13 or more lift ships were normally planned and controlled by the battalion.

(5) On 10 August one gunship from the 71st Aviation Company and one gunship from the 161st Aviation Company scrambled to the vicinity of BS 7578 to assist two Navy Swift Boats that were being fired on. The gunships made repeated runs on the enemy position until all ground fire had ceased. Only one enemy KBA was confirmed, however friendly forces did not move into the area and therefore no body count was made. (It is felt however that there were many more enemy casualties).

(6) On 13 August 1967, the Battalion committed 52 UH-1D's, 13 UH-1C (gunships), and 10 CH-47's to start Operation Benton. This massive operation involved moving 2 Infantry Battalions, two artillery batteries and support elements for a total of more than 1,500 combat troops. The combat assault was conducted in a morning and afternoon phase, however there was no break in pace as indicated by a new Battalion high of 637 hours flown in one day. Nine aircraft of the Battalion were hit by enemy ground fire, however there were no crewmember casualties.

(7) On 14 August 1967 the 176th Aviation Company (-) with direct support elements deployed to the Chu Lai area to facilitate support of Operation Benton. The move was completed in two days without significant loss in capability. After completion of Operation Benton all elements returned to the base camp at Duc Pho. The move was completed on 31 August 1967.

(8) On 24 August 1967 the 174th Aviation Company lifted A Company, 2/35th Infantry into an LZ without artillery or gunship preparation. The lift was conducted at first light and apparently caught the enemy off guard. The ground unit killed 21, captured several small arms, a rocket launcher and a 60mm mortar. Aircraft did not receive fire going into the LZ which would further indicate complete surprise.

(9) On 30 August 1967 the Southern perimeter of Chu Lai was subjected to a mortar attack. The attack lasted approximately 15 minutes during which time an estimated 40 rounds of 60mm and 82mm mortar shells fell inside the perimeter. The 161st Aviation Company was the only battalion unit in the vicinity of the attack and sustained only minor damage to the mini-port facility. Several hoses and bladders were cut by

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shrapnel and had to be replaced.

(10) On 6 September 1967 the Battalion conducted a major assault airlifting elements of the 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry. The assault forces of two (2) companies and one (1) company (-) were inserted into three LZ's simultaneously. A total of 38 UH-1D's and 2 CH-47's were used as combat troop carriers. Ten gunships provided all preparation and suppressive fires. No artillery preparation was used to achieve maximum surprise. The operation was extremely well executed and all troops were landed at H Hour. Only one aircraft reported receiving light sniper fire.

(11) On 9 September 1967 the 176th Aviation Company and all supporting units began movement to a new location at Ky Ha in the Chu Lai area. The move was completed on 15 September utilizing organic air combined with a road march of unit vehicles. The 176th provided continuous aviation support throughout the period in spite of the maintenance and operational problems created by such a move.

(12) On 12 September the Battalion committed 36 UH-1D's, 6 CH-47's, 10 gunships, 2 wreckers and 1 smoke ship to support the 2d day of Operation Wheeler. Two battalions of infantry and two artillery batteries from the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division were airlifted into multiple landing zones. The first LZ was mined and in spite of a heavy prep by TAC Air using Daisy Cutters, and both 105 and 155 Artillery, a mine was detonated while the 5th "V" of 3 was on the ground. Several casualties were sustained as a result of the first detonation and more were sustained when a 2d mine was exploded by crewmen and infantry men hastening to assist the already injured. Automatic weapons fire was intense throughout the day. A total of nine aircraft were damaged during the first lift and had to be replaced. The immediate response by all companies to provide additional aircraft to perform the 2d lift is particularly praiseworthy. Battalion statistics for the day include 1,626 troops, 216 tons of cargo and 317 hours flown. A total of 3 aircraft were damaged by mines and 10 hit by ground fire.

(13) On 23 September the Battalion conducted its first "People Sniffer" mission utilizing 2 UH-1D's and two gunships for security. Since that time this type mission has been conducted more and more frequently with varying results. Details of this type mission are discussed in Part II of this report.

(14) On 29 September 1967, this battalion was called upon to provide gunship close air support, reaction force lift ships, and flareships to units of the 101st Airborne Division who were engaged in heavy fighting. During the first encounter 2 UH-1D's were shot down while attempting to perform medical evacuations. Subsequently a

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gunship providing cover was downed and 3 more aircraft were shot down while inserting a lift force into the immediate area. All aircraft operating in the area were subjected to continuous heavy automatic weapons fire. Tactical air and gunship support were provided until darkness and weather prevented further assistance. Since the area was still insecure and recovery was impossible those aircraft still on the ground were destroyed in place. In final tabulation for the day, the battalion had 22 aircraft hit, 3 UH-1D's and 1 UH-1B destroyed, 8 pilots wounded and 1 crew chief killed in action. This was the worst day ever suffered by the battalion.

(15) On 8 October 1967 a tropical storm passed near the Chu Lai area with heavy rain and high winds. Nearly all operations were cancelled for that day.

(16) Throughout this quarter, units of the 14th Battalion have been called upon to perform many types of missions, day and night in good weather and bad. In all cases the challenge was met in an outstanding manner and many kudos received from supported ground units.

(17) During the quarter the 14th Aviation Battalion accomplished the following:

	<u>AUGUST</u>	<u>SEPTEMBER</u>	<u>OCTOBER</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Hours	11,617	10,825	10,894	33,336
Troops	61,496	61,410	63,530	186,436
Cargo Tons	7,323	8,281	9,492	25,096
Sorties	46,097	43,284	44,507	133,888
Med Evacs	129	117	139	385
VC KBA (Conf)	97	81	65	243
Structures Destroyed	363	399	549	1,311
Sampan Destroyed		7	25	32
Ammunition Expended:				
7.62mm	1,005,260	1,440,365	1,150,903	3,596,528
40mm	18,075	21,299	26,355	65,729
2.75" rockets	7,306	9,728	7,404	24,438

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Companies flew a total of 888 hours at night performing insertions, extractions, medical evacuation, resupply and armed helicopter missions.

The 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company evacuated 34 UH-1D's, 2 UH-1B's, 2 UH-1C's, 9 OH-23's, 1 OH-13 and 1 O-1 during this three month period.

c. Training

(1) The battalion prepared a program of instruction to be presented to the 198th Light Infantry Brigade and its subordinate units as a part of that Brigade's in country orientation and training in the planning for and utilization of available aviation support. Instruction was presented on the 21st, 24th, 25th and 27th of October. Training subjects included battalion level lift planning, small unit lift planning, resupply operations with the UH-1D, gunship employment and CH-47 utilization and planning.

(2) All units conducted protective mask training requiring all air crew members to perform in flight duties while wearing their individual protective mask. A minimum of 30 minutes flying time and two approaches are to be completed each month.

(3) A mobile training team from the 178th Aviation Company visited numerous ground units of the Americal Division to assist using units in planning for and utilizing the CH-47. Particular emphasis was placed on rigging techniques for external loads.

(4) All UH-1 companies conducted "Firefly" training to insure that sufficient personnel were trained to provide this capability within each unit.

(5) All units conducted familiarization firing of individual and crew served weapons.

(6) The battalion continued to utilize maximum quotas for AAMTAP courses. Because of a shortage of maintenance officers, several Warrant Officer quotas were also requested.

(7) Training of replacement crew members continued to require an extensive OBT program for gunners and crew chief and a closely coordinated standardization program for new aviators.

(8) During this reporting period the 174th Aviation Company has conducted training classes for the NCO Academy of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. The classes were given on the optimum utilization

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of aircraft to include UH-1D's and gunships in support of ground units. The classes received much praise, and consequently they were presented to elements of the 198th Light Infantry Brigade during the last week of October.

4. (C) Logistics

a. General: During the reporting period all areas of Logistical Support were adequate except vehicular support. Vehicle parts and lubricants are in short supply causing some equipment to become deadlined and the situation has not improved.

b. Class I - No significant events or problems.

c. Class II and IV: No significant problems encountered during the quarter. On 15 September 1967 cargo sling equipment was obtained from the 221st depot and reissued to units of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade and 101st Airborne in support logistical projects. Also during the quarter 4 each trucks, forklift were obtained through personal liaison from Cam Ranh Depot for all units except 71st Aviation Company.

d. Class III:

(1) 1-13 August 1967: Operation Hood River - The permanent JP4 refuel area at Quang Ngai with seven (7) permanent points were utilized using one (1) 350 GPM and four (4) 10,000 gallon bladders from the Marines in support of large lifts. Six (6) POL tankers from Chu Lai were sent over the road to provide increased refuel capabilities. Additional hoses were added to the tankers so that refueling could be accomplished with engines running.

(2) 14-15 August 1967: A coordinated move by the 176th Assault Helicopter Company from Duc Pho to Chu Lai was completed utilizing the units organic transportation. The base camp remained at Duc Pho and temporary facilities were arranged for the unit at MAG 36 area, Ky Ha.

(3) 15 August 1967: Operation Benton - Refueling facilities at Quang Ngai relocated at Tam Ky on 14 - 15 August 1967. Four (4) 10,000 gallon bladders were hand receipted from the Marines and moved to Tam Ky. The Marines already had six (6) JP4 refuel points in operation and they were used. In addition to the seven (7) refuel points operated by the Marines and the seven (7) refuel points setup by the 14th Battalion, eight (8) POL tankers were used at the site to support the initial insertion of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division in that encounter.

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(4) 30-31 August 1967: 176th Aviation Company during this period was spaced back to Duc Pho using organic air and surface transportation. One (1) LST supported the move to Chu Lai and one (1) LST supported the move back to Duc Pho, to support the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division who went into an AO West of Quang Ngai. The Tam Ky JP4 refuel capability minus the Marine JP4 permanent refuel point was reestablished as Quang Ngai and this facility plus Gallagher Beach facility was utilized to support the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division until on or about 9 September 1967.

(5) 31 August 1967: Operation Raid - The JP4 refuel point at Quang Ngai was prepositioned at Ha Thanh in support of this operation. An eight (8) point refueling area utilizing 100 GPM pumps supplying 30,000 gallons of JP4 from 500 gallon bladders. Gunship ammunition was also prepositioned by air at Ha Thanh.

(6) 9 September 1967: The 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division was lifted from Quang Ngai to Chu Lai in preparation for Operation Wheeler. JP4 refuel facilities from Quang Ngai was once again relocated to Tam Ky during the period 9 - 12 September 1967 to support Operation Wheeler. The operation began 13 September 1967 and 25 JP4 refuel points to include the Marines permanent points, Army Support Command points and POL Tankers from the 14th Aviation Battalion were setup to provide minimum turn around time for a two battalion insertion. In addition a JP4 refuel point was setup at Tien Phouc and Gallagher Beach facilities were closed. A separate rearm point was set up on the Tam Ky sod strip that would allow 4 guns to rearm at any given time.

e. Class V - No significant events or problems.

f. Base Development:

(1) Chu Lai area: A request for construction of a chapel for the 14th Aviation Battalion was submitted on 8 September 1967 and was finally returned on 14 October 1967 disapproved. Sheet tin was ordered and received from depot during the quarter for all units except the 176th to cover remaining administrative buildings, existing structures and enlisted billets.

(2) The aircraft revetment program for all units except the 176th Aviation Company was completed on 1 September 1967. Americal Division, exempted the 176th from this requirement, due to instability of unit.

(3) During the 1st of October a drainage problem was

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encountered in the 161st Aviation Company mess hall. This problem occurred during a seasonal storm and was eliminated without any inconvenience to personnel.

(4) Duc Pho area: The 174th Aviation Company completed construction of a new mess hall and have moved from tents with dirt floors to tents with wooden floors. The new tents have been constructed with steel plates atop the frames and the plates then covered with sand-bags. This type construction affords considerable protection from incoming mortar rounds.

g. Maintenance

(1) The flow of vehicle repair parts during this period has slowed to a marked degree. Deadline rates continue to increase despite major efforts in the vehicle maintenance field. The 188th Maintenance Battalion has reported that despite efforts to expedite repair parts from depot, fringe items and some PLL items simply do not appear to be available. Even "Red Ball" requisitions frequently fail to obtain parts within a thirty day period.

(2) The rapid turnover of qualified maintenance personnel has been significant during this quarter. Input has been largely composed of inexperienced, though school-trained, specialists. Some senior NCO's that have been received have had no maintenance experience other than schooling. Two very significant areas in which extreme shortages exist are motor maintenance and armanent repairmen. Minor personnel shortages and low skill levels are evident in all maintenance MOS fields.

(3) During a period of exceptionally rainy weather in October the lack of hangar space hindered maintenance efforts. No hangar facilities exist for CH-47 aircraft and it is anticipated that the problem will intensify in the upcoming monsoon season.

(4) Despite many combat damaged aircraft during this period, maintenance reaction has been excellent. Aircraft repair parts continued to flow well but transportation difficulties from Saigon sometimes delayed shipments of EDP parts for several days.

(5) Aircraft availability during this quarter was as follows:

	<u>UH-1D</u>	<u>UH-1B/C (Armed)</u>	<u>CH-47</u>
August	85%	81%	73%

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	<u>UH-1D</u>	<u>UH-1B/C (Armed)</u>	<u>CH-47</u>
September	85%	80%	66%
October	82%	80%	75%

(6) Aircraft mission ready, availability during this quarter was as follows:

	<u>UH-1D</u>	<u>UH-1B/C (Armed)</u>	<u>CH-47</u>
August	77%	61%	58%
September	76%	67%	55%
October	73%	64%	59%

5. (C) Civil Affairs:

a. During this period units of the Battalion have continued to haul many tons of rice and salt from field locations to storage areas from which it is later distributed to refugees throughout the Americal AO.

b. Hundreds of refugees have been moved from major contact areas to refugee centers.

c. Battalion units, particularly the 174th Aviation Company in the Duc Pho area, have donated soap and candy to orphanages and, when possible, building materials and tools to assist in the construction of refugee centers.

d. Battalion doctors participated in the MEDCAP program in conjunction with Americal Division ground units. This program has become particularly active during recent weeks.

6. (C) Personnel

a. The following is an analysis of the battalion strength for the quarter.

CONSOLIDATED BATTALION STRENGTH

	<u>AUTHORIZED</u>	<u>ASSIGNED</u>	<u>OVER/SHORT</u>
1 Aug 67	1,659	1,278	-381

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CONSOLIDATED BATTALION STRENGTH

	<u>AUTHORIZED</u>	<u>ASSIGNED</u>	<u>OVER/SHORT</u>
31 Oct 67	1,659	1,130	-529

The following is a breakdown of the authorized and assigned rated and non-rated personnel during the quarter.

	<u>RATED</u>				<u>NON-RATED</u>			
	<u>AUTH</u>		<u>ACT</u>		<u>AUTH</u>		<u>ACT</u>	
	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>
1 Aug 67	92	241	96	183	4	4	6	4
31 Oct 67	92	241	72	192	4	4	7	3

b. The following is a listing of critical MOS shortages that have existed as of 31 October 1967.

<u>MOS</u>	<u>AUTHORIZED</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
35K	19	13
35M	4	2
36K	14	8
45J	16	7
63C	24	22
67A	74	21
68A	16	3
68B	31	26
68D	10	4
68G	30	26
7. (C) Other		

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a. Aviation Safety

(1) During the period of this report the battalion experienced nine (9) major Army Aircraft accidents involving helicopters. Four (4) of the accidents were a result of pilot error, one (1) resulted from adverse weather and three (3) due to engine failure.

(2) One (1) of the eight (8) helicopters suffered repairable damage and seven (7) were total losses.

(3) One (1) fatality occurred as a result of aircraft accidents.

(4) For the reporting period the battalion flew 33,336 hours compared to 29,268 hours for the previous quarter. This represents a deviation of + 13.8%. An accident rate of 23.8 per 100,000 flying hours was accrued compared to 30.2 for the previously reported period, a deviation of - 23.7%.

Section II Commander's Observations and Recommendations Part I, Observations (Lessons Learned).

1. (C) Personnel

Item: Shortage of CH-47 aviators.

Discussion: The 178th has been operating with as few as 55% of assigned aviators and at present has only about 71% assigned.

Observation: As of September 1967 there are 14 CH-47 companies assigned to USARV. To maintain a 90% strength level would require a minimum of 476 replacements each year not including staff officer requirements at the various levels of command. Present pilot output from transition courses is not adequate and does not consider the authorized grade structure of the TO&E.

2. (C) Operations

a. Item: Misutilization of CH-47 helicopters.

Discussion: Units continue to request and receive CH-47 aircraft to support lift requirements that could be accomplished by fixed wing aircraft or be moved all or part of the way by road convoy. In addition too much cargo is still being carried internally when in

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cases it would be feasible to rig for external lift.

Observation: Better utilization of the CH-47 could be achieved by emphasis on advance planning. Too often it appears that units request CH-47 support because it is more convenient and requires less effort than obtaining other modes of transport. Sling equipment is generally available and aviation personnel are ready and willing to assist ground units in learning external rigging techniques.

b. Item: People sniffer missions.

Discussion: The "people sniffer" mission is a new concept that was first tried on 23 September. The purpose of this mission is to detect the presence of personnel on the ground regardless of cover or concealment. Through a chemical process, airborne equipment senses ammonia present in the area and provides a reading to the observer. Since orientals give off a relatively high ammonia odor, the machine will normally register a positive reading even for a very few persons. The "sniffer" ship reports all concentrations by calling "Hot Spot". A second UH-1D flying chase at altitude records the spot for later reference. Two gunships fly cover and render suppressive fire as required.

Observation: For best results one UH-1D with the sniffer equipment must fly at low level and one UH-1D must be at altitude to observe and record exact locations of hot spots. The low level aircraft is necessarily exposed to hostile fire, however exposure can be minimized by a well planned area reconnaissance. Care should be taken to insure that the aircraft does not pass over an area or terrain feature more than once. When several hot spots have been located in a particular area there is no need to continue looking for more. Close coordination between the "sniffer" and chase is required to insure the reconnaissance is flown according to plan. Emergency procedures in the event hostile fire is received must be emphasized.

c. Item: "Firefly" Operations

Discussion: Some units have requested "Firefly" missions in mountainous terrain. The majority of these missions have been unsuccessful.

Observation: Firefly missions are intended for and are most successful over flat terrain with waterway systems. Use in the mountains is impractical because the lights have insufficient range, navigation is difficult, increased engagement range results in low target destruction capability, target density is low,

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and aircraft are unable to maneuver adequately. The results do not justify the hazards and special problems encountered.

d. Item: Air delivered ordnance for Landing Zone preparation.

Discussion: The experience of subordinate elements of this headquarters indicates that the use of high explosive bombs with extension fuses, (Daisy Cutters) has given the best results on landing zones that are suspected of being mined, booby-trapped or rigged with helicopter traps. If approach and departure routes can be predetermined, it is also desirable to prepare these and the likely trouble spots with Daisy Cutters. The use of heavy ordnance on ridgeline landing zones is also desirable. The cratering effect of 500 pound bombs (or heavier) makes an ideal touchdown point for helicopters and eliminates hazards of boobytraps and mines. If the landing zone is suspected or known to have reinforced bunkers in or near it, the use of delayed fuse bombs can be very effective. The delay feature allows the bomb to bury itself from 10 - 20 feet in the soft earth prior to detonating. This normally has a devastating effect on underground tunnels and bunkers, collapsing most of them. The use of napalm has good effects on bunkers and built-up areas but should be used with discretion on areas that are dry and covered with heavy grass or foliage. If used in these areas it must be used very early in the preparation. This will allow time for any fires to burn out prior to troop insertion. The use of Cluster Bomb Units (CBU) during landing zone preparation should be avoided. Although it is effective ordnance against personnel and other targets, there are often unexploded bomb-lets left on the ground, which the enemy quickly converts into booby-traps for use against our forces.

Observation: Numerous types of air delivered ordnance is available for LZ preparation. Choice of a particular type (s) ordnance must be determined for each LZ.

e. Item: Selection of staging areas.

Discussion: Selection of the staging area for a combat assault can directly affect the ability of a unit to reinforce an initial element that is subjected to immediate enemy contact. The lift force must complete a turn-around to the PZ before additional troops can be brought in to reinforce.

Observation: Staging areas must be selected as close to the assault objective as possible. Turn around time in excess of 1 hour may be tactically unsound.

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f. Item: Coordination between rigging and evacuation crews when recovering downed aircraft.

Discussion: On several occasions a maintenance crew has responded to a call to evaluate and rig a downed aircraft for aerial recovery by CH-47 and then have had to wait in excess of an hour for the CH-47. In all cases radio contact was maintained with an airborne coordinator to keep him informed of the progress of the rigging crew.

Observation: The exposure of a rigging crew and aircraft for excessive time in a known hostile environment is a needless risk. Positive coordination should be made between the rigging crew and the crew of the evacuation aircraft or through a third party to insure that the evacuation aircraft can closely follow the rigging team into the recovery site.

g. Item: Inspection of rigging on disabled aircraft prior to evacuation by CH-47.

Discussion: During this reporting period two UH-1's were dropped because of improper rigging or unserviceable sling equipment.

Observation: When the situation permits the pilot should personally inspect the disabled aircraft. The controls must be locked, rotor blades tied down, rigging equipment serviceable and properly fastened, and two doughnuts used.

h. Item: Debris in the pick-up zone.

Discussion: Discarded packing and crating material strewn about the PZ creates a hazard to both the people working in the area and to the helicopter. Winds generated by a CH-47 reach gale force and objects carelessly placed become deadly missiles. Tar paper, steel bands, etc have been injected into aircraft engines necessitating a costly engine change. Flying debris has also caused damage to rotor blades.

Observation: Police of pick-up zones requires continuous command emphasis to preclude injury to personnel and unnecessary aircraft maintenance.

i. Item: Investigation of ground to air hostile fire by ground units.

Discussion: Ground to air hostile fire could be evidence

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of a large concentration of enemy troops. On at least one occasion, investigation of such an incident resulted in a VC Company being completely wiped out.

Observation: Ground to air fire incidents should be investigated whenever possible.

j. Item: Hazards to flight.

Discussion: Aircraft flying through some tactical AO's are required to contact each firing battery on an individual basis to ascertain hazards. At times this necessitates changing frequencies as many as five times in a relatively short period of time. Excessive time spent tuning radios adds to the hazards by detracting from the pilots capability to watch for other aircraft.

Observation: An artillery advisory service with centralized control within well defined geographical areas would be of great benefit. The system presently in use in the III Corps area is a good example.

k. Item: Mined LZ's.

Discussion: On 12 September 1967 a mined LZ was encountered while conducting a combat assault during Operation Wheeler. In spite of a heavy prep by TAC Air using Daisy Cutters and both 105mm and 155mm Artillery, a mine was exploded while the 5th "V" of 3 was on the ground. Crewmembers of other aircraft and infantry troops rushed to the aid of the injured and set off a second mine. The result was confusion and congestion in the LZ and caused a delay of the follow-on flights. In addition several personnel became unnecessary casualties.

Observation: Detonation of one mine in an LZ is evidence that others are present. All aircraft must unload and depart the LZ as rapidly as possible to permit a continuation of the mission. Injured personnel can be treated by personnel already on the ground and evacuated by dustoff or other aircraft when possible, without interfering with the mission.

l. Item: UH-1 Utilization.

Discussion: Although the situation has greatly improved during this reporting period, it is still found that when aircraft report for a mission such as resupply, they are often poorly used. In some instances resupply aircraft have been utilized for missions which should have been accomplished by the Command and Control aircraft. Also

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on several occasions resupply aircraft have taken several separate small loads to different locations which could have been combined into a larger load.

Observation: Aircraft Commanders should be quick to assist supported units in the matters of aircraft utilization, advisory on the possible uses of the aircraft, consolidating loads and generally "educating" the ground units.

3. (C) Training and Organization

Item: Division Aviation Officer

Discussion: As stated in FM 1-15, dated February 1967, the Commander of the Division Aviation Battalion is assigned the additional duty of Division Aviation Officer. In this capacity he is responsible for advising the Division Commander and staff on the technical aspects of aviation and the employment of elements of the battalion. He maintains liaison with aviation representatives and staff officers of higher and lower headquarters and with adjacent units. He prepares the aviation training program for the division and provides technical supervision of aviation training within the division. He further supervises the tactical employment of aviation elements assigned or attached to the division. Normally, the Assistant Division Aviation Officer is located at the Division Tactical Operations Center (DTOC) and is the principle representative of and responsible to the Division Aviation Officer on the division special staff. In addition he is usually responsible for supervising the Army Aviation Element (AAE) of the DTOC for the Division Aviation Officer. The above doctrine, both time tested and battle worn, continues to be an effective solution in Vietnam today.

Observation: This Battalion submitted a formal request to the Commanding General, Americal Division, that the Division be organized with the Commanding Officer, 14th Aviation Battalion as the Division Aviation Officer independent of all aviation units. This decision was based on the uniqueness of the newly formed Americal Division which includes two formerly separate brigades with organic aviation sections. A Division Artillery Aviation Section is also attached to the division. Although the 14th CAB provides the bulk of the aviation support to the division and there is no Divisional Aviation Battalion per se, it was deemed essential to have a Division Aviation Officer not a part of any unit, who was solely a special staff officer. This also was to free the Aviation Battalion Commander of those strictly administrative duties performed by the DAO. The Battalion then asked for permission to provide a Liaison Officer to the Division to effect coordination for all activities pertaining to the assets of the 14th

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Aviation Battalion and any other 17th Aviation Group elements supporting the Division. This proposal was accepted and at the present time a liaison officer and two members of the Army Aviation Element are being provided.

4. (U) Intelligence: None.

5. (C) Logistics

a. Item: Fuel contamination by monsoon flooding.

Discussion: After a recent exceptionally heavy rain, some bladder type fueling points located in areas with poor drainage, were found to be seriously contaminated by water. This discovery was made after quite a number of aircraft had been fueled from the contaminated bladders.

Observation: Fuel bladders should be located in areas with adequate drainage. During the monsoon season and especially after an unusually heavy rain, fuel samples should be taken from all bladders and inspected for water prior to refueling any aircraft.

b. Item: Fuel Identification

Discussion: On at least one occasion recently a UH-1 aircraft refueled at a field site from a 5,000 gallon bladder which did not contain JP4. An investigation revealed that the bladder contained 115-145 aviation fuel for piston engine aircraft operating in the area. It was not marked in any manner and was located in the proximity to other bladders which did contain JP4.

Observation: All fuel bladders and/or their associated nozzles should be clearly marked as to type fuel. Though it is the responsibility of personnel refueling aircraft to visually check all fuel before placing it in the fuel tank, such markings would serve as an additional precaution.

c. Item: Unserviceable rigging equipment and improperly rigged loads.

Discussion: This item continues to be a problem area within many of the units supported by the 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company. During the reporting period five (5) external loads were lost as a result of faulty rigging equipment and one (1) because it was improperly rigged.

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Observation: User units are not properly maintaining the rigging equipment designed for externally carried loads. This equipment requires proper care, cleaning and, above all, frequent inspections. Oil soaked, frayed or friction burned slings should not be used when air transporting supplies. The art of rigging, although not complicated is best accomplished when a few basic principles are adhered to. Technical assistance can be obtained by requesting liaison visits or by means of a mobile training team which is available.

Part II, Recommendations:

1. (U) Personnel: None.
2. (C) Operations:

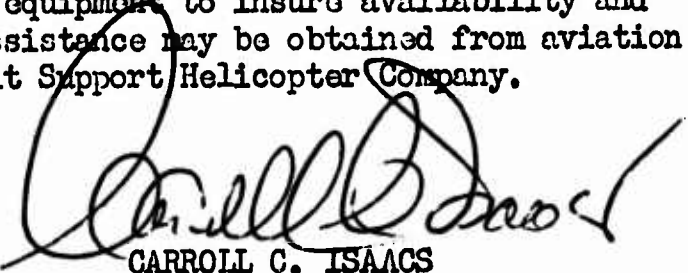
Reference: Section II, Part I, paragraph 2a.

Recommendations: That all units carefully consider the various modes available to accomplish a transportation requirement and select the mode that is best suited to that requirement. The 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company has organized a mobile training team for the specific purpose of assisting ground units in load planning and rigging techniques. All units should make regular use of this team to insure the best utilization of CH-47 aircraft.

3. (U) Training and Organization: None.
4. (U) Intelligence: None.
5. (C) Logistics:

Reference: Section II, Part I, paragraph 5c.

Recommendation: That all units establish inspection and storage criteria for rigging equipment to insure availability and serviceability. Technical assistance may be obtained from aviation personnel of the 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company.


CARROLL C. ISAACS
LTC, Armor
Commanding

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AVDF-GC (18 Nov 67)

1st Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (RCS-CSFOR-65)(U)

DA, Hq, Americal Division, APO San Francisco 96374 4 JAN 1968

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, APO San Francisco 96375

1. (U) Forwarded herewith is subject report of the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion.

2. (C) The following comments are considered pertinent to the referenced paragraph of the basic communication.

a. Reference: Section I, para 1.a.(1), pg 1. This headquarters was activated as HHC, Americal Division effective 25 September 1967.

b. Reference: Section II, part 1, para 2.j., pg 20. A centralized system of artillery advisories for aircraft is now in effect.

3. (U) This headquarters concurs with the observations and comments contained in subject report.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

[Signature] 225
KAZUTO KAWABATA
for Capt. AGC
Asst Adjutant General

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DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

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AVHGC-DST (14 Nov 67) 2d Ind (C)
SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 October 1967
(RCS-CS FOR 65)

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 26 JAN 1968

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

1. (U) This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 31 October 1967 from Headquarters, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion (AX2A) as indorsed.

2. (C) Pertinent comments follow:

a. Reference item concerning personnel, critical MOS shortages, page 14, paragraph 6b: Concur. The shortage of MOS's is command wide; therefore, the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion has their proportionate share of these MOS shortages. The 1st Aviation Brigade is overstrength in MOS 35M. That headquarters has been directed to reassign two MOS 35M personnel to the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion.

b. Reference item concerning personnel CH-47 aviators, page 15, paragraph 1: Concur. The redistribution of CH-47 aviators by the 17th Aviation Group during early November provided a more equitable distribution of available aviator assets. In the near future, the Falcon Group will be activated; one of its subordinate units will be the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion. The activation of this group is expected to enhance aviator personnel replacement support in the I CTZ.

c. Reference item concerning hazards to flight, page 19, paragraph j; and 2d Indorsement: Concur. HQ MACV is presently working on a directive to establish Artillery warning control centers in Vietnam. The III Corps system is being used as a model.

d. Reference item concerning unserviceable rigging equipment, page 21, paragraph 5c: Concur. The supporting aviation unit provides technical assistance to the supported unit. This includes assistance in preparing the load for rigging, assuring that the load is properly rigged and inspection of the load prior to pickup by the helicopter. Elimination of sling load accidents can best be accomplished by the supporting unit through an aggressive liaison program to the supported units.

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*Downgraded at 3 year Intervals
Declassified after 12 years
DOD DIR 5200.10*

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AVHGC-DST (14 Nov 67)

2d Ind (C)

SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 October 1967
(RCS-CS FOR 65)

3. (U) A copy of this indorsement will be furnished to the reporting unit through channels.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

C. S. Nakatsukasa

C. S. NAKATSUKASA
Captain, AGC
Assistant Adjutant General

Copy Furnished:

HQ, 14th CAB
HQ, Americal Div

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GPOP-DT(14 Nov 67) 3d Ind (U)
SUBJECT: Operational Report for the Quarterly Period
Ending 31 Oct 67 from Hq, 14th Combat Avn Bn
(UIC: WAX2AA) (RCS CSFOR-65)

HQ, US ARMY, PACIFIC, APO San Francisco 96558 27 FEB 1968

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

This headquarters has evaluated subject report
and forwarding indorsements and concurs in the report
as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:


K. F. OSBOURN
MAJ, AGC
Asst AG

