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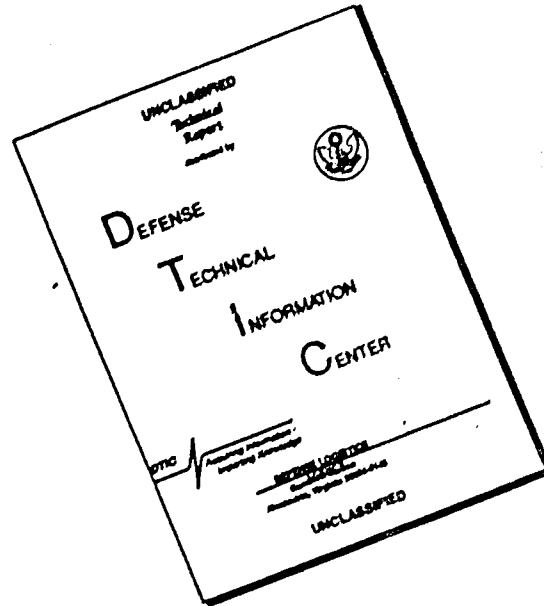
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Lessons

Learned, Headquarters, 52D AVIATION BATTALION (L) (8)

12 21 p.

AVAW-EC

11 15 January 1966

SUBJECT: Command Report, for Quarterly Period Ending 31 December 1965
Report Control Symbol (US PO-28(RL))

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TO: Commander in Chief
US Army Pacific
APO US Forces, 96558

SECTION 1: Significant Organization or Unit Activities.

1. (U) This report covers the period 1 October 1965 through 31 December 1965 and is submitted in compliance with AR 525-24 dated 29 October 1959. Activities of subordinate units are included in this report.

2. (C) Type and number of aircraft authorized:

1 October 1965 - 15 November 1965

- a. UHLB 32
- b. UHLB(Armed) 31
- c. UHLD 32
- d. OLF 53
- e. U6A 2

15 November 1965 - 31 December 1965

- a. UHLB 32
- b. UHLB(Armed) 22
- c. UHLD 16
- d. OLF 48
- e. U6A 1

(C) a. Number of aircraft hours flown during preceding quarter: 19,830

b. Number of sorties flown during preceding quarter: 34,538

(1) Tactical and logistical sorties in support of Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) and US Forces: 33,239

(2) Training and maintenance sorties: 1,299

4. (U) Number of days engaged in operations and training during preceding quarter: 92

5. (U) Training Subjects Stressed:

a. Aviator Training

APR 30 1966

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mll (003650)

Downgraded GROUP 4
Downgraded at 3 year intervals

techniques (1) Armed helicopter escort and suppressive fire tactics and

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- (2) Aviator standardization training.
- (3) Effects of weather and density altitude on flight conditions.
- (4) Aircraft performance characteristics.
- (5) Airmobile operations training.
- (6) Visual reconnaissance.
- (7) Aerial observer training.
- (8) Flight safety training.

b. Ground Training.

- (1) Crew served and individual weapons training.
- (2) Helicopter door gunner training.
- (3) Status of Forces Agreement.
- (4) Code of Conduct.
- (5) Medical Training.
- (6) Evasion and Escape Training.
- (7) CBR Training.
- (8) Defense Plans and Alerts.

6. (C) Brief summary of Major Tactical Operations:

a. 20 October 1965: Detachment C-2, US Special Forces, requested assistance for the out post camp at Plei Me which was under attack: Two (2) UHLB(A) and one (1) UHLB flare ship were dispatched, and provided illumination and air cover until the arrival of USAF flare and fighter aircraft. Two (2) UHLB(A) from the 119th Aviation Company were committed to provide Med Evac escort from Plei Me. The aircraft received intensive automatic weapons ground fire from all quadrants. One (1) UHLB(A) was shot down, and there were no survivors.

b. 21 October 1965: 155th Aviation Company was committed to lift 240 Airborne Rangers (ARVN), to reinforce the Plei Me camp. The 155th, using twelve (12) UHLB and five (5) UHLB(A), made three (3) lifts into a LZ four (4) kilometers North of the camp at coordinates ZA 185116. USAF provided an adequate prestrike for the assault. In the coordination and planning meeting prior to the assault, initial intentions were to place the troops by helicopter on the airstrip adjacent to the camp. The intent was to conduct the operation much the same as was done at Duc Co during a similar situation on 3 August 1965. Due to the possibility of an ambush at the Plei Me airstrip, the 155th commander requested another LZ be utilized. An LZ was selected North of Plei Me and the operation was conducted without incident. It was revealed later from POW sources, that the VC had expected a relief force to be airlanded on the airstrip, and were deployed to deliver destructive fires on the aircraft.

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c. 24 October 1965: An air landed assault was conducted in support of the Plei Me operation. An Armored Task Force was enroute overland to the Plei Me camp and the airmobile operation was made to counter likely VC ambush sites along the task force route. The 52d Battalion, using twenty-two (22) troop carriers and eight (8) armed helicopters lifted the 22d Ranger Battalion (ARVN) in three (3) lifts into an LZ at coordinates ZA 150155. Four hundred (400) troops were lifted. USAF provided an adequate prestrike.

d. 25 October 1965: Elements of the 155th and 119th Aviation Companies, utilizing twenty (20) troop carrier and six (6) armed helicopters, extracted the 42d Airborne Ranger Company (ARVN) from an LZ, coordinates ZA 146064 to the New Pleiku Airfield. Two (2) lifts were made lifting 280 troops. Upon completion of this operation the activities around Plei Me had greatly subsided. The 1st Air Cav Div elements were loading into the Ia Drang valley operation as they pursued the VC in their withdrawal from Plei Me.

f. 2 November 1965: The 52d Aviation Battalion supported operation Quiet Thang 172 (ARVN), staged from Tuy Hoa. 52d elements consisted of the 155th Aviation Company with nine (9) UH1D and four UH1B(A), 119th Aviation Company with ten (10) UH1B and four (4) UH1B(A) helicopters. HMM 363, Marine CH-34 Squadron with eighteen (18) CH-34s was attached to the 52d Battalion for the operation. Beginning at 020745 November, the battalion made six (6) lifts in a two (2) phase operation, placing 920 troops into an LZ at coordinates CQ 042330 and 720 troops into an LZ, at coordinates CQ 025372. Six (6) lifts were made with a total lift of 1640 troops. One (1) UH1B(A) received a hit through a main rotor blade from ground fire. There were no casualties. USAF provided an adequate prestrike on both LZ's.

g. 7 November 1965: The 52d Aviation Battalion supported the 22d Infantry Division (ARVN) in an air landed assault staged from Tuy Hoa. The 52d elements consisted of the 155th Aviation Company with eight (8) UH1D and three (3) UH1B(A) and the 119th Aviation Company with thirteen (13) UH1B and five (5) UH1B(A) helicopters. HMM 363, Marine CH-34 Squadron, was attached to the battalion for the operation. HMM 363 consisted of sixteen (16) CH-34s and four (4) UH1B(A) from the 197th Aviation Company. The operation involved air landing two (2) battalions of the 47th Inf Regt and two (2) battalion of the Airborne Task Force. A total of 960 troops were lifted in four (4) lifts from Tuy Hoa into an LZ, at coordinates BQ 905580. The USAF provided an adequate pre-strike of the LZ. Upon completion of the operation, HMM 363 was released and the 52d Battalion elements proceeded to Duc My to participate in a combined arms demonstration.

h. 9 - 12 November 1965: The 52d Aviation Battalion supported the ARVN artillery school in a combined arms demonstration at the Duc My training center. The 52d Aviation Battalion consisted of the 155th Aviation Company with thirteen (13) UH1D and six (6) UH1B(A) and the 119th Aviation Company with thirteen (13) UH1B and six (6) UH1B(A) helicopters. The 498th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) attached two (2) UH1D's to the battalion for the operation. All air movement, airforce and artillery fires were preplanned and coordinated by the Duc My training center. On 9 and 10 November live fire practice assaults, with troops, were flown. On 12 November the demonstration was conducted lifting 546 troops in three (3) lifts. Landing was made into two (2) separate LZ's after extensive preparation by artillery and air strikes. Prior to the demonstration, approximately 200 VIP's and spectators were lifted from the Duc My airstrip to the observation point by the 155th Aviation Company.

i. 18 November 1965: The 52d Aviation Battalion staged the II Corps (ARVN) operation, Than Phong 7, from the Duc Co airstrip. This operation was in conjunction with the 1st Air Cav Div, Ia Drang valley operation, which had begun following the Plei Me attack in the latter part of October (see para a. thru e. above). The 52d elements consisted of the 155th and 119th Aviation Companies utilizing twenty-two (22) troop carriers and eleven (11) armed helicopters. The battalion was reinforced by the 229th Avn Bn, 1st

Air Cav Div, with twenty (20) troop carriers and six (6) armed helicopters. A total of 1500 troops (ARVN) were lifted in five (5) lifts from Duc Co airstrip to an LZ at coordinates YA 841092. Two (2) UH1D from the 155th sustained light damage from ground fire. There were no casualties. The USAF provided an adequate prestrike of the LZ. A significant improvement during this operation over previous ones was the simultaneous refueling of twelve (12) helicopters utilizing prepositioned fuel pods. The A/C were not shut down for refueling, and the entire refueling operation (refueling 60 A/C) was accomplished in approximately 45 minutes.

j. 30 December 1965: Elements of the 155th and 119th Aviation Companies utilizing twenty-one (21) troop carriers and twelve (12) armed helicopters, were in support of the 23d Inf Div (ARVN). A total of 465 troops were lifted in three (3) lifts from a staging area at Buon E. Yang USSF Camp, BQ 010010 to an LZ at coordinates BQ 280045. The USAF provided an adequate pre-strike of the LZ. Ground fire was received on the departure end of the LZ. There were no hits or casualties.

7. (C) Detailed description of especially significant operations or events:

a. Reception of the 161st Aviation Company (AML) and detachments.

(1) The advance party for the 161st Aviation Company arrived at Camp Holloway on 10 December 1965. On 12 December 1965, the advance party was augmented with additional battalion personnel and moved to the new site at coordinates BR 947265, approximately fourteen (14) kilometers West of Qui Nhon. Adequate mess facilities and personnel were provided from the battalion on a TDY basis for the purpose of feeding the advance party and setting up camp to receive the unit. The TDY personnel and equipment stayed with the unit until they were able to provide for their own needs. A security platoon was permanently deployed to the site at the same time to provide security and prepare defensive perimeter positions. The security platoon also provided necessary detail personnel to erect tentage, build latrines, and other preparations for the main body. The main body arrived in port at Qui Nhon on 18 December 1965, but was not off loaded until 21 December due to bad weather and high seas. 22 December was fixed as D Day after all personnel had been off-loaded. The company's sixteen (16) UH1D and nine (9) UH1B(A) helicopters were flown off the carrier during the same period. The 79th TC Co. (Aircraft Maintenance) stationed at Qui Nhon performed an acceptance and safety of flight inspection on all aircraft. On D+1, a battalion personnel team moved to the 161st location, and processed all personnel and finance records for the unit. The battalion had published an OPLAN which included a training program to have the 161st in an operational readiness status by D+30. This training is still in process at this writing. A major problem area in bringing the unit to an operational readiness status is the shortage of TO&E equipment. Inclosure # 5 lists the major items of equipment and the existing shortages.

b. 170th Aviation Company. The 170th Aviation Company (AML) and Detachments was formed as a packet in CONUS at the same time as the 161st Aviation Company. The two units departed CONUS together and moved by surface transportation on the same vessels. The 170th was originally assigned to the 10th Aviation Battalion, headquartered at Dong Ba Thin. The advance party arrived at 12th Aviation Group on 10 December 1965, and moved to the 10th Battalion Headquarters the following day. On 12 December 1965, the advance party proceeded to Qui Nhon to be near their permanent site, co-located with the 161st at coordinates BR 947265. On 21 December, information was received from the 12th Aviation Group that the 170th was to be reassigned from the 10th Aviation Battalion to the 52d Aviation Battalion effective 19 December 1965. On 22 December, the G.O., 52d Battalion met with the 12th group commander at the 170th location to discuss the change and implications involved. The battalion personnel section processed personnel and finance records, and orientation classes were given to both units. By 31 December 1965, indications were that the 170th would be moved to Camp Holloway, Pleiku, Vietnam. Inclosure # 6 lists the shortage of major items for the 170th Avn Co.

c. 20 Oct - 28 Oct 1965: Plei Me operation, detailed in Inclosure # 1.

d. 17 Nov - 27 Nov 1965: Operation Thang Phong 7 (ARVN), detailed in Inclosure # 2.

SECTION II: COMMANDERS RECOMMENDATIONS

1. (U) Personnel and Morale Activities:

a. Personnel Shortages. At the end of the second quarter FY 66 this battalion was eleven (11) officers understrength. Officer shortages were further accentuated by the necessity of maintaining officers and warrant officers in full time non-TOE spaces required to augment the staff and to perform necessary liaison with II Corps tactical units. Enlisted strength remained at approximately 85% authorized strength due largely to the two new units being attached (161st & 170th Avn Co's). Critical shortages exist in certain MOS's (See Inclosure # 3). The critical personnel situation has for some time, caused a severe drain on the energies of the remaining personnel. The 117th Avn Co and attached supporting units departed the control of this battalion on 20 November 1965.

b. Recreation Facilities. A new facility was constructed to house the Holloway Library, which will become a branch of the HSAS library system. It will contain a reference book section and a taping facility in addition to the lending library for use by all personnel assigned to Camp Holloway. Two USO shows were presented. The Martha Raye Show and the Roy Acuff Grand Ole Opry Show both drew large crowds. A Vietnamese entertainment group which is part of the ARVN Psy War Battalion appeared and a five piece combo from the 1st Cavalry Division played at the Holloway Enlisted Men's Club on two occasions. The seating capacity of the theater was enlarged by the purchase and installation of thirty four benches. In addition, the showing of the movie twice nightly was initiated to accommodate the increase in troop strength; the attendance now averages 600 persons per night. A ping pong table was placed in the EM Club and a new bumper-stylo pool table in the officers club. A full size pool table has been ordered as well as other recreational equipment. A swimming pool was received in November but due to an acute water shortage, it has not yet been constructed. As soon as the water problem has been corrected, work will begin to assemble the pool and build the necessary auxiliary equipment.

c. Mail. Mail delivery continues to be unsatisfactory. Mail is frequently delayed 3 to 5 days in delivery to this installation from Saigon. Ten days from date of postmark to date of delivery of air mail is not uncommon. A new APO was constructed and opened at Camp Holloway during December 1965. This has facilitated in the purchase of money orders and sending packages, but has in no way alleviated the slow arrival of mail.

d. Post Exchange. As of the 26th of December 1965, the Army and Air Force Exchange Service assumed control of PX facilities from the Navy. The basic problem of too few and too small shipments of basic necessities remains as the greatest problem. Rationing of most items received continues in effect. Small inexpensive gifts, such as watches, electronic equipment and Japanese cameras, which are high demand items, continue in short supply.

e. Chaplain. During this quarter the Battalion Chaplain was responsible for all religious activities in the battalion. The Battalion Chaplain provided Protestant Religious coverage and a U.S. Air Force Catholic Chaplain, provided Catholic coverage. The 52d Aviation Battalion chaplain also provided area Protestant coverage to the 1st Cav Div and the 23d and 24th Adv Teams of MACV. During this quarter, 66 religious services were conducted with a total attendance of 2249. With the continued increase in the number of American troops in this area an increase in the number of chaplains in this

area becomes increasingly more important. The need for a Catholic Chaplain is apparent and must be given serious consideration within the next quarters.

f. Civic Action. The Battalion was represented on both the II Corps Community Relations Council and the Pleiku Vietnamese-American Friendship Council by two officers of the battalion. Three major civic action projects for the quarter were:

(1) The ground breaking and start of construction of the Pleiku Orphanage. This project is being financed by the 52d Aviation Battalion and is due for completion in March 1966. Cost of construction is 550,000 piastres.

(2) The 155th Aviation Company at Ban Me Thuot is rehabilitating the Catholic orphanage there. This project includes electrical wiring, repair of water facilities and kitchen and construction of a classroom. It is 25% complete.

(3) All units of the battalion sponsored Christmas parties:

(a) The 219th Avn Co had a party on 24 Dec 65 for 107 needy children ages 7, 8 and 9 years old.

(b) The 119th Avn Co had a party on 24 Dec 65 for 120 needy children ages 10, 11 and 12 years old.

(c) HHD, 52d Avn Bn had a party 24 Dec 65 for 58 dependent children of our CIDG Company.

(d) The 155th Avn Co had a party 25 Dec 65 for 65 orphans from their orphanage in Ban Me Thuot.

(e) All units at Camp Holloway joined with all American units in the Pleiku area to put on the Provincial Party 25 Dec 65 for 370 needy children.

g. Awards and Decorations. During the second quarter of FY 1966 the following awards were presented to members of the 52d Aviation Battalion:

Silver Stars	1
DFC	2
Soldiers Medal	6
Bronze Star	2
ACM "V"	7
ACM	15
Air Medal "V"	7
Air Medal	749
Purple Heart	4
Certificate of Achievement	5

2. (C) Intelligence and Security

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a. Intelligence.

(1) General.

Intelligence activities during this quarter were almost entirely confined to operations in conjunction with the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). During these operations, which began at Plei Me and continued through the battle in the Ia Drang Valley, constant liaison was established with the DTOC of the 1st Air Cav Div. Both the quantity and quality of intelligence developed by the 1st Cavalry was truly impressive and was a valuable factor in planning 52d Aviation Battalion missions.

(2) Project "Photo",

A project was initiated to recon, photograph and catalog every helipad and landing strip in the operational area of the 52d Aviation Battalion. The end product will be a notebook of 8"x10" photos of landing areas, along with a complete resume on the approach paths, obstacles, etc. A copy of this notebook will be supplied to each unit within the battalion and also to the major staff sections. It is anticipated that it will provide both a comprehensive guide for pilots and also a basis for laying out staging areas.

(3) Photo Laboratory.

An in-house photographic capability is considered highly desirable by this command. An old Special Services lab presently exists at Camp Holloway, but its equipment needs replenishing and cameras need to be purchased. A request for these necessary items has been forwarded to CO, 12th Aviation Group, ATTN: S-2. In the meantime, the lab is being cleaned, repainted and a lab technician has been hired.

(4) IR Reconnaissance of Landing Zones. Based on observations made during recent operations in the Ia Drang Valley, it appears that an IR reconnaissance of a landing zone made the night before an assault would yield significant intelligence. With the present location of ASTA units, reaction time is too slow to consider this tactic, but considering further operations in the Pleiku - Kontum area, it would be entirely feasible to locate such a unit or part of one here at Camp Holloway on a temporary basis.

(5) OLF Visual Reconnaissance Program.

It has been noticed that very few of the sightings made by pilots of the 219th Aviation Company were appearing in the II Corps daily ISUM. Investigation showed that the pilots were indeed reporting intelligence to sector advisor, but that the information was stopping there.

b. Security.

(1) Communications Security.

Here as well as all over the country, communications security has been a problem in the 52d Aviation Battalion. In all cases, however, the difficulties can be traced to the lack of an official SOI which is recognized by both ground and air component alike. SOI's have in fact existed, but among the five different types circulating in the II Corps area, not one has been officially designated. To correct the problem, coordination has been established between the 52d Aviation Battalion Signal Officer and the Signal Officer at II Corps Hq. One SOI has been selected and it is expected that the Senior Advisor will direct its use by all American units.

(2) Searching of female RVN Nationals.

In the past, certain of the Vietnamese secretaries were designated to search all female employees at Camp Holloway. This system was ineffective as these secretaries were extremely prone to pressure from their neighbors in Pleiku. Attempts were made to secure the services of two ARVN WAC's to perform the task but to no avail. An alternate solution is now being tried in the way of two ARVN officer's wives to do the searching. So far there has been noticeable improvement.

(3) Security Precautions Taken During VC Holiday Period: 18 thru 26 December.

During this period the following measures were taken to prevent Camp Holloway personnel from becoming victims of a VC terrorist or sabotage attack:

- (a) The perimeter guard was doubled.
- (b) Pleiku City was declared Off Limits during this period.
- (c) Two practice alerts were conducted.
- (d) All units were briefed as to the significance of this holiday period and the need for exercising caution.

c. Reception of New Units.

(1) In December, the 52d Aviation Battalion gained the 161st Aviation Company and was also informed that most probably the 170th would become part of the 52d. The Battalion S-2 coordinated with the Intelligence Officer of the sponsoring unit, the 119th Aviation Company, to provide the incoming units with the following:

- (a) Maps
- (b) Security Forms required by USARV Reg 380-5.
- (c) An up to date OB map of II Corps.
- (d) Channels for receiving daily ISUMS and AA fire reports.
- (e) A security briefing to include special consideration of Vietnamese Nationals.

(2) On 24 December an intelligence briefing was given to both of the new companies by the Battalion S-2. It included all aspects of terrain, weather and the enemy situation.

3. (C) Operations.

a. Tactical Air Mobility Concepts.

The concepts of conducting airmobile operations in the battalion have necessarily been a subject of constant review. The increased capability of the Viet Cong to mass more effective anti-aircraft weapons, and their increasing effectiveness, has prompted the battalion to explore new ideas and techniques. The companies in the battalion were encouraged to experiment with, and develop new ideas to present at a tactical symposium. This was conducted in December. Company commanders had been given an agenda for consideration prior to the symposium and the following are the subjects discussed, and the highlights brought out in each subject.

(1) Mission Planning The planning sequence will normally begin with the liaison officer stationed at the Corps Tactical Operation Center (CTOC) or the Division Tactical Operation Center (DTOC). The liaison officer acts as the Battalion Commander's representative in advising supported units on tactical employment of aviation. In the initial stages the liaison officer should monitor the feasibility of aviation support for the ground tactical plan, and make recommendations before plans are finalized. Although a ground visual reconnaissance is not made at this time, a thorough map reconnaissance is made, selecting potential areas for LZ's that will support the ground tactical plan. Following this, a warning order should be passed on to the battalion, and if at DTOC level, a request forwarded to II Corps CTOC, where aviation priorities and commitments are determined. When the final decision has been made for the planned operation to proceed, a visual reconnaissance party is assembled. This party should consist of the Aviation Commander, Operations Officer, Armed Platoon Leader, Forward Air Controller, Ground Commander and Advisor. If it is to be a battalion size, multi company operation, the reconnaissance party should consist of the Aviation Battalion Commander, S-3, S-2, Lead Company Commander, FAC, Ground Commander and Advisor. Generally the visual reconnaissance consists of a high and low fly over of the selected area, with additional low passes in adjoining areas for deceptive purposes, being careful to allot the same attention and time to the decoy areas. These may later prove to be alternate landing zones. After the visual reconnaissance is completed, the final details are worked out, and the mission is accomplished. The main point brought out in the discussion on mission planning is the need for "AVIATION" to get involved in planning at the beginning of an operation and at the lowest level.

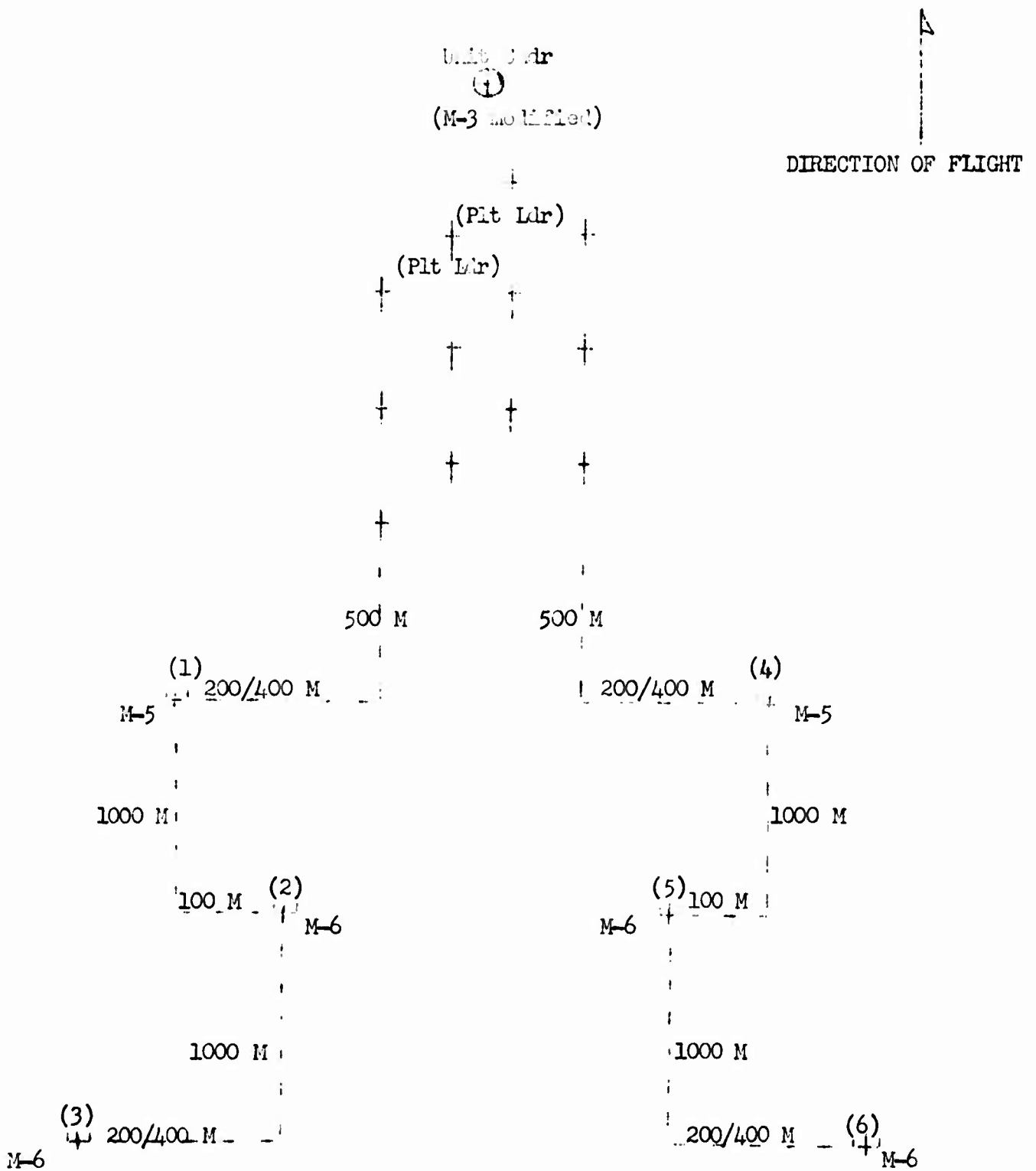
(2) Company Level Escort Techniques. The normal procedure for armed helicopter escort is to employ three (3) armed helicopters on each side of the formation. These aircraft being positioned to begin suppressive fires as the troop carriers approach the LZ, while unloading and during departure. Normally each armed helicopter would make a minimum of one pattern in the daisy chain, before accompanying the troop carriers on their departure. Due to numerous company size operations during the month of December, the companies in the battalion had opportunity to experiment with new techniques which led to numerous questions and discussion. The units recognized a need to compress the troop carrier formation in depth from front to rear as much as possible, this being desirable to enable the armed escort to provide better coverage due to the decrease in the time length of the troop carrier column. A type formation is illustrated in figure one. By compressing the overall length of the formation, and placing the armed escort in the illustrated positions, it is no longer necessary for all armed aircraft to fly the normal daisy chain pattern. The following technique was developed:

(a) Escort aircraft, numbers 1 and 4 provide suppressive fires on the flanks of the formation during approach and landing. Fires beginning, (firing rockets in pairs) 1500 to 1800 meters out on the approach path, continuing in approximate 5 second intervals until landing of the troop carriers is completed. At this time 1 and 4 execute a break, flying a daisy chain pattern and assume trail position on each side.

(b) When 1 and 4 execute their break, numbers 2 and 5 are in effective range, approximately 1500 meters to the flank and rear of the LZ. Numbers 2 and 5 immediately begin firing machine guns and rockets (spacing rockets in pairs 5 seconds apart) to cover the troop carriers as they complete unloading and make their departure. By the time the troop carrier helicopters are on their climb out, numbers 2 and 5 have closed to within 500 to 800 meters and are able to continue suppressive fire along the flanks of the departure route.

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Formation - Company "V" in trail/heavy left



⊕ Troop Carrier

⊕ Armed

FIGURE 1

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(c) Escort aircraft numbers 3 and 6 will be in position to cover 2 and 5 as they provide suppressive fires, escorting the troop carriers out of the LZ and on the departure route. Numbers 3 and 6 will also be in position to cover numbers 1 and 4 as they execute their break and return to the trail position. The desired procedure here is to not expend the ammunition from numbers 3 and 6, but to hold their ordnance for the 2d lift. However if a target develops they would fire as necessary. Utilizing these procedures, only the lead escort aircraft (numbers 1 and 4) on either side have flown a daisy chain type pattern. The following escort aircraft have flown straight through covering the flanks on both sides of the troop carriers.

(d) It is most desirable that the M-5 system, carrying 150 rounds 40mm, plus 24 2.75 rockets be employed as the lead armed escort on both flanks. The M-5 has sufficient ordnance to provide effective suppressive fires on the initial and subsequent lift. The M-6 system consisting of four (4) 7.62 flex mounted machine guns and 14 2.75 rockets is normally employed as the second and third aircraft on each flank. The firing run made by numbers 2 and 5 will require them to expend 70% of 7.62 ordnance and ten rockets. This expenditure requires numbers 2 and 5 to assume the trail position for the second lift. After the troop carriers have climbed to a safe altitude it is necessary for the armed escort to reorganize for the second lift. During the reorganization, numbers 1 and 4 will move back to the lead position and numbers 3 and 6 will assume the second position. This reorganization will allow essentially the same technique of employment and fire power for the second lift into the LZ provided friendly troop disposition allows and enemy reaction requires helicopter suppressive fires.

(3) Command and Control at Company Level

The company commander of an airmobile company in the assault is faced with dual functions that are at times in conflict. It is generally accepted that his place is in the lead troop carrier. Here he exercises his true leadership role. At the same time he must command and control his company. It is doubtful that the lead troop carrier is the position from which this best can be done. He cannot visually monitor the actions of his flight, effect coordination of artillery and USAF prestrike of the LZ, or observe hostile fire or mechanical trouble in the flight behind him. He is in a poor position to make an estimate of the situation and must depend primarily on radio reports. His maneuverability is limited since he is tied to that formation. To fill the "Leadership" role he has sacrificed flexibility and with it some degree of control. So it would seem that at times it may be desirable to divorce the C.O. and the formation; to permit him to break away from the flight at any time without disrupting the formation.

This demands a formation that will promote platoon integrity, facilitate the assumption of overall control at any time by either platoon commander and permit the splitting of the company by platoons on order. The formation should be adaptable to the size and shape of any LZ and of minimum time length to decrease exposure time in the LZ and permit better suppressive fire cover. Discussion brought forth the following concepts and ideas:

One answer to these considerations after experimenting with several formations, was to place platoons abreast in staggered trail, company V in trail, heavy left/right. (See figure 1) In effect this reduces the time length, and LZ exposure time by compressing the flight from front to rear. Flexibility of control and action is facilitated, and platoon integrity is maintained, wherein each platoon is placed in a staggered trail formation with platoons abreast to form the company. This ability to split down the middle and maintain a control element with each platoon offers other advantages. The two platoons may use different approach routes converging at a predesignated point prior to reaching the LZ. The formation is ideal for troop loading from each side of the stage field simultaneously. In the vicinity of the LZ this formation permits maximum use of door gunners.

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To provide the needed flexibility of Command and Control a troop carrier UHLB was fitted with half an M-3 system (24 rockets). In this rocket equipped C&C ship the company commander may depart ahead of the company formation, now led by a platoon commander, and arrive at the stagefield to insure that troops are properly formed for loading. He will make final coordination with the ground tactical commander, and depending on the landing plan, may or may not, load the command party or other troops in his ship. Again leaving the stagefield early he may precede the troop carriers to the LZ area, check enroute weather and make initial contact and final coordination with the FAC or FO controlling the prestrike. He positively identifies the LZ and, checking surface wind, makes the final determination on the approach path to landing. This done, he doubles back to vector the company now enroute with armed escort. Turning inbound along the approach route he permits the flight to close on him. He has again assumed the leadership role in the traditional sense, and is now in position to perform other functions. The problem of finding the LZ has been removed from the troop carrier flight leader. At maximum rocket range the C&C ship marks the LZ with one pair of white phosphorous rockets. The pilots of escort and troop carrier aircraft identify the LZ. During approach, suppressive fire is initiated by the C&C ship on the approach path immediately in front of the troop carriers, joined by the escort ships providing flanking fire. Conserving ordnance the C&C ship enters the LZ, providing fire power, if necessary, to the immediate front of the formation. Upon departure it directs suppressive fire along the take off path. With the troop carriers safe at altitude the company commander again enjoys freedom of maneuver while the troop carriers return for subsequent lift.

The armed C&C ship provides an excellent vehicle for a landing zone reconnaissance either alone or accompanied by one armed UHLB, without endangering security. The additional suppressive fire provided by this ship is felt to be invaluable. The vulnerable area immediately in front of a troop carrier formation on approach and departure is now covered by fire.

(4) LZ Identification/Marking.

LZ identification/marking can be effectively accomplished in one of the following ways.

(a) Reference paragraph c, (1) the unit commander can carry one pair of white phosphorus rockets to be used for LZ marking. He can also overfly the LZ and drop smoke grenades, or lead the formation in and land with the troop carriers.

(b) In most cases the prestrike preceding the AIA will adequately mark the LZ area. Additional pinpoint marking can be obtained by coordination with the FAC, and as the troop carriers approach the LZ he can mark it with rockets.

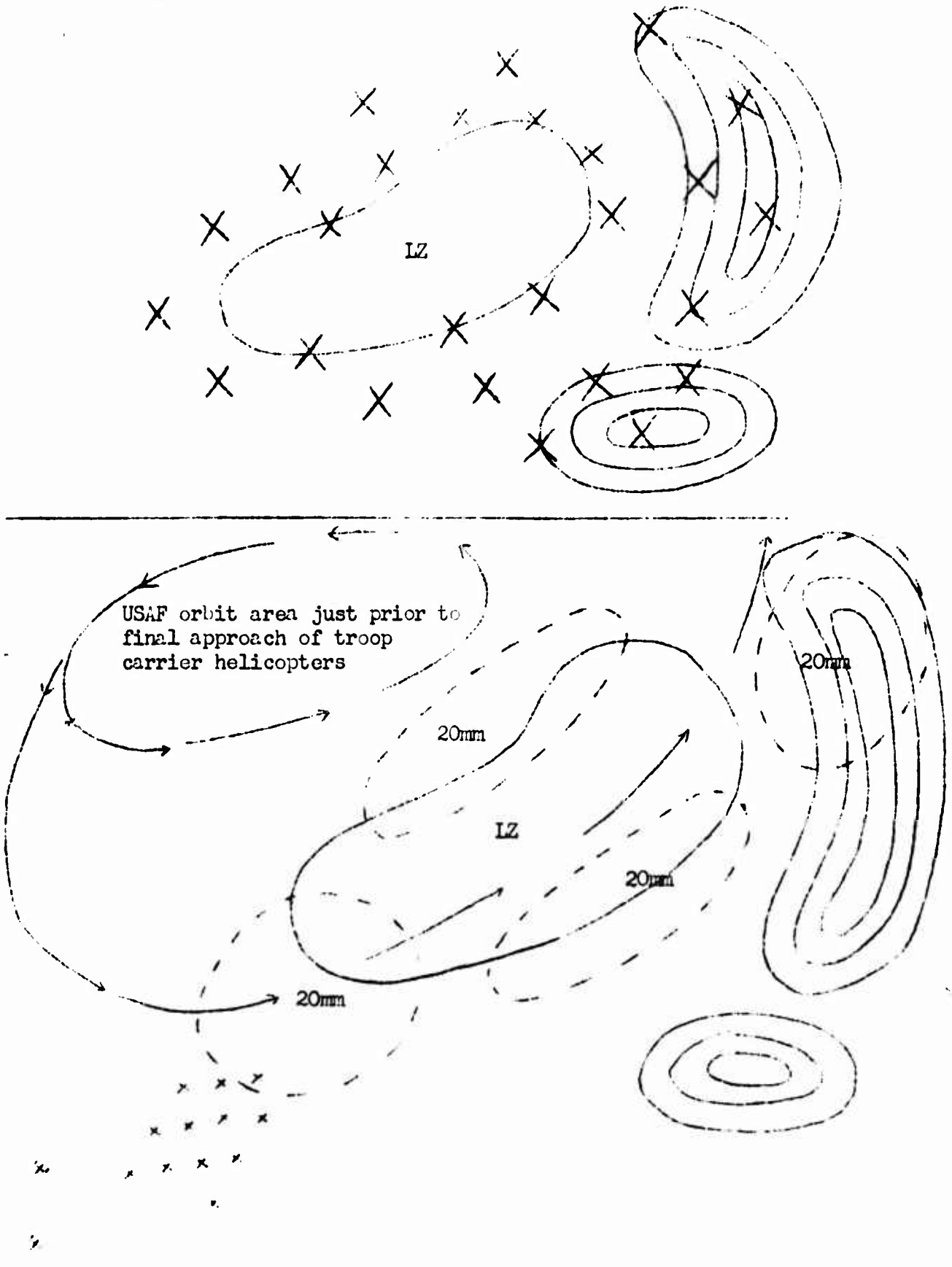
(c) In a large operation where the battalion takes command and control of all aviation support, an Army OLF could provide vector assistance and marking of the LZ (i.e. 219th Aviation Company).

(5) LZ Prestrikes. The present battalion concept of utilizing close air support is relatively new and still in the educational phase of attaining understanding and close coordination with USAF and the 52d Aviation Battalion. Several successful runs have been made in recent operations, and it was agreed that the concept will work and is tactically sound. Battalion and company operations officers can use the following as a general guide when planning the prestrike for an AIA:

(a) It is imperative that the FAC accompany the reconnaissance party in LZ selection. In doing this the aviation commander and the FAC can determine through visual reconnaissance exactly which areas in and around the LZ to prestrike. They can also at this time come to an exact

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15' to 45 minute prestrike around LZ and on commanding terrain features.



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FIGURE 2

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agreement as to the route the troop carriers will approach the area, where they will make their turn to final approach and proceed into the LZ. To derive the utmost benefit from the close air support, there should be no doubt with either party as to exactly what each intends to do.

(b) It is desirable that an optimum of six USAF sorties be available to provide a 15 to 45 minute prestrike, making the bombing runs in and around the LZ and on prominent terrain features. (See figure 2) As the troop carriers approach the operational area the strike aircraft should position themselves so they can immediately precede the troop carriers on their final approach. When the troop carriers start their let down, the strike aircraft overtakes the column and expends 20mm cannon on the approach path, sides of the LZ, and the departure path. With ideal timing, the escort armed helicopters will be within effective range so they can immediately pickup fires as the final strike aircraft finishes its firing run. From this point the armed helicopters will follow through using the techniques described in paragraph b.

(6) Formations and Altitudes.

(a) For some time, it has been accepted that flying at or above 1500 feet terrain clearance is a relatively safe altitude. 1500 feet is still a good altitude to avoid small arms fire, but with the recent VC employment of .50 caliber type weapons and 37/57mm AA weapons, 1500 feet is no longer necessarily a safe altitude. The need for current and accurate intelligence is of paramount importance. It was generally agreed that there will be more "tree top" flying to avoid the heavier caliber weapons.

(b) Several types of formations have been used and found acceptable to the Vietnam type missions. Most frequently used are "V"'s of three in trail, "V"'s of five in trail, staggered trail and "V"'s heavy left or right. To determine the best type formation, consideration must be given to the tactical situation, size, orientation, and shape of LZ, number of troops required on the ground initially and type of terrain to be flown over.

(7) Communications.

(a) Air to air capability is satisfactory in most operations. There is a need for a more dependable and reliable VHF radio.

(b) Air to ground FM is generally satisfactory, especially with the coming of the new series radios. The PRC 25 is proving to be dependable and a relatively trouble free source of communications.

(8) Battalion Operations. Multi-company operations at battalion level involve essentially the same planning sequence as at the company. A battalion operation is often staged away from a home base and requires pre-stocking of POL, ammunition and rations. Also a stage field party is required for command and control, administration and logistical assistance. The battalion S-4 and the Headquarters Commandant coordinate the logistics and the stage field party, providing necessary personnel and equipment and the movement to the stage field.

b. Stagefield Selection and Support.

Many of the battalion size operations are conducted away from the facilities at unit home stations. General procedure is to set up a stage field on an airfield that will accommodate USAF C-123 and Army CV-2 type aircraft. The C-123 and CV-2 aircraft are used to fly in logistical requirements to support an operation. (POL, ammunition, rations). Due to the restrictions, of having to stage from a fixed airfield, the battalion often can not support the ground tactical plan as effectively as it could from a stage field located closer to the operational area. Many times the airfield which is staged from

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is at such a distance from the operational area that numerous refueling stops are required. This not only delays ~~the~~ ~~operation~~ ~~into~~ ~~the~~ ~~loading~~ ~~zone~~, but adds additional logistical requirements. ~~One~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~problems~~ ~~with~~ ~~this~~ ~~problem~~ ~~would~~ ~~be~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~battalion~~ ~~to~~ ~~have~~ ~~organic~~ ~~CH-47~~ ~~type~~ ~~assets~~, or have them available to the battalion on a mission basis. This would add flexibility to the selection of staging areas, and allow the battalion to set up the stage field in close proximity to the operational area.

4. (C) Logistics:

a. S-4 Activities

The reorganization of USARV into Support Areas under the 1st Logistical Command has greatly affected supply channels and stockage levels for all classes of supply, temporarily causing a loss in efficiency for this unit. In lieu of dealing directly with the 1st Log Comd in Saigon, this unit, because of its geographical deployment, now has lines of communication with the Qui Nhon Support Area and the Nha Trang Support Area. This reorganization and changing of supply procedures often has been difficult to keep up with and involves extensive instructions to subordinate units. Due to the inadequate and overcrowded communications system in II Corps, these changes have imposed delays (and often misunderstandings) for subordinate units. Further, during this build-up period, it would appear that this unit has had a low priority in the processing of requisitions, particularly classes IV, V, and expendables. There continues to be a lack of construction materials such as cement, wire and sandbags. A forward supply area, involving all classes of supply, is being developed in the Pleiku area. With the reorganization of the 1st Log Comd, it is anticipated that the response time for resupply of this unit will be greatly improved over previous systems. During the quarter, this unit has been relieved by the 1st Log Comd of responsibility for maintaining four major class III and V pre-stock points. It is anticipated that responsibility for eighteen smaller pre-stock points in the corps area will be assumed by the 1st Log Comd in the near future.

This unit was tasked with sponsoring the 161st Aviation Company (AML) which arrived in Qui Nhon in December. Work orders were submitted for construction of shower, latrine and messing facilities. Engineer construction has been started on ramps, helipads, etc. Requisitions for expendables, Class II (A), IV, and IV (A) were submitted to Qui Nhon Support Area. Coordination for unloading troops and equipment, interim transportation, water, fuel and other minor requirements was accomplished prior to this unit's arrival.

During the week of the arrival of the 161st, this unit was notified that a newly organized company, the 170th Aviation Company (AML), would be assigned. All logistical and supply assistance rendered the first company was repeated for this new company. Both of these new units should become strong enough, logistically, to be combat operational during the first part of the third quarter.

Despite the shortage of some critical construction materials, appreciable progress was made in continuing construction of buildings and installations at Camp Holloway. Major works accomplished during this quarter were the completion of 8 permanent buildings, 10 temporary buildings, 17 personnel bunkers, and 10 concrete helipads. Many other miscellaneous works were accomplished such as constructing additional sidewalks, the renovation of roads, the replacement of tents, and improvements in perimeter barriers. It is anticipated that, due to materials shortage, less construction work will be accomplished during the next quarter.

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One of the major problems facing this unit in the future is the lack of organic aircraft transportation for the movement of the forward battalion headquarters to a staging area in preparation for a multi-company airmobile operation. Currently, this unit places its requests to II CTZ for assistance. Aircraft received have been of the fixed-wing type thus limiting selection of staging areas to ones with improved runways. Transportation for movement of the battalion CP and equipment back to home base is on a low priority basis often taking 5 days for completion of movement. Two CH-47 aircraft would be able to provide continuous class III (A) and V resupply for four airmobile companies. In addition, an aircraft maintenance recovery vehicle would be immediately responsive to emergency needs. Airmobile battalions of the 1st Cav Div employ these type of aircraft in the manner described above. Two CH-47 aircraft, if organic to this unit, would meet minimum operational needs. |||

b. Maintenance.

(1) Aircraft recovery effort utilizing the CH-47 aircraft, when available, have proved most effective. Aircraft downed and requiring extensive repairs as a result of hostile fire are recovered normally in less than one hour whereas previous recovery efforts utilizing the CH-37 took one day as a minimum time.

Slow recovery time with the CH-37 was the result of high density altitudes in the central highlands which necessitated removal of the engine, transmission and tail boom assemblies before the CH-37 could lift the aircraft. This caused additional requirements for combat troops and armed ships to secure the area for long periods of time.

(2) A critical shortage of some aircraft parts continues, however, improved parts movement from the supplier to user has assisted in maintaining satisfactory aircraft availability.

(3) Equipment maintenance and supply support for other items of equipment such as Engineer, Quartermaster and Ordnance has improved, but remains as minimum satisfactory. Area support will operate satisfactory, provided a detachment of sufficient size representing the various support activities is located at or near major unit areas. This will provide rapid coordination for higher echelon repairs, requisitioning, and follow up procedures.

(4) A quarterly maintenance inspection program including equipment and records was instituted during the period. Results of these inspections will form the basis for additional command emphasis for maintaining all equipment in a high state of readiness.

c. Medical

The last quarter of 1965 was the busiest for the medical personnel at Camp Holloway Dispensary.

In October a venereal disease suppression program was introduced in Pleiku through the cooperation of the Vietnamese National Police, the US Military Police and the managers of the bars downtown. Once a week medics from Camp Holloway and one of the doctors, make rounds of the bars giving prophylactic penicillin shots to the girls who were issued official treatment cards. The establishments visited were the only ones declared on limits for US troops. During the quarter, 61 cases of venereal disease were treated, 57 of those were gonorrhoea. The contacts were made in Bangkok (1), Vung-Tau (2), Saigon (3), An Khe (1), Nha Trang (2), and the remaining 47 cases in Pleiku. There were 4 cases of Chancroid contacted in Pleiku.

In the middle of November the battalion medical section assisted the 1st Cav clearing station at Camp Holloway during Ia Drang valley campaign.

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The 52d Aviator Battalion continues to have an effective Malaria preventive program. No Malaria cases have been reported to date.

The year ended with the influx of a large number of Gunners, both for two newly arrived Airmobile Companies and as replacements for battalion returnees to the US. These individuals did not have the necessary flight physicals which should have been accomplished prior to assignment to Vietnam.

The month of December saw a decline in the number of gastrointestinal infections. Upper respiratory tract infections continued to be the major cause of sick call visits, which stands at about 675 for the month as compared with approximately 730 for the month of November and 500 for October.

Reports of Plague in the local population during the middle of December resulted in our vaccinating all Vietnamese employees here at Camp Holloway and updating all servicemen in Plague and other shots.

One problem area is the resupply of medical supplies. Medical supply channels moved from Nha Trang to the 32d Med Depot at Qui Nhon. This occurred at the same time as the buildup of US forces at An Kho and medical supplies have become in short supply. During the last quarter, there was considerable difficulty in maintaining an adequate level of medical supplies. It is anticipated that the situation will improve next quarter.

5. (U) Communications:

The rapid expansion of the military installations throughout the Republic of Vietnam during the fourth quarter of FY-65 and the two quarters of FY-66 has caused an urgent need of command emphasis for a study and possible revamping of the entire in-country land lines communication system. The present switching facilities located at Camp Holloway have for the past nine months been extended far beyond their intended capabilities. The equipment is literally worn out, and third and fourth echelon replacement parts are presently not available at the supporting signal maintenance repair facility. Subscriber service has decreased rather than increased during the past quarter. A comprehensive coverage relating to the in-country telephone system and other signal matters is detailed in Inclosure #4 of this document.

6. (U) Aviation Safety:

During the quarter the accident rate decreased considerably compared to the previous quarter. Four accidents were recorded. One of the four was due to material failure which resulted in four fatalities. The battalion did experience three combat losses during the period. A UHLB was shot down during the Plei Me operation resulting in four fatalities. An OLF was hit by ground fire resulting in a crash landing. A UHLD crashed in a landing zone during a heliborne operation.

The Snowball concept of preventing accidents as outlined in last quarters report is continuing. Evidence of the success of the program is clearly indicated by the reduced accident rate during this quarter, and by the decreasing monthly accident rate. The reduction in the accident rate is the result of the battalion's emphasis on preventative measures. These include a thorough daily, pre-flight, and post flight inspection. In addition, daily aviator briefings are used in part to discuss some aspect of accident prevention. The "talking it up" approach to preventing accidents in every phase of operations and maintenance is perhaps the key to the success of the Snowball concept. The increased emphasis placed on accident prevention by commanders at all levels resulted in an accident free month for November and only one accident in December. As a minimum, the snowball objective envisioned an accident free period from 20 October 1965 through 20 February 1966, however, this objective was marred by one accident in December. Since a high percentage of newly assigned aviators are recent graduates of flight school, emphasis is being placed on the training and accident prevention education of these aviators.

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Utilizing these and other preventive measures incorporated in the Snowball concept, an enviable record of aviation safety in the 52d Aviation Battalion is being achieved.

Robert L. Cody

ROBERT L. CODY
Lt Col, Inf
Commanding

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AVAW-SC (15 Jan 66)

1st Ind

SUBJECT: Command Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 December 1965
RCS CSGPO-28 (RI)

HEADQUARTERS, 12TH AVIATION GROUP, APO San Francisco 96307

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

1. (U) Concur with recommendations of the Commanding Officer 52d Aviation Battalion.
2. (C) Personnel shortages in critical MOS's have been placed on special requisition to USARV. Assignments are made as replacements arrive.
3. (U) TO&E equipment for the 161st Airmobile Company and 170th Airmobile Company was off loaded at Qui Nhon 19 - 20 January 1966.


RAYMOND E JONES
Colonel, Arty
Commanding

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GROUP - 4
Downgraded at 3 year intervals
Declassified after 12 years.

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AVC (15 Jan 66)

2d Ind

SUBJECT: Command Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 December 1965,
Report Control Symbol (CSGPO-28 (R1)) (U)

Headquarters, United States Army, Vietnam, APO US Forces 96307 **02 FEB 1966**

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-MH,
APO US Forces 96558

1. (U) Concur with the 52d Aviation Battalion quarterly command report and with the 1st Indorsement.

2. (U) This command report offers constructive recommendations in the personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics, communications, and safety areas. These recommendations, based on experience factors in Vietnam, are supplemented by after action reports, in which the recommended techniques and procedures were used.

3. (U) Reference Section II, paragraph 1c: Limited aircraft availability and increased demands for air transportation has placed a heavy burden on air lift capability in Vietnam. Additional Army postal units programmed for Vietnam in CY 66, will improve the Army's capability to efficiently process the large quantities of mail currently arriving in Vietnam. Delay in mail delivery is currently a subject of official action with USMACV.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



HENRY L. DENNEY
CWO, USA
Asst Adjutant Gen

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"This document may be regraded "UNCLASSIFIED"
when separated from classified inclosure"

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GPOF-MH (15 Jan 66) 3d Ind (C)
SUBJECT: Command Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 December 1965,
Report Control Symbol (CSGPO-28 (R1)) (U)

HQ, US ARMY, PACIFIC, APO San Francisco 96558 1 MAR 1966

TO: Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, Department of the Army,
Washington, D.C. 20310

1. (U) Forwarded herewith is the Quarterly Command Report of the
52nd Aviation Battalion for the period ending 31 December 1965.

2. (C) The recommendation of the Battalion Commander that CH-47's
be made organic at battalion level for logistical support of battalion size
airmobile operations has special merit and should be thoroughly studied
(para 4a, p. 14).

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:



**H. S. KWASIAK
MAJOR, WAO
ACTING ASST AG**

DECLASSIFIED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 30 YEARS.
DOD EIR 5200.10

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