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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310



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IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (8 Jul 68) FOR OT RD 682160

15 July 1968

**SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 14th
Combat Aviation Battalion, Period Ending 30 April 1968 (U)**

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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.

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KENNETH G. WICKHAM
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 14th Combat Aviation Battalion

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 14TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO San Francisco 96325

3
AVGM-LO

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68.

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SECTION I

Significant Organizational Activities

1. (C) General

a. The mission of the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion is to provide timely, direct and general aviation support to the Americal Division (23 Inf Div) and selected units within the I Corps Tactical Zone. There were no significant changes or additions to the Battalion's mission, however, GO 951, Hq's, USARV, 1 Mar 68 and GO 1357, Hq's, USARV, 27 Mar 68 changed the status of this battalion from attached to OPCON to the Americal Division.

b. During this reporting period the 14th CLB relinquished control of C Troop, 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry, as directed by GO 182, USARPAC, 21 March 1968, effective date 1 April 68. An organizational chart, to include station list, is at Inclosure 1 and is current as of 30 April 1968.

c. The key personnel changes during this reporting period are reflected below:

(1) The 14th Combat Aviation Battalion was commanded by LTC Carroll C. Isaacs, OF 100 091, Armor, until 7 Feb 68. LTC Ray M. Carson, OF 106 541, CE, is presently in command.

(2) The former Executive Officer was LTC Joseph F. Rutkowski, 096467, Inf. LTC William J. Gorman, 04 005 796, Inf, assumed duties on 11 Jan 68.

(3) The former S-1 was Capt Gene E. Champo, 02 289 036, Inf. Maj. Dohne W. McGinnis, 05 702 914, Arty, assumed duties on 14 Feb 68.

(4) The former S-2 was Maj Harry Baldwin, 02 268 383, TC. 2Lt Robert F. Bertrand, 05 341 378, Inf, assumed duties on 14 Feb 68.

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AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

(5) The present S-3 is Major John J. Todd, OF 102 282, SIG C.
He assumed duties on 14 January 68.

(6) The present S-4 is Cornelius E. Liner, O4 011 864, Infantry.
He assumed duties on 29 January 68.

(7) The commanding officers for the companies of the 14th Combat
Aviation Battalion are:

<u>PAST</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>
HHD: Welsh, Vernon W., 1Lt 05 334 493 Inf	Schindler, Marvin F., Cpt 05 322 177, Inf 15 Apr 68
71st:	Fitzgerald, Robert D., Maj 01 930 052 Inf 18 Jan 68
174th: Wheat, Thomas W., Maj 04 009 596 Arty	Gibson, Glen D., Maj 04 010 454 Arty 2 Feb 68
176th:	Jackson, Paul E., Maj 04 025 832 Arty 3 Nov 67
178th: Kalina, John M., Maj 01 936 230 Inf	Wood, Ernest M. Jr., Maj 04 010 688 Arty 19 Dec 67

d. Unit strengths as of 30 April 68:

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

(1) Military

<u>Subordinate Unit</u>	<u>Officer</u>		<u>WO</u>		<u>EM</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H
<u>HHD & Bn Staff</u>	15	19	3	5	68	102	86	126
14th Sec Plat	0	0	0	0	60	47	60	47
348th Avn Spt Det	1	1	0	0	20	16	21	17
534th Med Det	1	1	0	0	8	9	9	10
<u>71st Avn Co</u>	15	11	52	46	152	150	219	207
94th Sig Det	0	0	1	0	7	7	8	7
151st TC Det	1	1	1	1	72	70	74	72
<u>174th Avn Co</u>	15	10	52	45	152	146	219	201
409th TC Det	1	1	1	2	70	72	72	75
452nd Sig Det	0	0	1	0	8	7	9	7
756th Med Det	1	1	0	0	10	12	11	13
<u>176th Avn Co</u>	15	11	52	41	152	150	219	202
411th TC Det	1	1	1	1	70	60	72	62
454th Sig Det	0	0	1	0	8	6	9	6
<u>178th Avn Co</u>	13	10	25	17	148	160	186	187
400th TC Det	1	1	1	1	80	77	82	79
<u>14th Combat Avn Bn</u>	80	68	191	159	1085	1091	1356	1318

(2) Civilian: (Separate detachments are combined with companies)

CONFIDENTIAL

AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

<u>Subordinate Unit</u>	<u>DAC</u>		<u>VN</u>		<u>3rd Natl</u>		<u>Contractor</u>	
	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H
HHD	0	0	7	8	0	0	1	1
71st Avn Co	0	0	11	9	0	0	2	2*
174th Avn Co	0	0	11	11	0	0	2	2*
176th Avn Co	0	0	11	11	0	0	2	2*
178th Avn Co	0	0	10	10	0	0	3	3*
14th Cbt Avn Bn	0	0	50	49	0	0	10	10

* Sheet metal personnel from LSI under control of 34th Gen Spt Gp, Two (2) per company.

e. The 14th Combat Aviation Battalion's aircraft status as of 30 April 68 is at Inclosure 2.

f. The results of the reporting period's operations, to include hours, sorties flown, troops lifted, cargo lifted, med evac, A/C recoveries, enemy KIA, sampans and structures destroyed or damaged, ammunition expended and aircraft lost or damaged, (by type) is reflected at Inclosure 3.

2. (C) Chronological Narrative, by functional headings, of the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion during the reporting period.

a. TET Offensive: A detailed description of the 14th Combat Aviation's activities during the period 29 Jan 68 to 29 Feb 68 is at Inclosure 4.

b. Personnel:

(1) The following is an analysis of the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion strength figures for the reporting period.

CONSOLIDATED BATTALION STRENGTH (as of 30 Apr 68)

<u>Authorized</u>	<u>Assigned</u>	<u>Over/Short</u>
Off 80	68	-12
WO 191	159	-32
EM 1085	1091	+ 6

CONFIDENTIAL

AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

(2) The rated/non-rated recapitulation of officers and warrant officers as of 30 April 68 is as follows:

	<u>RATED</u>		<u>NON-RATED</u>	
	<u>Authorized</u>	<u>O/H</u>	<u>Authorized</u>	<u>O/H</u>
OFF	76	59	4	9
WO	182	156	9	3

(3) A listing of critical MOS shortages as of 30 April 68 is reflected below:

<u>MOS</u>	<u>AUTHORIZED</u>	<u>O/H</u>
31B20	4	1
52B20	10	4
11B2F	107	81
11B10	49	13
93B20	16	7

(4) The Battalion experienced minor personnel problems during this quarter, as reflected in Sec I, Par 2f (Maint) and Sec II, Par 1. The 14th Security Platoon, attached to HHD is assigned the mission of twenty-four (24) hour, seven (7) day surveillance of the southeast perimeter of the Chu Lai Defense Command. Out of the assigned personnel in the Security Platoon, nine (9) of the forty-five (45) assigned are not working within the platoon due to other requirements within the battalion headquarters, or are not mentally (psychologically) capable of performing the duties of a security guard, therefore creating an actual shortage of twenty-five (25) personnel. During the TET Offensive the Security Platoon worked at maximum bunker manning levels and the need to reinforce the platoon was made evident. The replacements came from other assets and the offensive provided an opportunity to have all personnel review security procedures; such as target acquisition, forward observer techniques, field of fire procedures and communications techniques.

The helicopter companies, as well as staff elements, experienced a high percentage of key personnel turn-over during this reporting period. This led to the problem of a smooth transition of command, technical skills, and procedures throughout the Battalion. A unique benefit was gained from this adverse situation; all operational procedures; from staff methods to OJT training, out of necessity had to be reviewed, revised and reemplimented, thereby adding new emphasis and more efficient procedures to the Battalion's method of operations.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

c. Operations: Throughout this reporting period the 14th Combat Aviation provided daily, 24 hour support for the I Corps TAOR. The operational highlight of the period was the aviation support given during the TET Offensive. (See Inclosure 4) The mission concept of this battalion is to employ its aviation assets on a mission requirement basis, attempting to habitually assign the same aviation company assets to the same supported unit, thereby providing units concerned with the advantage of knowing each others methods of operation and personnel. While each aviation company's assets were capable of handling the daily requirements of specific supported units, at times the tactical situation would dictate the necessity to combine assets for battalion sized assaults. A recapitulation of these moves follows:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>UNIT MOVED</u>	<u>14TH CAB SEQUENTIAL ORDER NO.</u>
-------------	-------------------	--------------------------------------

(To 29 February 68, see Inclosure 4)

1 Mar 68	198th LIB	68-1
7 Mar 68	11th LIB	68-2
7 Mar 68	4th ARVN Regiment	68-3
23 Mar 68	B/1/14th Arty, D/1/46 Inf	68-4
8 Apr 68	11th LIB	68-5
8 Apr 68	198th LIB	68-6
9 Apr 68	198th LIB	68-7

The above combat assaults all were successful and emphasized the basic guidelines that each assault must follow; namely:

- I Full supported unit aviation indoctrination
- II A sound tactical plan
- III Reliable communications equipment

The 14th Combat Aviation Battalion experiences the majority of its aerial support utilizing only one or two UH-1D's on passenger or cargo runs (See Inclosure 3). One inherent problem in this type of operation is the lack of full employment of the aircraft's capabilities, we must continually emphasize organization and control of logistical type missions.

In major Americal Operations, the battalion is organized to provide daily support involving one (1) to approximately fifty (50) UH-1D aircraft and one (1) to thirteen (13) CH-47 aircraft. During this reporting period the Battalion has provided aerial support for the following operations:

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

<u>OPERATION</u>	<u>SUPPORTED UNIT</u>	<u>DATES</u>
Wheeler/Wallowa	198th LIB & 1/1 Cav	Began as Wheeler (11 Sep 67) combined with Wallowa (4 Oct 67) in Nov 67, continuing
Muscatine	11th LIB	20 Dec 67, continuing
Burlington Trail	198th LIB & 1/1 Cav	8 Apr 68, continuing
Norfolk Victory	11th LIB	8 Apr 68, continuing
TF Roach	198th LIB	8 Apr 68, continuing

The 14th Combat Aviation Battalion experienced the advantage of providing support from fixed base camp locations; however, the Battalion presently has a small number of aircraft in support of other units:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>AIRCRAFT</u>	<u>DATES</u>
5th SF (Da Nang)	2 UH-1D's (71st)	Began 1 April 68
5th SF (Kham Duc)	2 UH-1C's (176th)	Released 21 Apr 68
III MAF (Hue)	2 UH-1C's (176th)	Began 22 Apr 68
Americal (Camp Evans)	3 UH-1D's (174th)	Began 22 Apr 68
Americal (Camp Evans)	2 CH-47's (178th)	Began 22 Apr 68

As stated above the Battalion operates from a fixed base location, however, the 176th Aviation Company made an administrative move from its former location at Ky Ha (BT 533 110) to its present location at Chu Lai (BT 572 116). The move began 3 Feb 68 and was completed 8 Feb 68.

Shortly after the TET Offensive the decision was made to reorganize the 14th C/B's support of the Chu Lai defense reaction force. The 176th Aviation Company now possesses the capability to provide eight lift aircraft, 2 gunships and one flareship with a pick-up (PZ) zone reaction time of fifteen minutes. The defense plans for the companies were also reviewed and strengthened.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

This reporting period saw the conversion of the 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company from CH-47A to CH-47B models. Supported units were briefed on the increased capabilities of the B model; however, training must continue in this area, especially with the Artillery units.

Contingency plans for a number of SF camps have been drawn up and are ready for implementation on call:

<u>OPERATION</u>	<u>CONTROL AGENCY</u>	<u>AVIATION UNIT</u>
II Corps Disaster Plan	Americal Div	14th CAB
Golden Valley (Seven (7) selected SF camp reinforce- ments)	Americal Div/5th SF	14th CAB

In addition to the Battalion's primary mission of aerial support, the defense of our base area's must be considered. The battalion experienced enemy and mortar attacks during the TET Offensive only. These are reflected at Inclosure 4.

These attacks, although causing little material damage, hindered the work output of the personnel. A secondary effect of the attacks was a loss of off-duty time since performance of primary job was immediately followed by performance of guard duties. Organization on the part of Section Chiefs enabled all missions to be accomplished; however, the most desirable situation would be an area that is secured by a non-aviation unit, permitting the aviation unit to devote full time to primary mission.

d. Training: Due to the combat environment in which the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion operates, a formalized, inflexible, training schedule is difficult to administer. The 14th Combat Aviation Battalion policy is that each day is regarded as a training day with OJT principles fully applied. The Security Platoon of the HHD had initiated an inter-squad training program to familiarize individuals on organic weapons, fields of fire, night vision, enemy uniform and tactics, ammunition conservation and bunker maintenance.

Our experience has shown that an enlisted man in an aviation unit is exposed to seven (7) hours of platform type instruction each month. During these formal periods the topics of prime concern have been M-16 weapons familiarization, aircraft subjects, and required commanders topics. A rifle range (small bore) has been developed and constructed within the Battalion area (BT 570 040) to permit all personnel to fire assigned weapons at least bi-weekly for battle field zero. The 174th Aviation Company uses facilities provided by the 11th LIB, Americal Div. An adequate firing range has not been approved for the Battalion by the Americal Division.

2

CONFIDENTIAL

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AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

Crew training and proficiency is regarded as a daily occurrence, with company operations officer's attempting to assign more experienced pilots with the new arrivals. A new title, that of Senior Aircraft Commander (SAC) has been implemented by the 71st Aviation Company, with the intent of developing esprit and pride of accomplishment, one of the prerequisites being 400 hours of combat time. Pending favorable evaluation this concept will be implemented at Battalion level. Mission commitments precluded assigning an aircraft daily for training; however, experience has shown that the majority of flight subjects can be intergrated on missions. The exception to this is instrument training. All companies attempt to fly each aviator one (1) hour per month on hooded flight, however, a workable instrument instructional program is needed.

Two (2) visiting instructional teams presented formal instruction to members of the Battalion:

<u>Visiting Team</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>
New Equipment Training Team Picatinny Arsenal, Dover N.J.	2.75" Rocket	19/20/21 Apr 68
CID Americal Div	Drugs and Abuses	15 Mar 68

The NETT from the Picatinny Arsenal (Team Ldr, LTC Shaw) introduced new additions to the 2.75" rocket family; the XM 429 Proximity Fuze, the XM 229 Warhead and the WDU-41/A (Flechette). All of the above were test fired on 21 April 68 in the 198th Area of Operations.

e. Intelligence: During the period 1 Feb 68 to 30 Apr 68, the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion had 177 aircraft hit by enemy fire. This represents an increase of 12% over the preceding quarter.

An analysis of the hostile fire reports to determine the number of aircraft hit by altitudes reveals the following:

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report .. Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

<u>ALT</u>	<u>O/G</u>	<u>T/O</u>	<u>LMDG</u>	<u>ENRT</u>	<u>TARGET ATTACKS</u>	<u>TOTAL BY ALT</u>
0	11	7	4	22		44
100		3	5	20		28
200		4	2	6		12
300		3	1	4		8
400				5		5
500	2	2	1	8		13
600		1		6		7
700	1			1	1	3
800		2		9		11
900				3		3
1000		1		7		8
1200				2	1	3
1300				1		1
1400				1		1
1500				6		6
1600				1		1
1700			1	2		3
1800			1	3		4
1900						
2000				1		1
2100				2		2
UNK (13)	27	23	15	110	2	177

The weather had no major effects on operations during this quarter, although some missions were delayed in the early morning hours due to low visibility and intermittent rain showers.

The dissemination of S-2 material, although considered adequate, could be improved. This situation results from the fact that the Battalion not only supports the Americal Division, but also certain select Special Forces camps located in or near the Americal T.O.R. In some instances the pre-planning data necessary for our operations is best gathered by sending a representative to both the 5th Special Forces briefing as well as the Americal briefing.

f. Logistics: (to include Maintenance, Base development)

(1) Class I No Comments

(2) Class II & IV Aviation companies of this battalion have encountered problems in obtaining sufficient amounts of ballistic helmets, flight suits, 100 GPM pumps and armor for crew personnel. Fire fighting equipment and crash rescue equipment was also unavailable during this last quarter.

CONFIDENTIAL

13
AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

(3) Class III - The companies have an insufficient amount of fuel storage and refueling equipment to support themselves if any unit was detached. This is due to a shortage of pumps and bladders. The Division support unit also has a shortage of pumps and bladders. No tactical unit moves required displacement.

(4) Class IV - No significant events or problems.

Base Development - Numerous new construction projects have been completed during last reporting period i.e., orderly room, class room, supply room. Work request has been submitted to have all buildings rewired. The companies have received "Poneprime" for aircraft parking areas and equipment was issued for repair of bunkers and improvements of revetments. Following the TET Offensive this area was completely renovated in record time by MCB-6, MCB-40 and 26th Engineer Battalion. A work order has been submitted for the digging of wells to wash aircraft, however, no work has been accomplished.

HHD has moved into its new orderly room, which was constructed by HHD personnel in March 1968. The building houses the unit supply as well as the Orderly room.

Under the direction and guidance of the Chu Lai Defense Command, a renovation of the bunker lines and other security fixtures has begun. Work is being accomplished by members of the Security Platoon and is progressing satisfactorily.

(5) Maintenance

(a) The flow of vehicle parts stopped during TET and until 20 February 1968. Therefore, deadline rates which had been improving, declined as supply of parts became virtually non-existent. This decline continued well into March and thereafter a slow improvement was noted in all vehicle types except 2½ ton cargo trucks. The deadline rate improved rapidly toward the end of this quarter in all vehicle types.

(b) The rapid turnover of qualified maintenance personnel became a serious problem at the beginning of this quarter due to the loss of qualified supervisory personnel with no apparent replacement. This problem area increased as assigned Technical Inspectors in all units were lost and OJT training was not adequate to alleviate the problem. Coordinated loan of TI personnel between companies was partially successful, and toward the end of this quarter, replacement personnel were received. Additional quotas for in-country schools were received for April and for several months into the next quarter and should be a factor in precluding this problem in the future.

CONFIDENTIAL

14.

AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

(c) Number Twelve Periodic Inspections continued to be a severe problem entering this quarter. Only 3 CH-47B's were received in February and CH-47B peculiar parts and special tools were not available. Immediate close liaison was established with 1st Aviation Brigade and 34th General Support Group and resulted in immediate transfer of all 12th PE's to GS companies. One 12th PE was retained and due to non-availability of 13 EDP items, has not been completed. The 12 CH-47B's to complete the assignment for the 178th were received in March. To achieve this assignment, it was necessary to send assembly crews from the 178th ASHC and its supporting 400th TC Detachment to the 56th TC Company at Ton Son Nhut, to the 388th TC Company at Vung Tau, to the 14th TC Battalion at Nha Trang and to the 610th TC Company at Red Beach, Da Nang. During this same period, 6 each 6th PE's were completed and all CH-47A's were transferred to other units, with the exception of one (1) CH-47A. (See Inclosure 2)

(d) This battalion sustained losses of UH-1 aircraft due to combat damage and a peculiar problem area-engine and work dock separation. Maintenance reaction has remained excellent. However, the engine and work dock separation is beyond the capability of the units and required turn-in of the aircraft. The combat damage was repairable within the units in 80% of the combat hits. The remainder had to be turned into supporting maintenance companies for repair.

(e) Aircraft parts supply were in country but transportation was non-existent for the first 3 weeks in February. EDP lists included many ASL items. Request to 1st Aviation Brigade resulted in the movement of backed-up parts from Air Force movement ramp in Saigon. The flow of parts slowly improved. Other problem areas in distribution of parts are slowly being resolved.

(f) Aircraft Availability during this period was as follows:

	<u>UH-1D (slicks)</u>	<u>UH-1C (guns)</u>	<u>CH-47</u>	<u>OH-6A</u>
FEBRUARY	73%	70%	68%	54%
MARCH	74%	71%	90%	71%
APRIL	86%	77%	79%	(See sec I Par 1b)

(g) Aircraft Mission Ready availability during this period was as follows:

	<u>UH-1D (slicks)</u>	<u>UH-1C (guns)</u>	<u>CH-47</u>	<u>OH-6A</u>
FEBRUARY	67%	56%	42%	37%
MARCH	71%	55%	66%	62%
APRIL	72%	64%	75%	(See Sec I, Par 1b)

CONFIDENTIAL

15
AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

g. Organization: The only significant change in the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion's organizational structure was the deletion of C Troop, 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry. (Section I, Par 1b). Plans are also being made for the addition of another CH-47 company to arrive during May 1968. (132d Assault Support Helicopter Company, 16 CH-47B with the L7-C engine).

Presently the Battalion receives its missions and mission details from the Division Aviation Office (DAO) of the Americal Division. A plan is under consideration that would provide for direct coordination between the supported unit and the 14th CAB. It is felt this system will provide decreased reaction time and more concise mission information.

h. Other: (to include Civil Affairs, Safety and Communications)

The Civil Affairs Program of the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion centers on the An Tan Orphanage. Through the efforts of the Battalion Chaplain (Wade, Raymond J., CHC, 05 519 770, Cpt) and Flight Surgeon (Wurgler, James N., Cpt, MC 05 718 398) sixty (60) children are provided financial assistance and limited medical care. The governing board, consisting of four (4) senior Vietnamese, is advised by the Chaplain on money management, building construction and over-all operation.

The Aviation Safety Program of the Battalion receives command emphasis at all levels and is administered by the Safety Officer (Gordon W Seaward, Cpt, Arty, 05 402 709). During the period of this report the Battalion experienced three (3) major aircraft accidents. All of these accidents resulted in a total loss of the aircraft. There were no fatalities as a result of aircraft accidents during the period of this report. For this reporting period the battalion flew 21,997 hours with an accident rate of 13.6 per 100,000 flying hours.

During the last quarterly period the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion communications section scheduled 16 aircraft into the 335th Transportation Battalion Retrofit site at Chu Lai (Ky Ha). A total of 65 aircraft have been retrofitted to accept the KY-28 speech security equipment.

Another secure landline teletype has been installed. This new circuit provides secure radio teletype to 16th Cbt Avn Gp headquarters in Da Nang. The voice communications with a subordinate unit in Duc Pho and with group headquarters in Da Nang is still maintained by the operation of a single sideband not 24 hours a day.

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AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

17
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (OPLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

SECTION II

Lessons Learned

Commanders Observations, Evaluations and Recommendations

1. (C) Personnel

a. Observation: The Infusion Program is considered a useful personnel management tool; however, planned personnel losses must be recognized early enough for the program to take effect. Between the 5th and 13th of February one unit of this Battalion, the 176th Aviation Company, experienced the loss of 123 personnel due to DEROS. Many of these personnel were senior NCO's with critical skill MOS's. The company subsequently spent sixty (60) days recovering from the loss of its NCO leadership and technicians skills. Infusion within the Battalion is considered only partially successful because of the limited resources available within the companies.

Recommendation: The Battalion personnel section has the responsibility to alert higher headquarters of the impending problem. Corrective action must be initiated at once to provide infusion personnel or replacement personnel.

2. (C) Operations

a. Observation: The Battalion's present location is in a sandy environment, the fine dust particles require added precautions and man hours to keep sand and dust from penetrating helicopter bearings, fittings and close tolerance parts.

Evaluation: Tents (Maintenance, Frame) have been set up to act as maintenance and shop buildings; however, permanent type dust free work areas are needed for the best utilization of men and equipment. Dust inhibitors such as Penoprime are beneficial, however, the results are temporary. The 14th CAB has submitted work orders for permanent type maintenance buildings, with construction programmed to begin in July 1968.

Recommendation: Sand and dust proof shelters and a more permanent type of dust retardant are considered necessary.

b. Observation: Some field commanders who employ aviation assets generally have a limited knowledge of airmobile operations and procedures.

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AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

Evaluation: The capabilities of RVN aviation assets is diversified and new innovations are developed daily. Newly arrived commanders, and commanders without aviation experience do not employ their aviation assets to their maximum capacity.

Recommendation: The 14th Combat Aviation Battalion has developed an aviation briefing for newly arrived units in RVN and encourages all supported units to participate. Policy should reflect that the above local procedure will be a recurring requirement for all aviation supported units in RVN.

c. Observation: The practice of having CH-47 Chinooks and UH-1 type aircraft operating in the same resupply pad is creating an undue hazard, and a loss of time on both aircraft. Normally, resupply pads are single ship pads, and it is impractical and dangerous for a Chinook to operate around UH-1 aircraft in this type of area. Since UH-1 aircraft have to land on the pad to pick up their loads internally, the CH-47 must wait until the UH-1 has cleared the area before it can pick up the load. In cases where the UH-1 load is varied and must be loaded one piece at a time (i.e., ammunition, C rations) this delay can be and has been as long as 15 minutes. A letter has been forwarded to supported units outlining the above disadvantages and suggesting the following.

Recommendation: Whenever possible, separate resupply pads should be utilized for CH-47's and UH-1. Due to the CH-47 carrying mostly sling loads, it spends approximately 2 minutes in a PZ picking up the load. This would represent a total time of 13 minutes saved, and would eliminate the danger present when the CH-47, with its destructive rotor-wash, worked around smaller aircraft.

d. Observation: Dusty pick up zones and landing zones are becoming increasingly hazardous.

Evaluation: Due to the dry weather, dust is becoming an ever increasing problem with the CH-47B Chinook. Units in FSB's and landing zones tend to utilize dirt areas for resupply. In many cases, dust created by the high winds from the CH-47B Chinook causes the pilot to lose all references outside the aircraft. Often the dust has become so bad that the pilot has had to leave the pick up zone and wait for the dust to settle, then try to pick up the load again. This results in a loss time, and creates a very hazardous condition for the aircraft and the crew, and endangers the lives of ground personnel working in the immediate vicinity. A letter has been forwarded to supported units outlining the above disadvantages and suggesting the following.

Recommendation: When practical, using units should try to use areas that have been Penoprime'd or areas that have grass on them. If either of the above mentioned areas are not available, burnt motor oil can and should be used as a satisfactory substitute.

15
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AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

19
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

e. Observation: Poorly policed PZ's and LZ's endanger lives, equipment, and waste valuable time.

Evaluation: Loose debris continues to present extremely hazardous situations in and around PZ's and LZ's of supported units. Furthermore, the perpetuation of potential foreign object damage (FOD) in these resupply areas implies a basic lack of understanding among supported units with reference to hazards inherent in CH-47 operations. Resupply areas are continually littered with pieces of lumber, unsecured sandbags, mormite cans, wooden boxes, shell casings and fibers and other miscellaneous equipment. A CH-47B hovering with a normal load is capable of generating hurricane force winds of up to 100-120 knots. These winds can and do propel large objects into the hovering aircraft, other material, and, most importantly, towards personnel within a radius of 50 feet to 300 feet from the aircraft depending upon prevailing wind conditions. The FOD to one blade and one engine of one aircraft amounts to approximately \$85,000. Potential personnel injuries and fatalities caused by flying debris render the continual poor state of police in resupply areas inexcusable. A letter has been forwarded to supported units outlining the above disadvantages and suggesting the following.

Recommendation: Units must realize the severe consequences involved in loose debris allowed to remain near operating CH-47 aircraft. The state of police in all resupply areas must be constantly monitored and improved. It must be mentioned here that the air inlet screens in use by this organization have proved to be insufficient on two occasions to prohibit the ingestion of small rocks and bolts, necessitating engine changes in both cases.

f. Observation: Protective clothing for ground personnel is a mandatory safety precaution.

Evaluation: It is a matter of great concern to this organization that hook-up air-ground coordination personnel of supported units fail to wear proper protection clothing while working near operating CH-47B aircraft. The hazard to these personnel involving blowing sand, rocks and heavier debris are great. Concussion, loss of eyesight and severe lacerations are common probabilities especially for hook-up personnel in most resupply areas. A letter has been forwarded to supported units outlining the above disadvantages and suggesting the following.

Recommendation: Hook-up personnel and other personnel in the immediate area must wear, as a minimum, fatigue trousers, shirts with sleeves rolled down, combat boots, gloves, steel helmets and protective masks. Protective masks are recommended in lieu of goggles due to the added advantages of full face protection and the prevention of dust inhalation.

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26

AVGM-AC

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

3. (U) Training

a. Observation: The 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, due to its combat environment, cannot follow a rigid training program.

Evaluation: The necessity for individual training is an established fact; however, mission commitments preclude this Battalion from adhering to a published schedule. The requirements outlined in USRV 350-1 place an unrealistic training requirement on units.

Recommendation: A training program designed specifically for a combat aviation unit is needed. A central in-processing training facility, such as exists for infantry replacements, would substantially reduce unit training time.

4. (U) Intelligence: None

5. (U) Logistics: None

6. (C) Organization

Observation: Presently the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion receives its daily missions and coordinating instructions from the Americal Division through the facilities of the Division Aviation Office.

Evaluation: It is planned in the near future to receive mission requests directly from the using unit, thereby giving the Battalions operations personnel more direct and therefore more accurate, access to details concerning a specific mission.

Recommendation: In any situation involving the dissemination of aviation unit information all attempts should be made to permit the aviation unit to go directly to the ~~supported~~ unit for mission information and coordination.

7. (C) Other (Fire Fly)

Observation: The 14th Combat Aviation Battalion's capability to provide night illumination of the enemy's lines of supply and communications.

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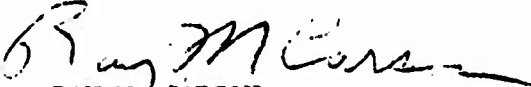
21
AVGM-10

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68. (U)

Evaluation: The Battalion has fabricated an illumination device that provides sufficient light to cover locations of suspected enemy build-ups. There are many advantages to this system: directional control of a high intensity light beam, continuous illumination of a specific target and immediate fire-power when gunships are used in conjunction with Fire Fly. Disadvantages also exist, the aircraft becomes a lucrative target, crews must be well trained and accurate coordination between the Aviation and Infantry elements must exist.

Recommendation: Innovations of the type described above are being developed daily by the aviation units in RVN, such as ship/shore operations and mortar drop systems. A central clearing agency should be established to provide immediate guidance and authority to either approve or disapprove of the concept under consideration.


RAY M. CARSON
LTC, CE
Commanding

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thru: USARPAC
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to: III MAF (Filo)
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- 10 copies to: Americal Division

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22

AVG-CO (15 May 68) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) For Quarterly Period
1 February 68 to 30 April 1968 (U)

DA, Headquarters, 16th Combat Aviation Group, APO 96337 29 MAY 1968

TO: Commanding General, 1st Aviation Brigade, ATTN: AVPA-111, APO 96384

1. (U) This headquarters has reviewed the basic report and concurs with the content except as noted below. Certain points have been amplified for clarity.

2. (C) Section I: Significant Organizational Activities.

a. Page 8, 4th paragraph down, Item: Guard: Aviation units are manned with critical skilled personnel. TO&L's do not provide excess personnel nor general duty soldiers. While aviation units can and do maintain internal security, the requirement to provide personnel for overall external perimeter security decreases their capability to perform their primary mission over an extended period of time. Aviation units should be augmented with security detachments or the security mission be assigned to Infantry, Military Police or other similar units.

b. Page 8, para d, Item: Training:

(1) This headquarters concurs that formalized inflexible training schedules are difficult to administer. However, any training schedule is nothing more than a management tool. Flexibility is derived in the manner of implementation.

(2) For clarification the last sentence pertains to aerial gunnery ranges. There is a definite need for areas in which aerial weapon systems can be tested and gunnery training conducted. Presently, aerial gunnery training is accomplished over hostile areas and at some distance from the home field.

(3) Daily missions provide an excellent training vehicle for the continuous training of aviators and crews. However, the aviator and the crewmember require periodic formal training to review those areas of flight which are not common occurrences. Crew training is required in both visual and instrument flying techniques. Periodic training to be effective, must be a scheduled mission in itself. This is especially true with instrument training. The practice of flying hood from point to point, neglects the critical area of approaches. Command emphasis is required to insure that aircraft are available for training and that this time is properly used.

c. Page 10, para 2f(2), Item: Class II & IV: Requirements have been forwarded to higher headquarters and some items have been received. These items are command controlled and are shipped direct to the units in many

19

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

23
AVGM-CO (15 May 68) 1st Ind

29 MAY 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) For quarterly Period
1 February 68 to 30 April 1968 (U)

cases. Units have been made aware of the command-wide shortages. Follow-up action is continuous by this headquarters.

d. This headquarters is aware that this item of equipment is short. However, no tactical unit moves are planned and Class III at unit locations is provided by permanent facilities in most cases. Further study of this matter is now underway.

e. Page 11, para 1f(5)(b), Item: Personnel turnover: In October 1967, USAFV directed that all replacements in grade of E6 and below be requisitioned by the 23d Inf Div (Americal) for this battalion starting with fill month Feb 68, even though the battalion was attached less requisitioning and transfer authority to the division. When Feb 68 arrived, the 23d Inf Div declined to furnish replacements unless their responsibility included all personnel requisitions. Consequently, CG, 1st Avn Lde was asked to fill this battalion's requirements. Replacements started arriving in March 1968.

3. (U) Section II, Lessons Learned, Commander's Observations, Evaluations and Recommendations.

a. Page 14, para 1a, Item: Infusion: Had a successful infusion program been established during 1967, the severe loss of personnel within the 176th Assault Helicopter Company would not have occurred. This situation will not recur since personnel losses have been replaced over a period of months. Active infusion programs are being conducted with direction from group level.

b. Page 17, para 3, Item: Training: The establishment of an in-country indoctrination center would provide the aviation commander with individuals oriented in the current procedures, employed by Army Aviation in RVN. Recurring training requirements can be handled at company level.

c. Page 18, para 7, Item: Clearing Agency: The requirement is valid. ACTIV, whose mission is the evaluation of new concepts and equipment in RVN satisfies this requirement. The unit has been advised.

Daniel G. Gust

DANIEL G. GUST
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

20

CONFIDENTIAL

24

AVBA-C (15 May 68) 2d Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (OLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68 from 14th Combat Aviation
Battalion.

Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade, APO 96384

JUN 16 1968

THRU: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC-DST,
APO 96375
Commander in Chief, United States Army Pacific, ATTN: GFOF-CT,
APO 96558

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

This headquarters has reviewed this report, considers it to be adequate,
and concurs with the contents as indorsed except for the following:

Section II, paragraph 3a, page 17. Nonconcur. Paragraph 5, 1st
Aviation Brigade Regulation 35C-1, dated 5 April 68, permits deviations
from the mandatory training requirements listed in Appendix I, 1st AV
Regulation 35C-1 when, in the judgment of the commander, the operational
mission of the unit necessitates and justifies such deviations. This
headquarters does not feel that this places an unrealistic training
requirement on the unit, but rather allows the unit commander maximum
flexibility in the planning and conduct of required training.

FO. THE COMMANDER:



J. D. SEGAL
LTJ, AGC
ASST ADJUTANT GENERAL

25
AVHGC-DST (15 May 68) 3d Ind (U)

CPT Arnold/ms/LBN 4485

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (ORLL) for Quarterly
Period 1 February 68 to 30 April 68.

HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375

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

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 30 April 1968 from Headquarters, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion.

2. Concur with report as submitted.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Copies furnished:

HQ, 1st Avn Bde

HQ, 14th CAB

20
GPOP-DT (15 May 68) (U) 4th Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 14th Cbt Avn Bn for Period Ending
30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

28 JUN 1968

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558

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

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding indorse-
ments and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

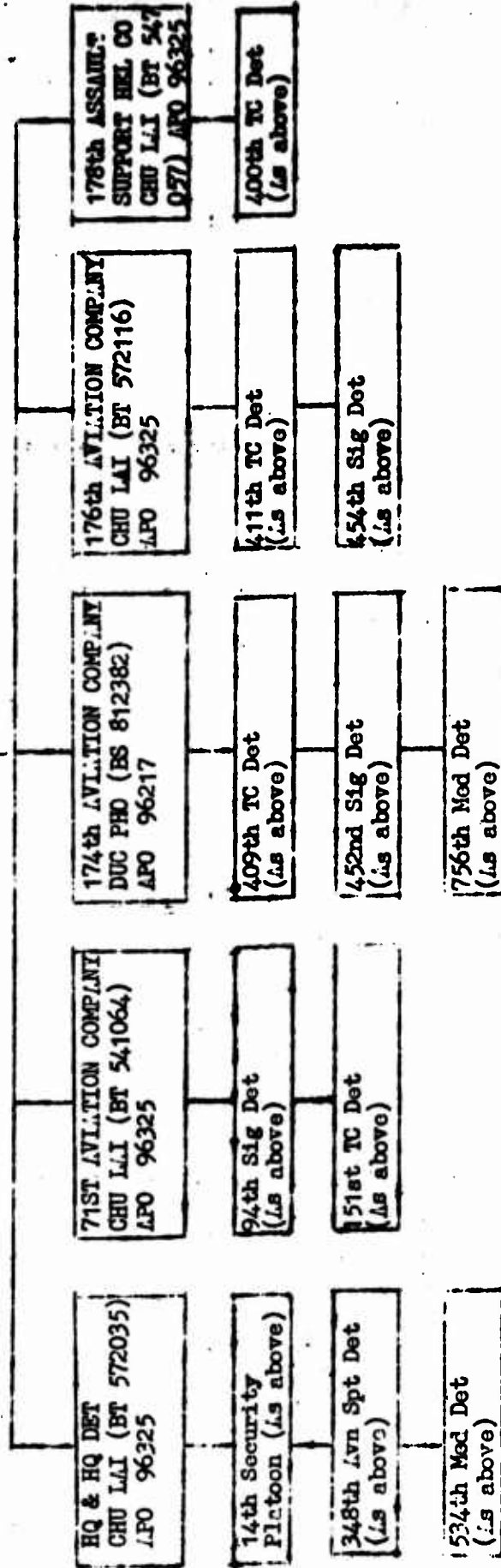
C.L. Shortt

C.L. SHORTT
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

27

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ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
14TH C/AB
CHU L I (BT 572 035)
APO 96325



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Inclusura #11

22

2

28

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14TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
AIRCRAFT STATUS (Authorized - O/H)
AS OF 30 April 68

Subordinate Unit	UH-1C Auth-O/H		UH-1D/H Auth-O/H		CH-47 Auth-O/H		U-6 Auth-O/H	
	HHD	-	-	0	1*	-	-	0
71st Av Co	8	6	23	18	-	-	-	-
174th Av Co	8	5	23	19	-	-	-	-
176th Av Co	8	6	23	18	-	-	-	-
178th Av Co	-	-	-	-	16	17***	-	-
14th C/B	24	17	69	55	16	17	0	2

* VOCCG, 1st Aviation Brigade

** 180 day loan

*** 178th ASHC has O/H one CH-47A that is awaiting reassignment (#157).
It is EDP for thirteen (13) items to complete 12th P.E.

Inclosure "2"

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27

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 14TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
 Operational Statistics
 1 Feb 68/30 Apr 68

Subordinate Unit	Hours	Sorties Flown	Troops Lifted	Tons Cgo Lifted	Mod Evac	L/C Recoveries	Enemy KIA.	Sampans Dam/Dest	Structures Dam/Dest		Ammunition Expended		L/C Confirmed Loss*	L/C Downed*
									Dam/Dest	7.62	40mm	2.75"		
HHD ¹	183	162	98	4	0	0	0	0/0	0/0	0	0	0	0	0
71 AV Co	7043	28743	33730	1847	26	0	81	0/316	217/341	952086	4545	5889	1	36
174 AV Co	6073	27889	36538	1092	21	0	279	0/0	0/88	591771	9975	2925	1	28
176 AV Co	5772	24079	40601	1734	49	0	139	0/7	108/524	684070	13605	5254	0	39
178 AV Co	2804	12065	22309	19871	37	58	0	0/0	0/0	6611	0	0	0	25
C/7/17 ²	3383	5777	4102	0	0	0	415	0/8	0/127	628262	10210	3826	1	53
14th CAB	25258	138715	217378	24548	133	58	914	0/331	325/1080	2862700	38335	17894	3	161

1 UH-1H figures are reflected in 176th Avn Co figures
 2 These statistics are for Feb 68 and Mar 68. See Section I, Para 1b.

Subordinate Unit	UH-1C Loss/Dam	UH-1D/H Loss/Dam	CH-47/B Loss/Dam	U-6 Loss/Dam	IOH Loss/Dam
HHD	-	-	-	0/0	-
71 AV Co	1/7	0/29	-	-	-
174 AV Co	1/7	0/21	-	-	-
176 AV Co	0/12	0/21	-	-	-
178 AV Co	-	-	0/25	-	-
C/7/17 ²	1/42	0/2	-	-	0/9
14th CAB	3/68	0/79	0/25	0/0	0/9

26

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 14TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO San Francisco 96325

31
AVGM-AC

18 April 1968

SUBJECT: Documentation of Army Aviation Operations (29 January through
29 February 1968) (U)

1. (C) Task Organization

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment

14th CAB Security Platoon
348th Aviation Detachment
534th Medical Detachment

71st Aviation Company

94th Signal Detachment
151st Trans Detachment

174th Aviation Company

409th Trans Detachment
452nd Signal Detachment
756th Medical Detachment

176th Aviation Company

411th Trans Detachment
454th Signal Detachment

178th Aviation Company

400th Trans Detachment

C/7/17 Troop (detached on 31 March 1968)

40th Trans Detachment

2. (C) Significant offensive and/or defensive actions.

a. During the TET Offensive numerous combat assaults were conducted by units of the 14th CAB as evidenced by para 3 below, however, all of the combat assaults were company sized or smaller. None of the combat assaults taken by themselves were extraordinary, but rather when considered consecutively were significant in assisting the Americal Division in regaining the initiative over the enemy.

b. Airfield Defense. During the period 29 January through 29 February 1968 no ground attacks were mounted against units of the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion. The enemy did attack on four occasions with mortar and rocket fire.

27

Inclosure "4"

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18 April 1968

SUBJECT: Documentation of Army Aviation Operations (29 January through 29 February 1968) (U)

32.

(1) At 0400 hours, 30 Jan 68, the Chu Lai Airfield complex was attacked by a hostile force utilizing 82mm mortars and 120mm rockets. The only 14th CAB unit subjected to incoming fire was HHD, 14th CAB which received 8-10 rounds of 82mm mortar and 4 rounds of 120mm rocket.

All defensive bunkers were manned prior to the attack with each bunker on a 50% alert status. Consecutive to the first incoming round, all positions were put on 100% alert status and all other personnel occupied their assigned security bunker. Personnel remained on 100% alert till released shortly after dawn.

The attack on the entire Chu Lai complex lasted 20-35 minutes and started a fire in the ammunition dump located one-quarter mile from 14th CAB. The resultant blast, from exploding 500 pound bombs, damaged every building in the Battalion Headquarters area. Bomb fragments fell on the area causing considerable damage to the tents and tin roofs. No injuries were sustained during the attack.

A UH-1D flareship and two UH-1C gunships were dispatched to seek out the firing sight. The area was pinpointed and the gunships expended with unknown results. No attempt by the enemy was made to penetrate the perimeter.

The defense of the battalion area and the airborne reaction team were directed by LTC Carroll C. Issacs, Commanding Officer, 14th CAB.

(2) At 0130 hours, 1 Feb 68, the Duc Pho base camp was attacked by enemy forces using 60mm mortars. The 174th AHC located at Duc Pho received 35-40 rounds on and near their aircraft ramp.

All defensive positions, which were on 50% alert status, were immediately brought to 100% alert. The UH-1C gunships and one UH-1D flareship reacted immediately with unknown results. No attempt was made by the enemy to penetrate the perimeter.

The attack, which lasted 15-20 minutes, caused major damage to six aircraft but no injuries were sustained by personnel of the battalion. Major Thomas W. Wheat Jr., Commanding Officer, 174th AHC was responsible for the defense of his company area.

(3) At 0315 hours, 7 Feb 68, the Chu Lai airfield was attacked by enemy forces utilizing 120mm rockets. Thirteen rockets landed in the vicinity of the 71st AHC and 178th ASHC ramps. The Chu Lai East runway, a Marine responsibility, was cratered and the only damage sustained by 14th CAB units was light skin damage to one CH-47.

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18 April 1968

SUBJECT: Documentation of Army Aviation Operations (29 January through 29 February 1968) (U)

33
All units came up to 100% alert and remained so until approximately 0430. The attack which only lasted 2-5 minutes caused no friendly casualties. No gunships were used in reaction and no attempt to penetrate the perimeter was made by the enemy.

The defense of the respective company areas was the responsibility of Major Robert D. Fitzgerald, Commanding Officer, 71st AHC and Major Ernest M. Wood Jr., Commanding Officer, 178th ASHC.

(4) At 0042 hours, 13 Feb 68, the Duc Pho airfield was attacked by hostile forces utilizing 82mm mortars. The 174th AHC located at Duc Pho received 5-6 rounds during the 3-5 minute duration of the attack.

All defense positions were immediately manned and no friendly casualties resulted. One aircraft was destroyed and two damaged. No reaction force was dispatched and the enemy made no attempt to enter the compound.

The defense of the area was directed by Major Glen D. Gibson, Commanding Officer, 174th AHC.

3. (C) The 14th CAB conducted 62 combat assaults and 4 final extractions during the period.

4. (C) None of the combat assaults were decisive on their own as explained in para 2a above. The gunship actions were significant (see Tab B, para 3).

5. (C) The 14th CAB conducted 337 resupply missions during the period of which 14 were escorted by gunships. Typical of the escorted missions is the one related below.

On 7 Feb 68, after being in heavy contact all day, B Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Infantry was in dire need of emergency ammo resupply. Two UH-1D's and two UH-1C's (gunships) from the 71st Avn Co were called out at approximately 1800 hours to accomplish this mission. One UH-1D acted as flareship while the other performed as resupply. The two gunships escorted the resupply ship into each LZ, thus no aircraft were hit by enemy ground fire. The mission terminated at 2300 hours.

6. (C) A total of 41 medevac missions were performed by units of the 14th CAB. Two of the above required gunship support. No details are available.

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34

AVG:-AC

18 April 1968

SUBJECT: Documentation of Army Aviation Operations (29 January through 29 February 1968) (U)

7. (C) Units of the 14th CAB flew 77 administrative missions during the period.

8. (C) Ammunition expended:

<u>2.75" Rocket</u>	<u>40 mm</u>	<u>7.62 mm</u>
7,238	17,246	1,120,944

9. (C) Casualty information:

<u>KHA</u>	<u>WHA</u>	<u>MHA</u>	<u>Enemy KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>
None	17	None	741	27

10. (U) Number of decorations received for the period:

<u>SS</u>	<u>DFC</u>	<u>BS</u>	<u>BS"V"</u>	<u>AM</u>	<u>ACM</u>	<u>PH</u>
1	7	5	3	215	3	17

11. (U) Number of recommendations for the period:

<u>SS</u>	<u>DFC</u>	<u>BS</u>	<u>BS"V"</u>	<u>AM</u>	<u>AM"V"</u>	<u>ACM</u>	<u>PH</u>
4	11	8	3	406	2	3	17

12. (U) Supporting data not available

JOHN J. TODD
MAJOR, SIG C
S-3

TAB-A Statistical Data
TAB-B Armed Helicopter Questionnaire

30

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35

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14TH CAB STATISTICAL DATA (29 Jan - 29 Feb 68)

	UH-1D/H	UH-1B/C	CH-47	OH-6A	U-6
1. HOURS FLOWN	5430	1793	1103.2	679	50
2. SORTIES FLOWN	17648	3449	4941	1097	54
3. TROOPS TRANSPORTED	35737	10	5910	0	112
4. CARGO TRANSPORTED (TONS)	1175	0	8074.8	0	3
5. AIRCRAFT DAMAGED ON THE GROUND DUE TO HOSTILE ACTION	7	3	1	0	0
6. AIRCRAFT RECEIVING HITS IN FLIGHT	29	33	15	4	0
7. AIRCRAFT SHOT DOWN	1	2	0	0	0
8. NUMBER OF VR MISSIONS FLOWN	35	0	N/A	622	N/A
9. NUMBER OF PHC/O MISSIONS FLOWN	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10. NUMBER OF SIAR MISSIONS FLOWN	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
11. NUMBER OF IR MISSIONS FLOWN	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
12. NUMBER OF STRUCTURES DESTROYED	0	430	0	0	N/A
13. NUMBER OF SAMPANS DESTROYED	2	111	0	0	N/A

31

TAB A to
Jan 4

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ARMED HELICOPTER QUESTIONNAIRE

1. (C) What type missions have your gunships performed since 31 Dec 67? Armed escort, close air support and immediate reaction force in conjunction with flareships.

2. (C) Could these missions have been accomplished by other means? If not, why?

No. This period was marked by actions requiring immediate reaction to enemy attacks. It required a fire support means that was intimately familiar with the friendly positions, the terrain and the units operating procedures, call signs and frequencies. Only on rare occasions was it possible to conduct a briefing prior to deployment. The only means available in the Americal MAOR to render assistance to the allied forces under the above conditions were the gunships of the 14th CAB. (See 3 below).

3. (C) During the TET Offensive, did your gunships play an important role? If so, give dates, locations, enemy killed, enemy structures or sampans destroyed and other factual information in narrative form?

a. 176th AHC - Weapons Platoon - "Muskots": On 31 Jan 68 and 1 Feb 68 the Muskots were called to assist in the defense of Tam Ky and Quang Ngai. The enemy had entered the cities and extreme care was necessary in order not to kill or injure innocent civilian personnel. The maneuverability of the helicopter plus the flexibility of their weapons systems proved invaluable in destroying enemy concentrations within these cities. A Muskot was sent to the city of Hue to help the allied effort there. That ship flew during the period 18 Feb through 27 Feb with another gunship joining to make a team. Numerous missions were flown into the Citadel trying to break up the stronghold the enemy had. The aforementioned capabilities plus the ships ability to work under extremely low ceilings, the much more hazardous, proved again the value of the armed helicopter. All told, the Muskots accounted for 112 enemy killed, 215 structures and 7 sampans destroyed during the TET Offensive period.

b. 174th AHC - Weapons Platoon - "Sharks": At approximately 0500, on 1 February 1968, the primary gun team was scrambled to Quang Ngai City. Upon reaching Quang Ngai airfield they found the entire southern perimeter under intensive attack from an estimated battalion of well armed NVL, and VC regulars. Instant coordination was made with the ground commander as to the location of the friendly forces prior to engaging the enemy. While coordinating, the team received small arms and automatic weapons fire. Warrant Officer Russell Doersam, who was leading the team, began making runs into the heaviest enemy concentrations. Although the only illumination was that of the tracers, effective fire was placed into the heavily armed enemy positions. During the early minutes of the mission, both ships in the team had received several hits throughout the aircraft. After many runs into the heavy enemy concentrations, they expended their complete load of heavy ordnance. The team commander then called for more gunships.

TAB B to Inclosure 4

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

31
TAB B to Inclosure 4 (cont'd)

At 0630 the secondary gun team was scrambled to assist the primary team. Instructions were given to Captain Thomas V. Woods, Commander of the secondary gun team. As soon as the briefing on the situation was complete, Captain Woods contacted the element on the ground for further coordination. During this time all three secondary ships were receiving heavy small arms and automatic fire. The crew chiefs and gunners on the aircraft were continually firing into enemy locations in an attempt to silence some of the enemy fire.

The ground commander had given his situation as bad. The southwest corner of his perimeter was under heavy pressure by a platoon sized element of VC utilizing trenches to provide cover. They were using mortars and automatic weapons and had succeeded in killing and wounding many ARVN soldiers. Captain Woods concentrated his heavy fire team on this portion of the perimeter, and after 2 passes, had succeeded in killing a great many of the invading troops. The remainder were withdrawing back through the trenches. In order to conserve as much of their major ordnance as possible, the team began making low level passes utilizing the door guns to complete the killing of the remaining enemy platoon.

At about this time, the ARVN training center on the north side of the Quang Ngai River was being overrun by an NVA company, and the ground commander there was requesting gunships. It was also at this time that an Air Force FAC had come on station with 2 sets of fighter aircraft for use on the remainder of the NVA/VC battalion on the southern perimeter. Insuring that the major threat to the south had been silenced enough to give the friendly ground troops command of the situation, the secondary gun team broke station and moved to the north side of the city where the training center had been completely occupied by an NVA company. The American advisor there was planning to sweep over the hill that the training center was on from south to north and retake one section at a time. Enemy fire was intense, he was losing troops and was now pinned down. The fire support provided by the gunships would have to be extremely accurate because of the proximity of friendly troops. Pass after pass was made on the positions each one bringing effective fire on the NVA company. While waiting for relief, the team began making low level passes utilizing door guns on the enemy who were now becoming disorganized. Soon the primary team returned. By now smaller battles had broken out all throughout the Quang Ngai area. The situation was becoming more spread out and the VC and NVA were still taking many friendly lives. The primary team again expended their ordnance and recalled the secondary team. Due to the expert skill of the maintenance personnel, who at times had seemingly impossible repairs to make, the support of the Quang Ngai mission continued throughout the day. The aircraft were badly riddled by the enemy fire with as many as 22 holes in one ship.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

38.

TAB B to Inclosure 4 (Cont'd)

When the day finally ended at 1800, the Shark gunships had been credited with over 230 enemy killed, and many wounded. This outstanding support allowed the friendly troops to police up over 100 weapons ranging from 140mm rockets to 57mm recoilless rifles, and many AK and SKS type weapons. The Shark gun teams were highly praised by the American advisors and credited with preventing a complete overrun of two major strongholds protecting the District Headquarters of Quang Ngai.

At 2230 hours, 29 Feb 68, the Dolphin flare ship was alerted for a possible night CA northeast of Quang Ngai Province. A Communist trawler had been sighted by a Naval radar aircraft. The scramble occurred at 0100. Two Shark gunships and a Dolphin flare ship proceeded to the location of the trawler, which was 10 km east, northeast of Duc Pho in the South China Sea. When the aircraft arrived, the trawler was receiving heavy fire from the Navy swiftboats. Immediately the flare ship started illuminating the area. The Shark gunships then rolled in and fired their mini-guns and 2.75" rockets. The aircraft immediately came under 12.7mm machinegun fire from the trawler. Through the combined efforts of the Naval swiftboats and the 174th Assault Helicopter Company the trawler ran aground. The Captain of the trawler, seeing that the situation was hopeless elected to destroy his ship. It was later ascertained that 4000 rifles, 1000 60mm rounds, 1000 57mm recoilless rifle rounds and an unestimable amount of other ordinance were destroyed.

Through the combined efforts of the 174th Assault Helicopter Company, and the Navy, badly needed enemy supplies were unable to reach their destination.

c. 71st AHC- Weapons - "Firebirds":

30 January 1968 the gunships and the flare ship were called out in support of a unit in the 196th LIB who were in heavy contact. Two enemy sampans were destroyed at BT 2744. KBA unknown.

31 January 1968 the gunships and the flare ship were called out at approximately 0300 in support of the ARVN's and C Troop, 1/1 Cav located at Tam Ky. Tam Ky had come under heavy ground attack and without the support of the gunships would have been overrun. KBA unknown. 1 UH-1C (A) hit by enemy fire.

1 February 1968 the UH-1C gunships and the flareship were called out in support of the 196th LIB. One of their units was in extremely heavy contact. 2 UH-1D flare ships were called out in support of the Chu Lai Defense Command. The southern perimeter was receiving mortars and small arms fire. The Flare ships provided the necessary illumination for the gunships on station and also the perimeter guards. KBA unknown.

34

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

39
TAB B to Inclosure 4 (cont'd)

3. February 1968 the flareship and UH-1C gunships were used to provide close air support and illumination for a company of the 196th LIB who were in heavy contact. 5 sampans destroyed. KBA unknown. During the day 3 UH-1D were hit by enemy ground fire in the 196th LIB area of operations.

4 February 1968. During the day the UH-1C gunships flew 12 sorties in support of the 196th LIB. 9 structures damaged, 12 destroyed. 1 UH-1C(A) shot down in support of the 196th LIB. Crew recovered but aircraft was not recoverable.

6 February 1968 the flareship and 2 UH-1C gunships were called out at 0030 hours in support of a unit of the 196th LIB which was in heavy contact. 6 structures damaged, 12 destroyed, 1 UH-1D was hit by enemy ground fire.

7 February 1968 the flareship and the UH-1C gunships were called out at 1800 for emergency ammo resupply in support of 3rd Bdo, 4th Inf Div. The mission was completed at 2300.

8 February 1968 the flareship and the 2 UH-1C gunships were called out on a "Fire Fly" for the 196th LIB in the eastern most part of their area of operation. 2 structures were destroyed and 1 damaged. 15 sampans were destroyed.

14 February 1968 the UH-1C gunships were called out to escort a UH-1D picking up a LRRP team in heavy contact. 5 structures were destroyed at BT 025 365. The aircraft took 1 hit from enemy ground fire.

15 February 1968 the flareship and UH-1C gunships conducted a "Fire Fly" for the 196th LIB in their eastern AO. 18 structures were destroyed, 25 damaged and 24 sampans destroyed. 1 UH-1C(A) took 1 hit from enemy ground fire.

19 February 1968 the flareship and UH-1C gunships were called out on a "Fire Fly" mission in support of the 196th LIB. This was conducted on the Inland Waterway in their eastern AO. 21 sampans were destroyed, 40 structures were destroyed, and 5 VC KBA.

20 February 1968 the UH-1C gunships were called out for a close air support mission for a company in contact. 2 structures were destroyed and 4 damaged at BT 008 375.

23 February 1968 the flareship and UH-1C gunships were used on a "Fire Fly" for the 196th LIB at approximately 0300-0430. 21 sampans were destroyed. Received heavy fire, no hits.

24 February 1968 the flareship and gunships conducted a "Fire Fly" for the 196th LIB from 2200-2400. 1 sampan destroyed, 6 structures destroyed, and 20 VC KBA at BT 2145 and BT 9541.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

TAB B to Inclosure 4 (cont'd)

26 February 1968. While in support of a company of the 196th LTB the UH-1C gunship claimed 1 NVA KIA. The company was in heavy contact and with the arrival of the gunships the NVA broke contact and tried to run.

4. (C) During the TET Offensive, did Air Force aircraft share in the defense of your airfield and to what extent?

No Air Force or Marine fighter aircraft participated in the defense of the airfields utilized by units of the 14th CAB.

5. (C) What increase in capabilities over current gunships are desirable in future gunships? Why?

The gunship would be much more useful as a close support aircraft if it could carry larger quantities of ammunition and could stay on station for a longer period of time. For close support a greater airspeed is not necessary but would be an advantage for the escort role.

6. (C) Please give all factual, written or statistical data available, based on the experiences of your unit, which would support the following contentions:

a. The UH-1 gunship is providing important support not available from the Air Force or any other means.

The impressive list of gunship accomplishments in para 3 above are all missions that fighter aircraft cannot perform or can only perform in a very limited manner. Each and every gunship mission is a visual recon and requires pilots integrated into the tactical situation and this tactical awareness comes only with daily contact with the supported units. A mission briefing is no substitute and the result can only be less successful.

b. The AH-1G can provide better support than the UH-1 gunship.

The 14th CAB has no AH-1G aircraft experience. It is felt, however, the increased load carrying capability and the increased airspeed of the AH-1G will increase the overall gunship performance in the missions conducted in the Americal Division T/OZ.

7. (C) If gunships had not been available in your area of operation during TET Offensive, what would the probable results have been? Why?

The American advisory compound at Quang Ngai would most probably have been overrun and the city of Tam Ky would probably have been occupied temporarily. The allied forces were reluctant to use T/C air and artillery in these cities but utilized the gunships to their maximum. The gunships in support of Quang Ngai were recommended for both US Army and Vietnamese awards and praised highly in after action reports which are not available for submission with this report.

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