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AGO ltr 29 Apr 1980 ; AGO ltr 29 Apr 1980

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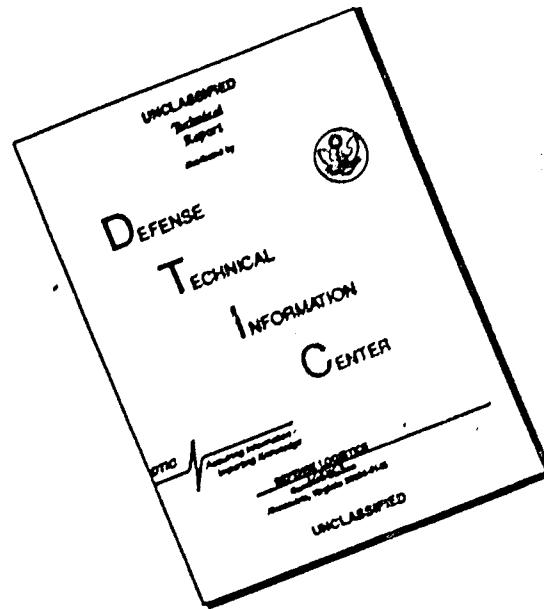
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310



AD 504334

AGDA (M) (8 Aug 69)

FOR OT UT 692161

20 August 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, Period Ending 30 April 1969 (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 UT, 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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The Adjutant General

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 269th Combat Aviation Battalion

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 269TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
APO 96353
"DISCIPLINED PROFESSIONALS"

AVBACA-F-SC

1 May 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report -- Lessons Learned of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion for the Period 1 February 1969 through 30 April 1969 (U)

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1. (C) Section 1. Operations: Significant Activities.

a. Mission: During this reporting period there has been no change to the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion's (CAB) mission.

b. Organization: During this reporting period there has been no change in the organization of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion. Present organization is attached as Inclosure 1.

c. Personalities:

(1) Commander: The Commanding Officer of the 269th CAB is LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE W. MC ILWAIN, 069741, Infantry. LTC MC ILWAIN commanded the battalion throughout the reporting period.

(2) Staff: The principal staff officers during the reporting period were:

(a) Executive Officer: MAJOR FRANK E. NICHOLS, 076466, Signal Corps, who replaced MAJOR JAMES J. GIFFNEY, on 27 March 1969.

(b) S-1: 1ST LIEUTENANT FRANCIS R. BASKIND, 05247156, AG, who replaced MAJOR FRANK E. NICHOLS on 27 March 1969.

(c) S-2: 1ST LIEUTENANT THOMAS G. GARDNER, 05348139, Infantry,

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who replaced CAPTAIN ROBERT H. OSTLER on 2 February 1969

(d) S-3: MAJOR RAYMON L. HARDY, 05308387, Infantry, no change.

(e) S-4: CAPTAIN GEORGE D. CRITTENDEN, 0524547, Artillery, no change.

(3) Subordinate Unit Commanders:

(a) Headquarters Company: CAPTAIN BALLARD M. BARKER, OF04611, Infantry, no change.

(b) 116th Assault Helicopter Company: MAJOR JOHN N. TRACESSER, OF114518, Artillery, no change.

(c) 187th Assault Helicopter Company: MAJOR JERRY R. STRATTON, 097045, Infantry, who replaced MAJOR JAMES J. GAFFNEY on 15 February 1969.

(d) 242nd Assault Support Helicopter Company: MAJOR MAS M. NAKLJO, OF100426, Artillery, who replaced MAJOR ROY H. HERRON, on 22 March 1969.

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2. (C) Personnel and Administration.

a. Maintenance of Unit Strength: The Battalion strength as of 30 April 1969 is shown at Inclosure 2. The summary of projected losses during the next 90 days is shown at Inclosure 3.

b. Replacements have been requisitioned in accordance with current directives. Although there remains some critical enlisted MOS shortages, the overall replacement program has functioned smoothly and efficiently. Following is a summary of personnel gains and losses during the period 1 February to 30 April 1969.

(1) Assignments:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
32	45	208

(2) Rotation to CONUS:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
12	23	222

(3) Casualties Returned to Duty:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
0	0	31

(4) Casualties Evacuated:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
0	2	4

(5) Killed in Action:

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
1	1	6

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c. Reenlistment: There were a total of eight reenlistments in the Battalion during this quarter.

d. Promotions: Promotion during this quarter were as follow:

<u>OPT</u>	<u>1LT</u>	<u>CW2</u>	<u>E-8</u>	<u>E-7</u>	<u>E-6</u>	<u>E-5</u>	<u>E-4</u>
10	0	25	1	2	9	68	62

e. Reclassification: A total of 97 enlisted personnel were administratively reclassified during the quarter. The primary reason for this action was upgrading of MOS skills, adjustments in MOS to jobs performed and enlisted promotions.

f. Retirements: There were no retirements or reversion to retired status during the quarter.

g. Civilian Personnel: There has been no change in the civilian personnel program administered by this battalion. Permanent hire personnel levels continue to be allocated by 12th Combat Aviation Group LHM USAFV Reg 690-7. There has been a general cut back in the number of daily hire personnel. This reduction has been necessary in light of the reduced funds available.

h. Morale and Personal Service: The overall morale of the battalion personnel remains at an excellent level. Contributing factors towards the maintenance of this morale have been increased attention to personal services, an active program and an enlivened spirit of competition within and between subordinate units.

(1) The R&R program is continually stressed throughout the battalion. During the quarter the battalion received and filled 210 quotas.

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(2) Leaves granted during the quarter were as follow:

	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>WARRANT OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
EMERGENCY	2	2	8
COMPASSIONATE	0	0	1
SPECIAL	1	1	16
ORDINARY	7	3	12

(3) Postal Services: Postal Services have continued to be excellent there by greatly assisting the morale of battalion personnel.

(4) Religious Services and Character Guidance:

(a) Religious services of the three major faiths are available to all personnel within the command. Denominational services are also available to certain Protestant personnel. Services for Catholic personnel are provided by Chaplains from adjacent units. Catholics in HHC, 242nd ASHC and 116th LHC attend Mass in the 2nd Brigade Chapel or in the 25th Division Memorial Chapel on the Cu Chi Base Camp. Masses are held in the Memorial Chapel at Tay Ninh for personnel of the 187th LHC. Jewish personnel in the units located at Cu Chi Base Camp may attend services in the 25th Division Memorial Chapel. Special arrangements are made for all Jewish personnel to attend days of special obligation such as Passover. The Battalion Chaplain conducts Protestant worship for the units as follow:

1. 242nd ASHC, 0900 hours on Sundays in the Company Day Room.
2. HHC 269th CAB, 1100 hours on Sundays in the Battalion Conference Room.
3. 187th LHC, 1930 hours on Sunday in the Company Briefing Room.

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4. Protestant personnel of the 116th AHC attend services at the 25th Division Memorial Chapel at 0830 hours on Sundays, or may attend with HHC 269th CLB. A Bible Study is now being held at 2000 hours in the Battalion Headquarters Conference Room on Wednesdays.

(b) Attendance at Protestant and Catholic services are about the same as last quarter. At the present time the Battalion Chaplain conducts Protestant services in Conference Rooms and Dayrooms. The new Battalion Chapel, which has been delayed in construction, due to a shortage of material is almost completed. Services will be held in the new Chapel the first Sunday in May. An increase in attendance is expected with a new Chapel for conducting religious services.

(c) The Battalion Chaplain has continued his program of education and consultation through a briefing and letter of welcome given to all new arrivals. He also conducts frequent visits to subordinate units to better avail himself to those personnel seeking his assistance.

(d) Memorial Services are held for all personnel who lose their lives while in the command. These services are usually conducted by the Battalion Chaplain and, in cases of Catholic personnel, a Catholic Chaplain is also present to say the Requiem Mass. These services are held in the Division Memorial Chapel or the area of the unit concerned.

(e) Character Guidance: Classes are held each month on the topic prescribed by higher headquarters. The Chaplain conducts these classes for subordinate units whenever requested. In addition, a supplemental orientation sheet is prepared by the Chaplain and distributed in sufficient

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numbers to the unit training officers for all officers and enlisted men unable to attend the formal class.

i. Discipline, Law and Order: During the past quarter the following disciplinary actions have been conducted:

- (1) Special Court Martial - 22
- (2) Summary Court Martial - 1
- (3) General Court Martial - 0
- (4) Article 15 Impositions - 67
- (5) 12 Cases of Confinement have been suspended.

j. Headquarters Management: There has been no changes in Headquarters Management Procedures during this reporting period. No major problems have developed in this area.

k. Safety: The Battalion Safety Program continues to receive command emphasis at all levels. Safety information is disseminated to subordinate units through the "Black Baron" Safety Newsletter. This letter is published monthly and contains articles written by personnel within the battalion.

l. Marriage to Foreign National: None

m. Exchange Facilities, Clubs and Messes: There has been no change in these facilities during the quarter.

n. Information Activities:

(1) No major changes have been made in the command information program of this battalion, although new ideas and concepts have been incorporated into the existing information program.

(2) Command emphasis at all levels, has increased participation and resulted in more personal interest stories, stressing an individuals

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achievements and the job performed by the personnel. The number of hometown news releases have been increasing, and the primary objective being stressed is the achievements in all areas of aviation and combat operations.

o. Awards and Ceremonies: Eleven (11) awards ceremonies have been held during the quarter. Headquarters Company held 3 ceremonies, with the Battalion Commander presenting the awards. Three awards ceremonies were held at the 116th Aslt Hel Co with the Company Commander presenting the awards. Two awards ceremonies were held at the 187th Aslt Hel Co with the Company Commander presenting the awards. Two awards ceremonies were held at the 242nd ASHC with the Company Commander presenting the awards. Awards ranging from the Distinguished Flying Cross to the Purple Heart were presented. Change of Command Ceremonies were conducted on 15 February and 22 March 1969. On 15 February MAJOR JERRY R. STRATTON assumed command of the 187th Assault Helicopter Company located at Tay Ninh, Republic of Vietnam. On 22 March MAJOR M/S M. NAKIJO assumed command of the 242nd Assault Support Helicopter Company located at Cu Chi, Republic of Vietnam.

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3. (C) Intelligence and Security.

a. There have been no significant changes in the policies and procedures of the Intelligence Section. The primary mission of gathering and disseminating timely and accurate intelligence from all reliable sources for use by the companies to assist in the accomplishment of their assigned mission continues.

b. With the increase in terrorist activities in and around Cu Chi Base Camp during the last reporting period, the 25th Infantry Division initiated a policy whereby all frequently used facilities would be inspected daily. This policy continues to be in effect.

c. All mess halls are inspected prior to each meal. All clubs are inspected daily. Areas that are used regularly by large numbers of troops are checked daily. The Vietnamese concession (barber shop and tailor shop) operating in the company area is inspected daily. All of these areas are checked for booby traps, explosive devices and signs of tampering, as well as personnel in the area after 1700 hours. Reports are due from each company to the Battalion S-2 Office the date following the date of the report. The company reports are consolidated into a monthly report by the Battalion S-2 Officer, reviewed by the Battalion Commander and filed in the S-2 section. The monthly report to Commanding General, 25th Infantry Division, ATTN: AVDCPE, certifying that units are making the required inspections, has been discontinued. The results for all inspections have been negative.

d. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion continues the mission of commanding Sector "E" of the Cu Chi Base Camp defensive perimeter. During

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March, a change in the responsibility for base camp defense from 25th Infantry Division Support Command, to 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division was made. A new operations order was put into effect by the 2nd Brigade which decreases the units under operational control of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion by one. Manning requirements in Sector "E" were changed by the new command and the problems with manning requirements are improving. With the new emphasis placed on base camp defense by the new command, the situation has improved greatly and without doubt will continue to improve.

e. 269th Combat Aviation Battalion held 2 practice alerts for Sector "E" during the reporting period, and base camp defense held 2 practice alerts. All practice alerts in Sector "E" were satisfactory. There were 3 actual alerts called; all satisfactory.

f. An improved and more rigorous airfield defense plan was prepared and issued which provides for, tighter, in depth defense of the battalion area, and the battalion sector of the Cu Chi base camp perimeter. The defense plan provides for defense in depth and obstacles around aircraft re-entrant areas. Perimeter fields of fire have been enlarged and expanded by clearing obstacles and burning grass and brush.

4. (U) Operations and Training.

a. Operations: The frequency of combat assaults performed by the battalion has remained at the same high level as the past quarter. The battalion continues to be committed daily to tasks varying from combat support missions to battalion sized combat assault operations, with emphasis being placed on company sized combat assault operations. The battalion flew a total of 169 combat assault days of the possible 178 days. For more statistical data see Inclosure 5. The battalion is normally committed daily for two combat assault companies, two general support aircraft (UH-1D/H) and six (6) CH-47A aircraft for general support from the 242nd Assault Support Helicopter Company. The normal mission profile for the assault helicopter company is nine (9) UH-1D/H lift helicopters, one command and control helicopter and four armed helicopters from the units assets.

(1) The 116th and the 187th Assault Helicopter Companies continue as the primary non divisional aviation support for the 25th Infantry Division; however, tactical situations required their use outside the Division AO. Both assault companies have conducted operations in support of the 1st and 9th Infantry Division, CMAC, ARVN Forces and Special Forces.

(2) The 242nd Assault Support Helicopter Company maintained its high level of support for all allied forces in the III Corps Tactical Zone. The 242nd ASHC is normally committed each day for three aircraft in support of the 25th Infantry Division and three aircraft in support of II Field Forces. With the use of our organic Pathfinder Detachment, the 242nd has expedited the movement of artillery batteries and large scale troop movements. The Pathfinders being more experienced in aviation operations, can assist the

ground commander in rigging heavy loads, positioning troops in the PZ and actual radio control of aircraft in the PZ's and LZ's.

(3) This battalion attempts to maintain the habitual association down to company level by assigning missions to specific brigades within the division. The 116th AHC located at Cu Chi provides the primary air assets for the 2nd Brigade located at Cu Chi. The 187th AHC located at Tay Ninh provides the primary air assets for the 1st and 3rd Brigades located at Tay Ninh and Dau Tieng respectively.

(4) The majority of the combat assaults conducted by the battalion are controlled by the individual companies. The 25th Infantry Division seldom initiates assaults of multi-company size. During the past quarter one (1) battalion lift was conducted and controlled by the battalion. Coordination of effort of all assigned units is maintained through the battalion operations center. By maintaining a close monitoring of mission progress and unit status, BOC Duty Officers can readily shift assets within the battalion to meet unforeseen requirements.

(5) During February of this reporting period the 187th AHC was assigned three (3) AH-1G (Cobras). Three Cobras rated pilots from other units in the 12th Combat Aviation Group were also assigned to the company. Maintenance personnel from the 187th AHC were sent to other units in the 12th CAG who had Cobras assigned to receive on the job training. Three (3) quotas to Cobra transition have been received and filled during the quarter. Three additional Cobras are expected to be assigned to the 187th AHC in the near future which will give them the six (6) authorized in the armed platoon.

Some problems encountered in transitioning to Cobras are discussed in Section II of this report.

b. Training:

(1) During the reporting period the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion sent 158 individuals to the Vietnam In-Country Training Program conducted by the 25th Infantry Division located at Cu Chi. The five (5) day course is designed for personnel assigned to one of the field units, but it is also very advantageous to individuals such as clerks, mechanics and aviation personnel who would not otherwise receive this type of training. This training provides the individual with a basic knowledge of the combat skills he will be expected to know and use during his tour in Vietnam. Some of the subjects covered are enemy weapons, enemy mines, booby traps, patrolling, land navigation, ambush and counter ambush techniques. The training course also includes instruction in weapons familiarization to include the M-14, M-16, M-60, M-79 grenade launcher and zeroing of individual weapon. This is an outstanding program and the 269th CAB will continue to send members as long as quotas are available.

(2) Army Aviation Refresher Training School (AARTS): The following AARTS school quotas were received and filled by personnel from units indicated:

<u>COURSE</u>	<u>116th AHC</u>	<u>187th AHC</u>	<u>242nd ASHC</u>	<u>HHC 269 CAB</u>
UH-1 Airframe	3	1	0	0
CH-47 Airframe	0	0	6	0
T-53 Engine	3	1	0	0

<u>COURSE</u>	<u>116th AHC</u>	<u>187th AHC</u>	<u>242nd ASHC</u>	<u>HHC 269 CAB</u>
T-55 Engine	0	0	3	0
Tech Supply	0	1	0	2
A/C Amament	3	3	0	0

(3) Aviator Training and Standardization:

(a) Three allocations for AH-1G transition were received and filled by the 187th Assault Helicopter Company.

(b) Primary training to newly assigned aviators is conducted at subordinate unit level. In-country orientations are given by company level instructor pilots, as are the various stages of training required to insure an aviators proficiency in the techniques peculiar to combat operations in Vietnam.

(c) Standardization is maintained throughout the battalion through 90 day standardization checkrides. Those rides are given by company and battalion instructor pilots who insure adherence to battalion standards. Battalion standardization pilots continually monitor the standardization program with an aggressive policy of frequent flying with subordinate units.

5. (U) Logistics.

a. In the area of logistics, the battalion has recently opened Class II, IV, and VII supply accounts in Long Bien with the 266th S&S Battalion. Past supply support has been with the 25th S&T Battalion here at Cu Chi, with very poor results in the G-4, 25th Infantry Division refused to support us with major end items of equipment. We feel that better supply support through Long Bien will alleviate shortages of many of our major end items. The battalion has drawn and issued a minimum of two (2) Nomex flight suits per aviator in the companies. APH 6 helmets are still in short supply and no relief is foreseeable in the near future.

b. Automotive Maintenance: Our deadline rate of vehicles has dropped from 20% to 5.9% in the past 2 months. This is largely due to an automotive maintenance technician being assigned to the S-4 office and a conscientious program on the part of the Company Commanders. Lack of automotive parts in field depot is still a problem, however, cannibalization at turn-in points in Long Bion have helped reduce deadline of vehicles due to parts.

c. Construction: The Chinook revetment construction for the 242nd Assault Support Helicopter Company near the main airstrip in Cu Chi, is scheduled for completion on or about 1 May 1969. This work is being conducted by the 554th Engineer Battalion. PA&E support here in Cu Chi has been very poor, especially in the field of generator repair and replacement. In order to give us more generator availability, we are currently starting classes in Battalion for generator operators.

d. TOE/MTOE Change: The battalion has just undergone a change in TOE's for all companies. Reorganization of sections and equipment in the battalion transitioned smoothly with no problems encountered.

6. (U) Aircraft Maintenance.

a. This battalion continues to experience high aircraft availability. The assault helicopter companies maintained an availability of 86.4 percent. Average flying time per aircraft per month was 95.5, decrease of 2.9 hours when compared to previous reporting periods. The 242nd Assault Support Helicopter Company maintained an availability of 81.8 percent. Average hours per aircraft per month was 66.6, a decrease of 5.9 hours.

b. The 187th and the 116th Assault Helicopter Companies have moved their maintenance operation into new permanent hangars. These new facilities are expected to greatly improve the aircraft maintenance effort. The spacious hangars will be especially valuable with the advent of the rainy season. The 242nd Assault Support Helicopter Company has received USARV approval for construction of a hangar. Work is scheduled to begin in the near future.

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7. (C) Signal.

a. KY-28: The installation of KY-28's in battalion aircraft has been completed for several months. However, pilots have been reluctant to use the secure voice equipment claiming of too great a volume without a means of control. This problem is presently being corrected through a modification which allows volume attenuation through the FM control head. Modifications are being performed by the LSI team from 20th Transportation and total modification are expected to be completed by 15 May 1969.

b. Office Administration: The Battalion Signal Section is currently relocating its office to facilitate an adequate and efficient operation of section administration. In the past, the signal office has been co-located with the second echelon repair shop and storage area. Administration was difficult due to the cramped and crowded conditions and the physical work requirements of the repair section. Separation of these functions will improve the operations in all areas.

c. CRYPTO Accounts: All three line companies are in the process of establishing separate CRYPTO accounts for their operations. At the present all cryptographic material is the property and responsibility of the Bn and HHC account custodian. Operational needs are hand receipted to each company. This makes each company dependent on battalion for secure voice operations. An account at each company requires an approved facility for operation and storage of equipment, plus the necessary custodians and records. Completion of this project is scheduled for 31 May 1969 and is in accordance with 12th Combat Aviation Group policy.

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d. Outside Plant: The Battalion Signal Section is currently acquiring the necessary materials for the complete renovations of the Black Baron outside plant telephone system. Fifty pair, self-supporting telephone cables will be erected to replace the hodge-podge spider web of WD-1 which now criss-crosses the headquarters area. Completion date for this project is 31 May 1969.

e. FM Antenna, 90' Pole: BOC has been having difficulties with our FM radio to 12th CAG. Examination of the equipment disclosed no faults or failures. However, it is believed that the present RC/292 antenna system is inadequate for the desired distance. The antennas are presently individually erected to a height of about 40-45 feet and within 20-25 feet of high voltage power lines. Preparations have been made to erect a 90 foot telephone pole, properly guided, lighted and secured, for the placement of a 4 antenna (RC/292) "top hat" complex. This will raise the elevation of the antennas to almost double their present height and therefore increase the range and efficiency of our FM radios. In addition, the antennas would be more permanently erected and would improve the appearance of the Battalion Headquarters area. This project will take approximately two months due to the necessity to enlist the aid of other units for the erection of the pole and construction of the "top hat".

8. (U) Aviation Medicine.

a. The 269th Combat Aviation Battalion Dispensary has completed consolidation with the 431st Medical (OA) Detachment. The 431st dispensary which had been operating in addition to the combined dispensary has been closed in favor of a single operations with personnel and equipment being brought to the battalion area. Medical personnel are attached to the various 269th CAB units at Cu Chi for lodging to be available in emergency situations. The 541st Medical (OA) Detachment remains at Tay Ninh and supports the 187th Assault Helicopter Company.

b. The battalion preventive disease rate remains low with very few man hours lost to illness. This factor is a tribute to the high standards of sanitation and hygiene maintained in the battalion. Again there have been no cases of malaria during the past quarter.

c. Aviator fatigue remains a relatively insignificant problem with the increase in aviator strength. The shortage of aircraft commanders has occasionally produced minor problems with high flying hour months. Few aviators have flown over 140 hours however.

2. Section 2. Lessons Learned.

a. (U) Personnel:

(1) Use of Aviation Personnel for Base Camp Defense:

(a) **OBSERVATION:** Experience has shown a need for aviation units to be released from duties involving base camp defense.

(b) **EVALUATION:** Because of the heavy manning requirements involved in aircraft security, aviation units find it increasingly difficult to meet manning requirements for base camp defense.

(c) **RECOMMENDATION:** That all aviation units be released from duties involving base camp defense, so they can concentrate on aircraft security.

(d) **COMMAND ACTION:** Letters have been submitted to base camp defense commander requesting that this unit be relieved of its responsibility on the base camp perimeter.

(2) Shakedown of Personal Equipment:

(a) **OBSERVATION:** Shakedown inspections for contraband are continuing to be rejected as evidence in courts martial.

(b) **EVALUATION:** Due to recent decisions of military appeals courts and Staff Judge Advocate review officers, evidence is generally not admissible unless it came from a locked container. It must be established beyond any doubt that the container was locked by the defendant.

(c) **RECOMMENDATION:** Insure that shakedown be conducted by officers in the presence of a witness, and that the fact the container (wall locker, foot locker, etc.) was physically locked, be substantiated.

This includes actually seeing the bow inserted in a pad lock and a key being used to open it by the defendant.

(d) **COMMAND ACTION:** Future shakedowns in this unit will follow above procedures.

b. (U) Operations:

(1) Assignment of UH-1C Helicopter.

(a) **OBSERVATION:** Recently a "slick" UH-1C helicopter was assigned to the battalion headquarters in place of the usual UH-1D/H.

(b) **EVALUATION:** The UH-1C has proven far inferior to the UH-1D/H in the role of a headquarters aircraft for the following reasons:

1. Use of the UH-1C as a liaison or courier is limited due to the number of passengers that can be transported.
2. It is difficult to operate fully loaded in confined heliports.
3. When used as a command and control aircraft with the command console installed the size of the command party is limited.
4. During the past quarter our units have experienced a shortage of UH-1C aircraft for use as gunships.

(c) **RECOMMENDATION:** That UH-1C aircraft not be assigned for use as a command and control aircraft.

(d) **COMMAND ACTION:** The UH-1C was loaned to one of the assault helicopter companies for use as a gunship. Authority to make permanent assignment of the aircraft to the assault company has been requested from higher headquarters. It also been requested that another UH-1D/H be assigned to Battalion Headquarters.

(2) Periodic Maintenance Checks.

(a) OBSERVATION: A past and present company policy has been to shut down an aircraft every two fuel loads or not later than four hours for the purpose of a maintenance check. Recent instances where this was not done have shown that failure to comply with the SOP could prove to be fatal.

(b) EVALUATION: Occasionally, pilots become preoccupied with their mission and over fly four hours without shutting down the aircraft for a maintenance check. Recently a pilot who did this, found at the end of the day on a post-flight inspection that a hanger bearing had overheated excessively and was about to fail. This should have been found earlier in the day and would have if the SOP had been adhered to. Failure of the part would most likely have caused a fatal accident if it occurred in flight. There are numerous critical areas in a helicopter which cannot be checked without shutting down the aircraft and these areas must be checked several times during a long mission day.

(c) RECOMMENDATIONS: All units should have in their SOP a required period after which an aircraft must be shut down. A four hour limit seems the most flexible in considering both the mission requirements and aircraft safety. It is the responsibility of all aviators to assure that the SOP is adhered to.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: In this unit, an entry is made on all 2408-13's at the beginning of each day, "Post-Flight inspection required after four hours flight." This must be signed off by the Aircraft Commander upon completion.

(3) Use of Reinforcing Door Gunner on Smoke Aircraft.

(a) OBSERVATION: In order to successfully employ an effective smoke screen it is necessary to fly low and slow down tree lines, etc.

(b) EVALUATION: During the slow, maneuvering smoke run the ship is vulnerable to ground fire.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That, as a minimum, a second gunner be employed on the smoke ship. He can be fastened into the aircraft by the tie-down cargo rings on a safety belt which will permit him to move to both sides of the aircraft to reinforce the firepower as necessary during smoke runs.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: This unit utilized two door gunners in addition to the crew chief on the smoke aircraft.

(4) Positioning of Observation Towers.

(a) OBSERVATION: Recently, this unit has been required to pick up observation towers approximately 30 to 40 feet in height. This is often impossible due to heavy dust.

(b) EVALUATION: The observation towers in question are normally in the center of a fire support base in the most dusty area. It is impossible to hook up the tower before the aircraft is completely IFR in dust. Due to the extremely high hover required, the pilot is unable to maintain ground reference.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that during the dry season, sorties to lift observation towers are not scheduled unless the area (PZ) is watered down prior to the arrival of the CH-47. A fifty (50) meter radius around the tower should be cleared of all personnel. Rather than placing

a hook up man on top of the tower, the flight engineer should use a shepherds hook to hook up the tower.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: At present, this unit is attempting to devise a water pod assembly which can be slung under the aircraft to wet down extremely dusty pick up zones.

c. (U) Training:

(1) Accidental Discharge of Weapons.

(a) OBSERVATION: This company incurred a fatality recently due to the accidental discharge of an M-16. It was found that the responsible person "didn't know it was loaded".

(b) DISCUSSION: In this particular case, the responsible individual was in the habit of carrying his magazine upside down in his M-16. While getting ready for a flight in the morning he accidentally placed the magazine in his weapon in the correct manner with a round ready to be chambered. Later that morning, as a "joke", he unknowingly chambered a round (believing the magazine to be inverted), pointed his rifle at a buddy and killed him.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: While in secure areas, all magazines should be carried in a pouch. M-16 magazines must not be placed inverted in the weapon as a convenient place to carry them. Command emphasis should be placed on the prohibiting of the above practice which is quite common.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: All personnel of this command have been specifically prohibited from carrying any magazines not placed in a magazine carrying pouch.

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(2) Safety and Standardization as Additional Duties.

(a) OBSERVATION: Recent experience by company safety and standardization officers indicates that they are unable to adequately or effectively perform their jobs in an additional duty status.

(b) EVALUATION: Each company safety officer must closely monitor operations, maintenance and the environment in which his unit operates. To accomplish this, he must maintain close coordination with Airfield Service Detachments, Infantry Brigade S-4 shops, POL, Direct Support Maintenance units, his own battalion and others. He, also, must monitor and follow up all unit aircraft mishap reports and investigations. These average approximately one per day. And since he is most probably the unit standardization officer, he must give a majority of the unit's check rides while training other instructor pilots and monitoring their check rides. Finally he must, also, initiate and run an active accident prevention program, as outlined in AR 95-5, among the air crews in his company.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That new TO&E slot be assigned the company level, titled Safety and Standardization Officer; and that it be a primary duty requiring a trained officer.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: Safety Officers of this unit are instructor pilots and Company Commanders have been encouraged to assign them to the headquarters platoon rather than a flight platoon. This has been done so that the Safety Officer may avail himself to each unit aviator, may gain time to perform safety duties as he is not hampered by platoon duties and may be directly responsible to the commander for unit safety and standardization.

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(3) AH-1G (Cobra) Employment.

(a) OBSERVATION: In February the 187th Assault Helicopter Company was assigned three (3) AH-1G (Cobras) to replace the "C" Model in the armed platoon.

(b) EVALUATION: The Cobra is limited to some extent when working with "C" models because of the slower airspeed. In every other respect the "C" model and Cobra fire team work together in an outstanding manner. In transitioning to the Cobra as an armed escort two major problems were encountered. The Cobra pilots who were assigned did not have prior experience with assault helicopter company operations. This retarded the efficiency of their performance for a period of time. The other problem area was in the maintenance section. We didn't have experienced personnel to perform maintenance on the Cobras.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Before assigning Cobras to other units, personnel who are Cobra qualified and familiar with the units tactics be assigned first. Also experienced maintenance personnel should be assigned to the unit along with the Cobras.

d. (C) Intelligence:

(1) Sapper Attack Against Aircraft.

(a) OBSERVATION: Following a sapper attack against the 242nd Assault Support Helicopter Company revetment and maintenance area, several lessons were learned.

(b) EVALUATION: The sappers infiltrated into the revetment area after breaking through the primary base camp defense. Their successful

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attempt was enhanced greatly by the lack of sufficient defensive lighting along the perimeter. One crew member was asleep in each aircraft since in the past, sapper attacks were normally preceded by a mortar or rocket attack. It became evident that since sappers may strike prior to a mortar attack, a more active defensive plan must be practiced within the company area. A walking guard should be utilized within the company area near critical points such as aircraft revetment areas, maintenance area, motor pool, etc. All personnel in the company must be thoroughly briefed on guard posts and any specific restrictions in order to preclude incidents between friendly personnel.

(c) **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Flood lights should be emplaced around the entire camp perimeter and be used continuously during the hours of darkness.
2. A mounted or walking guard should be utilized within the company area at critical points. The main camp perimeter defense cannot be solely depended on to provide a defense for the company area.

(d) **COMMAND ACTION:** A walking guard has been employed within the aircraft maintenance and revetment area. It was requested prior to the recent sapper attack that flood lights be emplaced along the perimeter. The request was turned down due to lack of funds which are negligible when compared to the resulting loss of aircraft and lives.

e. (U) **Logistics:**

(1) **Ammunition for Basic Load.**

(a) **OBSERVATION:** After a recent enemy attack on the ammo dump

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at Cu Chi Base Camp, it was noted that some companies did not have a complete basic load of ammunition available.

(b) EVALUATION: Because of improper distribution of ammunition between the companies and the ammo dump, some companies were left with less than their basic load rendering them less than 100% efficient.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That more emphasis be placed on the importance of establishing and maintaining a basic load of ammunition.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: A list of basic ammunition load has been passed down to the companies of this battalion and they have been directed to maintain this as their basic load. To keep the assault helicopter company at a high rate of efficiency, it is essential that a complete load of ammunition be maintained, separate from that ammunition available at the ammo dump.

(2) Electrical Failure of 2½ Ton Trucks.

(a) OBSERVATION: Electrical system failures have occurred on all this company's M35A2, 2½ ton trucks due to a recurring malfunction.

(b) EVALUATION: All electrical failures were originally attributed to generator or regulator failure. It was later found to be a short in the wire harness connecting the generator and regulator. This harness is enclosed in a rubber sheath and is routed behind the engine and rests against the engine block connecting the generator and regulator. The short in all cases was found at the point where the harness touches the engine. At this point, excessive moisture and rusted wire was found within the rubber sheaf. This short has led to the loss of numerous regulators.

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(c) RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that this wire harness be re-routed so that the harness passes over the airlines on top of the engine or in some other way in which it is well spaced from the engine. In this way, excessive heat and the resulting building up of moisture within the rubber sheath is avoided.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: This wire harness on all 2½ ton trucks within this company have been re-routed over the airlines on top of the engines.

f. (U) Organization:

(1) TO&E.

(a) OBSERVATION: Recent changes to the TO&E (MTOE) have caused some confusion and difficulty in the reporting of equipment authorized.

(b) EVALUATION: Due to the modification list for the TOE, there are now separate lists of TOE and MTOE causing confusion and possibilities of erroneous reporting of authorized equipment.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Combine the two lists with additions and deletions directed by the MTOE, so there would be one clearly defined list of authorized equipment readily available.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: The TOE and MTOE have been combined through pen and ink changes to allow this battalion to be as accurate as possible in the reporting of authorized equipment. All additions and deletions authorized by the MTOE have been posted to the TOE to make one complete list.

g. (U) Others:

(1) Use of Shotguns for Aircraft Security Personnel.

(a) OBSERVATION: Recent experience has proven that personnel on

duty as aircraft security during hours of darkness find it difficult to effectively engage targets with M-16 rifle fire.

(b) EVALUATION: Because of the excitement created by attack, and the limited visibility during the hours of darkness, personnel are ineffective with M-16 rifle during these periods.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That all personnel utilized as aircraft security during hours of limited visibility be armed with shotguns.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: All personnel utilized as aircraft security are armed with shotguns.

George W. McIlwain
GEORGE W. MC ILWAIN
LTC, Infantry
Commanding

5 Inclosures

1. 269th Combat Aviation Battalion
- ~~2. Unit Strength as of 30 April 1969~~
- ~~3. Summary of Losses for Next 90 Days~~
4. Aircraft Status
5. Operational Statistics
Incl 2 and 3 wd Hq, DA

AVBACA-SC (1 May 69) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
30 April 1969 (UIC: WDUTTO) (RCS CSFOR-65) (RI)

DA, HEADQUARTERS, 12TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP, APO 96266 22 May 1969

TO: Commanding General, II Field Force Vietnam, APO 96266

1. In accordance with USARV Reg 525-15, the Operational Report - Lessons Learned of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion, for the period ending 30 April 1969, is forwarded.

2. Reference Section 2, para a(1). All units of the command have heavy commitments for guard. In addition to perimeter guards, units are required to provide internal defense against sapper attacks. The day-to-day guard commitment averages fifteen (15) percent of the present-for-duty strength. Increased alert status demands up to 100% of personnel manning defensive positions. The recommendation is particularly valid in view of the heavy reliance placed on airmobile assets for the successful accomplishment of combat operations.

3. Reference Section 2, para b(1). The "slick" UH-1C was assigned to Headquarters, 269th CAB at a time in March 1969 when there was no shortage of gunships. At the time, lift helicopters (UH-1D/H) were in short supply. The assignment of UH-1C in lieu of UH-1D/H was made to several CAB Headquarters in order to make UH-1D/H available for the Assault Helicopter Companies. This condition has righted itself over the past month since gunship quantity has become critically low.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

David L. Forte
DAVID L. FORTE
MAJ, Inf
Adjutant

AVFBC-RE-H (1 May 69) 2nd Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
30 April 1969 (UIC: WDUTTO) (RCS CSFOR-65) (RI)

DA, HQ II FFORCEV, APO San Francisco 96266 12 JUN 1969

THRU: Commanding General, US Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC(DST), APO 96375
Commander-In-Chief, US Army Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-DT, APO 96558

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

This headquarters has reviewed and concurs with the Operational Report-
Lessons Learned of the 269th Combat Aviation Battalion for the period
ending 30 April 1969.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



B. G. MACDONALD
1LT. AGC
Assl AG

AVBAGC-0 (1 May 69) 3d Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
30 April 1969 (UIC: WDU110) (RCS CSFOR-65) (RI)

DA, HEADQUARTERS, 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE, APO 96384 4 JUN 1969

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

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

1. This headquarters has reviewed this report, considers it to be adequate and concurs with the contents as indorsed, except as noted below.
2. The following additional comments are considered pertinent:

a. Paragraph 2c (2), page 25: Nonconcur with the recommendation. The assignment of a full time Safety and Standardization Officer at company level is not feasible for world wide Army commitments. The company commander has the prerogative to exempt necessary personnel from additional duties to accomplish his assigned mission.

b. Paragraph 2f (1), page 29. Changes to basic TOE's and MTOE's are standard procedures throughout the Army. In order to interpret changes it is necessary to have the basic document and the changes or modifications thereto. The two documents are combined in the form of summary output MTOE's which are published by USARPAC and are currently available. These documents do not provide detailed information but are adequate for the purposes discussed herein. The 269th CAB has been apprised of this document.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



DAVID R. ANDERSON
Capt, AGC
Asst. AC

AVHGC-DST (1 May 69) 4th Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
30 April 1969 (UIC: WDUTTO) (RCS CSFOR-65) (U)

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY, VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 5 JUL 1969

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 1969 from Headquarters, 269th Combat Aviation Battalion.

2. Comments follow:

a. Reference item concerning "Use of Aviation Personnel for Base Camp Defense", section II, page 20, paragraph a(1) and 1st Indorsement, paragraph 2. Nonconcur with the recommendation that all aviation units be released from duties involving base camp defense. It is agreed that the base camp commander, in assigning defensive duties, should give careful consideration to the degree to which the tenant aviation unit(s) must commit personnel to aircraft security, as well as evaluating the effect of defensive commitments on the ability of the aviation unit(s) to perform their primary mission. The base camp commander, on the other hand, bears the great responsibility to secure and defend US personnel, equipment and facilities within the camp perimeter. To what extent aviation units must assist in the accomplishment of this task will vary from camp to camp as a function of the unit, location, and size of the base camp.

b. Reference item concerning "Periodic Maintenance Checks", section II, page 22, paragraph b(2); concur. The periodic inspection of aircraft by the flight crew during the operational day is SOP in most aviation units. Time between during-operation inspections is normally prescribed by the unit commander based on operational necessity.

c. Reference item concerning "AH-1G (Cobra) Employment", section II, page 26, paragraph c(3); concur. USARV allocation of quotas for the AH-1G Training Team and Army Aviation Refresher Training School has given consideration to units programmed to receive AH-1G aircraft.

d. Reference item concerning "Sapper Attack Against Aircraft", section II, page 26, paragraph d(1). Concur with the recommendation that flood lights should be emplaced around the base camp perimeter. However, that recommendation is only peripheral to the problem addressed. Flood lights around any base camp perimeter will degrade success of sapper infiltration attempt. The cost of replacing several helicopters is undoubtedly many times the cost of installation of perimeter lighting; however, the decision to install perimeter lights must be based on examination of many other

AVHGC-DST (1 May 69) 4th Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
30 April 1969 (UIC: WDUTTO) (RCS CSFOR-65) (U)

factors including established priorities for funds. The problem of preventing infiltration of sappers into the 242d ASHC revetment and maintenance area begins at the boundary of the company's area - which may or may not coincide with the perimeter fence. The problem has been correctly analyzed and an appropriate solution determined; i.e., more active defensive action within the company area.

e. Reference item concerning "Electrical Failure of 2½ Ton Trucks", section II, page 28, paragraph e(2); concur. Re-routing of the wiring harness on 2½ ton trucks as recommended by the unit is a satisfactory solution to prevent the harness from failing. Malfunctions of this type have not been previously reported. The unit has submitted two Equipment Improvement Recommendations (EIRs) recommending that the wiring harness be re-routed. TACOM representatives from CAO-V are investigating the positioning of the vehicle wiring harness. No assistance from higher headquarters is required.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



C. D. WILSON
1LT, AGC
Assistant Adjutant General

Cy furn:
269th Cbt Avn Bn
1st Avn Bde

GPOP-DT (1 May 69) 5th Ind (U)
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 269th Combat Aviation
Battalion for Period Ending 30 April 1969, RCS
CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 24 JUL 69

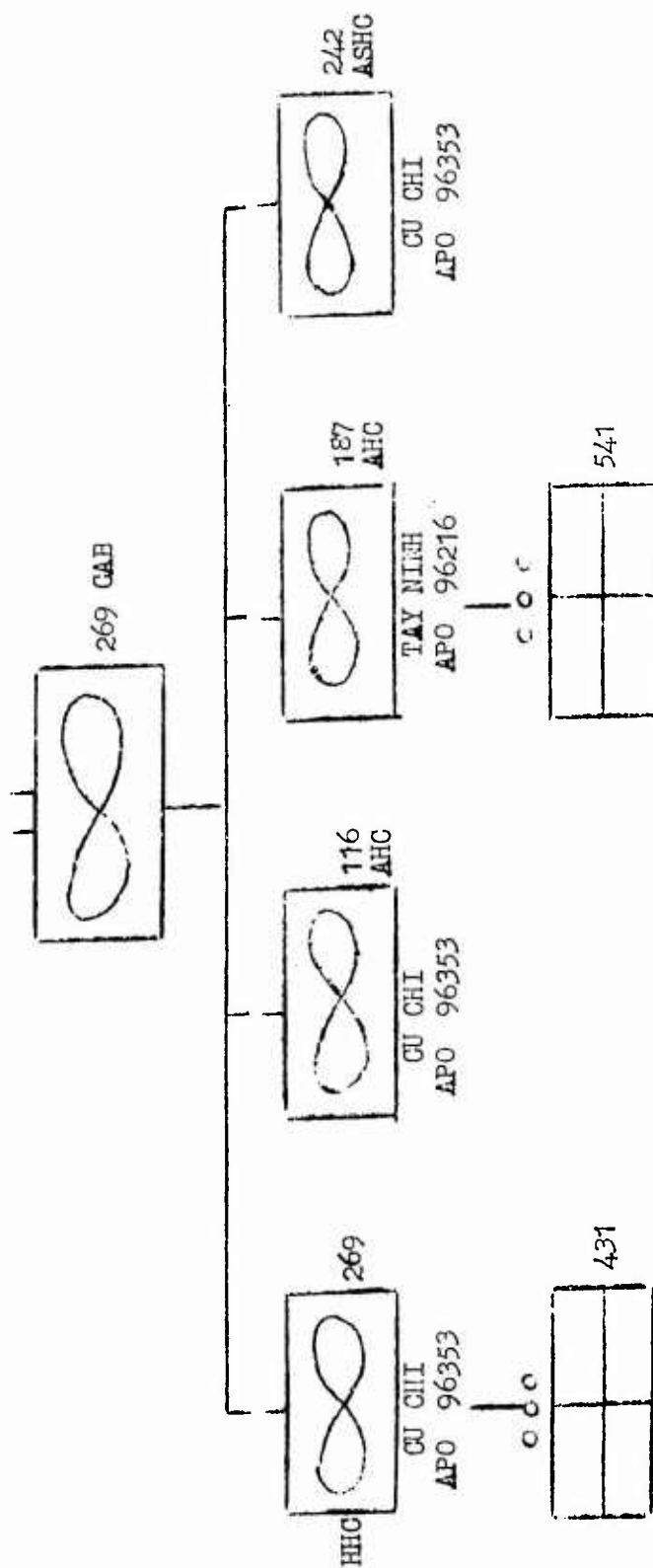
TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development,
Department of the Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forward-
ing indorsements and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:


C. L. SHORT
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

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DOD DIR 5200.10

AIRCRAFT STATUS
HEADQUARTERS 269TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
30 April 1969

SUBORDINATE UNITS	UH-1B		UH-1C		UH-1D		UH-1H		CH-47		OH-23		OH-6		U-6A		AH-1G	
	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H	Auth	O/H
HQ, 269th CAB	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
116th AHC	0	0	8	6	0	16	23	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
187th AHC	0	0	8	3	0	2	23	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
242nd ASHC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	17	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL, 269th CAB	0	0	16	9	0	20	46	21	16	17	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	3

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OPERATIONAL STATISTICS
HEADQUARTERS 269TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
Quarter Ending 31 April 1969

UNIT	SORTIES FLOWN	TROOPS LIFTED	TONS CARGO LIFTED	VC KIA	STRUCTURES DAM DEST	SARFANS DAM DEST	A/C LOST	A/C DAMAGE	FLYING HOURS	COMBAT ASSAULT DAYS
116th AHC	25,187	37,616	41.8	116	0 28	0 0	3	35	7,906	84
187th AHC	24,870	41,577	55.5	5	0 4	0 0	0	32	8,462	82
242d ASHC	10,405	45,588	18,524	0	0 0	0 0	9	10	3,261	0
TOTAL	60,462	124,781	18,621	121	0 32	0 0	12	77	19,729	166

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DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

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