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**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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IN REPLY REFER TO

AGDA (M) (17 Feb 70)

FOR OT UT 70B005

25 February 1970

**SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: COL Orman E. Hicks, CO, US
Army Aviation Materiel Management Center and CO, 34th General
Support Group, Period 6 January 1969 to 21 December 1969 (U)**

AD 502597

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1. Reference: AR 1-26, subject, Senior Officer Debriefing Program (U) dated 4 November 1966.
2. Transmitted herewith is the report of COL Orman E. Hicks, subject as above.
3. This report is provided to insure appropriate benefits are realized from the experiences of the author. The report should be reviewed in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 5, AR 1-26; however, it should not be interpreted as the official view of the Department of the Army, or of any agency of the Department of the Army.
4. Information of actions initiated under provisions of AR 1-26, as a result of subject report, should be provided ACSFOR OT UT within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

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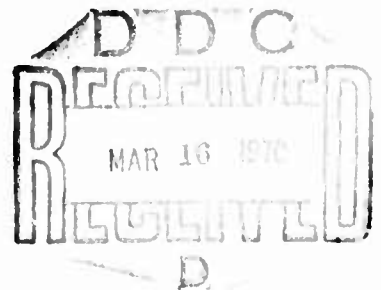
Kenneth G. Wickham

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

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96375**

9 JAN 70

AVHGC-DST

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report by Colonel Orman E. Hicks

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

1. (U) Attached are three copies of the Senior Officer Debriefing Report prepared by Colonel Orman E. Hicks. The report covers the period 6 January 1969 through 21 December 1969, during which time Colonel Hicks served as Commanding Officer, Aviation Material Management Center and Commanding Officer, 34th General Support Group (Aircraft Maintenance and Supply).
2. (C) This headquarters does not agree with all comments contained in paragraph 3, subject report. Mission performance with concurrent security responsibility is a problem not peculiar to aviation units and has previously been addressed in Unit Operational Report Lessons Learned by this headquarters. All organizations of this command have adequate strength to perform unit security responsibilities during non-duty hours without a serious derogation of operational capability. Redeployment phase down planning includes the elimination and consolidation of base areas to reduce security requirements.
3. (U) Colonel Hicks is recommended as a candidate guest speaker at appropriate service schools.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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L. D. Murray
L. D. MURRAY
CPT. / AG
Assistant Adjutant General

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 34TH GENERAL SUPPORT GROUP (AM&S)
APO 96309

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24 DEC 1969

SUBJECT: Debriefing Report, Colonel Orman E. Hicks

Commanding General
United States Army Vietnam
ATTN: AVHGC-DST
APO 96375

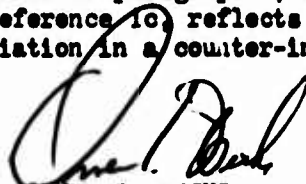
1. References:

a. Letter, Headquarters, U.S. Army Vietnam, AVHAG-PO, Subject: Senior Officer Debriefing Program, dated 5 May 1969.

b. AR 1-26, Senior Officer Debriefing Program (U), dated 4 November 1966.

c. USARV Regulation 1-3, Senior Officer Debriefing Program (U), dated 1 June 1968.

2. In accordance with reference 1a, my end of tour debriefing report is forwarded herewith. The report responds to paragraph 1, reference b, and in accordance with paragraph 5a of reference 1c, reflects my views on maintenance and supply problems facing aviation in a counter-insurgency environment.



ORMAN E. HICKS
Colonel, TC
Commanding

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DEBRIEFING REPORT (RCS-CSFOR-74)

COUNTRY: Vietnam

DEBRIEFING REPORT BY: Colonel Ornan E. Hicks

DUTY ASSIGNMENT: Commanding Officer at U.S. Army Aviation Materiel Management Center and Commanding Officer of 34th General Support Group (AMAS)(GS)

INCLUSIVE DATES: 6 January 1969 to 21 December 1969

DATE OF REPORT: 21 December 1969

1. Description of Duty Assignment

The undersigned has occupied two assigned positions in Vietnam since 6 January 1969.

a. Commanding Officer, U.S. Army Aviation Materiel Management Center (6 Jan 69 - 16 Oct 69), a subordinate unit of the 34th General Support Group, which serves as the inventory and Stock Control Center for all Army Aviation assets in Vietnam.

b. Commanding Officer, 34th General Support Group (16 Oct 69 - 21 Dec 69), responsible for the Direct Support (DS) Maintenance for units not having DS capability, for General Support Maintenance of all Army Aviation in Vietnam, and for both wholesale and retail, countrywide aviation supply support.

2. Introduction

In view of the recent debriefing report submitted by Colonel Alton G. Post, the preceding Commander, this report will not concern itself directly with the Group mission, organizational structure, or concept of operation. Instead, it will present my personal comments on the maintenance and supply support of Army Aviation in Vietnam. Listed below are the four areas of comment followed by a detailed discussion in the following paragraphs:

- a. Perimeter Defense Requirements
- b. More Stringent Aircraft Retrograde Criteria
- c. CH-47C Modernization
- d. Aircraft Repair Parts Supply

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3. Perimeter Defense Requirements

All subordinate units of the Group have self-defense requirements. Most are in forward areas which are frequently the target of enemy attacks. Security requires that all members of the units must frequently engage in guard and sentinel duties to the obvious detriment of mission performance. This problem was discussed in the 31 January 1969 Quarterly Operational Report of Lessons Learned submitted by the 58th Transportation Battalion. The rebuttal from USARV consisted of a reminder of the ability, as stated in the TO&E, of aircraft maintenance units to fight as infantry when required and the responsibility to properly secure their operational area. This is, of course, true. However, I feel strongly that this capability should be required only under emergency conditions, and that security of the operational area refers normally to interior guard. Aircraft maintenance and supply units are not tailored or staffed to support the present type security and perimeter requirements over prolonged periods of time. Several factors must be kept in mind and carefully weighed against what is desired and required from these units. For example:

(a) If a sizable element of the unit must be utilized in guard and sentinel duties, as is presently the case, a loss in full productivity must be accepted. The Army devotes extensive resources toward the training and retention of personnel in the aircraft maintenance and supply field. The training of infantry and military police is less expensive and security duties are more closely aligned with their normal mission. In my opinion, the overall ability of the Army to accomplish its theater mission would be greatly enhanced if infantry and military police were assigned to perform the installation security mission, especially as reductions in troop strengths leave aircraft maintenance units as major tenants of large installations. Both greatly increased production and more professional security arrangements would result.

(b) It is not economically practical to utilize highly skilled and technically qualified personnel to perform the skills of the basic soldier over prolonged periods of time. If the guard and security requirements were lifted from the aircraft maintenance and supply units within the 34th Group, we estimate that an increase of approximately 30% to 40% in productive man hours would result. This figure is based on the total maintenance man-hour capability of the 15 General Support and Direct Support units (365,000 maintenance man-hours per month) and the time lost to perimeter guard and other non-mission duties (146,000 man-hours).

4. More Stringent Aircraft Retrograde Criteria

a. During this period, the airframe time before retrograde to CONUS for overhaul of all aircraft in Vietnam was extended. The extensions of time are outlined in the Closed Loop Manual, Sep 69. The major impact of the extensions, from a maintenance point of view, is that the 34th Group units will be required to provide a major share of the maintenance man-hours resulting from the additional major Preventive Maintenance Periodic (PMP)

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inspections that will have to be performed in-country, primarily on CH-47, UH-1, and AH-1G aircraft.

b. 34th Group compared the maintenance man-hour capability of its units with the requirements generated by this new program and as a result initiated a request through USAFV for an augmentation of 201 contract maintenance personnel. Final approval was granted, although the initial request was cut from 201 to 181. The personnel are to be broken into PMP teams, physically located with, and under OPCON, of 34th Group units. Experience so far indicates that it will require approximately 3,600 man-hours for the CH-47 1st PMP and 700 man-hours for the UH-1 and AH-1G PMP's.

c. It is anticipated, however, that even with the augmentation of contract civilian teams, there will be an increase in backlogged maintenance man-hours, with a corresponding decrease in the operationally ready rate throughout Vietnam. The 34th Group is constantly updating its plans to insure that the forecast maintenance man-hours will be stabilized and that the impact on aviation operating units will be minimal.

5. CH-47C Modernization

The T55-L7C gas turbine engine was installed on the CH-47C helicopter from the start of production through serial number 69-15857. The T55-L7C was installed in lieu of the T55-L11 engine as an interim measure because of a lag in production of the L-11 engine. The L-11 is now being produced in sufficient quantity to retrofit all CH-47C's, enabling them to operate at maximum design capability. This conversion is programmed to be accomplished at the Air Vietnam contract facility. The modernization of the CH-47C consists of the installation of the T55-L11 engines and other dynamic components designed to withstand the maximum torque load produced by the L-11 engines. The basis for the decision to accomplish the conversion concurrent with cyclic maintenance at the Air Vietnam facility is the estimated 4.2 million dollar savings that will be realized. Contract negotiations have been started to convert 70 aircraft concurrently with cyclic maintenance at the rate of 5 per month, with initial input of aircraft in January, 1970. The input will be increased monthly with full production beginning in April, 1970. Conversion of additional aircraft, if required, can be accomplished as an add-on to the present planned program. No problems are anticipated in meeting the program schedule provided contract negotiations are finalized on time.

6. Aircraft Repair Parts Supply

a. The 34th General Support Group provides wholesale aircraft repair parts support to all Army aircraft in Vietnam. The Aviation Materiel Management Center (AMMC) operates a centralized inventory control center and two aviation depots at Qui Nhon and Saigon to support approximately 4,400 aircraft. In addition the group operates 10 Direct Support Supply Activities (DSSA's) to provide retail support to non-divisional aviation units. The DSSA's are located throughout Vietnam - from Da Nang in I CTZ to Vinh Long in IV CTZ.

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b. There has been steady improvement in the supply posture of Army Aviation in Vietnam. AFMC demand accommodation (the percentage of requisitions matching the ASL) now stands at 91%, while demand satisfaction (the percentage of matching requisitions that are filled immediately) has risen to 63%. More significant, however, is the effect of the improvement upon the operationally ready rate of RVN aircraft. For example, intensive management and daily contact with AVSCOM has reduced the number of parts grounding ten or more aircraft from as many as 24 parts grounding 485 aircraft in June, 1969, to a period in early October, 1969, when no parts were grounding ten or more aircraft. The Red Ball rate, or percentage of aircraft grounded due to requisitions redballed to CONUS reached a temporary high of 24.3% on 8 June, 1969. Intensive management and command emphasis, to include lateral search of DSSA's, use of the FAMP for fabricating parts, exploitation of interchangeability and substitutability data, and daily communication with AVSCOM reduced this figure to an all-time low of 4.2% on 31 October 1969. Specific improvement in two previously "problem" aircraft is documented in the table below.

NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT GROUNDED

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CH-47</u>	<u>OH-6</u>
Oct 68	115	---
Apr 69	100	109
Sep 69	---	45
14 Oct 69	---	12
22 Oct 69	29	---

c. In addition to improvement in the basic mission of keeping aircraft flying, notable progress has been made in other areas. Increased emphasis on elimination of excess resulted in 51,453 lines being retrograded to the depots and 14,143 lines being retrograded to CONUS during September and October 1969. A third generation computer, model 360/50 has been installed and will be operational soon. It will provide the capability for a cycle every second day rather than currently every sixth day. A recent analysis of DSSA zero balances resulted in securing USARV approval to increase the order-ship time used in computing stockage levels from 15 days to 30 days. The more realistic figure should materially reduce the zero balances and EDP's generated by the DSSA's. The Group Aircraft Supply Assistance Team (ASAT) has been extremely active; visiting and assisting most of the Group DSSA's; the 1st Cav Division and the Americal Division. The team is extremely well received and is our primary tool used to insure quality performance at the DSSA's.

d. There are a few "lessons learned" in the aircraft supply business that require constant reiteration and are listed below. My tour in Vietnam has reinforced my conviction that they are absolutely essential to an efficient, smoothly functioning, effective aviation supply system.

1. Dedicated airlift for in-country distribution insures a responsive transportation system. EDP shipments from Saigon to far north

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customers in October and November averaged 3.1 days. From Qui Nhon EDP shipments averaged 7.1 days. This is unacceptable. The dedicated Caribou which the 14th Trans Bn operates between Qui Nhon and Pleiku and has been outstandingly successful. This principle needs to be greatly expanded.

2. One-stop supply support is another essential feature of a responsive system. This requires that all parts essential to the weapons system be available at a single DSSA.

3. The most important single lesson learned during my tour is that centralized, "vertical" management of critical, expensive weapons systems is a must if we are to have high availability rates. This capability is provided by 34th Group on a theater wide basis, and an organization of this type, with organic aviation supply companies, should be an integral part of future aviation TO&E planning. The success we have had in lowering theater aircraft EDP rates is almost entirely attributable to this system of intensive management of specific weapons system.

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