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VIETNAM RETURNEE SURVEY

By

Kurt E. Lidke
Mark A. Hofmann
Andrew S. Martin

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents some results of a questionnaire given to 300 Army aviators who served in the Republic of Vietnam. The questions analyzed were primarily those concerned with work patterns, physical conditions, medical care, groundings and accidents.

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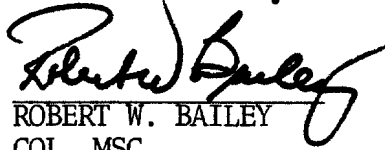

ROBERT W. BAILEY
COL, MSC
Commanding

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Figure 1 shows the number and percent of pilots in each group reporting various numbers of hours per week.

It can be seen that cargo and scout pilots report spending approximately 9 to 10 hours less per week than the other groups. These differences are possibly due to aircraft configurations (i.e., scout missions are frequently single pilot/no co-pilot missions, and fatigue may play a bigger role in pilot down-time). The difference for cargo helicopters may reflect differences in availability of replacement aircraft or maintenance difficulties concomitant with the operation of the large cargo helicopters (CH-47 and CH-54).

Question: How many hours were spent in an average week on all flight or flight related ground duties other than assigned additional duties?

The approximate averages for the categories mentioned in the previous question were:

	<u>Number of Hours</u>	<u>Percent of Time</u>
Cargo Pilots	42	72%
Scout Pilots	50	85%
"Slick" Pilots	51	75%
"C & C" Pilots	54	81%
Gunship Pilots	54	79%
Fixed-Wing Pilots	51	75%

The distribution of responses can be found in Figure 2.

Question: During your last tour in RVN, and in the unit you served with the longest, what was the largest number of hours you spent in-flight as an active member of a flight crew (pilot, co-pilot, aircraft commander, etc.), whether the time was logged or not?

The results for the maximum flying time in any 24-hour period, 10-day period and 30-day period are presented in Figure 3. It can be seen that for any one 24-hour period, 70 percent of the respondees had flown for 10-15 hours, at least once, and the mean maximum for a 24-hour period was 12 hours.

Maximum flying in any one 10-day period yielded a mean of approximately 58 hours. The mean maximum hours flown in any 30-day period was 123 hours.

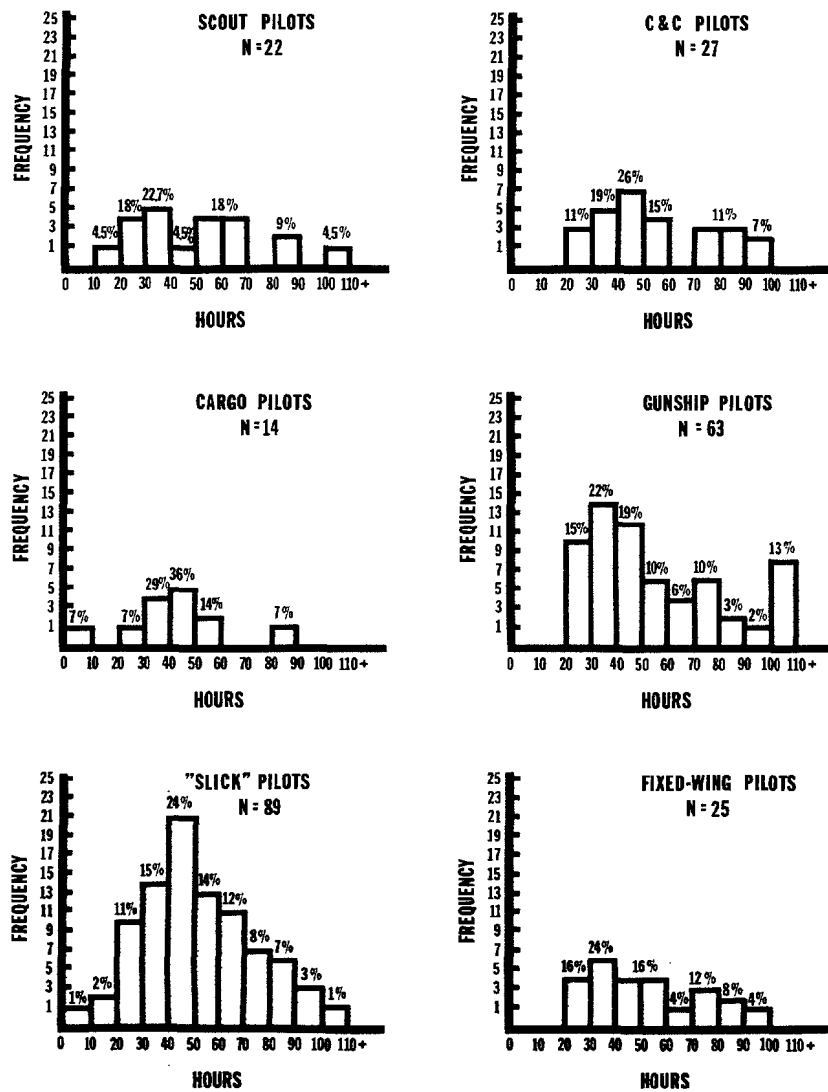


Figure 1
Average Number of Hours Per Week Spent In Flight Duties

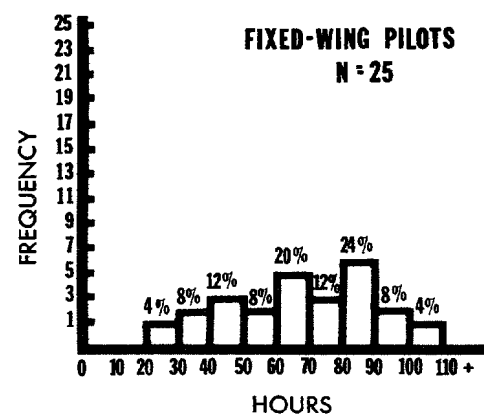
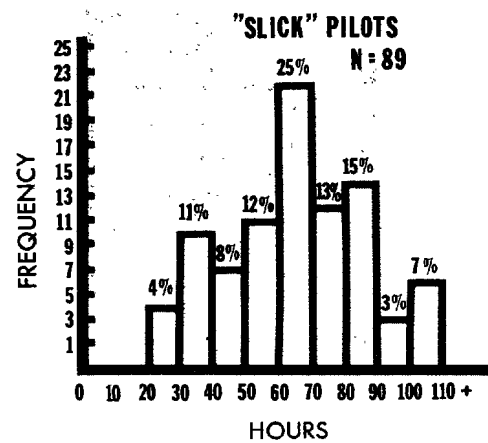
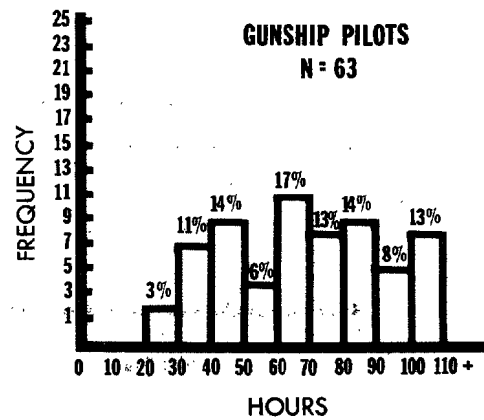
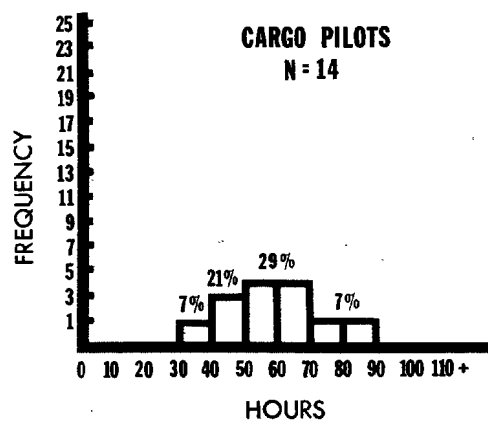
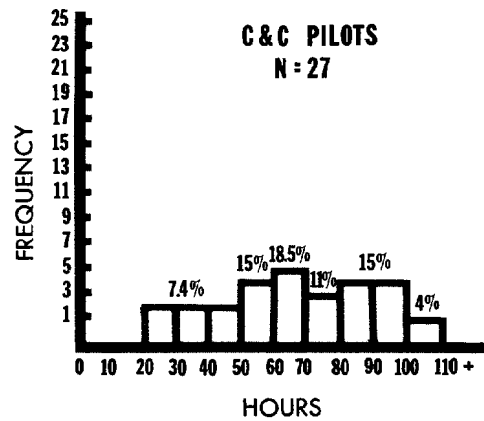
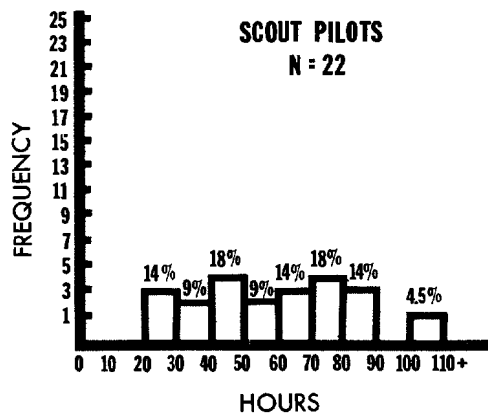
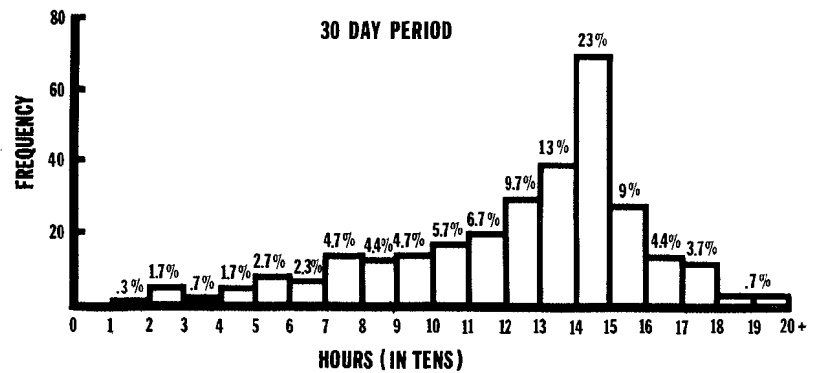
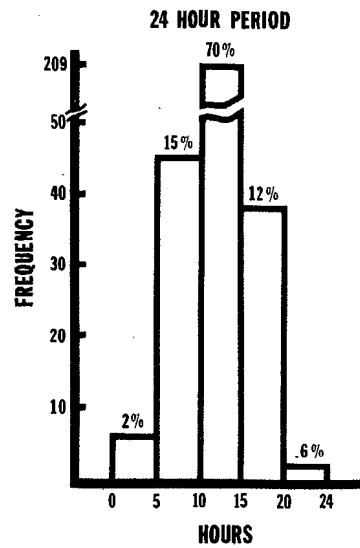
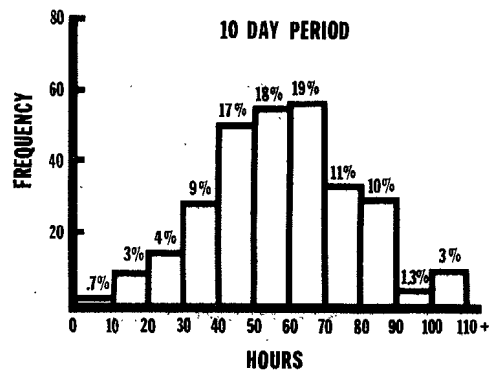


Figure 2

Number of Hours In An Average Work Week

Figure 3
Maximum Flying Time



Question: How many total flight hours (logged and unlogged) did you accrue during your last tour in RVN?

The mean flight hours for the 90 aviators who responded to this question was 819 hours. A plot of the distribution can be seen in Figure 4 below.

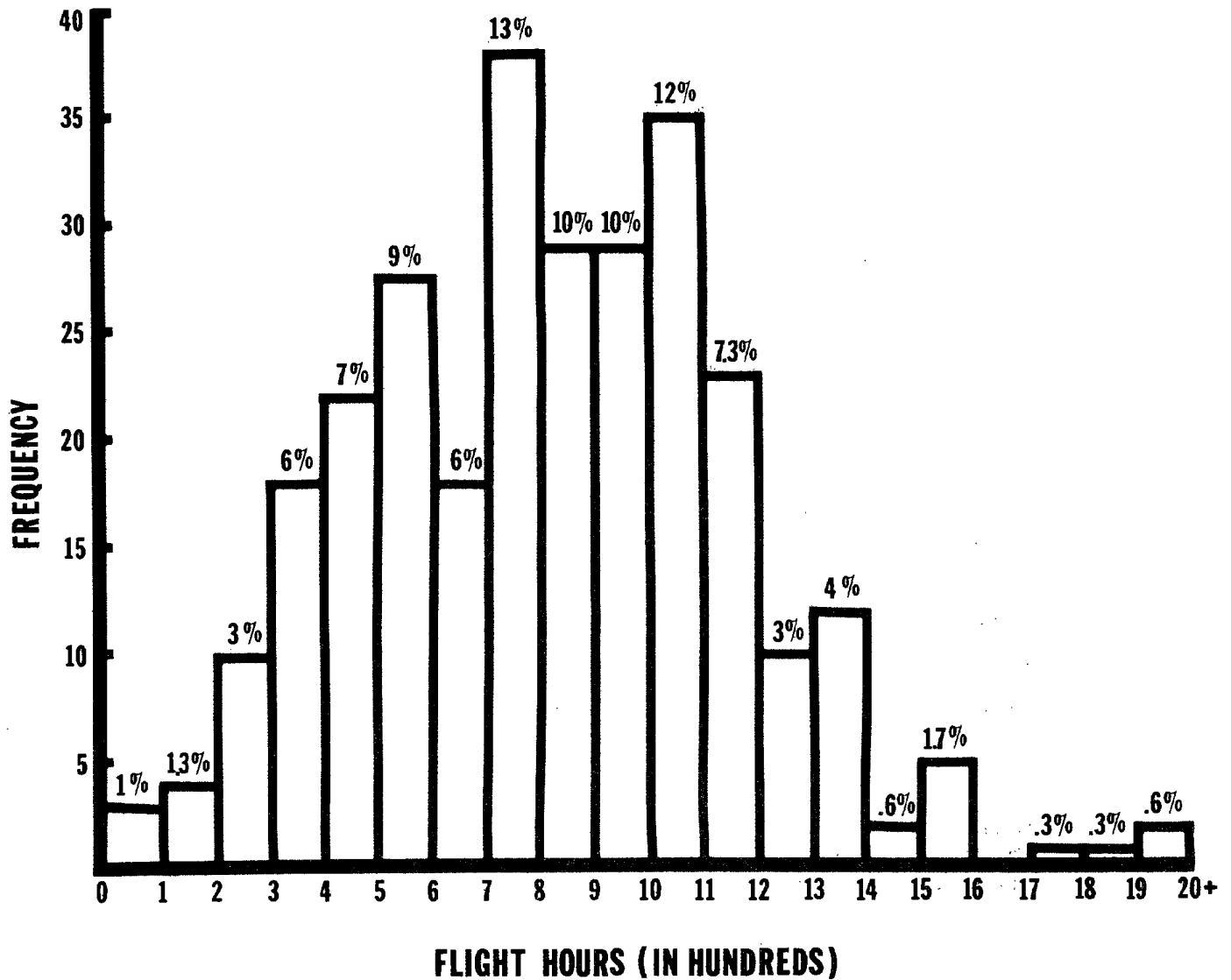


Figure 4

Total Flight Hours During Last RVN Tour

Flight Surgeons

Question: How often was your flight surgeon available to you for appointments, consultations, etc., during the tour in which you served the longest?

The answers to this question are summarized below.

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percent of Sample</u>
Always available	186	62%
Frequently available	75	25%
Infrequently available	20	6.7%
Never available	5	1.7%
Do not know	11	3.7%
No reply	5	1.7%

Question: How often did the flight surgeon stop and talk with you during your last RVN tour?

The responses to this question are summarized below.

<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percent of Sample</u>
Daily	37	12%
About Twice a Week	45	15%
About Once a Week	39	13%
About Once a Month	59	20%
Less Than Once a Month	95	32%
N/A, or had no contact with flight surgeons in RVN	20	6%
Did not reply	5	1%

Question: What is your opinion of the Army's medical care in RVN?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percent of Sample</u>
Highly Satisfied	168	56%
Mildly Satisfied	46	15%
Adequate, No More or Less	64	21%
Mildly Dissatisfied	12	4%
Highly Dissatisfied	7	2%
No Reply	3	1%

Nausea

- 4 Felt it was a problem at first, but cleared up later.
- 17 Felt it caused an occasional problem.
- 11 Felt it was always a problem while taking antimalaria pills.
- 11 Felt it was a factor and they stopped taking the pills.

Vertigo

Question: Did you experience vertigo while flying during your last RVN tour (not to include purposely induced vertigo during training)?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percent of Sample</u>
Yes	148	49%
No	147	49%
No Response	5	2%

Question: What factors do you feel contributed to your vertigo?

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percent of Responses</u>
Fatigue	71	36%
Stress	44	23%
Smoking	11	6%
Medication	2	1%
Illness	2	1%
Other Responses	65	33%

Question: How did you recover from your vertigo?

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percent of Responses</u>
By reference to instruments	112	61%
Gave controls to co-pilot	54	29%
Crashed	1	1%
Other responses	17	9%

Clothing and Helmets

Question: What types of clothing did you fly in most often during your last RVN tour?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percent of Sample</u>
Nomex Flight Suit (2 piece)	254	84.7%
Jungle Fatigues	38	12.7%
Both Nomex and Fatigues	7	2.3%
Other	1	.3%

Question: Who helped you fit your flight helmet?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percent of Responses</u>
Supply Personnel	127	38%
Operations Officer	100	30%
Flight Surgeon	44	13%
Survival Officer	21	6%
Training Officer	7	2%
Safety Officer	4	1%
No one helped or gave instruction	2	1%
Others	30	9%

Question: Would you prefer a helmet with both tinted and clear visors for use in RVN?

	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percent of Sample</u>
Yes	244	81.3%
No	36	12.0%
Do Not Know	20	6.7%

Night Vision Problems

Question: What factors, if any, caused night vision problems while flying in RVN?

<u>Factors</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percent of Responses</u>
Flares	196	44.9%
Search Lights	45	10.3%
Target Fixation	36	8.3%
Muzzle Flashes	23	5.3%
Other	78	17.9%
Had no night vision problems	58	13.3%

These data represent only a part of the total questionnaire administered. Questions included were, for the most part, chosen on the basis of their medical, physiological, or psychological implications. In some cases, questions were summarized or combined for brevity in presentation.

Inasmuch as this effort was primarily directed toward attaining information, no attempt was made to discuss data from the standpoint of drawing conclusions or making recommendations. Other data from the questionnaire for this sample has been punched on IBM cards and can be made available to interested parties.