UNIT HISTORY

48TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY (UH-1) (A)

5 July 1965 to 26 September 1966

Prepared By

[Signature]

JAMES I. McDOWELL
Captain, Transportation Corps

Approved By

[Signature]

JOEL J. WILLIAMS
Major, Infantry
Commanding
19TH AVIATION HISTORY

Chapter One: This Company Is Formed

The 48th Aviation Company (Airmobile) (Light), with support detachments, the
190th Transportation Detachment, 279th Signal Detachment, and 286th Medical Detach-
ment was activated at Fort Benning, Georgia by General Order 200, Hq, Third US
Army, on 5 July 1965. The only name listed on the 5 July morning report was that
of Major Keith L. Groom, C4003648, the first Commanding Officer. The first enlisted
entry on the morning report was Specialist Five Joseph E. Kearsey, which appear-
ed on the 21st of July 1965. The following personnel strengths were authorized
the 48th Aviation Company and to attached detachments:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>STRENGTH</th>
<th>TO&amp;E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48th Avn Co (Air)</td>
<td>14 Off, 41 Wo, 115 En</td>
<td>1-77E w/o 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190th TC Let (ChkHn)</td>
<td>1 Off, 1 Wo, 70 En</td>
<td>55-500R w/o 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>286th Med Let</td>
<td>1 Off, 3 En</td>
<td>3-500C w/o 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>279th Sig Let</td>
<td>1 Off, 9 En</td>
<td>11-500D w/o 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All personnel and equipment were to be obtained from locally available
resources. The primary source of personnel and equipment was the result
of the 11th Air Assault Div (Test) and 2nd Infantry Div being reformed into
the First Air Cavalry Division at Fort Benning, Georgia. The cadre officers
were assigned from the 10th Avn Group and the En came from various units
declaring personnel excess as a result of their reorganization. The 48th
Avn Co cadre coordinated through the S-4 officer of 10th Avn Group, Fort Benning,
and received approximately 75% of their equipment through lateral transfer
from the reorganizing units at Fort Benning. The remaining equipment and
supplies were requisitioned through normal supply channels on a priority basis.

The pilots for the 48th Avn Co signed in at Hq, 10th Avn Group on 1 Sep 65.
Nearly all the aviators reporting for duty with the 48th Avn Co were reassigned
from European assignments and their tours had been curtailed as a result of
the Vietnam build up.

Major Charles H. Drummond Jr assumed command of the 48th Avn Co on
1 Sep 65. From the personnel data cards completed by each officer inprocessing,
Major Drummond established his chain of command. His key personnel were:

Major Charles H. Drummond Jr                  CO
SFC E7 George C. Laws                          1/Sgt
Major Robert L. Stensmore                     MWO
Major Thomas E. Williamson                     Ops N Off
Major Willis E. Smith                         1st Airlift Plt Ldr
Major Harry J. Zellmer                        2nd Airlift Plt Ldr
Major Velma E. Parker                         3rd Plt Ldr (Gun Plt)
Captain Paul R. Lalumiere Jr                   Intel Off

Key personnel for attached detachments were:

Major Edward R Brophy Jr                     CO, 390th TC Let
Captain Orlon B. Donaldson III               CO, 279th Sig Let
Captain Arthur K. Hagen                      MWO, 286th Med Let
During the month of September 1965, the company worked a seven day week and directed their efforts toward full qualifying all personnel and to training, processing and packaging T-34 and T-50 equipment for overseas shipment. Training days were alternated with work days. The training schedule included 10 hours refresher training per pilot, weapons qualification, survival, escape and evasion, code of conduct, Geneva Convention, first aid, pilot briefings on tactics and techniques and a general Vietnam orientation. The pilots trained in aircraft belonging to the 181st AVN Tq Co, Fort Benning, Georgia.

On 17 September 1965 Capt. Rex Saindon, Lt. Robert Smith, CW2 Thomas Paulson, CW2 Kenneth Hill, CW2 Gary Wilkinson, and we olde timer ferried five 48th AVN Co UH-1 helicopters to Eagle Mountain Army Depot, Ft. Worth, Texas where they picked up five additional helicopters and continued to Beckham Army General Depot, California where the aircraft were processed for overseas shipment.

On 30 September the company conducted payday activities and all personnel desiring leave were granted leave until 18 October 1965. Personnel not desiring leave remained at Fort Benning and continued packing equipment.

Prior to movement overseas the 48th AVN Co and its detachments received inspections from the Inspector General, 3rd U.S. Army.

The 48th AVN Co and detachments were directed overseas by letter, United States Army Infantry Command, dated 8 September 1965, subject: Permanent Change of Station of STAF Forces.

CHAPTER TWO: ADVANCED PARTY DEPART TO ACCOMPANY AIRCRAFT OVERSEAS

On 14 October 1965 Major Edward H. Brophy Jr., Captain Rex Mitchell, Captain Arthur Hoen, Captain Arthur Hagen, CW2 James V. McGart, CW2 Wayne F. Geer, and 20 enlisted personnel were called off leave to form the advance party to accompany the aircraft overseas. This advance party boarded a bus for Atlanta, Georgia on 18 October. From Atlanta they flew commercial air to San Francisco International Airport. They reported to Alameda Naval Air Station, Oakland, California where they signed for 16 UH-1B and 9 UH-19 helicopters. The helicopters had already been processed for overseas shipment and had their main rotor blades, stabilizer bars, and tail rotor removed. The gun kits were boxed and secured inside the aircraft. The aircraft were zipped and locked inside large seaworthy protective bags and loaded aboard the USS MUL a GULF, a baby aircraft carrier.

The advance party for aircraft sailed from Alameda Naval Air Station, Oakland, California on 25 October 1965 aboard the USS MUL a GULF. The ship made one stop in the Philippine Islanais prior to arriving at Cam Ranh Bay, RVN on 13 Nov 65. Five days out from Vietnam the advance party started deprocessing and reassembling their helicopters.

Major Brophy, on the 13th of November flew one of the reassembled helicopters from the MUL a GULF to Long Binh to coordinate with the Co, 10th AVN BN in order to determine the new assignment and duty station for the 48th. Major Brophy was advised to proceed to Vung Tau, that the 48th was assigned to the 145th AVN BN with duty station Vung Tau.

After being tied up in Cam Ranh Bay harbor for three days, the USS MUL a GULF again set sail with the 48th AVN Co advanced party and helicopters aboard, this time with its destination as Vung Tau, RVN. They were met at Vung Tau on 16 Nov 65 by Major Smith, Co. 611th Transportation Company. Major Smith assigned Major Brophy and the other pilots the call sign "BLUE STK" to signal the arrival to
The Wung Tau operation of the 46th AVN Co, aircraft were flown off the Waco Waco Camp by 437th AVN crews and marked in the "light blue" marking code. The remaining equipment on board the carrier was off loaded in seven C-130 and C-137 loads. The name "light blue" has remained with the 437th AVN Co since 16 Nov 65. However, the call sign was changed twice officially, though not in fact, and the Company Commander in both cases was able to get the blue call title back. The advanced party commenced pre-flight briefing and safety of flight instructions on the aircraft and assembled and attached the gun systems to the aircraft. In the meantime, major troop had made contact with the 145th AVN and was advised that the 46th AVN Co had been transferred to the 145th AVN Co and would relocate immediately to the Khan Nang Valley approximately 12 miles north of Wung Tau.

On 25 November 1965 Captain Hosenbrandt of the advanced party had caught a flight aboard an Army C-47 from Tan Lung to Saigon attempting to link up with the advanced party for aircraft and to coordinate the meeting of the main body at Can Nam Bay on the 26th of November. Captain Hosenbrandt made contact with Capt. Mitchell at 12th AVN Group Hqs, Saigon. He later met with Major Ailsky and they arranged to have three aircraft meet the main body at Can Nam Bay on the 26th.

The advanced party for aircraft remained at Wung Tau for approximately two weeks readjusting the unit aircraft. Sufficient space and security were provided at Khan Nang, the aircraft were shuttled, at the rate of three per day, until all aircraft were relocated to Khan Nang.

Chapter Twelve: MAIN BODY DEPARTS FROM WUNG TAU

The 46th AVN Co Limus the advanced party with the aircraft (see chap 2) and the rear/advanced party (see chap 4) departed Muscogee County Airport, Columbus, at hourly intervals between 2300 hours 4 Nov 65 and 0330 hours 5 Nov 65 by commercial Super Constellation aircraft for Oakland International Airport. The LOW was classified to avoid public suspicion. Commercial buses were on hand to meet each aircraft as it landed at Oakland International and carried the 46th AVN personnel with baggage to Oakland Army Terminal where they promptly boarded the USNS Geiger, a Navy troop carrier. The USNS Geiger sailed from Pier 7, Oakland Army Terminal at 1730 hours, 5 Nov 65 with the 46th AVN Co (Limus) aboard.

Throughout the trip, company officers were involved in writing company orders, operating procedures to prepare them for operations in Vietnam. The USNS Geiger made one stop off enroute to AVN at Guam Island and liberty was afforded all personnel from 0900 hours until 1300 hours on 16 Nov 65. The only facility open at the Navy base was a snack bar until the officers of the 46th AVN Co passed the bat and cruised the naval officers' club bar tender to open the bar at 1030 hours. The enlisted personnel arranged through the naval petty officer's club to have beer and snacks taken to the beach, and the beach party that ensued few will forget.

The next stop was Qui Nhon, AVN where the USNS Geiger tied up for three days, 23-26 Nov, while other units disembarked. All 46th AVN Co personnel remained aboard the USNS Geiger in Qui Nhon harbor. The company spent their first National holiday overseas, enjoying a delicious Thanksgiving Day dinner aboard the ship. Their menu included turkey, mashed potatoes & gravy, candied yams, cranberries, peas & carrots, relishes, lima beans and pumpkin pie and ice cream served with coffee, milk or tea.
The beer bender departed Can Hanh harbor at approximately 2400 hours, 25 Nov 65 and encroached in Can Hann Bay at approximately 0730 hours, 26 Nov 65.

Captain Thurlond, OIC of the rear/advanced party let the company aboard the USN's Seiger. Captain ThurlOND briefed the Commanding Officer, Major Charles E. Erdlund Jr on the unit assignment with 10th Avn Co and duty station at Phan Rang.

The company, shortly after arrival at Can Hann Bay, disembarked into LCU's (Landing Craft Utility), which transported them to the beach. All personnel were issued their basic load of ammunition in the rain. Fifteen of the officers boarded three company helicopters which Major Krog is had brought from Vung Tau (see chapter 2) and flew directly to Phan Rang. The remainder of the company boarded 2½ ton trucks from the 10th Transportation Battalion, Can Hann. The trucks were ferried across Can Hann Bay and formed a convoy for the trip over national highway 41 to Phan Rang. An O-1A bird dog flew convoy escort and two Uh-1B gunships were on standby at Can Hann Bay for purposes of security. The company closed station at Phan Rang at 1900 hours, 26 November 1965.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE REAR PARTY CLOSED OUT FORT BENNING AND BECAME THE COMPANY ADVANCED PARTY

The rear party, composed of Captain Jales F. Thurlond (OIC), Captain Larue H. Rosengrant, 1LT William T. Logan, 5SG Gilbert McColough, 5SG Delbert L. Call, SSG Jimmie H. Bay, and PFC Donald E. Wallace remained at Fort Benning to close out property accounts and to turn over their building to another unit. The rear party were the last 48th Avn Co personnel to depart CUBUS, the only members to fly directly to RVN, and the first to arrive in Vietnam. The rear party departed Fort Benning by bus and boarded a commercial airlines at Macon County airport, Columbus, Georgia, at 0800 hours on 10 Nov 65. They flew by commercial air to San Francisco International airport. A bus took them at the airport and took them directly to Travis AFB, California, where they were booked on a Pan American Jet for Saigon, RVN, with stops at Anchorage, Alaska, Tokyo, Japan, and Clark AFB, Philippine Islands. They arrived at Tan Son Nhut airport, Saigon, RVN at 1900 hours, 13 Nov 65 and were now acting as the advanced party for the main body of the 48th Avn Co.

Shortly after arrival, Captain Thurlond contacted Colonel Jones, Cu, 12th Avn Co in Saigon to report their arrival. 12th Avn Group had no knowledge as to when the 48th Avn Co was scheduled in-country, who they would be assigned to or where their duty station would be. The advanced party moved into Camp Alpha, 90th Repl Bn, Tan Son Nhut AFB, Saigon, and awaited notification of their assignment. On 16 Nov 65, the party received word that the 48th Avn Co would be assigned to the 10th Avn Br at Long Binh Thin and they hopped a ride aboard an Air Force C-130 to Can Hanh Air Force Base. Their personal and company equipment, to include classified documents, were off loaded on the runway and the C-130 departed.

Captain Thurlond contacted 10th Avn Br who dispatched a helicopter to Can Hanh. Captain Thurlond and Lt Logan flew to Long Binh Thin to coordinate with the CO, 10th Avn Br. Captain Rosengrant and the advanced party (kimos) remained overnight at Can Hanh and joined the others on 18 Nov in Long Binh Thin. Coordination was completed with Lt Col Olney, who informed that the 48th Avn Co advance party with the aircraft had been in Can Hann but had departed for Vung Tau (see chap 2). Lt Col Olney, Captain Thurlond and Lt Logan, on 17 Nov 65, flew a helicopter to Phan Rang to reconnoiter a location for the 48th Avn Co. Coordination was made with Colonel B K Mattlick, the Air Force Commander, and Colonel Timothy, Cu, 1st CCB, 101st ABn Div, and the area they agreed upon was an area approximately five acres in size and located east of the 10th Avn Co airstrip. On the 20th the advanced
party convoyed from Long Binh to Phan Rang in a 2½ ton and 3/4 ton truck they had borrowed from the 10th Arm. Passing through the village of Phan Rang they continued straight to Vung Tau where they should have turned right. After realizing their mistake and in the process of turning around, the 2½ ton truck received fire from a sniper. This was the first incident where the 48th Avn Co received hostile fire. No injuries were sustained and the group continued to the military compound at Phan Rang.

The advance party encountered with the air force, who at that time amounted to an advanced party in Phan Rang with only a few tents erected. The advance party was embarked on the ship and unloaded. They marched to the air force hanger and established a base, tents and water for the complement upon their arrival. They coordinated with the 101st Abn Div (also new in the area) and a field kitchen, complete with fire unit, pot, and pans, was established. Sections were also drawn from the 101st. On 23 Nov 65 Captain Koenig set up a flight from Vung Tau to Saigon to link up with Major Huy and the advanced party accompanying the aircraft, and to arrange for three company aircraft to meet the main body in Phan Rang on the 26th. Captain Thurmond met the company aboard the USS Geiger in the Phan Rang Bay and briefed the company commander on the new location. Company officers were making bets on whether or not Captain Thurmond would make it up the side of the ship via its rope ladder. It was a struggle but Captain Thurmond made it.

CHAPTER FIVE: 48TH AVN CO (AML) ARRIVES AT PHAN RANG

The 48th Avn Co, upon arrival at Phan Rang on 26 Nov 65, loved into air force tents arranged for them by the advance party. The first three days in Phan Rang, the officers, NCO's, and men all were issued axes, machetes, and other tools and everyone pitched in to attempt to clear the trees and underbrush from the area which was to be their new home. On 30 Nov 65 the 48th Avn Co loved out of the air force tents and into their partially cleared area. Company personnel continued to clear the company area and as sufficient space was cleared, aircraft were ferried from Vung Tau at the rate of three per day until all aircraft were relocated to Phan Rang. The first casualty for the 48th in Vietnam was Captain Paul H. Lelumier Jr when he received a light injury from a machete during the clearing operations. It Jack Horne, while working at clearing operations, encountered one of the many poisonous snakes in the area. The company soon employed approximately 200 coolies to get the clearing operation under way. Throughout the first few weeks while the 48th was clearing the land and building their camp the monsoon rains were in full force and they worked, ate, and slept in the rain up to their knees. Before getting settled at their new home, the Phan Rang LACV Sector Advisor warned them that a Viet Cong attack was imminent. On 2 Dec 65 the pilots evacuated the aircraft to Dong Ba Thin where they stayed with the 117th and 129th Armored companies for two nights. Throughout the remainder of December it became a nightly procedure to evacuate the aircraft to the 101st Airborne Division contingent area and the crews billeted with units of the 101st. The early part of December was spent clearing the company area, digging foxholes, erecting tents and some limited flying missions.

On 21 Dec 65 the 48th conducted its first company sized airborne operation when it administratively lifted 4/2/502nd Abn Inf from Phan Rang to the shore of the South China Sea 15 miles west, and returned to Phan Rang with 4/2/502nd Abn Inf. Ten UH-1D's and four UH-1B's (gunships) took part in the exercise.
In 22 December, Major Ralph W. Iromen became Operations Officer.

In 23 December, Major Iromen and CWO Geer experienced the first engine failure in Vietnam. They put the ship down in a rice paddy without a scratch and were quickly rescued.

On 27 Dec 65, twenty-three door gunners were assigned to the 48th Avn Co by the 10th Avn Bn. CWO Temple and WO Fisher departed for Tuy Hoa with a C&C ship to support the 117th Airmobile Company.

On 29 December, the 48th Avn Co completed its first operational combat mission, with the extraction of bodies from a crashed 7 aircraft. The aircraft had been lost in the mountains approximately 16 miles south of Phan Rang. Earlier attempts by another Airmobile Company to rescue the bodies had been driven off by enemy fire. The 2/327th Abn Lnf Bn conducted a combat assault in the vicinity of the crash site to secure the area, however, numerous enemy remained. Captain Arthur Ioen and 1LT Robert E. Smith had been flying C&C for the 2/327th and volunteered to attempt the extraction. They successfully accomplished this difficult mission under extremely hazardous conditions. Both 48th Avn Co pilots received the air medal with "V" device and were the first members of the 48th Avn Co to be decorated for heroism.

Also on 29 Dec, Captain Carl R. Jones, Captain Morris R. Steenson, Captain Donald R. Kelsey, and CWO Dominik L. Guccione departed for Tuy Hoa with two gunships to augment and train with the 117th Avn Co through 6 Jan 66. The first time 48th aircraft received enemy fire was when these crews and 117th pilots were conducting a live fire exercise in a designated free fire area west of Tuy Hoa and while undergoing target practice an enemy sniper within close vicinity of the target fired back at them. There was no damage to either aircraft or crews.

CHAPTER SIX: COMPANY IS DECLARED OPERATIONAL - 1 JAN 66

On 1 Jan 66 the 48th Aviation Company (AhL) was declared combat operational by the CO, Major Charles H. Drummond Jr. The company was in-country a total of only 36 days before it was declared combat operational.

At 0045 hours, 1 Jan 66, the 48th Avn Co crews at Tuy Hoa underwent a mortar attack. The Viet Cong landed 21 mortar rounds within the camp. Fortunately no personnel were injured.

The 48th Avn Co received its first aircraft hit from hostile fire on 2 Jan 66. Aircraft #064, flown by Captain Carl Jones received a hit from small arms fire just below the horizontal stabilizer while escorting a medevac helicopter. This occasion, incidently, happened on Captain Jones' birthday.

After rehearsing for three days, the 48th Avn Co pilots put out the 101st Abn LRP (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol) in an area 10 miles SE of Phan Rang. The insertion was timed for approximately 15 minutes remaining light. The helicopters orbited 15 minutes after insertion and started back toward home base when the LRP made an emergency call to the 48th pilots requesting extraction as they were heavily engaged in a fire fight. The 48th Avn Co gunships, led by Major LaVerne M. Bindrup, suppressed the enemy fire and the slicks (UH-1D's) extracted the team. This was the first time 48th Avn Co personnel actively engaged the enemy.

4 Jan 66: (Phan Rang) gunships attacked a Viet Cong platoon sighted in the open by the 101st LRP. After the gunship attack, 48th Avn Co aircraft lifted a
platoon of 101st Abn Inf troops to the battle site. The LEP reported having observed two ox cart loads of bodies being removed after the gunship attack. The official estimate was 12 VC KIA (killed by aircraft).

4-7 Jan 66: (Phan Rang) The company received its T&E equipment. Repair parts had been in-country but had not been delivered to Phan Rang prior to this date.

8 Jan 66: Captains Halsey and Steen (097), Captain Clemons and CWO Harke (085), LT Green and CWO Harris (093) were called to Saigon to reinforce the 155th AVN Co with gunships on Operation Crisp. The operation required 10 Airmobile companies with over 300 aircraft and two complete infantry brigades (1st Div and 25th Inf) were hell-lunched. A large battle took place on 9 Jan 66. The first LZ in which the 48th AVN Co gun pilots provided pre-strike fires and armed escort had 4 of 7 gunships severely damaged by hostile fire. The three 48th aircraft were the three not receiving hits. Twelve .50 cal machine guns were captured by the ground troops in this LZ. The 48th gunships escorted troop carrying UH-1D's and two additional teams for operation with pre-strike fire in each, but unfortunately the 48th again sustained no hits. The crews returned to Phan Rang on the 10th with their first real test of combat flying. The same crews departed the following day again for Tuy Hoa and again to support the 117th AVN Co during Operation Jefferson in conjunction with the RHK (Republic of Korea) Brigade.

9 Jan 66: 80 5, para 19, hq, 10th AVN En, nineteen security personnel were assigned to the 48th AVN Co. Within a week the security personnel totaled 31 and were formed into a security platoon. Their mission was to provide physical security for the 48th AVN Co.

12 Jan 66: At 1300 hours the 48th AVN Co departed Phan Rang for Tuy Hoa with 6 UH-1D's and 3 UH-1B's to reinforce the 129th AVN Co on Operation Jefferson. This became the first sustained support of a combat operation by the 48th AVN Co and this date set off a long and still continuing chain of combat support operations. On 12 Jan the 1st Airlift Platoon departed Phan Rang for Song Lao to support the 2/327th Abn Inf En on a combat operation. The first platoon rejoined the company at Tuy Hoa South Airfield. The service platoon was split between Tuy Hoa and Phan Rang and the 390th Lat (-) remained at Phan Rang as did the administrative sections of the company. During this operation aircraft were returned to Phan Rang for FE's and major maintenance. The crews accompanied their aircraft to Phan Rang for PE and were allowed to rest during the time the aircraft underwent maintenance.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN OPERATION VAN BUREN/HARRISON: TUY HOA

The 48th AVN Co was in general support of both Operation Van Buren (18 Jan - 20 Feb 66) and Operation Harrison (21 Feb - 15 Mar 66) with priority of missions going to the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division. Missions were received by the 10th AVN En at the CSAC (Combat Support Coordination Center) and relayed to the companies. The company was briefed that elements of the 95th PAVN (People's Army of Vietnam) Regiment, the 3rd Viet Cong Regiment and local Viet Cong companies were known to be operating north and west of Tuy Hoa. The major friendly units in the area were the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division, a Republic of Korea brigade, and the 47th AVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) Regiment. The 48th AVN Co supported all three friendly elements from 18 Jan - 15 Mar 66.
The 48th AVN Co. joined as a fighting team at Tuy Hoa. They fast earned the reputation for rendering timely and professional aviation support to ground troops ranging from simple one ship supply missions to leading multi-company night combat assaults into insecure landing zones.

The 48th AVN Co., remaining in the field on direct combat support operations from 10 Jun – 15 Jul 66, established a new record for the number of days of sustained combat support from an aerial location by an airborne company. Statistically the 48th, on their first combat support operations, achieved an impressive record. During this period, the 48th AVN Co. led the largest night helicopter assault on record. Thirty-six (36) UH-1D’s from three companies escorted by twelve (12) gunships. The mission was to lift two battalions of 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, commencing at 0100 hours to exploit the effects of A-10 bombing raids. This assault was accomplished by infiltrating a pathfinder team which lighted the landing zones.

On 2 February the 48th AVN Co. set another record by lifting the largest number of troops (2400) and cargo (100 tons) into the largest assortment of landing zones (15) in the history of the Vietnam war. This was accomplished with eighteen (18) UH-1D’s (six from the 117th AVN Co.). The average pilot on that day flew over nine hours.

(10 Jun – 15 Jul 66)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Total hours flown</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total sorties flown</td>
<td>19,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cargo lifted</td>
<td>857 tons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total passengers carried</td>
<td>15,524</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of aircraft hit by enemy fire</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of aircraft shot down by enemy fire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of aircraft destroyed by enemy fire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Viet Cong ABA</td>
<td>29 confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 estimated</td>
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</table>

Quantity of fuel expended

- 7.62mm 340,300 rounds
- 40mm 1,068 rounds
- 2.75 inch rockets 4,977 rockets
- JP-4 fuel consumed 250,619 gallons
- Number of crew members wounded 8

The 48th AVN Co. returned to Khe Sanh from Tuy Hoa and remained at base station from 15 Jul – 11 Apr 66. During this period the company maintained five aircraft with crews in Nha Trang in support of 4th Field Forces, 1st Air Command. The station emphasis was placed on maintaining aircraft vehicles and in improving the living conditions at Khe Sanh. During this period the officers constructed an officers club. The club is of frame structure with a concrete floor and corrugated steel roofing. Employees of RMA Construction company rendered invaluable services and material in building the club. Captain John Jenkins was the first appointed club officer and he supervised the construction effort and conducted the necessary correspondence to establish legal officers open base.

The control of the 48th AVN Co. was temporarily assumed by Major Willis L. Smith from 17-31 March 1966. Major Charles L. Buxton Jr re-assumed control of the 48th AVN Co. on 31 March 1966. Major Harry H. Roper Jr assumed control of the company from Major Buxton on 4 April 1966.

On the 2nd and 3rd of April 1966 the 48th AVN Co. provided seven UH-1D.
HELICOPTERS ... THE 60-13 HELICOPTERS IN SUPPORT OF THE 151ST MOBILE CO ...
were supporting the 1st Cav Regt (ARVN) in operations against the known Viet Cong battalions operating within a twenty kilometer square northwest of Phu Kham, NVA. This short operation proved to be one of the hottest engagements the 48th LVN Co had participated in up to that time. Four UH-1B and one OH-13 helicopters received direct hits. One aircraft returned with forty entry holes in the airframe caused from a 50-cal round exploding close to the aircraft. Statistically these nine aircraft completed a big job for a two-day period.

| Total sorties flown | 315 |
| Total troops carried | 206 |
| Total cargo lifted | 31.9 tons |
| Total troops medically evacuated | 9 U.S. |
| Total enemy kills | 6 |
| Total hours flight time | 34:00 |
| Total amm. expended | 3200 rounds |
| 7.62 | 300 rounds |
| 40 | 8 rockets |
| 2.75 inch rockets | |

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE UNIT CREST AND LOTTO

Shortly after assuming command, Major Roper designed a company crest. The background for the crest is a "blue star" bordered in gold, derived from the original still-in-effect unit call sign, centered inside the blue Star (are the numerals "48" in white letters with black trim. Lettered in red on a white scroll below the blue star is the unit motto "SKILL NOT LUCK" also contributed by Major Roper. Upon arrival in country and prior to assuming command of the 48th, Major Roper was repeatedly told of the many successful operations by the newly formed 48th LVN Co, of which Lost sources contributed their success to pure luck. After but a brief period with the company, Major Roper realized that it was skill, not luck, which accounted for the 48th LVN Co's success and hence the company motto originated. The blue star has become a symbol of strong pride among the members of the 48th LVN Co. Each aircraft carries a blue star trimmed in gold on its tail section, and the men in the company proudly wear the blue star patch on their right breast pocket. The gun platoon, known by their call sign as the "Jokers" have altered the basic 48th LVN Co crest by placing in green letters the word "Joker" on the white background above the scroll. The members of the 266th Medical Detachment have altered their crest slightly by having embroidered on the white background a red cross with the numerals 266 in black just above the red cross.

CHAPTER NINE: OPERATION AUSTIN II

After the short breather in Phu Kham the 48th LVN Co again took to the field, this time they moved South to Phan Thiet, Nv, and again were in general support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, and in direct support of the 1st Inf, 327th Abn Inf, 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div. There were reported widespread Viet Cong terrorist activities west and north of Phan Thiet. Operation Austin II was conducted in two phases. Phase I (11-19 Apr 66) was conducted to the west of Phan Thiet. The activity of Phase I, with the exception of two large combat assaults, was primarily in support of small units conducting search and destroy missions. Assaults with from two to five aircraft were made into dispersed confined landing zones. Phase II (20-25 Apr 66) kicked off with the 48th LVN Co making a night combat assault carrying 425 troops of the 1/327th Abn Inf En into three LZ's approximately 40
miles north of Phan Thiet. This operation went on record as the largest night combat assault conducted by an airborne company in the history of the Vietnam War.

For the remainder of Phase II of Austin II, the 48th Avn Co staged its aircraft from a forward base of operations, (SF Camp Luong Son) and during daylight hours remained on immediate standby, as the infantry troopers developed the enemy situation the 48th provided troop lift, re-supply, and armed helicopter support. Statistical results of the 48th Avn Co support of Austin II are as follows:

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total hours flown</td>
<td>767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sorties flown</td>
<td>2794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cargo lifted</td>
<td>78 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total passengers carried</td>
<td>3946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total aircraft hit by enemy fire</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures damaged</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures destroyed</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total VC KIA (confirmed)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew KIA's wounded</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Medical evac</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amm expended</td>
<td>183,000 rounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.62mm</td>
<td>3,300 rounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40mm</td>
<td>12,260 rounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.75 inch rockets</td>
<td>487 rockets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JF-4 fuel consumed</td>
<td>57,790 gallons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On 24 April 1966, while in general support of Operation Austin II, the 48th Avn Co received a mission of direct support to the 2nd bn, 44th Inf Regt (ARVN) for a combat assault into an LZ approximately 20 miles south of Phan Thiet. The gunships made a pro-strike of the LZ but crew no fire. Inbound to the LZ aircraft 776, piloted by CW's William Moore and Tom Paulsen, experienced an engine failure. The two pilots expertly cutrotated their aircraft without damage to the aircraft or injury to the Vietnamese troops aboard. Following the troop lift a gunship escorting a UH-1D on a resupply mission received four hits. No injuries were sustained by crew members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total sorties flown</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total troops carried</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cargo lifted</td>
<td>1 ton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total hours flown</td>
<td>44:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amm expended</td>
<td>12,260 rounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.62mm</td>
<td>250 rounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40mm</td>
<td>56 rockets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.75 inch rockets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER X: OPERATION AUSTIN VI (29 apr - 18 May 66)

The company, completing Operation Austin II, broke camp and loaded their equipment aboard US Air Force C-130 transports at the Phan Thiet airfield and were flown to an airstrip at Nhon Co near the Cambodian border. The air crews loaded their aircraft with personal equipment and were able to AUN at Phan Rang enroute to Nhon Co.
The 48th Aviation Company was placed in direct support of the 1/327th Inf, 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div with the additional mission of general support to the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div and the 45th Inf Regt (LRRPs). An enemy force of unknown size was operating along the Cambodian border utilizing trails to infiltrate personnel and equipment from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. The weather until 1000 hours was generally overcast with ceilings from 100 to 200 feet and 1 mile visibility, lifting to from 500 to 1000 feet until 1500 hours and 1800 hours daily. The terrain over which the company operated varied from 1300 to 2300 ft. The preponderance of the area was covered by heavy jungle vegetation varying in height from 100 to 150 feet. The company established its camp within the perimeter of a newly formed Special Forces Camp. Living conditions were severely crowded due to the lack of space. Newly recruited Vietnam CIVIL IRREGULAR DEFENSE GROUP (Civilian Irregular Defense Group) companies with their incendiary mines the perimeter surrounding the 48th Abn Co.

The 48th Aviation pilots experienced increased difficulty in low level navigation over the dense jungle. It was also discovered that the dense jungle canopies reduced the effectiveness of enemy fire. In bad weather and at night, flares proved especially valuable in helping the pilots find Nhon Co airfield.

The first troop lift for the 1/327th Infantry Battalion occurred on 1 May 66. The Bn was lifted into LZ Savman (Y628465) and the 48th Abn Co provided ammunition, re-supply and troop lift capability from the Nhon Co airfield through 5 May 66. During the period 9-16 May 66, the 1/327th Inf Bn operated their base of operations from Bu Gia hap airfield which is 10 miles of Nhon Co and approximately 20 miles. Five UH-1D's and 2 UH-1B's were maintained on strip alert during the day at Bu Gia hap airfield for resupply and minor troop moves.

Statistical Data

- Combat sorties flown: 2366
- Troops moved: 3587
- Ammunition expenditures:
  - 7.62mm: 45,700 rounds
  - 40mm: 600 rounds
  - 2.75 inch rockets: 232 rockets
- Total flight time: 854.5 hours

Chapter Eleven: STOP OFF AT CHEO HEO

Again the 48th Abn Co (all) packed their gear, struck their tents and loaded their equipment on USAF C-130 pallets for air transport. On 29 May 66 the air crews with their B-52's packed down with personal equipment and tents departed Nhon for Phan Rang. The crews were afforded the opportunity of staying 4 days and 3 nights at "hike". The remainder of the company stayed at Nhon Co until all unit equipment was loaded aboard C-130 aircraft and they then proceeded directly to Cheo Heto, the next base of operations.

The air crews took full advantage of being back in Phan Rang, which by this time was becoming more of a fable than a reality to most blue stars. The new officers club, which you recall was constructed by unit personnel as were all other structures claimed by the 48th, was the sight of two rather gory parties. It was the first opportunity for the officers to relax and enjoy their own club.
The company closed Cheo Neo on 24 May and started again the new routine procedure of erecting tents, unbagging their tents, digging foxholes, setting up latrines, and a shower point. Erecting mess tents and a kitchen and establishing operations.

The 48th IVN Co was again in support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div. Both units were at Cheo Neo to participate in Operation Trooper which never took place. The 48th's tenure at Cheo Neo was abruptly curtailed by orders to again break camp and move. Due to tactical considerations by higher headquarters, the 101st and 10th IVN Bn, parent unit of the 48th IVN Co, were to proceed without delay to Dak To. The 48th was encamped at Cheo Neo only six days (24 - 30 May) and no significant operations were conducted.

CHAPTER TWELVE: LAK TO; REINFORCEMENT OF TOUTHONG; OPERATION HAWTHORNE (1-20 Jun 66); OPERATION HAWTHORNE (24 Jun - 14 Jul 66)

The 48th Assault Helicopter Company (UH-1) (the new designation for the pliable companies proposed by Brigadier General Seneff, Commanding General, 1st Aviation Brigade and hence officially adopted) closed at Dak To on 30 May 1966.

Dak To located approximately 50 miles north of Kontum City in the Vietnamese Central Highlands. The 48th established their camp at Dak To #1 airstrip which is an abandoned airstrip approximately 5 Kh east of the active Dak To airfield, also the sight of an American Special Forces Camp. Dak To #1 was reverently referred to as "Old Dak To". Old Dak To had a field elevation of approximately 2100 feet MSL and was situated in the spacious Dak To Valley. The surrounding countryside was mountainous with peaks varying from 3000 to 6000 feet MSL. Numerous streams flowed in the valleys providing many areas suitable for landing sites. The mountainous terrain was covered with heavy forest and dense jungle and offered very few landing zones. The weather was generally mild with the evenings quite cool. Early mornings it was common to be weathered in due to fog which generally rose to a ceiling of 1000 feet by 0900 hours. During midday there normally existed a scattered cloud layer from 4000 to 6000 feet MSL. These were occasional thunder showers in midafternoon, but the soil had good drainage and there was no real problem with mud.

The company was forewarned that they could expect to remain from five to six months at Dak To. This was all it required for the company to pull together and create a very livable camp. Throughout the area their existed numerous Montagnard tribes and several of these indigenous personnel were employed as KP's and workers. Several impressive hoochies were constructed. One constructed by Captain Vincent Nipoll and First Lieutenant Hogan resembled a Swiss Chalet than an Army hex tent. The hoochies, with two tents joined, had a porch with overhanging canopy (parachute) and several large banana trees swarming their front yard. The supporting artillery units found the 48th Blue Stars a continuous pest as they begged, borrowed and stole 105mm ammo boxes. With the boxes they built wood floors for the less tents and operations tent and within two weeks nearly all individual tents included wooden floors.

Since Dak To was nearly a three hour flight back to Phnom Kung it was no longer practical to perform KP's and major maintenance from here base. For this reason the 390th Trans Det and the rear echelon of the company maintenance section packed up and joined the ubiquitous Blue Stars. The 390th set up operations at Kontum, just North of the local MACV compound. Aircraft were either evacuated or flown to Kontum when major maintenance was required.
Operationally the company was tasked with missions immediately. The company which had now been together for nine months and had matured as a fighting unit was called on to perform perhaps their most daunting task.

The 424th North Vietnamese regiment had been identified and was operating in the area just north of Dak To. The 104th Vietnamese Regional Force Company, landing an isolated outpost at Toulanrang (socrep 198360) had been assailed by enemy fire since the end of April, and for the past six days had been under siege. The immediate enemy force estimated as two reinforced North Vietnamese companies were subjecting the Toulanrang outpost to mortar bombardment and had the Ain's pinned down by heavy (12.7mm) machine gun fire from five well concealed and fortified positions. The Vietnamese outpost was near complete exhaustion of supplies and the danger of being overrun was imminent.

On 1 Jun 66 the 48th Assault Helicopter Company received from the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion the mission of reinforcing the Toulanrang outpost with 64 Vietnamese Rangers stationed at Kontum.

A reconnaissance flight of two armed UH-1B's and the C&G (Command & Control) aircraft were dispatched to Toulanrang to ascertain the enemy's proximity, possible landing zones, flight routes and to draw enemy fire to confirm intelligence reports. By high recon it was determined that the best flight route would be along the river located in a valley NS of the finger of the ridge line where the beleaguered Vietnamese outpost was located. During low reconnaissance the two armed ships drew intense machine gun fire from two locations on a hill to the north overlooking the camp. The armed aircraft conducted recon by fire for approximately five minutes. They ascertained that the enemy was well dug in, with continuous observation and fields of fire of the only available LZ which was within the confines of the outpost proper.

Eight UH-1D's, five UH-1D gunships and 1 C&G ship took part in lifting the 64 Vietnamese Rangers and 2000 pounds of supplies into Toulanrang outpost. The troops were picked up at Kontum and ferried north in staggered trail, flights of two with a 15 second interval between flights. Four sorties of A-1B fighter aircraft failed to silence the enemy's machine guns. The five UH-1B's proceeded the flight by five minutes and conducted an intense pre-strike and then formed on the inbound UH-1B's and escorted them into the 4500 foot pinnacle landing zone, attempting to divert the enemy fire from the troop laden ships and to provide suppressive fire. During the approach into the landing zone and in the LZ the helicopters were under heavy fire. The combat assault was successfully completed, but one UH-1D and one UH-1B had sustained damage from hostile fire.

The following morning on 2 Jun 66, the 48th AHC received the mission of delivering 1200 pounds of cargo and a signal relay team of 13 men from the 101st airborne division who were to become an important communications link for Operation Hawthorne which was just kicking off. Again throughout the night the Toulanrang outpost had been under heavy attack. Three UH-1B's and five UH-1D's accomplished the mission. As the armed helicopters began striking the enemy positions the first flight started their approach under intense hostile fire. The pilot of the lead aircraft, 2O Jimmy Humm, was hit by enemy fire seconds after landing in the landing zone. The other aircraft continued to land in spite of heavy enemy fire. When the two aircraft loaded with cargo landed the ground troops recently landed were pinned down. The 48th AHC crew chiefs and gunners displayed exceptional bravery when they left their machine gun stations and unloaded the 1200 pounds of critically needed cargo. The mission was successfully accomplished but five of the aircraft
Artillery in the lift received damage by hostile fire. The UH-1B received major damage in the UH-1B's received numerous hits throughout the cabin sections and tail boom. The pilot, WO Huns, was wounded in the right forearm and evacuated to the field hospital at Pleiku. WO Huns was also hit in his chest protector, which saved his life. Crew chief, 575 Marion M. Hennet, was wounded by shrapnel in the neck of both hands. He was treated at the 48th AHC dispensary and returned to duty.

These heroic actions by the crews of the 48th AHC, who displayed exceptional devotion to duty and professional skill, were responsible for the successful reinforcement of the besieged Toulong outpost on 29 June and for enabling an important signal relay team the following day.

Throughout Operation Hawthorne, which commenced on 1 June 66, the 48th AHC was in general support of the 1st BCT, 101st Air Biv with priority of mission support to the 1/327th Abn Inf Bn. Operation Hawthorne was a highly successful operation in which the 101st Airborne, later reinforced by elements of the 1st Air Cav Division, encircled an estimated 1200 North Vietnamese Regular troops. American long-range bombers unloaded 432 tons of 500 and 1000 pound bombs in what military spokesmen called "one of the largest" bombings of the war. The bomb raid was on target and enemy casualties counted into the hundreds. The 48th AHC, as the statistical analysis points out (below), played a large part in the successful exploitation of the bombing. Individual acts of heroism were numerous and too large a number for these pages. Several night missions were conducted and assessed of these of an emergency nature such as medical evacuations and resupply of food, water, and ammunition. On one occasion on 7 June, three Jokers aircraft (UH-1B) returning from an escort mission intercepted an urgent radio call from "S" Battery, 1/320th Artillery. They were being overrun, in fact the enemy had already taken one gun position. The Jokers made six gun runs each with 2.75 inch rockets, 40mm grenades, and 7.62mm machine guns and through exceptionally close air-ground support stylized the enemy attack long enough to allow the artillerymen to regroup and successfully counterattack. On 10 June 66 a Marine helicopter crashed into the mountain north of the 48th AHC camp. Captain Halten J. Sanoa Jr., Flight Surgeon, 48th AHC, hearing that one of the pilots had a possible broken back volunteered to go to the sight where he climbed down a rope from a hovering helicopter to the injured aviator. Doc Sanoa, in an outstanding display of courage and professional ability was credited with saving the lives of four seriously injured men.

Statistical Data: Operation Hawthorne

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total hours flown</td>
<td>787.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sorties</td>
<td>3247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number combat assault sorties</td>
<td>1183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cargo hauled (Tons)</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total passengers carried</td>
<td>4322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft hit by enemy fire</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft shot down</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average aircraft availability UH-1B</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UH-1D</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures damaged</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures destroyed</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC KIA</td>
<td>36 (body count)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 (est)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew members wounded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pilots</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crew chiefs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gunners</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emergency Medical Evacuation

Ammunition expended

- 7.62mm
- 40mm
- 2.75 inch rockets
- JP-4 fuel consumed
- Aircraft accidents or incidents

62
191,640 rounds
3,155 rounds
471
61,400 gallons
0

On 14 Jun 66 the first edition of the 48th AMC Blue Star was printed. Realizing the value of having a unit newspaper both for members of the company and as a means of keeping the folks back home advised of our whereabouts and accomplishments, Major Hopper, with the support of the other field officers came up with their ideas for a unit paper. Captain James L. Holwell was assigned with the mission of seeing it through. The paper was greeted with overwhelming success and many a budding writer was discovered among company personnel.

Operation Beauregard (24 Jun to 14 Jul 66) found the 48th AMC again in support of the 1st BCT, 101st Abn Div, and in direct support of the 1/327th Abn of 1st bn. The purpose of the operation was to exploit the success of Operation Hawkstone. It was suspected that the remnants of the battered 24th North Vietnamese Regiment would attempt to escape to the west into Cambodia and Laos. The size of the remaining enemy force was unknown. Operation Beauregard took place in the valley northwest of Dak Toc. Ground contact was made throughout the operation but significant contact with a large enemy force was never accomplished. The 48th AMC continued their normal support of CAS aircraft, resupply missions, medical evacuations and combat assaults, carrying troops to and from the battle field in support of the 101st airborne division. In addition they accomplished numerous missions in support of ARVN forces and American Special Forces throughout the tactical zone.

Statistical Data: Operation Beauregard

- Total hours flown: 948.7
- Total sorties flown: 3770
- Total combat assault sorties: 1264
- Total cargo hauled (tons): 74.3
- Total passengers carried: 4602
- Aircraft hit by enemy fire: 0
- Aircraft shot down by enemy fire: 0
- Average aircraft availability
  - UH-1B: 91%
  - UH-1D: 94%
- Structures damaged: 57
- Structures destroyed: 7
- VC KIA: 1
- Crew members wounded
  - pilots: 1
  - crew chiefs: 1
- Emergency Medical evacuations: 21
- Ammunition expended
  - 7.62mm: 157,890 rounds
  - 40mm: 2,091 rounds
  - 2.75 inch rockets: 345
- Aircraft accidents and incidents
  - UH-1D (accident): 1
  - UH-1B (incident): 1
For short of the 5 to 6 months reported for the 48th AH-1C's duration at Dak To, it received its travel orders and was on the move again. The aircrews departed Dak To on 15 July 1966 and again had a couple of days at Phan Rang. The rear party of 1 Uh-1D and 2 Uh-1B's remained at Dak To with the rear echelon of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, and then rejoined the company at Tuy Hoa. The remainder of the company loaded vehicles and equipment aboard USAF C-130 aircraft on 17 July and departed for Tuy Hoa.

Due to security considerations this unit history will be concluded at this point. The 48th AH-1C at Tuy Hoa participated in Operation John Paul Jones (20 Jul 66 to 4 Sep 66) and is now participating in Operation Arrow again in general support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div.

At this writing the 48th AH-1C has 18 aviators of the original 55 aviators that accompanied the unit to Vietnam. All of these personnel will be rotating by 4 Nov 66. The company is presently undergoing reorganization with the remaining personnel and new personnel are arriving daily.

Command of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company (Uh-1)(A) changed from Major Harry Net Roper Jr. to Major Joel J. Williams on 26 September 1966.
CHAPTER THIRTEEN: SONGS AND TUNES WRITTEN AND SANG BY BLUE STARS

1. A Chopper Pilot's Day
2. A Message From my Heart
3. American Fighting Man
4. Army Aviation
5. Ballad of the Gunners
6. Blue Stars
7. Chopper Jockey
8. Green Flight Pay
9. Gunship on Ly Tail
10. Have Chopper - Will Hover
11. Huey - Flying Man
12. In Our Own Little World
13. Ol' Phan Hang
14. Phan Hang Tower
15. Red Hot Pilot
16. Short Timer's Blues
17. Sixteen Hours
18. Sky King
19. The Beat Don't Play, They Mean Business
20. The 48th
21. The Joker's Song
22. The Medic
23. Tôn Thời (Royal Family)
24. Victor Charlie
25. when My Tour's All Done This Fall
Chopper Pilot's Day
by: Capt Jack Burns
CWO Bill Looke

In the early morning hours
Before the sun is bright
You can hear the turbinas turning
As the choppers lift for flight.

A sleepless night is over
The pilots on their way
To face the fears and danger
Of a chopper pilot's day.

CHORUS: A chopper pilot's day by boys
A chopper pilot's day
We face the fear and danger
Of a chopper pilot's day.

The VC will be hiding
For they know so very well
Should a gunship pilot step then
He'll blast their soul to hell.

The smell of battle fills the air
The landing zone is near
The flight turns on it's final leg
No place for cowards here.

CHORUS: - - - - -

Lasers guns chatter and rockets flash
An awesome sound and sight
But a welcomed one for us it is
For it causes Charlie's fright.

Our choppers settle on no-man's-land
And now our troops depart
Charging into battle
To win, in each man's heart.

CHORUS: - - - - -

An extra second on the ground
Could cost a pilot's life
And leave a tearful mother
Or a very lonely wife.

We clear the ground above the trees
There comes a blinding flash
On our right a ship is hit
We watch the awful crash.

CHORUS: - - - - -

(See next col)

A gunship comes onto the scene
To cover the crew's escape
A slick ship comes to pick them up
We pray they're not too late.

Then through the smoke we see them rise
Into the morning sky
A lucky crew is on that ship
'Twas not their day to die.

CHORUS: - - - - -

All crew has now accounted for
We hear our leader say
We breathe a sigh, "We made it,
Through a chopper pilot's day.

BLUE STARS
by: LT Ronald K. Baneon
(Tune - Sky Ball Mail)

There she flies-look at her go
She's a 48th-a sight to behold
Flying thru the sky all day
Take a warning and don't get in her way.

A group of pilots-each one a man
He knows his job-like the palm of his hand
None the job-and they'll do it great
They're the blue stars-from the 48th.

They've got a guncrew-that just won't quit
Their blazing rockets-their guns do spit
Hole the place-and point it out
And the Jokers will wipe it off the map.

hit an LZ-late at night
No mistakes-do it right
Tracers burning-flares so bright
have no fear---
Blue stars are out tonight.
From California I traveled
Across waters far and wide
And many a person I knew
For what ahead did I see
Traveled for a day or so
My home was far away
And then before two days had passed
I fell in Vietnam

CHORUS:
Singing Papasan's a VC
But you ain't supposed to know
You can tell them one and all
For Charlie is their name
And Papasan and Babysan
Like Papasan Same Same

Papasan works in the field
Harvesting the rice
Waves at choppers overhead
Papasan's so nice
But just forget and turn your back
And fly your chopper low
And Papasan will shoot you down
With his M-1 hoe.

CHORUS:

You go to the market place
To spend your hard earned P's
And the people in the market
They say come buy from me
They say since you American
And you so very nice
They'll sell you anything you want
It only twice the price.

CHORUS:

The pretty girls in Saigon
Will try and lead you on
You buy then tea
They hold your hand
But there's just one thing wrong
When you say you are finished
And you have no more to pay
They say go home American
You wasted my whole day.

CHORUS:

(See next column)
Well I'm a red hot pilot, I fly an M1B
(He's a pilot, flies an M1B)
Well I'm a red hot pilot, I fly an M1B
(He's a pilot, flies an M1B)
When people come my way
They look at me and say
U-Rah U-Reh is that you M1B
Well I fly through the jungle kinda low
And slow
Keepin' old Charlie way down in his hole
When he hears me coming well he know
Well
If I see him I'll blast his soul into hell.

For I'm a red hot pilot, I fly a big iron bird
(He's a pilot, flies a big iron bird)
For I'm a red hot pilot, I fly a big iron bird
(He's a pilot, flies a big iron bird)
When people come my way
They look at me and say
U-Rah U-Reh is that your bird?
Well I fly so low I knock the limbs off the trees
Keeping old Charlie right down in his knees
When he hears me coming he jumps right in the grass
And he hides in his hole until I go none for gas.

Well I'm a red hot pilot, I'm the scourge of the sky
(He's a pilot, he's the scourge of the sky)
Well I'm a red hot pilot, I'm the scourge of the sky
(He's a pilot, he's the scourge of the sky)
When people come my way
They look at me and say
Hy-O-hy is you the scourge?
We fired our guns and the VC started crying
There wasn't as many as there was awhile ago
We fired once more and they began to run down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Ol' Major Jones said we'll catch 'em by surprise
We won't fire our guns till we see where they lie
Then we'll swoop in low and let our rockets go
Right down on Victor Charlie's own front door.

We fired our guns and the tracers started burning
We fired at Charlie who was waiting down below
We fired once more and they began to run down in a tunnel up to Ho Chi Minh's door.

Guts and guns are the Jokers biggest pride
Our only biggest problem is to shoot 'em in the eye
When our fuel runs out and fuel gets low we head back to Tuy Hoa and get some more.

(See next col)
I'm Archie the Harrell I am, I am
Called for a flare the other night
Saw Almighty what a terrible sight
How I see the airfield - Airfield?
Looks so funny upside down
I'm an all weather pilot Archie
Archie the Harrell I am

I'm little Jack Horne I am, I am
I run the mess hall around this place
Saw Almighty what a terrible disgrace
I don't eat in the mess hall - mess hall?
Wouldn't eat there to save my life
I'm a cook's supervisor - Horne
Little Jack Horne I am

I'm John the Jenks I am, I am
I'm John the Jenks I am, I am
Went for a flight the other day
Somehow I seem to have lost my way
And now I'm sitting in Song Be - Song Be?
Forgot to turn my switches to start
And now I'm using my checklist
John the Jenks I am

I'm Cambodia Jones I am, I am
I'm Cambodia Jones I am, I am
Went for a flight the other day
They tried to tell me that I lost my way
But I know where I am - I am
Never been lost in my life
I'm map reading pilot Jones
Cambodia Jones I am

I'm Frixit 6 I am, I am
I'm Frixit 6 I am, I am
I fixed airplanes for my pay
One just crashed the other day
And now I must recover it - recover it?
Wouldn't go out there to save my life
I'll leave it there in the jungle
Frixit 6 I am.

Every morning at the line you could see
him arrive
About 5 foot 2 and weighed 185
Kinda narrow at the shoulder
And broad at the hips
Everybody knew he didn't give a damn, Sky King

Sky King, Sky King --- Short Fat Sky

Some say Sky was born in New Orleans
Where he put himself a rotor on a sewing machine
Cut his teeth on a collective pitch
Oli Sky was a low flying son of a gun, Sky King

Sky King, Sky King --- Short Fat Sky

Then came the day at stagesfield four
When his engine quit and wouldn't run anymore
Brave men sighed and hearts beat fast
Everybody thought it was the end of his last,
Except Sky
He just pushed the old pitch right down to the floor
But the damn rotor blade wouldn't turn anymore
So his rear puffed up and with a terrible sound
He just sucked the old chopper right off the ground, Sky King

Sky King, Sky King --- Short Fat Sky

Now the ship wasn't hurt but it took half the class
To get the seat cover out of Sky King's rear, Sky King

They never reopened that worthless strip
Just put a marble stand on top of it
On that stand these words are seen
There ain't no butt that can packer
Like ol' Sky King
By: Capt. Ari A. Nelson

Hello, this is Blue Star 851. I'm 5 miles from your airfield and my fuel is almost gone. The engine sounds coughing and my tail propeller has split. You better call your crash crew out this calm thing's gonna quit.

Hello Blue Star 851, this is Khan Hang tower. We can't call your crash crew out this is their coffee hour and we just as soon you didn't land here for awhile because our visibility is not half a mile.

Hello Khan Hang tower this is Blue Star 851. I'd love to land this landing field but that just can't be done by engine's belching fire and I'm running out of gas. I've got to get this chopper down before I have a crash.

This is Khan Hang tower. Calling Blue Star 851. We'd just like to know what kind of flight you are on. Our Operation's Officer says you have not been cleared. You'll be grumbled thirty days if you land that chopper here.

Hello Khan Hang tower this is Blue Star 851. I'm up in pilot's heaven and my flying days are done. Tell my old commandant I'm sorry that I crashed. Tell your Operation's Officer that he can kiss my a__!

By: Sg t. Michael T. Wallace

We have a little tent set up over the sand. We call ourselves the legion clan with pills in a bottle and syringe in our hand. Ain't a smart thing we're afraid of in this land. "On big bad legion".

We can see out in the other day didn't see like the pearly gates were far away we threw him on a stretcher, pulled down his pants then stuck him in the rear and he's up and cancer.

We sit around at night drinking alcohol and throwing syringes at our little tent walls. Staying in practice so we don't miss we stick them with a needle but they get no kiss.

We got a CCC, he's pretty straight. For weakness he's gonna get us a Ford V-8 gonna load it with leftovers and head for the hills. Disease we've got the market cornered on pills.

Went to the latrine, looked on the wall was a big sign "Unsanity for all" I knew it was put there by the legion clan. So I went out yelling "Lord help me man!"

---

By: Unknown

(Tune - Hark of Ages)

Victor Charlie at Pleihi
Threw a hand grenade at me
So I caught it in my palm
Threw it back, and he was gone
Victor Charlie at Pleihi
Thanks a lot you S.O.B.
**SILVER WINGS**

(Tune - Green Seret)

Silver wings upon my chest
I fly my chopper above the best
I can make more dough that way
But I can't wear no green seret

Tennis shoes upon his feet
Some people call him sneaky Pete
He sneaks around the woods all day
Wearing that funny green seret

It's no jungle floor for me
I've never seen a rubber tree
1000 men must take the test
While I fly alone and take a rest.

And while I fly my chopper hole
And leave him out there all alone
That is where green serets belong
Out in the jungle writing songs.

And when my little boy is grown
Won't leave him out there all alone
Just let him fly and give him pay
Cause he can't spend no green seret.

And when my little boy is old
His silver wings all lined with gold
He then will wear a green seret
In the big parade on St Patrick's day.

**CHORDS:**

Now we're not scared—for we're still asleep
But Major Kuper begins to speak
Said if you go down there what to do
Don't call us—I'll call you.

We start our choppers and head for the sky
Don't use lights unless you want theNote: busters butting—people start to scream
I close my eyes and hope it's a dream.

Intelligence says it's a big LZ
You can land 40 ships in a "V"
But after we get there we hear the same line
"Better try landing one at a time."

**CHORDS:**

**SKY AVIATION**

(Tune - 16 bars)

**CHORDS:**

This world's a free world
The sky is our goal
Lift your eyes up to the heavens
The Army's on the go.

**CHORDS:**

Army aviation—flying above the best
Army aviation—flies away and leaves the rest

Never a job too big
Never one too small
Army aviators
Qualified to do them all.

Any time—any or night
Whether clouds or heavy rain
They can do the job for you
That's the way our men are trained.

**CHORDS:**

We've got the big ones—got some little ones too
Choppers, fixed wing—just make it—any that you could choose.

We've passed the big test
Now we're in full stride
Part of the greatest Army
And serving it with pride.

(See next col)
THE COUNTRY

By: The 3rd (Guns & Guns) Platoon

Born at: Fort Benning on 5 July
The year was 1965

They had no choppers but they didn't care
If they ever got alerted they would go anywhere

Then one day the order came down
To go to Vietnam and put Charlie under ground

They sailed from California one bright November day
And set their feet upon the sand at the seaport town Haiphong

They climbed up on the Army trucks and everybody sang
We're here to whip on Charlie let's start at old Phan Tang

They finally got their choppers
It sure did take a while
They headed out for Tuy Hoa, all had a great big smile

They left their mark on Tuy Hoa and moved to Phan Thiet
They put the hurt on Charlie but they were not finished yet

At Phan Co and Cheo Nao everything was slow
So they all picked up their bags and moved to old Dak To

They finally got their camp set up, They worked into the night
Charlie knew they had moved in but Charlie was scared to come and fight

Operations got the mission and the Co yelled come on
We finally found old Charlie, he's hid in Toumorong

They pulled pitch on the choppers, they never have been late
What Charlie didn't know, it was the mighty 48th
I wake up one morning when the sun didn't shine
I picked up my tool box and I walked to the line
by tail hook was sagging, engine oil needs filled
If Charlie can't get you then this chopper will

You fly 16 hours and what do you get
another G4 and we're not through yet
Intermediate Inspection and the M is one
Crank her up, we have a mission for you

Turbines roaring, blades spinning fast
783 has a full load of gas
Off on the first mission of this long day
Sundown looks a long time away

You fly 16 hours and what do you get
another G4 and you're not through yet
we just come in, so what do we do
we pull 9 hours of guard duty too

Gunner and crew chief standing by
briefing is over and we're ready to fly
tripping 'bout the chopper and gunner's job too
Seems that the pilots have nothing to do

You fly 16 hours and what do you get
another G4 and you're not through yet
Bullets in the plane and the seat on our pants
Bullets in the fuel tank as we're out of gas

How the weather was sticky and the sky was black
Ole 783 ought to be back
St. Peter don't you dally now so cause we can't lose
We're in this weather on anotherilk run

You fly 16 hours and what do you get
another tell chevin' and we're not through yet
The pilots are off in a joy flight
But crew chief and gunner are stuck on the thing.

I'm an American fighting man
I serve my country where I can
And every place there's trouble is my haunch
I don't know where I'll be tomorrow
Maybe joy and maybe sorrow
I'm a rolling stone.

Chorus
Hear me, hear my destiny
A cabin boy, to travel on
I know when I die that I won't be at home

I'll not surrender of my own free will
I will stay and fight until
The last breath leaves my body cool
I've been here and I've been there
Well I've been calm near everywhere
And I learn more the farther on I go

If by chance I'll overfly
I'll keep on fighting from a prison cell
and let my captors know that I'll resist
Clean escape will be my goal
and I will never sell my soul
To those who'd take the freedom of a man.

If I'm questioned I will tell that
Nothing least I rest in hell
If any of friends can depend on me
Ennemy interrogators ask me questions
Without answers
But from me, they'll never learn

The will never forget that
I'm an American fighting man
I'll pour my life for my home
Though I may die at any hour
But I'll not tell them why
By force of arms... say how to die.
**GUNSHIP ON MY TAIL**

**BY**: Capt. Donald K. Kelsoy (Tune - Tiger on My Tail)

I've got a gunship on my tail it's plain to see
And I won't be much when he gets through with me
I'm losing weight and turning kind of pale
It looks like I've got a gunship on my tail.

Everyday he chases me across that jungle floor,
There just ain't no safe place anymore
Then at night the Mhawks come with STALK and infrared
Soutimes I just wish that I were dead.

The other day we slipped upon there artillery
Way we were set to gun those redlegs down
Then with guns ablazing they came out of the sky
And all around men began to die,

We were set to overrun a place called Toworong
Thought we had it made but we were wrong
At the crucial moment the gunships came on in
A raising hell and spoiled our plans again.

Man I hate these gunships more than anything around
Thought I would try and shoot one down
I cracked down on the leadship but his wingmen came around
And sent me to the happy hunting ground.

---

**HOT DROPPED - WILL HOVER**

**BY**: 1LT Ronald K. Dauron (Tune - Truck Driving Man)

Well I hop aboard my old chopper
And then like a flash I'm gone
I get that old Huey a rolling
I'll be on my way to fight the Cong

**CHORUS**

Well if you pour me another cup of coffee
For it is the best in the land
Then I'll crank my old Huey and get moving
For I'm a chopper flying man.

---

Bad as a briefing just this morning
Said they had Charlie on the run
It's up to the Blue Star chopper pilots
To make sure Charlie's work is done.

**CHORUS**

The Jokers are cranked and a marine
To clear a path for the slicks
Their rockets a thundering into mountains
I bet old Charlie's getting sick.

**CHORUS**

The slicks are coming up on final formation locked in too tight
Jokers a flying on the flanks Charlie's gonna bite the dust tonight

**CHORUS**

The slicks have dropped off their pull-up pitch and leaving the LZ
Jokers take the final pass
Another mission now complete

---

**HOT DROPPED - WILL HOVER**

**BY**: 1LT Ronald K. Dauron

**CHORUS**

We travel through the day
We travel through the night
Any place anywhere
Just make it that's all right
We're the men from the greatest state
We all come from the 48th

We fly choppers - that's our life
We do our job but never gripe
We take the good along with the bad
But the good is something that we ain't had.

**CHORUS**

Come on got a mission - in the dark of the night
And won't be back till its done just right
After we're back and the sun goes down
We'll start our Blue Star sounds

**CHORUS**

Lift your eyes and follow us
We'll lead the way - no trouble or fuss
If you want something done
And you want it done right.
We're listed under Blue Star
And flying day and night.
If you’re in trouble and find that you need me
If Charlie’s got you pinned down and you’re afraid
If you want a chopper to come and set you free
Be me a favor and don’t call me.

If you are out of food and need some new recruits
Or if you want supplies and jungle boots
You say to cap them off in your LZ
Well wouldn’t you take them from a thousand feet.

It’s not that I mind Charlie or his friends
I just can’t care about seeing them again
I’m getting short, and there’s just one more thing
I hate to admit old Charlie’s aim.

Eleven months I was king of the road
I tried to carry more than my load
It’s not that I mind flying with the gang
But I’m too short to play these games.

I’d like to leave this country far behind
This yellow streak is creeping up my spine
I’ve got to see the doc ‘fore it’s too late
I’m nearing my rotation date.

They say that Ol’ Man River’s a hell of a place
The organization’s a low down disgrace
There are Captains and Majors and Light Colonels too
Their hands in their pockets with nothing to do.

They stand on the runway
They scream as they shout
About many things they knew nothing about
For all they accomplish.

They might as well be shoveling sand on the Isle of Capri

Singing — sing — sing
Shove it in your ear
Better things are coming, bye and bye
Pull crap!!
AERIAL GUNNERY FOR HELICOPTER

GENERAL.

Organic fire support for air assault operations is furnished by both conventional ground artillery units in air assault configurations and other divisional units equipped with armed helicopters. Units equipped with the aerial weapons systems are the aerial artillery battalion, cavalry squadron and weapons companies of the assault helicopter battalions. Target destruction or neutralization may be accomplished by either aerial or surface fire support means, but the extra mobility and range of aerial weapons units provide unique capabilities to support air assault operations. Although limited by ammunition and fuel load capacity, the armed helicopter units provide the commander with a significant increase and extension of available fire support beyond that provided by organic ground units of the airborne division. To best employ armed helicopter units, commanders must know the principles, the weapons systems, and the procedures involved in target engagement.

PRINCIPLES OF ARMED HELICOPTER ATTACK.

Successful employment of aerial weapons units involves seven basic considerations. These are speed, surprise, volume and type of fire, control, target approach, timing and terrain utilization.

Speed in the actual attack is essential to achieve surprise and the maximum effect with minimum vulnerability. All attacks are normally executed at maximum speed. Consideration of speed is also involved in the time required to reach and engage distant targets, and in the reaction time of on-call armed helicopters.

Surprise is highly desirable to maximize the effect of fires on a target and reduce aircraft vulnerability. Prior planning to select the best approach routes and best methods of attack, together with maximum speed in the attack itself, give the best assurance of surprise. Timing the attack to take best advantage of weather and lighting conditions, and selecting times when troops in the target area are fatigued or not alert also enhances surprise.

Volume and type of fire must be carefully planned for maximum effect. Firepower commensurate with the nature of the target and target
both maximum effect and minimum personnel exposure.

Control on the attack includes all measures which best take advantage of the possibilities involved. Ingenuity must be exercised to achieve surprise or deception so that application of force is made at the exact time and in the manner best suited to the target. Target engagement by a single aircraft is rare, and in nearly all cases, two or more aircraft under a single flight leader engage the target. The flight leader must closely coordinate and control all aircraft throughout the entire attack. Experience, judgment, instant communication and team performance are prerequisites to control. Control also includes the close coordination of helicopter attacks with the independent or supporting artillery, troops on the ground, and supporting artillery.

Flank approach is normally made from the direction of least target vulnerability. The other factors such as terrain which affects covered or concealed approaches, wind which affects weapon approach, position of the sky, and multiple approaches, make for simultaneous attack from several directions must be quickly analyzed and exploited. This decision, by the flight leader, is perhaps the most critical element in target engagement.

Timing includes both the selection of the general time period of the attack and the more important precise coordination between aircraft to insure simultaneous target engagement by all attacking elements. The degree of success of the attack is, in most cases, closely related to the degree of coordination of attacking elements.

Terrain is utilized in the attack to cover the approach and the break from the target. Again, skillful planning and control is the key to success. Achievement of surprise, close approach and simultaneous masses of forces require that the flight leader utilize all terrain possibilities to best advantage.

WEAPONS USED:

The weapon systems in use within the airborne division may be breaking, shooting and/or area. The plan of artillery with support, area, and the cavalry, and suppressive fire delivery types for the airborne companies of the rifled battalions. For specific planning missions,
fire support units may be assigned a task force to the mission; on normal operations, supporting aerial warfare units with a task force will include a mix of weapons suitable for all anticipated targets.

The aerial artillery battalion is armed with the M3 area type weapons system which consists of two fixed pods of 24-2, 75 inch rockets each, mounted one on each side of the UH-13 helicopter. The rate of fire is six pairs of rockets per second. Maximum range, determined by fuse arming, is 300 meters. Maximum effective range is 2,500 meters, although true maximum range is over 6,000 meters. Total rounds in each load is 48, each with a 6X meter ranging fuse. Each aircraft load in salvo is roughly equivalent to one battery volley of conventional 105mm artillery. Firing intermittently, the M3 may also be utilized in the suppressive fire role.

Suppressive fire weapons of the weapons companies includes the M2 and M6 machine gun systems. The M2 system utilizes two 7,62mm M60C fixed machine guns, one on each side of the helicopter. Rate of fire is 600 rounds per minute for each gun, with a total load of 550 rounds per gun. An elevation range of nine degrees may be obtained, and guns may be elevated at the rate of six degrees per second or depressed at nine degrees per second. Effective range extends to 400 meters; with 800 meters maximum range. The M6 system is roughly equivalent to two M2 systems, but with greater flexibility. The same basic M60C machine guns are utilized; two on each side of the helicopter. Guns may be elevated to 15 degrees inboard and 70 degrees outboard. The total rate of fire, using all four guns, is 2,400 rounds per minute.

The M6, in combination of the M6 machine gun system with two 7-round pods of 24, 75 inch rockets aided, gives the commander a system with a high degree of flexibility of employment. Having both rockets and machine gun makes it suitable for area and suppressive type fire.

Target systems of the aerial artillery are now limited to the M7, in which six wire-guided missiles are mounted on racks, three on each side of the helicopter. Rate of fire is one per minute. Effective ranges are 500 to 3,000 meters.
TARGET ENGAGEMENT.

In addition to the factors discussed above in principles of attack, effectiveness of the aerial weapons unit is dependent upon the teamwork and skill of both the gunner and pilot. With rigid systems, where the pilot is also the gunner, accuracy is determined by the pilot's ability to maintain coordinated flight throughout his firing run. Any uncoordinated turning maneuver during a firing run will result in error in both range and deflection. Gunner skill, acquired only through practice and experience, is the ultimate factor in successful aerial helicopter gunnery. The specific attack patterns for any target may vary widely and must be tailored to each situation.

The flight patterns of helicopter elements armed with the M2 or M6 machine gun systems involve wide variations, but the normal firing run begins at a range of 300 meters from the target and terminates within 100 meters of the target. Accuracy is inversely proportional to range, thus fire becomes more accurate as the helicopter approaches the target. During engagement, the helicopter flies at maximum speed. See Figure 1. The steeper the angle of attack, the smaller the range dispersion pattern. For maximum effect, regardless of the angle of attack, the long axis of the elliptical firing pattern should coincide with the long axis of the target. See Figure 2. In the delivery of suppressive fires, the weapons companies are most frequently utilized in escort and security roles, and to secure landing zones during air assaults. Targets engaged are usually targets of opportunity in and around the landing zone. During this type mission, helicopters are employed in trail formation.

The M22 missile system provides the division with an organic airborne anti-armor capability. The M22 is employed only against point targets, normally armored vehicles. Since the missile flight is wire-guided, an unobstructed line of sight between the gunner and the target must be maintained for accurate delivery. Accuracy is dependent upon the skill of the gunner, who guides one round at a time to the target. Although hit probability is increased by shorter ranges, engagement at longer ranges reduces vulnerability, and enhances surprise. Attacking aircraft may use the pop-up technique and remain relatively stationary during engagement, or move slowly toward the target on a level or descending flight path. Lateral or turning movements with regard to the target tend to greatly reduce the gunner's accuracy.

Aerial artillery helicopters, equipped with the M3 rocket system, are the most flexible area fire weapons in the Air Assault arsenal, and
are utilized on a wide variety of missions. Assault preparatory fires are employed to neutralize enemy positions prior to assaults by placing direct aerial fire on the objective. During the actual assault direct suppressive fires are directed in or near the landing zone by artillery helicopters which orbit in the area or make on-call in forward larger areas until initial assault objectives are secured. The short response times of on-call aerial ships greatly extend the artillery fire power available to the commander. Orbit area selection is based upon the desires of the support ground commander, toward the aerial artillery element commander and the fire support coordinator's recommendations. Know enemy strong point locations and local air defenses are primary considerations in recommending orbit areas. Counteralley fire missions may be flown by aerial artillery ships, to include mine missions. Aerial artillery units are particularly effective in missions against radar-directed anti-aircraft systems, using a low level, multi-directional attack pattern under the radar screening capability. The flexible fire power and mobility of aerial artillery make it particularly useful to cover withdrawals of either ground or air assault units. The harnessing and interdiction fire plans of conventional artillery units may be reinforced and greatly extended in depth by the employment of aerial artillery aircraft. The largest number of aerial rocket missions involve targets of opportunity, due to the unique ability of the armed helicopter to both locate and engage these targets. The two basic flight formations utilized in the attack of targets of opportunity are extended, in which aircraft fly in trail, and the spread, in which aircraft on line are able to fire simultaneously. In either formation, attacks may employ the pop-up technique, in which aircraft fly nap-of-the-earth climb rapidly to attack altitude at a distance of about 2,500 and 3,500 ranges between 1,500 and 1,000 meters. Disengagement occurs as soon as rockets are fired and attacking aircraft return to low altitudes without overflying the target. Except for targets of opportunity, aerial rocket fire missions are normally received from the reinforced or supported unit, or through artillery fire control channels. Fire mission requests and fire orders within the aerial artillery battalion are standardized to expedite receipt and completion of fire missions.

Surveillance reports are rendered after each mission, by the firing element leader to the unit which requested the mission. Damage and casualty assessments are vital intelligence and speedy, accurate reporting is essential to keeping the commander informed.
and more careful era. The system also provides a direct hit on the target and a discerning strike capability. The flak or rocket provides small unit or a large area target for rocket pilots. It is probable to issue non-damage delivery of fires, but at the expense of low efficiency.

Six general rules of target engagement for the armed helicopter units are:

1. Engage at maximum range, unless in position of each firing run, maintain continuous fire from direct engagement through disengagement, attack at maximum feasible speed, return from over shrewd secure positions if possible, and avoid overflight of the target.
Fig 1

Normal attack angle with machine guns

Fig 2

Effect of angle of attack
On 19 June 1966, five CH-46 marine helicopters from Marble Mountain at Danang, Vietnam, were assigned the mission to fly to Dak To, Vietnam, to support the 101st Airborne Brigade evacuating their wounded personnel from field locations to the aid station. During the initial flight from Marble Mountain, the CH-46S encountered bad weather resulting in one of them crashing into a 3,900 foot mountain five miles northeast of Dak To airfield.

Members of the 10th Aviation Battalion Pathfinder team volunteered to conduct the rescue operation. They were airlifted to the base of the mountain where the helicopter had crashed earlier that morning. Because of the rugged and dense terrain they had to jump eight to ten feet from the helicopter to the ground. While the 46th Aviation Company provided armed helicopter support, the Pathfinder team broke trail through dense foliage, jungle, and enemy-held territory. The team arrived at approximately 1000 hours, six hours after the aircraft had gone down, finding that the engines, fuel cells, and tail assembly, which had torn clear of the cockpit and cargo compartment, were still burning. The other portion of the helicopter was untouched by fire. The Pathfinders found the medic, who was a member of the downed helicopter crew, in a conscious condition walking around some 75 meters from the crash site. They guided him back, during which time they were receiving sporadic sniper fire from

We on the BLUE STAR staff are encouraged by the overwhelming reception Vol I, No 1 received last week. I want to emphasize that this is your paper, and encourage all of you to contribute to its success by submitting articles, jokes, cartoons, crossword puzzles or what have you, to any staff member or just drop it in Operations. Write it on anything, just get it in.

I have heard a lot of talk about the 101st, the Cav, and other larger units getting all the glory (publicity). Perhaps you can use this paper as an outlet to your hometown newspaper and get yourselves in the news.

Many thanks to those who have contributed to this issue and for the helpful hints we have received.

Staff: Captain James I. McDowell
1Lt. Loyd R. Streep
3F/5 Stan. H. Rorland
1Lt. Don D. Wallace
PFC Bill Van Eschendore
PFC Allen B. Doktor

LEADING THE BLUE STAR

Our congratulations to WO Sharon L. Temple, who this week became the first of the original Blue Star pilots to pass the 500 mark in hours flown in Vietnam.

As of 27 June, WO Temple had accumulated 516.1 hours in the 58 months he's been flying in SVN.
That's going up in the clouds quite a bit.

(Cont pg 3, col 1)
A very common occurrence in the life of a Blue Star aviator is providing aerial support for friendly ground elements when only a helicopter can assist them in their relentless conflicts with the Viet Cong. At times, the Blue Stars have combined their efforts with other aviation units to successfully bring about the completion of their mission. These massive and complex operations are more commonly known as "Romeo Foxtrots". One of the most recent of these took place on the afternoon of 8 June in the vicinity of Dak To, RVN. At approximately 1600 hours, our Jocker aircraft (armed helicopters) were called upon to lend gun support to the E-43 Air Force helicopters, known as "Pedros", which were evacuating casualties of the 1/327th Infantry Battalion. Landing was difficult so the Pedros were accomplishing their mission by winching up the troops.

Captain Ivan C. Swift, who has taken part in many such missions in the past, was now giving his assistance on the FM 25 (radio) to Operations because of his recent appointment as assistant S-5 Office.

The Jokers and Pedros relentlessly continued their mission. The time was now 2230 hours and Captain Swift was fully realizing that his duties as operations officer can be just as trying as those of an aviator who is physically taking part in the night's activities. The mission was coming to a successful end when an emergency re-supply call reached our assistant S-5 Office. The ground forces were said to be "starving", not having eaten all day, and running short of medical supplies and amm. The 48th reacted immediately. 32 cases of C-rations, 30 pounds of medical supplies, 100 pounds of amm, and 2 hours later, the mission was completed and our long day was over. After gathering up all the landing lights from the runway on the morning of 9 June, Captain Swift was finally headed for his bunk at 0130 hours. I'm sure Captain Swift slept soundly, and dreamt of all the bigger and better Romeo Foxtrots yet to come.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY

An officer known as "magnet ass"?

A crew chief known as "sis" or "sims"?

A gunner known as the "crier"?

A Warrant Officer known as "AK-47"?

A maintenance officer called "Speedy"?

The two garroteers of the 48th?

The pilots responsible for blowing over "Big 6's" latrine a few days ago?

The Blue Star Engineer requiring only nine rounds for artillery adjustment?

An officer branded "lightning"?
BLUE STAR TWINS

Did you know we are two brothers in the company who are identical twins? It's true, we are Louis and Juan Carreras of the Security Platoon.

The twins hail from San Antonio, Texas. They joined the Army on 2 May 69 under the "ready system", and have been together ever since. Back at the ranch, in a relay, they pull the same shift, work night and day shifts, and share a common爱好. Louis and Juan enjoy the same shift, enjoy their own city time together.

* * *

DOCTOR (cont.)

doctors from a helicopter. After being dropped to the ground, he found himself alone and had to make his way down the incline to the crash site 400 meters away. Doctor Senas had a diagnosis of the injured man and found that the crew chief had to be evacuated immediately because he had a skull fracture and brain damage, so he was also having trouble breathing and needed surgery. The mountain was so steep the helicopter could not hover directly over the crash site. The Pathfinders had blown a small opening in the dense jungle, enough to drop a sling into the area and hover a short distance from the open spot. To save this man's life, Captain Senas took the decision to have the helicopter snatch the injured man out of the hole and fly him to the combat rear medical station where a surgery could be performed and then be evacuated to \[no\] hospital for neuro surgery. Since the gunner was already deceased they airlifted him the same way, but the co-pilot was causing blood from internal injuries, and several fractures, ribs, and sprained in his right knee. It was too dangerous to evacuate him the same way as the crew chief and gunner. Doctor Senas and the Pathfinders had a cutter out of two canoes and physically had to crawl 400 meters up the heavily infested incline to the top of the mountain carrying the injured co-pilot. He was placed on a helicopter and safely evacuated. Captain Senas, in an outstanding display of courage and professional ability, is
Recently and unexpectedly, two helicopter crews of the 45th Aviation Company (Blue Star) had their usual role of supporting the infantry reversed; and in a manner they shall never forget.

The crews on a cross-country flight in two UH-1 helicopters were within 20 minutes of their destination when they encountered low hanging clouds and, not long after, fog clinging to the ridge line to their north. A 10th Aviation Battalion, before a formation of aircraft on 16 June 1966.

We are very happy to see five new Sergeants first class (A-7) in the company. They are:

- SFC Lawrence B. Holt, our Intelligence Sgt.
- SFC Gilbert MacCollough, our Operations Sgt.
- SFC Alvin C. Fletzer, 1st Airlift Platoon Sgt.
- SFC William M. Jackson, 390th TC Detachment Maintenance Sgt.
- SFC Tom M. Taylor, Service Platoon Sgt.

Congratulations on your well deserved promotions.

LIGHT NEW CLOTH STARS

The 45th recently welcomed eight helicopter pilots transferred from the First Cavalary Division (Air Mobile). This transfer accomplishes two objectives: it offsets rotation rates for both the 45th and the First Cavalry, and the two units arrive in-country on separate dates. These experienced pilots bring to the 45th backgrounds from such diverse tactics as aerial helicopter reconnaissance, aerial rocket artillery and helicopter troop employment. The pilots joining the 45th are Capt. Troy K. Bowser, Capt. Lloyd A. Schum, Capt. Perry L. Jackson, Capt. Kenneth C. Feh, Capt. George A. Sockel, Capt. Jim W. Hart, Capt. Joe L. Amor, Capt. Gerald A. Fowler.

These eight aviators bring to the 45th an accumulation of 3,346 hours.

(Cent pg 5, col. 2)
enhanced at sm. the aircraft again touched down near air. The quiet was broken when the air force radar controller announced, "Blue Star 616 (4th aircraft) this is radar control, be advised we are unable to continue radar service due to intense thunder storm activity between your target and this station."

Jocks are heavily against two navigation aids becoming unreliable at once, but in enemy territory even once is too often. As the sun set, the two helicopters were surrounded by clouds stretching from the jungle floor to heights unknown. The approving pilots were unusually quiet and busy with their maps. They pinpointed their location over national highway #14, but to attempt flying under those low clouds and with your visibility of night, would be asking for trouble. Their map indicated nothing within 30 miles except villages of unknown allegiance an the jungle.

It was night and quiet for what seemed an endless period of time as the birds circled the skies in an ever so slow, but finding none way out. Suddenly the silence was broken by Captain James McDowell, aircraft commander of the 2-101st, when he sighted two lights approximately 2 kilometers to his left. He radioed Blue Star 616 that he sighted what might be a U.S. Special Forces Camp. Captains hico and Jim Price decided to make a low pass over the lights. With the turret gunners, SP/5 Donald A. Kohl and FTV Bobby M. Babli alerted and the aircraft weapons in the arm position, the pilots brought their Huey over into a shallow dive and came in clipping over the trees tops at 100 knots. Fifteen meters out, Captain Price let out a hearty yell, "those guys down there are Americans, we've got 'em!" They pulled up and radioed to Captain Jim Thurnblom and his pilot captain Jack Home to standby while they learned to break out the situation. When they approached the area the infantry troops sighted their gasoline filled cans forming a huge blazing fire, a friendly sign to those weary but now overjoyed pilots. 1/Lt Ronald F. Cuerno let the crew as they stopped from their aircraft, and he was immediately overwhelmed by these happy aviation. The circling aircraft contacted Radar Control, was relayed an MIA (Missing In Action) message to Blue Star Control. Captain Jack Home yelled out as he stopped from his Huey, "I never thought

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DOCTOR (cont)

credited with saving the lives of four seriously injured men and possible annihilation by the Viet Cong, that were known to be in the area.

* * *

LA SUE Scust (cont)

Victor S. Smith, 2d, 4th Bn, 101st Abn, 3rd QTR, 117th ED, 1st SQM, 244th, 124th Inf Regt, 1965, 912 hours total flying experience.

* * *

FOR TUNES (cont)

those stars on your vehicles could look so good. soy, is it great seeing you guys? The Infantry troops turned out to be Task Force Harris from 2-101st Cav of the 1st Air Cav Div, commanded by Major Arthur H. Harris. Just twelve days earlier TF Harris had started building a 1-300 logging strip out of the wilderness which had so plainly showed up as jungle on the aviators' maps.

The Infantry men supplied their guests with a tent, and although it rained all night and the wind was a foot deep, no one ever knew two happier helicopter crews.

* * *

OUTING SHORT......

During the next month or so, the 4th will lose some of its strength from a few of its enlisted men become civilians.

The 286th Medical Detachment will lose the services of SP/6 Guster Dmdra and SP/4 Ronald L. Holdridge. SP/6 Dmra will join his family in Detroit on 13 July and SP/4 Holdridge will be in Philly on 23 July.

* * *

A couple of helicopter crews will have to be reassigned when SP/5 Ivan J. Puknahan, a crew chief from Hawaii, and James F. Smith III,
BLUE STAR HIGHLIGHTS

14 June...
43th furnishes 2 UH-1Ds and three armed UH-1Bs in support of the 10th Aviation Battalion on a combat assault lifting an ARVN force.

Generals Penney, 1st Aviation Brigade Commanding General and Colonel Harr, 17th Aviation Group Commanding Officer had dinner with the Blue Stars.

15 June...
0840 hours seven Blue Star UH-1Ds lifted the 1/327th platoon sized Tiger Force on a combat assault. Four Joker aircraft provided escort and pre-striking the LZ as soon as the Air Force completed their strike.

0930 hours the 43th provided seven UH-1Ds to 10th Aviation Battalion for a company sized combat assault.

1045 hours the 43th Blue Stars made an administrative lift of 144 troops.

1300 hours the Blue Stars and Jokers made a recon with 101st LRRP (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol).

1800 hours the 43th inserted the LRRP using 3 UH-1Ds and 3 UH-1Bs (Story on page 7).

16 June...
0800 hours five UH-1Ds and two UH-1Bs moved the 1/327th Infantry Tactical CP.

1050 hours two UH-1Ds supported the 129th Aviation Company in extracting two Special Forces patrols in contact with the enemy (Story on page 7).

1530 hours the 43th Blue Stars picked up the 101st LRRP.

17 June...
0712 hours two Joker guns hips sent on fire mission for 1/327th Infantry (Story on Page 7).

0930 hours two Jokers dispatched to escort dust off aircraft (Medical evacuation).

1255 hours the 43th put in one ARVN company and extracted another.

1600 hours the 43th conducted a two company administrative lift.

* * * *

By the way, the next time we have an alert, would one of you first platooners make sure your leader gets his boots on the right feet.

SINGING PILOTS

Congratulations to Captain Donald Kelsey and Captain Robert Helms who placed second and third in the 1st Aviation Brigade song contest conducted in Saigon last week. The lyrics and music were original by Blue Star members.

"A Chopper Pilots Day" came in second and "I Am A Red Hot Pilot" wound up third. Look for the third place winner in next week's news.

"A Chopper Pilots Day"

Verse 1

In the early morning hours Before the sun is bright You can hear the turbines turning As the choppers lift for flight.

A sleepless night is over The pilots on their way To face the fear and danger Of a chopper pilots day.

Chorus

A chopper pilots day, my boys A chopper pilots day We face the fear and danger Of a chopper pilots day.

Verse 2

The VC will be hiding For they know so very well Should a gunship pilot spot them He'll blast their soul to hell.

The smell of battle fills the air The landing zone is near The flight turns on its final leg No place for cowards here.

Chorus

Verse 3

Machine guns chatter and rockets flash An awesome sound and sight But a welcomed one for us it is For it causes Charlie's fright.

(Cont pg 8, col 2)
15 June -

As dusk slowly turned into night and the sun disappeared behind the mountains, the stealthy LRRPs and the equally stealthy Blue Stars winged north on another recon mission into no-man's-land. The last minute coordination between aircrews and LRRPs had been accomplished and all that remained was the swift run to the drop off point, a remote jungle clearing. The Blue Stars with their Joker escorts peeled off one by one from formation and the lonely final run to the landing zone commenced. All senses were at high key for the moment of truth was at hand as the Blue Stars swooped down into the vulnerable area to discharge their precious cargo. As the skids brushed the ground the LRRPs bashed for cover and the angry whines of the Jokers could be heard as they flashed by providing that most important fire cover should Charlie be there.

The LRRPs faded into the jungle.

(Cont pg 9, col 1)

16 June -

SPECIAL FORCES AIDED

16 June -

This morning two of our slicks were called on to help the 129th Airmobile (our sister company) rescue two 40 can. CILG (Civilian Irregular Defense Guard) patrols and their Special Forces advisors who were surrounded by the enemy. This ASAP mission was received by Blue Star Operations at 1050 hours. Ex: 1100 hours the crews of 778 and 779 were in the air and linked up with the 129th. The friendly patrol was heavily engaged and zipped down by Charlie, who was within 30 meters. The aircraft orbited overhead until a snip LZ was hatched out of the bamboo. The Blueys then soared in one at a time and successfully extracted the patrol while under heavy enemy fire. On their return flight to the staging area, with the patrol safely in their ships, they received an emergency request to extract another. CILG patrol which was also pinned down. In routine fashion the crews dropped off their passengers and reported to the new location. They

(Cont pg 9, col 1)

17 June -

JOHNNYS ATTACK VC

17 June -

As dawn approached the foggy Dak To Valley, Blue Star Operations received an urgent call for two gunships to help out a company of the 101st Airborne Brigade. Within minutes Jokers 96 and 93 were airborne in answer to the distress message. Captain Morris A. Steenon, the Joker flight leader, established contact with the infantry company and quick coordination identified the area where fire was needed.

The Jokers started their work in earnest as the ground commander adjusted fire from 2.75 rocket and 40mm grenade bursts. Pass after pass was made with the Jokers until they had expended all their rockets and grenades. They continued their support until the ground commander called "well done, we can move in on them now!"

As the infantry moved into the area which the enemy had occupied, blood trails were found and the Jokers were accredited with at least 5 VC KIA (Killed by Aircraft). Returning home for breakfast, the Jokers prepared for another day's work.

Captain Morris A. Steenon

* * *

BLUE STARS & JOHNNYS TEAM UP AGAIN

18 June -

"Just another chopper pilot's day", is becoming quite a saying with the pilots of the 40th, but many are starting to wonder if this statement isn't becoming an every day occurrence.

Once again the Blue Stars were called upon to extract troops out of the heavily wooded mountains northeast of Dak To. For the past three weeks this area has been known to be a well fortified enemy position heavily entrenched with bunkers and spider holes.

A flight of four, led by Captain Redford, was assigned to lift a company, 1st of the 327th Airborne Infantry plus the TAU up to a new location south of their present Command Post. Aircrafts
-----This one happened last week but we thought you'd like to read it, though admittedly a little late-----

Early on the morning of June 7, three Jokers, the 48th Aviation Company gunships, were returning from an escort mission when they heard an urgent radio call from "B" Battery of the 320th Artillery Battalion, requesting an immediate air strike at their location. Captain Donald A. Kelsey, flight leader of the Joker flight, decided they had sufficient fuel to strike and still return to base camp. The Jokers reversed their flight path and proceeded to the artillery position. Captain Kelsey coordinated with the ground commander, who marked his position with red smoke. The Jokers were astounded to find the enemy dug in only 25 meters from the friendly troops. The enemy had moved in during the night, dug in, and had the artillery battery pinned down with sniper and automatic weapons fire.

The Jokers each made six gun runs, strafing the enemy with machine gun, 2.75 inch rockets, and 40mm grenade fire. At first, they were hesitant in firing so close to the friendly position, but after repeated requests from the ground commander, they brought their fire in closer. At one time the radio operator shouted, "You got them!" as a rocket knocked out an automatic weapon. On their sixth pass the Battery commander called a "Cease fire" and his troops counter attacked the enemy positions.

When the Jokers returned to base camp, Intelligence reported 36 Communists killed with the Jokers receiving credit for 37 KIA. The Jokers received a hearty "thank you" from the Battery commander. The Artillery unit had been under attack since early dawn and at one time the VC had taken over one 105mm Howitzer without the Jokers help the Artillery unit could easily have been overrun.

SINGING PILOTS (Cont)

Our choppers settle on no-man's-land
And now our troops depart
Charging into battle
To win, in each man's heart.

Chorus ---- - -

Verse 4

In error and on the ground
Could the pilot's life
And leave a tearful mother
Or a very lonely wife.

We clear the ground above the trees
There comes a blinding flash
There on our right a snip is hit
We watch the awful crash.

Chorus ---- - - - -

Verse 5

A gunship comes onto the scene
To cover the crew's escape
A slick ship lanes to pick them up
We pray they're not too late.

Then through the smoke we see them rise
Into the morning sky
A lucky crew is on that ship
'Twas not their day to die.

Chorus ---- - - - -

Verse 6

All crews are now accounted for
We hear our leader say
We breathe a sigh, "We made it"
Through a chopper pilots day.

Written by

Captain Jack Horne
CWO Bill Moore
Phan Rang, Vietnam

* * *
shadows and the Blue Stars hastened their departure into the protective night. At drop time + 15, the LRRP team leaders radioed their "All Clear" to us, signalling the Blue Stars to return to base where they remain on standby pending a call from the LRRPs that they're in trouble, at which time the Blue Stars return to bail them out.

"Another Chopper Pilots Day"

Captain James T. Radford

* * *

**SHEWLL FORMS** (cont)

extracted the second patrol with the same professional ability they had exhibited in their earlier rescue.

**SHEWLL FORMS** (cont)


WO Towler's comment after the rescue was, "It's too short for this kind of mission".

WO Fletcher S. Stitzle

* * *

**BLUE STARS & JOKERS** (cont)

774, piloted by Captain Radford and WO Klinger, 889, flown by WO Towler, and WO Mason, 776, flown by CWO Harrell and CWO Paulson, and 773, flown by Captain Bunch and Lt. Stroup began extracting troops from EZ Suzanne located midway up the mountain.

The pickup zone was a typical carved out opening that the Blue Stars have become so accustomed to. A small opening cleared by hand just large enough for one helicopter to set down into like a well fitted part of a jigsaw puzzle.

The first lift was uneventful except for the normal uneasiness and sweaty palms from trying to put a helicopter in a hole the size of the main rotor blade. On the second lift, as WO Towler and WO Mason wore on short final, automatic weapons fire suddenly opened up from a small ridge line to the right of the pickup point. As the Infantry dove for cover, WO Towler and WO Mason immediately executed a maneuver that any other pilot would have done. A hard right turn, tucked the collective under the wings, and parted the grass halfway down the side of the mountain.

Joker elements led by Captain Jones were immediately called in to lay down pressure fire. After hitting the line with rockets and machine gun 889 once again attempted a landing. This time no fire was received and the troops were safely lifted out. Neither Charlie had been eliminated or he was too busy keeping his head down.

Blue Stars and Jokers combine into a mighty tough team that's IMPOSSIBLE to stop.

WO Jerry Towler

* * *

**GETTING SHORT** (cont)

a-gunner from Dayton Beach, Florida, wave goodbye to the 48th. Elvin T.'s B1S is 5 July and Smitty's is on the 11th of the month.

On 30 July, the 48th will lose SP/4 Ronald L. Geier and SP/4 Kenneth E. Lawrey. WO Geier will leave operations a man short when he departs for Tacoma, Wash. WO Lawrey is one of our youngest men and he'll be missed by Detroit.

PFC Donald W. Martin IV; of the 57th Pool, will be back home in California on the 23rd of July.

I know you guys hate to leave all this heat but that's the breaks of the game. Good luck to all of you, we'll miss you.

* * *

(cont next col)
UNIT HISTORY
48th
ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY
(UH-1) (A)

48
SKILL NOT LUCK