

1967

174th Aviation Company (AML)

ANNUAL UNIT



HISTORY

1967

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UNIT HISTORY

174TH AVIATION COMPANY (AML)

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IX. OPERATIONS SUPPORTING THE CAPITAL ROK INFANTRY DIVISION

(1 January 1967 to 13 January 1967)

During this short period the 174th Aviation Company continued to maintain its outstanding reputation by providing combat helicopter support to the Capital ROK Infantry Division. In providing this support the Company flew combat resupply missions for the Cavalry Regiment and the 1st Regiment. These units secured the area north of Qui Nhon, extending from the Phu Cat Mountains on the coast, westward to the An Khe Pass. In addition, the Company furnished combat helicopter support to the 26th Regiment, which was busily engaged in extending the Division's area of operations southward from the Cu Muong Pass (just west of Qui Nhon) to Song Cau.

X OPERATIONS SUPPORTING THE 9TH ROK (WHITE HORSE) DIVISION

(14 January 1967 to 25 March 1967)

AND THE 1ST BRIGADE, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION

(30 January 1967 to 5 February 1967) and

(18 February 1967 to 25 February 1967)

On 14 January 1967 the 174th Aviation Company began providing combat helicopter support to the 9th ROK (White Horse) Division at Ninh Hoa. Initially, this support was furnished from the Company's base at Lane Army Heliport by sending helicopters TDY to Ninh Hoa. Because of the long ferry distance between Lane AHP and Ninh Hoa, arrangements were quickly made to construct a semi-permanent heliport and base camp at Ninh Hoa. Under the direction of Cpt Henry Raymond, the work proceeded so quickly and smoothly that on 28-29 January 1967 the Company was able to move from Lane AHP to

Ninh Hoa by LST right into wooden tent frame type buildings. The facilities included showers, latrines, kitchen, mess halls, officers club, enlisted club, not to mention office and ample billeting space.

As the Company rear elements prepared to move from Lane AHP to Ninh Hoa, the Company furnished 13 UH-1D (slicks) and 5 UH-1C (gunships) helicopters to support 9th Division combat operations. These operations ranged from Tuy Hoa on the north, to Ninh Hca and as far south as Phan Rang. The Company conducted 3 regimental sized combat assaults, the last of which occurred as the major part of the Company moved by LST from Qui Nhon to Nha Trang, all without the slightest break in the combat support provided.

On the morning of 30 January 1967, just as the Company rear was moving into it's new base at Ninh Hoa, the Company received orders to close at Phan Thiet not later than 1900 hours and begin supporting the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. Again, the Company responded in an exemplary manner by completing the move of a maintenance team and a P.O.L. team to the new location easily within the time allotted. The night of 30 January 1967 turned out to be a sleepless one for many as plans were made and orders decimated. At the crack of dawn on 1 February 1967, the 174th Aviation Company and the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion moved the forward fighting elements of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division on a remarkable combat heliborne assault. Within a few hours the area around New Bao Loc, long a Viet Cong stronghold, was besieged from the air and turned into a large base camp complex. During the next few days the Company participated in numerous combat assaults and extractions as the area around New Bao Loc was secured and expanded.

On 5 February 1967 the 174th Aviation Company (AML) was released from it's commitment to support the 101st Airborne Brigade and returned to Ninh Hoa.

Personnel and equipment were moved back to Ninh Hoa and the next day the 174th Aviation Company began supporting the 9th ROK (White Horse) Division once again.

On 18 February 1967 the Company was called upon to support the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division when the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion was pulled from them to support Operation Junction City. The Brigade Commander was so pleased by the combat helicopter support that his unit received from the 174th that he sent letters of appreciation to the Company Commander, Major William C. Dalrymple and the Company Operations Officer, Major Henry E. Schwarz.

Upon its release from supporting the Screaming Eagles (1/101st) on 25 February 1967, the 174th Aviation Company (AML) returned to Ninh Hoa and began supporting the 9th ROK (White Horse) Division again.

Throughout the period when the Company supported the 9th ROK Division, the combat assaults were at least battalion sized and, more often, regimental sized assaults. As examples: On 7 February 1967 eight lift and four armed helicopters conducted a combat assault 10 miles southwest of Ninh Hoa carrying 1,092 troops. Ten lift and four armed helicopters supported the 9th ROK (White Horse) Division on 14 February in an area 13 miles southwest of Ninh Hoa lifting 1,252 troops into the landing zone. During the period 16 - 18 February 1967 twenty lift and four armed helicopters were utilized in transporting 1,604 troops on combat assaults into landing zones 10 miles northwest of Tuy Hoa. Again, on 17 March, the Company lifted 1,816 troops of the 28th ROK Regiment into the same area utilizing twenty lift and six armed helicopters. On 25 March 1967, 430 ROK troops were rappelled into the jungle area 5 miles southwest of Ninh Hoa. Nine lift and four armed helicopters accomplished this mission. All lifts were coordinated by the

174th and, as indicated by their size, were phenomenal accomplishments. Upon completion of the combat assault on 25 March 1967, the 174th Aviation Company (AML) was ordered to return to its former base camp at Lane AHP. The Commanding Officer of the 9th ROK (White Horse) Division, Major General Lee, was so enthused with the combat helicopter support furnished his unit, he personally went to see Lieutenant General Larson, Commanding Officer, First Field Forces Vietnam (IFFV), in a futile attempt to have the order changed. Major General Lee was so appreciative that the Company Commander, Major William C. Dalrymple, and the Company Operations Officer, Major Henry E. Schwarz, were presented letters of commendation for their individual efforts and for and in behalf of the men of the 174th Aviation Company.

In the short period from 25 to 28 March 1967 the entire Company moved its flight elements by air and its main body back to Lane AHP by LST.

XI. OPERATIONS SUPPORTING THE 3RD BRIGADE, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION AT LZ UPLIFT (28 March 1967 to 18 April 1967)

On 28 March 1967 the 174th Aviation Company (AML) began supporting the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division in combat operations south of Bong Son, around LZ Uplift. An average of three platoon sized combat assaults were made every morning with the extraction of the same troops in the evening. The Company maintained support in the form of thirteen lift and five armed helicopters since assuming this mission. As further demonstration of its versatility, on 6 April 1967 the 174th Aviation Company conducted a company sized combat assault for the 22nd ARVN Division. A total of 207 troops were lifted into two landing zones seven miles northeast of LZ Uplift. This combat assault was significant in that the Company coordinated the preparatory fires of not only US and Vietnamese artillery batteries, but also US

naval gunfire from a destroyer standing off shore. Operations in support of the 3rd of the 25th continued in the LZ Uplift area until 16 April 1967 when the Brigade started to move 37 N.M. north to Duc Pho.

XII. OPERATIONS SUPPORTING THE 3RD BRIGADE, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION AT DUC PHO
(19 April 1967 to 24 June 1967)

Initially, the US Marines started the campaign to clear Quang Ngai Province of Viet Cong only to be repelled. In a short time the 3rd of the 25th took their place. The Duc Pho area was virgin enemy territory, so to speak. Intelligence estimates of the situation indicated that the Viet Cong had controlled the area for more than twenty years, that the Viet Cong had one of the best developed hamlet VC infra-structures in Vietnam in this region and that 2 to 3 members of almost every Vietnamese family actively supported the Viet Cong. The problem at Duc Pho was an interesting one - how to destroy the Viet Cong, return the area to Vietnamese government control and provide a secure atmosphere so that the people could substantially improve their standard of living in peace.

To accomplish this the 174th Aviation Company lifted elements of the 3rd of the 25th on combat operations daily. These operations gave the 174th Aviation Company a real taste of combat in that one or more ground units were always in heavy contact with the enemy. By way of statistics to substantiate this; 67 helicopters were shot at and 38 hit one or more times. Luckily, while the Company sustained 12 casualties from combat helicopter operations, the wounds were such that the men fully recuperated after a period of convalescence.

The logistics of the support rendered during this time reflects the high level of coordination that exists within the 174th Aviation Company.

Due to the initial logging at LZ Uplift when the unit began it's support of the 3rd of the 25th, a contingent element of the company was moved to that location on 28 March 1967 and a second segment of the company was brought to Duc Pho on 19 April 1967 to provide operational supervision, maintenance support, and POL facilities. This left the unit split into three distinct wide-spread locations. The high quality of support that the 174th Aviation Company set as it's norm was not curtailed by this extremely adverse situation. In spite of the reduced work force at each location and difficulty in communications caused by distance and dispersion of equipment, the unit continued to plan, coordinate and carry out it's assigned missions with expediency, exactness, and impecable efficiency. This imposing situation was contended with until 20 May, when the entire 174th was moved to the new base camp at Duc Pho, RVN.

Then, in the early morning of 24 June 1967 at 0052 hours, tragedy struck when the Viet Cong assaulted the Duc Pho base camp with a mortar and recoilless rifle attack. A total of 24 shells landed in the Company area lightly damaging 3 and heavily damaging one helicopter. One of these shells hit one of the 409th Maintenance Detachment billeting tents killing Sp4 Thomas Dickinson and Sp4 Larry R. Guentzel and wounding 36 others. The men of the 174th Aviation Company (AML) responded to the emergency in accordance with the finest traditions of the US Army by quickly doing their jobs in accordance with previously prepared defense plans and promptly treating the wounded. The next day the men of the 174th began their duties with renewed determination to avenge their fallen comrades.

XIII. OPERATIONS SUPPORTING THE 3RD BRIGADE, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION AT DUC PHO

(25 June 1967 to 31 October 1967)

During this period the 174th Aviation Company has continued to maintain its outstanding reputation by providing combat helicopter support to the 101st Airborne Division and the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. While providing this support the 174th Aviation Company has continually set new records in the field of combat aviation support. These records, in both maintenance and the actual flying of the aircraft, are evidence of the determination, versatility and capabilities of the men and aviators of this unit.

An example of this was displayed on 25 June 1967 when the 174th assisted in the support of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division by lifting 156 troops of the 1st Battalion 327th Infantry and the 2nd Battalion 327th Infantry on a combat assault to a location eighteen miles northwest of Duc Pho. The 174th Aviation Company had suffered heavy casualties and equipment losses on the night of 24 June 1967 during an enemy mortar and recoilless rifle attack on their position.

The versatility of the 174th Aviation Company was displayed when they participated in a combat assault on 3 July 1967 during which all aviators and crew members were required to wear gas masks. Prior to the combat assault Air Force A-1E's dropped a large concentration of CS gas into the area of operations. This mission proved highly successful and no doubt lead to future missions of this type. The 174th has also worked in support of the psychological warfare effort by assisting S-5 of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division in dropping 200,000 leaflets per day. Loudspeaker teams who broadcast their messages from the aircraft are also flown on an average of two hours per day.

On 27 September 1967 the 174th Aviation Company sent ten lift and four gun helicopters in support of the 1st and 2nd Battalions 327th Infantry at Tam Ky RVN. During this combat assault 165 troops were lifted into the area of operation. This area was an enemy stronghold and all aircraft received automatic weapons fire with several reports of 50 caliber machine gun fire. A high degree of skill and professionalism was displayed by all the aviators and crew members of this unit as the 174th completed the mission with no injuries or combat damage to the aircraft of this unit.

This period noted a complete change of the unit and detachment key personnel. Major Thomas W. Wheat assumed command of the 174th Aviation Company on 27 June 1967. Through the next few weeks the unit experienced a change of many of its key officers. Major Roy F. McMillan was assigned as the unit XO, Captain Kenneth R. Kolovich was assigned Operations Officer, 1Lt Edwin D. Gillie as Intelligence Officer and Captain Edward L. Goff as 409th TC Detachment CO. The third flight platoon was taken by CPT Tanner who was later wounded and replaced by CPT Woods. The other two flight platoons have had changes in the platoon leaders with 1LT McCrary serving as first platoon leader and CPT Boswell as platoon leader of the second flight platoon. Through close cooperation and long hours of work all of the above officers have contributed greatly to the successful completion of the mission assigned the 174th Aviation Company.

This period marked a first for the 174th Aviation Company. On 14 September 1967 the unit was listed as 100% flyable. This was accomplished to the credit of the 174th Aviation Company's 409th TC Detachment. A fly-by was held and all the aircraft of the unit were airborne. The fly-by was attended by COL Wear of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Major Wheat

of the 174th Aviation Company and other commanders and VIPs of the Duc Pho area. During this four month span the 174th Aviation Company had flown a total of 215 combat assaults and 150 extractions in addition to the mammoth job of resupply, command and control and other various missions assigned this unit.

During this period many problems faced the 174th. Some of these were building adequate mess facilities and acceptable showers for the officers, NCOs and EM. However, through close coordination, proper supervision, and an aggressive attitude on the part of every one, these problems were met and solved expeditiously. In addition, availability of supplies required for the construction of the improved revetments for the helicopter pads gave the 174th Aviation Company the opportunity to replace the emergency revetments that were constructed upon the arrival of the unit to Duc Pho.

With the advent of the monsoon season and the painful memory of the disaster caused by a mortar round hitting one of our tents, it was quite obvious that improvements were required in the billeting of the unit's personnel. Great care and foresight was utilized to formulate plans for a protective bunker type tent kit with a floor raised sufficiently above ground level to assure safety from flooding. A schedule was devised and the 174th Aviation Company set itself to the task of renovating it's "home". The program is still in process and through a monumental effort on the part of all members of the unit, it is rapidly reaching fruition. The difficulties of obtaining the materials required to accomplish this task continues to pose a problem. However, by fully utilizing every source available and the scrupulous, frugal use of all materials acquired, this problem is diminishing in importance.

It was during this period that a unit patch was adopted. The patch,

as exhibited on the cover of this annual history, incorporates the figures of a shark and a dolphin, the names adopted for the unit's gunships and slicks. The USARV sword is centered on the crest and the aviator wings superimposed on it. Two lightning bolts flank the sword blade, indicating power and devastating speed. The unit's record has been built not only on it's accomplishments of extremely high caliber within the realm of duties of an aviation unit under the most adverse and hostile conditions, but also for it's capacity to accomplish the task of building the unit base camp with no assistance other than the unit's own personnel, while setting the 17th Group record for the highest total hours flown. What motto could be chosen for the unit patch other than the very appropriate, "NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE".

XIV. OPERATIONS SUPPORTING THE 3RD BRIGADE, 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION AT DUC PHO (1 November 1967 to 31 December 1967)

The latter part of October and the early part of November found the 174th Aviation Company in a tight situation. As a result of the high number of hours the unit was flying, many of the unit's aviators were unable to man aircraft because of the close proximity of their flying hours to the maximum limitation of 140 hours in a 30 day period. With the assistance of the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion pilots from other units were assigned on short TDY periods to this unit until our own pilots started to leave enough time to be flyable.

The last two months of the year saw a continuation of the fine support that has come to be expected of the 174th Aviation Company. They also provided an opportunity for this unit to expand it's practice of continuous

training and information rendered to the units supported on the optimum utilization of helicopters in all phases of support.

The 198th Infantry Brigade was assigned TDY to the 4th Infantry Division. Having newly arrived from CONUS, they were not familiar with the capacities and capabilities of helicopter support in Vietnam. The 174th Aviation Company conducted classes for a two week period to familiarize the unit with the proper methods and procedures pertaining to load limits, positioning of personnel, equipment and supplies in the aircraft, loading and unloading efficiency, PZ and LZ positioning and other facets of helicopter usage.

The 174th Aviation Company then supplied the aircraft for the initial CAs and extractions of the 198th Brigade. As a result of critiques offered, based on the efficiency of the 198th personnel on these lifts, valuable information was offered to the 198th to improve their learning to a maximum degree. The unit's heliborne capabilities had improved greatly in its two-week TDY period and, as a direct result of the 174th Aviation Company's efforts, they went to their new location with a greater confidence resulting from a better knowledge of what to expect and how to obtain maximum helicopter support in all its diversified capabilities.

This training period was also employed by the 174th Aviation Company to improve its own capacity, and also to shift emphasis in its training schedule. The latter proved invaluable in the last part of December when the 11th Infantry Division was assigned to assume responsibility of the 3rd of the 4th's A.O., effective 2 January 1968. The improved format was incorporated to train the 11th Division who also were new arrivals to Viet Nam. One major change was the inclusion of "practice" CAs and extractions to better evaluate the comprehension of the instructed unit. This change was found to be most effective and satisfactory.

During this period Major Thomas W. Wheat Jr. retained command of the unit. There were several changes in his staff: Cpt George W. Boswell assumed the position of Company Executive Officer; Major Glen D. Gibson took over as Operations Officer; and WO1 Michael L. Banek replaced WO1 Leon Williams as unit IP with the additional duty of Assistant Operations Officer.

The Thanksgiving holiday found the 174th Aviation Company engaged in the staggering effort of supplying a hot turkey meal to every individual of the Division who was located in the field. Although it meant being late for our own unit's enjoyable meal, the ships were not shut down until the mission was completed.

The same task was accomplished on Christmas day. The implementation of the 11th Division to the A.O. made the job even more difficult, but the full cooperation of each man in the unit found the mission accomplished before the men felt the work day was over and the holiday evening begun.

The 174th Aviation Company was host to a group of 100 orphans for a Christmas party on 26 December. The original group of volunteers who were to supervise the party found their ranks swelled with every available man from the unit. Everyone cooperated to make the day a most enjoyable one for the children. They were given a good meal, party hats and noise-makers, some toys that the unit's members had bought and items that were requested from family and friends in the U.S. Before the orphans left, they also gave us a gift: a concert of Vietnamese songs and the memory of 100 radiantly smiling faces, a gift without price.

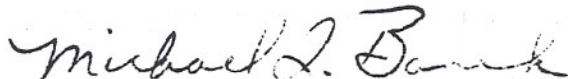
The spirit of giving that is so prominent at Christmas is another quality of the 174th. The high goals of the past year have been attained only through the complete giving of one's strength, cooperation, and

initiative on the part of every individual in the unit.

In view of the obsticals that had to be overcome, it would have to be admitted that the past year was monumental in its accomplishments. The 174th Aviation Company has flown 30,895 hours, 167,186 sorties, lifted 208,806 passengers, 10,583 tons of cargo and provided in excess of 457 Combat Assaults and 314 extractions.

The esprit de corps of the unit leaves everyone looking forward to the new year with renewed vigor and the desire to prove that, indeed, for the 174th, there is -

NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE.



MICHAEL L BANEK
WO1 Avn
Unit Historian