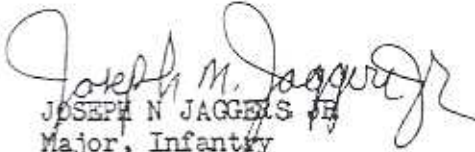


15 Aug - Dec 1964

HISTORY OF THE
68TH AVIATION COMPANY (AIR MOBILE LIGHT) (PROVISIONAL)
15 August 1964 - 31 December 1964

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Approved by:


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The 68th Aviation Company was originally activated at Fort Ord, California, under TOE 1-7D, with a strength of 19 Officers, 14 NCO's, and 74 Enlisted Men. It was activated effective 14 April 1960 by GO 41, HQ, Sixth US Army, 22 March 1960. The 68th was reorganized under TOE 1-7D, 1960, Change 1 with a strength of 23 Officers and 104 Enlisted Men. This reorganization was effective 15 May 1961, by GO 58, HQ, Sixth US Army, 3 May 1961. The 68th Aviation Company was inactivated, effective 6 December 1962 by GO 171, HQ, Sixth US Army, 28 November 1962. The 68th Aviation Company was assigned to the US Army Pacific, to be activated as an Aviation Company (Air Mobile Light)(Provisional). It was activated effective 15 August 1964 by GO 143, HQ, US Army Pacific, 31 July 1964. The 68th was activated under TOE 1-77E, with a strength of 29 Officers, 26 Warrant Officers, and 113 Enlisted Men. The 68th Aviation Company was activated in the Republic of South Vietnam utilizing the personnel and equipment of the US Army Utility Tactical Transport Helicopter Company which was activated on 15 July 1961 at Okinawa.

The Utility Tactical Transport Helicopter Company was the first tactical armed helicopter unit to be formed in the history of Army aviation. It was the recommendation of the USAAVNS that since this unit would be the obvious forerunner of the future 100% air mobile combat units of the 1970 era, that it should be a Series I unit (branch immaterial).

The organization of the Utility Tactical Transport Helicopter Company consisted of: Company Headquarters to provide command control, administration, mess, and supply; Operations section which provided the unit with communications and an operations capability; three (3) armed airlift platoons;

a Service Platoon which would provide second echelon maintenance. There was also a provision for an aircraft maintenance detachment to be attached to provide third echelon maintenance for the aircraft. The 68th Aviation Company is organized almost identical to the Utility Tactical Transport Helicopter Company except the 68th is under control of the 145th Aviation Battalion and depends upon them for personnel administration and other similar types of administration.

The primary mission of the Utility Tactical Transport Helicopter Company was to provide air transportation for movement of combat troops in the forward area of the combat zone. The secondary mission was to provide tactical air movement of combat supplies and equipment within the combat zone. In the months that followed the employment of the Utility Tactical Transport Helicopter Company in the Republic of South Vietnam, it was found that the unit could perform many more than the published missions that were originally assigned. The 68th Aviation Company still carries through the missions that were pioneered by the old UTT Helicopter Company.

The UTT pioneered many concepts, tactics, and developed much doctrine that is presently used by the 68th Aviation Company and all armed helicopter units in Vietnam. They pioneered many weapon systems and finally came up with the present XM-6 and XM-3 weapons systems that are presently in use.

The situation in the Republic of South Vietnam still continued to be critical all during the period since the activation of the 68th Aviation Company on 15 August 1964 thru 31 December 1964. Major Ralph D Irvin, Infantry, assumed command of the 68th on activation 15 August 1964. Captain Edwin C Riley was the Executive Officer. On 31 October 1964,

Major Irvin was relieved by Captain Riley who then assumed command. On 22 November 1964, Major Joseph N Jagers Jr assumed command with Captain Colver H Jones Jr as the Company Executive Officer.

At the time of activation of the 68th on 15 August 1964, there were 25 UH-1B's authorized and 25 on hand. All 25 of these helicopters were armed with either the XM-3 or XM-6 weapons systems.

Many significant actions were engaged in by the 68th since its activation on the 15th of August 1964. The first of these took place in the Ben Cat area around the middle of September 1964. In this action Lt David H Price was seriously wounded and the helicopter that he and Captain Timmermeyer were flying was hit many times by enemy ground fire but was brought back to the airfield without loss of the aircraft. In November 1964, Capt Riley and CWO Holloway were shot down while participating in one of the biggest air operations of the Vietnamese conflict. Aircraft and crew were recovered. Also around the middle of November 1964, the 68th was called on to furnish support to the First Corps area and five helicopters and crews from the Raider Platoon were dispatched to Da Nang. On the first of December the Raiders were replaced by 5 helicopters and crews of the Dragon Platoon and 2 helicopters and crews from the Raider Platoon. On 20 December 1964, these 7 ships and crews were replaced by 7 ships and crews of the Playboy Platoon.

On 29 December 1964, Lt Paul D Murray and WO Daniel W Sullivan were shot down by enemy ground fire in heavy action in the Binh Gia area east of Saigon. In this crash Lt Murray and the Gunner on board the helicopter received injuries so serious that they had to be evacuated from Vietnam

for further medical attention. On 30 December 1964, WO Roy G Azbill and WO Steven E Morgan along with their Crew Chief and Gunner, SGT Franklin D Porter and PFC Theodore Winowitch were all killed in action when their helicopter was shot down in enemy held territory. This action at Binh Gia was termed the heaviest action that the 68th Aviation Company had engaged in the history of the UTT or the 68th. Many other operations were participated in by the 68th in which the Officers and Enlisted Men put forth their greatest effort.

From the time of activation of the 68th Aviation Company on 15 August 1964 until 31 December 1964, the 68th was credited with an estimated 1080 enemy KIA (Killed in Action) and 1139 enemy WIA (Wounded in Action). This however was not without some casualties being taken by the 68th. During this period of time there were 6672 combat hours flown by personnel of the 68th and for this time flown 56 aircraft hits were taken and 4 helicopters shot down, 2 of which were destroyed. The personnel of the 68th suffered 40 WIA and 4 KIA.

The Officers and Enlisted Men of the 68th Aviation Company have been recommended for the following awards for the period 15 August 1964 thru 31 December 1964:

- 4 - Air Medal w/V
- 4 - Bronze Star
- 15- Distinguished Flying Cross
- 1 - Soldier's Medal
- 29 - Army Commendation w/V
- 785 - Air Medal
- 40 - Purple Heart
- 1 - Distinguish Service Cross