

DECLASSIFIED
2-13-41
By: [Signature]

ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT
HISTORY OF THE
68TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY
125TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

1 JANUARY 1969 - 31 DECEMBER 1969

Prepared by
WO Dale A. Rivett
Unit Historian

APPROVED BY:

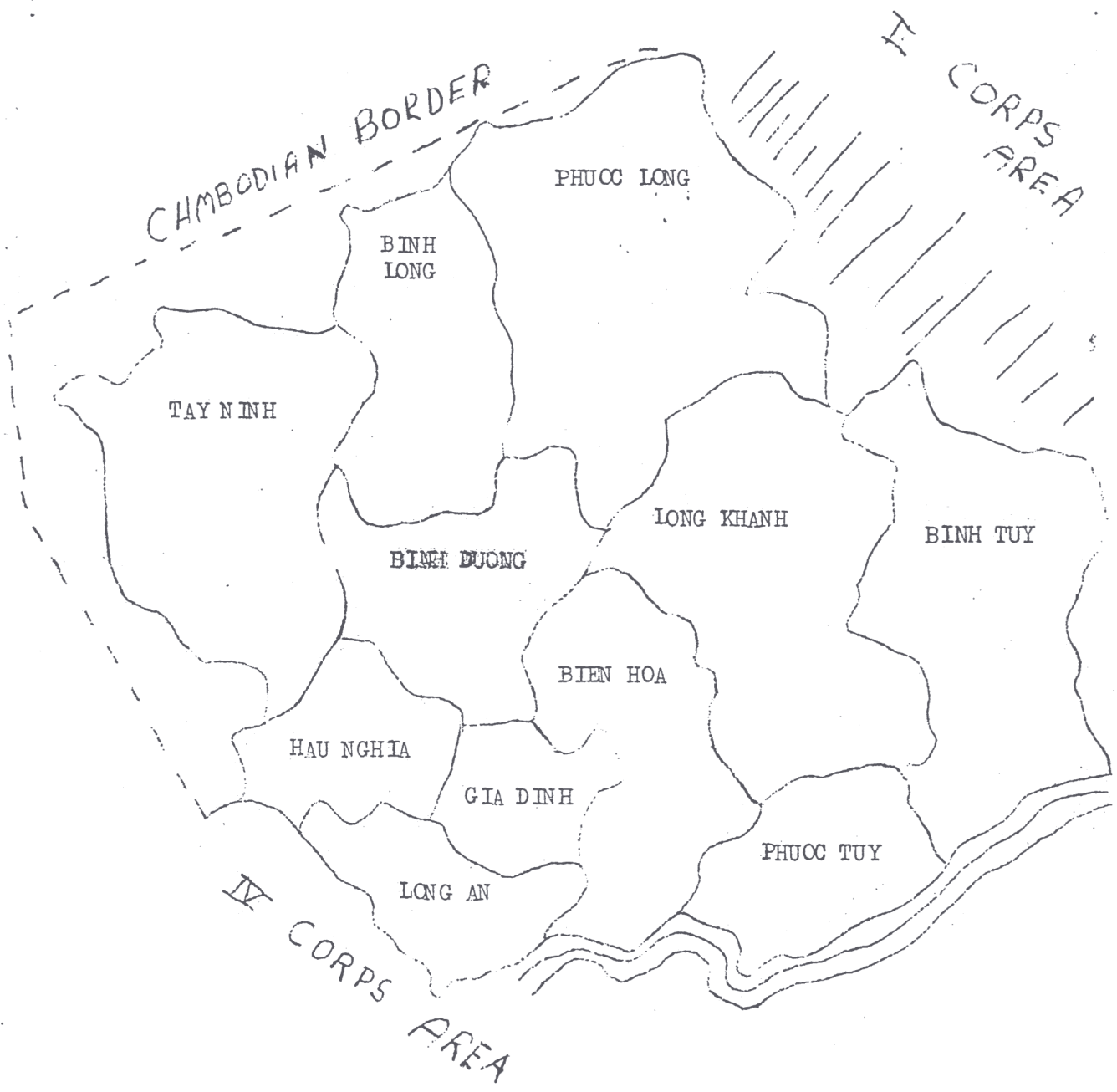
Luther L. French

LUTHER L. FRENCH
MAJ, INF
COMMANDING

Bien Hoa, Republic of Vietnam
AFO 96227

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: 2-1354L
By: [signature]

AREA OF OPERATION



DECLASSIFIED
Authority: 2-13541
By: [illegible]

During the past year, the 68th Assault Helicopter Company has operated in the III Corps area of Vietnam. This is the transitional terrain area for South Vietnam which provides a link between the rice paddies of the Mekong Delta and the mountains of the central highlands. (South and West of Saigon the land is delta type terrain and to the North and East is a large plain, slowly rising to the mountains of the far perimeter of the III Corps Area).

The delta region of the III Corps is a heavily silted area crisscrossed by numerous streams and rivers. It is a low level plain with an elevation of no more than ten feet above sea level. Almost the entire area is divided into rice paddies that are kept flooded during the rainy season. There are many nipa palm bushes found growing along the banks of the rivers and around the small villages.

The territory to the North and West of the III Corps area is a plateau rising from sea level to over 600 feet. The land is covered by thick jungle, except for the areas around large communities which have been cleared away. This jungle, which is often two and three canopies thick, consists of bamboo and broad leaf forests, interspersed by ferns and rubber plantations. There are only a few large mountains in the III Corps area, which serve as excellent land marks.

The III Corps area provides a great variety of terrain to which the aviator must adapt. He must land anywhere from muddy open rice paddies to small holes in the thick jungle. The aviator must learn to navigate using all types of terrain features. He must adapt to dust and haze in the dry season and large thunderstorms in the wet season. These conditions of the III Corps area provide the aviator with a great challenge.



THE LOG JOURNAL OF THE 68TH AS-BUILT HELICOPTER COMPANY 1969

Company Commanders: (Top Tier 6)

Major Donald I. Sa thoff: From Dec 68 to Jun 69

Major Thomas G. Moody: From Jun 69 to Nov 69

Major Luther L. French: From Nov 69 to Jan 70

Executive Officers: (Top Tiger 5)

Captain Geoffrey R. Webster: From Nov 68 to May 69

Captain James D. Court: From May 69 to Oct 69

Captain Vernon H. Sutter: From Oct 69 to Jan 70

Operations Officers: (Top Tiger 3)

Captain Douglas C. Couch: From Nov 68 to May 69

Captain Stanley Christian Jr.: From May 69 to Jul 69

Captain Walter C. Burk: From Oct 69 to Dec 69

Captain Donald E. Stout: From Dec 69 to Jan 70

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: 23341
By: [illegible]

UNIT HONOR ROLL

THESE INDIVIDUALS MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE FOR THEIR COUNTRY

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER DAVID A. HICKMAN

WARRANT OFFICER GLEN S. MURPHY JR.

WARRANT OFFICER EARL K. GARRISON

WARRANT OFFICER ROBERT A. WILLIAMS

MASTER SERGEANT HARVEY N. HEDSTROM

SPECIALIST FIVE CHARLES A. ROMERO

SPECIALIST FIVE RICHARD D. BACA

SPECIALIST FOUR ALAN H. ROUCHON

SPECIALIST FOUR HERMAN DEZ JOSE VALEZ

SPECIALIST FOUR RAY L. ROYSTON

DECLASSIFIED
2/13/41
By: [unclear]

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS 1969

JANUARY

- 3 Army Commendation Medals for Valor
- 2 Purple Hearts

FEBRUARY

- 1 Purple Heart

MARCH

- 1 Distinguished Flying Cross
- 4 Air Medals for Valor
- 1 Army Commendation Medal for Valor
- 2 Purple Hearts

APRIL

- 1 Distinguished Flying Cross
- 1 Air Medal for Valor
- 2 Army Commendation Medals for Valor plus 3 for Service

JUNE

- 3 Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry/Bronze Star
- 1 Purple Heart

JULY

- 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses
- 5 Air Medals for Valor
- 1 Purple Heart

AUGUST

- 10 Distinguished Flying Crosses
- 25 Air Medals for Valor
- 1 Army Commendation Medal for Valor
- 2 Purple Hearts

SEPTEMBER

- 8 Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry/Silver Star
- 19 Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry/Bronze Star pending

OCTOBER

- 2 Air Medals "V" pending
- 2 Army Commendation Medals for Valor pending

NOVEMBER

- 1 Distinguished Flying Cross pending
- 1 Air Medal "V" pending
- 2 Army Commendation Medals for Valor pending

DECLASSIFIED
273541
By

THE OPERATIONAL HISTORY OF THE 68TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY 1969

- 3 Jan The new year started eventfully for the 68th Top Tigers. Inserting troops of the 25th Infantry Division 5 miles NW of Duc Hoa, RVN; the inserting ships came under heavy small arms fire. The supporting armed helicopters halted the enemy fire resulting in negative friendly casualties.

- 9 Jan A 68th lift ship making an insertion of a Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol in Long Khanh Province RVN; sighted several enemy 30 to 100 meters from the landing sight. Realizing the danger to the inserted party the pilot assaulted the enemy position on the way out of the landing zone. The enemy location was pinpointed and gunship fire directed to it. The result of the engagement was 1 VC killed and evidence of several wounded.

- 16 Jan The 68th "Mustang" gunship light fire team on strip alert was called out to cover a contact. Troops of the 18th RVN Inf. Division came into contact with a VC unit in Long Thanh District, Nhon Ha province RVN. The results of the engagement was 28 VC killed, 4 weapons captured.

In the month of January 1969, the 68th Assault Helicopter Company flew a total of 2,532 hours. There were 18,073 passengers and 18 tons of cargo carried.

The maintenance availability achievement for January was:

66.7%, 74.8% and 89.8% in C, D and H series aircraft respectively.

DECLASSIFIED
873541
By: [signature]

1 Feb The month of February was typical of all Vietnamese New Years. During the New Year offensives Bien Hoa Air Base came under several mortar and rocket attacks. On occasions Bien Hoa came under ground attack and the officers and men of the 68th were kept busy with the security of their area and aircraft.

The 68th did not make any major engagements during February. The normal operation of combat assaults and direct support missions continued, but remained flexible to meet the stepped up enemy activity of the New Year offensive.

In the month of February 1969, the 68th Assault Helicopter Company flew a total of 2,237 hours. There were 16,005 passengers and 6 tons of cargo carried.

The maintenance availability achievement for February was:
74%, 80% and 85% on C, D and H series aircraft respectively.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: 8-13541
By: [unclear]

THE OPERATIONAL HISTORY OF THE 68TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY 1969

- 2 Mar A 68th aircraft flying in direct support of a special forces unit working out of Tay Ninh RVN; came under fire several times during the conduct of their mission. This same aircraft distinguished itself while making a delivery under intensive mortar barrage.
- 3 Mar A 68th aircraft was called on to fly Command & Control for 25th RVN Inf. Division troops in contact. While covering a contact near Duc Hoa RVN the ship aided in the capture of one VC and in the discovery of a cache. The results of the mission were 6 VC killed, 1 VC captured; 7 AK-47, 1B-40, 1 carbine, 1 AR-15 and several documents.
- 24 Mar A 68th "Mustang" gunship covering an operation near Binh Phouc RVN was shot down while engaging an estimated platoon size element of NVA. The crew of the aircraft as well as valuable materials were rescued although rescue operations were within 150 meters of enemy positions.

In the month of March 1969 the 68th Assault Helicopter Company flew a total of 2,451 hours. There were 17,618 passengers and 23 tons of cargo carried.

The maintenance availability achievement for March was:

80%, 82% and 90% on C,D and H series aircraft respectively.

DECLASSIFIED
87341
by [unclear]

THE OPERATIONAL HISTORY OF THE 68TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY 1969

12 Apr The 68th "Mustang" gunships were called on to support 25th RVN Inf. Division troops near Duc Hoa RVN. The gunships were called on to assault enemy positions when the ground contact was established. The result of the mission were 17 VC killed, 9 VC captured, 8 weapons and several documents captured.

In the month of April 1969, the 68th Assault Helicopter Company flew a total of 2,371 hours. There were 18,547 passengers and 21 tons of cargo carried.

Particularly noteworthy is the maintenance aircraft availability achievement for the month of April. The availability was:

89%, 85% and 90% on C,D and H series aircraft.

DECLASSIFIED
873541
By: [illegible]

THE OPERATIONAL HISTORY OF THE 68TH ASSET HELICOPTER COMPANY 1969

11 May During the month of May the 68th "Mustang" armed helicopter platoon distinguished themselves. The eye witness statement resultant of their actions is included on the following page.

During May the 68th Flew 2, 530 hours carrying 18,106 personnel and 16 tons of cargo.

The maintenance availability of aircraft for May was:

C models- 85%, D models- 81%, and H models- 84%.

EYE WITNESS STATEMENT

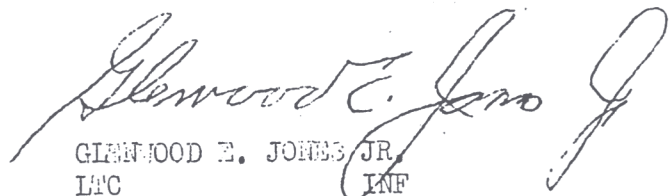
On 11 May 1969, between the hours of 1200 and 1600, Cpt. Stanley Christian, Jr., 05338961, 1LT Rufus Esters, 05341893, WO1 Wayne N. Jones, W3162989, WO1 Michael D. Milton, W3162133, Specialist Four David W. Doane, RA16918911, Specialist Four Nick F. Anania, RA11621542, Specialist Four James L. Youtsey, RA18920408 and Specialist Four Alan M. Rouchon, RA68001323, members of the "Mustang" armed helicopter platoon of the 68th Assault Helicopter Company, participated in the action against a reinforced VC Division near Dinh Quan, Republic of Vietnam.

While acting as crewmembers of two UH-1C model gunships, these personnel displayed an outstanding manner of courage and profound dedication to duty.

Serving as an Emergency Stand-by Fire Team, they were directed to the location of the heavy enemy contact. After arriving on station, they were informed that a location must be secured for medical evacuation of wounded troops. A recon was initiated by the two armed ships and upon locating a suitable landing zone, the aircraft began to receive heavy ground fire. They immediately began to put in rockets on the intense fire area allowing the troops to advance. After several secondary explosions, the fire was silenced and the friendly moved in and secured the area enabling the medical evacuations to begin.

At this time, the fire team was notified of a unit in contact receiving heavy automatic weapons fire from a well entrenched hill. Several advisors were wounded and numerous friendly casualties had resulted. The fire team engaged the fortified hill receiving heavy fire on each pass. Once again several secondary explosions were observed on the hill; however, on the final pass, the lead gunship took 50 caliber hits from another location and the aircraft was forced to land. The hill was taken without additional casualties.

Their actions contributed greatly to the successful completion of the mission and were directly responsible for the safe medical evacuation of critically wounded troops, and the taking of a VC fortified hill to include 33 confirmed enemy kills. Their actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon themselves, their unit, and the United States Army.



GLENWOOD E. JONES, JR.
LTC INF
Senior Advisor
43d Infantry Regiment

DECLASSIFIED
2-13-41
By

THE OPERATIONAL HISTORY OF THE 68TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY 1969

19 Jun 68th "Mustang" gunships were scrambled to cover troops of the 18th RVN Inf. Division in contact near Xuan Loc RVN. As the lead gunship started his assault of the NVA position he was shot down. Although the aircraft commander made a successful autorotation to the tops of the trees, the aircraft falling threw the triple canopy jungle, crashed & burned killing its crew.

20 Jun The 68th flew in support of the 5th RVN Inf. Division 5 miles east of Song Be RVN. During the operation the flight came under heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire several times. The aircraft received several hits, 1 crewmember was killed and 2 were wounded.

Another "Top Tiger" also distinguished himself flying a rescue mission in the Xuan Loc area. With enemy activity heavy in the area of the downed aircraft the 68th ship evacuated the crew, and denied the enemy much valuable equipment as well.

In the month of June 1969, the 68th Assault Helicopter Company flew a total of 2,509 hours. There were 16,117 passengers and 25 tons of cargo carried.

The maintenance availability achievement for June was:

78%, 76% and 83% on C,D and H series aircraft respectively.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: 213541
By: [unclear]

THE OPERATIONAL HISTORY OF THE 68TH AS ALT HELICOPTER COMPANY 1969

1 Jul - 31 Aug During the months of July and August the 68th did not make any significant enemy contact. The 68th did however continue the normal routine of Combat Assault type missions, and Direct combat support missions.

The 68th does most of its assault type missions in the Xuan Loc area of operation. In the Xuan Loc area we support the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, and the 18th RVN Infantry Division. The area for the most part is heavy jungle. This often means that the infantry unit must be inserted and extracted through small one ship landing zones. The nature of the area slowed down airmobile operations considerably. It also is very demanding of aircraft and crews who often make vertical takeoffs and descents of up to 300 ft.

On a day when the 68th is flying in direct combat support any aircraft may cover the four corners of III corps. On occasion ones mission may take one into IV corps or within a few kilometers of the dangerous Cambodian border. The same aircraft that has gone to all these places may find himself enroute to the in-country R&R center at Vung Tau to gaze at its lovely setting by the South China Sea. Flying direct support of III corps as we do requires that the pilot fly great distances over varying terrain where the lone aircraft must be completely self sufficient. We of the 68th consider ourselves very fortunate to be allowed to travel across III corps, to learn the area and see new places.

During the month of July the 68th Assault Helicopter Company flew a total of 2,631 hours. There were 14,871 passengers and 50 tons of cargo carried.

The maintenance availability achievement for the month of July was:
84%, 81% and 84% on C,D and H series aircraft respectively.

During the month of August the 68th Assault Helicopter Company flew a total of 2,679 hours. There were 15,851 passengers and 178 tons of cargo carried.

The maintenance availability achievement for August was:

90%, 72% and 86% on C,D and H series aircraft respectively.

DECLASSIFIED
873541
By: [unclear]

THE OPERATIONAL HISTORY OF THE 68TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY 1969

5 Sep The 68th flew a combat assault mission for the 199th Light Inf. Brigade. The operation was conducted near Gia Ray Mt. RVN, where the 68th gunships killed 6 VC. Further results of the operation were 2 VC captured as well as a weapons cache uncovered. One casualty was suffered when the C&C ship was shot down by a command detonated mine while making a low level recon of a VC flag planted on a road.

During the month of September the 68th Assault Helicopter Company flew a total of 2,667 hours. There were 15,103 passengers and 139 tons of cargo carried.

The maintenance availability achievement for the month of September was:

84%, 81% and 81% on C, D and H series aircraft respectively.

1 Oct - 31 Oct In the month of October the 68th Assault Helicopter Company did not make any contact with the enemy. Operations did continue as normal as described in the months of July and August.

During the month of October the 68th Assault Helicopter Company flew a total of 2,820 hours. There were 17,034 passengers and 119 tons of cargo carried.

DECLASSIFIED
213541
By: [unclear]

THE OPERATIONAL HISTORY OF THE 68TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY 1969

5 Nov A 68th Aircraft flying direct support of the 5th Special Forces near Bu Dop RVN came under mortar fire several times in the conduct of their mission. This same ship was distinguished later that day while conducting an emergency medevac under intense mortar barrage.

During the month of November the 68th Assault Helicopter company flew a total of 2,641 hours. There were 17,622 passengers and 218 tons of cargo carried.

The maintenance aircraft availability achievement for November was:

81%, 78% and 78% on C,D and H series aircraft respectively.

4 Dec A 68th aircraft resupplying an infantry unit 1 mile NE of Tanh Linh RVN, was shot down shortly after departing the landing zone. The Officer in charge of the Infantry unit being resupplied reported that the aircraft had received AK-47 fire and had returned fire until the time of impact. The results of the crash was 3 crewmen dead, 1 passenger dead, and the aircraft completely destroyed.

During the month of December the 68th Assault Helicopter Company flew a total of 2,903 hours. There were 17,674 passengers and 215 tons of cargo carried.

The maintenance availability achievement for the month of December was:

77%, 73% and 82% on C,D and H series aircraft respectively.

DECLASSIFIED
8/13/41
By: [illegible]

THE OPERATIONAL HISTORY OF THE 68TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY 1969

During the months of 1969 the men of the 68th Assault Helicopter company have proven themselves time and time again. In their daily missions both individually and as a whole the men of the 68th have demonstrated a high degree of professionalism. A phrase often used by one of the 68th former commanders well describes the standards set by the 68th. "The difficult we do immediately, the impossible takes a little longer; and miracles by appointment only". The 68th will continue to live up to the standards that it has set. Though the faces may change in the coming year the 68th will remain the effective, efficient Assault Helicopter Company that it is today.

During the months of 1969 the 68th Assault Helicopter Company has flown a total of 31,071 hours. There were 202,620 passengers and 1,028 tons of cargo carried.