

1967

U. S. Army Military History Institute

ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT
HISTORY OF THE
281ST ASSAULT HELICOPTER COMPANY
10TH COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

1 January 1967 - 31 December 1967

Prepared by
Captain Seymour Schwartz

APPROVED BY:



DONALD R. RUSKAUFF
MAJOR, TC
Commanding

228-03
206-02.2

Nha Trang, Republic of Vietnam
APO 96240

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Introduction by The Present Commander

It is indeed an honor to reflect upon the accomplishments of the 281st Assault Helicopter Company. During the past year the 281st has been involved in a great number of different and demanding missions.

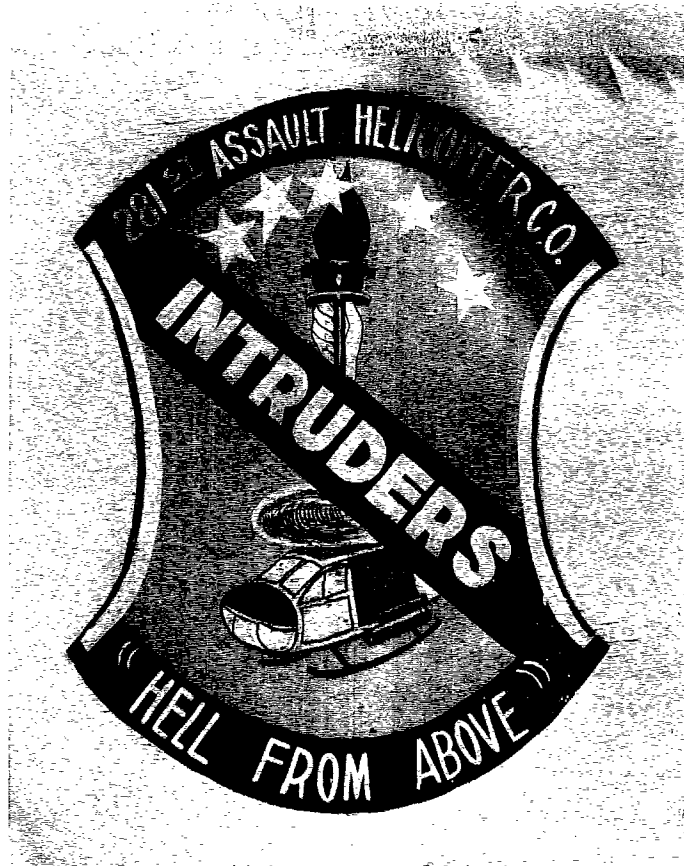
Any aviation unit can perform VIP flights or combat assaults or resupply missions or medivac or troop carry or long range reconnaissance operations or any one of a hundred and one missions, but how many units can do all of these, and do all of them equally well? The 281st can and does, every day, 365 days a year.

The officers, non-commissioned officers and enlisted men are professionals in every sense of the word. Those qualities by which a commander evaluates his unit: morale, esprit de corps, discipline and proficiency are very obvious in this fine organization.

I proudly look forward to another year of outstanding service by this outstanding unit.

CHAPTER ONE

HERALDRY



- SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INTRUDER CREST -

The meaning of the Intruder Crest is as follows: The torch and stars represent our goals freedom and liberty, the helicopter for our means of attaining these goals, the "Hell From Above" is what we will bring to those in opposition to these goals and "Intruder" our operational call sign.

OCMH(1 Jul 66)

1st Ind

SUBJECT: Request for Certificate of Lineage and Honors

HQ, DA, Office, Chief of Military History, Washington, D. C. 20315

TO: Commanding Officer, 281st Aviation Company, APO San Francisco 96240

1. The records of this office show that the 281st Aviation Company and the 483d Transportation Detachment were constituted (first placed on the rolls of the Army) on 6 October 1965 and were activated on 7 October 1965 at Fort Benning, Georgia. They are now units with no prior history and have not earned any honors to date.

2. The history of the 499th Signal Detachment goes back to 10 October 1944 when the unit was constituted in the Army of the United States as the 3499th Signal Service Detachment. The detachment was activated on 6 November 1944 in Panama and remained there until its inactivation on 27 February 1967. On 21 April 1945 it was redesignated as the 3499th Signal Equipment Installation Detachment. On 6 October 1965 the unit was redesignated as the 499th Signal Detachment and was allotted to the Regular Army. It was activated at Fort Benning, Georgia, on 7 October 1965. The detachment has not received any campaign participation credit or unit decorations to date.

3. The official certificates of Lineage and Honors for the 281st Aviation Company, the 483d Transportation Detachments, and the 499th Signal Detachment have not been prepared. In order to insure the earliest completion of the entire lineage program, this office established a precise schedule for the preparation of certificates of Lineage and Honors for the units on the rolls of the Army. Because of the great number of these units and the complexities of their interrelated ancestry, strict adherence to the schedule is necessary.

4. Certificates of Lineage and Honors for these units will be forwarded shortly after the project schedule permits work on units of this type. In the meantime, The Adjutant General has been requested to forward the units' Historical Data Cards (AGAZ Form 373) which contain dates of reorganizations, changes in station, and other pertinent information.

FOR THE CHIEF OF MILITARY HISTORY:

H. A. SCHMIDT
Colonel, AGC
Chief, Historical Services
Division

CHAPTER TWO
COMMAND AND CONTROL

281st Assault Helicopter Company Commanders

1 January 67 - 6 February 67	Major William P Griffin
7 February 67 - 9 September 67	Major Allen L Junko
10 September 67 - 31 December 67	Major John W Mayhew

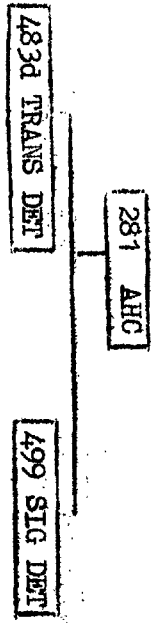
483rd Transportation Detachment Commanders

1 January 67 - 28 August 67	Major Richard D McMillan
29 August 67 - 31 December 67	Major Donald R Ruskauff

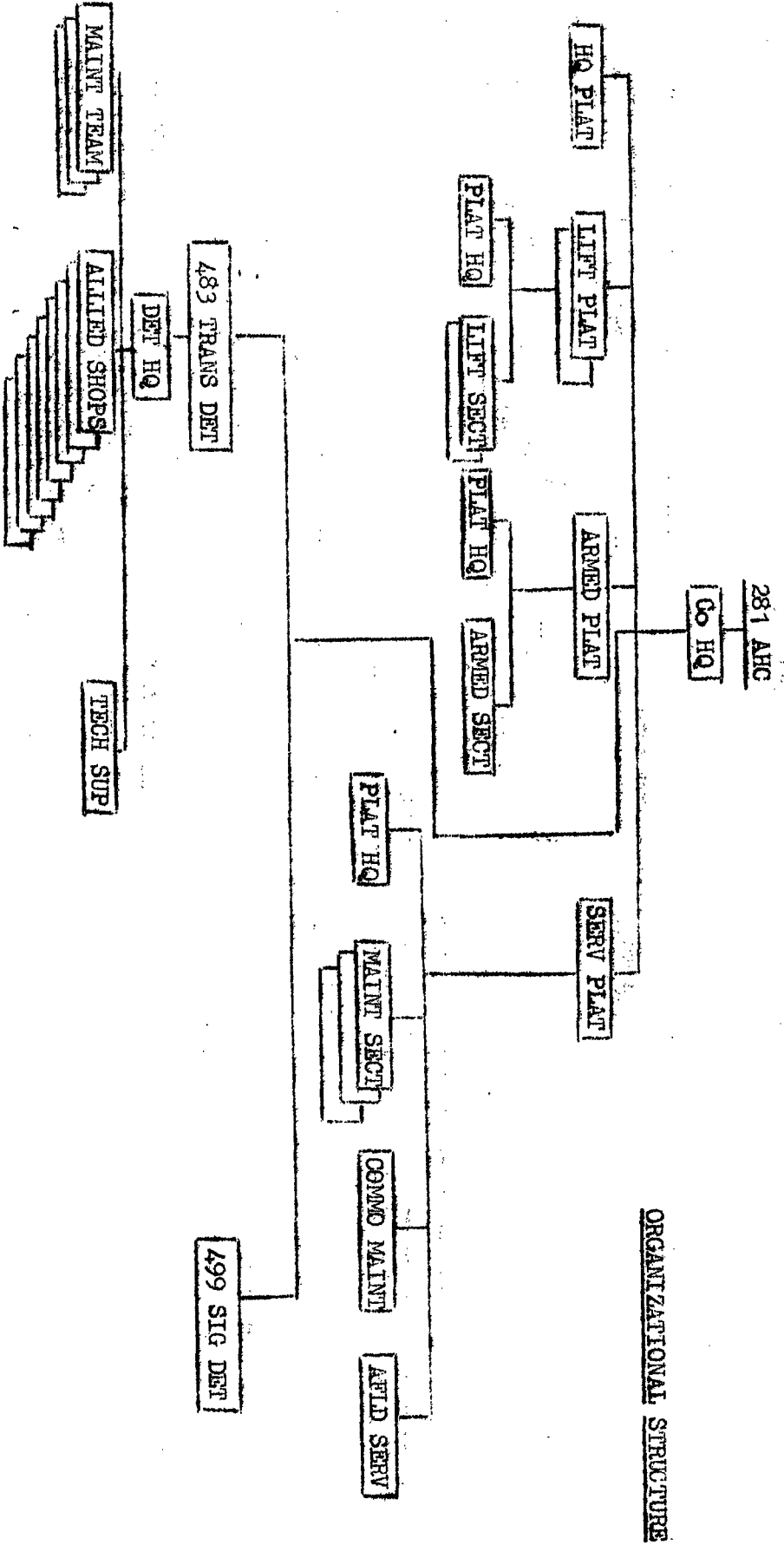
499th Signal Detachment Commanders

1 January 67 - 26 May 67	Captain William J Brondol
27 May 67 - September 67	Lieutenant Leonard N Ito
2 September 67 - 31 December 67	Warrant Officer Arthur Snyder

ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

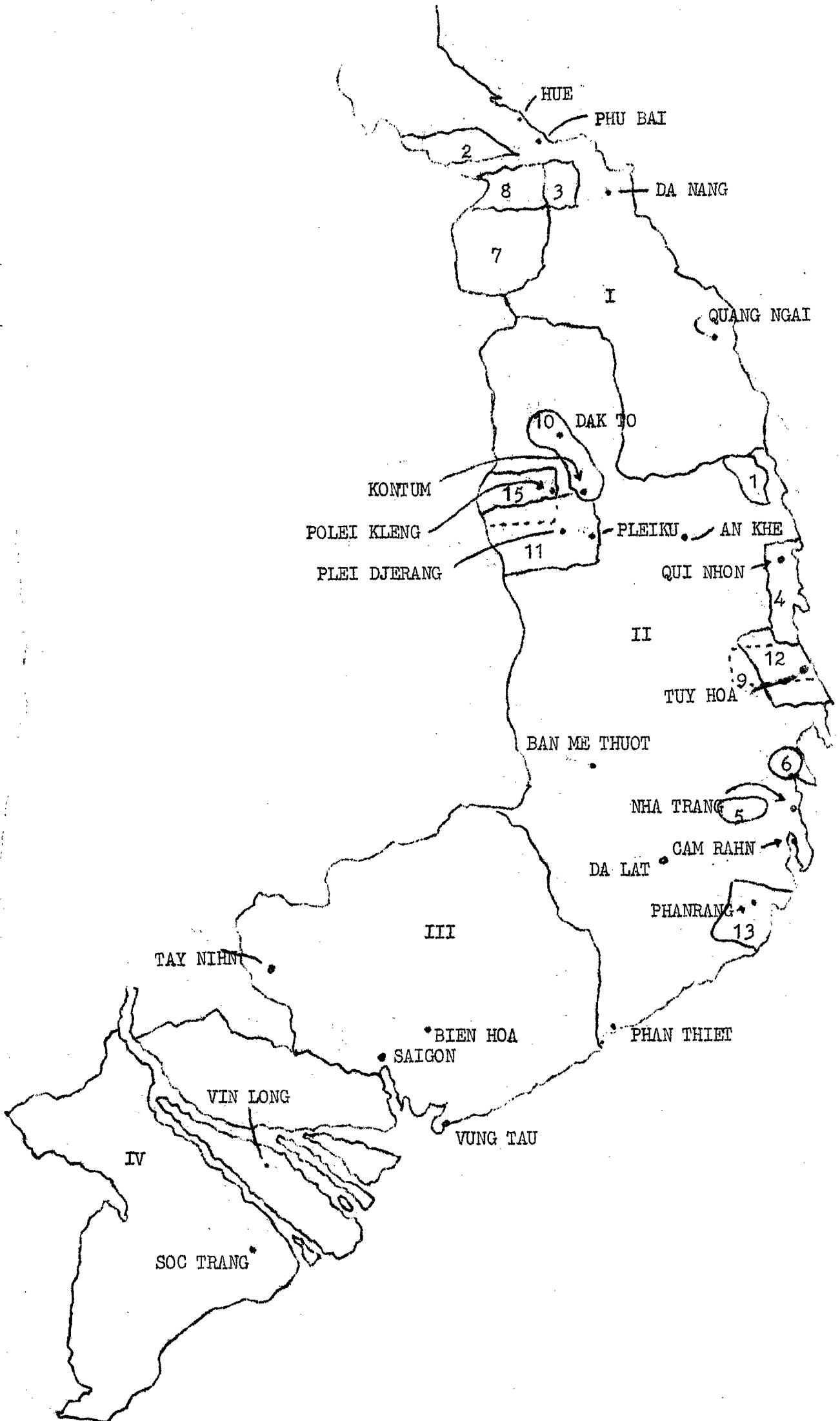


COMMAND STRUCTURE



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

AREA OF OPERATIONS



CHAPTER 3

UNIT OPERATIONS

Mission of the 281st Assault Helicopter Company

During the period 1 January 1967 through 1 July 1967 the primary mission of the 281st Assault Helicopter Company was to provide support to the 5th Special Forces Group (ABN). This support was furnished to the Letter Companies and Headquarters, 5th SFG (ABN), the MACV Recondo School and Detachment B-52 (Special Operations). During the time the 281st AHC was under Operational Control of the Commanding Officer, 5th Special Forces Group (ABN).

On 1 July 1967 Operational Control of the 281. AHC reverted back to the Commanding Officer, 10th Combat Aviation Battaion, 17th Aviation Group. The Primary Mission minus the support of the lettered companies remained the same. In addition a secondary mission to provide general support to units within II Corps area as directed by the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion was assigned.

Major Unit Operations 1967

1. Project Delta 2 March - 3 April
2. Project Delta 12 April - 15 June
3. Project Delta (Samurai I) 16 July - 16 August
4. Logistical Support for the ROK Capital Division 12-31 August
5. CIDG Assault West of Nha Trang 21 - 23 August
6. Navy SEAL Operation at Ninh Hoa 14 - 17 September
7. Project Delta (Samurai II) 15 September - 18 October
8. Project Delta (Samurai III) 19 - 31 October
9. Operation with 173rd Airborne Brigade 23 - 24 September
10. Project Omega (Dak To) 10 - 13 October
11. 5th Special Forces Group (Prairie Fire) 19 October - 9 November
12. Operation Parachute (173rd at Phu Hiep) 5 - 29 November
13. Operation Rose (101st Abn Div at Phan Rang) 11 - 20 November
14. VIP Flight RVN President Thieu and Vice President Ky 17 November
15. Project Delta (Sultan I) 3 - 23 December
16. Operation Christmas 24 - 31 December

1. PROJECT DELTA (3 March - 4 April)

A. This operation took place in conjunction with the 1st Air Cavalry Division operating in the Bong Son and An Lo areas. During this period some 32 separate teams were infiltrated, also several company size assaults were flown. As in the past the medivac missions continued to be flown by 281st Aircraft. Additional support in the form of lift ships and "GO - GO" ships (Armed CH-47 Chinooks) were supplied by the 1st Cav.

B. Statistics

Hours Flown	722
Tasks	728
Sorties	1655
Troops	2356
Cargo	16 Tons

2. PROJECT DELTA (12 April - 15 June)

A. This operation by far was the longest one of the year. It also turned out to be a very costly one. Working out of the Hue - Phu Bai area. The zone of operations extended west to the Laotian border, with the majority of activity centered around the Ashau Valley. During this operation forty -- seven infiltrations and exfiltrations were accomplished. Some thirty-two medivac missions were flown. On 27 April while attempting an extraction, one of our UH-1D's was shot down. The crew linked up with ground forces and were extracted by USMC CH-46's but not before one of their A/C was shot down. All crews were safely evacuated. On 14 May two more "Slicks" were shot down, suppressive fire by gunships, spooky and F4's enabled all crews to be evacuated. On 21 May a UH-1C was shot down over bad terrain. The aircraft burned after rolling down a ravine.

The crew chief was picked up later in the day while under heavy enemy fire. The gunner PFC M. F. Gallagher on the recovery ship was mortally wounded. The pilot, copilot and gunner were listed as MIA. On 22 May another crew member was sighted and while being extracted a CH-46 was downed in the LZ. All members escaped with minor injuries. On 23 May after approximately 60 hours in the jungle the missing pilot was sighted and extracted. During the remainder of the operation the search for missing copilot WO1 Wrobleski continued. He is presently listed as MIA.

B. Statistics

Hours	1656
Tasks	1315
Sorties	2844
Troops	2657
A/C Lost	4 (3 UH1D, 1 UH1C)
Medivac	32
A/C Hits	19

3. Project Delta (Samurai I) 16 July - 16 August

A. In this operation the second and third platoons provided continuous support for the 5th Special Forces Group and B-52 Special Operations. Additional support to this project came in the form of US Marine Corps CH-46's and aircraft drawn from Task Force Oregon. Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols were infiltrated and extracted in selected areas, culminating in a battalion sized combat assault of CIDG troops. The thirteen captured prisoners provided vital information on enemy units and supply routes in the I Corps Area. Operations were carried out to the west of Da Nang. It was during this operation that the 281st lost three

personnel. After surviving a crash in some very rough terrain extraction was attempted by an Air Force helicopter. The aircraft commander WO1 G. Omdahl remained behind at the crash site while his crew was hoisted out. While they were being lifted out a malfunction occurred and the three crew members were dropped. All were killed in an infortunate accident. Later WO Omdahl was extracted by a 281st recovery ship.

B. Statistical Highlights

Tasks	819
Sorties	1655
Troops	1901
Cargo (tons)	35
Hours	968

4. Logistical Support for the ROK Capital Division 12-31 August

A. This operation provided the 281st Assault Helicopter Company personnel the opportunity to perform in a different role. The area of Operations was centered at Quin Nhon and extended approximately twenty miles north, west and to Tuy Hoa in the south. Daily resupply of ammunition, rations and water was accomplished to the many outposts within the Korean TAOR. Much experience was gained in pinnacle and confined area approaches with heavy loads.

B. Statistical Highlights

Tasks	81
Sorties	718
Troops	1113
Cargo (tons)	108.6

5. CIDG Company Assault West of Nha Trang 21-23 August

.. On 21 August a Special Forces CIDG Company at Camp A-502 was lifted to an area west of Nha Trang for a combat assault against an enemy tunnel and bunker complex. No resistance occurred and extraction on the 23rd was without incident. A total of 84 hours was flown.

6. U.S. Navy SEAL Team Operation 14-17 September

A. Three UH-1D's rigged by the MACV Recon School were sent to Ninh Hoa on the 14th of September to support Navy Seal Team Operations. The area of operations was approximately two miles southwest of Ninh Hoa. The team was successfully extracted with the use of rope ladders on the 17th of September.

B. Statistical Highlights

Tasks	14
Sorties	21
Troops	17
Hours	19.5

7. Project Delta (Samurai II) 15 September - 18 October

A. This operation was conducted in the area southwest of Da Nang and generally within the I Corps Area. Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol coverage was provided under extremely poor weather conditions. One of the highlights of this operation was an eagle flight on the 27th into the village of My Hiop. The LLDB (RVN Rangers) troops inserted by our aircraft captured 40 POWs and a large quantity of rice. The gun platoon was credited with two kills. On 5 October, a combat assault was made on an area previously infiltrated by a Delta LLRP team. Despite heavy ground fire the company was inserted into the landing zone without loss of aircraft or crew. While under light contact the ranger company was extracted on the 9th of October. While providing suppressive fire on yet another

insertion the gun platoon was credited with two additional confirmed kills.

B. Statistics

Tasks	722
Sorties	1505
Troops	1857
Cargo (tons)	53
Hours	1062

8. Project Delta (Samurai III) 19-31 October

A. This operation was an extension of the Samurai II project and again was centered in the I Corps Area. The Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols were continued and the unit executed a multi-company sized operation. Ground units reported many blood trails and destroyed structures in the areas that the gunships had placed their fire. A "Lightning Bug" operation was conducted between 0001 and 0200 hours 21 October. Three structures were destroyed.

B. Statistical Highlights

Tasks	259
Sorties	544
Troops	1025
Cargo (tons)	8.3
Hours	326.9

9. Phu Hiep Operation with the 173rd Airborne Brigade 23-24 September

A. Six UH-1D's were sent to assist in a combat assault planned by the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The operation called for eleven combat assaults originating from five separate pickup zones terminating in two landing zones. The operational area was twenty miles west of Tuy Hoa with the main

assault five miles west of Tuy Hoa North airfield.

B. Statistical Highlights

Tasks	24
Sorties	78
Troops	340
Cargo (tons)	0
Hours	43

10. Project Omega (Dak To) 10-31 October 67

A. The first platoon provided three UH-1D's for operations at Kontum in support of Project Omega. Staging out of Kontum, the aircraft were utilized in the daily shuttle of a seventy two man reaction force to New Dak To and to stand by there daily to insert the reaction force in areas where the Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols detected enemy activity. Three assaults were made northwest of New Dak to into mountain side landing zones.

B. Statistical Highlights

Tasks	37
Sorties	164
Troops	325
Cargo	2
Hours	65

11. 5th Special Forces Group (Prairie Fire) 19 October - 9 November

A. The aircraft used in this operation were assigned a primary mission of resupply and liason, the unit in addition conducted several combat assaults. The area of operations was southwest of Kontum, where the assaults were flown into mountain landing zones. On one such assault, 281st aircraft killed one enemy. On 9 November, the aircraft were

withdrawn to Pleiku, where they flew in support of the 189th Assault Helicopter Company.

B. Statistical Highlights

Tasks	202
Sorties	936
Hours	342

12. Operation Parachute (173rd Abn Div at Phu Hiep) 5-29 November

A. On this operation, seven UH-1D's supported the 3rd Battalion, 503rd Infantry of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The operation was conducted in an area ten miles northwest of Tuy Hoa. The aircraft participated in several combat assaults, resupply and liaison missions. Two armed UH-1C's along with unit's organic artillery provided fire support on all combat assaults.

B. Statistical Highlights

Tasks	361
Sorties	1956
Hours	622

13. Operation Rose (101st Abn Div at Phan Rang) 11-20 November

During this time, six UH-1D's helicopters and two armed "Charlie" models were flown to Phan Rang to participate in a combat assault in support of the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry, 101st Abn Div. Two companies were lifted into selected landing zones approximately 15 miles southeast of Phan Rang. Naval gunfire, tac air, artillery and gunships were used to prepare the landing zones prior to the assault. Two slicks remained at Phan Rang after the assault to resupply the ground troops.

B. Statistics

Tasks	48
Sorties	315
Hours	90

14. VIP Flight for RVN President Thieu and Vice President Ky 17 November

A. One of the highlights of the month of November was a VIP Flight carrying President Thieu and Vice President Ky, which took place on the 17th of November. The presidential party made stops at Old Dak To Airstrip, Plei Me for a Japanese-Vietnamese Friendship Ceremony, a Montagnard resettlement village 15 miles west of Pleiku, and an ARVN camp two miles west of Dak To.

15. Project Delta (Sultan I) 3-23 December

A. Operation Sultan I took place in the Plei Kleng area, about thirtyfive miles west of Pleiku. During this operation, a total of three Ranger companies, one CIDG Company and one Mobile Strike Force were airlifted into LZ's for operations. During the conduct of these activities the 281st suffered the loss of three aircraft due to enemy ground fire, one of which was recovered, and the other two being complete losses. Fortunately the crews for the most part sustained only slight injuries.

B. Statistics

Tasks	1252
Sorties	3237
Hours	1614

16. On 24 December the first elements of the 281st depart for home base, Nha Trang for a well deserved rest and a "Quiet" christmas.

CHAPTER FOUR
EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATIONS

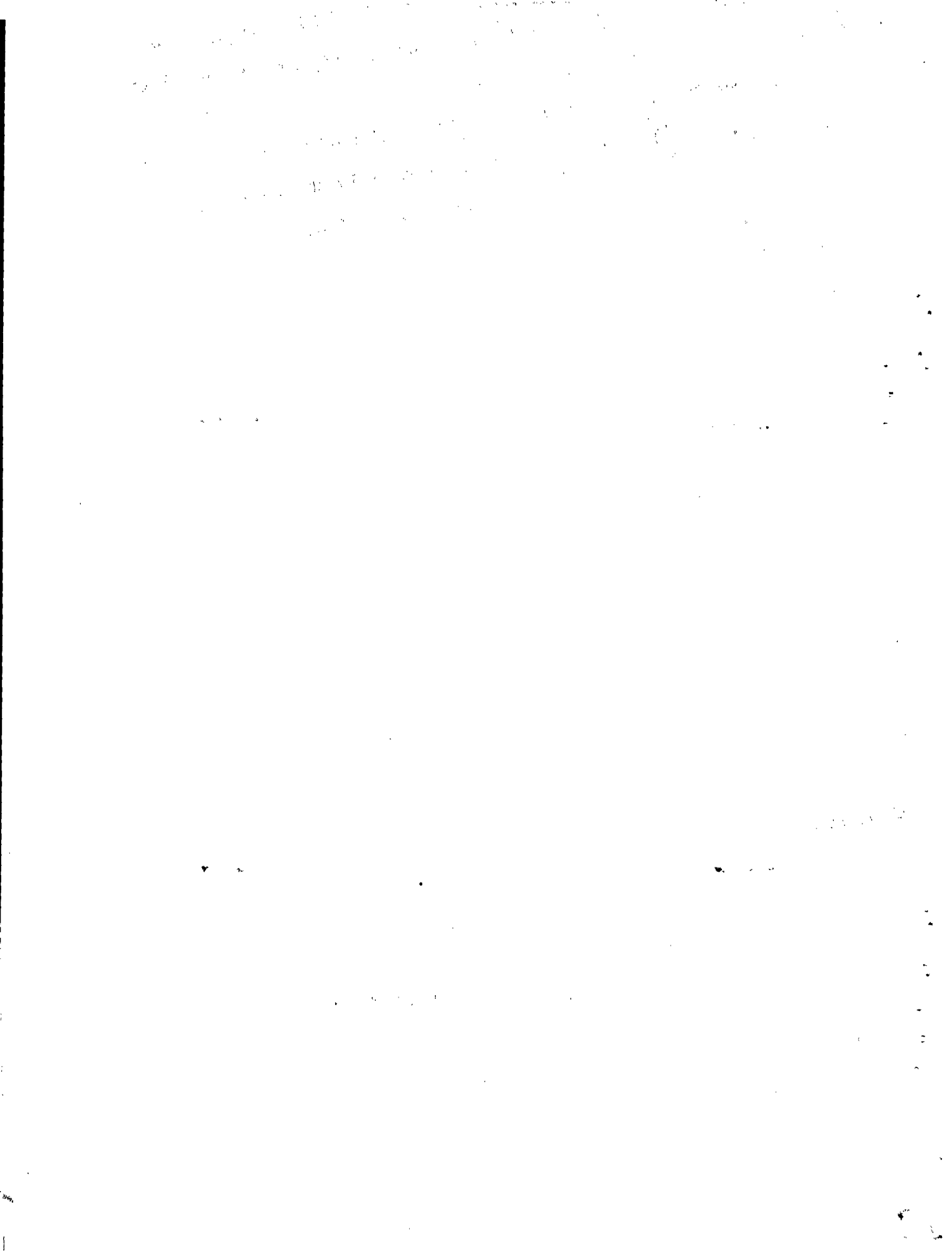
EQUIPMENT

The 281 AHC and its subordinate units the 483 TC Det and 499th Sig Det are presently operating with those pieces of equipment authorized by their respective TO&E's.

The aircraft assigned to the 281st AHC consist of the Bell UH-1D, C and H models. The lift capability being provided by the UH-1D and H models. These are also armed with two M-60 machine guns.

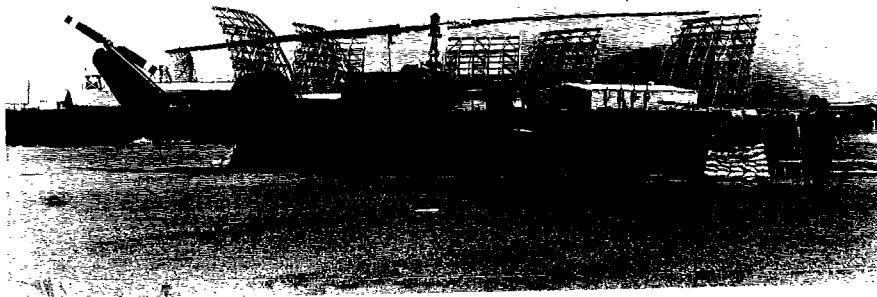


Above is one of the unit's newer H model aircraft.

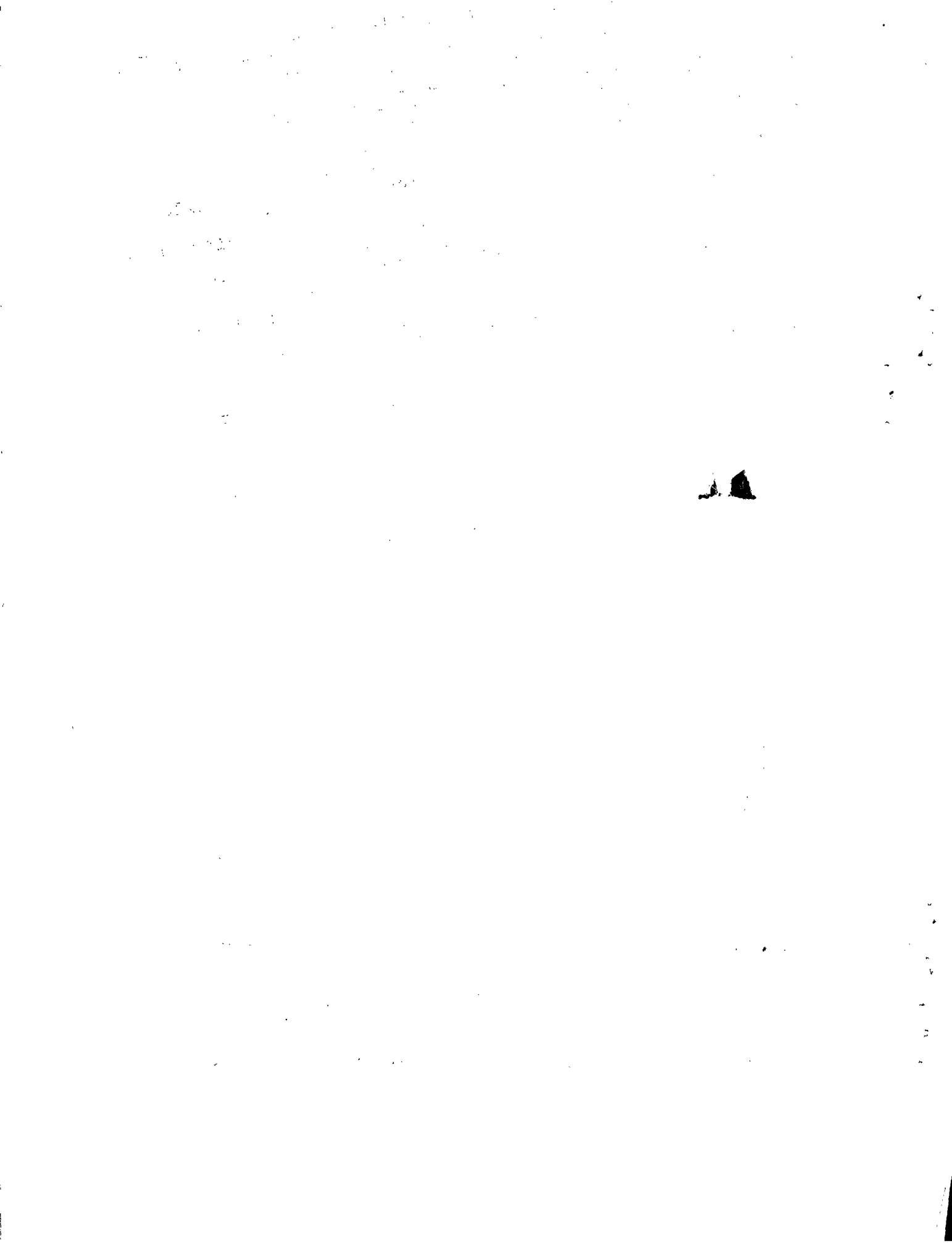


For the majority of the year the unit has been operating only with "D" models. In December we began exchanging our older "D" models for the newer and more powerful "H" models. It is expected that by early 1968 the unit will have completed the switch over to the new aircraft.

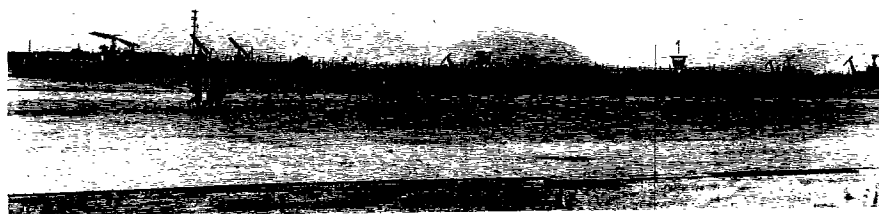
The firepower of the gun platoon is provided by eight (8) UH-1C aircraft. Within the gun platoon the following type armament is available; the M-16, 4 M-60 machine guns with two Rocket pods, (each capable of 7, 2.75 Rockets). The XM-21 (minigun & rocket combination), the M-3 (2 pods 24 rockets each) and the M-5 40 mm grenade launcher.



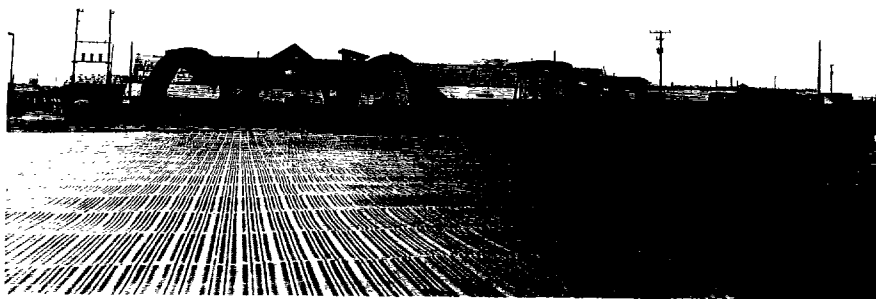
Above is one of the gunships with the XM-21 system installed.



All armed aircraft are presently parked on the south side of the 05 runway at Nha Trang Air Base, Vietnam. Below is a view of the revetment area. The area is as protective as possible from mortar rounds, however it is adjacent to a road which creates the necessity for security continuously.



Our aircraft maintenance area consists of several maintenance tents and "homemade" structures. The 281st and 483rd maintenance areas are co-located. To the right are the vans belonging to the special shops.

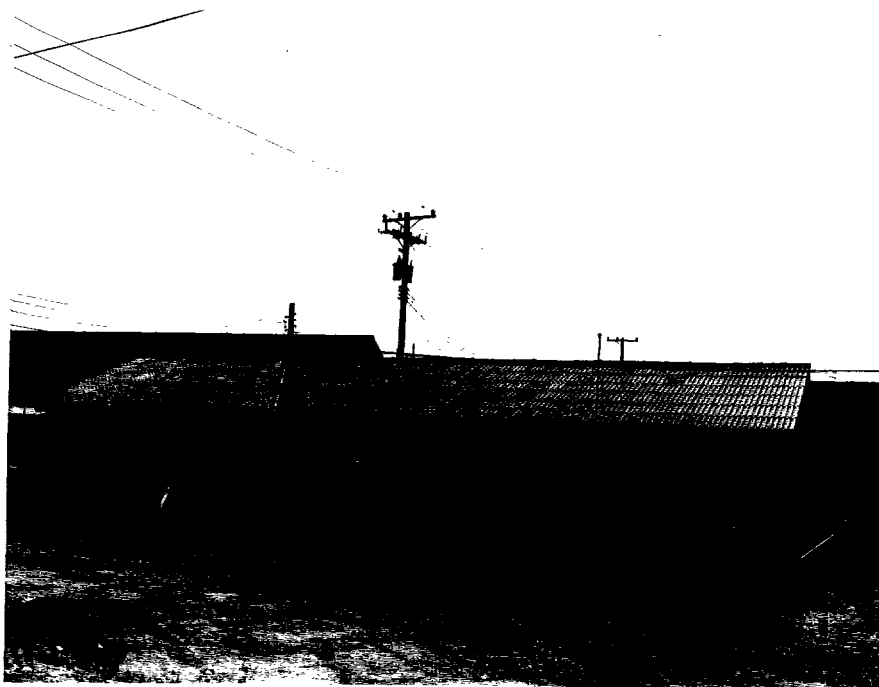


Our motor pool has some 43 vehicles ranging from a 1/4 ton jeep to a 5 ton wrecker. It is adjacent to the airfield. It is presently being redesigned, so in actuality our motor pool is a temporary one. Observe road running through motor pool. It is used by several local units.



Also at the present time there is no maintenance shelter available, thus it is difficult to accomplish maintenance in bad weather.

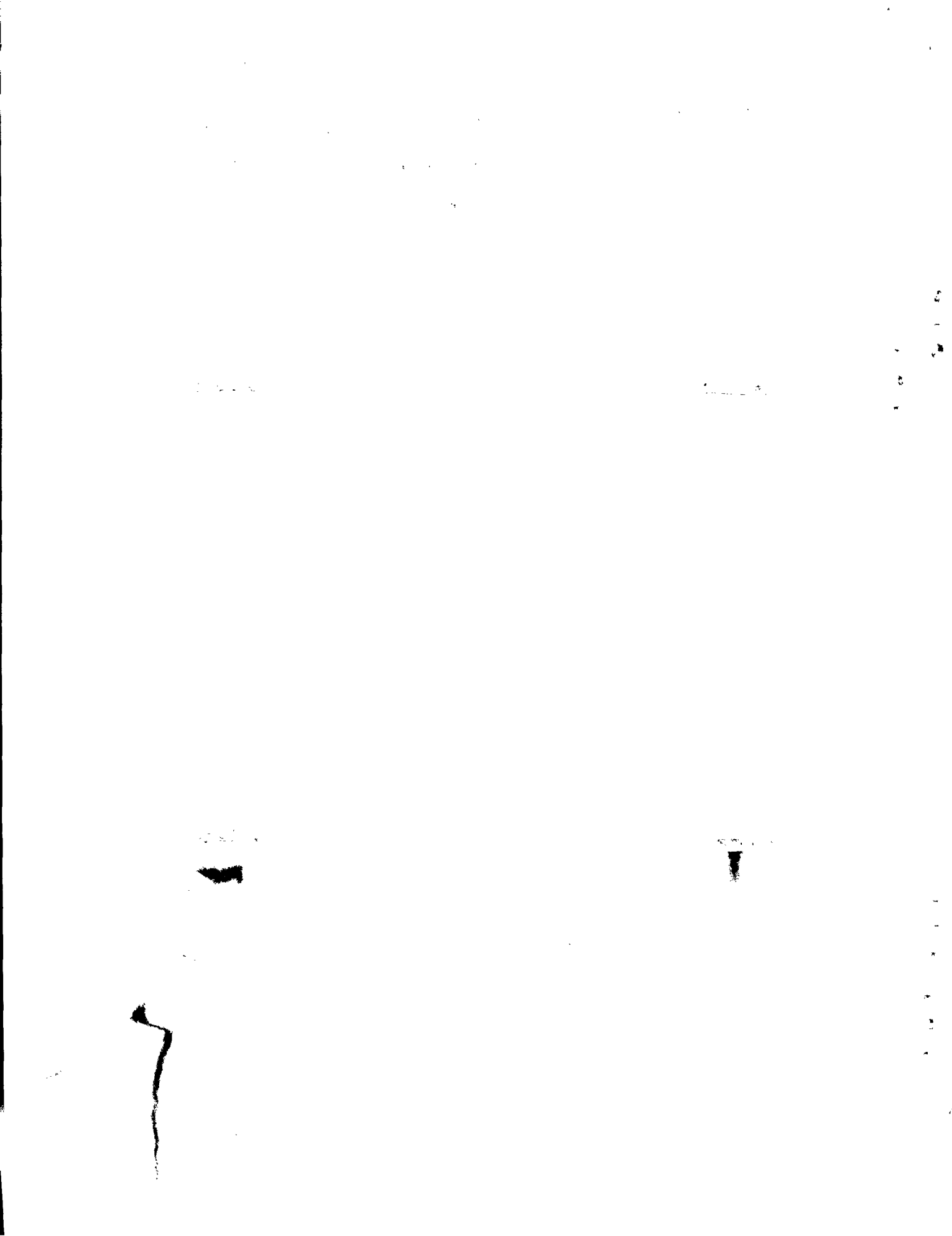
Below is our newly finished operations building. With offices for the operations and intelligence sections, one for each of the platoon leaders and a conference room, it is one of the "show places" in the local area.



The offices for the 483rd TC Det and 281st service platoon are located adjacent to the operations building (left).

The 499th Signal Detachment is located in the maintenance area. Its vans are set into the left side of the building. The commo section of the 281st Service platoon is also located here.





Pictured below is the Company area, the building in front at the right is the Orderly room. The billeting area consists of the 9, two story buildings.

The officers are billeting in the Special Forces Billeting area.



For the most part the set up at Nha Trang is very comfortable.

CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTIONS

HONOR ROLE

"For those who gave their lives in the defense of Freedom"

PFC Micheal P. Gallagher	21 May 1967
WO1 Daryl L. Miller	6 August 1967
PFC Michael A. Goffredo	6 August 1967
PFC John C Soper	6 August 1967
SP4 Leslie H. Paschall	21 December 1967

MISSING IN ACTION

WO1 Walter F. Wrobleski	21 May 1967
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"MAJOR AWARDS PRESENTED TO MEMBERS OF THE 281ST AHC"

"Distinguished Flying Cross"

WO1 Roger Barnes	1Lt James M McMillian
Major Barclay Boyd*	WO1 Gary Omdahl
WO1 Edward Duke	1Lt Robert J Reynolds
WO1 Phillip English	Opt Ronald A Schwachenwald
WO1 Sterling J Essenmacher	WO1 Joseph Shipes
Opt William D Harris	WO1 Leroy H Schwuchow
WO1 John D Hood	Major Robert J Moberg
Major Donald D Jutz	WO1 Walter F Wrobleski (MIA)
*Awarded Twice	SP5 Arthur Gallagher (POST)

"SOLDIERS MEDAL"

WO1 Walter M. Hart

"BRONZE STAR WITH "V"

WO1 Gary Omdahl	SP5 William G Cameron
SGT Jimmy R Ward	SP4 Grady E Shows
Major Robert J Moberg	

"AIR MEDAL with "V"

Major Robert J Moberg	WO1 Robert D Klarner
WO1 Francis G Boisseau	WO1 Virgil L Sampcel
Major Barclay Boyd **	SP4 Billy Baker
WO1 Edward Duke	PFC Vernon Mondrinos*
WO1 Phillip English	SP4 James Parden
WO1 Brent H Gourley	1Lt James M McMillan

"AIR MEDAL with "V" (Cont)

SP4 Robert M Prove	PFC David A VanAistine
SP4 Ronald Renfro	SSG David L Bittle
SP4 Grady E Shows	SP4 John McGoldrick
WO1 Leroy H Schwuchow	SP4 Steven P Miers
OW2 John T Stevens	SP5 Gary L Stagman
PFC Robert Trammel	SP4 Robert D Standley*
* Awarded Twice	** Awarded Three Times

"ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL with "V"

Opt James A Warren	SP4 Dannel L Kennedy
WO1 Allan R Larson	Major Eldon L Smith Jr
WO1 William J Brennan	SP4 Joseph Corney

"BRONZE STAR with "S"

CW2 Richard E Lubie	Major William D Griffin
1Lt Roberts J Reynolds	Opt Thomas P Buckley
Major Reino O Oksa	SFC Marcus E Hazel
Opt James A Warren	Opt Gene T Stockwell
SP4 Carmen T Caporusso	SGT William C Carter
1st Ssg J B Cooley	Major Eldon L Smith Jr
WO1 Howard E Hines	Major Alvin Cartwright
1Lt Lloyd R Gentry	WO1 Francis G Boisseau
Opt James Good	SFC Robert H Thompson
Major Lynn F Coleman	SGT Joseph P Davis

"ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL"

SP6 Lawrence Kitts	SP5 Jerald D Helwig
SP5 Raymond C Atwell	SSG Albert F Mitchell, Jr
SP6 Harvey L Hiner	WO1 Arthur A Kopp
WO1 Ronald O Gaddis	Cpt Raymond Ronchetti
SP4 Daniel J Fountanetta	WO1 Roger A Barnes
WO1 Terry L Richmond	SP4 Richard Cooper
SP5 Thomas P Dvan	WO1 Robert Klarner
SP4 Benjamin D Wilkerson	WO1 John J Stephens
SP4 Joseph T Hoboin	1Lt James McMillian
SP4 Russell C Erbe	SGT Lino S Varela
SP4 Billy J Baker	Cpt William D Harris
SGT Roger L Cox	WO1 Virgle L Samples