

1969



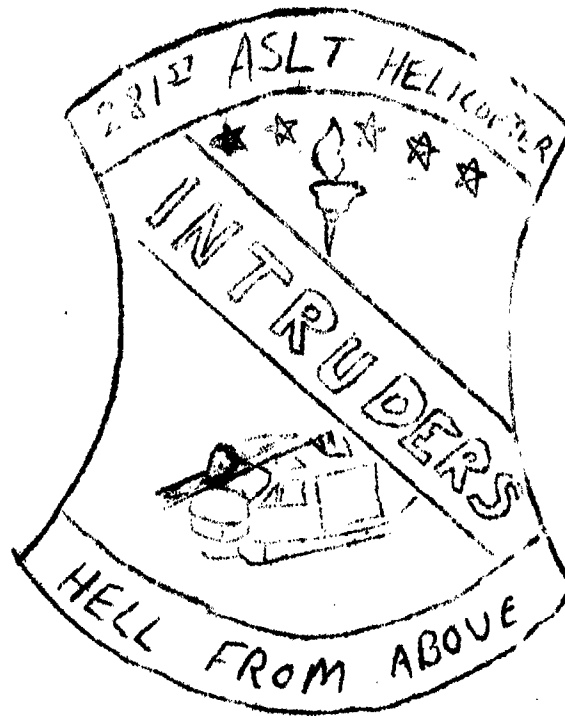
ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT
HISTORY OF THE
281ST AVIATION COMPANY (ASSAULT HELICOPTER)
10TH AVIATION BATTALION (COMBAT)
1ST AVIATION BRIGADE

1 January 1969 - 31 December 1969

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APO 96240

HEARLDRIX



THE MEANING OF THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE 281ST CREST ARE AS FOLLOWS:

THE TORCH AND STARS REPRESENT OUR IDEAS, FREEDOM AND LIBERTY; THE HELICOPTER IS THE INSTRUMENT WE USE TO PROTECT AND FOSTER THESE GOALS; "HELL FROM ABOVE" IS WHAT OUR ADVERSARIES CAN EXPECT WHEN THEY THREATEN OUR ALLIES OR OURSELVES; AND "INTRUDERS" IS OUR OPERATIONAL CALL SIGN.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
281ST AVIATION COMPANY (ASSAULT HELICOPTER)
10TH AVIATION BATTALION (ASLT)
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96240

UNIT HISTORY FOR THE YEAR 1969

FORWARD

The 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) was first placed on the rolls of the Army on 6 October 1965. It was activated on 7 October 1965 at Fort Benning, Georgia by para 1, General Order 313, Third Army.

The 433rd Transportation Detachment was also constituted on 6 October 1965, and activated at Fort Benning, Georgia on 7 October 1965 by the same General Order.

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. 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 activated at Fort Benning, Georgia on 7 October 1965.

These Detachments were attached to the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) for all purposes by para 2, General Order 36, 10th Aviation Group, dated 7 October 1965. The 281st Aviation Company was attached to the 44th Aviation Battalion primarily for training, POR qualifications, and preparation for over-seas movement. At that time it was designated the 281st Aviation Company (AML) (-), composed of a headquarters platoon and service platoon. This is less than the three flight platoons normally a part of a full TOE Aviation Company.

JANUARY 1969

Starting January 1 and ending 28 January 1969 the 281st Aviation Company's main mission was supporting MACV Recondo School. Basically the mission was the Insertion of LRRP Teams, and Providing Logistical support. During the operation on 21 January 1969 four (4) aircraft received heavy fire. One of the Recondo personnel was wounded and died later that evening. During the operations the 231st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) had four (4) aircraft damaged. During this month the 231st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) committed four (4) aircraft to the 268th Combat Aviation Battalion at Phu Hiep. Gunship training was conducted daily and consisted of both armament systems and tactics utilizing free fire zones, OJT continued in the use of rope ladders repelling and Maguire rigs.

FEBRUARY 1969

On 17 February 1969 Major Ellie E. Lynn assumed command of the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) from Major Andrew J. Miller Jr.. Two other significant changes took place in the chain of command as Captain Robert E. Timmerman left the company and Captain Michael S. Goodman assumed the Executive Officer position from 1 February 1969 thru 28 February 1969. The 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) supported B-55 (SF), 5th Special Forces Group, IDC, MACV Recondo and 4th Infantry Division.. On 18 February 1969 a UH-1H was lost due to enemy action southwest of Phu Hiep. The crewchief was KIA and the other three crewmembers were seriously injured in the crash. The AC and gunner were medivaced to the States and the pilot returned to duty. On 24 February 1969 the Nha Trang, airfield sustained two mortar attacks. Five 82MM rounds were received in the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) area. One UH-1C received moderate damage in the attack, no personnel were injured. In both attacks a light fire team from Wolf Pack was utilized.

MARCH 1969

The month of March 1969 was a month of little significance. The company spent the entire month supporting Recondo and 5th Special Forces Group, and Coastal Support Missions. An aggressive training program was initiated, both within and without the unit. Much valuable experience was gained by newly assigned aviators and crews while participating in Recondo type training in support of 5th Special Forces Group. Also instructions were given by the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) personnel to these units in the employment of electric rescue hoists and other specialized equipment. The company experienced an aircraft accident on 29 March 1969. A UH-1H was lost south of Phu Hiep due to an engine failure. The pilot was admitted to the 91st Evacuation Hospital with a laceration on the chin and a back injury.

APRIL 1969

During the month of April 1969 the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) supported project Delta on operation Cass Park at a forward operational base in I Corps. Operating from the Forward Operational Base were the Second Flight Platoon and Armed Platoon. The First Lift Platoon was left at the Base Camp to provide support to the units in the coastal Nha Trang, Area.

Approximately 125 men were sent forward to the Forward Operational Base. Even though the service platoon and operational section were split and thinly manned, operating out of two locations, maintenance remained at a high level and both operations performed smoothly. The new Aviators who were assigned to the unit during the month of April were left at Base Camp for orientation flights and special flight training. These aviators were initially assigned to the flight platoon at the rear base were later assigned to appropriate flight platoons. During the month of April two aircraft were lost by this unit while working with Project Delta in I Corps, no lives were lost.

MAY 1969

During the month of May 1969 the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) continued to support "Project Delta" in operation Cass Park. The forward operational base was moved from Hue/Phu Bai to An Hoa at the 1st of the month and operation Cass Park I was initiated. During the relocation of the FOB the 2nd Lift Platoon was rotated with the 1st. The service platoon and operations section remained split and functioned efficiently at both the FOB and the Base area. Aviation support was also rendered to MACV, RECONDO, IDC, and WHRID during the month of May.

In May the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation Medal for action with Project Delta in support of a combined arms operations in the I corps area. Admiral Flanagan, Deputy Commander of Naval Forces in RVN, presented the award to Major Lynn, Commanding Officer of the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter). Brigadier General Burdett, Commanding General of the 1st Aviation Brigade, Colonel Mahone, Commanding Officer of the 17th Aviation Group (Combat) Colonel Aaron, Commanding officer of the 5th Special Forces Group (Abn) and Captain Henderson, Commanding Officer of the Cam Ranh Naval Air Facility, witnessed the presentation.

JUNE 1969

Support was provided by the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) in support of Project Delta on operation Cass Park. On 8 June 1969, Phase I and II of operation Cass Park. During the period between phase I and II the first flight platoon was rotated with the 2nd Flight Platoon. On 2 June 1969, the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) received another commitment of three (3) UH-1H and two (2) UH-1C's to support the 129th Aviation Company in their operations in the An Son area.

Support of the Vinh Son Orphanage was continued by the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) during this time. Approximately \$200,00 was collected for the orphanage along with 10 boxes of clothing and 4 boxes of toys from the families and men of the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter). All the fire extinguishers throughout the orphanage were checked by volunteer workers from the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter).

JULY 1969

July started with the completion of Cross Park II (Project Delta). As soon as everybody got adjusted to Nha Trang living conditions we received a commitment of 3 UH-1H and 5 UH-1C helicopters for Project Delta. The place of the Forward Operational Base is the Northern I Corps tactical area where they were backed up by the Marines. During the month the company supported IDC, MACV RECONDO School and Various other units.

On 12 July 1969 the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) was presented the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm by Major Gen Quang of the VNSF. The award was given for performance with Project Delta from June of 1966 to May 1969. Attending the ceremony were Colonel Mahone, Commanding Officer of the 17th Aviation Group (Combat), Colonel Rheault, Commanding Officer of the 5th Special Forces Group (Abn), and LTC Stanley, Commanding Officer of the 10th Aviation Battalion (Combat).

Support of the Vinh Son Orphanage continued by our company. Twenty boxes of clothing were received for the families of the men of the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) in addition \$181.00 was collected from the men for the orphanage.

AUGUST 1969

August 1969 seemed to follow the footsteps of July limited missions with hardly any enemy contact. The war at this point seems to be on the decline as far as enemy action is concerned.

On 2 August 1969 Major George W. Little assumed command of the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) from Major Ellie E. Lynn.

The 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) again supported MACV Recondo School training the LRRP's in utilization of the helicopter. We also supported the other various units in and around the Nha Trang area.

Operation "3-69" which started at the end of July 1969, ended phase I on the 28th of August 1969. The 1st Flight Platoon and the 3rd Flight Platoon returned to home base for a stand-down while the 2nd Flight Platoon prepared to replace the 1st Flight Platoon in the operating base. Extensive training was given to the pilots who were not yet qualified as aircraft commanders in an effort to qualify these pilots to fill the vacancies of the departing aircraft Commanders. Great strides were made in this area as well as in other areas of aviation training in the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter), such as Co-pilot training and instructor pilot training.

SEPTEMBER 1969

During the month of September 1969 the 281st Avn Co (Aslt Hel) supported "Project Delta" on Operation "3-69" Phase II, which began on 8 September 1969. The 2ND Flight Platoon and the 3RD Flight Platoon operated out of the FOB each day. Due to the closeness and security of Quang Tri, the pilots and crew moved to that location. The crews got up at 0430 hours each day to arrive at Hai Loc before first light and stayed until dark. Things got extremely hot a few times and on one mission, three aircraft were released for one time flight to maintenance because of extensive damage done to the aircraft from enemy fire.

The first flight platoon took over support in Nha Trang by supporting units: 5th SFG (Abn), IDC, MACV Recondo School, IFFV, DSA II Corps, ROK Training, 5th ALC, 5/22 Artillery, 4th Infantry Division, and 23 ARVN Division. The flying time picked up considerably this month with a great deal of the flying being done in the Ban Me Thout area. At this time the company was in dire need of pilots

OCTOBER 1969

In October 1969 the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) "INTRUDERS" supported Project Delta on operation "3-69" Phase II (Trojan Horse II) and Phase III (Trojan Horse III). Phase II terminated on 2 October 1969 and Phase III started on 11 October 1969. Both operations were conducted from the same operational base. The Wolf Pack and Bandit Flights returned to home base upon termination of Phase II. During the 14 day break the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) provided Aviation support to local units. The First Platoon and the Third Flight Platoon departed for the FOB on 14 October 1969 to start Phase III. The Bandits remained at this location to support other units of the II Corp area.

The MACV Recondo School began its training on 16 October 1969, with the "BANDITS" as the aviation support. During the four day field operation there were five emergency extractions two of which were accomplished at night. All were accomplished with the type of professionalism demanded by the 10th Aviation Battalion (Combat) and synonymous of the officers and men of this unit.

NOVEMBER 1969

During the first half of November the "INTRUDERS" continued to provide support "PROJECT DELTA" on operation "3-69" Phase III (TROJAN HORSE). On 7 November 1969, Major General Allen M. Burdett Jr., 1st Aviation Brigade Commanding General visited the FOB'S and was briefed on the Aviation support role in conjunction with Delta Operations. Trojan Horse III terminated field operations on 11 November 1969.

The 2nd Flight Platoon, "BANDITS" remained in the Nha Trang area to provide support for units in central II Corps. On the evening of 4 November 1969 a UH-1H was reported overdue while in a flight from BAM ME THOIT to Nha Trang and presumed down in the vicinity of the DUC MY PASS. An aerial search was initiated at first light on 5 November 1969. As many as six aircraft per day from our company and other units (92nd, 48th and 183 Aviation Company) were employed in the search which lasted until 9 November 1969, with no trace of either the aircraft or the crew. The crew was as follows: AC-WO1 Alford; P- WO1 Cavender; CE-SP4 Ware; G-SP4 Klimo.

With all elements of the company rejoined in the Nha Trang area on 16 November 1969, all aviation capabilities were directed in support of the BU PRANG-DUC LAP area defense, despite marginal weather conditions and enemy ground fire. An armed "NO PACK" UH-1C was shot down by enemy fire near DUC LAP Camp. All crew members were rescued unharmed, despite spending 30 minutes on the ground engaged in a fight with enemy forces who surrounded the aircraft.

DECEMBER 1969

The first two weeks of December were dedicated to the resupply and gunship support of BU PRANG AND DUC LAP . Preparation was then made for operation "YELLOW RIBBON" with PROJECT DELTA, with operations commencing on 2 December 1969, out of the Forward Operations Base. All elements rejoined in NHA TRANG in time for new years eve.

The "BANDITS" continued to support the Units in the Nha Trang area and continued to their job at DUC LAP and BU-PRANG; For the remaining portion of the month, support was provided for three Major Combat Assaults involving ROK FORCES in the NHA TRANG and MINH HOA areas.

The latter part of the month was devoted to less war oriented pursuits. everyone looked forward to XMAS packages from Home, and a few days relaxation. We had a very important mission on the 24th. Our assignment was to transport an oddly dressed individual from a classified location to an orphanage in NHA TRANG. There he distributed gifts and good cheer to a group of less fortunate children. The operation was an unequalled success and aided in closing out an eventful and successful year for the 281st Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter).