

ENCLOSURE 2

UNIT HISTORY 10 JAN 1970

UNIT HISTORY

1 January to 31 December 1970

158th AVIATION BATTALION (ASLT HEL)(AMEL)

101st AIRBORNE DIVISION (AMBL)

APO San Francisco 96383

by

CPT Frank R. Van Note

10 January 1970

GENERAL

Throughout the year, the 158th Aviation Battalion (Aslt Hel)(Amb1) provided its elements in General Support to the 101st Airborne Division (Amb1), Direct Support to 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Amb1), and both Direct and General Support to the 1st and 2d ARVN Regiments. The Battalion also provided on a daily basis, 5 UH-1H and 2 AH-1G aircraft in Direct Support of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized). In addition, the Battalion supplied on a daily basis, several aircraft to the Special Forces in support of CCN missions.

HHC, 158th Avn Bn (Aslt Hel)(Ambl)

The mission of Headquarters is to furnish command, control, staff planning and supervision for the 158th Aviation Battalion (Aslt Hel)(Ambl). HHC provides the personnel, and their support for the Headquarters of the 158th Aviation Battalion (Aslt Hel)(Ambl), and assists the subordinate companies in the accomplishment of their mission.

Companies A, B, and C

The mission of Companies A, B, and C is to provide tactical mobility for combat troops, supplies, and equipment during the conduct of airmobile operations.

Company D

The mission of Company D is to provide security for airmobile forces within the battalion, and to participate in offensive, defensive, and delaying action as part of a highly mobile combined armed team.

Each company has adopted call signs as follows:

Company A, Ghost rider

Company B, Lancer

Company C, Phoenix

Company D, Redskin

Each company has a Transportation Detachment. The 159th TC for A Company, 168th TC for B Company, 273d TC for C Company, and the 169th TC for D Company. The mission of the Transportation Detachments is to perform direct support aircraft maintenance, avionics, and supply support.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

1970

158th Aviation Battalion

11 Aug 69 - 24 Jan 70	LTC Joseph H. Kastner
25 Jan 70 - 30 Jun 70	LTC George N. Stenehjem
1 Jul 70 - Present	LTC Robert J. Gerard

Headquarters Company

1 Jan 70 - 22 Jan 70	CPT Joseph J. Pauero Jr.
23 Jan 70 - 30 Mar 70	CPT Lawrence I. Karpman
31 Mar 70 - 9 May 70	CPT William G. Hinkel Jr.
10 May 70 - 19 Sep 70	1LT Dennis M. Demuth
15 Sep 70 - Present	CPT William A. Vivolo Jr.

Company A

8 Sep 69 - 14 Apr 70	MAJ Turner D. Griffin Jr.
15 Apr 70 - 23 Aug 70	MAJ Edwin L. Richter
29 Aug 70 - 30 Dec 70	MAJ William L. Longarzo
31 Dec 70 - Present	MAJ Raydean H. Patterson

Company B

1 Jan 70 - 2 Feb 70	CPT Jimmy E. Griffis
3 Feb 70 - 16 Sep 70	MAJ Grant S. Green
17 Sep 70 - 17 Dec 70	MAJ Paul A. Cole
17 Dec 70 - Present	CPT James W. Becker

Company C

1 Dec 69 - 1 Jun 70	MAJ Gerald Lord
2 Jun 70 - 29 Aug 70	MAJ William L. Longarzo
25 Aug 70 - Present	CPT Robert J. Baker

Company D

18 Aug 69 - 6 Mar 70	MAJ Thomas J. Glenn
7 Mar 70 - 27 Nov 70	CPT Seth F. Hudgins Jr.
28 Mar 70 - Present	MAJ James W. Lloyd

UNIT HISTORY

1970

The new year came to the 158th Aviation Battalion (Aslt Hel)(Ambl) under cover of low ceilings, poor visibility and heavy rains. The poor weather conditions that are characteristic of the northeast monsoon during the winter months hampered the flying of the 158th, however the Battalion was able to run a few large multi-ship moves in January. One, on 16 January was an artillery raid for the 3d Brigade. The artillery was emplaced on FSB Shepard and extracted the same afternoon. The mission was a complete success without incident. On 29 January the 158th inserted 900 ARVN troops into LZ's in the northeast corner of Viet Nam without incident.

The scarcity of large moves did not keep the 158th from seeing any action. The first three months of 1970 saw the 158th sustain 19 UH-1H aircraft damaged, 8 AH-1G aircraft damaged, and 1 AH-1G destroyed all by hostile fire. The majority of the aircraft received damage while in support of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry (Mech) in the extreme northern portions of I Corps Military Region. The primary missions for the 158th were P Company Ranger insertions, ARVN Ranger insertions and 1/5th Mech contact missions. The 158th was credited with 25 VC/NVA confirmed kills by helicopter, four structures destroyed and all insertion missions completed.

The good weather that came with spring was conducive to more large multi-ship combat assaults which were conducted using maximum firepower, chemical and deceptive measures available. A quadrant system of air traffic control and coordination of suppressive firepower was devised and used on all assaults. Each assault included air strikes on selected targets in the vicinity of the LZ's, tube artillery firing preparation fires on and around the LZ's, and aerial rocket artillery as final preparation fire. Continuous suppressive fires were used during the landing phases along with employment of CS gas and smoke on selected areas along the approach and departure routes to and from the LZ's. Also, Air Cavalry scouts were employed to seek out enemy anti-aircraft and indirect fire weapons before and after the initial assaults on the LZ's. Combat assaults consisting of twenty lift ships were used to insert troops into such places as FSB Ripcord and O'Reilly, names that are destined to be remembered for a long time by the men of the 158th.

On 1 May one C&C, 30 UH-1H aircraft, six gunships, three smoke UH-1H aircraft, three CS UH-1H aircraft and two sections of ARA were employed to combat assault 480 troops of the 54th ARVN Regiment into Tun Tavern (YD 059328). This move was highly successful and a similar package was used again on the 6th of May when landing on LZ Miller (XD 973360). This move was blemished by a fatal accident when 2 smoke ships collided in flight while laying down a smoke screen north of the LZ.

Throughout May 20 and 30 lift ship combat assaults were conducted almost daily. The most extensive support was provided to the 1st ARVN Division. Over 7,000 ARVN troops were lifted into combat and over 30 battalion sized ARVN combat assaults were initiated. During May and into June the 158th supported the

actions in the Fun Tavern and Henderson area where the 54th ARVN Regiment made heavy contact with the 66th NVA Regiment. As a result of the fighting in this area the 66th NVA Regiment was completely destroyed with only moderate losses to the ARVN elements. This accomplishment was made possible by the tremendous support of the 158th Aviation Battalion, which conducted numerous assaults, extractions and re-supply missions for the 54th ARVN Regiment while under intense mortar, anti-aircraft and 75mm recoilless rifle fire.

As the summer wore on the increased enemy action came to a climax on 23 July. On this day the 158th extracted, while under almost continuous mortar, small arms and automatic weapons fire, all friendly personnel from FSB Ripcord and the immediate surrounding area. This complex and flexible operation was conducted utilizing 1 C&C, 63 lift aircraft, multiple ARA sections, 8 AH-1G gunships and both white and pink teams. The NVA delivered intensive fire onto the LZ's early in the morning and kept it up all day despite the tremendous volume of suppressive fire that was thrown back at them. The slicks continued to expose themselves and pick up troops until the extraction was completed by early afternoon. During the extraction a grateful passenger gave a pilot a written message which reads: "Words can't express it, you guys got balls - Thanks A1/11."

Although Ripcord was the highlight of the summer, things by no means slowed down after that. In addition to numerous multi-ship moves the 158th provided daily logistical and gunship support to the beleaguered FSB O'Reilly until its extraction 7 October. The "Redskins" of D Company repeatedly provided support to units in contact, for example, on 12 and 13 August the gunships provided close support to ARVN mechanized units operating in the Hai Vang area. During the two days of heavy fighting, the attack helicopters were credited with 85 NVA killed by helicopter.

The approach of the northeast monsoon season and the anticipation of poor flying weather caused fewer multiple ship moves to be planned. However, before the weather immobilized air transportation one more large move was planned on the 25th of September. The assault was planned according to the information offered by a Chieu Hoi and made directly onto the location identified as the Headquarters of the 27th NVA Regiment. The information was correct and heavy enemy fire was encountered as the aircraft touched down in the landing zone. In spite of the intense hostile fire, the assault was continued. Of the 20 slicks and 14 gunships that were utilized, 13 aircraft were hit, 4 of which had to be force landed in heavily defended enemy terrain. Despite the hostile fire and battle damage, aviation personnel casualties were miraculously limited to 3 WIA.

Once the northeast monsoon arrived the large multi-ship moves had to be replaced by one and two ship moves. The extremely bad weather conditions made even these small missions very hazardous. However, the outstanding reputation that the 158th earned during the year was held high despite the weather. The successful completion of many hazardous single ship missions demonstrated that true professionalism was a basic characteristic of each individual aviator of the 158th Aviation Battalion.

ENCLOSURE 3

UNIT HISTORY 20 JULY 1970

UNIT HISTORY

1 JANUARY TO 30 DECEMBER 1969

158th AVIATION BATTALION (AV)
101st AIRBORNE DIVISION (AMBL)
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96383

BY

CPT ROBERT ROCKWOOD

20 JULY 1970

228-08.105

FOREWORD

The esprit of a unit can often be traced directly to an awareness of its members of that particular unit's history. Pride in one's organization, and a motivation to enhance a unit's prestige are two of the most important reasons for a study of past events. With these basic tenets in mind, this Unit History of the 158th Aviation Battalion (AH) is presented.

In a larger sense, however, it is for the future members of this command and the 101st Airborne Division's overall record that we have prepared this history.

PREFACE

This is a history of the 158th Aviation Battalion (AH), 101st Airborne Division (AMBL), for the period 1 January 1969 through 30 December 1969. This history includes activities of the units assigned to the 158th Aviation Battalion (AH). From lessons learned in the past it will focus the reader's attention on the ever reaching "goals" set before us.

The appreciation of the author is extended to the battalion staff officers and to personnel of the subordinate units for their assistance in providing the information for this history.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

1969

158th Aviation Battalion

1 October 1968 through 10 August 1969
11 August 1969 through 24 January 1970

LTC Peter C. Withers
LTC Joseph H. Kastner

Headquarters Company

22 November 1968 through 19 May 1969
20 May 1969 through 29 July 1969
30 July 1969 through 22 January 1970

MAJ John E. Watts
CPT Robert J. McCorry
CPT Joseph J. Pavero

Company A

18 July 1968 through 25 April 1969
25 April 1969 through 26 July 1969
26 July 1969 through 8 September 1969
8 September 1969 through 15 April 1970

MAJ Maurice F. Dougherty
MAJ Eldon L. Smith Jr.
MAJ John T. Colson
MAJ Turner D. Griffin Jr.

Company B

18 July 1968 through 18 July 1969
19 July 1969 through 30 December 1969

MAJ Tommy W. Thornton
MAJ John E. Watts

Company C

25 July 1968 through 23 July 1969
24 July 1969 through 30 November 1969
1 December 1969 through 1 June 1970

MAJ John J. Jenkins
MAJ Lawrence Karjala
MAJ Gerald Lord

Company D

25 July 1968 through 17 August 1969
18 August 1969 through 6 March 1970

MAJ Calvin T. Gibson
MAJ Thomas J. Glenn

DECORATIONS AWARDED IN 1969

Silver Star	25
Distinguished Flying Cross	87
Soldiers Medal	1
Bronze Star	390
Army Commendation Medal	1006
Air Medal	860
Purple Heart	83

IN COUNTRY FORMING

The following is the order in which the 153th Aviation Battalion assets arrived in RVN.

<u>DATE OF ARRIVAL</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
28 Jan 69	HQ	Advanced Party Personnel w/ Mission Essential Equipment
1 Feb 69	Co A	Personnel w/ Mission Essential Equipment
2 Feb 69	Co C	Personnel w/ Mission Essential Equipment
5 Feb 69	Co C	Organic Equipment
6 Feb 69	Co D	Organic Equipment
7 Feb 69	Co A	Organic Equipment
13 Feb 69	Co C	Organic UH-1H Aircraft
15 Feb 69	Co A	Organic UH-1H Aircraft
21 Feb 69	Co B	Personnel w/ Mission Essential Equipment
23 Feb 69	LHC	Personnel w/ Mission Essential Equipment
23 Feb 69	Co D	Personnel w/ Mission Essential Equipment
4 Mar 69	Co B	Organic UH-1H Aircraft
7 Mar 69	Co D	Organic Equipment
11 Mar 69	Co B/MEC	Organic Equipment
1 Apr 69	Battalion	Declared Fully Operational
7 Apr 69	Co D	Received First Cobra (AH-1G Aircraft)

TRAINING

1. In country training was conducted from 8 Feb 69 through 31 Mar 69. From 15 Mar 69 to 27 Mar 69, A and C Companies, having completed company level training, flew log missions of an operational nature.
2. The in country flight training, progressing from individual aviator proficiency to section, platoon, company and battalion tactics, included ground school at the company level in aviation related subjects.
3.
 - a. OH-6A Transition
 - b. AH-1G Transition
 - c. AH-1G Armament (Enl)
 - d. AH-1G Armament (Off)
 - e. T-53, L-13 Engines
 - f. UH-1H Airframes
 - g. Tech Supply
 - h. AH-1G Airframe
 - i. AH-1G Mechanic
 - j. Jungle Survival Course
4. The 158th Battalion expedited to concentrate on training efforts in flight proficiency, safety and maintenance areas through small scale informal training and special discussions of safety. A systematized program of rotation of inexperienced pilots with qualified personnel and closely supervised OJT for new crew chiefs and mechanics was utilized.
5. Rapelling training for lift company pilots and maintenance recovery teams by Special Forces instructors from Camp Eagle BDN.
6. 29 July 1969, OH-6A transition started for Commander and Staff.

CHAPTER I

MAJOR ORGANIZATIONS OF THE 158th AVIATION BATTALION (AH)

HHC, 158th Avn Bn (AH)

The mission of Headquarters is to furnish command, control, staff planning and supervision for the 158th Aviation Battalion (AH). HHC provides the personnel, and their support for the Headquarters of the 158th Aviation Battalion (AH), and assists the subordinate companies in the accomplishment of their mission.

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The mission of Company D is to provide security for airmobile forces within the battalion, and to participate in offensive, defensive, and delaying action as part of a highly mobile combined armed team.

Each company has adopted call signs as follows:

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Each company has a Transportation Detachment. The 159th TC for A Company, 168th TC for B Company, 273d for C Company, and the 169th TC for D Company. The mission of the Transportation Detachments is to perform direct support aircraft maintenance, avionics, and supply support.

CHAPTER II

Unit History

158th Aviation Battalion (AH)

101st Airborne Division (AMBL)

As of 1 Jan 69 the 158th Aviation Battalion continued preparation for deployment to the Republic of South Vietnam and the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile). The final preparation was the Organizational Readiness Inspection conducted in January. The ORI covered all battalion and individual company files, records, and equipment. The last phase of the ORI being an in ranks inspection prior to departure.

On 25 January 1969 the Battalion Advance Party departed Colorado Springs, to arrive at Da Nang 28 January 1969. The remainder of the battalion closed by the end of February. All aircraft were in country by the middle of March, and after concentrated in-country training, the battalion was declared fully operational on 1 April 1969. On 1 March 1969 the battalion, for the first time all assembled at one place at the same time, was welcomed into the 101st Airborne Division by the Commanding General, Major General Zais (and 3 122mm rockets, compliments of "Charlie".)

From 2 March to 8 May 1969, the battalion supported elements and performed accelerated training and maintenance programs to bring the unit up to standards, to insure personnel were honed to a keen edge in order to perform their combat support role.

On 8 May 1969, the 158th participated in its first major combat assault, Operation "Apache Snow" inserting elements of the 101st Airborne Division into the A Shau Valley. The mission was a successful one as the battalion sustained only minor damage to one aircraft throughout the entire lift.

Throughout the spring and summer months the 158th continued its mission of support in operation "Montgomery Rendezvous," "Kentucky Jumper," "Richland Square," and "Horton Falls."

As the summer months approached their end, the 158th also received a new commanding officer. On 11 August 1969 LTC Peter C. Withers relinquished his command to LTC Joseph H. Kastner, thus beginning a new chapter in the battalion's proud history. Under the leadership of "Vampire," the 158th continued to distinguish itself as an outstanding aviation unit, through the monsoon season and into another hot and dry summer.

On 23 September 1969, the 158th Aviation Battalion underwent its first Annual General Inspection since arriving in Vietnam. The battalion again distinguished itself, receiving an overall score of 98%.

During the period from 15 August to 28 September 1969, the 158th Aviation Battalion (AH) provided direct support for the 2d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (AMBL), Operation Clayborne Chute, and the 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (AMBL) Operation Louisiana Lee. These two Brigade Operations conclude the extent of direct support the 158th Aviation Battalion (AH) provided for the 101st Airborne Division Operation Richland Square. Of the three assault helicopter companies organic to the 158th Aviation Battalion (AH), one company was assigned a general support role and the remaining two were assigned direct roles, one each per Brigade. The 158th Aviation Battalion (AH) attack helicopter company provided general support for both Operation Clayborne Chute and Operation Louisiana Lee, as well as general and non-divisional support.

During the period from 29 September 1969 to 31 October 1969, the 158th Aviation Battalion (AH) provided direct support for the 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division Operation Republic Square. Of the three assault helicopter companies organic to the 158th Aviation Battalion (AH), Company B provided direct support for 3d Brigade. Companies A and C assumed the general support missions.

The operational period from 29 September 1969 to 21 October 1969 was successful despite the fact that inclement weather reduced the effectiveness of aviation support. Last minute changes caused by weather hindered the timely accomplishment of the larger combat assaults as well as the daily logistical support. Improvements to operational planning have been made through incorporating specific procedures and adequate time margins for weather delays. These measures have greatly enhanced the flexibility necessary to accomplish the assigned tasks.

The period from 1 November 1969 through 6 December 1969 the 158th Aviation Battalion (AH) supported the 101st Airborne Division (AMBL) Operation Republic Square.

Summary:

In a relatively brief period of time, the 158th Aviation Battalion (AH) has achieved a reputation for providing outstanding support and its courage under fire and periods of inclement weather is attested to by its operations. The names of some of our activities conjure sharp remembrances for all of us, as well as the whole of the 101st Airborne Division: "Apache Snow," The A Chau, Airborne, Dong Ap Bio (Hamburger Hill); they and the rest reflect that the battalion has accomplished its own unique rendezvous with destiny.

CHAPTER III

FIRST OPERATION

May 5th, 1969, the Battalion G and S-3 began plans for Operation Apache Snow. Four(+) battalions were lifted in one day. The 158th and 101st Battalions were committed.

158th Aviation Battalion (AH) Lift:

2/1 ARVN 8 May (9 May)

3/187 10 May

4/1 ARVN

1st Co, 2/1 ARVN

3/1 ARVN 11 May

IZ on RVN - Laos border

Staging area - Highway 547 between FSB Blaze and Cannon.

The operation, being the first major undertaking of the 158th Aviation Battalion (AH) since arrival in RVN, demonstrated the battalion's capability to perform in the manner expected. In the three day period concerned, the battalion lifted 1774 troops into combat in 295 sorties without difficulty and almost without incident. High points of the operation included the professional display of flight and communications discipline; the execution of emergency procedures by the crews of two combat-damaged aircraft; the flexibility shown when "A" Company was unexpectedly committed to a third lift of the 3/187, requiring a complete change in the lift sequence for the remaining assaults scheduled; and perhaps above all, the outstanding results of the teamwork of the aerial combined arms team involved: air cavalry, aerial rocket artillery, and the assault helicopter elements. The mutual support and great cooperation displayed by all three were of significant import, ably demonstrating the results which can habitually be achieved in such operations.

ENCLOSURE 4

D-R-A-F-T UNIT HISTORY (UNKNOWN DATE, SUSPECT SPRING 1971)

UNIT HISTORY

The 158th Aviation Battalion (Aslt Hel) was activated on 25 Jul 68 by General Order Number 244 under the command of Major Maurice Dougherty. It was organized from two existing aviation companies, the 246th at Ft Carson and the 247th at Ft Riley, plus additional men and equipment needed to bring the battalion up to its strength. Headquarters, Alpha, Bravo and Delta companies remained at Ft Carson while Charlie Company was formed at Ft Riley. Unit training began on 9 Sep 68 and continued through Army FTX's and ATX's in the harsh winter of Ft Carson. On 9 Jan 69 the final operational readiness inspection was passed and the unit began packing for South Vietnam. In all, over 4500 aircraft hours were logged during this training.

The advance party departed Ft Carson on 25 January and arrived Da Nang, South Vietnam on 28 Jan 69. Throughout February the remainder of the battalion arrived in bits and pieces and started in-country training under the guidance of combat veterans of the 101st Airborne Division. On 1 Apr 69, the unit was declared fully operational and began flying missions of a logistical nature for the division.

On 8 May 69, the 158th Aviation Battalion participated in its first major combat assault, Operation Up the Snow, into the A Shau Valley. Four battalions of Allied troops were lifted into the area in a completely successful operation. Minor damage to one ship was sustained.

Throughout the remainder of the spring and summer the battalion distinguished itself in such operations as Clayborne Chute, Louisiana Lee, Richland Square, Republic Square, and famous to Rio (Wanburger Hill). Along with supporting the

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101st Airborne Division, this unit flew for elements of the 1st ARVN Division, and the 1st Bde of the 5th Mechanized Division during some extremely hard fighting.

Winter 1969 and the harsh North~~est~~ Monsoon made flying extremely difficult and hazardous. The battalion assumed direct support of the 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, and 1st Bde, 5th Mech Div along with general support for the remainder of the units in Northern I Corps.

The coming of the New Year saw action pick up in the extreme Northern area of South Vietnam. Units of the 158th Aviation Battalion in support of the 1st Bde, 5th Mech Div were credited with 25 NVA/VC kills in this area during January 1970.

Spring came, the weather cleared and the battalion once again began making large combat assaults into such newsworthy areas as Ripcord, O'Reilly, Tun Tavern and Henderson. Most extensive support was provided to the 1st ARVN Division in hard and bloody fighting during their effort to wrest control of mountainous Western I Corps from the enemy. Perhaps the highlight of the summer came on 23 Jul 70 when the 158th and other aviation elements of the 101st Airborne Division extracted American troops from the Ripcord vicinity under heavy enemy pressure from multiple enemy regiments. A total of 63 lift ships were used in this highly successful operation.

The battalion continued to provide daily logistical support for beleaguered FB's O'Reilly and Barnett in the late summer. The gunships of Delta Company had one of their finest hours on 12 and 13 August when they supported ARVN Mechanized units in contact near Hai Vang and received credit for 85 kills. On 25 Sep the 158th conducted its last large combat assault before the advent of the bitter fall-winter monsoon. Going into the base camp area of the 27th NVA Regiment northwest of Vandergrift with Vietnamese Marines thirteen ships were damaged by enemy fire, four shot down in the landing zone area and two forced to go down at nearby Allied airfields. Miraculously, casualties to the air crews totaled only 3 wounded.

As the ~~Bad~~ weather of the monsoon reached I Corps^{and} the battalion was forced to limit the scope of its activity. As the Allied forces concentrated on maintaining a screen between the NVA/VC forces in the mountains and the people of South Vietnam in the densely populated lowlands the 158th saw a majority of its aircraft committed to logistical and reconnaissance type missions along with periodic multi-s' in combat assaults to keep the Allied screen intact. Heavy activity quieted down throughout November and December only to pick up again in January in preparation for Tet and the good weather of the approaching Spring 1971.