

REMARKS

4TH AVIATION BATTALION

GENTLEMEN, IN VIETNAM WE HAVE WITNESSED THE TRIUMPH OF A RELATIVELY NEW CONCEPT OF MODERN WARFARE. I AM REFERRING TO THE USE OF HELICOPTERS AS AN INTEGRATED PART OF THE INFANTRY DIVISION'S COMBAT EFFORT. THE KOREAN WAR PROVIDED THE FIRST TEST OF AIR MOBILITY, AND THE VIETNAM WAR BROUGHT THE IDEA TO ITS FULL FRUITION WHEN IT MODIFIED THE 1ST CAVALRY'S METHODS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A LINE INFANTRY DIVISION. IN THIS DIVISION IT IS YOU MEN WHO HAVE PROVIDED THE BULK OF OUR HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL USE OF THAT IDEA IN THE CONDUCT OF EVERY OPERATION SINCE WE FIRST ARRIVED HERE IN 1966.

AS EVERYONE IN THE DIVISION IS WELL AWARE, THE HELICOPTERS OF THE BATTALION HAVE BEEN IN THE AIR ALL DAY, EVERY DAY. AN EFFORT SUCH AS THIS HAS REQUIRED A GREAT DEAL OF TEAMWORK ON THE PART OF EVERY MAN IN THE BATTALION--BOTH ON THE GROUND IN MAINTENANCE AND IN THE AIR ON MISSIONS. IT HAS ALSO REQUIRED STUBBORN TENACITY IN THE LONG, UPHILL GRIND OF THE PAST FOUR AND ONE-HALF YEARS.

THE GUNSHIPS, LOHS AND SLICKS OF THE 4TH AVIATION BATTALION HAVE FLOWN THE AIR CORRIDORS OF THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS IN A NEW KIND OF WAR. THE SKY FIGHTERS OF THE 4TH OFTEN RISKED THEIR LIVES TO BRING FOOD, MAIL, REPLACEMENTS, AMMUNITION AND NEWS TO THE SOLDIERS IN THE FIELD; BUT THIS WAS ONLY ONE ASPECT OF AIR SUPPORT. THROUGHOUT EVERY TACTICAL OPERATION THE MANUEVER ELEMENTS OF THE DIVISION COULD COUNT HEAVILY ON YOUR SUPPORT. IT WAS THE DETERMINING FACTOR IN MORE THAN ONE BATTLE FOUGHT FROM THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS TO THE JUNGLES OF CAMBODIA. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THE HELICOPTERS OF THE 4TH AVIATION BATTALION INITIATED AND FINISHED THE CONTACT. YOUR

ACHIEVEMENTS ARE REFLECTED IN YOUR UNIT AWARDS--THE MERITORIOUS UNIT CITATION AND THE VIETNAMESE CROSS OF GALLANTRY WITH PALM, EARNED FOR YOUR ACTIONS.

EACH ONE OF YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT THE LONG HOURS, THE HEAT, THE MISERY. YOU KNOW, TOO, THE EXHILARATION OF THE BATTLEFIELD AND THE FEELING THAT COMES WHEN THE ENEMY HAS SUFFERED A CRUSHING DEFEAT BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT. NOW I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT THE ENTIRE DIVISION APPRECIATES WHAT YOU HAVE DONE AND WE THANK YOU.

BECAUSE YOU AND OTHERS HAVE DONE SUCH AN OUTSTANDING JOB, THE 4TH DIVISION IS LEAVING THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS. MANY OF YOU WILL BE REASSIGNED TO OTHER UNITS IN-COUNTRY. TO YOU I SAY, WEAR THE PATCH PROUDLY ON YOUR RIGHT SHOULDER. SERVE YOUR NEXT UNIT AS WELL AS YOU HAVE SERVED US. THE REMAINDER OF YOU WILL BE RETURNING TO THE UNITED STATES. I CONGRATULATE YOU ON THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF YOUR TOUR, AND I WISH YOU ALL THE BEST IN THE FUTURE. TO ALL OF YOU, I WISH GOOD LUCK AND GODSPEED.

HISTORY
4TH AVIATION BATTALION

THE 4TH AVIATION BATTALION TRACES ITS ORIGINS TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE 4TH AVIATION COMPANY ON 1 APRIL 1957. ON 1 OCTOBER 1963 THE UNIT WAS REDESIGNATED THE 4TH AVIATION BATTALION, AND CONSISTED OF TWO COMPANIES-- HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS AND BRAVO, WITH ALFA TO BE FORMED AT A LATER DATE.

FOR THE NEXT 10 MONTHS THE BATTALION CONDUCTED EXTENSIVE UNIT TRAINING THAT CULMINATED IN EXERCISE DESERT STRIKE. DURING DECEMBER OF 1965, LARGE PORTIONS OF THE NORTHWESTERN UNITED STATES WERE DECLARED FLOOD DISASTER AREAS. TAKING PART IN THE RELIEF ACTIVITIES, THE 4TH AVIATION BATTALION PROVIDED AN AVIATION HEADQUARTERS AT EUREKA, CALIFORNIA THAT CONTROLLED AND DIRECTED ALL AVIATION RELIEF ACTIVITIES OF THE ARMY, AIR FORCE AND MARINES.

DUE TO IMPENDING DEPLOYMENT OF THE BATTALION TO THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, AN INTENSIFIED TRAINING PROGRAM WAS CONDUCTED DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 1966. A COMPANY WAS ACTIVATED IN SEPTEMBER, BUT DID NOT ACCOMPANY THE MAIN BODY OF THE BATTALION WHICH DEPLOYED TO CAM RANH BAY DURING THE SAME MONTH.

ON 1 OCTOBER THE UNIT FLEW TO THE AIR BASE AT PLEIKU. FROM THERE IT MOVED TO THE DRAGON MOUNTAIN BASE CAMP WHERE WORK WAS BEGUN BUILDING FACILITIES FOR PERSONNEL AND AIRCRAFT. TWO WEEKS LATER THE BATTALION BEGAN SUPPORTING THE DIVISION IN OPERATION PAUL REVERE IV. COMPANY B ARRIVED IN JANUARY 1967. DURING THE REMAINDER OF 1967 THE BATTALION PARTICIPATED IN OPERATIONS SAM HOUSTON, FRANCIS MARION AND MACARTHUR. EARLY 1968 FOUND THE BATTALION HEAVILY COMMITTED DURING THE TET OFFENSIVE,

THE BATTLE FOR KONTUM, AND THE TET COUNTER-OFFENSIVE. FOR ITS ACTIONS DURING THIS PERIOD THE 4TH AVIATION BATTALION WAS AWARDED THE MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION. OPERATION HINES FOLLOWED WITH THE BATTALION IN SUPPORT FROM DAK PEK TO BAN ME THUOT. IN MARCH OF 1970 THE BATTALION RELOCATED FROM CAMP ENARI TO CAMP RADCLIFF; HOWEVER, IN MAY THE AVIATORS RETURNED TO THE WESTERN CENTRAL HIGHLANDS TO SUPPORT DIVISION OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA.

AS THE UNIT NOW PREPARES TO RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES, THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 4TH AVIATION BATTALION CAN DEPART VIETNAM WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THEY HAVE ADDED ANOTHER STIRRING CHAPTER TO THE PROUD AND CONTINUING HISTORY OF ARMY AVIATION.