

1968

ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT
HISTORY OF THE
243rd ASSAULT SUPPORT HELICOPTER COMPANY
10th COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION
1st AVIATION BRIGADE

VOLUME II

1 JANUARY 1968 - 31 DECEMBER 1968

PREPARED BY
WO-1 HARRY A. TOLLE
UNIT HISTORICAL OFFICER

APPROVED BY

EDGARTON T. CROUTER
MAJ. INF.
COMMANDING

DONG BA THIN, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

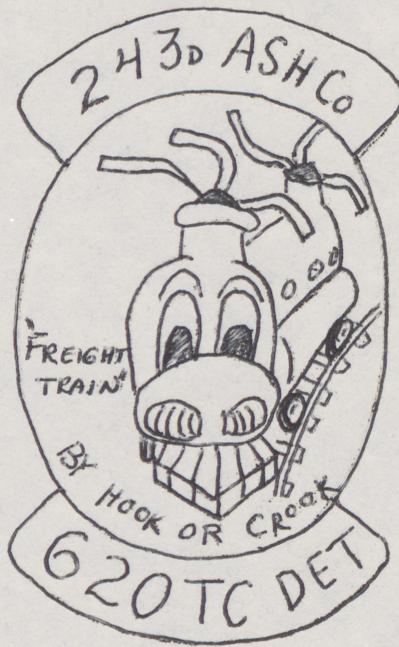
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	1
Chapter I Heraldry.....	2
a. Description and meaning of unit patch....	2
b. History and Honors.....	3
Chapter II Command and Control.....	4
a. Unit Commanders.....	4
b. Area of Operations.....	4
c. Map of area of operations.....	5
Chapter III Unit Operations.....	6
Chapter IV Equipment and Installations.....	9
Chapter V Reflections.....	10
Appendix I Vital Statistics.....	11

FOREWORD

The year 1968 was only the second in the history of the 243rd Assault Support Helicopter Company, a year that saw every Officer and Enlisted personnel doing his best to make a good record for the company. Awards for flying safety gave proof of the abilities of the crew members and maintenance personnel. This same ability has given rise to an excellent reputation among our supported units for getting the job done. Awards for Motor Pool and Mess Hall facilities showed the widespread desire of the rest of the company to aid in the accomplishing of our mission. It was not to be a year unmarred by the loss of friends, however, to this day a ship and its' entire crew remain missing in action; a sad reminder that the land we fly over is as hostile as it is beautiful.

Chapter I Heraldry



a. Description and Meaning of the Unit Patch

The 243rd Assault Support Helicopter Company adopted the name "Freight Train" after their arrival in country. The name is descriptive of our combat mission and the words, "By Hook Or Crook", located below the Freight Train on the patch emphasize our ability to provide a "Visible means of support" for the ~~Viet Cong~~ ~~of~~ Vietnam. The "Freight Trains" carry supplies into the field for our supported units just as the trains around the world carry cargo of every size and shape to the most remote corners of the globe. If a load cannot be hauled via the conventional means of our hook, then we find an unconventional way to haul it. "By Hook or Crook" we complete our mission.

b. History and Honors

The 243rd Assault Support Helicopter Company was designated as such on the 30th of September 1966 and allotted to the Regular Army. The company was officially activated on the 1st of December 1966 at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. This was in essence the begining of the 243rd ASH Co. Our lineage, however, is traced back to the begining of World War II, at which time we were the 815th Quartermaster Company (Truck).

Chapter II Command and Control

a. Unit Commanders (Dec 67-Dec 68)

Major Billy A. Brown had assumed command of the 243rd ASH Co. on 12 June 1967. He continued to serve until the 8th of April 1968, at which time, Major Bobby R. Latham took command. Major Latham served as the company commander for approximately five months. The company was turned over to the present commander, Major Edgerton T. Crouter, on the 20th of September 1968.

b. Area of Operations

(1) The 243rd Assault Support Helicopter Company continued to operate in the II Corps area. The majority of our missions took us to the coastal city of Phan Thiet for the movement of Artillery and resupply. Freight Train aircraft flew daily missions over the mountains into the central highlands area, supporting both ARVN and American forces. From Ban Me Thout to Bao Loc and as far West as the border of Vietnam would allow, Freight Train aircraft moved artillery bases, resupplied them and carried ground forces on combat assaults.

(2) Most of our missions keep us South of Ban Me Thout. We have on several occasions, however, flown North to Phu Hiep to conduct joint operations with our sister units, the 180th and the 196th ASH Companies.

AREA OF OPERATIONS

o KONTUM

o PLEIKU

o QUI NHON

o TUY HOA

o BAN ME THOUT

II CORPS AREA

o GIA NHIA

o DALAT

NHA TRANG

DONG BA THIN
CAM RAHN

o BAO LOC

o PHAN RANG

o PHAN THIET

Chapter III Unit Operations

a. The 243rd ASH Co. completed its' support of operation Klamath Falls on 7 January 1968 and reverted to a general support mission in the II Corps area. Two aircraft were assigned in direct support of the 3/506th at Phan Thiet. The third phase of the infusion was started and work continued on the ramp and perimeter.

b. General support throughout our operational area was continued during the month of February. Two aircraft were assigned daily to the 3/506th and three more were assigned to the White Horse ROK Infantry Division (WHRID). A night mortar attack on Phan Thiet damaged one of our aircraft so severely that it was evacuated to depot by CH-54. The other received only minor damage. Infusion of personnel and a shortage of aircraft parts caused our aircraft availability to drop. A non-availability of C-130 aircraft resulted in the 243rds participation in a Fire Base move from Pleiku to Ban Me Thout for the 4th Inf. Division. One of our aircraft was shot down near Dak to; only minor damage was done. Another aircraft was flown so extensively that it accumulated 130 hours in a space of only 20 days. This included the performing of a periodic inspection during the 20 day period. Later in the month a number of combat assaults (CA) were conducted with the WHRID. The unit also accepted the responsibility for the supervision and construction of a perimeter around the Dong Ba Thin water point.

c. During the month of March we continued our support of the 4th Inf. Division. Two aircraft were assigned to the 3/506th at Phan Thiet and three more were assigned to the WHRID. Parts shortage continued to reduce aircraft availability at the first

of the month and a further decline was expected due to the fact that several aircraft were approaching their sixth periodic inspection simultaneously.

d. Five aircraft supported the 4th Inf. Division during the month of May. Two more supported the 3/506th on Fire Base moves and occasional support was given to the WHRID. Parts shortage reduced airdraft availability to the point where controlled cannibalization became necessary.

e. Occasional support was given to the WHRID and to Capitol ROK Inf. Division during the month of June. Direct support was continued for the 4th Inf. Division by two aircraft and two more also gave support to the 3/506th. We also supported the 97th Arty group by recovering their Fire Bee Drones from the South China Sea off Hon Tre Island near Nha Trang. Only one Drone was not recovered due to a failure of the Drones' system. The later part of the month found us supporting Task Force South (TFS) in the Bao Loc and Dalat area with Fire Base moves and Combat Assaults. June was also the month with the lowest aircraft availability since our arrival in country.

f. Four aircraft were sent daily to the TFS area and one to the WHRID during July. Our general support role continued throughout our area of operations. On the 21st of July the unit completed 10,000 hours of accident free flying.

g. Our support of TFS continued into September, receiving four aircraft daily. Task Force Spoiler in the Ban Me Thout area also received daily Freight Train aid. The WHRID received only occasional support throughout the month.

h. October brought floods to the Phan Rang area and Freight Train aircraft were used to evacuate flood victims stranded on roof tops and in trees to safe areas. On one occasion a water landing was necessary to facilitate loading. We continued support of TFS with four aircraft and also supported the 3/506th with one aircraft. 60% of aircraft availability was maintained inspite of the problems of parts shortage and inexperienced personnel.

i. Nomex flight suits were issued during November and the unit continued its' support of a Vietnamese orphanage with food and clothing. Three aircraft supported TFS and one aircraft supported various units in the Phan Thiet area. Internal failure of a combining transmission necessitated a precautionary landing at Phan Rang. A second precautionary was made to the West of Dong Ba Thin. A severe vibration in the aft section was investigated without success and the aircraft was flown home without further incident. An effort was begun at this time to improve the perimeter and the billits area.

j. December was business as usual inspite of the holiday season. New bunkers were built on the perimeter and our support of the orphanage continued. Four aircraft were assigned to TFS and one airdraft to the WHRID.

k. Our year end statistics were compiled and they are as follows;

HOURS FLOWN.....	14,422
TROOPS LIFTED.....	155,138
SORTIES.....	34,002
CARGO IN TONS.....	54,821

Chapter IV Equipment and Installations

a. Improvements were begun early in the year on the perimeter and the ramp area. Adequate revetments and ramp lights were quickly supplied. Work on the perimeter remained at the close of the though the perimeter was by no means inadequate.

b. Improvements were made in the company living conditions. Enlisted mens billits were partitioned off into four man rooms and all of the billits were heavily sandbagged. An outdoor theatre was completed for the enlisted men. The Officers used their spare time to build an Officers club next to the BOQ area. This club has since been annexed to the Sands Officers' Club. Our Mess Hall was remodeled and improved during the year and well deserves the Best Mess award which it received during the year.

Chapter V Reflections

a. Individual Awards

1. DFC Major Bobby R. Latham
2. DFC Captain Felix Owens

b. KIA none

c. MIA

1. CW3 Charles E. Deitsch [REDACTED]
2. WO1 Henry C. Knight [REDACTED]
3. S/P5 Jerry G. Bridges [REDACTED]
4. S/P5 Charles H. Meldahl [REDACTED]
5. S/P4 Ronald V. Stanton [REDACTED]

d. Unit Awards

1. Citation: Outstanding Achievement in Motor Maintenance from 17th Group for the months of September and October
2. Best Mess Award fy 68 4th quarter
3. Safe Flying Award from 17th Group for six months of accident free flying
4. Safe Flying Award from 17th Group a quarterly award for accident free flying

APPENDIX I

VITAL STATISTICS

MONTH	HOURS FLOWN	TROOPS FAX	CARGO TONS	A/C REC	ACC	A/C HIT
JAN	8630	8574	2945	3	0	2
FEB	1060	15116	4091	3	0	4
MAR	1153	15875	5029	2	0	1
APR	(STATISTICS NOT AVAILABLE)					
MAY	1154	9255	5964	5	0	1
JUNE	966	10214	4069	1	0	0
JULY	(STATISTICS NOT AVAILABLE)					
AUG	1213	12587	4580	5	0	5
SEPT	1284	14076	4408	6	0	3
OCT	1218	13701	4139	5	0	4
NOV	1106	15499	3874	7	0	0
DEC	1223	14892	4798	4.	0	2
AVG	1129	13009	4390	4.4	0	2.2