

ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT  
HISTORY OF THE  
221<sup>ST</sup> RECONNAISSANCE AIRPLANE COMPANY  
13<sup>TH</sup> COMBAT AVIATION BATTALION  
164<sup>TH</sup> COMBAT AVIATION GROUP  
1<sup>ST</sup> AVIATION BRIGADE

FOR THE PERIOD

1 JANUARY 1970

TO

31 DECEMBER 1970

PREPARED BY

1LT THOMAS L. HENSON [390]

UNIT HISTORIAN

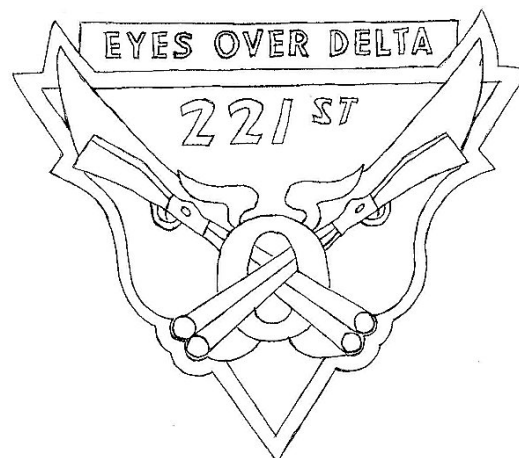


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## FOREWARD

The year 1970 was a very eventful one for the SHOTGUNS of the 221<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Airplane Company. During this Year the company was twice relocated; first from Soc Trang to Can Tho, then from Can Tho to Vinh Long. Concurrent with the Can Tho – Vinh Long movement, the SHOTGUNS received the entire Military Region IV as their area of operations when the 199<sup>th</sup> Aviation Company was deactivated. This sequence of events once again made the SHOTGUNS truly “The Eyes of the Delta”.

The accomplishments and achievements contained in this annual history supplement are a lasting tribute and a permanent record of the professional ability of the officers and men who wear the SHOTGUN patch. This history also challenges every contemporary SHOTGUN to meet and surpass the standards of excellence established by his predecessors. I urge all SHOTGUNS to pick up the gauntlet and meet that challenge.

/s/

BURNUM E. MELTON [968]  
Major, Infantry  
Commanding

## HERALDRY

### Symbolic Description of Unit Crest

The unit escutcheon is shaped to resemble the Greek letter delta, which alludes to the unit's area of operations. It is auric bordered, suggesting the daily luminescence of the sun's rays shining into a verdant base representing the rich lushness of the delta region. Raised white alae symbolize wings of flight and the aviator's mission.

Two double-barreled shotguns, which represent the company's eponym and are symbolic of strength and effectiveness at short range, cross and permeate the center of the cat's eye suggesting the unit's perpetual vigilance over the delta.



## HONORS

The Presidential Unit Citation was presented to the unit on 25 June 1969 by MG Robert R. Williams. The guidon streamer for this award is embroidered "Chuong Thien Province".

The unit received the Meritorious Unit Commendation on 23 July 1967; this guidon streamer is embroidered "Viet Nam 1966".

In addition to the above honors, the company has twice been Awarded the Viet Nam Cross of Gallantry, with Palm. The Guidon streamer for the first award is embroidered "Viet Nam 1966-67", and the second award streamer is embroidered "Viet Nam 1967-68".

## UNIT BACKGROUND – SUPPLEMENT

The 221<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Airplane Company remained at Soc Trang Army Airfield, Viet Nam, from its arrival there in 1965 until 23 March 1970, when the unit headquarters moved to Can Tho, Viet Nam. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon headquarters moved to Can Tho on 28 March. This move was precipitated by the impending transfer of Soc Trang Airfield to the control of the Vietnamese Air Force.

There was not enough living space available at Can Tho, so the EM were billeted in what was called “tent city”. In September, the EM were finally given permanent quarters. This comfort was very short lived, for in October the company moved to Vinh Long.

A weary series of truck convoys and confusion is an excellent description of this relocation. The confusion was the result of this unit moving into the area of the 199<sup>th</sup> Aviation Company which had begun to stand down of 15 September. On that date, the SHOTGUNS assumed the responsibility for coverage of the entire Military Region IV. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon headquarters moved from Can Tho to Vinh Long of 15 October, while the 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon headquarters relocated to Cao Lahn to be nearer to its geographic area of operations. The 4<sup>th</sup> platoon headquarters remained at Bac Lieu.

## HEADQUARTERS

The year began in Soc Trang with Major Ronald H. Thornquist [879] as the CO, Captain Michael E. Lawson [498] as XO, Captain Kenneth M. Attaway [023] as Operations Officer, and 1SG Donald L. Beardon [039] as First Sergeant. The first officer to depart was Major Thornquist [879].

On 17 January he was succeeded by Major Jimmy J. McGraw [562], who had been a platoon leader in the unit in 1967. The next new arrival was 1SG Clyde Cantrell [131] on 1 February. In March, both the XO and Operations Officer duties were changed over. Captain Russel J. Duffin [240] became the XO on 5 March, while Captain George P. Williams Jr. [944], became 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon Leader and Operations Officer. On 9 May Captain Duffin was “short” and Captain Joseph Cody [161] was called in from his Platoon Leader’s job in Bac Lieu and became XO. On 15 June Captain James R. Arnold [019] replaced Captain Williams in both of his positions.

Exactly one month later, Major Louis E. Sokowoski [813] arrived from the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion Headquarters to take command of the unit, and he was “SHOTGUN 6” for the remainder of the year. Another change took place in the XO slot as Captain Leonard R. Howell [419] left the 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon and became XO. In August, Captain Howard W. Willhoite [939] was assigned to the company and became the operations officer. In October, a senior captain arrived in the form of Troy L. Duplessis Jr. [245], and he became the XO until 15 November when emergency leave tore him away for the rest of the year. Captain Howell [419] was called upon to again become XO. 1SG Clyde Cantrell [131] departed in September, and he was replaced by SFC Ricardo Estrada [256], who had been serving in the maintenance platoon.

Under the maintenance heading, Captain David J. Horridge [413] left on 4 January to be replaced by Captain Jules P. Perelli-Minette [661] as Maintenance Officer. Both officers had WO1 Charles Sands [758] as their assistant maintenance officer. On 1 April the job belonged to WO Sands [758], since Captain Minette [661] was going home. Three months later it was Chuck's turn to go, and Captain William G. Bedenbender [041] picked up the ball. Captain "B" did without an assistant 5 September when WO1 Terry L. Johnson [445] arrived on the scene. He was able to stay until 19 October, when the demand for more pilots forced him out of maintenance.

However, he was there long enough to help the company change to a fleet of "G" models, by exchanging our old "D" models with the deactivating 199<sup>th</sup> Aviation Company.



## FIRST PLATOON

The first platoon (headquarters platoon) began the year with Captain Robert N. Dews [214] in command. Four days later he was going home, and Captain Russell J. Duffin [240] moved to Soc Trang and assumed command on 4 January. From 1 February to 1 March, Captain Jules P. Pernelli-Minette [661] served in the dual role of Maintenance Officer and 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon Leader. On 28 February Captain George P. Williams [944] moved from 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon and took command of the 1<sup>st</sup> platoon on 1 March, twenty-seven days before moving to Can Tho with the rest of the company. Apparently the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon Leader was under worked, for on 4 March he became the Operations Officer, too. This dual role held true for Captain James R. Arnold [019], who commanded the platoon from 15 June to 5 July, when he became full-time Operations Officer. Upon his departure, Captain Joseph Cody [161] vacated the XO job and led the platoon until he went home. Captain Arnold [019] again returned to the platoon on 31 July, and commanded it for the remainder of the year. On 15 September the 1<sup>st</sup> platoon shed its headquarters platoon function and went to work on its own by supporting four sectors and one division with aviators from the deactivating 199<sup>th</sup> Aviation Company. CW2 Claude Duvernay [247] flew from 15 September to 3 October, and WO1 David Gudelauski [352] flew from 15 September until 31 October. Kien Hoa Province was ably covered by 1LT David Connor [172] for the duration of the year. Vinh Binh had two pilots in Captain Vernon Campbell [127] and 1LT Kevin Kirby [467]. 1LT Kirby [467] completed the year flying for the Province. The 7<sup>th</sup> ARVN Division was supported by Captain William P. Wilkinson [937], who later became the unit administrative officer. Captain Cleveland Whitley [931] and WO1 Randy Hines [400] were the other pilots who flew for the Division.

## SECOND PLATOON

The second platoon had the highest personnel turn over rate of all platoons during the past year. The major reason for this high rate is the IV Corps aviators. These aviators are assigned many varied missions; convoy cover, photo missions, radio relay, and visual reconnaissance. Because of the wide assortment of missions it has been common practice to place a new pilot in the IV Corps area. By doing this, the new aviator gains a well-rounded knowledge of the aircraft, the type missions flown, and the local terrain. The success of this practice has been reflected by the company's excellent accident record during the past five years. A list of IV Corps pilots follows:

Captain Russell Duffin [240]	1 Jan – 4 Jan
Captain William Cottrell [186]	1 Jan – 31 Jan
Captain William Cottrell [186]	9 May – 10 Jul
1LT George Williams [944]	1 Jan – 28 Feb
WO1 Thomas Vogt [902]	1 Jan – 28 Feb
WO1 Ronald Zimmerman [966]	1 Jan – 30 Mar
1LT Frederick Hatton [382]	1 Feb – 1 Apr
1LT Robert Stansberry [829]	15 Apr – 9 May
CW2 Dennis Keelin [455]	28 Mar – 30 Apr
Captain Leonard Howell [419]	1 May – 5 Jul
Captain James Merritt [577]	12 Jun – 25 Aug
1LT James Flaherty [276]	27 Jun – 5 Jul
CW3 Bill Hitt [404]	5 Jul – 16 Jul
1LT Thomas Henson [390]	5 Jul – 20 Aug
WO1 David Lewis [510]	1 Aug – 30 Aug
CW2 Jerry Finch [273]	1 Sep – 31 Dec
WO1 James Richcreek [720]	10 Aug – 31 Dec
Captain George Thompson [874]	25 Aug – 15 Sep

The year began with only two sectors, but several changes occurred during the year. The original two sectors were Phong Dinh, covered by Captain Steven Black [056] from 1 Jan – 1 Apr. 1LT Fred Hatton [383] from 1 Apr – 9 May, and 15 Sep – 7 Nov, and WO1 Terry Johnson [445] from 7 Nov – 31 Dec. Chi Lang sector was covered by Captain Francis

Alexander [008] from 1 Jan – 24 Feb, CW2 Thomas Maehrlein [527] from 1 Jan – 28 Mar, WO1 William Fitzgerald [275] from 1 Jan – 9 May, Captain William Cottrell [186] from 1 Feb – 9 May, and WO1 Ronald Zimmerman [966] from 30 Mar – 9 May, when Chi Lang was no longer covered by the unit. On the same day, the following three sectors were gained by the platoon: Chuong Thien, Kien Giang, and Phu Quoc Island. On 15 September Chuong Thien was lost to the 4<sup>th</sup> platoon, but Sa Dec and Vinh Long were gained by the 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon and were covered by 1LT James Flaherty[276]. The platoon moved from Can Tho to Vinh Long on 15 October, and completed the year there.

### THIRD PLATOON

The third platoon, located at Soc Trang with the rest of the company, had Captain Robert Clayton [159] as its leader. Again there were many changes during the course of the year. The year began with four sectors but ended with six completely different ones. Ba Xuyen was covered by Captain Clayton [159] until 23 January when Captain Michael Zak [965] took it over until 31 January, then Captain Clayton [159] took it back over. On 10 April Captain James Arnold [019] relieved him and remained until the shuffle of 9 May. Chuong Thien was watched by Captain James Burgansky [105] from the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year until 9 May, when the 4<sup>th</sup> platoon gained that sector. Kien Giang, later taken by the 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon, was worked by Captain David McGowan [561] from 1 Jan – 18 Feb, and by 1LT John Hooks [409] from 1 Feb – 9 May. Phu Quoc was covered by WO1 Ralph Howard [415] from 1 Jan – 5 Jan, and by WO1 Louis Radwanick [701] from 5 Jan – 9 May. Phong Dinh was covered by 1LT Frederick Hatton [382] and WO1 Ronald Zimmerman [966] from 9 May – 15 Sep, and Vinh Long was covered by Captain Frank Bracken [076] from 9 May – 5 Jul and by 1LT James Flaherty [276] from 5 Jul to 15 Sep. These three sectors were lost to the 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon on 15 September. After Captain Arnold's [019] departure, Captain Clayton [159] was again platoon leader until 15 June when Captain Joseph Pace [645] took the reins. Captain Pace [645] was in command during the move from Can Tho to Cao Lahn on 15 September. With the Cao Lahn move, Chau Doc, Kien Phong, Kien Tuong and the 44<sup>th</sup> Special Tactical Zone were gained by the 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon. Chau Doc was flown by Captain William Holland [407] from 15 Sep – 1 Oct, and by 1LT Edward Bragg [078] from 1 Oct – 31 Dec.

Kien Tuong had a heavier representation with CW2 Larry Wheaton [928] from 15 Sep – 25 Oct, WO1 John Brown [089] from 15 Sep – 31 Dec, Captain James Merritt [577] from 15 Sept – 10 Oct, and Captain Donald Merkle [575] from 15 Oct – 31 Dec. The 44<sup>th</sup> Special Tactical Zone was watched by two Warrant Officers, WO James Shortridge [787] and WO Ronald Zimmerman [966], who worked the area from 15 September until the end of the year.

#### FOURTH PLATOON

The fourth platoon, located at Bac Lieu, with Captain Joseph Cody [161] as platoon leader, survived the entire year with only two major changes. Bx Xuyen and Chuong Thien Provinces were picked up in the shuffle of 9 May. Bac Lieu sector has WO1 James “Skip” Dent [211] until 25 July, and 1LT Donald Rogers [737] took over upon WO Dent’s [211] departure and flew the area for the remainder of the year. An Xuyen Province had several pilots during the year. 1LT Larry Marty [540] and WO1 Dennis Keelin [455] kicked the year off, with WO1 Ralph Howard [415] arriving on 28 March to replace WO Keelin [455] until his 26 June departure. Captain Donald Merkle [575] worked the area from 15 Jun – 15 Oct before departing for the north. 1LT Larry Wofford [955] was the sector pilot with Captain Merkle [575] and Captain James Merritt [577]. The two new sectors were picked up on 9 May along with Captain James Burgansky [102] as the new platoon leader. Ba Xuyan was covered by CW2 William Fitzgerald [275] and WO1 Robert Griffiths [348], while Chuong Thien was flown by Captain Darryl DuRossette [238]. And WO1 Charles Sands [758]. The 21<sup>st</sup> ARVN Division has always been supported by the platoon. The pilots were called upon to fly VR’s, adjust naval gunfire, cover convoys, and any other missions required by the Division. The year’s Division pilots were WO1 Louis Radwanick [701] from 1 Jan – 5 Jan, WO1 Ralph Howard [415] from 5 Jan – 31 Jan, 1LT Larry Wofford [955] from 1 Jan – 26 Jun, Captain Bruce Corning [181] from 1 Jan – 17 May, Captain Darryl DuRosette [238] from 6 Apr – 9 May, 1LT Donald Rogers [737] from 13 Apr – 25 Jul, WO1 Charles Sanders [754] from 14 Jul – 25 Sep, WO1 David Lewis [510] from 1 Sep – 31 Dec, CW2 Jerry Finch [273] from 5 Aug – 31 Aug. It became time for Captain Burgansky [105] to go home, and on 20 August, Captain Jerald Kowieski [476]

took command of the platoon and guided it for the remainder of the year.

## UNIT OPERATIONS

The company mission requires that its pilots operate from numerous airfields throughout Military Region IV (see map on the next page.) Because of this situation, the unit pilots are employed in a direct support role of either a sector (Province) or of the 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, or 21<sup>st</sup> ARVN Divisions. These pilots fly regularly scheduled missions for their supported units, and fly other missions on an as-required basis.

The SHOTGUNS of the 221<sup>st</sup> Reconnaissance Airplane Company participated in numerous operations during the past year. Many of these operations were sector operations, and were conducted on a small scale at the local level. Because of the nature of these operations, they are almost always without special names (i.e. LAM Son 719) did not receive any publicity or fanfare.

The aviator's principle value to his supported unit is in his intelligence gathering capacity. Although the aviator can perform a wide variety of missions ranging from adjustment of artillery and naval gunfire to forward air control and convoy escort, his principal mission is that of visual reconnaissance. The principle by which the aviator becomes an effective intelligence source is that of learning by repetition: by flying the same geographical area on a daily basis, the aviator becomes intimately familiar with his area of operations, and is therefore able to immediately detect any changes in his area, such as new trails, bunkers, or houses. Through this repetitious process, the aviator becomes the eyes of his supported unit, and contributes to the overall reconnaissance effort of the company and insures that the SHOTGUNS are truly "Eyes Over the Delta".



AREA OF OPERATIONS

MAP OF DELTA REGION

In Real Bad shape, Unable to use.

REFLECTIONS

MONTH	HOURS FLOWN	AVAIL RATE	SORTIES	KBA	STRUCT DEST	SAMPANS DEST
JAN	2122	87.0%	2238	50	06	12
FEB	1865	90.0%	1953	41	15	15
MAR	2166	90.0%	1844	78	19	19
APR	1977	91.0%	1842	56	31	30
MAY	1687	92.0%	1647	85	14	28
JUN	1629	95.0%	1637	59	17	18
JUL	1617	93.0%	1688	83	63	31
AUG	1771	93.0%	1831	59	22	27
SEP	1810	96.0%	1871	33	34	06
OCT	1667	93.5%	1771	00	00	00
NOV	1768	90.2%	1642	01	01	00
DEC	2102	94.7%	1859	00	03	02
TOTALS	22181	92.1%	21823	545	225	188

MAJOR AWARDS

Silver Star	01
Distinguished Flying Cross	11
Bronze Star	33
Air Medal "V"	01
Air Medal Basic	49
Army Commendation Medal	88
Purple Heart	01
Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry	04

REFLECTIONS

PICTURE OF SHOTGUN 6 JEEP IN FRONT OF ORDERLY ROOM IN CAN THO

PICTURE WAS IN BAD SHAPE UNABLE TO USE

REFLECTIONS

PICTURE OF BIRD DOG FIRING ROCKETS

PICTURE WAS IN BAD SHAPE, UNABLE TO USE

REFLECTIONS

PICTURE OF BIRD DOG DIVING TOWARDS RIVER