

# We Were Unique

Our tour together in 1964-65 was more unique than any of us realized at the time. Our little helicopter company, with all its affiliated support units, was truly the vanguard for the huge US buildup in Southeast Asia.

Think about it. Other than Special Forces detachments, only seven US combat units were in place in South Vietnam when we arrived in Vinh Long in September 1964. All seven were helicopter companies formed into three Battalions assigned solely to support the ARVN. Our Battalions was still new that it was still known as the "Delta Battalion" but soon to become the famous 13th Aviation Bn.

The 62d Aviation Company was quickly pulled together in Ft. Benning from assets in the 11th Air Assault Division and rapidly deployed to Vinh Long. When we arrived, there were no US divisions. There was no Long Binh support base. There was no 1st Aviation Brigade. There was no US Infantry to provide airfield security. In the Delta we found two other helicopter companies, the 114th (our sister unit at Vinh Long) and the 121st at Soc Trang. Delta Battalion in Can Tho was our link to higher echelon support, i.e. USARV and MACV. It was clear we had to be extremely self-reliant, self-sufficient, and self-supporting.

When the 62<sup>nd</sup> Avn Co left Fort Benning, we were the very first unit moved to Vietnam to begin the massive US buildup! None of us realized that, in less than a year, the 11th Air Assault Division would become the 1st Air Cavalry Division and be locked in combat in the highlands in central Vietnam. By mid-1965, five other US combat divisions were either in or on their way to Vietnam as well as thousands upon thousands of support units.

But, we were good, and we led the way! We brought with us experience gained from tough training with the 11th Air Assault Division and, upon arrival, we acquired the experience of combat tested people who transferred into our unit from other in-country units.

We took pride in our growing accomplishments. We named our company the "Outlaws." The Mavericks (and what a great name it was!) provided gun support for our slicks. "Road Runner" (beep-beep) people pulled us out of one tight situation after another with their maintenance skills. The 28th Signal Det, always behind the scenes but out front with their avionics support kept us communicating with each other. We picked up door gunners from Hawaii because our TO&E didn't provide for that critical support. Our unit had cooks, supply people, ammo specialists, medics, and countless others who contributed to our success in many unsung ways. Together, we made one great team during that first year and we had much to feel proud about during those days so long ago.

Contributed by Tom Anderson

This article Copied from Vinh Long Outlaws News, April 2002 s/TWilson