

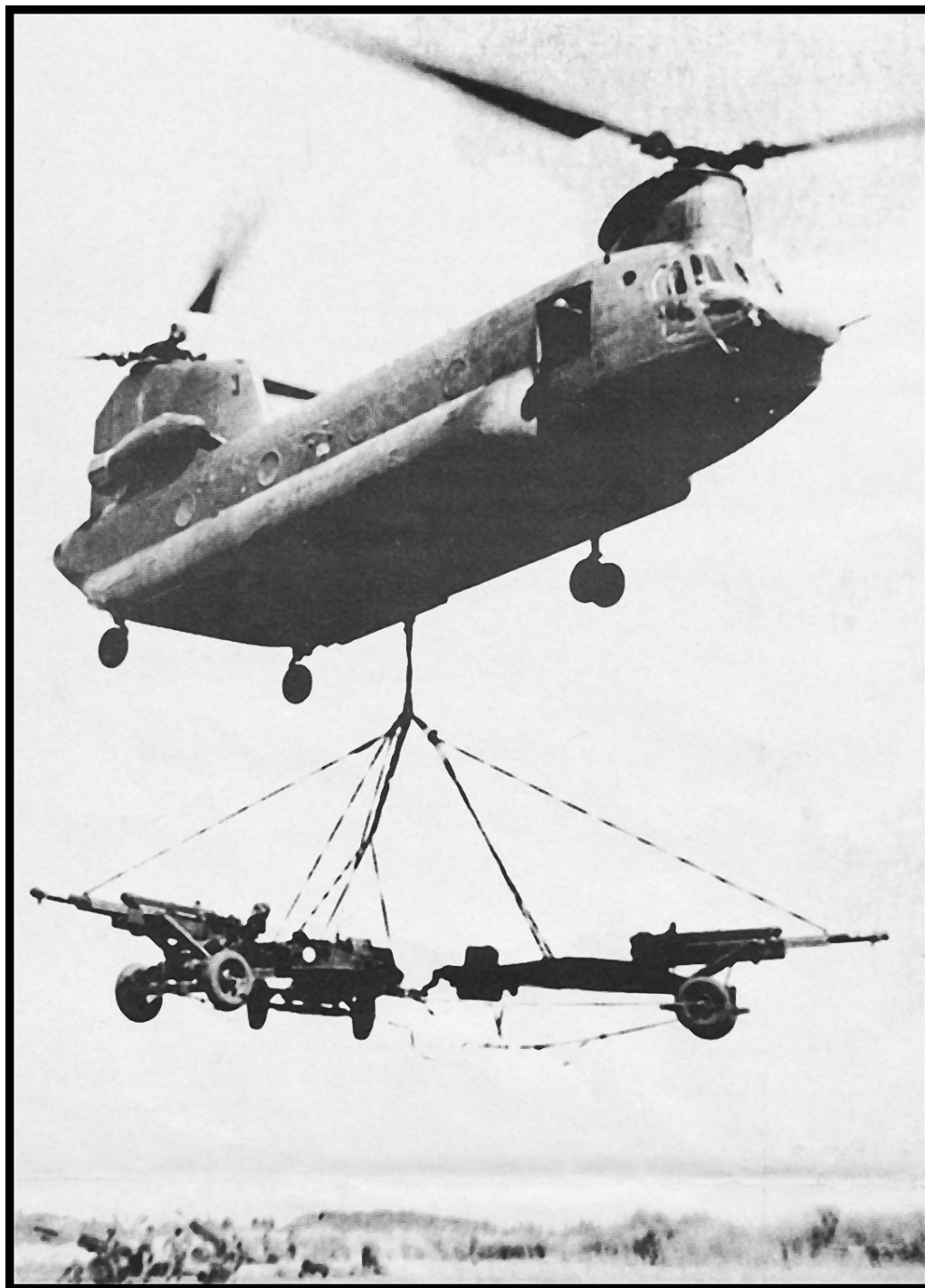


3-13th FA goes great guns in fire FTX

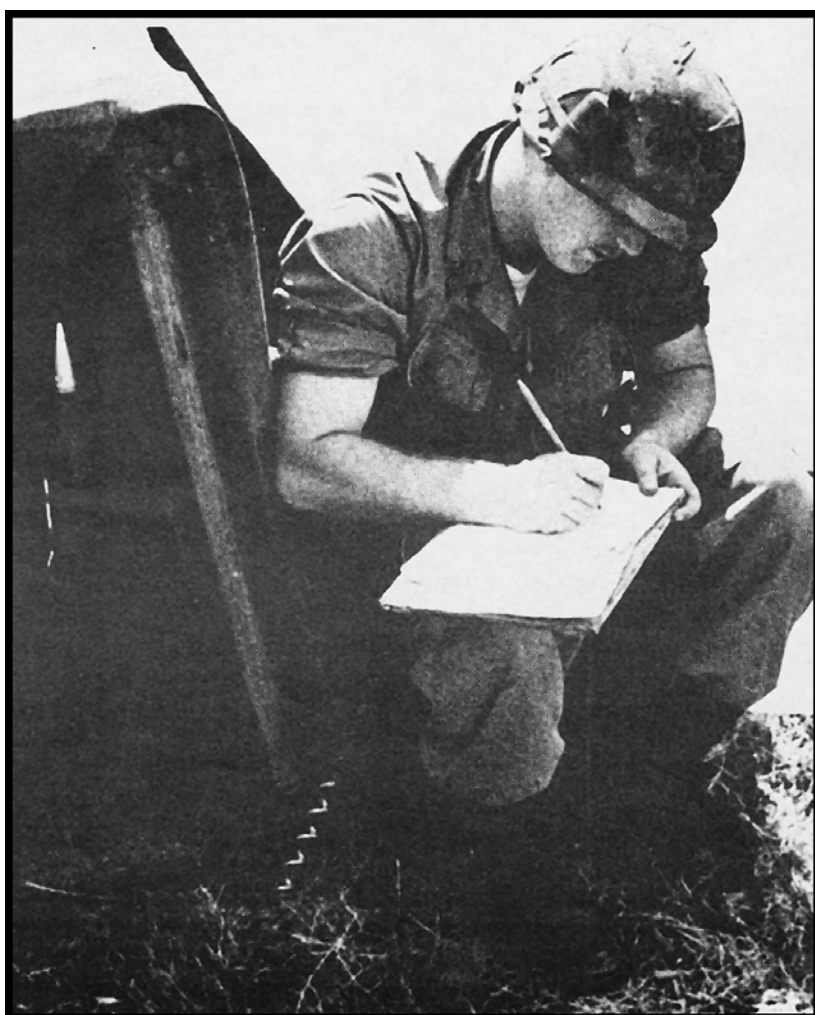
A CH-47 "Super C" Chinook from the 147th Avn. Co. lifts three M-102 105mm howitzers--a first in the Division. The trend setting event took place February 26 during a 3-13th FA airmobile FTX. A story and more photos appear on pages 8 and 9.

**TROPIC
LIGHTNING
NEWS**

Article provided by William Rung



THREE HUNG LOW. A 147th Avn. for the Division. Below, Pvt. Robert C "CH-47 "Super C" Chinook lifts Caverly of 13 Btry., 3-13th FA, calls three M-102 105mm howitzers from a report back to headquarters during the 3-13th FA airmobile during FTX ing the battalion live fire exercise in recently. The super hoist was a first Makua Valley.



Big lift

3-13th FA moves entire battalion during airmobile FTX

by Paul Hillman
TLN Staff Writer

The 3-13th FA made Division history twice during a three-day combined airmobile/live fire exercise last week.

Not only did the cannoneers airlift all of their firing batteries and headquarters, but, for the first time in the Division, simultaneously transported three M-102 105mm howitzers beneath 147th Avn. Co. CH-47 "Super C" Chinook helicopters.

The exercise began early February 25, when 400 of the battalion's cannon cockers were trucked to Dillingham Air Field on the North Shore. Svc. Btry. remained there while HHB was airlifted to Kahuku Airstrip and A, B and C Btrys. were airlifted into other areas of the Kahukus where they established fire bases in support of simulated 1st Bde. infantry operations.

LANDING ZONES CLEARED

Before any of the artillery batteries moved into position, each landing zone was first reconned by a B Trp., 3-4th Cav. scout team and then secured by a rifle squad provided by C Co., 1-5th Inf. The infantrymen were inserted at each firing position during the first 24 hours of the exercise by elements of Co. A, 25th Avn. Bn.

On the second morning, the artillerymen prepared for airmobile moves to Makua Valley, South Range and McCarthy Flats for live fire exercises.

The scouts from B Trp., 34th Cav. again flew reconnaissance missions prior to batteries being inserted at the new landing zones.

After C Btry. had moved into position at Makua Valley, A Btry. at McCarthy Flats and B

Btry. on the South Range, the 34th Cav. scouts conducted an aerial registration of the area to insure first-round accuracy on all future targets. After the registration, C Btry. joined with Cobra gunships from the 34th Cav. in conducting a Time on Target (TOT) exercise against a simulated enemy armor threat.

GUNS, COBRAS COMBINE

A TOT of this nature is designed to allow artillery fire to disperse the tanks and get them to "button up." Then the Cobras move in at close range and destroy the tanks with precision fire from their 2.75 inch rockets before the tankers can react to their presence.

Later, infantrymen from C Co., 1-5th Inf. conducted a platoon live fire exercise backed up by the 105mm guns of C Btry.

Although A and C Btrys. airlifted their guns from the Kahukus in the conventional one gun per aircraft method, B Btry. suspended three howitzers at a time beneath the helicopters, permitting the move to be completed in two lifts instead of the usual six.

PLANS FOR PLATE NEEDED

Preparation for the triple lift began nearly a year ago. The first step was to acquire the plans for the steel plate used to join the three guns from the Field Artillery School at Ft. Sill, Okla.

Cpt. William Sharp, B Btry. commander, and Cpt. Harry Deleon, battalion motor officer, used the plans to design a plate. The plate used in the airlift was constructed by USASCH Machine Shop Six from parts that were machine-tooled from steel discs and bars.

After the plate was completed, it still needed to be tested for strength and balance before being used for training purposes. This task fell to the Division's 84th Eng. Bn., who tested it by

using a 20-ton crane to lift the three guns, which together weigh just under 10,00 lbs.

The 147th Avn. Co.'s CW2 William Steele then tested the rigging and aircraft handling capabilities in a practice hover-lift demonstration before the FTX began.

The plate and rigging passed the tests and were ready to be turned over to the artillerymen for unit training in the final hookup procedures.

Although at first the idea of lifting more than one gun at a time seemed a bit risky, the men soon got used to the idea--and its advantages.

"It really cuts down on the time it takes to airlift a battery," explained PFC Thomas Murphy of B Btry. "It's a lot less work, too."

Cpt. Sharp agreed.

TRIPLE LIFT SAVES TIME

"Since the purpose of the exercise was to work on the battery's ability to conduct airmobile operations," he pointed out, "being able to transport three howitzers at a time helped by cutting down on time and manpower."

Most of the B Btry. gunners thought the triple lift technique made the exercise run much smoother.

On the final day of the FTX, after completing the Makua Valley live fire exercises, C Btry. was again airlifted, this time to McCarthy Flats, where the men joined the other batteries, who had been live firing all of the previous afternoon and most of the night from their positions at Schofield.

After the C Btry. gunners were positioned, the final phase of the FTX, a battalion TOT, was conducted. All three of the firing batteries cut loose on the target, marking the end of a very successful "first" for the battalion.

