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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
55TH AVIATION COMPANY (ARMY)
EIGHTH UNITED STATES ARMY
APO 96301

55AVN

31 March 1970


SUBJECT: Unit History/Annual Supplement Requirement

SEE DISTRIBUTION:

Reference Special Troops Letter dated 9 December 1970, subject same as above, the Unit History of the 55th Aviation Company (Army), APO 96301 is included as inclosure 1.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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MICHAEL J. SKYRCHAK
CPT IN
Admin Officer

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
55TH AVIATION COMPANY(ARMY)
EIGHTH UNITED STATES ARMY
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96301

31 March 1970

The 55th Aviation Company(Army) was first activated in March 1951 as the 8085th Flight Detachment at Taegu, Korea. It moved from Taegu to Seoul in June 1951. The 8085th Flight Detachment was redesignated as the Eighth United States Army Aviation Detachment in January 1957. On 24 June 1960, the unit was designated as the 55th Aviation Company (Army) with an authorized strength of 14 officers and 70 enlisted men. The primary mission of the unit was to render general aviation support to Headquarters, United Nations Command, Eighth United States Army, Korea Military Advisory Group, the United States Embassy, and governmental agencies of the Republic of Korea.

During the year 1969, although the mission of the 55th Aviation Company (Army) remained primarily the same as in previous years, the size of the unit and type of equipment used within the unit have changed considerably. The authorized strength was raised to 26 officers, 180 enlisted men and 33 KATUSA personnel. Under the company headquarters are five platoons: Headquarters Platoon, Operations Platoon, Service Platoon, Rotary Wing Flight Platoon, and Fixed Wing Flight Platoon, which provide the organizational structure of the company. Also attached to the company is the 6th Aviation Platoon (Aerial Surveillance). The 55th Aviation Company is located on Yoido Island, approximately 8 miles southwest of Seoul, Korea, bordered on all sides by the Han-River. Past history has reflected numerous complete floodings of the island.

To combat this a flood control project was completed in 1969, consisting of a cement barrier that surrounds the island. Previous to the flood control project, all equipment had to be evacuated to other military installations during heavy seasonal rains. Many buildings still show the water level marks halfway up the walls from previous floodings. Yoido Island is soon scheduled to be returned to the Republic of Korea Government where it will be reconstructed into the Republic of Korea governmental headquarters. The new site for the 55th Aviation Company (Army) is approximately 15 miles south southeast of Seoul at the new K-16 airfield which is presently under construction. Target date for completion is Aug 70. In the logistics aspect, the 55th Aviation Company is the most advanced and up to date Army Aviation Company within the Republic of Korea. In 1967, the U-8D Seminoles were replaced with six U-21 Utes. This greatly increases the mission capability as well as decreasing the flying time between airfields with the new U-21's any airfield in the Republic of Korea can be reached within one hour. The company retained five of the "old reliable" U-6 Beavers. The sixth Aviation Platoon (Aerial Surveillance) add three OV-1B Mohawks to the company fixed wing capability, making a total of fourteen fixed wing aircraft within the company. In addition to these fourteen Army fixed wing aircraft assigned, the company supports the Eighth Army Flying Club and a Navy U2SB.

While the 55th Aviation Company(Army) has allarge fixed wing capability, the rotary wing section has equally increased in its number of aircraft with 7 OH-23 Ravens and 8 UH-1 Hueys.

During the year 1969, the unit participated in two Eighth Army field exercises, "Focus Retina" and "Focus Lens". In addition to its normal

mission of providing aviation support, the unit established and operated a heliport which provided courier service between Pyong-Taek and Seoul. The planning coordination and operation brought recognition from higher headquarters.

Dignitaries and high ranking officials of varying nations were flown throughout the Republic of Korea, Japan, and Okinawa. The list of officials includes Ex-Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, Secretary of State William P. Rogers, Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor, members of the Joint Chief of Staff, and numerous ambassadors. One mission flown by the company had a total of thirty-five stars aboard, five four-star Generals and one three-star General. Although VIP passenger service is the primary mission of the company, many other types of missions were tasked to the unit, including mercy missions of varying descriptions. During a downtown Seoul hotel fire, Major Turner, WO2 Lamontagne, and SP4 Wilddung received Distinguished Flying Cross's for airlifting trapped Koreans from the roof top of the burning hotel. During the Han River flooding, the company participated in helping Korean families locate missing personnel and belongings which had been washed away. Varying accomplishments such as those mentioned have brought the 55th Aviation Company(Army) a feeling of pride and a reputation to be proud of. During the later part of the year, the "Standardization Section" of Eighth Army Aviation was assigned to the 55th Aviation Company (Army) for the purpose of testing and standardizing all aviators within the Republic of Korea. With this addition, the Company became the standardization center for Army Aviation within the Republic of Korea. Under the command of Melecio Z. Santos Jr., the 55th Aviation Company (Army) has had a very successful year, accomplishing its mission with

the utmost of pride and in a manner that can truly be considered "well
done"