"Early in 1963, in the sandy hills of Fort Benning, Georgia a new concept was formally introduced to the United States Army. This idea was conceived in the minds of mobility-minded military leaders many years ago. Its birth was celebrated in the rice paddies and jungles of the Republic of South Vietnam early in that conflict. The concept matured into adolescence with the advent of new and better machines and it became the duty of the new 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion to prove to the world that air mobility was ready to take its place among the tired and proven tactical concepts available to the Army.

The 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion was constituted in the Regular Army on 1 February 1963 and assigned to the 11th Air Assault Division. This was the first battalion of its kind in the world and as it built into a full strength unit in the next several months, it stood ready to meet the challenge of providing a third dimension to the United State Army’s tactics.

On 11 February 1963 the 31st Transportation Company (Light Helicopter) was re-designated and activated as Company B, 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion, and brought to the battalion its twenty-two CH-34 helicopters.

On 15 February 1963 Company A, 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion was activated as the second of the battalion’s units. Company A was designated the aerial weapons armed escort company; their UH-1b’s and armament systems arriving in late April 1963.

On 18 July 1963 Headquarters Company, Company C and Company D, 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion was activated and in August 1963, the battalion became operational. Company C received its first UH-1D’s in August, the first issued to a TOE unit for field use. In December, Company A and Company D exchanged designations, making Company D the assault escort company. The Battalion then embarked on a long trail of sweat and tears that took two and half years of testing the airmobile concept. The concept was proven and the ground work laid for the forth-coming airmobile division.

The 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion was reorganized and re-designated 1 July 1965 as the 227th Aviation Battalion (Assault Helicopter); concurrently relieved from assignment to the 11th Air Assault Division and assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). The battalion had provided the “Air Assault” to it’s former division and now set out to put the “Airmobile” in the 1st Cavalry Division.

On 9 September 1965, the aircraft carrier USS Boxer anchored in Qui Nhon harbor and the first of the 227th helicopter and personnel begin to arrive. The quartering party had began preparation of the battalion’s new home just outside the small mountain village of An Khe, RVN and the battalion

1 "History of the 227th Aviation Battalion, 1 July 1965 - 31 December 1965, Prepared by: Major Thomas I. McMurray and Major Larry E. Scoggins, Approved by: Lt. Colonel Jack Cranford
moved in and began the long hard process of making a containment area and heliport out of a piece of jungle.

Just eight days after the arrival of the first helicopter, the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion flew its first combat assault. A unit of the 101st Airborne Division had been surrounded by a superior Viet Cong force and elements of the battalion spent the following two days resupplying ammunition, lifting reinforcements, carrying wounded 101st troopers to a field hospital and extracting units from the battle area. On the 21st September, that operation was terminated with another extraction and the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion had come through its first combat operation, its baptism of fire, and had acquitted itself in the same fine manner it had displayed in the past whenever confronted with a requirement. The battalion sustained no losses and two of its members were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and one the Bronze Star Medal as a result of their heroic actions on 17 September."

The 227th continued to distinguish itself throughout the Vietnam War including:

1 "On 10 October 1965 operation 'Shiny Bayonet' began. The battalion lifted the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry on a combat assault of their objective early on 10 October. This was their first large combat lift of a 1st Cavalry Division unit and was made without difficulty. This lift was Vietnam's introduction to altitude flexibility, which has since proved so valuable in avoiding enemy automatic weapons.

On 23 October 1965 the Viet Cong attacked the special forces camp at Plei Me in force and the long and costly Plei Me - Ia Drang Valley Campaign was under way. The morning after the attack, 23 October 1965, Company 'C' was ordered to Pleiku to support the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry. Within a few days the entire battalion was committed in support of the 1st Brigade, whose mission was to seek out and destroy the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army forces in the Plei Me area. This support was continued routinely with each of the lift companies supporting an infantry battalion daily until late in October. When the large North Vietnamese Army were located near Ia Drang Valley, the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion began lifting the 1st Brigade units in assaults on the enemy positions."

1966 saw several operations including Paul Revere I and Paul Revere II near Pleiku at the Chu Pong mountain area and LZ Oasis

2 "During 1966 Flight leaders led as few as two, or as many as sixty helicopters. Missions were successfully completed despite extremely bad weather and enemy ground fire. The tempo of the combat situation at times did not allow time for the normal planning sequence. Flight leaders received mission information over the radio while enroute to pickup the assault troops. In these situations the landing zones were first seen by the flight leader on the initial assault. The numerous individual decorations awarded during the year are indicative of the excellent esprit de corps and dedication that characterized the individuals assigned to the 227th Aviation Battalion." 3 "1967 action in II Corps saw The Battalion became split in three locations, Company A was at Phan Thiet,

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2 History of the 227th Aviation Battalion, 1 January 1966 - 31 December 1966, prepared by Major Richard R. White and Captain Louie A. Barber and approved by LTC James F. Hamlet, Commanding

3 History of the 227th Aviation Battalion (Assault Helicopter), 1 January 1967 - 31 December 1967, prepared by Major Darwin A. Peterson and Captain Alex Woods Jr. and approved by LTC W. F. Dixon, Commanding
Company B was at LZ Dog, and Company C was moved to LZ Hammonds. The gun Company (D) remained at LZ Dog, but provided one platoon of four acorns to Phan Thiet."

At the beginning of 1968 the entire 1st Cavalry Division moved from II Corps to I Corps, headquartered at Camp Evans.

During the 1968 Tet Offensive (January 30 - February 29, 1968), the 227th was supporting the 1st Cavalry Division throughout our AO, including the Battle for Hue.

CMH awarded to CWO Frederick E. Ferguson, Company C, 227th AHB

Operation Pegasus was launched April 1, 1968, and on April 8 the relief of the Marines at Khe Sanh was achieved. The 1st Cavalry Division began withdrawing from Khe Sanh on April 10th and immediately began planning for operations in the A Shau Valley.

The A Shau Valley campaign (Operation Delaware Lam Son 216) was initially planned to commence April 17th but bad weather pushed the initial assault forward until April 19th. After about four weeks of intense battle, the extraction of troops from the A Shau Valley began on May 10, 1968, and the operation was terminated on May 17th. The 227th flew 14,833 Sorties and the crew members received 5 Silver Stars, 83 DFC, and 63 Air Medal w/V during Delaware Lam Son 216.

May 19th, 1968 (Ho Chi Minh's Birthday) saw the Camp Evans ammo dump explosion. Most all of the 227th aircraft at Camp Evans were damaged or destroyed.

The last of October 1968 the entire 1CAV Division began it's move to III Corps to act as a shield north of Saigon. When the order came down portions of the 227th left with the first aircraft flight headed south the next day. On the beginning of November we flying a combat assault in support of firebase DOT, located west of Quan Loi and south of the "Fishhook"

1969
January 1969 saw the loss of six A/227 crew members during a crash at Lai Khe. This flight was intended to deliver a see-saw to the local orphanage but crashed due to tail rotor failure.

"On 6 March 1969 Company A, 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) met heavy enemy resistance in a bunker complex northeast of Bien Hoa, Republic of Vietnam. The battalion commander decided to take Company C and conduct a combat assault into an area south of Company A. Six transport helicopters from A Company and two AH-1G Huey Cobra gun ships from D Company, 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion were assigned to the combat assault. During the 6-hour battle 40 aircraft flew in support of the operation. Adequate reinforcements and decimation of the enemy by aerial firepower enabled the infantry to secure the LZ without any further casualties. Seven aircraft of the 227th were extensively damaged - two required evacuation to the United States to be rebuilt, while the other five required 2,200 man-hours to repair. Over 1,300 aerial rockets and 38,600 round of minigun ammunition were expended."

May 1970 saw the 227th lead Into Cambodia into the "Fishhook" for the two month Cambodia campaign.

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4 "They Need Us Down There", Published in the spring of 1970 in the Army Aviation Digest
By Major John A. Little
When the 1CAV returned stateside at the beginning of 1971 all our assets (227th aviation units) remained in Vietnam until the end of the war, serving with valor, attached to other commands.

Our last Company A, 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, Commanding Officer, Major William E. Adams, was awarded the CMH after our unit was transferred to II Corps and designated the A/227 Assault Helicopter Company, 52nd Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Brigade.

Our history and stories are online at:

227ahb.org

227th BATTALION AND UNIT CITATIONS AND AWARDS

227TH BN PRESIDENTAL UNIT CITATION – PLEIKU PROVINCE – 23 OCT TO 26 NOV 65
CO A 227TH , CO D 227TH PRESIDENTAL UNIT CITATION – BINH THUAN PROVINCE – 27 JAN TO 04 APR 67
2ND &3RD PLT, CO D 227TH VALOROUS UNIT AWARD – QUANG TIN PROVINCE – 01-31 OCT 67
227TH BN VALOROUS UNIT AWARD – BIEN HOA PROVINCE – 6 MAR 69
227TH BN VALOROUS UNIT AWARD – FISH HOOK – 01 MAY TO 29 JUNE 70
CO A 227TH VALOROUS UNIT AWARD – FIRE SUPPORT BASE 6 – 31 MAR TO 16 APR 71
227TH BN REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM CIVIL ACTION HONOR MEDAL 1ST CLASS – VIETNAM 1969- 1970 01 JAN 69- 01 FEB 71