

HISTORY OF TRANSPORTATION CORPS AVIATION

This document has been written by Ted Cimral as a summary of information gleaned from numerous sources. It is not intended to be complete, for each TC Aviator has his or her own story to tell. It is intended, however, to be accurate, and any omission or inaccuracy is mine alone; it is requested that recommended changes be sent to my e-mail listed under Contacts.

The primary sources are listed below. Footnotes are used when items are directly attributable to a specific source.

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2. Army Aviation in Vietnam, 1961-1963, Ralph B. Young, published in 1999 by the Huey Company, Inc.
3. Army Aviation in Vietnam, 1963-1966, Ralph B. Young, published in 2000 by the Huey Company, Inc.
4. Spearhead of Logistics, A History of the U.S. Army Transportation Corps, Benjamin King, Richard C. Biggs, and Eric R. Criner, first published in 1994 and reprinted in 2001 by the U.S. Army Transportation Center and the Center of Military History.
5. U.S Army Aircraft, published by the Army Aviation Directorate, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development (ACSFOR), HQDA, 1 Nov 1969.
6. Field Manual 1-5, Army Aviation Organizations & Employment, May 1959.
7. Field Manual 1-5, Aviation Company, May 1966.
8. Field Manual 1-100, Army Aviation, April 1959.
9. Field Manual 20-100, Army Ground Forces: Light Aviation, September 1947.
10. Field Manual 20-100, Army Aviation, February 1952.
11. Field Manual 55-15, Transportation Reference Data, October 1997.
12. Field Manual 57-35, Army Transport Aviation Combat Operations, June 1958.
13. Field Manual 57-35, Airmobile Operations, September 1963.
14. Field Manual 63-23, Aviation Support Battalion, June 1996.
15. Army Directory and Station List, August 1952; August 1955; August 1957; August 1962; and August 1965.

IN THE BEGINNING.....

An old adage of the Transportation Corps is: "Nothing Happens Until Something Moves." Walking on one's feet is the most basic form of movement, and we've been doing that for thousands of years. Even today in Iraq and Afghanistan, our soldiers continue to move by foot. Man is a very creative sort, and he has sought to improve his mobility by adding the factor of speed. First he domesticated horses, camels, and other pack animals. He then discovered the wheel, which led to chariots and then wagons. Nation states were created and the leaders of those states desired to not only keep what

was theirs, but they also coveted what belonged to their neighbors. Friction became war, and armies were created to carry out the will of the King or Queen.

Until the 17th century most armies lived off the land, taking what they wanted and laying waste to the rest, a cruel and wasteful practice that kept an army constantly on the move in search of supplies. At the end of the 17th century, most armies typically had a wagonmaster in their military organization. In 1645, a “Waggon-Master-General” was appointed to the New Model Army in England. It was this heritage that the fledgling Continental Army adopted during the War of Independence when the quartermaster general became the chief supply officer and transportation officer of the army.¹

“What goes around, comes around.” Like Adam’s rib, the Transportation Corps grew out of the Quartermaster Corps. Now, in 2009, plans have been approved to move the home of the Transportation Corps at Fort Eustis, Virginia to the home of the Quartermaster Corps at Fort Lee, Virginia. A new Logistics Corps will be formed, and the old QMC, TC, and OrdC will disappear. Headquarters, US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) will move from Fort Monroe, Virginia to Fort Eustis in 2011.

PRE-WORLD WAR II AVIATION

The Army is an organization about doing things on the ground. Aviation is about doing things in the air. A natural mismatch exists. From the Civil War to the present, the Army has taken two basic approaches to reconcile this mismatch. One was to create a separate, specialized organization, focused on aviation. In its history the Army has had the Balloon Corps, the Air Service, the Air Corps, the Army Air Forces, and now the Aviation Branch. Out of the stream of Air Service, Air Corps, and Army Air Forces came a completely separate service --- the United States Air Force. The other basic approach was to put aviation people and technology into existing branches of the Army. This approach started with Army Aeroplane Number 1 in 1909. That airplane went into the Signal Corps to provide reconnaissance and communication support.² World War I revived the specialized aviation organization once again, separating the ground Army from the aviation Army.

ARMY AVIATION IN WORLD WAR II

The Army decided it required both approaches, separate and integrated, on 6 June 1942. The War Department created Organic Army Aviation within the Artillery Branch to provide observation and fire adjustment support, while the Army Air Forces provided bomber, fighter, and transport support to ground forces. The conflict between air and ground people had thus begun over how best to provide close-in support to Army combat forces, and who should provide that support. It was argued that Army Air Forces were too far away to provide responsive support. Of course, the pilots and mechanics of the L-4 and L-5 aircraft (similar to later Bird Dog models called L-19 and O-1) were members

¹ Spadhead, page 1.

² A History, page 5.

of the Army Air Forces. This precept that Organic Army aircraft “are designed and integrated into the Army structure to enhance the overall Army mission “... to conduct prompt and sustained combat incident to operations on land”³ continued until 1983 when the current Aviation Branch was born.

In 1939 Igor Sikorsky successfully flew his helicopter, the VS-300. In November 1941, just shortly before Pearl Harbor, the Army acquired its first helicopter, a Sikorsky YR-4, an adaptation of the VS-300. During the war only 424 helicopters were procured, mostly R-4s. Helicopters began to exhibit their potential by providing light transport, rescue, and lifesaving. Helicopters were used extensively in Burma and in the Philippines.⁴

THE BIRTH OF THE ARMY TRANSPORTATION CORPS

Mobilization following Pearl Harbor demonstrated the need for the centralization of transportation and traffic management efforts. The Chief of Staff approved the creation of a Transportation Corps, separate from the Quartermaster Corps, on 31 July 1942.⁵ The Chief of Transportation assumed all transport responsibilities formerly performed by the QMC. However, the War Department failed to seek the necessary Congressional action to have the Transportation Corps designated as a permanent branch of the Army. In May 1945 Fort Eustis was recommended as a Transportation Corps unit training center. In January 1946 it was approved as a Class IV activity under the Chief of Transportation. In 1950 the installation was redesignated as The Transportation Center and Fort Eustis,⁶ and President Truman designated the Transportation Corps a permanent branch of the Army.

PRE-KOREAN WAR PERIOD

In 1947 General Eisenhower, the Army Chief of Staff, approved a field manual that provided a Table of Organization & Equipment for light aviation support to a field army. TO&E 1-977 provided an Army Air Force Liaison Squadron to a field army, consisting of four flights of eight L-4 or L-5 airplanes per flight, plus a flight per corps. The pilots were NCOs.⁷

Because Organic Army Aviation was an outgrowth of the Army Air Forces, Army aircraft were purchased by the Air Force. Ground commanders could see the value helicopters brought to Army mobility, but the Air Force saw helicopters as having little or no military value. As late as 1948 the Air Force director of requirements flatly refused to obtain helicopters for the Army.

From 1945 to 1949 the Army Ground Forces Board had tested several types of helicopters as possible replacements for ground vehicles and light fixed-wing aircraft. In

³ U.S. Army Aircraft, Introduction.

⁴ A History, p.30

⁵ Spearhead , p. 121

⁶ Ibid, p. 133

⁷ FM 20-100, 1947.

November 1949 the Transportation Corps recommended that the Army needed six types of rotary-wing aircraft.

In May 1950, two months before the Korean War started, the Army approved five experimental transport helicopter companies. Intense opposition from the Air Force delayed procurement until 1951. The first Transportation Corps helicopter units were formed in 1952.

ARMY AVIATION IN KOREA

On 25 June 1950 North Korean forces attacked across the 38th Parallel. The U.S. Army had 668 light airplanes and 57 helicopters.⁸ The Army saw the need for short-haul transport aircraft, mainly helicopters, to provide immediate responsiveness at corps level and below. The Air Force didn't want the Army to expand further into aviation, yet they neglected ground support in much the same way as in World War II that led to Organic Army Aviation in 1942.

The Transportation Corps pressed hard to expand Army aviation. In 1950 BG William B. Bunker, who was not a rated aviator, authored a report to the Chief of Transportation powerfully arguing that helicopters had intrinsic value in logistical roles. Bunker's report led to action at senior levels and earned him the title, "Father of the Helicopter."⁹

On 2 October 1951 the Air Force agreed to allow the Army to have organic aviation that was an integral part of a combat organization for limited operations up to 70 miles. On 21 August 1952 the Army committed to forming 12 helicopter battalions. This led to another agreement with the Air Force on 4 November 1952 that allowed Army fixed wing aircraft to weigh up to 5,000 pounds, range was extended to 100 miles, MEDEVAC within the combat zone was permitted, and artillery and topographic survey functions permitted.¹⁰

In February 1952 the Army published Field Manual 20-100, Army Aviation. It stated:

1. The mission of Army aviation is to expedite & facilitate the conduct of operations on land; to improve mobility, command, control, and logistic support of Army forces; and to provide greater battlefield dispersion and maneuverability under conditions of atomic warfare.¹¹
2. Transportation helicopter units are provided to increase the speed and flexibility available to commanders for tactical operations. These units permit the rapid movement of troops over or around fixed defenses and natural obstacles and into areas inaccessible to ground transport means. Assault troops may be landed accurately and with planned dispersion.¹²

⁸ A History, p. 52

⁹ Ibid, p. 59

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 53.

¹¹ FM 20-100, p. 1.

¹² Ibid, p.49.

3. Troop movements are divided into administrative movements and tactical movements.

In July 1952 the first Army helicopter company – 6th Transportation Company (Helicopter) – received H-19C Chickasaw helicopters and began training at Fort Bragg.

In August 1952 the Transportation Corps assumed responsibilities for Army aviation that had been previously assigned to the Ordnance Corps. That same month the Army Directory and Station List contained three transportation helicopter companies: the 6th (at Fort Bragg), the 13th (at Fort Sill), and the 506th (also at Fort Sill).¹³ The 6th and 13th Transportation companies did not deploy to Korea until February 1953, six months before the end of the war. On 15 June 1953 the 1st Transportation Corps Army Aviation Battalion (Provisional) was activated,¹⁴ marking the first Army aviation battalion.

RAPID EXPANSION OF TRANSPORTATION CORPS AVIATION, 1954 to 1960

By 1952 the Transportation Corps (TC) had become the major center of aviation activity and was assigned overall responsibility for Army aviation. In 1953 the Army procured H-34 Choctaws and H-37 Mojaves for the twelve new TC helicopter battalions. The H-34 was the first helicopter that could lift a squad of soldiers. Two H-34s could lift a 105mm howitzer, its ammunition, and its gun crew. Previously it had taken nine H-19s to accomplish the same move. The H-37, the first medium lift helicopter (first with twin engines and a clamshell nose door), could carry 6000 pounds, a jeep with a towed howitzer, 23 soldiers, or 24 litters. The H-37 could even retrieve downed aircraft.¹⁵

In another first for the Transportation Corps, on 7 December 1954 Fort Eustis dedicated the Army's first airport for helicopters, Felker Army Airfield.

By August 1955 the Army Directory and Station List showed four TC aviation battalions (8th, 45th, 54th, and 71st) and eleven light helicopter companies flying H-21s and H-34s. The 14th Aviation Company (Tactical Transport) at Fort Riley was flying U-1 and U-6 fixed-wing aircraft.¹⁶

By August 1957 the Army Directory and Station List showed six TC aviation battalions (3d, 8th, 45th, 52d, 54th, and 71st) and 17 light helicopter companies flying H-21s and H-34s. Note that no medium lift helicopter companies (H-37s) had yet been formed and fielded. Three tactical transport fixed-wing companies were in the field. By 1957 the Army had started fielding aviation companies in divisions and aviation detachments to support major headquarters. These units were comprised of both fixed and rotary wing aircraft.¹⁷

¹³ Army Directory, Aug 1952.

¹⁴ Spearhead, p. 315.

¹⁵ A History, p. 63

¹⁶ Army Directory, Aug 1955.

¹⁷ Army Directory, Aug 1957.

In June 1958 the Army published Field Manual 57-35, Army Transport Aviation Combat Operations. The mission of Army aviation is to augment the Army's capability of conducting effective combat operations. By definition, it is organic aviation immediately responsive to the demands of the arms and services, employed to enhance the mobility and flexibility and battle efficiency of ground combat forces. Transportation aviation units normally are assigned to a field army. They may be attached to a corps, but normally they are not attached below division level. "Present helicopter unit TO&E provides two types of companies based on the lift capability of the helicopters: light (1 ½ ton) and medium (3-ton). Fixed-wing aircraft units likewise are organized according to lift capability."¹⁸ A light helicopter company consists of 20 aircraft (H-19, H-21, or H-34). A medium helicopter company consists of 16 H-37 aircraft. A light fixed-wing company consists of 16 aircraft (U-1 and U-6).

The capabilities of Army aircraft in 1958 were:

- H-19	Speed 80 knots	Endurance 3.25 hours
Exterior sling capacity: 1 ton		Interior capacity: 10 soldiers, 6 litters
- H-21C	Speed 85 knots	Endurance 3.5 hours
Exterior sling capacity: 5,000 lbs		Interior capacity: 20 soldiers, 12 litters
- H-34	Speed 80 knots	Endurance 3.5 hours
Exterior sling capacity: 4,000 lbs		Interior capacity: 12 soldiers, 8 litters
- H-37	Speed 100 knots	Endurance: 1.25 hours
Exterior sling capacity: 10,000 lbs		Interior capacity: 23 soldiers, 24 litters
- U-1 airplane	Speed 115 knots	Endurance: 7.0 hours
		Interior capacity: 9 seats, 6 litters
- U-6 airplane	Speed 115 knots	Endurance: 5.75 hours
		Interior capacity: 5 seats, 2 litters & 2 ambulatory

By 1969, only four of the above aircraft were still in the Army inventory. The cost to purchase one was:

- H-34: \$376,296.00
- H-37: \$921,520.00
- U-1: \$122,740.00
- U-6: \$ 99,529.00¹⁹

The advent of the turbine engine drastically reduced the amount of maintenance required on Army aircraft. In the late 1950s the Army acquired three new turbine-engine aircraft: the UH-1 (Iroquois or Huey), the CH-54 (Tarhe), and the OV-1 (Mohawk). The Huey became the symbol of air mobility in Vietnam. The Tarhe derived from the CH-37 Mojave but gave a 12.5-ton lift capability and did vital service in Vietnam until engine upgrades on the CH-47 allowed the Tarhe to be retired. The Mohawk was a twin engine high performance fixed wing aircraft capable of performing multiple roles: observation, recon, and surveillance. Called the "Widow Maker" because of its penchant for losing one engine on takeoff (the torque from the good engine would roll the aircraft), the

¹⁸ FM-57-35, Jun 58, p.1

¹⁹ U.S. Army Aircraft, Nov 69

Mohawk was a fully acrobatic Short Take Off & Landing (STOL) aircraft equipped with ejection seats for the pilot and observer and oxygen for high flight options. It was the only aircraft in the Army inventory that was permitted to fly IFR (on instruments) with a single pilot on board. The Mohawk could carry cameras, infrared sensors (to detect heat on the ground from an engine or a soldier), and side-looking airborne radar (SLAR) (to detect movement on the ground). It could also carry weapon pods under its wings, which brought howls from the Air Force. The Army convinced itself that the Mohawk was the replacement for the O-1 Bird Dog; I'm sure laughing all the way. There was no comparison.

On 1 December 1957 the Army organized the Executive Flight Detachment to fly the President and support the White House. Major William A. Howell, a TC officer, was selected to lead the 50-man detail, based out of Fort Belvoir's Davison Army Airfield. After flying President Eisenhower, President Kennedy, President Johnson, and President Nixon, in 1976 President Ford terminated Army support. Apparently the Army leadership felt it was a waste of Army pilots; the Marine Corps was more than happy to take up the slack.²⁰

VIETNAM AND THE AGE OF AIRMOBILITY

In 1960 the Transportation Corps was firmly in charge of all facets of Army aviation, including procurement, maintenance, and supply. The start of the Vietnam buildup in 1962 was when TC aviation units reached their apogee (for those of you in Rio Linda, it means "peak"). In 1962 about 52% of 6200 Army aircraft were fixed-wing; by 1970 about 80% of 12,693 Army aircraft were helicopters. By 1965 TC aviation units were disappearing, being replaced by "Aviation" companies and battalions. By 1970 TC aircraft maintenance units reached their zenith.

The first Army aviation elements in Vietnam were Transportation Corps aircraft. In August 1961 an experimental Caribou (CV-2) landed in Saigon, and then flew into short strips normally limited to much smaller aircraft. The Caribou excelled at supporting Special Forces camps along the border. The Air Force insisted the C-130 could do everything the Caribou could do; everything that is except land on short SF airfields. In December 1961 the first two TC helicopter companies arrived in Saigon. The 8th and 57th Transportation companies were comprised of 16 H-21 Shawnee "Flying Bananas" helicopters each. Less than a month later, on 2 January 1962, the first airmobile combat action involving U.S. helicopters occurred --- flying Vietnamese troops into a jungle clearing.²¹ January 1962 also saw the arrival of the 93d Transportation Company (Light Helicopter) arrive in Danang and the activation of the first aviation battalion in Vietnam, the 45th Transportation Battalion (Transportation Aircraft). Each company arrived with a supporting TC aircraft maintenance detachment. The 45th Trans Battalion grew to incorporate UH-1A and B Huey gunships of the Utility Tactical Transport (UTT) Company, three light TC helicopter companies (33d, 81st, & 93d), 114th Aviation Company (Airmobile Light) with UH-1Bs, and the 73d Aviation Company (O-1D

²⁰ A History, p.85.

²¹ Ibid, p. 115.

aircraft). In 1962 the 45th Trans Battalion was named the Outstanding Aviation Unit in the US Army. In September 1963, the 45th Trans Battalion was redesignated the 145th Aviation Battalion.²² As of December 31, 1964 the 765th Transportation Battalion (Aircraft Maintenance & Supply) had assigned to it three aircraft maintenance companies, the 61st Aviation Company (Airmobile-Fixed Wing) with CV-2 Caribou, and the 73d Aviation Company (Aerial Surveillance) with OV-1s.²³

The Howze Board of 1962 recommended increased movement by Army aircraft, first called Airmobility and eventually Air Assault. Large units moved to remote areas and sustained by Army aviation, with close air support provided by the Air Force, Navy, Marines, and ... Army gunships. The 11th Air Assault Division (Test) was formed in 1963 at Fort Benning along with the 10th Transport Brigade (Test). The final joint test of the air assault concept was scheduled for July 1965, but the President decided an Army division should be sent to Vietnam. The Army Chief of Staff decided it would be an airmobile division – which didn't exist. On 1 July 1965 the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) was activated, modeled after the 11th Air Assault. On 10 September 1965, the first ship carrying the division arrived at Qui Nhon, Vietnam.²⁴

The August 1962 Army Directory and Stationing List shows the following aviation units in the Army force structure:

Seven TC aviation battalions (3d, 8th, 45th, 49th, 52d, 54th, and the 71st)

Nineteen TC light helicopter companies (H-21, H-34)

Five TC medium helicopter companies (H-37)

Seven TC light fixed-wing companies (U-1, U-6)

Non-TC units:

Two groups, one Europe & one at Bragg to support Howze Board

Five battalions (four divisional, one Alaska)

Fourteen companies (divisional)

Five companies (armored cav regiments)

Seven companies (major headquarters support)²⁵

The buildup of operations in Vietnam drove a major expansion of and change in aviation force structure. Up to that time, only a few aviation battalions existed. These were almost all designated as Transportation units. As the focus shifted from administrative movements of personnel and cargo to combat assault tactical movements, so did the unit designations shift from transportation to combat aviation units. By the end of 1964 Army aviation in Vietnam consisted of several major organizations, none of them transportation.²⁶

²² Army Aviation, 1961-63, p.40.

²³ Army Aviation, 1963-66, p.24

²⁴ A History, p. 112.

²⁵ Army Directory, Aug 1962.

²⁶ Op. Cit., A History, p. 124.

As unit designations changed, so did the aircraft in those units. Helicopters used by the United States in Vietnam fell into four general categories: utility (UH), cargo (CH), observation (OH), and assault helicopter (AH). The UH-1 Huey was the workhorse of the Vietnam War, replacing the H-19 Chickasaw, the H-21 Shawnee, the H-23 Raven, and the H-34 Choctaw. The Huey was used to transport troops and supplies, evacuate the wounded, and serve as a gunship.²⁷ I remember clearly the sight of a UH-1B gunship laboring to lift off at LZ English on a hot summer day in 1968. It literally had to skip down the runway, sparks flying from the skids, until enough speed was gained for liftoff. The CH-47 Chinook replaced both the CH-37 Mojave and the CH-54 Tarhe. It could carry troops and equipment internally and sling external loads simultaneously. Its maximum range was normally 150 to 200 miles at a speed of 110 to 120 knots. At Dak To in 1968, CH-47s would arrive in the morning from Camp Holloway (Pleiku) and begin lifting external sling loads to the 4th Infantry Division's firebases perched on top of nearby mountains. These firebases were inaccessible by road. Because the NVA controlled the sides of the mountains surrounding Dak To, the Chinooks were not safe there after dark, and they departed in late afternoon. CH-47s were, are, and will always be transportation aircraft.

The August 1965 Army Directory and Stationing List reflected the demise of TC aviation units:

- No TC aviation battalions
- Seven light helicopter companies (none in Vietnam)
- One medium helicopter company (Fort Sill)
- One fixed-wing company (Fort Benning)
- Four cargo helicopter detachments (all in Vietnam)
- One Caribou fixed-wing detachment in Vietnam

Other aviation units listed:

- Three aviation groups
- 27 aviation battalions
- 60 aviation companies
- Two airlift platoons
- 17 aviation detachments²⁸

The Army and the Air Force continued to battle over the expanding roles and missions of Army aviation. The Army received its first fixed-wing cargo aircraft, the twin engine CV-2 Caribou, in 1959 under an exception to the weight limitations imposed by the 1956 Army-Air Force agreement. The Army saw the Caribou filling the gap between the C-130 and other Army aircraft. When first deployed to Vietnam in 1961, the Army discovered the CV-2 could operate out of all 130 military airstrips in country, whereas the Air Force could use only 30. The Air Force hated the Caribou because it went where the Air Force would not. It could carry 32 passengers, had short take off and landing (STOL) capability, and Army pilots would go into harm's way on a moment's notice to

²⁷ Spearhead, p. 367.

²⁸ Army Directory, Aug 1965.

support Special Forces camps. In the Spring of 1962 the Army awarded a contract to DeHavilland to build a STOL aircraft that could carry the same tactical load as a Chinook as a follow-on to the Caribou. This aircraft was known as the Buffalo, CV-7A, and its maximum payload was 41,000 pounds with 41 troops or 25 litters. Four prototypes were delivered in the Spring of 1965. The Army wanted to procure 120 Buffalos in late 1965, but the Air Force objected because they were developing the C-123. On 6 April 1966, the Chief of Staff, Army agreed to transfer the Caribous and Buffalos to the Air Force in return for allowing the Army to field attack helicopters. This agreement resulted in the demise of Army fixed-wing cargo transport aircraft, with Chinooks being used to support outlying areas the Caribous had served. The Chinook cost five times as much per hour to fly as a Caribou. Cost-effectiveness depended on who was paying the bill.²⁹

Your TCAA Vice President, Tiny Woolston, was the Flight Engineer on Caribou tail number 62-4184 in the 135th Aviation Company.

THE DEMISE OF TRANSPORTATION CORPS AVIATION

The Vietnam surge created a huge population of Army pilots that peaked in 1972 at 26,000, almost fourfold from 1962. Many of these were warrant officers, yet the Army also had a huge excess of commissioned officers in more senior grades where they were not needed and could not be used. The Army needed to refresh the entry-level population to fill future requirements.³⁰ The post-Vietnam draw-down resulted in the loss of many excellent Reservists and the return of some officers to lower permanent grades or to enlisted ranks. In 1972 the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) changed the officer structure from being “generalists” with multiple Military Occupation Specialties (MOS’s) to a dual-tracked system. All officers were to develop a secondary skill in addition to their branch qualification. When Congress passed the Aviation Career Incentive Pay (ACIP) Act of 1974, “gates” were established at the 12 and 18 year points to ensure pilots were spending at least 50 percent of their years in operational flying positions in order to draw flight pay. These thresholds could not be met if the Army continued to assign officer pilots to ground duties.

In 1975 Specialties 15 and 71 were added to OPMS. Specialty 15, Aviation, was designed for commissioned officer pilots. Specialty 71, Aviation Materiel Management, was designed for Transportation Officers performing procurement, maintenance, and supply. Specialty 71 could be an alternate specialty for aviators of other branches. In 1976, as an example of how screwed up the system was, I was informed by MILPERCEN that I had to choose my primary specialty, either 71 or 95 (Transportation). My alternate specialty had already been designated as 49 (Operations Research) because I had accepted graduate school at Army expense. Even though I was a dual rated aviator and aircraft maintenance officer, I knew my flying days were over. I could never achieve my “gates”, so I chose 95 as my primary specialty.

On 12 April 1983 the Secretary of the Army approved the creation of the Aviation Branch. On 7 August 1983 the CSA approved the design of a winged propeller, an

²⁹ A History, p. 153.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 187.

updated Army Air Corps insignia, and the blue and orange colors used by the Army Air Corps.³¹ Warrant officers would remain part of the Warrant Officer Branch until July 2004 when the branch was decommissioned and warrant officers were absorbed into their individual branches. The Aviation Branch now includes all Army aviators except those in the Army Medical Department, Military Intelligence, and those under the Special Operations Command.³² Just as in 1942, a portion of Army aviation has slipped away from the Army Air Corps --- oops, I mean the Army Aviation Branch.

SUMMARY

The Transportation Corps can take great pride in its leadership role during the formative days of rapid technological growth in Organic Army Aviation and pushing the frontiers of mobility and support to the soldiers in the field. "Still --- Above The Best."

This brief narrative was written by Colonel (Retired) Ted Cimral, President, TCAA. This document is dedicated to the memory of my father, Francis James Cimral, who would have been 96 today, August 1, 2009.

³¹ Ibid, p. 195.

³² Ibid, p.6.