

The 135th Assault Helicopter Company from Vietnam Unites for ANZAC Day Ceremony

The **135th Assault Helicopter Company** was organized at Fort Hood, Texas on 1 February 1967. In October 1967 the unit deployed to Vung Tau, Republic of Vietnam. At the time of deployment, the Australian Government dispatched a Navy Helicopter flight to Vietnam consisting of eleven officers and thirty-six enlisted men. The Australian flight was assigned to the 135th, and the unit became known as an "Experimental Military Unit", or EMU for short. The unit's first roll in Vietnam was to support the Royal Australian Task Force and other free-world units working in III and IV Corps. To facilitate operations, the 135th moved to Blackhorse in December 1967 and then to Bear Cat in November 1968. Working as part of the 214th CAB and 222nd CAB, the EMU's wrought devastation on the Viet Cong from the southern edges of the U Minh Forest to the Bamboo of Bu Dop and east to the boundaries of II Corps.

On 8 September 1970, the EMU's moved again, this time to Dong Tam, supporting strictly Vietnamese Army units in the Delta. As other Aviation units in the Delta deactivated, the only US/Australian helicopter unit in existence took up the slack. The 135th daily flew great distances from home station in support of the war effort. As the only completely integrated Multi-national Helicopter Company fighting in Viet Nam, the EMU's developed pride and dedication to their motto, "GET THE BLOODY JOB DONE".

In honor of their Australian brothers the EMUs gathered at the 135th AHC Memorial, at Memorial Park in Ft. Rucker at 5:30 AM to recognize the sacrifice the Australian army made as they invaded Gallipoli on that tragic day, 25 April 1915. "First Light" was the start time of the Battle of Gallipoli by the Australian/New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) on the southern coast of what is now Turkey. Australian Army Officer, LTC Charlie Barton gave the ANZAC Day Address. COL David Francis and LTC Barton Laid a wreath at the 135th AHC Monument in memory of the fallen, as did their children Isabella and Alice Barton and Emma Davis, on behalf of future generations. Members of the 135th Army Helicopter Company (AHC) read the Combat Aviator Honor Roll. In addition to the memorial service there was a rare opportunity for an Australian soldier to get an award for service with the US unit, that can now be worn on the uniform, but when they served, it was not permitted and remained that way until only a few years ago. COL Fred Dunaway (Ret), former EMU commander, presented the new "Forgotten Hero to recognize the service of Door Gunner Jim Shaw.



Anzac Day Address



Reading of the combat aviator Honor Roll



Laying of the wreath in Memory of the Fallen



Laying the wreath on behalf of Future generations



Forgotten Hero Wings (For service to the 135th)

In addition to the memorial service there was a casual gathering at Mother Rucker's on Sunday afternoon 24 April 2016 , and a hanger tour in Ozark at the Friends of Army Aviation Hanger followed by a lunch. We would like to thank the 135th AHC EMUs and all those who served in Vietnam.



135th AHC Veterans – (back row) David Chance, Ken Rucker, Bob Kern, John Crowley, Tom Rudolph, Mike Guard, Mark Knuckles, (middle row) Bill Rummel, Jerry Chapman, Ben Barefoot, Lloyd Ankrum, Fred Dunaway, Bob Clark, (front row) Phil Stanley, Jim Shaw, Rick Vasquez, David Porter, Tony Spelistoser