



**Winter 2019**

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## AIRMOBILITY

by  
Don Simpson

Down through history, adversaries have developed techniques of mobility and firepower to gain advantage over their opponents. Examples are the chariot, the English long bow, the rifled musket, the machine gun, the tank and massed artillery. Vertical envelopment provided another increase in mobility.

During World War I, Colonel Billy Mitchell, the American Expeditionary Force Aviation Officer, developed a plan to drop paratroopers behind the German trench line near Metz, France, using bomber aircraft. Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division would make the jump. The Armistice occurred before the plan could be executed.

During World War II, the army formed five airborne divisions and numerous parachute regimental and battalion combat teams. Major airborne operations were conducted in both the European and Pacific Theaters, the most notable being the jumps by the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions in Normandy on D-Day and in Holland in September 1944.

Paratroopers and glider borne infantry increased maneuver and flexibility. However, paratroopers required large drop zones and assembly of units was difficult due to the dispersion of the individual jumpers.



UH-1 Iroquois known as the Huey

These problems increased if the jump was at night as on D-Day. Gliders carried infantry, light vehicles, artillery pieces and supplies, but they required landing zones free of obstacles. Another problem with both paratroopers and glider borne infantry was that once on the ground they were relegated to the same mobility constraints as other ground infantry.

The next improvement in mobility was the helicopter. In the 1930s, Igor Sikorsky, a Russian immigrant, developed a single rotor helicopter. By 1942, the Sikorsky R-4 was in full production. A total of 131 were produced, but they had limited use during the war.

*Continued on page 2.*

Helicopters gained greater use during the Korean War. They were used for medical evacuation, rescue of downed pilots, courier service and limited transport, both of troops and cargo. We have all seen the opening of the TV show, "MASH", where the medics run to the helipad to receive casualties being delivered by a Bell H-13 helicopter.



H-13 Helicopter as Medevac

After the Korean War, little was done with helicopters. The Eisenhower administration's austere budgets went primarily to the air force and navy with little left for the army. The air force insisted that anything that flew was in their domain and their focus was on long range bombers and fighter aircraft, not helicopters to move army troops. With the election of President John F. Kennedy in 1960, the emphasis changed to a more flexible defense strategy. In mid-October 1961, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara asked the army for two reports: one on the current status of mobility in its units in the field and secondly, to identify what equipment was needed to reach the level of mobility required. Neither report satisfied the Secretary.

McNamara then directed the formation of the US Army Tactical Mobility Requirements Board under the leadership of the XVIII Airborne Corps commander, LTG Hamilton Howze. The mission was to study and test the airmobile concept. The Howze Board studied long range aspects, logistics, budget problems, operations research, integration with other military concepts and conducted testing. A battle group from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division was used to field test the concept.

The final report identified problems in aircraft, weapons systems, electronics, tactical concepts, organization, research and development and integration into the army force structure. Howze recommended that one third of the army's infantry divisions be airmobile.

One half of each division's 3,000 vehicles would be replaced by 330 helicopters. Rocket firing helicopters would replace a portion of the division's artillery. Helicopters would provide resupply rather than ground vehicles.

Secretary McNamara approved the report. The next step was to create an airmobile division to further test the concept. This unit was activated at Fort Benning, Georgia, on 1 February 1963 as the 11<sup>th</sup> Air Assault Division (Test). MG Harry Kinnard was selected as the division commander. Kinnard was an experienced army paratrooper, having served in the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in World War II. He was coming off an assignment as Assistant Division Commander of the 101<sup>st</sup> at Fort Campbell, KY.

For the next two years, Kinnard and his division developed and refined air assault tactics and techniques. Areas included scouting and screening, formation flying, heliborne assaults, aerial resupply, establishment and movement of support bases, and command and control. Much of the infantry support was provided by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, also located at Fort Benning. Two major maneuver exercises were conducted against the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. Each maneuver was successful.

As Vietnam heated up in 1965, President Johnson decided to send the airmobile division to Vietnam. The 11<sup>th</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division were reflagged as the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division (Air Assault) and deployed to the Central Highlands of Vietnam in the summer of 1965. The division consisted of 15,737 officers and men and 434 aircraft.

The workhorses of the airmobile division were two helicopters known to every Vietnam Vet: the UH-1 Iroquois or "Huey" and the CH-47 Chinook. The Huey was the first turbine powered helicopter. Bell Helicopter manufactured 16,000 after 1960.



UH-1 Gunship.

In Vietnam, Hueys were used for troop transport, fire support, logistics support, command & control, courier service, and medical evacuation. Troop transport helicopters were referred to as “Slicks” since they had no armament except door guns for self-defense. Gunships were referred to as “Guns” or “Hogs”. Medevac ships were known by their call sign of Dustoff. These terms are embedded in our military vocabulary.



CH-47 Chinook with Infantry, 1966.

The CH-47 Chinook is a twin-engine tandem rotor, heavy lift helicopter. It was built by Boeing and came into service in 1962. It had a lifting capacity of 7,000 pounds in the mountains, 8,000 pounds along the coast. Chinooks moved artillery howitzers to establish fire bases, hauled ammunition, heavy cargo and provided recovery for downed aircraft.

Other helicopters were developed later in the war: the LOH-6 for scouting and observation, replacing the older H-13s, the AH-1 Cobra to replace the UH-1B gunships and the OH-58 Kiowa, also for observation and scouting.

The basic unit for Hueys was the Assault Helicopter Company. It consisted of 209 officers, warrant officers and enlisted men, and twenty Hueys. The basic unit for the Chinooks was the Assault Support Helicopter Company consisting of 177 officers, warrant officers and enlisted men and sixteen CH-47s. These companies were organized into combat aviation battalions that normally consisted of two assault helicopter companies and a Chinook company.

On 1 March 1966, the 1st Aviation Brigade was organized to standardize training, procedures and methods of operation. This brigade provided country-wide support. By 1970, this organization consisted of sixteen combat aviation battalions in four aviation groups and totaled 4,000 aircraft and 27,000 personnel.

A standard mission in Vietnam consisted of developing intelligence information on the location of an enemy force, formulating a plan to find and fix the enemy, establishing a fire base with a battery of six 105mm Howitzers so that infantry companies would always have tube artillery fire available, and then air assaulting infantry companies into the operational area to find and destroy the enemy force. From my experience as a rifle company commander, a normal mission is described below.

I was commander of A Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, 196th Light Infantry Brigade, part of Task Force Oregon operating in Quang Ngai Province, I Corps Tactical Zone. I commanded the company from 15 March to 10 November 1967. Of note, my twin brother commanded a company in the 1st Cavalry Division from December, 1966, to July, 1967.

In early June, 1967, the company was alerted for a very significant mission. We were to be air assaulted into an area much farther west than US forces had previously operated. The marines, in this area since 1965, had operated about six kilometers west of Highway one. We were to go farther west.



I was convinced that this mission was going to be tough! I expected the combat assault into our selected landing zone to be hot (under fire). We prepared accordingly with artillery and helicopter gunships to prep the landing zone (LZ). We had ten Huey slicks to carry the company and two gunships to work the LZ. The Battalion Commander and the Operations Officer (S-3) were in the command & control chopper to direct the insertion. This was a normal lift complement from the supporting assault helicopter company: ten slicks, two gunships and a C & C ship. Our support came from the 71st Assault Helicopter Company known as the "Rattlers". Their gunships were the "Firebirds". The company foxhole strength for the mission was about 100 men which required two lifts to move the company. The aircraft load (ACL) was five soldiers, fifty per lift. I rode the fourth ship in the first lift, which was my normal practice for a combat assault.

The helicopter ride to the LZ from our battalion pickup zone (PZ) was about ten minutes. As we approached the LZ, the artillery was lifted and the gunships started working both sides of the landing zone. As the choppers went into short final and that final hover before we jumped out, we had the sense of being about as exposed and vulnerable as we could possibly be. I had my two radio operators and my artillery forward observer and his radio operator on the ship with me. The First Sergeant was in an adjacent ship with the company medic along with three soldiers from the lead platoon. We jumped out when the ship was about four feet above the ground into a wet, marshy meadow covered with waist high reed grass. The LZ was cold (no fire) which was a huge relief to say the least. We secured the LZ and waited for the second lift, which took another twenty minutes. Once the second lift was in, we organized in company column formation and moved out to our first objective."

The above describes a normal combat assault that was conducted thousands of times by thousands of infantry soldiers in Vietnam. It is hard to imagine how we would have fought that war without helicopters and an established tactical doctrine for their employment. Much of the credit goes to those on the Howze Board who initiated the requirements and the members of the 11th Air Assault Division (Test) and the 2nd Infantry Division who put those concepts into practice.



Infantry soldiers loading onto Huey "slicks".

### SOURCES

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Don and twin brother, Patrick, taken in October, 1969 when we were on our second tours in Vietnam. Pat was finishing his year in the Americal Division and was about to go home. He had a few days left so he came down to the Delta where I was five months into my tour as a District Advisor with the Vietnamese in the Mekong Delta near the Cambodian border and the Gulf of Thailand. The photo is taken in front of my team house. I'm on the left and he is on the right. I personally thought he was crazy! I would have stayed in Chu Lai (northern Vietnam) and waited for my flight home rather than get on C-130s and helicopters to come to the far reaches of the Mekong Delta for a two day visit and then have to get back to Chu Lai. I got him out on an Australian Caribou. He went home a week later.

# BROWNING AUTOMATIC RIFLE

by Emily White

John Browning was a remarkable gun designer and the founder of Browning Arms. In three short months he designed the Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) to provide an automatic rifle for use during World War I. At the time, the military needed an easy and reliable machine gun, which Browning had a reputation for making, that could be carried by infantry troops to increase their fire power at the front lines. The 1903 Springfield was an accurate rifle but lacked the firepower needed on the front. The French Chauchat (pronounced “sho-sho”) then came in to play. This rifle is the most hated due to its poor construction and unreliability.

The first design of the BAR, the M1918, was in service during the end of World War I, and weighed nineteen pounds with a twenty-round magazine. This rifle could only be fired in two automatic modes; slow (300 to 450 rpm) or fast (500 to 650 rpm); however, it did not fire in the semiautomatic mode - powerful, reliable, and simple to use for the common soldier. It took three men to service the BAR: the main gunner, assistant gunner, and the ammo bearer. With this rifle one would need a special belt equipped with a holder for the buttstock so the main gunner could hip fire his way across no man’s land. Now soldiers can arise from the trenches with real fire power. Approximately 17,000 BAR’s were in use in the European theaters. Then in 1940 the Army adopted the M1918A1 and M1918A2, which were used extensively during WWII.

The United States Marine Corps preferred the semiautomatic mode for certain tactical situations, and modified most of the M1918A2 guns to include that capability. A buffer spring in the buttstock greatly reduced recoil which was to the advantage both of firing accuracy and shooter stamina. This rifle would fire 550 rounds per minute. The M1918A2 also mounted a folding bipod on a special flash hider near the end of the barrel. This could easily be detached in this model, but was very effective in defensive situations.

Browning’s own son Val Browning was the first to lead the troops using the BAR on the front lines on September 13, 1918. In 1918, Browning was commissioned as a second lieutenant with the United States Army and served with the 79th Infantry Division at Verdun during World War I. In 1920, he became the manager of the manufacturing of John Browning guns in Liege, Belgium, and served as his father's personal representative to Fabrique Nationale de Herstal.

Upon his father's death in 1926, Browning had the responsibility of completing the projects that were not finished by his father, including the Browning Superposed shotgun and the Browning Hi-Power pistol (GP-35) (the latter in cooperation with his father's Belgian assistant, Dieudonné Saive). The war ended before the original could fulfill its combat potential.

This famous rifle caught the eye of well-known outlaws like Bonny and Clyde, Vern Miller, and Pretty Boy Floyd. These outlaws wanted the automatic functioning instead of their regular six shooters. For this reason, law enforcement agencies hunting these criminals also used the Browning. This is just one of the famous weapons we have on display in the Lewis Army Museum.



**From The Director ....**

Happy New Year from the staff at the Lewis Army Museum!

Each day the museum continues to grow and become more engaged with JBLM and South Sound community. To illustrate our growth let's look at some statistics:

During last full fiscal year in which the museum was open to the public, FY 2016, we had a total of 8,725 visitors. From there we were closed nearly all of Fiscal Year 2017 for exhibit renovations. Looking now at the statistics for our most recent fully open Fiscal Year, 2018, our total visitation was a whopping 23,087. That's an increase of %165!

To help fuel this increase we expanded our public open hours from five hours, four days a week to seven hours five days a week. Throw in the active use of our public-access parking lot and gate with aggressive efforts to increase awareness of the museum through social media and community outreach and we've developed a winning strategy for the future of the Lewis Army Museum.

As we continue to increase our visitation, our emphasis this coming year will be on Soldier training. Since making better Soldiers is truly the core mission of the Lewis Army Museum and the entire Army Museum Enterprise, we look forward to utilizing the museum's extraordinary assets to help the Army be more ready and lethal.

Lastly, I want to talk about the Cannon Shop and what an extraordinary asset it is to the museum and its mission. Since our reopening in August 2017, the Cannon Shop saw significant increases in sales across the board and has been extremely popular with our guests. Next we need to ensure that the Cannon Shop is staffed during all our open days. Those Friends who have volunteered in the Shop have done extraordinary work and they could use some help. If you, or anyone you know, might be interested in volunteering in the Cannon Shop (or as a Docent) please contact the Friends' Volunteer Coordinator, Ms. Dawn Dailey, or any member of the Friends Board of Directors. Your help at this critical point is greatly appreciated!

Thank you all for your continuing support and we look forward to an exciting 2018.

Erik

**From The President ....**

Greetings, Friends!

I hope that you all had a wonderful holiday. I find that the holidays are often a good opportunity to treat out-of-town guests to our museum. I enjoyed taking my mother-in-law, a Vietnam veteran (nurse), and she especially enjoyed our new Hall of Valor.

A large part of what makes the Lewis Army Museum stand out is the dedication and professionalism of our staff and volunteers. I would like to recognize some of our volunteers who have recently earned the Lifetime Achievement Membership by volunteering at the museum for over 500 hours:

- Emily White
- Tim Kuncel
- Richard (Red) Driver
- Jenn Jett
- Dawn Dailey
- Karolyn Bredberg
- Catherine Bander

If you are interested in learning more about our volunteer opportunities, please stop by the museum or contact Dawn Dailey, our Volunteer Coordinator.

Marisa

**BRUNCH COSTS**

Did you notice the increase in the cost of the Brunch this month? As with most things, Patriots Landing has increased the cost for all groups using the facility for meetings, as well as all residents. And, as you probably know, employees are not allowed (by State Law) to accept tips or gifts of any kind, So, the Residents Association annually provides a 'bonus' to all hourly employees, funded by donations to the Employee Appreciation Fund, via a box on the front desk. The units using the facility are requested to provide a gratuity to the Fund, and most contribute 20% of their bill. The Friends has done this for years, and will continue to do so, hence the Brunch cost has increased by \$1.00 per person to \$18, \$15 for the meal and \$3 for the gratuity. Thanks for your understanding and support of the Friends!



# **FRIENDS OF THE FORT LEWIS MILITARY MUSEUM**

## **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**24 February 2019**

**Place: Patriots Landing, Olympic Dining Room**

**Time: 1130-1200 Social Hour**

**1200-1300 Brunch**

**1300-1400 Program**



Our guest speaker this meeting is Steele Clayton, sharing his experiences from 21 months stationed in Chu Lai, Vietnam. Steele was born and raised in SE Alaska, graduated from Linfield College in McMinnville, OR, and completed post-graduate work at Webster University and Reformed Theological Seminary. He is a retired CW5 Army CH-47 Instructor Pilot who was voluntarily recalled from retirement after 9/11. He served 4 more years Active Duty at Gray Army Airfield, and then 12 years there as the DAC Airfield Manager. He is a member of Wear Blue: Run to Remember, active in DuPont, and a regular volunteer at the Tacoma Rescue Mission Homeless Shelter.



Return this reservation form to LTC (Ret) Donald A Simpson, 827 Aloha Street, Edmunds, WA 98020 with your check payable to "The Friends" by Tuesday, Feb 19, 2019.

**NOTE THE NEW** cost of Brunch  
for members and guests: **\$18.00** each.

Last minute reservations may be made by calling  
Paul Knoop at (253) 279-2598.

Number of Reservations: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Guests: \_\_\_\_\_

Residents of Patriot's Landing do not need to make payment for the meeting, but are requested to make reservations for seating.

**The Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum  
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**Our State's Namesake:  
General George Washington**

by Alan Archambault

Joint Base Lewis-McChord is appropriately located in the only state named after America's premier military hero, General George Washington. The Revolutionary War, which gave the United States independence, would never have been won without the leadership of General Washington.

Congress had long sought to name a state in honor of our greatest hero, so in 1853, when the settlers north of the Columbia River petitioned for a new territory separate from Oregon, the name of Washington was proposed. Although, the name Columbia was considered, it was thought that it would be confused with the existing District of Columbia. The name of Washington was approved for the territory and when Washington became the 41st State, on 11 November 1889, Washington became the only state named for a military hero and president.

Visit the Friends web site for more  
information and purchases from the Cannon  
Shop.  
<http://fortlewismuseum.com>



**Friends of the Fort Lewis  
Military Museum  
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General Washington in the field with his  
Army, 1781, by Alan Archambault.