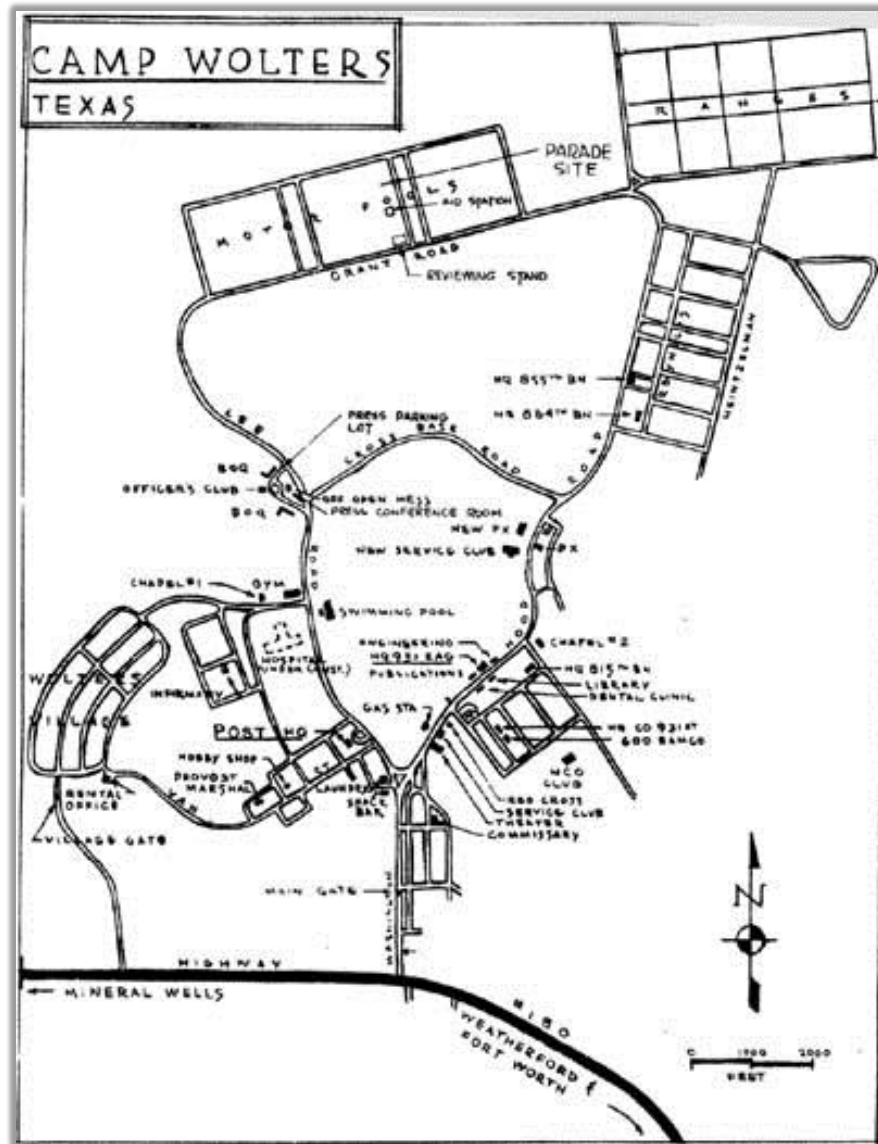




Primary Source Adventures: Fort Wolters Texas and Vietnam

The core of Camp Wolters before its expansion into the army's helicopter training school.

Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. 3; Primary Helicopter Center Facility. Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. and Boyce Ditto Public Library.





Primary  
Source  
Adventures:  
Fort Wolters  
Texas and  
Vietnam

Camp Wolters role in  
World War II.

Casper, Willile H., Jr.,  
Pictorial History of Fort Wolters,  
Vol. I; Infantry Replacement  
Training Center. 2007.  
Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr.  
and Boyce Ditto Public Library.

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS OF CAMP WOLTERS

1. ON 31 August 1940, A LETTER FROM SECRETARY OF WAR TO THE  
COMMANDING GENERAL, VIII CORPS AREA, FORT SAM HOUSTON, TEXAS.

INSTRUCTED AN INVESTIGATION OF THE FEASIBILITY OF LEASING  
SUFFICIENT LAND ADJACENT TO CAMP WOLTERS NATIONAL GUARD CAMP NEAR  
MINERAL WELLS, TO SUPPORT AN INFANTRY REPLACEMENT TRAINING CENTER  
FOR 16,000 MEN.

ESTIMATED SEVEN THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED ACRES OF LAND WAS  
REQUIRED, WITH A LEASE FEE OF \$ 1.00 PER ACREA PER YEAR.

BASED ON A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE FORT WORTH CORPS OF  
ENGINEERS, WITH INPUT FROM THE TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD, MEMBERS OF THE  
MINERAL WELLS COMMISSIONERS AND MINERAL WELLS CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE, THE RETURNED ANSWER TO THE SECRETARY OF WAR WAS POSITIVE.

2 MR. ALLEN GUINN, PRESIDENT OF THE MINERAL WELLS CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE AND MAYOR JOHN C. MILLER MADE TWO TRIPS TO WASHINGTON, D.C  
ON MATERS PERTAINING TO THE LOCATION OF THE CAMP AND ASSURE THE  
SECRETARY OF WAR THAT THE CITIZENS OF MINERAL WELLS WERE WILLING TO  
COOPERATE IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE.

3. THE CONSTRUCTION OF CAMP WOLTERS HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS " ONE OF  
THE GREATEST BATTLES AGAINST TIME AND THE ELEMENTS, WITH REASON."

SEVENTHY-FIVE HUNDRED ACRES OF BRUSH AND HILLS TO BE CONVERTED  
INTO THE LARGEST AND MOST MODERN ARMY REPLACEMENT TRAINING CENTER  
IN THE COUNTRY. LATER EXPANDION REQUIRED SIXTEEN THOUSAND ACRES.

SEVEN HUNDRED BUILDING HAD TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN THE TIME FRAME  
THREE AND ONE HALF MONTHS--LABORED IN ADVERSE COLD, RAIN, MUD, & WIND.

EIGHTEEN THOUSAND CONTRACTORS, ARCHITECTS, DRAFTMEN AND  
WORKERS WORKED AROUND THE CLOCK SEVEN DAYS A WEEK.

LUMBER AND OTHER MATERIALS ROLLED INTO CAMP AT THE RATE OF 35 TO  
50 LOADS PER DAY. GIANT MACHINES CUT TREES, BUILT ROADWAYS, CLEARED  
RIGHT-A- WAYS. RAIL SPUR WAS BUILT FROM WEATHERFORD. COST: \$ 14,270,000.

4 WORK BEGAN NOVEMBER 16, 1940 AND WAS 83 % COMPLETED 3 MARCH 1941.  
TROOPS BEGAN TRAINING MARCH 24, 1941. ON APRIL 4, 1941 THERE WERE 15  
BATTALIONS IN OPERATION, THIRTY THOUSAND TROOPS WERE IN TRAINING, WITH  
2 BATALLIONS; 4,000 MEN AWAITING TRAINING OR HAD COMPLETED TRAINING  
5. AFTER WW II IT WAS USED AS A SEPERATION CENTER. CLOSED, AUGUST 15, 1946.

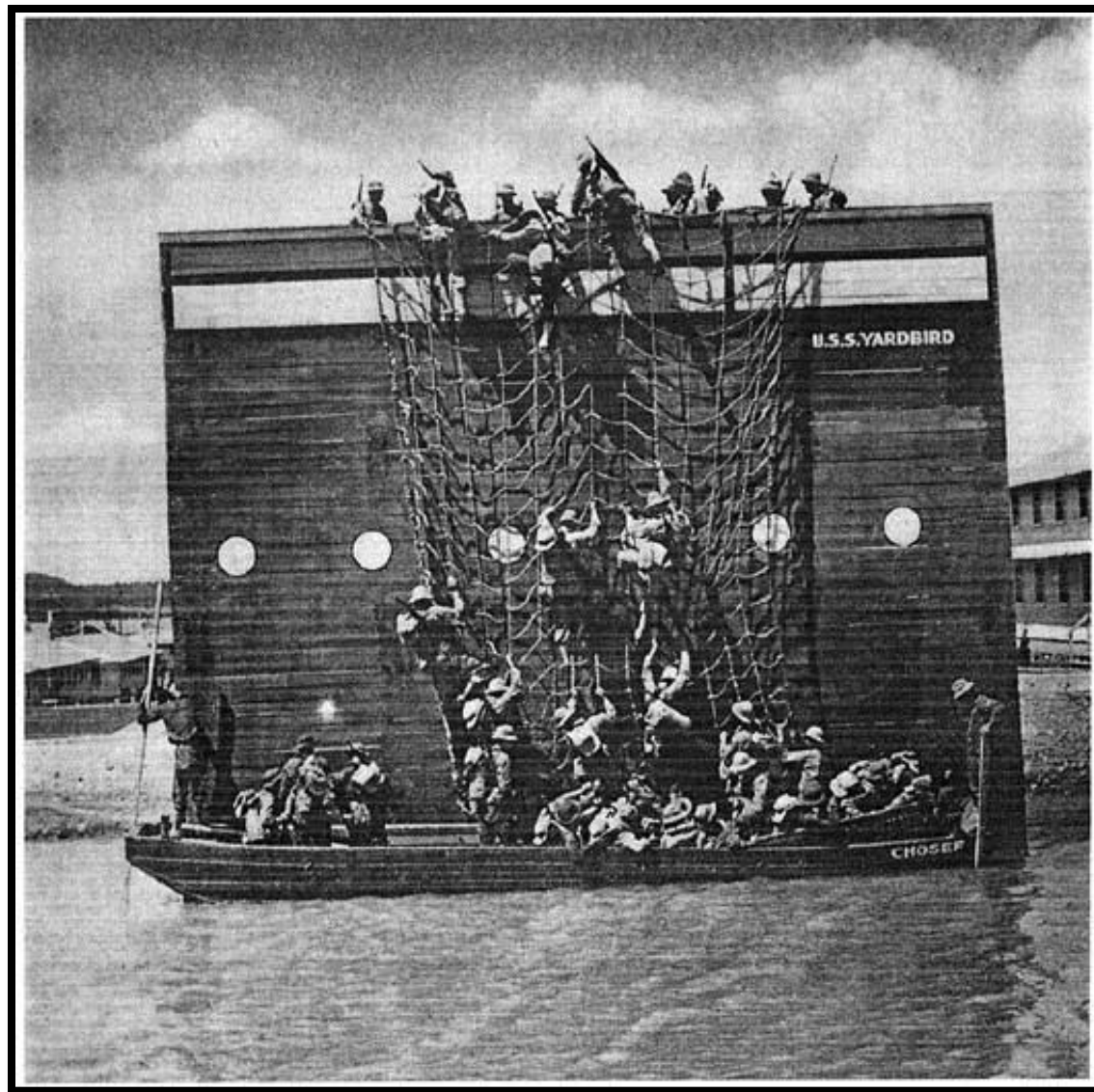
*c:\...campwolt.swpd*



Primary  
Source  
Adventures:  
Fort Wolters  
Texas and  
Vietnam

Amphibious assault  
training during  
World War II

Pictorial History of Fort  
Wolters, Vol. 1; Infantry  
Replacement Training Center.  
Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr.  
and Boyce Ditto Public Library.





Primary  
Source  
Adventures:  
Fort Wolters  
Texas and  
Vietnam

Front page to the  
Army welcome  
pamphlet for new  
trainees.

Pictorial History of Fort Wolters,  
Vol. 3; Primary Helicopter  
Center Facility. Courtesy of  
Willie H. Casper Jr. and  
Boyce Ditto Public Library.





Primary  
Source  
Adventures:  
Fort Wolters  
Texas and  
Vietnam

Read about the  
expansion of  
Fort Wolters as the  
helicopter training  
center.

Casper, Willile H., Jr.,  
Pictorial History of Fort Wolters,  
Vol. X; Primary Helicopter  
School Training Curriculum for  
Officers and Candidates.  
Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. and  
Boyce Ditto Public Library.

### EXPANSION AT FORT WOLTERS

When the Army regained control of Camp Wolters and established the U. S. Army Primary Helicopter School in 1956, no facilities existed for training helicopter pilots. The 931st Engineer Group(Construction) was then the primary unit on post and was called upon to construct the Main Heliport, classrooms, and four stage fields, and the necessary access roads.

Stage field one and two were located on the reservation. The civilians of Mineral Wells contributed \$ 21,000 and the citizens of Weatherford another \$ 5,000 to purchase land required for stage fields three and four. In addition, local landowners donated the use of over 600,000 acres of land for pinnacle approaches and confined area operations.

There were 125 helicopters in the initial training fleet. The first class, which began its training in November 1956, graduated 35 students in April 1957. There were 140 civilian structors employed by Southern Airways Company now known as Southern Airways of Texas, Inc. Which was the civilian flight contractor. During the first full year of operations the school trained approximately 2,250 students.

At first the USAPHS enjoyed a steady but unspectacular growth, but since 1965 the student output increased by leaps and bounds. First came the 290 Program (designed to graduate 290 students per month from the Army Aviation School at Fort Rucker, Alabama), then the 375 Program.

The 575 program, which graduate 575 students per month to Fort Rucker, was instituted with the first class of fiscal year 1968. This program called for an in residence student load of 3,200.

Since activation more than 14,000 students completed the primary rotary wing flight training at the helicopter school. In addition to U.S. personnel, foreign nationals from more than 20 allied countries had also trained there.

During the anticipated training program, the school graduated about 7,000 students per year, which produced quite an impressive yearly alumni roster.

The helicopter fleet increased from the original 125 to 569, then 755, and finally to more than 1,200 aircraft. The main heliport was enlarged to accommodate 550 aircraft and in 1966, Downing Army Heliport, located on 97 acres leased from the City of Mineral Wells, was opened. Downing had facilities for approximately 250 aircraft. A third facility, Heliport West, was constructed near Palo Pinto, Texas and was ready for use soon after January 1, 1968. After completion, Heliport West accommodated 450 aircraft. (It was later renamed Dempsey Heliport.)

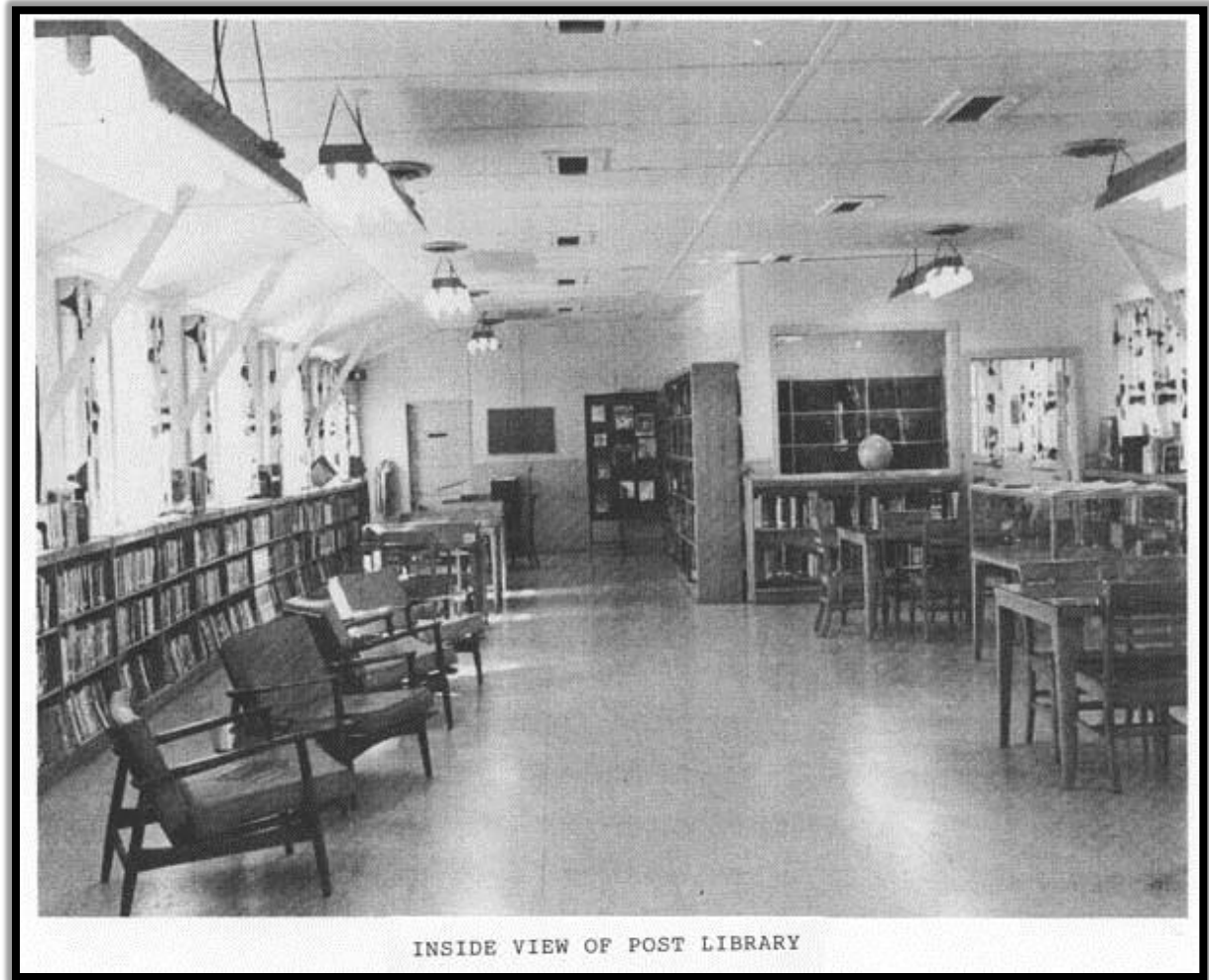


*The* PORTAL to  
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<http://texashistory.unt.edu>

One of the amenities available to camp personnel



Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. 3; Primary Helicopter Center Facility.  
Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. and Boyce Ditto Public Library.

University of North Texas Libraries

Primary  
Source  
Adventures:  
Fort Wolters  
Texas and  
Vietnam



## The design of motto and crest of Army Primary Helicopter School.

### U. S. Army Primary Helicopter School New Crest and Motto

Until July 1964 the U.S. Primary Helicopter School used the familiar blue and orange crest. The old motto "Above the Best" will not be worn in the future by the Fort Wolters personnel. For about a year several sketches have been judged for a new crest and motto for the U. S. Army Primary Helicopter School. "Above the Finest" is the motto finally decided on for the school. The old motto was felt inappropriate, because it included all of Army aviation and did not apply directly to the school.

While a motto was being chosen, a crest was also being designed. The approved crest contains, on the shield, the pattern of helicopter blades.

The white stands for air,

The black for the compressed air which forces the helicopter up.

The chevron represents the military aspect of the school.

The stars, command and control.

The stars are also the insignia found on all American military aircraft.

The torch represents man's striving for knowledge.

The device above the shield contains a shakefork representing helicopter blades.

In addition it represents the phase of instruction at the school.

The colors found on the crest are red, white and blue, the national colors.

Written for historical value only.

Willie H. Casper, Jr.

Colonel U. S. Army (Ret.)

Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. 3; Primary Helicopter Center Facility.  
Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. and Boyce Ditto Public Library.



## Aerial View of Fort Wolters



Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. 4; Army Primary Helicopter School, Officer Graduation Class.  
Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. and Boyce Ditto Public Library.





# MISSION STATEMENT OF USAPHC/S

**THE MISSION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY PRIMARY HELICOPTER CENTER / SCHOOL IS TO TRAIN HELICOPTER PILOTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH U. S. CONTINENTAL ARMY COMMAND PROGRAMS OF INSTRUCTION ; AND TO PROVIDE TRAINING, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT REQUIRED BY ACTIVITIES ASSIGNED TO THE CENTER AND OTHER UNITS LOCATED AT FORT WOLTERS.**

Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. 3; Primary Helicopter Center Facility.  
Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. and Boyce Ditto Public Library.



Primary  
Source  
Adventures:  
Fort Wolters  
Texas and  
Vietnam



13 July 1956, new sign at the main gate of Fort Wolters. Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. IV;  
Army Primary Helicopter School, Officer Graduation Class.  
Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. and Boyce Ditto Public Library.



The training time for cadets



Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. 10; Primary Helicopter School Training Curriculum for Officers and Candidates. Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. and Boyce Ditto Public Library.

Primary  
 Source  
 Adventures:  
 Fort Wolters  
 Texas and  
 Vietnam



One of the many small heliports at Fort Wolters.



“Stagefield Tuy HOA 1109 4 January 1971” Casper, Willile H., Jr., Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. VII; Heliports, Stagefields, Directory.



The organizational  
details of Fort Wolters

Casper, Willile H., Jr., Pictorial  
History of Fort Wolters, Vol. X;  
Primary Helicopter School  
Training Curriculum for Officers  
and Candidates.  
Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr.  
and Boyce Ditto Public Library.

**ITEMS OF INTEREST**  
 Fort Wolters

**INFORMATION**

16/16 Flight Concept Wolters Rucker	60 Solo Hours 15 Solo Hours	50 Dual Hours 75 Dual Hours	Total 110 Hours Total 100 Hours
---	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------------

**Student Load**      **FY68--FY69**      **Peak Load 3,304**      **Called 575 program**  
 610 Students programed in  
 575 Students to Rucker per month  
 This program required a resident student load of 3,200.

<b>Flight Hours</b>	FY 70 FY 68 FY 70	Called 390 Program about 1 million hours 852, 978 hours.	Vietnamese Students
---------------------	-------------------------	--	---------------------

48 Training Weeks per Year      5,600,000 flying hours--1956 to 1973

**Facilities and Facility Cost :**

Student Activity Building	Recreation, Relaxation	750 seat capacity	\$ 300,000
Student Barracks-	Built by the Air Force	after WWII	
9 barracks built in 1953 and remodeled in 1959			
Each barrack contained 24,972 Sq Feet			
Capacity:	3 floors	65 men per floor	Total 200 personnel
	2 men per room		Central Restrooms

**HELICOPTER TRAINING AREA**

713,000 acres in 8 counties      377 land owners donated the use of over 600,000  
 acres of land for pinnacles and confined area operations at no cost to the government. Due  
 to the requirement of emergency equipment to enter private property, in 1969, to protect the  
 Government from damage claims, each leasee was required to accept a token of \$ 1.00 per lease.

**FORT WOLTERS PROPERTY MINERAL RIGHTS**

All mineeral rights to property formally know as Ft. Wolters has been transferred from  
 GSA to Bureau of Land Management, Dept of Interior. Per telephone conversation with  
 Government representative Mr. Martinez, Albuquerque, NM. This authority is covered under  
 Regulation H-19 dated 1977.

To Department of Defense	National Guard area, 100%, except 200 acres on the Eastside of Lake which they have 3/8 interest.
To Department of Interior	All of the Area which includes State Park, College and land donated to the City of Mineral Wells.

Copied for historic purposes only.  
 Willie H. Casper, Jr.      Colonel, U. S. Army (Ret.)

*Willie H. Casper, Jr.*



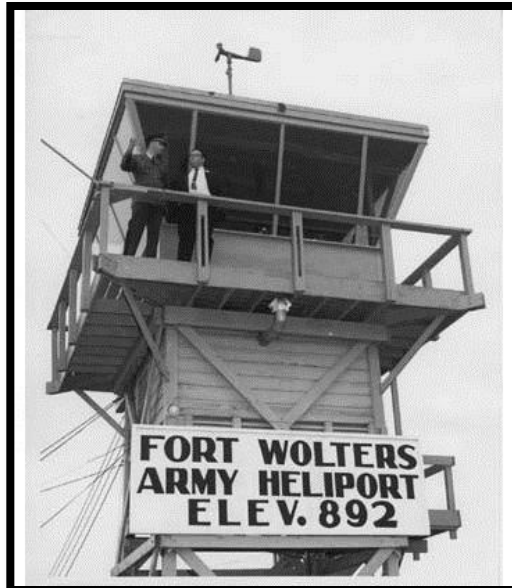
Primary Source Adventures: Fort Wolters Texas and Vietnam



Graduation Fly By H-23 27 April 1957, Vol. IV



Casper, Willile H., Jr., Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. VII; Heliports, Stagefields, Directory.



Casper, Willile H., Jr., Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. VII; Heliports, Stagefields, Directory. Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. and Boyce Ditto Public Library.

The H-23 training helicopters and the control tower



Primary  
Source  
Adventures:  
Fort Wolters  
Texas and  
Vietnam

The number of cadets  
trained at  
Fort Wolters

Pictorial History of Fort Wolters,  
Vol. 10; Primary Helicopter  
School Training Curriculum  
for Officers and Candidates.  
Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr.  
and Boyce Ditto Public Library.

COMMENTARY ON  
UNITED STATES ARMY PRIMARY HELICOPTER SCHOOL

In November 1956, thirty-five students began flight training at Wolters. Since that class, over 41,000 students have received their rotary wing flight training here. Today, the U.S. Army Primary Helicopter School graduates its last students, signifying the end of an era in Army aviation.

Ft. Wolters skies, once quite, carried a new sound in 1956 as the first helicopter student took to the skies. That familiar hum grew louder as the number of students increased. With the phase down, however, and the decrease in the number of students, the whirl of helicopter blades has become fainter and fainter. And soon, the skies will be quiet again. Ft. Wolters' mission of conducting primary rotary wing flight training is being transferred to Ft. Rucker, Alabama.

In April this year, the Department of the Army announced the closing and realignment of numerous military installations. Ft. Wolters' U.S. Primary Helicopter School was one of those affected.

It was then announced to transfer the Primary Helicopter School from Ft. Wolters to Ft. Rucker and place Wolters in a care taker status by July 1, 1974.

From its first graduation in April, 1957, the School has seen considerable changes. Class sizes increased considerable over the years.

In the first five years of operations, the School graduated about 1,000 students pilots, including civilians and foreign military.

For the Fiscal Year 1958 the Army Aviation Helicopter Course was added to the curriculum. This course was to qualify rated fixed wing pilots to rotary wing aircraft.

In January, 1959, the warrant officer candidate classes were temporarily suspended, and the officer courses were renamed "The Officers Rotary Wing Qualification Course,"

Latter, thee WOC classes resumed on a small scale, expanding in number with the years leading up to and during the Vietnam build-up.

In FY 1963, courses were added to teach pilots how to fire weapons from helicopters, and to operate observation helicopters in tactical situations.

In the early stages in Vietnam, helicopters proved themselves invaluable. They had been used in Korea, mostly for medical evacuation, supply missions and air-sea rescue.



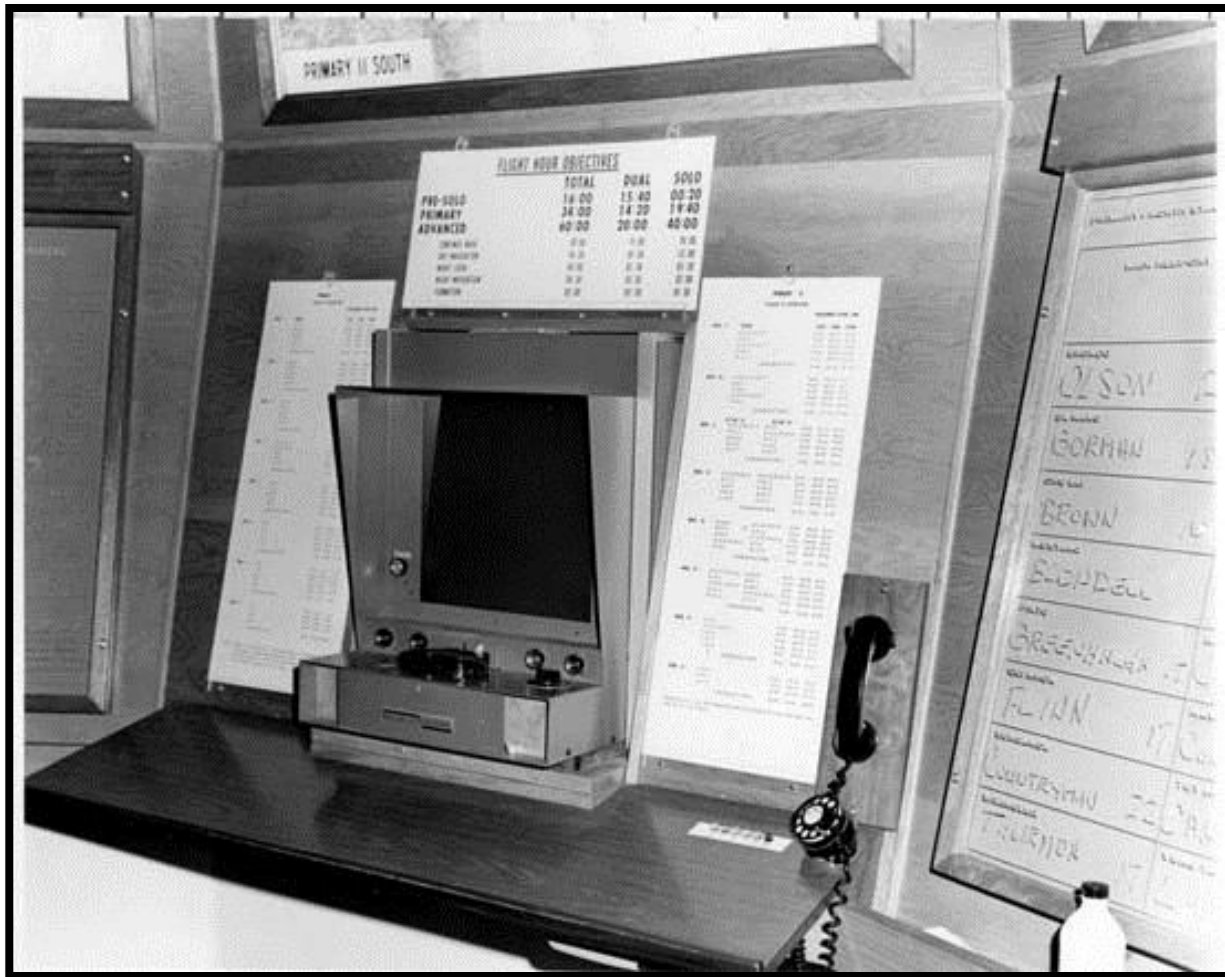
# The PORTAL to TEXAS HISTORY

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<http://texashistory.unt.edu>



## Primary Source Adventures: Fort Wolters Texas and Vietnam



	TOTAL	DUAL	SOLD
PRO-SOLD	18 00	15 00	00 20
PRIMARY	24 00	14 20	19 40
ADVANCED	40 00	20 00	40 00
OTHER	00 00	00 00	00 00
TOTAL	82 00	49 20	60 00

Terry D. Morris, "School Helicopter Operations Center" US Army Photo 41184-024302/AK69 4 Jan 1969





Primary Source Adventures: Fort Wolters Texas and Vietnam

The demands the Vietnam War made on the school

Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. 10; Primary Helicopter School Training Curriculum for Officers and Candidates . Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. And Boyce Ditto Public Library.

With Vietnam, helicopters proved themselves in other areas, such as flying gun platforms, aerial command post and troop carriers. There seemed to be no limit to what a helicopter could be used for.

In Vietnam, helicopters bore nicknames such as "hog," "mini-hog," "slicks," "gunships," "dust-offs," and so on. But all there knew the UH-1 or "Huey." Few will disagree that the "Huey" was the work horse of the Vietnam War.

Many of the enlisted men who served as gunners, medics, or crewmen in the helicopter came stateside with a single goal in mind: to learn to fly one of these "wingless wonders."

Demands for helicopter pilots were "loud and clear," with the Vietnam build-up. Ft Wolters "went to war."

The increased student load at the Helicopter School called for bigger and better facilities, and Wolters undertook a single mission, training pilots for duty in Southeast Asia.

Two new heliports were constructed. Downing Army Heliport (named in memory of the Helicopter School's first assistant commandant, the late Colonel Wayne Downing, who was killed in a stateside accident), was built near Mineral Wells' Municipal Airport and Dempsey Army Heliport was constructed near Palo Pinto. Dempsey was named in honor of Colonel Jack Dempsey, who was killed in action in Vietnam.

The area surrounding the post proper became dotted with training sites, with road signs bearing names that made Texas drivers take a second look to make sure that they were on the right road. Interspersed with directional signs to such area communities as Cool, Millsap and Santo were Hue, Chu Lai, Soc Trang, My Tho and Bien Hoa, to name a few.

In 1967, post population figures increased from more than 6,300 to almost 10,000 and the Helicopter School was going into its peak program of graduating about 600 students each month.

Local landowners, who had been of tremendous assistance throughout the growth of the school had contributed more than one million acres of land for student training on which were located more than 1,300 Landing sites.

The friendly relationship between the local populace and the post has been a tribute to Army Community Relations.

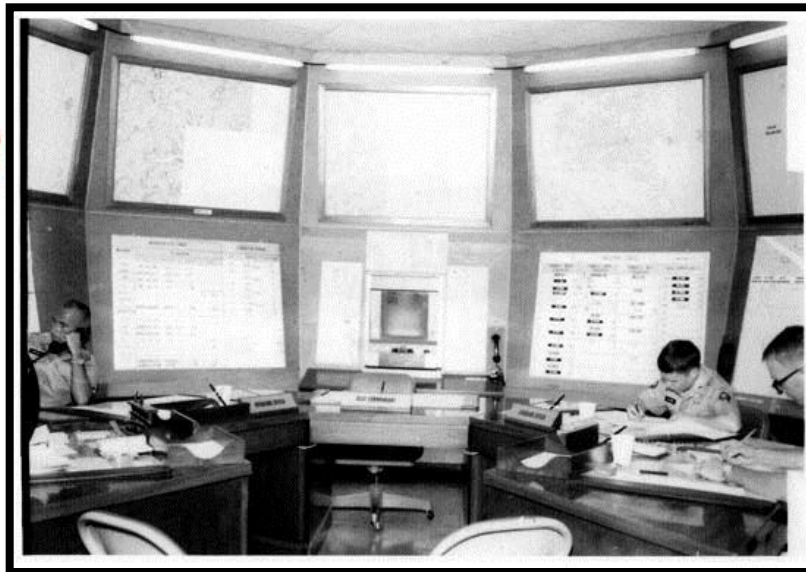
During the Peak of the Vietnam Was, special flight courses were added; 47 senior officers (among them Colonel George S. Patton, son of The famed General Patton of World War II) went through flight training here. The school also trained more than 480 officers for the U.S. Marine Corps, and in late 1970, the U.S. Air Force announced that it wanted the Army to train helicopter pilots here.



# The PORTAL to TEXAS HISTORY

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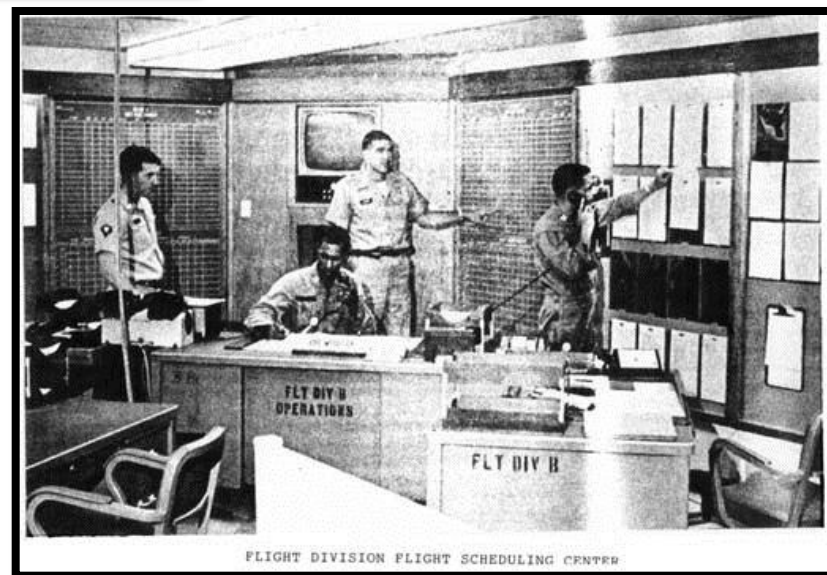


School Helicopter  
Operations Center

Primary  
Source  
Adventures:  
Fort Wolters  
Texas and  
Vietnam

Casper, Willile H., Jr., Pictorial History  
of Fort Wolters, Vol. X; Primary  
Helicopter School Training Curriculum  
for Officers and Candidates.

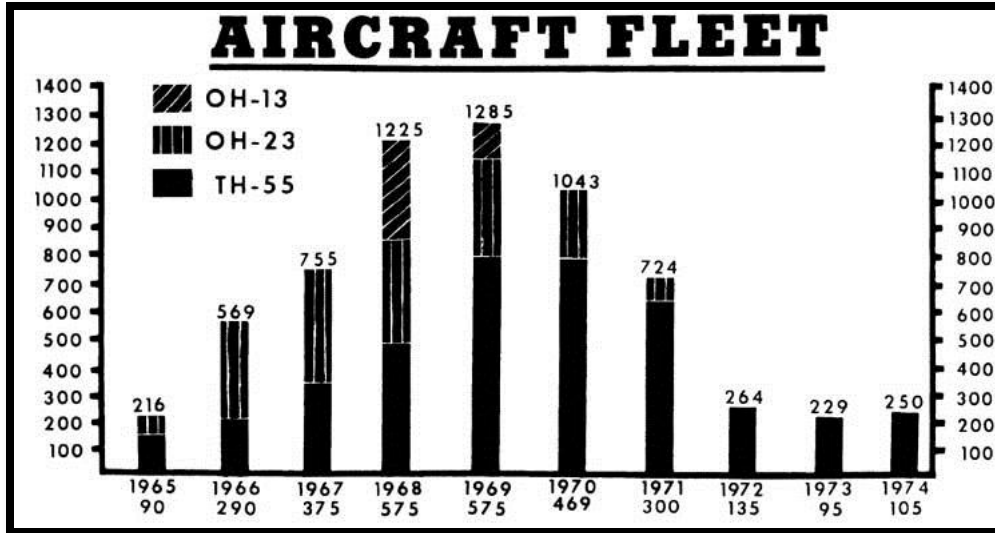
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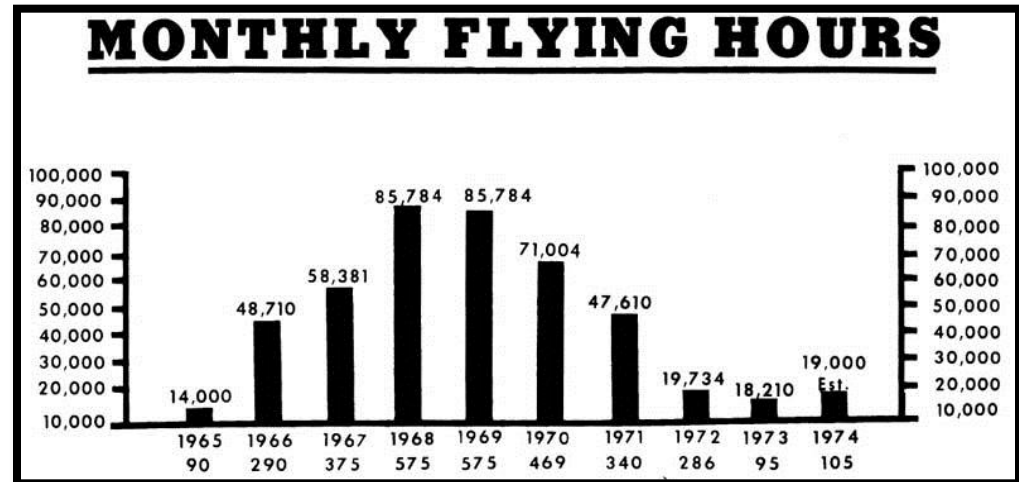
Primary  
 Source  
 Adventures:  
 Fort Wolters  
 Texas and  
 Vietnam



The aircraft fleet with flying hours and how the Vietnam War caused a spike

Casper, Willile H., Jr., Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. X; Primary Helicopter School Training Curriculum for Officers and Candidates .

Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. and Boyce Ditto Public Library.





Primary  
Source  
Adventures:  
Fort Wolters  
Texas and  
Vietnam

Who else Fort  
Wolters trained.

Pictorial History of Fort  
Wolters, Vol. 10; Primary  
Helicopter School Training  
Curriculum for Officers and  
Candidates.  
Courtesy of Willie H. Casper  
Jr. and Boyce Ditto Public  
Library.

Prior to the build-up, the civilian contractor became Southern Airways of Texas, Inc. A Military Flight Department was created and staffed by combat tested aviators, with military instructors assuming most of the flight instruction.

In addition to training U.S. Marine Corps officers and U.S. Air Force officers, allied students from more than 30 countries sent men here to train in helicopters. During the peak of the Vietnam War, "Little Vietnam" was located here with the activation of a Vietnamese Battalion. Staffed by a cadre of U.S. and Vietnamese personnel to oversee the training of the influx of Vietnamese Air Force pilots. More than 1,600 Vietnamese Air Force pilots are among the School's alumni roster.

That rooster became history today, USAPHS closes its logbooks, bringing to an end 17 years of "flying "Above the Finest."

This article "U,S,Army Primary Helicopter School" was written by members of the Fort Wolters Information Office to be published in the last addition 15 November 1973 of the "Fort Wolters Trumpet"

Copied for historial interest by  
Willie H. Casper  
Col. U.S.Army (Ret)  
Former Deputy Commander  
U. S. Army Primary Helicopter Center/School  
February 6, 1966 to July 1 1971

The last classes to graduate:

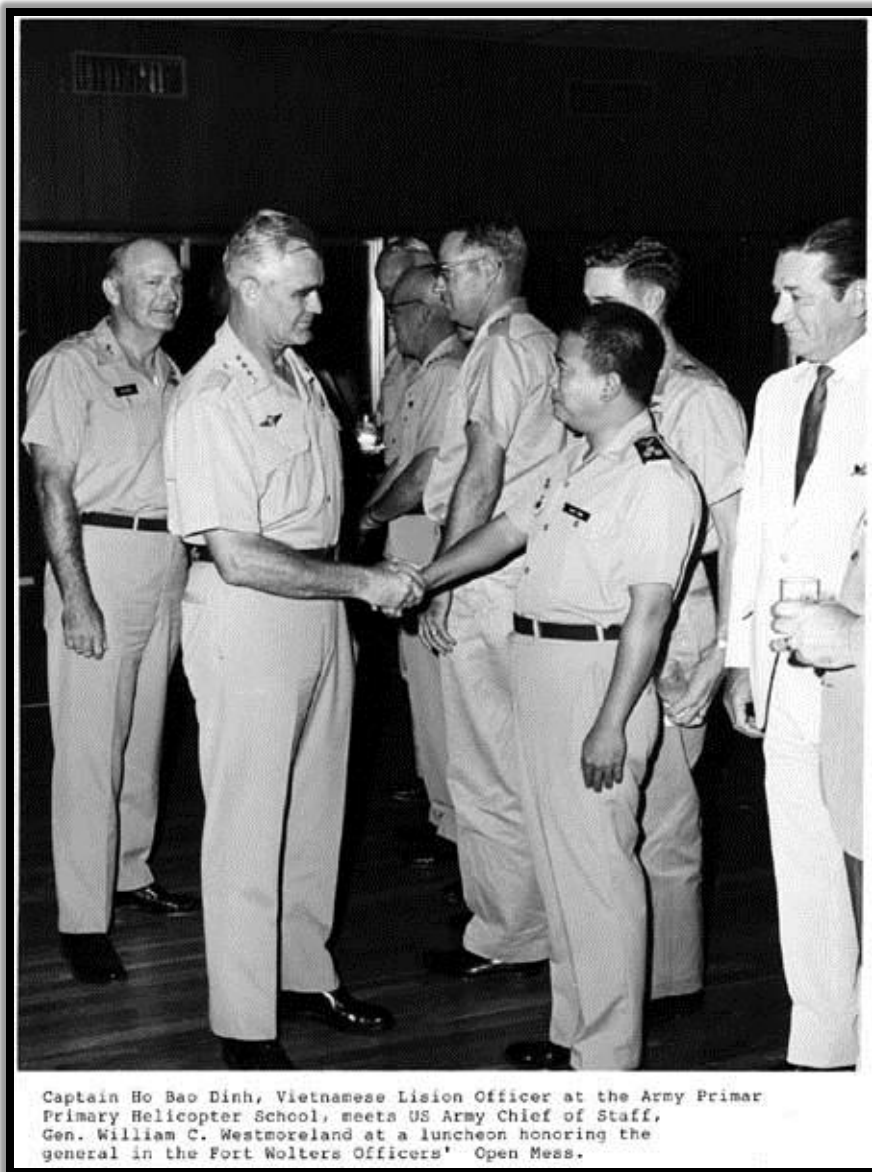
- Class 74-07 Warrant Officer candidates  
23 students
- Class 74-08 Officer Class  
18 U.S.Army officers  
1 allied student from Jordan



Primary  
Source  
Adventures:  
Fort Wolters  
Texas and  
Vietnam

General Westmoreland visits  
Vietnamese Officers  
training at Fort Wolters.

Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. 10;  
Primary Helicopter School Training  
Curriculum for Officers and Candidates .  
Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. and Boyce  
Ditto Public Library.





## General Westmoreland tours Fort Wolters



“21 June 1969 General William C. Westmoreland, Army Chief of Staff.” Casper, Willile H., Jr., Pictorial History of Fort Wolters, Vol. II Primary Helicopter Center Personnel. Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. and Boyce Ditto Public Library.



Primary  
Source  
Adventures:  
Fort Wolters  
Texas and  
Vietnam

The final years of  
Fort Wolters

Pictorial History of Fort Wolters,  
Vol. 10; Primary Helicopter  
School Training Curriculum  
for Officers and Candidates.  
Courtesy of Willie H. Casper Jr. and  
Boyce Ditto Public Library.

US Army Primary Helicopter Center/School  
Commandant's Farewell Message

Today (Thursday, November 15, 1973) the final chapter will be written in the proud history of a vital part of Army Aviation training. Classes 74-7 and 74-8, the last ones, have completed their primary helicopter training at Fort Wolters and now the rotor blades are winding down. No more hover buttons, no more 180's, no more checkrides--no more students. The stagefields, confined areas and pinnacles along the Brazos have fallen silent--no more busy TH-55's.

Hover, we who have been part of the US Army Primary Helicopter School, military and civilians alike, can be justifiably proud of our accomplishments over the past 17 years. We have excelled! Over 41,000 helicopter students have learned their primary trade at this fine school. We have a well-deserved reputation for astute and economical installation management: we have met a myriad of diverse and exciting challenges. We have been in every sense true professionals.

My congratulations to Classes 74-07 and 78-08. May your flight paths be smooth, your revolutions per minute (r. p.m.) steady and your future accomplishments noteworthy.

I express my deepest appreciation to all the military and civilian personnel of Fort Wolters, including the grand employees of Southern Airways of Texas, Inc., without whose enthusiastic support the flight training program could not have been successful.

Finally to the Texas citizens of this area--farmers, rancher workers, merchants--Americans all--my most sincere thanks for your wholehearted support of your Army.

It has been my pleasure to have been the Commandant of the US Army Primary Helicopter School, Fort Wolters, Texas

Howard M. Moore  
Colonel, FA  
Commandant

This article was copied from the "Fort Wolters Trumpet" dated 15 November 1973.

Copied for historical interest by  
Willie H. Casper, Jr.  
Colonel US Army (Ret)  
Former Deputy Commander.  
US Army Primary Helicopter Center/School  
February 6, 1966 to 1 July 1971