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APRIL - MAY - JUNE 1970 Group 1  
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PROJECT CORONA HARVEST  
DO NOT DESTROY  
No. 0239206

DATE: 28 Jan 2017

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HISTORICAL DATA RECORD  
(RCS: AU-D5)

REPORTING PERIOD

From: 1 Apr 70

To: 30 Apr 70

FROM: OIAA, 56th Special Operations Wing  
APO San Francisco 96337

To: 56SOW (WHD)

I. MISSION

a. Primary mission is twofold:

(1) To fulfill search and rescue requirements in Vietnam and Eastern Laos.

(2) To provide tactical air support for studies and observations groups as directed by MACSOG.

b. Secondary mission: To serve as in-country asset as required by higher headquarters.

II. PERSONNEL STATUS

	Officers	Airmen	Civilians	Total
Assigned	12	59	Ø	71
Authorized	15	46	Ø	61
Attached	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø
MIA	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø
KIA	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø

III. EQUIPMENT STATUS

Nomenclature	No. Asgd	Gains	Losses	Reasons
A-1H aircraft	9	2	1	Change of models through rotation of aircraft. 1 A1H and 1 A1J lost to hostile ground fire.
A-1J aircraft	1	1	2	
A-1E aircraft	Ø	Ø	1	
Auxilliary Power unit	5 (A-1)	Ø	Ø	
	1 MD-3	Ø	Ø	
Pick-up, 3-pax	1	Ø	Ø	
Pick-up, 6-pax	1	Ø	Ø	
Van, Multi-stop	2	Ø	Ø	
Jeep	1	Ø	Ø	

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IV. SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS:

Combat Sorties-

OR Rate	93.2
NORS Rate	2.5
NORM Rate	3.3

Air Accident Rate - See narrative

Ground Accident Rate - 1 (See narrative)

V. NARRATIVE

During the period 1 Apr to 30 Apr 1970 OLAA pilots responded to 59 requests for tactical air support for ground operations, 35 requests for support of troops in contact, flew 23 search and rescue missions and 7 missions on SAR airborne alert, and flew 15 non-combat missions for a total of 278 sorties. Spad air strikes resulted in the following bomb damage assessment: three secondary fires, two POL fires, five instances of ground fire silenced, thirty-two confirmed KBA, three military structures destroyed, twenty secondary explosions, seven fighting positions destroyed, one supply location destroyed, and one helicopter destroyed.

OLAA lost two aircraft to hostile ground fire during operations in the month of April. Spad 01, Capt David E. Friestad was forced to bail out after his aircraft was hit during the SAR effort for Cowpoke 18. Maj Dean E. Detar was also forced to extract from his burning aircraft after being hit by enemy ground fire near the CIDG camp at Dak Seang. Both pilots were recovered successfully. Five other aircraft received battle damage in separate instances.

OLAA participated in a total of 13 SAR efforts during the period, of which, 11 were run solely by the unit and 2 were in collaboration with NKP SAR forces. The most significant operation was the rescue of Cowpoke 18 from the heavily defended ford area along Rt 966.

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During that SAR two A-1 aircraft from NKP and one from Da Nang were lost to enemy ground fire during the two-day period. Two OLAA aircraft received substantial battle damage. On-scene commander at the time of the pickup was Lt Colonel James W. Wold, OLAA commander.

A new SAR tactic, the value of which was only recently brought to light, has been made extensive use of whenever possible by SPAD pilots. That is to regularly employ Army Cobra gunships as air cover during the Jolly Green pickup phase of the SAR. Their maneuverability and firepower capabilities make them an excellent Search and Rescue asset in a small arms and automatic weapon environment. The Cobras are limited only by their fuel supply which is good for an average of one hour and forty-five minutes flying time. It is suggested that serious consideration be given to making the Cobra standard equipment of the SAR force.

No significant changes appeared in Steel Tiger operations. The unit SOG operation centered in three major areas: southwest of the DMZ, west and southwest of A Chau, and west of Dak To. SPADs were scrambled on 59 PRAIRIE FIRE operations the majority of which involved close air support for troops in contact. No battle damage was incurred during these operations.

The seige of Dak Seang CIDG camp and subsequently of Dak Pek special forces camp northeast of Dak To provided the SPADs with numerous in-country missions to support air resupply drops and troops in contact during the early part of the month. Such missions gave the unit an opportunity to demonstrate again the effectiveness of the A-1 in a close air support role. On several occasions it was necessary to deliver ordnance within 20-30 meters of friendly positions and the SPADS succeeded in gaining high respect from the ground forces in the area. It should be noted that many pilots from NKP took part in the operation and they are to be commended for their

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outstanding work. One airplane was lost and two received battle damage during that operation.

The beginning of a major turnover of flying personnel took place in April with the departure of Maj Dean E. DeTar, Capt David E. Friestad, and 1Lt John W. Weinig from the flying roster. Two new pilots from NKP, Maj Peter D. Williams, and 1Lt Joel T. Morrison arrived and are now fully established at this unit. Maj Williams is the new Deputy Commander and Operations Officer. Aircrew manning has been a problem in that the unit has not had a sufficient number of pilots to afford adequate combat time off. The unit has been assigned twelve pilots. However, taking into consideration battle injuries, DNIF, R&R and leave requirements during the month of April the unit had an average of 8.3 available aircrews on any given day. Taken another way, the unit had 256 man-working-days available not counting aircrews on DNIF status, and flew 278 sorties for a rate of 1.08 sorties per man per day. Using 8.3 as the average number of aircrews available for flying, the sortie rate per available man during the month of April was 33.6. This statistic is supported by the fact that the one pilot who was available for flying the entire month flew 33 sorties. This manner of aircrew manning does not allow for any combat time off as is the custom with most units in the war zone. The morale of the unit, however continues to remain at a high level, saying much for the spirit of the SPADs.

OLAA experienced one motor vehicle accident in April involving the armament crew step van. There were no injuries although damage to the van was assessed at \$230.00. The driver of the van was found not guilty of negligence and received no disciplinary action.

#### COMMANDER'S REMARKS

The unit experienced one of its peak periods of turnover in maintenance

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personnel. New personnel quickly adapted to their new environment and the unit maintained its 100% effective alert posture. The aircraft operational ready rate was 93.8%. The OR rate has averaged in excess of 92% during the entire calendar year as compared to a 75% OR rate for the A-1s at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB. This is attributed to the personalized maintenance concept and outstanding unit pride and spirit which exists among the SPADs. The SPAD of the Month program was initiated in Feb 70. One man each from Armament and Maintenance are selected as SPAD of the Month. One of them is in turn selected to compete for the 366TFW Gunfighter of the Month. Each SPAD of the Month is presented an engraved plaque, is given a 3 day CTO to NKP, and his name is engraved on the permanent unit honor roll.

The unit received a nest of official mail boxes. Construction of an approved unit mail room is expected to be completed early in May.

Sergeants Steven R. Beisser and Ronald L. Sartin were reenlisted.

VII. ROSTER OF KEY PERSONNEL

Commander: Lt Colonel James W. Wold  
Deputy Commander: Major Dean E. DeTar  
Operations Officer: Major Dean E. DeTar  
Maintenance Superintendent: MSgt Paul J. Homlish Jr. (also NCOIC OLAA)  
Weapons Superintendent: MSgt Curtis L. Reece (also Acting First Sergeant)

*Warren C Blanchard Jr.*  
WARREN C. BLANCHARD JR., 1st Lt,  
OLAA-56 SpOpWg  
Historian  
16 May 1970

*James W. Wold*  
JAMES W. WOLD, Lt Col,  
OLAA-56 SpOpWg  
Commander  
16 May 1970

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