

HISTORY
OF
56TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING

JULY - SEPTEMBER 1970
VOLUME II
(Unclassified Title)

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~~DECLASSIFICATION IAW EO 12958~~
~~REVIEW DATE 7/11/91~~
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DEC 1981
~~REVIEW ON 1/1/91~~

PROJECT CORONA HARVEST
DO NOT DESTROY
No. 0248377
EXEMPTED CATALOGED

SEA TEAM

Date: 19 Aug 91 Init: WW

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DOCUMENT RETAINS CLASSIFICATION
EXCERPT DECLASSIFIED IAW EO 13526
BY SAFE PAPER AFHRA

DATE 28 Jan 2017

RETURN TO
Historical Research Division
ASI/HOA
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112

30 AUG 1991

K-106-56-141
Jul-Sep 1970
V 2

2011/1/10

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HISTORICAL DATA RECORD
(RCE: AU D3)

REPORTING PERIOD
From: 1 August 70
To: 31 August 70

FROM: OLAA-56 Special Operations Wing
APO San Francisco 96337

TO: 56 SOW (WHD)

I. MISSION

a. Primary mission is twofold:

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

(2) To provide tactical support for studies and observations of groups in their long range reconnaissance function as directed by MACSOG.

b. Secondary mission: To provide tactical air support for in-country operations as directed by higher headquarters.

II. PERSONNEL STATUS

	Officers	Airmen	Civilians	Total
Assigned	12	46	0	58
Authorized	15	46	0	61
Attached	0	0	0	0
MIA	0	0	0	0
KIA	0	0	0	0

III. EQUIPMENT STATUS

Nomenclature	No. Asgd	Gains	Losses	Reasons
ALH/J	12	1	1	Crash
Auxilliary Power	5(A-1)	0	0	
Units	1(ND-3)	0	0	
Pick-up (3Pax)	1	0	0	
Pick-up (6Pax)	1	0	0	
Van Multi-purpose	2	0	0	
Jeep	1	0	0	

GROUP 4
Downgraded at 3 year
intervals; declassified
after 12 years

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IV. SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS:

A. Combat Sorties Total 212

 1. SAR Support & Exercises 64

 2. SOG Support & Exercises 114

 3. In-Country Strikes 16

 4. Misc (Ferry, FCF, etc.) 15

B. Total Combat Hours 496.6

C. Aircraft Accidents 1 (cause undetermined)

D. Aircraft Incidents 1

E. Explosive Incidents 0

F. Explosive Accidents 0

G. Ground Accidents 0

H. Munitions Expended

CBU-25	551
LAU-59(WP&HE)	91
BLU-32	120
M-47	56
20mm	18,300 (est)
7.62mm	195,00 (est)

I. Significant BDA--the following significant BDA was reported.

- 1 - sustained fire
- 2 - military structures destroyed
- 3 - bunkers damaged
- 1 - UH-1 helicopter destroyed

V. NARRATIVE

During the period of 1 August to 31 August 1970 Spad pilots responded to 2 Search and Rescue efforts with 4 sorties. In addition, Spad pilots supported the SOG mission with 114 sorties and support in-country forces with 16 sorties. The remaining 15 sorties were for Ferry's and local FCF's.

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GROUP 1
Downgraded at 3 per
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On the morning of 14 Aug 70, Lt Engel and Capt Kent arrived on station as Spad 02 and 04 to support a long range reconnaissance team which had been inserted deep within enemy territory. Within minutes after insertion, the friendly team suffered heavy casualties during an attack by a numerically superior hostile force. Covey 253 immediately directed Spad 02 and 04 in close support of the team. In the face of heavy ground fire and marginal weather conditions, Lt Engel and Capt Kent performed multiple passes, placing their ordnance within 40 meters of the friendly team. The Spads' extremely accurate deliveries forced the enemy to break contact, temporarily relieving the team's desperate situation. Deteriorating weather prevented any further support for the remainder of the day.

At 0545 15 Aug 70, Lt Engel and Capt Wolcott as Spad 01 and 02 and Lt Kasbeer and Maj Lundy as Spad 03 and 04 launched in support of the besieged team. Arriving on station, the Spads learned from Covey 259 that the team was again in contact with the enemy and had suffered further casualties. At Covey 259's direction, Lt Engel and Capt Wolcott, although hampered by a 700 foot ceiling and ground fog, placed their ordnance in close proximity to the team, once again forcing the enemy to break contact. As a result of the intense ground fire, Lt Engel's aircraft received several direct hits from automatic weapons.

Covey 259 next directed Lt Kasbeer and Maj Lundy against all known gun positions. In spite of marginal weather, Spad 03 and 04 continued to deliver ordnance and draw fire toward their aircraft, thus enabling a rescue helicopter to move in and evacuate the wounded.

As Spad 01 and 02 returned to the area, the enemy again assaulted the team's position. Covey 215 directed Lt Engel and Capt Wolcott in the placing

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of ordnance to within 15 meters of the friendlies, thwarting the enemy attack. When the extraction forces assembled in the area, Spad 01 and 02 supplied a smoke screen to shield the rescuing helicopters. Because of the effectiveness of the smoke screen, the remainder of the team was rescued without further casualties.

Lt Engel and Capt Wolcott flew one remaining sortie to try and locate a mission crewmember and to destroy a downed helicopter to prevent it from falling into enemy hands.

On 14 Aug Major Van Dusen was scrambled as Spad 01 on a Prairie Fire Emergency to support the ground team First Snow. Spad 01 was cleared for take off on R/W 17L. Spad 01 was configured with a 300 gal centerline tank, 2 BLU 32's, 8 CBU 25's, 2 IAU 59's, 760 rounds of 20mm and 6000 rounds of 7.62mm. The pilot advanced the throttle to full open and checked the torque oil pressure (top) at 118 PSI, which was above the reject torque of 115 PSI. At approximately 70 KTS the pilot raised the tail to takeoff attitude. As the airspeed approached 100 KTS he noted the torque meter had dropped to 115 PSI. At this point he checked the RAM air switch - direct and the mixture - full rich. The aircraft became airborne, gear was raised, airspeed approximately 110 KTS, when the pilot noted the torque meter decreasing to 110 PSI. The engine appeared to be running rough and the aircraft started to settle. Realizing the aircraft would not remain airborne, the pilot closed the throttle and extended the landing gear. To abort. The aircraft started to swerve to the right after touch down and when it appeared it would depart the runway, the pilot raised the landing gear IAW checklist procedures. The aircraft slipped off the right side of the runway and came to rest approximately 100 feet right of the overrun. The pilot immediately evacuated the aircraft by manually releasing the lap belt and the two parachute connections, and opening the canopy hydraulically. The aircraft was on fire prior to coming to rest, however, became engulfed in flames shortly after the pilot departed.

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Downgraded at 3 year intervals, declassified after 12 years

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VI. COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

The month of August was highly successful, as is indicated in the above report.

Several two-day Prairie Fire Emergencies realistically tested the unit's ability to provide sustained close-air support for the Army's long range reconnaissance teams. The unit passed each test with flying colors. In each case, despite the loss of key personnel through normal rotation, the armament and maintenance support given Spad pilots allowed them to fly all missions asked of them. Unit morale during these emergencies was exceptionally high, despite long and tiring hours.

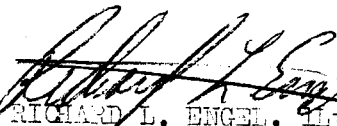
VII. ROSTER OF KEY PERSONNEL:

Commander: Lieutenant Colonel Melvin G. Swanson

Deputy Commander/Ops Officer: Major Albro L. Lundy

Maintenance Superintendent: MSgt Juan R. Urrutia (also HCOIC OMA)

Weapons Superintendent: TSgt Govan O. Huggins (also acting First Sergeant)


RICHARD L. ENGEL, Lt, USAF
CIAA-56 Special Ops Wing
Historian
16 Sept 70


MELVIN G. SWANSON, Lt Col, USAF
Commander

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Classified as SECRET
Declassify; declassified
after 18 years

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HISTORICAL DATA RECORD
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APO San Francisco 96337

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III. EQUIPMENT STATUS

<u>Nomenclature</u>	<u>No. Asgd</u>	<u>Gains</u>	<u>Losses</u>	<u>Reasons</u>
ALH/J	12	0	0	
Auxiliary Power	5 (A-1)	0	0	
Units	1 (ND-3)	0	0	
Pick-up (3Pax)	1	0	0	
Pick-up (6Pax)	1	0	0	
Van Multi-purpose	2	0	0	
Jeep	1	0	0	

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GROUP 4
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intervals; declassified
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W. SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS

A. Combat Sorties Total: 219

1. SAR Support & Exercises	60
2. SOG Support & Exercises	134
3. In-Country Strikes	8
4. Misc (Ferry, FCF, etc.)	17

B. Total Combat Hours 504.7

C. Aircraft Accidents 0

D. Aircraft Incidents 0

E. Explosives Accidents 0

F. Explosives Incidents 0

G. Ground Accidents 0

H. Munitions Expended

CBU-25	608
LAU-59(WPHE)	87
BLU-32	121
M-47	70
20mm	57,900 (est)
7.62mm	166,500 (est)

I. Significant BDA

HBA	1
Military Struc	2 destroyed
Secondary Fire	1 (POL)
Secondary Ex	1
Sustained Fires	3

V. NARRATIVE

During the period of 1 September 1970 to 30 September 1970, the Spad pilots responded to three Search and Rescue efforts with four sorties. In addition, Spad pilots supported the SOG mission with 134 sorties, 34 of which were Prairie Fire Emergencies. Seventeen sorties were flown for local FCF's and for ferry missions.

On 23 September, Lieutenant Colonel Swanson and Captain Rentz, Spads 11 & 12, were scrambled to assist in the pick-up of a downed F-105 pilot, Dallas 01. Dallas 01, after experiencing engine problems, was attempting to get "feet wet" when ejection

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became necessary 20 miles Southeast of Quang Tri. Lieutenant Colonel Swanson and Captain Rentz, after determining the area was secure, directed a Jolly Green HH-53 from the 37th ARRS who made the successful pick-up of the downed crewmember.

On 11 September the Spads assisted in the infil of a unique long range reconnaissance team. Also on that date, units of the Royal Laotian Government were fighting to interdict Rt 23 in the Laotian panhandle. The reconnaissance team, code name "Tailwind", was three times their normal size and was intent on more than reconnaissance. Scheduled to be a diversion for the Laotian unit, Tailwind on 12 September made contact with the enemy. In response to this contact, the Spads launched 10 sorties to support the tactical emergency which had developed. On those sorties Spad pilots made numerous low altitude passes to .50 calibre, and intense small arms and automatic weapons. Strikes were also directed against known mortar positions. By the 13th of September the enemy had definite knowledge he was fighting more than a standard reconnaissance team. An aggressive effort was made to overrun the special forces. The Spads again responded to what had now become a Prairie Fire Emergency by providing twelve sorties. Again low passes and precision delivery repelled hostile forces in their attempt to destroy the friendly team. This lasted throughout the day, and efforts were made to prepare for a first light launch.

On the 14th of September eight sorties were launched on this day to assist in the recovery of this team. The team was safely extracted at 1400 hours on the 14th of September. All total the Spads provided thirty sorties in support of the "Tailwind". The team reported over 400 KBA and suffered only three lost during its heroic activities.

VI. COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

September was an exceptionally active month, particularly on the days we were supporting "Tailwind". The mission was very successful and the Army appears grateful for the support we gave them. Although battle damage was incurred during the month,

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maintained a 97% O/R rate and were still capable of handling any other contingencies that might arise.

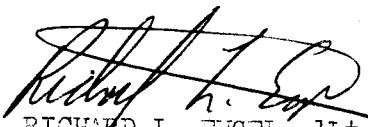
VII. ROSTER OF KEY PERSONNEL


Commander: Lieutenant Colonel Melvin G. Swanson

Deputy Commander: Major Albro L. Lundy, Jr.

Maintenance Superintendent: MSgt Juan R. Urrutia (also NCOIC of OIAA)

Weapons Superintendent: TSgt Govan O. Huggins (also acting First Sergeant)


RICHARD L. ENGEL, 1Lt, USAF
OIAA-56 Special Operations Wing
Historian
17 Oct 70


MELVIN G. SWANSON, Lt Col, USAF
Commander

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