

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

DATE 28 Jan 2017

~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

HISTORY
OF
56th SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING

JANUARY - MARCH 1970
VOLUME II
(Unclassified Title)

P.F.

RETURN TO
USAF Historical Archives
ASI(ASHAF-A)
Maxwell AFB, Ala 36112

30 AUG 1991

AUG 6 56 H1
V.2
30 AUG 1991

PROJECT CORONA HARVEST
DO NOT DESTROY
No. 0227553

CATA

GROUP 3

Downgr
int
automatic

Copy # 1 of 5 copies

70- 0011

RESTRICTION REMOVED BY AFHRA SAFEPAPER.

EXTRACT ONLY

DATE: 28 Jan 2017

47159
5464-

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

HISTORICAL DATA RECORD
(RCS: AU-D5)

REPORTING PERIOD

From: 15 Nov 69

To: 31 Jan 70

FROM: OL-AA, 56 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 special operations 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	47	Ø	59
Authorized	12	47	Ø	59
Attached	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø
MIA	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø
KIA	1	Ø	Ø	1

III. EQUIPMENT STATUS

Nomenclature	No. Asgd	Gains	Losses	Reasons
A-1H aircraft	9	1	1	Aircraft accident
A-1E aircraft	1	Ø	Ø	
Auxilliary power unit	5 (A-1) 1 MD-3	Ø	Ø	
Pick-up, 3-pax	2	Ø	Ø	
Van, Multi-stop	2	Ø	Ø	
Jeep	1	Ø	Ø	

PROJECT CORONA HARVES

DO NOT DESTROY

Ø 227717

CATALOGED No.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CATALOGE

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

IV. SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS

Combat Sorties - 310

(15 Dec - 31 Dec)

(1 Jan - 31 Jan)

OR Rate	84.3%	91.5%
NORS Rate	12.6%	4.9%
NORM Rate	3.0%	3.6%

Air Accident Rate - See narrative

Ground Accident Rate - \emptyset

V. NARRATIVE:

OL-AA, 56 SpOpWg flew a total of 310 combat alert sorties during the period indicated. Spad pilots responded to 113 requests for tactical air support for ground operations, flew 22 airborne alert missions, participated in or conducted 12 SAR efforts, and flew 2 sorties as combat air patrol for the Bob Hope Christmas Show at Chu Lai, Rvn. Spad air strikes resulted in the following overall bomb damage assessment: 42 secondary fires, 21 secondary explosions, 59 structures destroyed, 28 structures damaged, 1 truck destroyed, 1 bulldozer damaged, 6 bunkers destroyed, 26 fighting positions destroyed, 50 confirmed KBA.

During the period, pilots in the unit received one silver star, eight distinguished flying crosses and four air medals for earlier actions.

To cite a few significant examples of missions flown, Capt Robert H. Karre and 1st Lt Donald L. Engebretsen were on a mission to support friendly troops when they were diverted to assist in the rescue of Litter 15, a downed F-100 pilot. Capt Karre and Lt Engebretsen played a major role in the rescue, delivering accurate ordnance in the face of heavy hostile fire, enabling the Jolly Greens to make a pickup. Directing the Litter 15 SAR was 1st Lt John W. Weinig and wingman 1st Lt Maurice A. Coleman. Also involved were Maj Dean E. DeTar and 1st Lt A. J. Roberts III. All were indispensable in making the

²
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Litter 15 SAR effort a successful one. In another instance, 1st Lt James F. Seith and Lt Engebretsen were scrambled in support of a long range reconnaissance team which was surrounded by hostile forces and in immediate danger of being overrun. Lts Seith and Engebretsen were directed against the opposing forces. Laying their ordnance down with devastating accuracy, they were able to stop the enemy's advancement and completely disorganize the attack, allowing the friendly team to be successfully rescued. The Spad flight was subsequently credited by the wounded team leader with killing 50 enemy soldiers on that mission.

The Spad alert commitment is primarily from first light to last light. However, the unit went on 24 hour alert during the period 21 - 24 January involving flying escort for AC-119 Stingers on a special operation. Pilots from the 1st SOS helped solve the problem of obtaining night escort tactics by giving us a night escort briefing.

In late December and early January the unit was faced with particularly bad weather. This was considered a prime contributing cause in the loss of one of our pilots while making an IFR approach on return to base after a strike mission. As a result of this tragedy, greater emphasis has been placed on making all flying personnel aware of the problems associated with IFR operations around DaNang Air Base. In addition, new procedures are being employed by rapcon to insure greater safety during IFR recoveries at this base. OL-AA had no missions cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. Coordination with tower as to the landing runway was sometimes a problem. Local procedures dictate that the active runway be changed when tailwinds exceed fifteen knots. However, a tailwind of greater than seven knots is out of limits for the A-1. The problem was discussed with Air Traffic Control and a solution was reached

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

which allows the Spads to land against traffic when winds dictate.

Both the maintenance and loading crews have done outstanding work in keeping a maximum number of aircraft on flying status and with reliable armament systems. One aircraft, an A-1E model, has been continually plagued with maintenance problems and has caused the OR rate to be substantially lower than it might have been. The primary maintenance problem was an inability to accomplish functional check flights due to adverse weather conditions. Now that weather conditions are improved, that problem has taken care of itself.

The most significant problem encountered was at the beginning of the period when the unit was in the process of moving into its present location. Coordination between OL-AA and support units at DaNang AB was found to be difficult and resulted in excessive delays at times in smoothing out the rough edges in the early operation of the unit. Procurement of office supplies such as desks, filing cabinets, and certain clerical supplies was difficult as these items are particularly in short supply.

Personnel problems were numerous, mainly due to the fact that all the unit's field records are kept at the 56 Combat Support Group (CBPO) and it necessitates a special trip whenever a records problem arises.

A minor problem in armament arose during the special escort mission with the 18th SOS "Stingers". The escort load called for CBU-24 but no allocation had been made by 7th AF for its use. This resulted from a lack of communication with 7th AF and it is unlikely that such a problem will arise again. A sudden shortage of CBU-22 at this location necessitated sending two airplanes to NKP to bring back a special load. 7th AF policy is to have Air Force level distribution of ordnance based on local unit usage. There was apparently a lag in feedback of information on OL-AA ordnance usage resulting in the shortage

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

of CBU-22. Steps are being taken to insure that this does not happen in the future.

No significant change in tactics has been made by OL-AA. The Prairie Fire alert segment of our mission has been in operation since early in 1968 and the tactics that have evolved have been tried, tested and refined to a high degree. Weather is the only appreciable factor affecting our tactics and bad weather usually results in cancellation of the operation. The most difficult aspect of the mission is coordinating with the SOG mission planners in order to have all the assets arrive in the area of operation simultaneously, thus avoiding excessive delays. Close coordination with 20th TASSs "Covey" FACs has kept delays to a minimum.

The terrain around DaNang poses a special problem in air operations particularly during IFR conditions. The December air accident pointed out again the inadequacies of local radar service. Numerous conferences were held with all pilots involving local IFR problems and procedures, and a significant effort is being made by all parties to correct any air traffic control inadequacies that are noted.

The greatest lesson to be learned from the experience of OL-AA is one of receiving support from the parent wing. Primarily, the bulk of work done to organize and develop OL-AA into a working operational unit was generated at this level. As a result, unforeseen problems arose that might have been avoided had there been a more specific plan of operation at the start. A delay in obtaining experienced clerk-typists resulted in a lag in administrative work and a consequent delay in completing tasks such as awards and decorations, security clearances, and setting up the basic unit files.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

VI. COMMANDER'S CONCLUSIONS:

OL-AA, 56 SpOpWg was formed at DaNang AB, RVN on 12 Dec 69 of assets formerly assigned to the 6 SOS, Pleiku AB, RVN. The 6 SOS was deactivated on 15 Nov 69. The mission as stated in section I was discharged by two unofficial detachments, i.e. Detachment 2, 56 SpOpWg, DaNang AB, RVN and Detachment 3, 56 SpOpWg, Pleiku AB, RVN. Det 2 was assigned a Search and Rescue mission, Det 3 was assigned a SOG mission. Det 2 was also responsible for preparing facilities for OL-AA. Det 3 was responsible for moving assets from Pleiku.

Detachment 2 consisted of four officers, Major Dean E. DeTar, Commander; Lt John W. Weinig; Lt Maurice A. Coleman, Jr.; and Lt Albert J. Roberts III and eighteen enlisted men. All personnel were on TDY from the 56 SpOpWg, Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand. The NCOIC was MSgt Carl J. Bir. Four A-1H aircraft were assigned.

Detachment 3 consisted of eight officers, Lt Col James W. Wold, Commander; Major Timothy L. Buttermore, Operations Officer; Capt Robert H. Karre; Capt Glenn R. Manning; Captain Paul D. D. Houppert; Lt Donald L. Engebretsen; Lt Warren C. Blanchard; Lt James F. Seith; and twenty-seven enlisted men. The NCOIC was MSgt Paul J. Homlish, Jr. All personnel were on TDY from the 56 SpOpWg, Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand. Six A-1H aircraft were assigned.

The concept of operations for each unit was to maintain the alert status and to perform organizational maintenance. Supply support was partially provided by the host base; however, most support was from the parent wing. All field maintenance support was from the 56 SpOpWg. This concept was used after the consolidation of the detachments at DaNang on an "as required" basis

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

while the proper supply channels were established. By the end of Jan 70, most parts and spares support were handled by the 366 TFW, the host unit.

The original personnel concept for OL-AA, 56 SpOpWg was to have all personnel on TDY with rotation of individuals at approximately 30 day intervals. This concept was not approved because of head count problems, i.e. personnel TDY from Thailand to Vietnam are counted against the manpower ceilings in both countries. On 12 Dec 70, all personnel were sent PCS without PCA.

The major problem of Det 2, 56 SpOpWg and OL-AA, 56 SpOpWg was the lack of lead time to obtain and improve facilities and parking revetments. The host-tenant agreement was not written, coordinated or approved until late January. This administrative detail severely hampered the commander's ability to demand and receive the necessary support from the 366 TFW.

During the period from 15 Nov 69 to 12 Dec 69, Det 2 rescued: (a) the pilot of Milestone 513, Lt Comdr Lloyd W. Richards, who had a broken neck, a dislocated shoulder and two broken ankles. This SAR was opposed. (b) The pilot of Litter 15 (F-100) near Saravane was rescued. The SAR force was opposed by heavy ZPU, 23mm, and 37mm guns and ground forces. (c) The pilots and aircraft of Det 2 deployed to NKP and flew twelve sorties in support of the rescue of Boxer 22. (d) A total of 104 sorties were flown between 15 Nov and 15 Dec in support of the SAR alert commitment.

During the period from 15 Nov 69 through 15 Dec 69 Detachment 3 flew 127 sorties in support of the Studies and Observation Group (SOG) and 38 sorties in support of the seige of the Bu Prang and Duc Lap Special Forces Camps. The total number of sorties flown was 198 which included ferry flights and functional check flights. These sorties totaled 555 flying hours.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

VII. ROSTER OF KEY PERSONNEL:

Commander: Lt Col James W. Wold

Deputy Commander: Major Dean E. DeTar

Operations Officer: Major Timothy L. Buttermore

Maintenance Superintendent: MSgt Paul J. Homlish Jr. (also NCOIC OL-AA)

Weapons Superintendent: MSgt Curtis L. Reece (also Acting First Sergeant)

Warren C Blanchard
WARREN C. BLANCHARD, 1st Lt,
OL-AA, 56 SpOpWg
Historian
26 February 1970

James W Wold
JAMES W. WOLD, Lt Col,
OL-AA, 56 SpOpWg
Commander
26 February 1970

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

HISTORICAL DATA RECORD
(RCS: AU-D5)

REPORTING PERIOD

From: 1 Feb 70

To: 28 Feb 70

FROM: OLAA, 56 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 special operations 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	47	Ø	59
Authorized	12	47	Ø	59
Attached	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø
MIA	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø
KIA	Ø	Ø	Ø	1

III. EQUIPMENT STATUS

Nomenclature	No. Asgd	Gains	Losses	Reasons
A-1H aircraft	9	Ø	1	Temp due to battle damage
A-1E aircraft	1	Ø	Ø	
Auxilliary power	5 (A-1)	Ø	Ø	
unit	1 MD-3	Ø	Ø	
Pick-up, 3-pax	1	Ø	1	
Pick-up, 6-pax	1	1	Ø	
Van, Multi-stop	2	Ø	Ø	
Jeep	1	Ø	Ø	

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

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

) IV. SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS

Combat Sorties - 174

OR Rate	93.2%
NORS Rate	4.7%
NORM Rate	2.1%

Air Accident Rate - See narrative

Ground Accident Rate - \emptyset

V. NARRATIVE:

During the period 1 Feb to 28 Feb 1970 OLAA pilots responded to 75 requests for tactical air support for ground operations, flew 18 missions on SAR airborne alert and flew 18 non-combat missions for a total of 204 sorties. Spad air strikes resulted in the following bomb damage assessment: thirty-five secondary fires, eighteen instances of ground fire silenced, twenty-six confirmed or probable KBA, eighteen military structures destroyed and twelve secondary explosions.

OLAA experienced one major aircraft incident due to battle damage from hostile ground fire on 17 Feb 1970. The pilot, 1st Lt A. J. Roberts, was leading Spad 03/04 flight on a mission in support of a SOG team and had just completed a dive bomb pass when he received a 37mm AAA round in the left wing tip. His wingman, 1st Lt Larry L. Cavender, escorted him into an emergency landing at Pleiku AB. Spad 11/12, flying SAR airborne alert, also flew directly to the area but they were not needed. Lt Roberts successfully engaged the approach end barrier and landed unharmed. The aircraft, an A-1H model, required a new wing outboard of the fold and was out of commission at Pleiku through the end of the month (see Atch one).

Spad search and rescue forces did not participate in any SAR efforts during the period. Spad 11 and 12 flew 19 airborne alert missions.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

All Prairie Fire missions in support of Studies and Observation Groups were flown in Steel Tiger East ranging from as far south as the tri-border area to as far north as the DMZ. In the most significant action of this period, Spads flew in support of Halfback, a large SOG team operating in the tri-border area west of Ben Het. The team was inserted with Spads flying top cover and there was no enemy contact. Within twenty-four hours, however, the team began receiving incoming rounds ranging from small arms to RPG and mortar and it was apparent that they were surrounded by a sizeable hostile force. The team resisted initially but incurred several wounded and it was decided to extract them rather than attempt resupply. Spads scrambled to suppress the hostile fire, making repeated low level passes in extremely poor visibility due to smoke and haze, while the helicopters went in for the pickup, but two helicopters were lost to hostile fire and the pickup attempt was aborted. Spads continued to fly cover for the team into the night until gunships could be brought up. The next morning another attempt was made and, after the A-1s made a final suppression attack on the area, the team was successfully extracted. A problem arose during this operation involving the loading of special ordnance on the SOG aircraft. After the first rescue attempt failed, Seventh Air Force ordered four aircraft at DaNang to be fully loaded with CBU-19 leaving only two aircraft with a standard Prairie Fire suppression load. This meant that OLAA would not have been able to respond to another Prairie Fire emergency should one have occurred simultaneously which is often the case. After some consideration Seventh ordered the CBU-19 downloaded and replaced with CBU-24 which is completely incompatible with a close air support situation, but it was apparent that the order resulted from an unfamiliarity with the ordnance. Once this was

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

) understood, it was decided to utilize the standard load.

OLAA continues to be faced with the problem of obtaining additional office desks which are not now available. Also, for it's alert facility, the unit is authorized certain recreational equipment, however, there have been excessive delays and suitable equipment has not been issued at this time. OLAA has maintained an active awards and decorations program, however administrative delays in processing have been encountered at CBPO. It is anticipated that a smooth administrative flow will resume in the near future.

Maintenance experienced many delays which reduced the OR rate. Such delays were invariably the result of base supply's inability to obtain the parts necessary for aircraft maintenance. The battle damaged aircraft at Pleiku was late in getting back in commission due to a delay in obtaining a new wing section.

) Vehicle maintenance posed a problem mainly because of the large backlog of vehicles out of commission at the motor pool. Excessive delays were experienced for even preventive maintenance items such as spark plugs and distributor points. In an attempt to align actual vehicle distribution with the base vehicle authorization listing, the motor pool reclaimed one of the unit's better conditioned three passenger trucks and substituted a six passenger truck of the same year which was notably in need of major repairs in the interest of driving safety. This truck went back to the motor pool for repairs and left the unit one vehicle short of it's authorized quota for an extended period of time.

Coordination and cooperation with support units on this base and at Nakhon Phanom show continued improvement.

VI. COMMANDER'S CONCLUSIONS

Maintenance: Supply delays such as for the #3 engine cylinder on aircraft 643 point out a requirement for review of supply lay-in of certain items at

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

) DaNang. It is also imperative that one and preferably two spare engines be prepositions at DaNang. Necessary action will be initiated.

Vietnamization Program: A large portion of facilities at DaNang are expected to be transferred to the VNAF this calendar year. Our present location on the flight line is included in one of the tentative plans as a facility required by the VNAF. For planning purposes we are furnishing the 366 TFW with requirements for total square feet of floor space, special storage space required for AGE, munitions, inflammables, etc., and any other factors unique to our operation. The basic assumptions being used in our planning are as follows:

- a. Current facilities will be vacated within the next six months.
- b. Present personnel force structure will remain at its present level.
- c. OLAA and its mission will remain at DaNang for an indefinite period of time.

) Whenever the above changes occur, the Host-Tenant Agreement will require modification.

Budget: The Budget Review Panel (366TFW) has approved the following operating budget for submission to 7AF:

FY 70 - TDY:	\$2,000
FY 70 - Supply:	\$64,000
FY 71 - TDY:	\$2,000
FY 71 - Supply:	\$115,000
FY 71 - Equipment:	\$6,262

Unit Mail Room: A Civil Engineering Work Order to construct a unit mail room was submitted on 9 Jan and was approved. All required material is not yet on hand. The request specifies wire mesh covered individual boxes as a temporary expedient. Requirement exists for one section of Post Office Department approved mail boxes with combination locks. Efforts to date to secure this have been unsuccessful. It has been requested that NKP and Udorn Det 1

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

resources be surveyed to determine availability of one section.

R&R Policy for Enlisted Men: Current plan, as discussed with Lt Col Stone on 27 Feb, is to have OLAA maintenance men depart from DaNang on R&R fourteen to fifteen days prior to DEROS. Upon return from R&R they will proceed to NKP on the first available C-47 to complete outgoing processing. Enlisted men being reassigned to OLAA will be briefed prior to departure on advantages (income tax exemption; combat pay; all R&R locations open to DaNang personnel - Hawaii, Sydney, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Taipei, Bangkok, etc.) and disadvantages (cannot take R&R until last month of tour due to austere manning; austere living conditions compared to NKP).

Unit Effectiveness: The morale and esprit de corps of the unit are outstanding. Almost without exception every officer and enlisted man assigned to the unit is a volunteer. Overall maintenance effectiveness and, hence, mission effectiveness is enhanced by the close rapport existing between pilots and maintenance personnel, a condition made possible by the small size of the unit and the daily contact between the officers and men.

Command: Command of this unit has been extremely rewarding in the short period of time since activation in late 1969. Although not as prestigious as command of a squadron might be, it has had the advantages of providing a learning experience and a growth situation not possible in an established unit. Every day has presented new problems, but every obstacle encountered has been a challenge to management ability. The young lieutenants have been given their initial exposure to staff work as additional duties in organizing the administrative function; establishing supply accounts; supervising the maintenance function; staffing a request for an alert facility (subsequently approved by PACAF); organizing and writing the unit history; organization and management of

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

unit and officer's funds; organization and administration of an aggressive awards and decorations program; management of resources such as vehicles, facilities and housing. An operating budget tailored to the size and location of this unit had to be developed for the remainder of FY 70 and for FY 71. A Host-Tenant Agreement had to be written, coordinated and consummated. Initial supply difficulties not normally experienced by a long established organization had to be resolved. In all the initial confusion of moving, consolidation of two detachments, and necessary reorganization, the mission remained the paramount consideration. It is a tribute to the pilots and the maintenance and armament personnel that the unit maintained a 100% effective alert posture during these early days.

VII. ROSTER OF KEY PERSONNEL:

Commander: Lt Col James W. Wold

Deputy Commander: Major Dean E. DeTar

Operations Officer: Major Timothy L. Buttermore

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
9 April 1970

James W. Wold
JAMES W. WOLD, Lt Col,
OLAA-56 SpOpWg
Commander
9 April 1970

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

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

HISTORICAL DATA RECORD
(RCS: AU-D5)

REPORTING PERIOD

From: 1 Mar 70

To: 31 Mar 70

FROM: OLAA, 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	48	Ø	6Ø
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	8	1	2	Change of models through rotation of aircraft
A-1J aircraft	2	2	Ø	
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	

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals; declassified after 12 years

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

IV. SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS

Combat Sorties -

OR Rate	86.8%
NORS Rate	14.4%
NORM Rate	4.5%

Air Accident Rate - See narrative

Ground Accident Rate - \emptyset

V. NARRATIVE

During the period 1 Mar to 31 Mar 1970 OLAA pilots responded to 78 requests for tactical air support for ground operations, flew 14 search and rescue missions and 15 missions on SAR airborne alert, and flew 26 non-combat missions for a total of 236 sorties. Spad air strikes resulted in the following bomb damage assessment: thirty-five secondary fires, eighteen instances of ground fire silenced, twenty-six confirmed or probable KBA, eighteen military structures destroyed and twelve secondary explosions.

OLAA experienced no accidents or incidents during the month of March. The unit participated in a total of ten search and rescue efforts resulting in seven successful rescues of downed airmen. Of special note was the rescue of Wolf 06A on 21 March. Major Dean E. DeTar, flying as Sandy 05, expertly organized and directed the SAR forces in a successful pickup after an unsuccessful attempt the previous day. Major DeTar is to be highly commended for his action. In addition to the Wolf 06 SAR, OLAA pilots were involved in SAR efforts for Charger 411, Speedy 19, Nail 53, Misty 50, Garfish 501, Nail 37, and two Army helicopters. Every pilot in the unit was involved in at least one SAR effort.

Steel Tiger operations saw no significant changes. A-1Hs from OLAA were involved in SOG operations ranging from the Tri-border area north to the DMZ in selected areas along the Vietnamese-Laotian border. Again the mission

2
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

consisted of flying combat air patrol in support of Studies and Observation Groups. Most of these missions involved close air support for troops in contact. Tactics for this mission are being refined to a high degree resulting in a very quick reaction time and increased safety for the teams involved. The addition of an FM radio to the unit operations center has greatly enhanced our flexibility in the air and has considerably shortened our average turnaround times on the ground.

With the departure of Captain Robert H. Karre, the unit lost one of its most capable pilots. Captain David E. Friestad, Capt Karre's replacement, has proven himself to be well qualified to fill the vacancy. One enlisted man left and was replaced.

The unit was finally successful in obtaining a sufficient number of office desks making it easier to accomplish the various administrative tasks required. Some difficulty was experienced in obtaining clerical supplies which seem to be in short supply on base. A nest of mail boxes with combination locks was located at Tan Son Nhut Air Base and is being shipped to this unit for installation in the unit mail room.

The average OR rate was substantially lowered due to the maintenance difficulties experienced with the one "E" model. In addition, the "H" model OR rate was lowered due to the delay in obtaining an engine change for one of the aircraft. Nevertheless, the overall 91% OR rate for the A-1H/J was significantly above the Air Force standard of 71%.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

VI. COMMANDER'S CONCLUSIONS

Personnel: Four replacement pilots are required between now and 10 May. Major Buttermore has been med-evacuated to Chanute AFB, which reduces unit pilot manning to 73% of authorized. Major DeTar, Lt Coleman and Lt Weinig will depart DaNang AB for NKP during the period 27 April - 10 May. Lt Weinig's replacement will sign for custody of the life support property account and should be in place prior to Lt Weinig's estimated departure date of 27 April. A CTO program, such as exists at NKP, is urgently needed for OLAA pilots. Thirteen to fourteen hour alert duty days for up to twenty consecutive days without a complete day off are resulting in fatigue. The emergency leave of one pilot and leg injury of another has aggravated the situation, as well as fitting the leaves of all former 6th SOS pilots into a five month period. The timely input of replacement pilots in April and early May will enable us to recover to a normal schedule with adequate time off from the alert schedule and possible implementation of a CTO program.

Maintenance: Consideration should be given to dedicating twelve A-1H/J aircraft by tail number to the SOG/SAR alert force at DaNang AB. Two of these aircraft would be in phase cycle at any given time, with ten aircraft on station at DaNang. These aircraft should be equipped with secure voice FM radios because of current MACSOG mission requirements and 7AF emphasis on COMSEC. Another reason for dedicating twelve aircraft is to keep the underside painted gray because of our day mission. Aircraft flying day missions in South Vietnam and Steel Tiger are painted gray to minimize the silhouette effect.

This organization has implemented a SPAD of the Month program to recognize superior performance by airmen in grades of E-1 through E-4. The airman

4
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

selected is awarded a certificate, given a weekend CTO to NKP, and is entered in competition for the 366TFW Gunfighter of the Month award. They will also be submitted to 56 SpOpWg in competition for Maintenance Man of the Month.

The 366TFW RCS: U-36 Report has been in error the past two months, reflecting approximately 60% of actual sorties and flying hours for this unit. The problems involved in processing time cards for the report have been resolved, and this should result in accurate reporting henceforth.

Maintenance and armament personnel are performing in an outstanding manner. During the month of March, the ten assigned A-1s flew an average of 62.6 hours each, and the OR rate on the A-1H/J aircraft was approximately 89%.

Sergeant Carl A. Great was reenlisted.

One additional load crew and one gun mechanic have been requested to be assigned to man OLAA on a par with the three A-1 squadrons at NKP.

Vietnamization Program: This program has highest command interest. Tenant units attached to 366 TFW have been requested to furnish information concerning ability to train VNAF personnel. This unit has the capability to train a limited number of maintenance and armament personnel and VNAF A-1 pilots in the MACSOG mission.

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
17 April 1970

James W. Wold
JAMES W. WOLD, Lt Col,
OLAA-56 SpOpWg
Commander
17 April 1970

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~