

HISTORY

OF

56TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1970

VOLUME II

(Unclassified Title)

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

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HISTORICAL DATA RECORD

REPORTING PERIOD

FROM: 1 October 1970
TO: 31 October 1970

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

	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>AIRMEN</u>	<u>CIVILIANS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Assigned	16	51	0	67
Authorized	16	46	0	62
Attached	0	0	0	0
MIA	0	0	0	0
KIA	1	0	0	0

III. EQUIPMENT STATUS

<u>NOMENCLATURE</u>	<u>NO. ASGD</u>	<u>GAINS</u>	<u>LOSSES</u>	<u>REASONS</u>
AH/J	12	1	1	A/C Accident
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	

PROJECT CORDON HARVEST

DO NOT DESTROY

0 250972

N.

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

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III. SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS

A. Combat Sorties Total: 192

1. SAR Support & Exercise	42
2. SOG Support & Exercise	104
3. In-Country Strikes	2
4. Misc (Ferry, FCF, etc)	44

B. Total Combat Hours 430.1

C. Aircraft Accidents 1

D. Aircraft Incidents 0

E. Explosive Accidents 0

F. Explosive Incidents 0

G. Ground Accidents 0

H. Munitions Expended

CBU-25	376
LAU-59 (WP&HE)	19
BLU-32	38
M-47	10
20mm	33,400 (est)
7.62mm	107,500 (est)

I. SIGNIFICANT BDA

3 - 50cal positons silenced
1 - medium secondary fire
3 - KBA

V. NARRATIVE

During the period of 1 Oct to 30 Oct 1970 the Spad pilots responded to one Search and Rescue effort with two sorties. 104 sorties were launched in support of the SOG mission of which 22 were responded to Prairie Fire Emergencies. The remaining 44 sorties were local FCFs, Ferry flights, and two weather evacs to NIP.

On 6 Oct 70, Major John V. Williams, Spad 02 launched at 1008H in support of a Prairie Fire Emergency. After forty minutes of flight at ten thousand feet just prior to arriving on scene, Spad 02 advised Spad 01 that his engine was running rough. Spad 01 told Spad 02 to jettison his ordnance and turn to a heading

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

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090 degrees. Spad 02 jettisoned his ordnance and turned to a heading of about 045 degrees. Spad 02 then jettisoned the center line tank after Spad 01 reminded him. Aerial 05 then joined Spad 02 in trail and they crossed the Ashau Valley in trail descending. Spad 02 then radioed that his prop was running away and that he had a sump light. Aerial 05 reported that Spad 02 then turned 180 degrees in a controlled descending turn and impacted in a landing attitude on a relative flat defoliated ridge about twelve hundred feet up the eastern rim of the valley. On impact the wings ripped off and then the fuel tank exploded and the ball of flame extended about fifty meters forward of the aircraft. Neither aerial 05 nor Spad 01 saw a chute and aerial 05 reported that the canopy was on the aircraft on impact. About twenty minutes later Zorro 03 lowered a medic who inspected the crash site. The medic reported the aircraft destroyed and fragments scattered over a fifty meter area. The medic reported that he found Major William's badly damaged survival radio and helmet but no trace of the body, i.e. zippers, knock fastenings, gun or gun belt.

On 7 Oct 70 a bright light team secured the wreckage and recovered the body. In addition, numerous pictures were taken to assist the accident board.

On 28 Oct 70 the Spads from DaNang were scheduled to evacuate to NKP due to a pending tropical storm aimed at DaNang. Spads 3 & 4 were launched to support a "ball game" and then to divert to NKP. At 1200 Spads 01 and 02 were launched to evacuate to NKP. While enroute, Spad 01 heard a conversation on guard between Oiler 02 and Vanguard. Recognizing that a reconnaissance team was in trouble Spad 01 made contact with Oiler 02 and immediately diverted to the scene to assist the stricken team. As the team leader made his initial request for ordnance the intense fire fight that was taking place could be heard in the background. After expending all their ordnance Spad 01 called for Spads 05, 06 & 07 in common fox mike who were also evacuating. Spads 05, 06 & 07 arrived

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

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Spad 01 & 02 had to leave due to diminishing fuel reserves. After continued suppression efforts, the stricken team was rescued by helicopter at 1500 hrs.

VI. COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

No comments.


VII. ROSTER OF KEY PERSONNEL

Commander: Lieutenant Colonel Melvin G. Swanson

Deputy Commander: Maj Albro L. Lundy, Jr.

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

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


RICHARD L. ENGEL, 1Lt, USAF
OLAA-56 Special Operations Wing
Historian
Nov 70

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GROUP 4
Excluded at 5 year
intervals, automatic
after 15 years

Historical Data Record

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Reporting Period

FROM: 1 November 1970
TO: 30 November 1970

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

	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>AIRMEN</u>	<u>CIVILIANS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Assigned	16	48	0	64
Authorized	16	46	0	62
Attached	0	0	0	0
MIA	0	0	0	0
KIA	0	0	0	0

III. EQUIPMENT STATUS

<u>NOMENCLATURE</u>	<u>NO. ASGN</u>	<u>GAINS</u>	<u>LOSSES</u>	<u>REASONS</u>
ALH/J	12	0	0	
Auxilliary Power	5 (A-1)	0	0	
Units	1 (ND-3)	0	0	
Pick-up (3 Pax)	1	0	0	
Pick-up (6 Pax)	1	0	0	
Van Multi-Purpose	2	0	0	
Jeep	1	0	0	

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

SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS

A. Combat Sorties Total: 200

1. SAR Support and Exercise	42
2. SOG Support and Exercise	116
3. In-Country Strikes	0
4. Misc (Ferry, FCF, etc)	42

B. Total Combat Hours 497.9

C. Aircraft Accidents 0

D. Aircraft Incidents 1

E. Explosive Accidents 0

F. Explosive Incidents 0

G. Ground Accidents 0

H. Munitions Expended

CBU-25	755
LAU-59	0
BLU-32	0
M-47	51
20mm	40,500 (est)
7.62mm	163,100 (est)

I. SIGNIFICANT BDA

- 7 Medium Fires
- 2 Small Secondary explosions
- 1 Military structure damaged
- 3 Small military structure damaged

V. NARRATIVE

1. During the period of 1 November to 30 November 1970 the Spad pilots launched 116 sorties in support of the SOG mission, of which 18 were in response to Prairie Fire Emergencies. There were 2 sorties flown in a SAR practice in coordination with the Jolly Greens. The remaining 42 sorties were locals, FDFs, and Ferry flights.

2. On 3 Nov 1970 Spads 03 and 04 were detailed to launch on a SOG support mission. while taxiing to the arming area. Spad 03 impacted 04 causing damage to the left

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

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ing. The left wing tip and leading edge of A/C 286 were replaced after 80 man hours.

3. On 4 Nov 1970 Spad 13, 14 and 15 flew escort for the Honorable Dr. Robert S. Seamans, Secretary of the Air Force, and his party. The **escort** picked up the 3 Jolly Greens at Binh Thuy and flew them to Soc Trang. The Spads held in the area while Dr. Seamans turned over control of the base to the VNAF. The Spads rejoined the departing Jollys and escorted the party back to Binh Thuy for a similar ceremony there. The mission was flown as briefed and as practiced.
4. On 28 Nov 1970 Spad 03 and 04 launched at 17:20 in support of a Prairie Fire Emergency. 03 and 04 expended the ordnance on the hostile forces but a pickup was unable due to adverse weather and approaching darkness. A gunship was called in for night suppression to relieve 03 and 04. At 0300H 29 Nov 70 the Spads were alerted for a first light pickup effort. 0650 Spads 01 and 02 launched for rendezvous with Vapid 22. Upon arrival the Spads were immediately briefed that the team was surrounded and taking fire from all 4 quadrants. The FAC directed the strike on the aggressor forces 25 meters from the friendlies in a heavy tree line. 01 and 02 made repeated passes of this nature as directed by the ground team. Spads 03 and 04 arrived on the scene 45 minutes later and held in reserve. The helicopter package, arriving 10 minutes after 04 and 03, proceeded to deliver their ordnance. Several passes later 01 and 02 had expended their ordnance departed the immediate area, as 03 and 04 continued their strikes as directed by Vapid 22 while the choppers set up for the pickup. 03 and 04 were making their final delivery runs when the chopper finally departed the LZ with 6 KIA and 6 WIA.
5. Lt Col Robert S. Adams assumed command of the 56 SOW OLAA and Major Robert J. Donaldson as Operations Officer 4 Nov 70, when Lt Col Melvin G. Swanson and Major Albro L. Lundy, Jr were rotated to 56 SOW, Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand. Captain William Oberlin arrived 14 Nov to bring OLAA up to the present strength

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

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16 pilots.

VI. COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

No Comments

VII. ROSTER OF KEY PERSONNEL

Commander: Lieutenant Colonel Robert S. Adams

Operations Officer: Major Robert J. Donaldson

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

Weapons Superintendent: TSgt James T. Hall/also acting First Sergeant

Charles L. Tipton

CHARLES L. TIPTON, 1Lt, USAF
OIAA-56 Special Operations Wing
Historian
15 Dec 70

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

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HISTORICAL DATA RECORD

Reporting Period
From: 1 Dec 70
16 Dec 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	CIVILIAN	TOTAL
Assigned	16	48	0	64
Authorized	16	46	0	62
Attached	0	0	0	0
MIA	0	0	0	0
KIA	0	0	0	0

III. EQUIPMENT STATUS

<u>NOMENCLATURE</u>	<u>NO. ASSIGNED</u>	<u>GAINS</u>	<u>LOSSES</u>	<u>REASONS</u>
AH/J	12	0	0	
Auxillary Power	5(A-1)	0	0	
Units	1(ND-3)	0	0	
Pick-up	1	0	0	

GROUP-4
Downgraded at 3 year intervals;
Declassified after 12 years.

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Pick-up (6 Pax)	1	0	0
Van Multi-Purpose	2	0	0
Jeep	1	0	0

IV. SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS

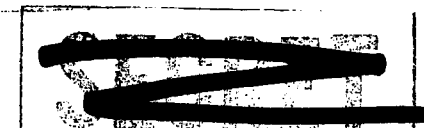
A. Combat Sorties	64
1. SAR Support and Exercise	34
2. S6G Support and Exercise	20
3. In-country Strikes	0
4. Misc (Ferry, FCF, etc.)	10
B. Total Combat Hours	167.1
C. Aircraft Accidents	0
D. Aircraft Incidents	0
E. Explosive Accidents	0
F. Explosive Incidents	0
G. Ground Accidents	0
H. Munitions Expended	
CBU-25	220
LAU-59	0
BLU-32	0
M-47	0
20mm	12,500 (est)
7.62mm	54,000 (est)
I. Significant BDA.	none

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V. NARRATIVE

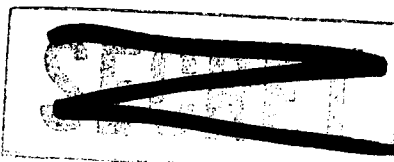
Wednesday, Dec 2, L/C Robert S. Adams and wingman Maj. Kemplin C. Belt were scrambled at 0943H on a Search and Rescue mission. Stormy 03 Alpha and Bravo, an F-4 FAC out of DaNang, was down near D45 in Steel Tiger. Spads 01 and 02, Captain John W. Taylor and Lt. Douglas D. Carmichael, were released by Blue Chip to escort the Jolly Greens to Ch. 103 for holding. Weather in the area was approximately 200 overcast but Spad 11 went under it to probe the valleys and ravines near the survivors. Two nearby Army choppers, recognizing the "Spad" call sign, asked if they could be of assistance. Spad 11 accepted the assistance and advised the choppers to probe the ravines near the survivors. After 2½ hours, Spad 11, running low on fuel, briefed Sandy low from NKP, Major Petter B. Lee of the existing situation. Approximately 15 minutes later one of the Army Dust-Off's located "B" and initiated a pick-up. "A" saw the chopper in the hover and vectored him to his position and was also rescued. Queen advised SAR completion at 1320H. Spad 11 RTB'd with one 30 cal hit in the centerline.

Saturday Dec 12, Spads 11 and 12, Lt. Richard Engel and Captain John W. Taylor, were scrambled on a Search and Rescue mission. Spads 01 and 02 were released by Blue Chip and launched to the scene for possible strike support. Falcon 64B an F-4 GIB had ejected in the southern Barrel Roll. Sandy low from NKP, Major Albrow L. Lundy Jr., briefed Spad 11 and 12 of the

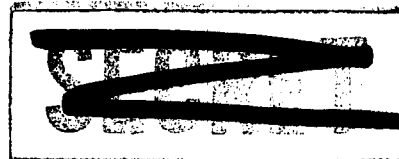

existing situation for the pick-up. On the first attempt the Jolly received small arms fire and was forced to retreat. The Spads were put in to strike the area again. The Jolly then entered the area again and let a PJ down the string and recovered 64B. Upon examination of 64B in the chopper it was found he had been shot in the head. All assets RTB'd to NKP.

Friday Dec 4, Spads 01 and 02, Maj. Kemplin C. Belt and Capt. William C. Oberlin, and Spads 03 and 04, Capt. Levy M Rentz and Capt. John W. Taylor were launched in support of "Fence Post" in the Leghorn area. Spads 01 and 02 arrived after the initial "TIC" but found the area quiet. As the Package arrived for the pick-up, the team was assaulted by hostile forces from 360 degrees. Gunships and Spads worked the area constantly until they had exhausted all ordnance. The ground team advised they were out of ammo and that if they weren't picked up on the next attempt they would be overrun. Spads 03 and 04 had not arrived as of yet so the Army "slick" went in without air support and made a successful pick-up. Spads 01 and 02 RTB'd to Ch. 77 while Spads 03 and 04 covered the pick-up of a downed "Cobra" crew in the immediate area.

Tuesday Dec 15, 5 A-1's and 1 A-1E Skyraider flew the "last pass" over DaNang Air Base, RVN. They left behind 2 A-1's for SAR support from DaNang, 2 A-1's for SAR support from Bien Hoa, and many friends in the Monkey Mountain area. The Spads, formerly the 6 SOS from Pleiku, had spent one year flying from DaNang providing close air support for any friend in need.



VI. COMMANDER'S COMMENTS



A very proud and successful organization has flown its last mission in the RVN. Many courageous airmen have a share in the proud heritage of this organization. This can be attested to by the many pilots who have been picked up behind the lines and the hundreds of Special Forces personnel who have only the courage and skills of a Spad pilot to thank for being alive today. I speak for those who have gone before me as well as the Officers and Airmen that saw the close of this unit when I say, "I'm proud to have been a member of this inspiring organization."

VII. ROSTER OF KEY PERSONNEL

Commander Lt. Col. Robert S. Adams

Operations Officer Major Robert J. Donaldson

Maintenance Supervisor MSgt Juan R. Urrutia/ also NCOIC of OLAA

Weapons Supervisor TSgt James T. Hall/ also acting First Sergeant

Charles L. Tipton 1167
Charles L. Tipton, 1/Lt, USAF

Historial Officer

