

THE OFFICIAL HISTORIES OF THE 6994TH SECURITY SQUADRON



“Top 10” Questions

Question #3. The EC-47 during the “Easter Offensive” of 1972. Turning back this massive NVA assault is as near a vindication of airpower as can be found in the entire war. The EC-47 must have played a part, but at present we have almost no relative information.

Response. The response consisted of extracts from the Det. 2 history for January-June 1972 which describe efforts to D/F North Vietnamese tanks in southern Laos. One of the principal battles of the offensive occurred around the town of An Loc, north of Saigon in the area covered by the 6994th/360th TEWS out of Tan Son Nhut. Presumably there would have been considerable ARDF support for the eventually successful allied operations to break the siege, but nothing from the 6994th histories was received.

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Question 3

15455(H)
9013

THE HISTORY OF
DETACHMENT 2, 6994th SECURITY SQUADRON
1 JANUARY 1972 - 30 JUNE 1972
RCS: USS-D3



~~CONTAINS CODEWORD MATERIAL~~

1 JULY 1972

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Detachment 2, 6994th Security Squadron, APO San Francisco 96337

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CHAPTER VI

SPECIAL INTEREST ITEMS

North Vietnamese Tanks Enroute to Southern Laos and South Vietnam

(U) ~~(S-NVCCO)~~ In February, this Detachment was tasked with a special ARDF/AIC mission, targeted specifically against North Vietnamese tank activity in Southern Laos. The first mission was flown on 17 February; the first positive results were obtained on 19 February.

(U) ~~(S-NVCCO)~~ A minor equipment problem was encountered during the first few days, but it received immediate attention and was soon overcome. It was discovered during the mission on the 19th that, while the ARDF position was able to monitor and DF the voice signal in the AM mode, the AIC position was unable to obtain a legible recording of the communications. This problem was solved by replacing the long wire antenna, normally utilized on the Low VHF "E" Band, with the whip antenna which is normally utilized on the Medium and High VHF Bands.

(U) ~~(S-NVCCO)~~ The first fully successful mission was flown on 24 February and proved to be highly productive in both ARDF and collection. Three DF Fixes were obtained locating the tanks in Southeastern Laos in the vicinity of 15:26N 107:07E. The voice

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communications reflected a minimum of 19 vehicles, positively identified as tanks, involved in the movement southward. The intercepted communications indicated that this major group was divided into three smaller groups and that within these groups the individual tanks were maintaining an interval of one kilometer. Intercept also divulged that the planned parking area, following the movement for the night, would be area "A-3" (unlocated).

(u) ~~(S UNK)~~ Positive ADF and voice collection results were again obtained on 25 February. The callsigns intercepted indicated a different group of tanks involved in this activity. Two DF Fixes placed this tank group in the vicinity of 15:06N 107:12E, a position slightly southeast of the previous days activity. The intercepted communications established the movement to be from "L-2" to "L-3", both unlocated parking areas.

(u) ~~(S UNK)~~ Only voice communications intercept was obtained on the mission of 26 February. This intercept revealed a minimum of eight groups of tanks moving southward. The mission was unable to obtain ADF results and there were no references to locations in the voice communications.

(u) ~~(S UNK)~~ Further tank activity occurred on 2 March when ADF results showed the southward movement of tanks to a location in the vicinity of 15:15N 107:17E. The intercepted voice communi-

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cations reflected at least two groups of tanks enroute to a parking area designated as "A-6". (unlocated)

(U) ~~(S HV000)~~ During a mission flown on 3 March, two DF Fixes and one DF Cut located tank activity in the vicinity of 15:12N 107:12E and 15:10N 107:22E. Voice communications also reflected a third group of 19 tanks. Enemy communications indicated the destination would be parking area "A-3" (unlocated).

(U) ~~(S HV000)~~ The next reflection of tank activity was obtained during a mission flown on 13 March. Voice communications reflected the same groups of tanks that were active on 2 March, and that they were enroute through a "mountain pass". The ARDF fixes located this activity in the vicinity of 15:08N 107:26E, placing them somewhat east of the normal infiltration route in Southeastern Laos. It appears that the enemy was concerned about previous air activity and especially any current air activity in their general area of operation. Tank communications mentioned the twisting route of travel and the very slow progress, further substantiating their deviation into rougher terrain to lessen the possibility of detection.

(U) ~~(S HV000)~~ The final reflection of tank movement came during a mission flown on 18 March. No DF Fixes were obtained due to an inflight malfunction of the ARDF equipment. Throughout the period of activity the aircraft flew various patterns in an attempt

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to determine, by aural signal strength, the approximate location of the tanks. Voice communications indicated there was a minimum of six groups of tanks moving in a southeasterly direction. Three of the groups had not been reflected previously. The conversations indicated there were still three vehicles remaining near the area "A-3" (unlocated) with maintenance problems and a minimum of three vehicles were proceeding to location "A-4" (unlocated). The text reflected that the six groups involved in the movement were to proceed to a location "A-6" (unlocated) to park and undertake camouflage actions. In general, the conversation indicated that a rather large parking area was involved. References were made to the utilization of various quadrants for parking purposes. The most important aspect, however, was the association of 100 vehicles already in place and the appearance of three new callsigns.

(U) (~~S HVCCO~~) An "in-Depth" analysis of all tank communications was undertaken upon the conclusion of the activity, the results of which were forwarded to DIRNSA for confirmation and comments.¹ The subsequent offensive in the "B-3" Front near Kontum, South Vietnam, confirmed the suspected large number of tanks that were located in the area.

Tactical Reporting (TACREP) of Tank Activity:

(U) (~~S HVCCO~~) After the first successful mission was flown

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against the tank activity on 24 February, it was evident that the voice communications contained extremely valuable intelligence. On 26 February DIMSA authorized this Detachment to issue TACREFs on all tank activity. The first TACREF was issued on 2 March. In all, a total of four TACREFs were issued. No technical supplements were required, but to replace these, a Transcript Report containing a "verbatim" transcription of intercepted voice communications was issued. This function required the development of working aids, consisting of all terminology associated with the tank activity. A thorough and comprehensive vocabulary list was generated which greatly reduces the transcription time and facilitated timely reporting.

Problems Encountered:

(U) (~~S - FRODO~~) Many of the missions flown against the tank activity encountered problems which had a direct bearing on the ADF results and the continuity achieved by analysis of the voice communications. The problem previously mentioned concerning the proper antennas for the intercept and recording of the FM signal reduced the overall effectiveness until it was overcome. Once this problem was solved the intercept was normally good to exceptional in quality.

(U) (~~S - FRODO~~) The tanks utilized frequencies in the low VLF range, therefore the A1/AIR 38 with a frequency range of

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2-190 MHz was the only suitable system. The limited number of AN/AIR-38 systems available at this unit sometimes resulted in the non-availability of aircraft, late take-offs, reduced time over target, and, on rare occasion, a cancellation of the mission.

(U) (~~S HVCCO~~) Weather was also a factor that detracted from the overall effectiveness of the mission. During this time of the year, the Central Highlands experience weather build-ups which often restrict flying in areas not suitable for optimum coverage. This often necessitated signals being DF'd from a greater stand-off range than desired for the best ARDF results.

(U) (~~S HVCCO~~) Anti-Aircraft Artillery (AAA) High Threat Areas probably presented the biggest problem. The Tanks utilized the existing route structure in Laos for transit from North Vietnam into Cambodia, Southern Laos and South Vietnam. This entire route network through Laos was extremely well protected with AAA weapons. Mission aircraft had to avoid the AAA high threat areas and still maintain a flight profile to insure ARDF coverage. As in the case of the weather build-ups, this often required signals being DF'd from a greater stand-off range than desired.

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