

UNCLASSIFIED

# HISTORY OF DETACHMENT 1 6994TH SECURITY SQUADRON

January - June  
1969



The EC-47 History Site

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HISTORY OF DETACHMENT 1, 6994TH SECURITY SQUADRON

1 January 1969 - 30 June 1969

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PROJECT CORONA HARVEST

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FOREWORD

This historical study is a record of Detachment 1, 6994th Security Squadron (Operations), covering the period 1 January - 30 June 1969. All references to date are within this period unless otherwise indicated.

The majority of the information contained herein was taken from the files and records maintained at this unit. Additional information was gained from personal interviews with members assigned to the unit.

All suggestions and comments should be directed to the Operations Officer who is responsible for preparing this report.

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## CHAPTER I - MISSION AND ORGANIZATION

### Mission and Organization

Detachment 1, 6994th Security Squadron was located at Nha Trang, Republic of Vietnam. The mission was to conduct Airborne Radio Direction Finding in the II Corps Tactical zone in direct support of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. The Operations Section continued to be located adjacent to Nha Trang Air Base at Camp McDermott in the 313th Radio Research Battalion compound area. The 361 Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron provided the front-end flying crews to fly the aircraft. They continued to operate from Nha Trang Air Base proper.

The Detachment maintained and improved a close working relationship with personnel of First Field Forces Vietnam (IFVF) and the 313th Radio Research Battalion. This greatly enhanced the operating capabilities of the Detachment by providing a ready channel to coordinate on operational matters which affected the mission accomplishment of the unit.

### Organizational Changes

Detachment 1, 6994th Security Squadron had a long time problem transporting its Airborne Radio Operators between Camp McDermott, Nha Trang AB and the crew quarters especially when missions were fragged together. The flying crews would launch and recover some 1 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles away on Nha Trang AB. Many timely delays were encountered in handling problems of a small but annoying nature. So often so, that on 1 May the detachment established an Operation Control Center (OCC). The Center was located on the air base in the same building housing the 361st TEWS and Det 1, 6994 Security Squadron Maintenance function.

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The OCC was manned 24 hours per day by an experienced NCO, capable of making the decisions necessary to maintain a smooth operation. This NCO worked directly with the 361st Duty Navigator and Supervisor of Flying. Most problems concerning last minute schedule and/or tasking changes were alleviated due to this Control Center. Further, the Radio Operators recovered and debriefed at the Center instead of making the trip out to Operations at Camp McDermott. The OCC duty NCO performed quality control on the operator and mission logs and traffic and thereby eliminated the need of later locating the Navigators and Radio Operators. OCC monitored the VHF radio for aircraft making scheduled and unscheduled landings so that a truck was ready for immediate pick-ups on the flight line. Working harmony with the 361st TEMS, as a result of OCC, rose to a degree never enjoyed before.

During this period Operations experienced no shortage in any authorized operational personnel. Personnel were sent TDY to various places in the Republic of Vietnam and Thailand. (Further details contained in the Special Collection Projects portion of this history). During this period, the Detachment had no internal organizational changes of any consequence, but received word that Nha Trang AB was to be returned to the Vietnamese Air Force in the near future and Det 1, 6994 Security Squadron would be relocated to Phu Cat Air Base, Republic of Vietnam.

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CHAPTER II - TASKING

(UNCLAS) This unit was directed by HQ USAFSS to implement a new Daily Resources Management Information Summary (DURMIS) on 15 February. The new DURMIS was implemented with minimum problems. It provided a more comprehensive management tool for the study of unit mission resources and performance results. Several minor changes to the reporting procedures were made during the succeeding months. Final instructions for DURMIS reporting are to be formulated in USAFSSM 200-4, Volume XV, which is expected to arrive in the field for evaluation on approximately 1 August 1969.

Mission tasking for this period continued to reflect intercept of HF/VHF Voice Communications; however, support of this tasking was a problem which was never resolved. The unit was authorized eight 203X1's but the actual on-station strength never exceeded two for the entire six month period. The few linguists which were assigned at the beginning of the period were TDY to the 6990th and subsequently sent PCS to that unit. The unit had one 203X1 TDY from Tan Son Nhut and one TDY from Pleiku; both of these departed for their home stations in May for PCS processing. For the remainder of the period, no linguists were on station. Projection for incoming linguists for this unit is eight 203X1's to arrive approximately 1 September 1969.

At the beginning of this period, the unit was authorized eighty-nine 292X1 personnel. By the end of the period, this authorization had dropped to eighty. In May we began providing 202X1's to Det 3, 6994 Security Squadron (Nakhon Phanom, Thailand) to support their operations. The number of personnel increased to a maximum of sixteen TDY to that unit at the end of 2QFY70. At the time the requirement to provide TDY personnel to Det 3 was levied on this unit, the mission tasking at Det 1 called for a total of fifty-eight missions

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per tasking week; however, by the end of the period, the unit was tasked with sixty-eight missions per week and soon after that the number increased to seventy-five. This thirty per cent increase of mission tasking coupled with the loss of TDY personnel caused problems in scheduling. Although the unit met all flying commitments, the increased flying hours per man, together with squadron and base details, upgrade training, proficiency training, ect., created extremely heavy workloads for many personnel within the unit. This problem is anticipated to continue until personnel TDY to Det 3 return and the unit is once again at full combat ready strength on station.

The Master Program called for sixteen EC-47 aircraft at this unit for the entire period (14 Combat Cougar and 2 Combat Cougar ZULU). Throughout the first four months of the period, assigned aircraft fluctuated between fifteen and seventeen. By the end of the period, eighteen were assigned to this unit. In March, the unit sent one Combat Cougar aircraft to Udorn, Thailand to support special tasking against NVA and Pathet Lao forces. This aircraft support continued until 8 April. On 9 April, one aircraft departed TDY to Det 3, 6994 Scty Sq (Nakhon Phanom). This commitment was increased to two aircraft on 24 April and continued until 14 May when one aircraft returned. An additional aircraft was again provided NKP and ~~was~~ still at that unit at the end of the period.

The two aircraft assigned to this unit in excess of Master Program requirements were Combat Cougar ZULU aircraft. Aircraft sent to NKP in support of Det 3 operations were also ZULU aircraft.

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CHAPTER III - PROCESSING AND REPORTING

Changes in Responsibility

Prior to January 1969, this unit had developed and maintained a data base from which to identify Airborne Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) traffic. The development of this data base and the identification of the targets reported in the ARDF recovery report was accomplished on the unit's own initiative and was not an official requirement. In January 1969, the Collection Management Authority (CMA) and ARDF Coordinating Center (ACC) decided that the aviation units should not attempt to identify targets reported in the recovery reports, but should instead concentrate on timely submission of the reports and the inclusion of technical extracts for those targets on which callsigns were not intercepted. The only identifications we should report would be those targets that appeared on the Chewy Sheets or those identified by the Direct Support Units (DSU). The reason for this decision according to the ACC was the Aviation Unit's low identification rate (8%), inaccuracy of the identifications (50% correct), excessive time delays in submission (over two hours), and a lack of technical extracts for wideband support. On 8 February 1969, the decision to take the aviation units out of the identification business became official.

This decision restricted the unit to report identifications for targets identified from the cherry sheets or those identified by the DSU; consequently, the data base was allowed to deteriorate. This unit then requested in Manpower Change Request 69-1 (24 Jan 69) that a previous manpower change request for nine additional 202X0 spaces be deleted and that the existing spaces also be deleted. The reason for this request was that 292X1 personnel could just as efficiently submit recovery reports in the required format as 202X0 personnel. This request was held in abeyance by HQ USAFSS.

In March 1969, this unit was informed that it was to participate in a test

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to determine if it was feasible for Air Force aviation units to produce a South East Asia Technical Summary (SEATS)<sup>(1)</sup>. At the time, with only five 202X0 personnel on hand, the unit attempted to rebuild the data base. With the assistance of the Air Force liaison analyst at the CMA, (330 Radio Research Co at Pleiku) the callsign card file was gradually brought up-to-date and a card file of last known locations of Viet Cong units in the II Corps area was started. In addition, this unit was put on distribution for a number of NSA working aids. On 12 April 1969, the SEATS test was implemented and was continued for a ninety day period. By the end of the first week of the test, the identification rate stood at 24%. As the data base became more accurate and personnel became more experienced in the use of the National Security Agency (NSA) working aids, and more familiar with the various callsign systems employed by the Communist military network, the identification rate rose to a high of 53% by the week ending 17 June 1969.

#### Problem Areas during the "SEATS" Test

Manning was a problem during the SEATS test. Although the unit was authorized eight 202X0 personnel, emergency leaves and unexpected curtailments (including the NCOIC of Exploitation) left the unit with a serious shortage of analysts. To alleviate the problem, 292X1 Radio Operators were utilized to type recovery reports, prepare cherry sheets, and to log traffic onto the SEATS forms. In addition, one NCO from the 6994th Security Squadron and one from Det 2, 6994th Security Squadron arrived on TDY to give assistance. By June, new personnel began to arrive to fill the additional spaces which were to be authorized on 1 July 1969, and the manning picture improved to the point where 292X1 personnel were no longer required to fill analytical functions.

Although this unit was placed on distribution for most of the important NSA working aids, technical support continued to be a problem. On 9 June 1969,

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a request for TEXTA and technical net diagrams was sent to NSA, but this unit was still not in receipt of this essential data. In addition, this unit was not an addressee on technical exchanges between NSA and the CMA. These tech exchanges were acquired informally from the 313th RRBW with whom this unit is colocated. However, the impending move to Phu Cat will remove us from this source of information. Technical feedback either from Army sources or DIRNSA was very limited. Official feedback from DIRNSA was limited to fixed and rota type callsigns and did not include those nets utilizing daily changing callsigns which comprised two thirds of the unit's intercept. Army feedback was limited to the daily change report to the daily fix report.

#### Unit Analytical Capability

During the last three months of this report the identification capability of this unit grew tremendously. During the month of June the analytical unit was fully identifying 60 to 80% of the targets with callsigns reported in the Recovery Report. These identifications proved, on the average, to be 90 to 95 per cent correct. The recovery reports were submitted with full technical extracts for wide band support and within acceptable time limits. The SEATS, which included search traffic as well as direction finding intercept with transmitter callsigns, was submitted with an average of 50% of the intercept correctly identified. This unit was therefore providing the CMA and IFFV with a timely and accurate report, fully justifying the effort expended.

Although this unit proved its capability in the area of identification and reporting, it does not have the capacity for analysis such as, case development, continuity, and frequency and callsign analysis. Because of the nature of ARDF missions, actual intercept is very limited. The "Y" operator copies a target only long enough to get callsigns for identification. In addition, the "X" operator is only looking for targets on the cherry sheets,

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which are selected links with reliable schedules. Consequently, other links in a net will not be intercepted by an ARDF aircraft, making continuity impossible. Also, the size of the area in which the aircraft were scheduled, coupled with the huge number of nets and enemy units and paucity of intercept, drastically limited this unit's capability to perform analysis per se.

Summary

The Detachment 1, 6994th Security Squadron analysis section has come a long way since February when it was suggested that analysts were not needed in the organization. Now the analytical unit is building toward its authorized strength of eighteen and has become a viable unit within the organization. Five months ago the analysis product was in such disrepute that it was not desired by the CMA or ACC; now, through the efforts of everyone in the organization, the analysis unit is producing a highly desirable product readily useable by any of our consumers.

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CHAPTER IV - SPECIAL COLLECTION PROJECTS

With the advent of a new enemy offensive in Laos, this unit was requested to send a Combat Cougar aircraft and crew to Udorn, Thailand on 1 March 1969.

The objectives and results of that special mission are related here as taken from a report written by SSgt Louis R. Stennes who was the Senior Radio Operator on the mission.

Primary interest areas consisted of Landing Site 36 (LS36), Plaine Des Jarres, and the area north of Vientiane along Highway Four. The areas worked, which consisted of the afore-mentioned "primary interest" areas, were called Military Regions Laos two and five (MRL2C and MRL2A).

The NVA and Pathet Lao (PL) forces were undertaking a major offensive in Laos because of the period was the dry season; thus, the most advantageous time of the year for launching their attacks. Landing Site 36 and other critical Landing Sites (LS) were at the time under enemy control. These LS's contained air strips, hospitals, Tacan stations, and logistic support facilities for friendly forces in the area. The Tacan stations located at these sites were critically important, for friendly aircraft going into Laos and North Vietnam depended upon these stations for accurate positions and guidance.

A great many units of the 2nd NVA Regiment and the 924th NVA Regiment who together with subordinate units overran LS 36, were unlocated. The job assigned the EC-47 was to fix as many targets as possible. Landing Site 36 was of immediate interest and was designated as the Mission Frag Point.

The mission encountered certain hindrances. The weather was generally poor with a solid haze cover on most day. In addition the primary Tacan station was not in operation. Many targets had to be worked with a 10 to 20 mile

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stand-off range due to restricted areas. A 25-mile restriction was placed on North Vietnam borders, high threat areas were placed around MRL2C and MRL2A, and another high threat at the Plaine Des Jarres, a major enemy stronghold.

Quantity of targets fixed was stressed over the quality of the fixes, but due to the outstanding efforts of the entire crew, an average fix radius of 2,000 meters was obtained.

Laos is very rugged, mountainous terrain, much more so than anything the crew had found in South Vietnam, which at times forced the aircraft up to 12,500 feet.

A total of 123 targets were fixed and 21 were cut. The ARDF fixes confirmed suspicions of enemy units moving in a southwesterly direction toward the Laotain, captial of Vientiane.

The fixes obtained on this mission located units previously unlocated, but suspected to be in the area; located and fixed many units previously unidentified; and obtained initial fixes on Pathet Lao and NVA units not thought to be in the area.

The results of one fix alone resulted in action producing 2 large secondary explosions, 12 secondary fires, 200 small secondary explosions, and ten structures destroyed.

On 21 March 1969, another Det 1 EC-47 Combat Cougar aircraft was sent TDY in support of Controlled American Source (CAS) emergency requirements in north and central Laos in the vicinity of landing site 36. This special mission was extended through the 7th of April.

This mission was also very successful and prompted ACC to relate to Det 1: "The total locations obtained during this period produced excellent results with the consumer being fully satisfied. This was due mainly to having a well

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experienced and fully qualified back end crew. This mission provided exceptionally important data with 15 initial locations being obtained." (1)

#### Operation Carpenter

As a result of Det One's involvement in Operation Carpenter, the Det Commander received the following:

[REDACTED] "I am extremely pleased to extend my appreciation to the officers and men of your unit for their outstanding support of "Operation Carpenter" during the period of 5 through 28 February 1969, and "Operation Centurion V" during the period of 18 through 22 February 1969.

[REDACTED] "It is felt by this headquarters that the excellent results of these operations were primarily due to the timely passage of intelligence from your assets to the 403rd personnel on the ground. After the mobile strike force deployed to the operational areas, their only means of maintaining enemy continuity and planning targeting actions was through the information that your personnel provided. Their personal concern and diligent efforts to render maximum support at all times enabled the operations to receive the utmost coverage. Your personnel should take great pride in their timely, professional assistance. Their actions were outstanding and are a credit to themselves, their unit, and the United States Air Force." (2)

#### Operation Centurion 8

On 8 June 1969, Det One was engaged in Operation Centurion 8. It was the eighth operation in a series which originally began in January 1969. The operation was coordinated with the 5th Special Field Force (Nha Trang) and conducted by the 3rd Mobile Strike Force in war zone Bravo (located to the northeast of Saigon in the northwestern segment of MACV area eight).

An element of the 5th Special Field Forces provided communications support to the operation and was in turn supported by three daily ARDF flights into the area (one from Tan Son Nhut, one Army mission, and one from Nha Trang).

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Essentially the operation was designed to prevent elements of the 5th NVA Division from moving into the Saigon area. Both harassment operations and search and destroy operations were employed. ARDF fixes were the primary intelligence inputs to this operation.

Sgt Huffine, the 5th Special Forces Communications NCOIC briefed the Det on 11 July 1969 and related that based on ARDF results, they reacted with immediate artillery, recondo teams, ground sweeps and troop deployments.

At the conclusion of Operation Centurion 8, 18 July 1969, the end results were 38 NVA KIA, one captured radio, 25 pounds of captured documents and the capture of over 17 tons of ammunition.

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Notes

Chapter III

1. USAFSS message, 191700Z Mar 69, Subj: Tech Support Test for USAFSS ARDF Effort.

Chapter IV

1. Message, USM-7, 160620Z April 69, Special ARDF Missions
  2. Letter, Commander Hq 5th Special Forces Group to Commander of 6994 Security Squadron undated.
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