

# SECRET

## THE FIRST DAYS

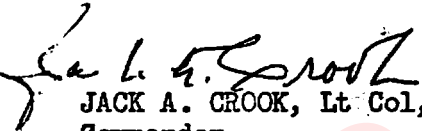
Lt. Col. Jack A. Crook

1. (S) After considering numerous air bases in RVN, it was finally decided to locate Det 1 of the 361 Recon Sq at Pleiku. Original planning was for 9 aircraft. In June 1966 the number of aircraft was changed to 15 with possibly two more attrition aircraft to arrive later.
2. (U) SO G-221, Hq PACAF, 20 July 1966, officially established the detachment. Lt. Col. Jack A. Crook was assigned as commander. Twelve aircraft mechanics were sent TDY to Pleiku from Nha Trang. Calling themselves the "Dirty Dozen", they took over the cleanup of the new unit area.
3. (U) The clean-up was no small task. The area and buildings were being used by the VNAF as a motor pool and arsenal storage. VNAF personnel also maintained living quarters in the area. Undaunted, the "dirty dozen" hosed down and painted the four buildings. Sod and Shrubbery were planted and approximately one-half mile of concrete sidewalks were laid.
4. (U) After 30 days of this work, which included ditchdigging, killing rats and snakes, one of which was the deadly kraat species, it was time for the "dirty dozen" to return to Nha Trang. Having seen a filthy area transformed into a most attractive work area, these 12 personnel volunteered and were ordered PCS to Pleiku and the new detachment.
5. (U) In November, maintenance personnel began to arrive PCS. Morale was high. With 70 airmen assigned, several base projects were assumed. Assistance was given in building the VNAF a new arsenal and motor pool. Late in November these projects were completed and the VNAF personnel and equipment were moved. This gave us access to the interior of the buildings. With the arrival of the first aircraft on 8 December 1966, construction was begun and is in progress for first class unit operations and maintenance facilities.
6. (C) A raised quonset hut had been completed for the maintenance activity, and before the end of the year seven aircraft and 11 crews were assigned. The reception and shakedown of aircraft by unit maintenance was outstanding. Aircraft were flown as fraged with excellent results. Back-end maintenance of ARD-18 equipment and the C-12 compass system were the major problems. These are the responsibility of the Security Service and the base maintenance function. Although not a unit responsibility, the unit insured that necessary test equipment and spares were on order. The lack of spares in the supply system remains the major concern, which limits outstanding reconnaissance operations in this unit.

Attachment 2<sup>1</sup>

7. (U) Due to past planning, personnel for the unit were filtered through TSN and Nha Trang. This proved unsatisfactory. We realized that it was impossible to administer a unit of this size as a detachment. Action was taken and approved to establish a squadron at Pleiku, to be designated the 362nd.

8 (U) Personnel records are not up to standard at present. However, by the official date of squadron activation, 1 February, these records will be secured by the base CBPO and each officer and airman will have had a records check.

  
JACK A. CROOK, Lt Col, USAF  
Commander

Attachment 2<sup>2</sup>