[redacted]

MARINE FIGHTER ATTACK SQUADRON 232
Marine Aircraft Group 15
1st Marine Aircraft Wing
FPO San Francisco 96602

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

1 September to 30 September 1972

INDEX

PART I - ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

PART II - NARRATIVE SUMMARY

PART III - SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

PART IV - SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS 6 5

VMFA-232

[redacted]

Enclosure (1)

Sept 1972

[redacted]

[redacted]

5750
03A27872
4 October 1972

PART I

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

1. (U) DESIGNATION — COMMANDER

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232 — LtCol. E. R. MAAG
1 September - 8 September 1972
LtCol. R. O. LAWRENCE
8 September - 30 September 1972

2. (U) LOCATION

1 September - 30 September - Nam Phong AB. THAILAND

3. (U) STAFF OFFICERS

Executive Officer	Maj J. K. ALBRIGHT JR	1 - 10 September 1972
	Maj W. T. MCFALL	10 - 30 September 1972
Operations Officer	Maj A. E. PEET	1 - 30 September 1972
Administrative Officer	Capt W. L. DOMINA	1 - 30 September 1972
Logistics Officer	Capt R. B. RAMSDEN	1 - 30 September 1972
Maintenance Officer	Capt C. L. CULLER	1 - 30 September 1972
Aviation Safety Officer	Capt R. K. WARD	1 - 30 September 1972
Intelligence Officer	Capt E. SALANIUK	1 - 30 September 1972

4. (C) AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

	SEPTEMBER
a. Marine Officers	
(1) Naval Aviators	18
(2) Naval Flight Officers	14
(3) Aviation Ground Officers	3
(4) Naval Flight Surgeon	0
(5) Air Force Exchange Aviator	0
b. Marine Enlisted	219

[redacted]

Enclosure (1)

5750
03A27872
4 October 1972

PART II

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

(C) During the month of September 1972, VMFA-232 flew a total of 321 sorties accounting for 556.4 flight hours. This represents an increase in sorties and flight hours by 15% and 28% respectively over the previous month's operations. Two hundred and sixty seven of the total sorties were combat missions flown in support of the RVN and of the Laotian Government forces. Although the squadron operated with fewer aircraft than the previous month, the sortie increase is due to improved weather which has allowed a greater percentage of scheduled sorties to be completed.

(C) Reconfiguration of air-to-air aircraft for the air-to-ground mission continued to be a viable procedure for maintaining a consistent sortie rate on days when the Linebacker missions were cancelled. Reconfiguration was required only on a limited basis because Linebacker missions were executed on 27 of the available 30 days.

(C) The Linebacker BarCap mission was the primary mission during September accounting for 42% of the combat sorties and 65% of the total combat flight time. Recent structure changes in the Linebacker mission concept of operations enhanced this Squadron's continued participation in these missions. Linebacker missions are now conducted twice daily resulting in increased flexibility and a reduced number of aircraft per mission. However, total demands on USAF fighter assets are increased by the two mission concept. USMC fighter aircraft are receiving more attention as a solution to the increased demands.

(C) While the BarCap continues to be the primary mission, the air-to-ground role is still successfully carried out in MR-1 and in the Laotian Barrel Roll area as well. The primary air-to-ground effort was in support of RVN forces during the Quang Tri counteroffensive. Marine tactical air played a heavy role in the offensive which culminated in the recapture of Quang Tri City during late September.

(U) The entire Squadron participated in the Wing sponsored Human Relations Training Program throughout the month. The program itself,

designed to open peoples' minds to the rights of others and to promote better working relationships between men, is a well founded instrument offered to all units for the betterment of each individual as well as the unit as a whole. Each individual dedicated 20 hours in a three day period to the program for a total of 5,080 squadron man hours during the month. These man hours, although utilized for a constructive purpose, severely stressed all squadron efforts while the Squadron continued to maintain and execute its entire combat profile.

(U) On September 8 the Squadron held a change of command. LtCol. R. O. LAWRENCE succeeded LtCol. E. R. MAAG as Commanding Officer. Also, the Squadron received Maj. W. T. MCFALL as the new Executive Officer plus six additional officers to complement its strength and replace the departing aircrews. These additional personnel, particularly the NFO's, have set this Squadron in a much more secure position for meeting the mission requirements.

5750
03A27872
4 October 1972

PART III

SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1. (U) Personnel

8 Sept 1972	LtCol. R. O. LAWRENCE succeeded LtCol. E. R. MAAG as Commanding Officer.
1 - 30 Sept 1972	One Marine was promoted to Lance Corporal, eleven to Corporal, nine to Sergeant and one to Staff Sergeant.

2. (C) Aviation Safety

22 Sept 1972	WT-16 inadvertantly lost its rear canopy while pulling off target in MR-I. The aircraft landed at Danang AB. without further incident (VMFA-232 incident 3-73I)
30 Sept 1972	WT-02 went off the left side of runway 19 after blowing a tire on landing (VMFA-232 incident 4-73I)

3. (U) Training

4 - 30 Sept 1972	Squadron received 20 hours of Human Relations training for each officer/enlisted.

4. (U) Command Relations

16 Sept 1972	CINCPAC visted units of MAG-15.
25 Sept 1972	CG FMFPAC visted units of MAG-15.
27 Sept 1972	Asst CMC visited units of MAG-15

Enclosure (1)

MARINE FIGHTER ATTACK SQUADRON 232
Marine Aircraft Group 15
1st Marine Aircraft Wing
FPO San Francisco 96602

PART IV

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A. (C) LIST OF VMFA-232 BDA FOR SEPTEMBER, p. 6

B. (C) PERSONNEL, p. 7

C. (C) AIR OPERATIONS, p. 8

D. (C) MAINTENANCE p. 9

E. (U) AVIATION SAFETY p. 10

F. (U) AVIATION SAFETY ARTICLE FOR THE PROFESSIONAL pp. 11-13

G. (U) PHOTOGRAPHS, pp. 14-19

Enclosure (1)

[redacted]

5750
03A27872
4 October 1972

[redacted]

A. (C) A list of VMFA-232 BDA for September follows:

38	Secondary Explosions	31	Bunkers Destroyed
6	Secondary Fires	1	130mm Gun Damaged
4	Trucks Destroyed	1	50 cal Gun Destroyed
2	Trucks Damaged	1	85mm Gun Destroyed
1	15 meter Trench Destroyed	2	107mm Gun Destroyed
1	Road Cut	25	No BDA - Smoke & Foliage

[redacted]

Enclosure (1)

5750
03A27872
4 October 1972

B. (C) PERSONNEL

	OFFICER	ENLISTED
Joined	8	20
Transferred	5	31
Promoted	0	13

Enclosure (1)

[redacted]

5750
03A27872
4 October 1972

[redacted]

C. (C) AIR OPERATIONS

Total Sorties	321
Total Flight Hours	556.4
Total Combat Sorties	267
Total Combat Hours	491.7
High Day Sorties	16
High Day Hours	27.1
Average Pilot Strength	18
Average Pilot Sorties	18
Average Pilot Hours	32.7
Average RIO Strength	14
Average RIO Sorties	22
Average RIO Hours	39.7

[redacted]

[redacted]

Enclosure (1)

5750
03A27872
4 October 1972

[redacted]

D. (C) MAINTENANCE

Aircraft Assigned	17
A/C Operational Readiness	44%
Average A/C Available	14.3
Calendar Inspection	4

Enclosure (1)

5750
03A27872
4 October 1972

E. (U) AVIATION SAFETY

Accident	0
Incident	2

Enclosure (1)

AVIATION SAFETY ARTICLE FOR THE PROFESSIONAL

Lessons Learned From The "Rose Garden"

Perhaps a strange title for an article on safety? Well, for many of us this is the first time we've operated from a somewhat austere, expeditionary airfield. Although many ideas have been passed down to us, it seems we still end up learning the hard way. Since most of us don't have our own experiences to fall back on from "Chu Lai '65", we've learned a lot from our combat operations here at NCAS Rose Garden (Nam Phong, Thailand, for the uninformed) over the past three months.

There was a mistaken impression by some individuals that all the training they received and all the safety precautions they were taught, back in the States or in Iwakuni was unrealistic. They felt that being in a war zone was license to throw away the book and do things their own way. All those lectures on wearing safety shoes and protective clothing, grounding aircraft, etc. were a waste of time - we're at war! No time for that Mickey Mouse stuff here, right? WRONG! The dangers inherent to working on and around aircraft are increased under these conditions. Multiple launches, specific take-off and target times, live ordnance, frenzied activity and close quarters, all add to an extremely hazardous situation in which the prevention of accidents requires a thorough knowledge and application of safety precautions.

What about field expediency to get the job done? This is a kind of catch-all term that is used and misused in this environment. It is best used when a job is accomplished through a non-standard (but safe) means, due to the unavailability of a required piece of equipment or material. It is misused when given as an excuse to take unnecessary and often dangerous shortcuts that stem from laziness and lack of initiative. "We used to do it that way," does not make it right if it goes against safe, sound procedures and the proper means or methods are available.

Sometimes maintenance procedures are just ignored because they are time consuming and not enough emphasis has been placed on them on the past. Supply can become a problem also, but there is not much that we can do at the Squadron level to speed up the influx of much needed parts. Or is there? If we continue to document maintenance action, fill out supply requests properly and follow them through, just as we did before we deployed, then surely we will prevent some delays in shipping and handling. When used properly, Maintenance and Material Management is a good system. It worked well back in a training environment so there should be no reason to doubt its validity now that we're in combat. Everything we do must be done safely, precisely, and efficiently. These skills are acquired through peace-time study and practice, and to be effective must be applied the way we practiced them now that we are operating under the increased tempo of operations brought about by combat.

Enough on the fixers. How about the flyers? Again, we have spent months training for one ultimate goal. That being the accurate delivery of ordnance against the enemy, be he on the ground or in the air. More than ever before, our lives depend on positive, split second decisions. We cannot allow NATOPS to fall by the wayside as we fly daily missions over enemy territory.

An attitude most closely associated with the Marine Corps is one of can do and will do. This is the backbone of the Marine Corps spirit, and is highly commendable, but it must be tempered with judgement. Very few (if any) missions are so important that an unprepared or unsafe airplane should be flown to get the job done. Flying a fighter against an enemy aircraft when its weapons system is inoperable, is like a gladiator going into the ring without his sword. Likewise flying over enemy territory to deliver ordnance in an aircraft that is marginally up, makes no sense. In these situations, it is more important than ever to have a mechanically sound aircraft. The same judgement should prevail as in peacetime, ie; if the aircraft is not safe, don't fly it!

It is far to easy to allow complacency to slip into our work when flying day after day. It takes a concious effort to study and re-study basic procedures as well as conduct a constant review and updating of tactical doctrine. Each mission is different and requires total planning, briefing, and debriefing, covering all aspects of the flight.

Another area for the aircrew to consider, is that of the airfield and its facilities, from which we operate. Starting tactical operations from an expeditionary airfield poses many hazards which we may not have been exposed to in the past. The equipment used is expeditionary and therefore portable. Electrical power comes from generators which can become unreliable and cause lack of communication, navigation aids, lighting, etc. Weather can be a factor when trying to get into the field if approaches have not yet been published, or if navaids haven't been flight checked. FOD is a big problem initially with flights of cargo coming in, and trucks, tractors, loaders, and trailers being moved around the flight line. These are but a few of the problems that can arise and aircrew must have alternate plans and procedures, to cover all contingencies, and be prepared for the unexpected. When unsafe conditions are encountered, they need to be brought to the attention of the airfield operations section, not in the form of griping, but with suggested solutions to problems.

What then have we learned at the Rose Garden? Consider the following:

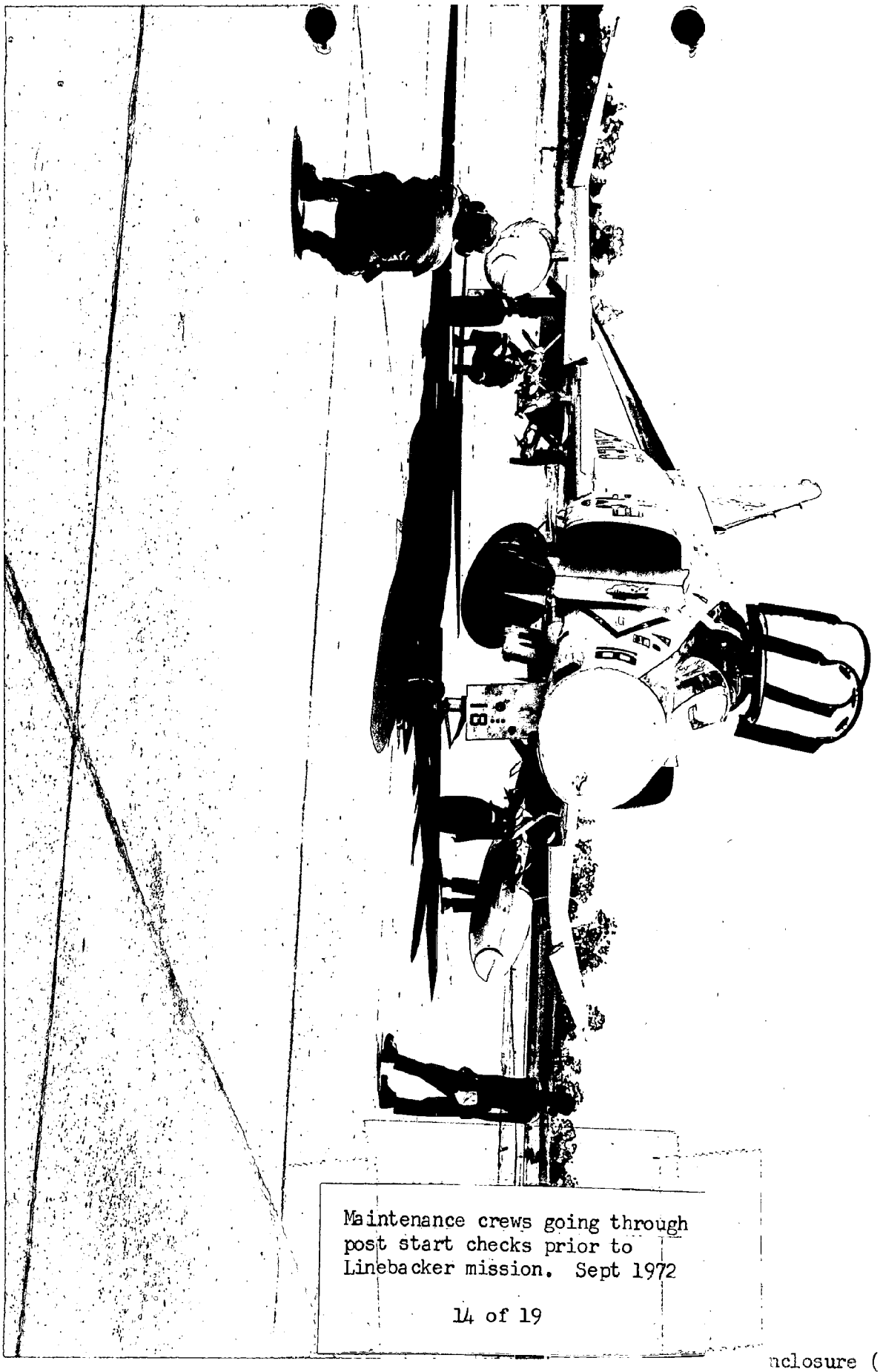
1. Field Expediency should not be used as a crutch to take the easy way out. The right way is still the best and only way to do a job.

2. We must put into actual use all the things we have practiced. Combat is no place to throw away the book and forget all that we have learned in training. This is the place where the practice pays off and the mission sucess is the end result of the effort put forth in training.

3. Constant awareness of one's surroundings, absolute thorough knowledge of aircraft, systems, weapons, and tactics, and application of basic sound judgement, are the prerequisites for efficiency, accuracy, and mission success with safety.

Richard K. WARD
VMFA-232 ASO

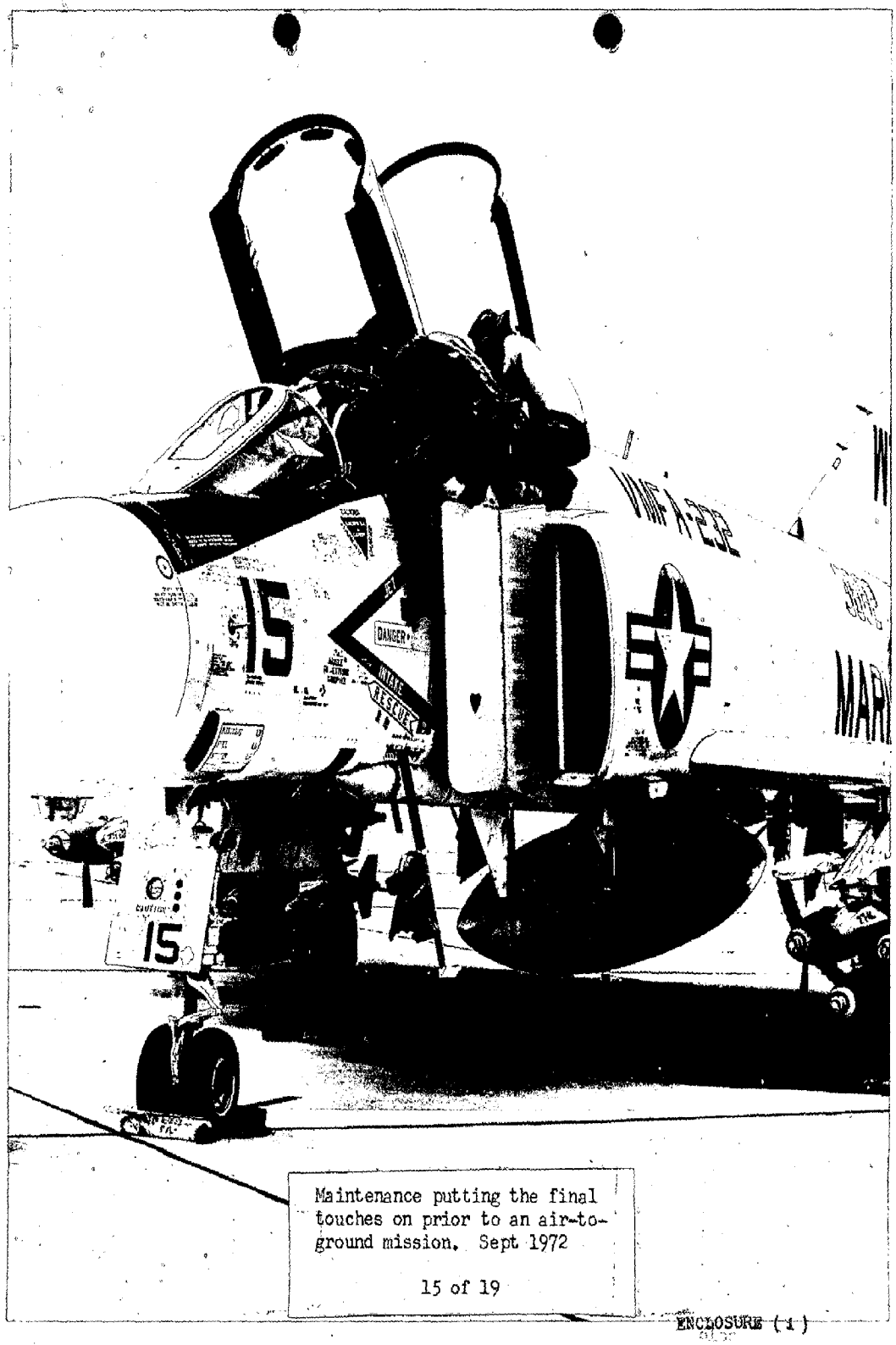
Enclosure (1)



Maintenance crews going through post start checks prior to Linebacker mission. Sept 1972

14 of 19

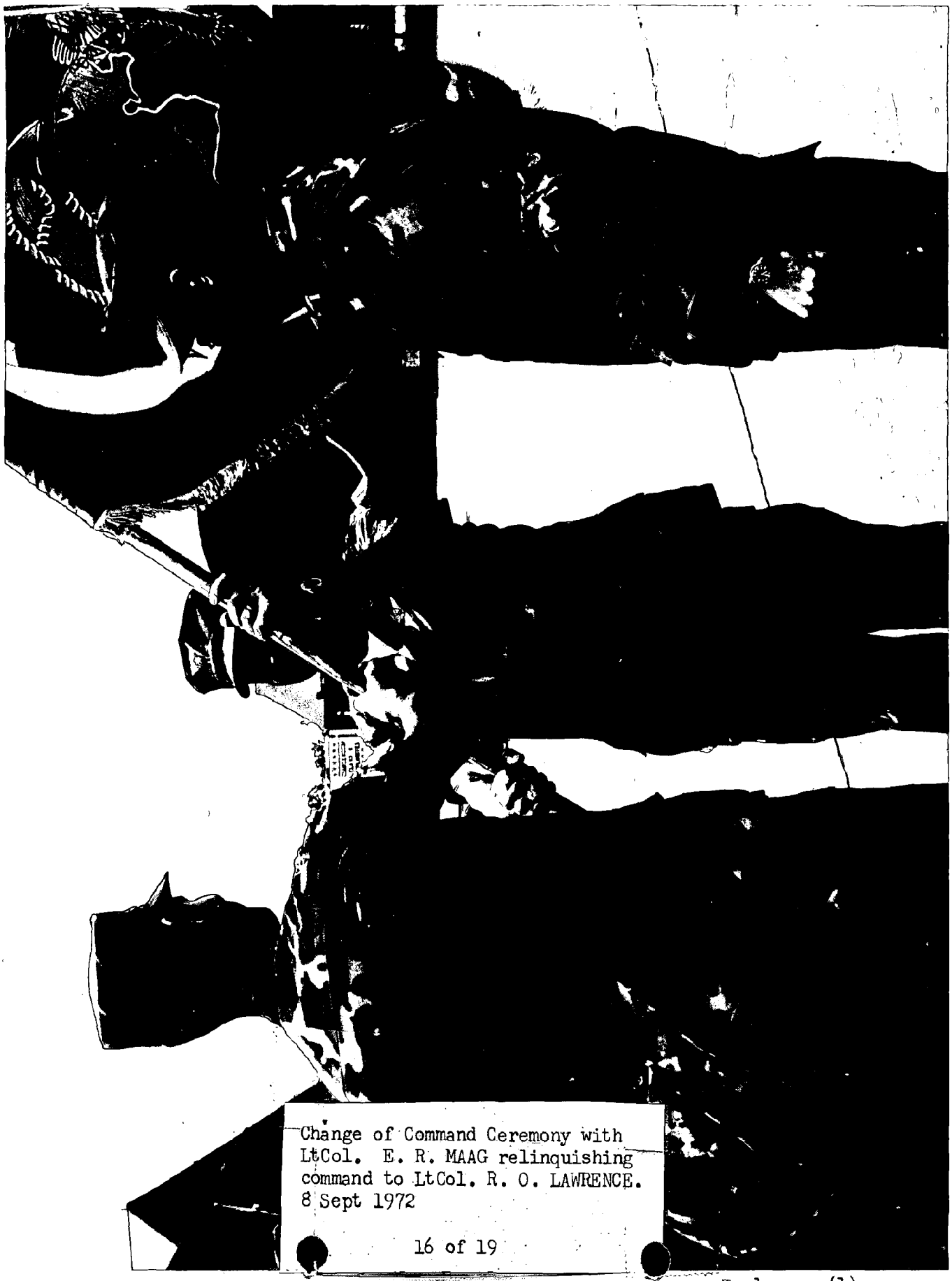
nclosure (1)



Maintenance putting the final touches on prior to an air-to-ground mission. Sept 1972

15 of 19

ENCLOSURE (1)



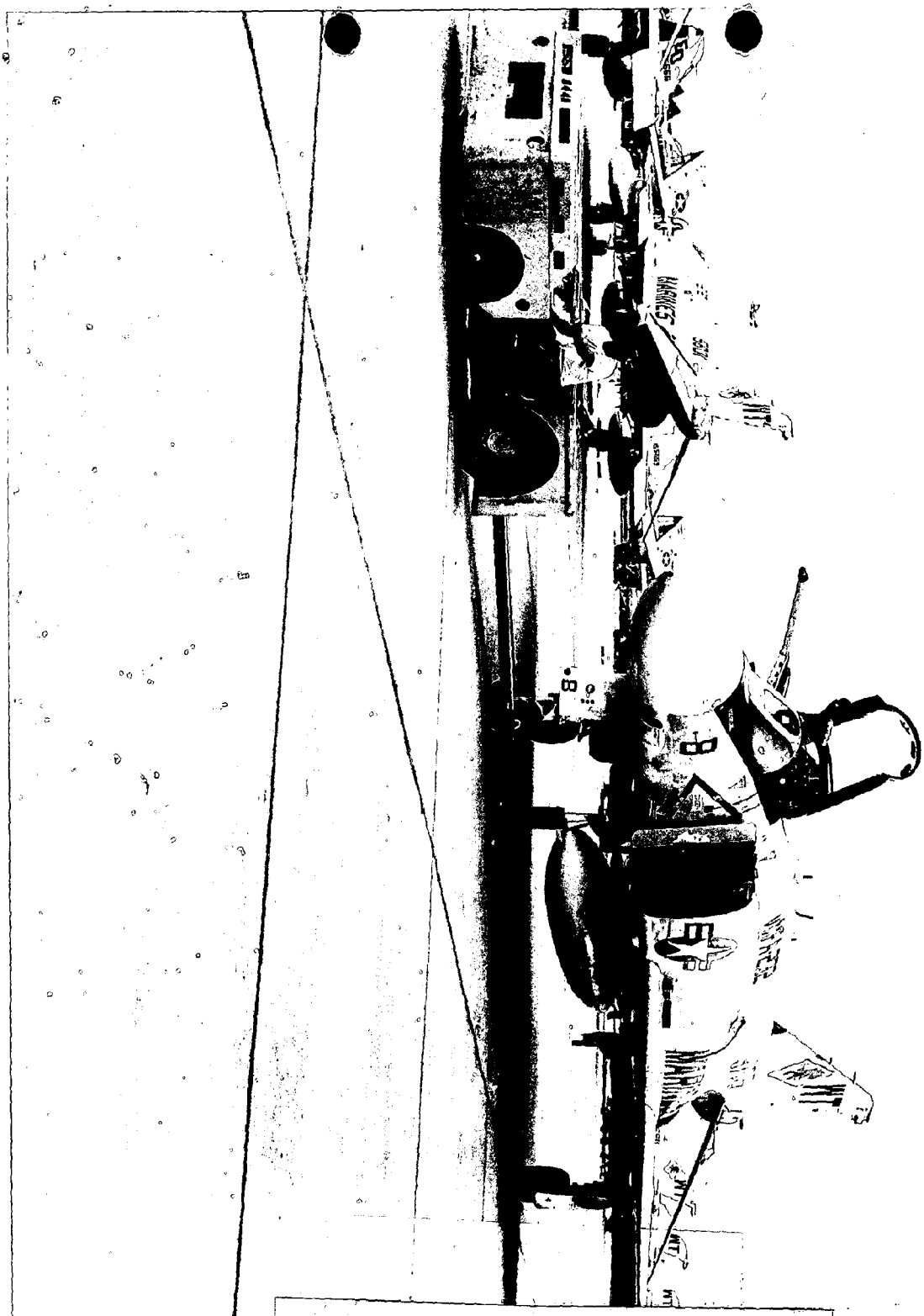
Change of Command Ceremony with LtCol. E. R. MAAG relinquishing command to LtCol. R. O. LAWRENCE. 8 Sept 1972

16 of 19

Enclosure (1)

VMFA-232 Executive Officer Maj. W. T. MCFALL discusses VMFA-232 air operations with the Govenor of Khon Kaen Province Buri PROMLAKANO and BGen. TAYLOR. 25 Sept 1972

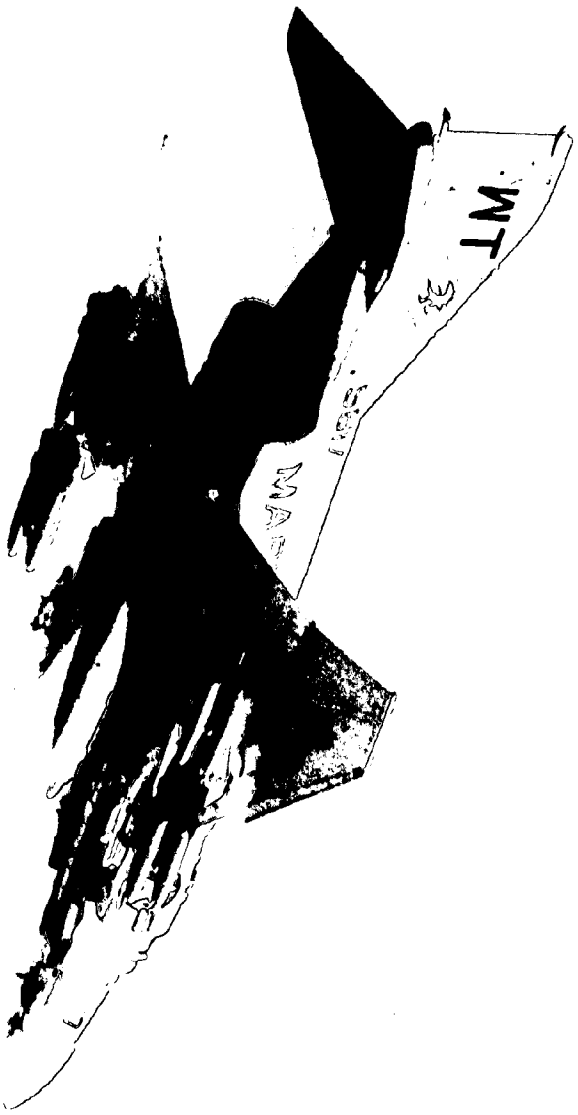
Enclosure (1)



Maintenance personnel relocate aircraft for scheduled maintenance. Sept 1972

18 of 19

ENCLOSURE (1)



VMFA-232 aircraft enroute to target in MR-I.

19 of 19

Enclosure (1)