

(Wed.) APRIL 3 (Danang)

Finally got to fly one sortie today. We sprayed along the coast near Duc Pho. I pretty much lead the mission, even though an instructor was in the airplane. It was a fairly easy target. We didn't take any fire, but we got a lot of farmers mad. You could see people running around on the ground as we came over and sprayed their crops. I thought for sure they would start taking pot-shots at us.

The siren went off last night, though no rounds hit the base. They went outside the city. Most guys slept right through and never heard the siren. These barracks are really great. Walls are concrete - a foot thick. You ~~sure~~ ^{don't} hear under the bed.

(THURS.) APRIL 4 (Danang)

Tried to spray a road target southwest of Hue. We were there, the fighters were there, but no FAC. So we came on home. another wasted day, but one closer to going home.

Started sorting out my stamps today. It's fun, but it takes lots of time and patience.

(FRI.) APRIL 5 (Danang)

Finally got on target again. Sprayed a hill and ridgeline down south along the coast near Phu Cat. I goofed a little bit, ~~but~~ by continuing to spray when we went off target. The pilot screwed up even more. He wouldn't hold the headings I gave him and we flew right off the target. He said he didn't want to fly near the clouds on the top of the ridge. I never did see them.

We had an "old ranch" dining in tonight. What a wild blast. It was quite a party. I've never seen so much broken glass. The purple flying suits really look a crowd stopper.

(SAT.) APRIL 6 (Danang)

We went back to the same road target near Hue, that we tried to spray on Thurs. This time we were successful. It was an easy run, but it was supposed to be pretty hot. There was a 27 mm Triple A gun in the area last week. It wasn't there today. They move around quite a bit.

Boy did I drink too much last night. I don't remember the end of the evening, and I sure did get pretty sick. It was embarrassing. I really messed things up. I still feel terrible tonight. The last thing in the world I wanted to do this morning was fly.

(F (SUN.) APRIL 7 (DANANG)
Palm SUN.

I flew way down south to spray a road 10 miles west of Pleiku. It's a brand new road the V.C. put in. Its only 12 feet wide. I never once saw it as we flew over. The trees were so thick. No. 2 aircraft took a hit - 30 caliber. No damage - it went through the wing. But a new major had to buy every one champagne, since it was his first hit. I haven't gotten mine yet.

Well tomorrow we go back to Bien Hoa. I'd like to stay here. They had another rocket attack Fri. night. One hit our operations hanger. Another hit the NCO Club and killed one guy. It's been so nice and quiet at Danang.

(MON) APRIL 8 (DANANG)

Flew one left this morning. I had a little trouble finding my line up point for the spray run. It was very hazy. We sprayed the same road target near Hue that we sprayed on Sat. It sure must have top priority. This Mountain flying sure is fun, but it's hard.

I got a bunch of mail at noon from Bien Hoa. It's been a week. It was kind of a waste since we flew back to Bien Hoa this afternoon. I got 3 tapes & 80 letters. Couldn't play the tapes till I got home.

(Tues) APRIL 9 (Bien Hoa)

Well I'm back at old Bien Hoa again. I didn't fly today but I didn't have the day off either. I spent most of the morning taking a written exam that is part of my checkout program. In the afternoon I had to flight plan for tomorrow's mission. I fly my check ride tomorrow.

I've spent all night catching up on my mail & listening to ~~the~~ teen tapes. I've got 2 weeks worth of mail to catch up on.

Col. Larsen, one of our new pilots, took his first hit today. He threw a champagne party at the club. My turn may come tomorrow.

(Wed) APRIL 10 (Bien Hoa)

We weather aborted both primary & alternate today. So I didn't get my check ride completed.

One of the other flights took a lot of ground fire today. Three aircraft got hit. One plane took 3 hits. One hit blew the tire on the nose landing gear. They had to land with a flat tire.

Had another champagne party. My turn is bound to come. I'm surprised I haven't had my cherry broken yet.

(THURS)

APRIL 11

(B. en Hoa)

I flew my check ride today. I had a pretty good mission, even though the weather was bad. I flew a river target 50 miles NE of Bien Hoa. There was a low cloud deck in the valley. On half of the run up couldn't see the ground. We had to climb up to 2500 ft. while we were spraying.

I'm checked out now. I fly by myself from now on. I sure hope I'm ready. I'm still not confident.

Another aircraft on another mission took 2 hits today. Hell, this is getting to be a regular habit. No champagne party this time though.

It rained today. First time since I've been over here. We had 2 thunder showers. Really cools it off.

(FRI.)

APRIL 12

(B. en Hoa)

I Had today off and didn't have to fly. First one since March 17. Actually I only had the morning off since I had to target study this afternoon for tomorrow's mission. But I did get yesterday afternoon off too.

another one of the flights today took 3 more hits. That makes a total of 36 so far for the month of April. Things are sure picking up around here.

(SAT)

APRIL 13

(B. en Hoa)

Today I flew my first lift by myself - with no instructor around. Everything went okay. It's still going to be a couple of months before I build my confidence up. I defoliated a block of land 5 miles west of Ham Tan. We sprayed on down to the coast. No ground fire.

We had another champagne party tonight. A new colonel got his leg broken yesterday. I'm still a virgin. I wish I'd get it over with.

Today was my 20th mission in the "Ranch." That means I've now got my first Air Medal.

(SUN)

APRIL 14

(B. en Hoa)

EASTER

Flew one lift this morning. It was down in the Bund Salt dumping ground south east of here.

I saw the most beautiful sunrise over here yet. Guess it was appropriate since it was Easter. We tanned past the Sunrise Service being held on the ramp, as we got ready to take off.

The afternoon was all mine; so I read. Sure didn't seem like Easter, or Sunday. It was just like any other day.

(Mon.)

APRIL 15 (Bien Hoa)

I was off today and didn't fly.

My roommate ~~ed~~, Major Joy, who I knew from Hurlbert was hitless, like myself until today. He sure got his Henry broken in a big way. He was navigating the lead aircraft of 6 ships and took 14 hits. They took 20 total for the flight. That's the most hits for one of the Ranch birds for over a year. An Army major who just went along for the ride, got a shrapnel scratch in the neck. All we had to do was put a bandaid on it, but he'll still get a Purple Heart.

The Champagne was flowing at the club tonight.

(Tues.)

APRIL 16 (Bien Hoa)

My one target today was some trees & grass near a river just west of Tai Nhe. As we were pulling off target I heard some automatic weapons fire off to our left along the river. We didn't take any hits, but my turn is getting closer.

We had our first good rain yesterday evening. Two good downpours for about 20 min. each. Sure rains hard over here. Cools things down a lot though. Keeps the dust down too.

(Wed.)

APRIL 17 (Bien Hoa)

I lead the first mission today and was deputy on a second. We worked down just west of Ham Tan again.

The FAC's smoke was 2 clicks off and I started to buy it. I should have trusted myself. I've got to get a little more confidence built up. I was pretty sure we were lined up when we started in on target.

Heard today that they had another 123 crash at Hurlbert yesterday. 3 or 4 were killed.

That makes the 3rd crash since October. One of the guys killed was supposed to come over to the Ranch next month and become our new Squadron Commander. It's more dangerous back in Florida than here.

(Thurs.)

APRIL 18 (Bien Hoa)

Another day off, or should I say half day. Spent the morning shopping & reading. Not very exciting.

We had another "Ranch Dining-In" tonight. It wasn't quite as wild as the one at Panang at least I was around for the end of this one. It was a good time and a good meal. I wore my purple flight suit for the first time. Man, they are sharp. I had a couple of pictures taken in it. Maybe now Melissa will believe me.

(FRI.)

APRIL 19 (Bien Hoa)

I flew the late lift today, thank goodness. After last night I needed the extra sleep. I felt pretty good this morning.

Today's mission went real well. I feel more confident everyday. We sprayed a road leading northeast out of Gio Nghe. It was a 3 shipper and all I had to do was hope on the burn and follow it.

Everyone says I'm doing a real good job. I guess I'm too much of a perfectionist, because I know I can do a lot better. I've still got a lot to learn.

(SAT.)

APRIL 20 (Bien Hoa)

I lead the early lift today down in Hung Sat. It was pretty easy, but we had to orbit for 45 min. waiting for the fighters. It's not too good an idea. I don't like letting people know I'm coming. Hung Sat is just about sprayed out. We'll be closing out a bunch of III Corp targets shortly. Guess we'll start flying in IV Corp. That's always a pretty hot area.

Melissa's tape came today. Boy was she mad, cause I hadn't written while at Conang. Best I start buying some post cards. The check book finally came too.

(SUN)

APRIL 21 (Bien Hoa)

Today was a late lift again, so I didn't have to show till 8 o'clock.

We were supposed to fly up to Tuy Hoa - 1+3 each way. We took off and as soon as we lifted off the runway, we got a call that the target was cnx. because of weather. So we circled the field and came back in to land. Since the alternate was only 25 min. away, we had an hour wait. Finally went to the alternate, north-east of Gio Nghe. It was the road a patch of jungle north east of Bien Hoa, in War Zone D. It was one of my better runs.

(MON)

APRIL 22 (Bien Hoa)

We went to the old standby target again - 30 miles Southeast of Bien Hoa - Hung Sat. I'm putting more burns in that target than anyone. It's almost finished up.

I'm not getting much flying time lately. Only getting one flight a day averaging about an hour & a half. I was finished flying by 8:00 AM today.

Had the rest of the day off, so I rerecorded some more tapes.

I also got two shots today - plague & cholera. Boy my arm is sore.

(Tues) APRIL 23 (Bien Hoa)

Today was my day off. Recorded some more tapes this morning. Spent the afternoon flight planning for tomorrow's flight.

We had a hell of a thunder storm this afternoon. It poured like mad for over an hour - thunder and lightning too. It sure cooled things off though.

The past 2 weeks, it has been getting terribly hot. The sun is just about overhead now, and we are having our longest days of the year. We'll have some more long days in a few months when the sun moves back down south again.

(Wed) APRIL 24 (Bien Hoa)

This is getting pretty repetitious, but I went down to Rung Shatt again. I seem to be the only one who ever flies that target. I can fly it blindfolded.

The weather is starting to turn bad. In a few weeks, we'll be sitting on the ground a lot because of weather aborts.

I got a package from Mom today. It only took 2 months to get here. It was mailed to Phan Rang about Feb. 25. They finally got around to forwarding it down here. The cookies were in surprisingly good shape.

(THURS) APRIL 25 (Bien Hoa)
3 Months

Today is 3 down and 9 to go. I like to look at it as a quarter of a year. It sounds much better.

Well we canceled both targets today because of weather. We were on the runway ready to take-off when they canceled the alternate. Low ceilings and rain showers were the problem.

We had another good thunderstorm ourselves this afternoon. The raindrops are so big, it sounds like hail.

(Fri) APRIL 26 (Bien Hoa)

Back to old Rung Shatt again. At least this time it was a little different. We ran a North extension, which was only half as long as usual, so we had to plum-tree it. First time I've ever done a plum-tree. It didn't work too well.

We had to orbit for 35 min. about 10 miles out from our rendezvous. There was artillery all over the area, and we couldn't get cleared in.

There was a squadron picnic today at the base picnic grounds. There was beer, and steaks & salads. I only stayed long enough for a beer and a meal. I was home by 5:30. It wasn't quite like Da Nang.

(SAT)

APRIL 27

(A. EN Hoa)

(SUN)

APRIL 28

(B. EN Hoa)

It was 2 lifts for me today. I lead the second one. It was good to fly there, I need the hours.

The Gia Nghia road target was mine again today. That's my third time on it. Everything was perfect until just before spray on. The ground wind was from the north, which should have blown us to the right. When the smoke was off to our right I couldn't believe it. I never did get over far enough. I sprayed kind of an erratic path, but I think I followed the road and a burn pretty well. The wind at 6000 was 180° different than on the ground. It really surprised me, but it's just another part of my learning experience.

Today I was off. In fact I'm off tomorrow too.

I recorded some music by the Ray Charles Singers this morning. I was getting tired of recording the "Talkie" tapes. I just lounged around all day. Recorded a tape for my Mom & Dad and read a book. It's so nice to relax. I just wish it were a little cooler.

(MON)

APRIL 29

(B. EN Hoa)

Had the day off again, though I spent most of the day down at the squadron anyway.

We got our first "K" model, with the jets today. Eventually all the planes will have jets. It's a nice added safety factor.

We've had a dozen or so C-130's staying here from Ton Son Nhut. They are flying some new type missions. They're dropping 50 gal drums of gasoline and exploding them when they hit the ground, to start forest fires. Kind of a crude method of defoliation, I guess.

Boy did it ever rain this afternoon. I've never heard it rain harder. Inside that metal wadded hanger it was so noisy, I had to yell on top of my lungs just to brief.

(TUES)

APRIL 30

(B. EN Hoa)

Flew Alpha & Charlie this morning. I led alpha and we sprayed a wooded area about 10 miles west of Ham Tan. Everything went real smooth. There weren't many checkpoints along the run. I know I started okay, but after that, who knows. Nobody else knew either, so they have to believe what I told them.

Five "Kamikaze Hands" threw a going home party at the Club tonight. It was a lot of fun - purple flight suits & all. Two that are leaving are navigator Bobby Oyer & Chuck Fischer. We are hunting for nav. men. I guess we'll be flying out tomorrow.