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[ 10 Nov 1981 ] (Postmark)

WILLOUGHBY DAVID JACK [Signature] \_\_\_\_\_  
Name (last first middle signature date)

Specific Information

Please answer the following questions in the spaces provided. Be specific.

1. Ranch Hand service: From 10 MAR 1968 to 2 MAR 1969. Where? BIEN HOA / DANANG
2. RH/C-123 training: Where/when? C-123 AIRCRAFT OVERHAUL FLD 12 NOV 67 - 13 JAN 1968  
VC 123 SPRAY LAUREL AFB 20 MAR 68 - 12 FEB 68
3. Rank while in RH? LT Col Present/retired rank? COLONEL RETIRED 1976
4. Duty(s) while in Ranch? PILOT - LOGS - IP dates? 10 MAR 68 - 15 JUN 68  
"D" FMT EDR  
Asst ON MAINT STAFF OFFICER 15 JUN 68 - 29 FEB 69
5. Other Vietnam service? Where/when? NONE
6. If aircrew member:
  - a. Number of missions: RH 355 Other (specify) 76 Bunkers
  - b. Combat flying hours: RH 508.2 Other (specify) 70.3 Hours

Narrative Information

On a separate sheet(s) of paper, please answer the following questions with as much detail as possible. Write too much, rather than too little. Use names and dates, if possible. If you want a name "blacked out" before this goes in the archives, just circle the name. On the sheets, indicate the number of the question you are answering, and put your last name and the form number in the upper right-hand corner of each sheet.

7. Special missions/operations participated in? (name, when, where, what, who else)
8. Decorations? (If Purple Heart, DFC, or above, give date and details of the act. If you have a copy of the narrative justifying the medal, please attach a copy.)
9. Were you present during an attack against the base, Ranch site, or quarters? Explain.
10. Were you present when a Ranch aircraft was shot down or crashed? Give all details.
11. Were you present when a Ranch crew member was killed or wounded? Give as much data as possible, even if you didn't directly observe it or are not sure of date or names.
12. Did you ever see or repair unusual battle damage (more than routine skin holes)?
13. Did you ever help plan RH missions? If so, what was the procedure?
14. How did you get into the Ranch? What did you know about the mission beforehand?
15. What were you told about the chemicals used? In Vietnam? Before Vietnam?
16. Other than something already discussed (or going home), what is your happiest memory of the Ranch (or Vietnam)? What is your unhappiest (saddest)?
17. What unusual, odd-ball, weird, funny, etc., thing happened to you in VN or training?
18. Same as question 17, but you saw it happen to another person(s).
19. What were your quarters like? Your routine day? Your parties? Anything else?
20. We know that the Ranch was unique. What should I tell the reader that will help him understand why this was a special outfit of special people? What or who should I not talk about?

Other data: Do you have any good pictures (especially of RH members), any journals, notes, diaries, letters, briefing notes, maps, etc., that I could copy? If so, DO NOT SEND THEM with this form. Repeat...DO NOT SEND THEM!!!! Describe the items on a separate piece of paper, with your name and form number on it. I will write and give you instructions on when to send them, or how to get them copied, at a later date. All materials will be protected and returned to you!!! Thank you for your help and time.

Please return this form and the narrative sheets in the enclosed envelope to Texas A&M.

WILLHOUGHBY

Form 7861

7. FLEW DEPUTY TADA IN AN OUT COUNTRY ROAD TARGET MISSION ON 17 OCTOBER 1968. MISSION CONSISTED OF 6 RANDOLPHS Plus 1 MAHANO SPARE (UC-1231C), 1 F4C (COVEY) AND SIX A-1 FIGHTERS (SPAD) FOR HEAVY SUPPRESSION. WE TOOK HEAVY GROUND FIRE DURING WHICH 5 RANDOLPH AIRCRAFT WERE HIT. ONE AIRCRAFT HAD AN ENGINE KNOCKED OUT AT START OF RUN BUT CONTINUED THE MISSION.

8. AWARDS RECEIVED DURING THIS TOUR WERE: DFC W/100C; AIRMOBILE W/1200C; PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION W/100C; RVN GALLANTRY CROSS W PARM (UNIT) AND 4 BATTAL STARS. BOTH DFCs AND TWO AIRMOBILES WERE FOR SPECIFIC MISSIONS. ONE DFC WAS FOR A MISSION ON 2 JULY 1968 NEAR CA MAN IN IV CORPS. I WAS LEADING A G SHIP AREA MISSION IN WHICH WE RECEIVED HEAVY GROUND FIRE. THE FORMATION TOOK 29 HITS WHICH WAS THE SECOND HIGHEST IN RANDOLPH HISTORY. THE SECOND DFC WAS FOR A MISSION ON 22 JULY 1968 NEAR TAN AN IN IV CORPS. I WAS DEPUTY TADA IN #2. WE GOT HIT JUST BEFORE "SPRAY OUT", HAD A MOMENTARY FIRE AND THE AIRCRAFT FILLED WITH SMOKE. WE WENT "PIGGY BACK", DUMPED AND COMPLETED THE RUN.

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9. Based on my DIARY, I was present during 20 Rocket/mortar attacks at Bien Hoa and 8 at DANANG. These occurred during the periods 7 Apr - 29 May 68; 22 Aug - 5 Dec 68 and Feb 69. There may have been more which weren't in the DIARY. The most significant of these were:

A. 7 Apr 68 - Rockets hit two storerooms, the NCO club and a bunker in the quarters compound. There were some casualties. However no casualties in quarters were hit.

B. 5 May 68 - Rockets hit the aircraft ramp as crews were boarding aircraft. 3 aircraft were hit with shrapnel and the 315<sup>th</sup> Wing D/O who was visiting to fly a mission was wounded.

C. <sup>22</sup>~~22~~ Aug 68 - During one Rocket/mortar attack the VINAF Bomb Dump on the North side at Bien Hoa blew up. It was estimated that there were 800-1000 750<sup>th</sup> Bombs involved. The blast blew open doors open in our hangar and put shrapnel in the quarters and aircraft ramp areas approximately 2 miles from the blast. During a second attack, four rounds hit between the runways just as we pulled a 3 ship formation onto the runway for take off.

D. 30 Aug 68 - A large Napalm storage area went up on the North side at Bien Hoa but did not affect the aircraft area.

Willow Run

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E. 23 Feb 69 - One of the heaviest Rocket/Mortar attacks hit the east side of Bien Hoa. The attack lasted about 4 hours and with an estimated 300 rounds. There were no hits in the Ranch area but 1 F100 - 1 UH1D and several vehicles and buildings were damaged in the 3rd TAC FFWing area.

F. 26 Feb 69 - AT about noon "The 24hr Battle of Bien Hoa" began. An estimated enemy force of two battalions was ~~seen~~ dug in just east of Bien Hoa. Friendly ground forces included the US 11th Cavalry, RVN Marine, Ranger and Cavalry units. Air support was initially provided by US Army Comms and Shocks. At about 1500 hours TAC MA strikes started with F100s and F4s and UNAF A-1s. At dark the Gunships took over. The 3rd TAC FFWing Daily Bulletin of 28 Feb gave enemy losses at 141 killed and 50 captured.

10. ON 24 May 68, I was Flight Lead in a 3 ship NAAG Bravo mission escorted by two A-37 Fighters (RAP). DURING DESCENT TO TARGET, JUST BEFORE SPRAY ON, RAP 2 CRASHED AND BURST. AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME THE ALPHA MISSION WAS ON THE WEST COAST IN THE CAMP. THEY TOOK GROUND FIRE AND AS THEY PULLED UP AT THE END ONE AIRCRAFT ROLLED OVER AND CRASHED IN THE WATER. ALL THREE CREWS WERE KILLED (RUCKER, SHANKS AND SCHMIDT). I WAS NOT ON THAT MISSION.

11. on 16 Jun 68, I was in #4 on a G ship Army suppression mission on the Saigon River. The Fighters had had smoke on our right side which drifted into us. As we came through the smoke we encountered ground fire. We took one hit and #5 got some hits mostly in the cockpit area. The windshield was shattered and one AK-47 slug hit the co-pilot (Jack Gentry) in the throat. Luckily we had the new Ranch Hand Flak Jacket with the wide collar and the slug was stopped by the collar so his injury was more like a hand blow. (The slug was found imbedded in the collar at the hospital). He and the Pilot (Dick Ely) received some facial cuts from flying glass.

12. In addition to flying a normal mission you, I had the additional duty of staff maintenance officer for 8 hours during a period of high sortie rates and heavy activity. I saw a lot of battle damage other than the routine AK-47 skin holes which required only a sand patch. This damage consisted of:

a. Flight and engine control cables severed and hydraulic lines ruptured

b. Engine cowlings and intakes/exhaust tubes penetrated.

c. one slug went into a prop cone and locked up the cone so the prop could not be feathered. Luckily it was a 1K model (1)

WILLOWBAY

FEB 78 61

d. Several fuel cells were punctured by 30 and 50 cal shots but thanks to the self sealing tubes, the aircraft recovered safely.

e. on at least 3 occasions, while in the cockpit, I was hit with shrapnel, radio and aircraft oxygen panels behind the pilot and copilot.

f. on two out country missions 37 mm and 14.5 mm 2PU fire caused spin and skin damage to the wing and fuselage areas.

g. on one mission I was hit 18 times ~~one~~ in the nose of the aircraft. The left Anderson ball cannon was severed and the Anderson went to the full up position. It took full power on the left engine, 10% on the right and full Anderson by both pilots to control the aircraft to land where it landed. It landed on landing due to brake damage. This aircraft was out 25 days for repair.

13. I was not involved in mission planning except as tank pilot for individual mission tactics.

14. While in Europe assigned to the AF School USMILGP, I received orders to the 309<sup>th</sup> ACS in Viet Nam with C-123 aircraft training at that point. Due to the forth coming increase in the size

Willoughby  
Fall 1961

at the Ranch Hand operation, a second location for spray  
training was started at Langley AFB. Several squads including  
myself were selected from the A-1H class to serve as  
volunteers. We were briefed on the Ranch mission and went  
to Langley upon completion of A-1H training.

15. I was told, both in training and in Viet Nam that the  
chemicals were a basic commercial household and what the  
difference was between orange, white and blue. I have used  
2-4D and 2-45-T commercial preparations before and after Viet Nam.  
I also know about malathion (insecticide) from briefings in  
the Ranch zone.

16. My happiest memories of the Ranch are the look flying,  
interesting missions and working with Sierra Hotel fighter jets  
and F-4s. My unhappiest memories are of ridiculous higher  
headquarters directives which prohibited using Saturdays for quarters  
parties (until April 68), pushed base beautification projects and  
tried to run the administrative (paperwork) and inspection systems  
in a combat zone as if we were in the states.

17 and 18 Nothing noteworthy

19. Our quarters were in the west corner of Blair Hall which

was built by the French. The woods were simple scrub  
with and most overhangs with the upper part covered. Toilet facilities

were in a separate building. After a while we got some of them

from well tried up ~~mountain~~ through salt water (Coralline and overhanging) and some

and arrangements. After about 6 months I got to move into

a Portacabin which was about 12' x 24' taller with one man

in full sun. They were the same and very comfortable.

A narrow dry line was set up about 0300, but ~~disappeared~~

at the mess hall. No one to believe about 0400. ~~the~~ That's all

would be about 0500-0600. Depend on the distance to the target.

missions with <sup>1 1/2</sup> hours, some as short as 30 minutes. <sup>1 hr</sup> as

have as 3 1/2 hours. Upon return to base the aircraft would be

grounded. Great flights to 6000 meters and 8000 ft. Monthly

we were finished about noon, it was then an additional duty

that took up the afternoon, it was then a party (and

on Saturday the ball was in order. It was then a party (and

the whole lot of them) They would start about 5 or 6 pm and finish

about 9 pm. There was no going into town to Blair Hall

with off limits and the whole place was under strict control to be in.

I went to Saigon once by jeep on business. We were never

and had a car with us. I went into Blair Hall once when the

government visited a flight school we were sponsoring. They were

at home and two weeks R/R at the end of the year.



Our parties were at three basic types (1) CHERRY PARTIES were the most frequent. The individual(s) whose aircraft were met by every one for the first time (not their "cherry") would celebrate by buying champagne for the bunch. We also quite a few visitors who got to buy also including a MRS GIBSON, a UPI Reporter (2) Formal?? parties where the someone chipped in for a certain purpose such as a Farewell to a comrade or an anniversary etc. If it was really formal we would provide flight suits and scarves. (3) Informal parties either at the O club, in a bar or at a flight squadron "Hospitality Room". Usually my reason was needed for this type. Parties generally consisted on guests; singing ranch special songs such as "Where Were All The Rock Hounds Grow"; toasts "TO THE RANCH"! TO JERRY KILMER AND TO HIM; SINGING; DRINKS; SINGING; DRINKS ETC ETC. Once in awhile there were food at a party especially if it was a "Dinner in" (and one)

Williamson

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~~At~~ At Bien Hoa, the entire command lived in hootches in the west compound which had been built by the French. 2 or 3 of the officer hootches had been burned out just prior to my arrival so things were pretty crowded initially. As some other units moved to new quarters on the east side of the base we got additional hootches and were able to spread out and by self help (skill and economy) got them pretty well fixed up including air conditioning. There was a few porta cabs for senior officers to take about 6 minutes I got out of town. They were like a 24' trailer with one man in each end, air conditioning and very comfortable. At Da Nang aircraft were in a two story concrete buildings with two men per room.

A routine day was to get up about 0300-0400, have breakfast in the mess hall and go to briefing. Take off was about 0500-0600 depending on the distance to target, missions averaged about 1 1/2 hours, upon return to base, the aircraft was serviced and crews briefed for the second mission and off again. Normally we were finished by noon. If we had an additional duty, that took up the afternoon, if not, leave waiting, shooting the bull in a NAC was in order. Depending on crew and aircraft availability we would fly two (2)

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DAYS WITH THE THIRD DAY OFF HOWEVER SOMETIMES WE WOULD FLY AS HIGH AS SIX DAYS BEFORE A DAY OFF. IF WE HAD A PARTY (WE HAD LOTS OF THEM) IT WOULD START ABOUT 1700-1800 AND FINISH ABOUT 2100. THERE WAS NO GOING INTO TOWN AS BANGHUR WAS OFF LIMITS AND THE BARRACK AREA WAS UNDER NO GO IN. WE WERE AUTHORIZED AN R+R AT ABOUT MID HOUR.

PARTIES WERE OF THREE BASIC TYPES (1) CHERRY PARTIES WERE THE MOST FREQUENT. INDIVIDUALS WHOSE AIRCRAFT WERE HIT BY ENEMY FIRE FOR THE FIRST TIME WERE OBLIGATED BY TRADITION TO BUY CHAMPAGNE FOR THE RAISE. (2) FORMAL?? PARTIES WERE FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION SUCH AS FAREWELL TO A COMMANDER OR AN ANNIVERSARY. IF IT WAS REALLY FORMAL WE WORE THE PURPLE FLIGHT SUIT WITH SCARF. (3) IMPROMPTU PARTIES WERE HAD AT THE 'O' CLUB, IN A HOOTEN OR AT A FIGHTER SQUADRON "HOSPITALITY ROOM". VARIOUS VERY REASON WERE NEEDED FOR THIS TYPE PARTY.

20. 1. BECAUSE THE RANCH WAS UNIQUE FOR SEVERAL REASONS:

a. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME IN MILITARY HISTORY THAT A MAJOR ASSAULT HAD BEEN MADE AGAINST MOUNTAIN NATURE IN ORDER TO DENY ENEMY GROUND FORCE CONCENTRATION FROM NATURAL TERRAIN.

(OVER)

(10)

B. The mission entailed flying UNARMED AIRCRAFT IN FORMATION AT 100' AT 170 KTS OVER ENEMY TERRAIN. THE RUCK BACK 3000 HITS ON 22 July 68 AND I BELIEVE WHOEVER WE HAD BEEN HIT OVER 3200 TIMES.

C. OUR AIRCRAFT EXPERIENCE (AGE, SERVICE AND FLYING HOURS) PROBABLY HAD THE HIGHEST AVERAGE AT ANY UNIT IN VIET NAM. SOME OF OUR CREW MEMBERS WERE FLYING IN THEIR THIRD WAR. CROWS WERE HIGHLY RESPECTED BY FRENCH AND BRITISH PILOTS WHO FLEW OUR MISSIONS. THEY CONSTANTLY EXPRESSED PRIDE FOR THE RUCK BACKS AND PROFESSIONALISM.

D. AT A TIME WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CONUS WERE REVERING AND BURNING THEIR DRAFT CARDS AND THE AMERICAN FLY OUR YOUNG MAINTENANCE PEOPLE WERE BEATING THEMSELVES AND WORKING THEIR TAILS OFF SEVEN DAYS A WEEK UNDER VERY POOR LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS. I CANNOT FIND WORDS TO ADEQUATELY EXPRESS MY PRIDE AND ADMIRATION FOR ALL THE NCOs AND AIRMEN IN THE SQUADRON DURING MY TOUR.

E. ALL OF THESE FACTORS RESULTED IN A SQUADRON OF HIGH SPIRIT & CORPS.

2d. The following items cover subjects not included in your questions but should be considered as part of the Ranch history. You may or may not receive this information during your other research.

At 1st having my own training history as a representative example of pilots in the Ranch during my time. I was in the USMC in Ecuador when I received orders (2 June 67) to the 309th AFS in Vietnam with combat training in route. I attended the USAF Survival course at Fairchild AFB in Nov 67 and C-123 combat training at Hurlburt Fld for two months (12 Nov 67 - 13 Jan 68). Upon completion of the first training, I went to Langley AFB for 3 weeks of spray training (Good old plum tree island). I departed Travis AFB 1 Mar 68 for Clark AFB where I attended the PACAF jungle survival school (4-8 Mar 68) and got to Yen Son NM, VN on 10 Mar 68. There were 9 Ranch pilots and 15 F-4s in our group so we had a lot of trouble. Finally got them to get to Buon Hoa (only 35 miles). Tet 68 was still under way and the Ranch was in JAC "E" strike team. Finally found a Ranch aircraft which was to have a JAC combat team to the Special Forces base at Song Be. The 2nd of us (CIN SUNFANS) piled our boards with our baggage and flew a combat mission before we got to our units. Song Be

was under heavy pressure so we got to see the  
theses we learned at that time - i.e. High steep approach,  
short field landing and combat off-load (open the ramp -  
boost the engines and let the load roll out) we got  
to see that just after dark.

RAAF policy was to send new aircrews to Phou Khouang  
to fly aircraft missions with the 315 Wing and in country and  
airfield familiarization. Nine of us went there on 11 Jan  
for 18 days TDY. During 14 days of flying, I got 70 hours on  
76 sorties and landed at 27 different fields. Returned to B-10 USA  
on 30 Mar and flew my first B-10 mission (EXERCISE) on  
31 Mar. Flew another mission on 1 Apr 68 to win the  
right to buy champagne at my Chanay party. Became Training  
Quarterback as pilot on 21 Apr, Lead pilot 12 Jun, Flight Test  
on 19 Jun and Instructor pilot on 9 Sept 68.

The training provided to B-10 USA crews was excellent  
and I believe we had the highest overall average experience of  
any unit in Viet Nam. When I arrived there were 16 H-10s and  
one H-11 - The others were Capt and Majors. Due to the build up  
in aircrews for the increase in aircraft we started receiving  
some UPT courses in Jun 68. On 1 Sept 68 (I have no answer  
reason) we had 111 aircrew members: 81 officers and 30  
Enlisted (Flight Engineers). The officers consisted of 11 - Lt Col,  
39 majors, 20 Capt and 11 1st Lt with ages 24 to 52. The  
Flight Engineers consisted of 1 - 1st Lt, 23 - 2nd Lt, 5 - 3rd Lt and 13 - 4th Lt.

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b. Upon my arrival in VIN on 10 MAR 68, the ENEMY's TET 68 OFFENSIVE WAS STILL GOING ON. CONSIDERABLE FIGHTING WAS GOING ON IN AND AROUND SAIGON AND BIEU HOA HAD BEEN RECEIVED REGULAR ROCKET AND MORTAR ATTACKS. THE 12<sup>th</sup> AIR COMMAND SQUADRON (RANGH 12th) WAS FLYING VC-123B AIRCRAFT AND WAS REINFORCED (V/E) TWELVE AIRCRAFT AND WAS BASED AT BIEU HOA WITH A DETACHMENT AT DANANG. OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE WAS LOCATED IN THE USAF HANGAR ON THE WEST RAMP, THE PROBABLY RUINED AND DAMAGED WERE IN THE OLD FRENCH COMPOUND SOUTH OF THE RAMP. 2 OR 3 OFFICERS WATCHES HAD BEEN BURNED OUT BY ROCKET ATTACK AND HAUSING WAS VERY TIGHT AT THAT TIME. THERE HAD BEEN NO ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE SOUND BAY PROTECTION AND THE BUNKERS WERE MARGINAL AND WOULD NOT WITH STAND A DIRECT HIT. THE OLD RANCH HAD PAID SIGN OF "COWBOY" HAD BEEN CHANGED TO "HADES"

c. ORGANIZATION - THE 12<sup>th</sup> ACS WAS ORGANIZATIONALLY ASSIGNED TO THE 315<sup>th</sup> AIR COMMAND WING WHICH WAS LOCATED AT PHUO RANG WITH THREE AIRCRAFT SQUADRONS. OPERATIONAL CONTROL DIRECTLY UNDER 7<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE (TRAC) AND ALL SPRAY MISSIONS WERE DIRECTED BY FRAG ORDER FROM THAT OFFICE. THE SQUADRON WAS A TENENT <sup>UNIT</sup> AT BIEU HOA UNDER THE 3<sup>rd</sup> TAC FTR WG WHICH HAD 3 SQUADS OF F-100S AND 1 SQUAD OF A-37 FIGHTERS (14)

This allowed excellent coordination and support for missions in III and IV Corps as the 34 TFW normally provided fighter support and could return pre mission briefings. Full base support including field level maintenance was provided by the 34 TFW. The O & A wing detachment was a tenant at the 366<sup>th</sup> TAFPCW which also allowed pre mission briefings when fighter support was provided by their F-4s. Aircraft and crews were rotated to, to O & A wing with all inspections and heavy maintenance performed at Bien Hoa.

The squadron consisted of the command with administrative, operations and maintenance sections. Upon my arrival, Lt Col DONALD S STEWART was the command, Lt Col CHARLES AVERY was the operations officer and Lt Col BERT KOLLOFF was the maintenance staff officer (this was an additional duty for a senior officer (pilot) with maintenance experience). In December these people were replaced by Lt Col ARTHUR F. MCCONNELL, OAR; Lt Col WILLIAM H. WILDMAN, OPS, and Lt Col DAVID I. WILLOUGHBY. Maintenance in December 1968. Lt Col RICH STONER became COB, Lt Col DAVE STONER, OPS, and I remained maint. until my departure in the end of Feb 69. On 1 April 1968 the 315<sup>th</sup> Air Command Wing became the 315<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing along with the other squadrons the 12<sup>th</sup> ARS became the 12<sup>th</sup> SOS.



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Form 2861

D. OPERATIONAL TACTICS AND PROCEDURES - MISSIONS WERE DIRECTED BY 7<sup>th</sup> AF (TACC) THROUGH FRAG ORDERS WHICH SPECIFIED THE TARGET, TIMES, FORWARD AIR CONTROLLER (FAC), FIGHTER SUPPORT AND WHETHER FIGHTER ESCORT OR HEAVY SUPPORT. ESCORT MISSIONS USUALLY HAD TWO FIGHTERS WHICH MADE INDIVIDUAL PASSES WITH US ON THE RUN INTERMEDIATE SIDES. NO ORDNANCE WAS USED UNLESS WE TOOK GROUND FIRE AND THE FAC WAS ABLE TO LOCATE AND MARK THE TARGET. ON HEAVY SUPPRESSION MISSIONS, THE FIGHTERS DROPPED ORDNANCE JUST AHEAD OF THE RANOH FORMATION. ON A FEW OCCASIONS WE HAD A PAB STRIKE JUST A FEW MINUTES AHEAD. THESE MISSIONS USED 4 TO 6 FIGHTERS AND ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION USED 10 FIGHTERS AND 2 FACs. INITIALLY THE SUPPRESSION PROCEDURE WAS TO RUN SMOKE DOWN ONE SIDE AND CDU-2 DOWN THE OTHER SIDE. HOWEVER AFTER 3 OR 4 INCIDENTS WHERE THE SMOKE PREVENTED THE US FROM SEEING THE TARGETS, WE TO FLY THROUGH IT (IFR LOW LEVEL FORMATION!) AND GET HOT PLOTS. BAD THE SMOKE SCREEN WAS TERMINATED, THE FIGHTERS THEN RAN CDU-2 DOWN BOTH SIDES. LATER ON WHEN WE FLEW OVER ESPECIALLY HOT TARGETS, THE FIGHTERS WOULD DROP 750<sup>lb</sup> BOMBS WITH FUSE EXTENDERS 30 SECONDS IN FRONT OF THE FORMATION IN ADDITION TO RANOH CDU-2.

RANOH MISSIONS NORMALLY USED 6 AIRCRAFT ON FLEW

TARGETS (ALPHA AND CHARLIE MISSIONS) FROM BLOW HORN THROUGH  
IN EARLY 1964 WE STARTED USING 9 SHIP FORMATIONS ON SOME  
TARGETS. FOR MOUNTAIN AND CAMP TARGETS WE USED 3 AIRCRAFT.  
(BRAVO AND DELTA MISSIONS FROM BLOW HORN AND HORNED NO LINDA  
MISSIONS FROM DA NANG). INITIALLY ALL FLIGHTS RETURNED  
TO HORN BAZZ FOR TURN AROUND BETWEEN MISSIONS. IN MID  
1968 WE ESTABLISHED ITADICRO AND FUEL SUPPORT CAPABILITIES  
AT NHA TRANG AND PHU CAT SO WE COULD TURN AROUND FOR  
LONG MISSIONS INTO NORTHERN III CORPS AND SOUTHERN II CORPS.

E. EQUIPMENT ~~AND FORMATIONS~~ - AT THE BEGINNING OF MY TOUR  
WE WERE FLYING THE UC-123B WHICH HAD BEEN IN USE FOR MANY  
YEARS WITH A U/E AUTOMATION OF EITHER 12 OR 16 AIRCRAFT. IN MAY 1968  
WE STARTED CONVERTING TO THE UC-123C WITH A AUTOMATION  
OF 25 AIRCRAFT. THE MODIFICATION FROM B TO C WAS DONE  
IN THE CONUS WITH THE AIRCRAFT FLOATED BACK AND FORTH  
BY COUS FERRY CRANES (DUE TO THE GREAT CRUISING SPEED  
OF THE AIRCRAFT IT REQUIRED 60-80 HOURS FLYING TIME ONE-WAY)  
THE SQUADRON MAINTENANCE WORK LOAD WAS VERY HIGH BECAUSE  
IN ADDITION TO FLYING COMBAT MISSIONS, THE AIRCRAFT HAD TO  
BE PREPARED FOR THE TERRY FLIGHTS. FOR B MODELS PERMANENT TO  
CONUS WE HAD TO REMOVE THE ITADICRO SYSTEM TO BRING PLANE  
AND INSTALL THE NEWER NO2 OXYGEN SYSTEM (WHICH WAS BACK OUT  
FOR YEARS) INSTALL WITH PYLON JAMES AND PURCHASE FUEL AND OIL (12)

Willoway

Room 7861

THINKS AND INSURE ALL COMM NEW EQUIPMENT WAS OPERATIONAL.  
UPON ARRIVAL AT THE K MODEL, THESE SYSTEMS WERE REMOVED  
AND THE SPRAY SYSTEMS INSTALLED. SINCE WE WERE INCREASING  
THE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT ALSO, THERE WAS A SHORTAGE  
OF SPRAY SYSTEMS AT TIMES AND WE HAD TO LOCALLY  
FABRICATE ADDITIONAL AIRBORNE PLATFORM SYSTEMS. IN ADDITION  
TO THE BASIC MODIFICATION TO THE K MODEL, CERTAIN  
OTHER MODIFICATIONS (TFO) WERE PERFORMED IN COUNTRY AT  
PHU RANG AND AN IRAN (INSPECT AND REPAIR AS NECESSARY)  
PROGRAM WAS ESTABLISHED IN TAIWAN.

THE K MODEL PROVIDED TWO J-85 PWD MOUNTED JET  
ENGINES, AN IMPROVED ANTI-SKID BRAKE SYSTEM, A HEATED  
WINDSHIELD WHICH PROVIDED IMPROVED RESISTANCE TO BIRD STRIKES AND  
A DESIGNED UP NOSE LANDING GEAR. THE JET ENGINES PROVIDED  
A TREMENDOUS INCREASE IN SAFETY BECAUSE THE B MODEL, WITH  
11000<sup>LB</sup> OF HEAVY LIFTING AND BURST, WAS 1000<sup>LB</sup> OVER GROSS WEIGHT  
FOR SINGLE ENGINE PERFORMANCE (IT TOOK 2 MINUTES TO DUMP). ALSO  
THE AIRCRAFT WOULD NOT MAINTAIN ALTITUDE AT ANY WEIGHT IF  
AN ENGINE WAS LOST AND COULD NOT BE FORWARDED. WE SAVED AT  
LEAST 4 AIRCRAFT DURING MY TOUR BY HAVING JETS.

OTHER MODIFICATIONS INCLUDED A CHANGE TO USE EXISTING OIL  
FOR THE PROP INSTEAD OF THE INDEPENDENT OIL SUPPLY, INSTALLATION OF

UPDATING UHF AND IFF SYSTEMS, ADDITION OF AN FM RADIO  
AND INSTALLATION PROPELLER REVVERS LATER.

THE FIRST K model ARRIVED IN MAY 68 AND THE FIRST K MISSION  
(3 SHIP) WAS FLANNED ON 20 JUN 68. ON K MISSIONS WE USED THE  
JETS FOR TAKE OFF AND CLIMB, THEY WERE SHUT DOWN FOR CRUISE  
TO TARGET, STARTED AND SET AT 6000 FOR THE TARGET RUN, 10000 AND  
MORE POWER FOR ACCELERATION AND CLIMB OUT AT TARGET AND SHUT  
DOWN FOR RETURN TO BASE. THE FULL CAPABILITY OF THE JETS  
WAS DEMONSTRATED EARLY ONE MORNING WHEN AN AIRCRAFT BLEW  
A REAR ON TAKE OFF AND BECAME AT COMPLETE CONTINUITY, BOTH  
REAR WERE FURTHER. THE CREW GOT THE AIRCRAFT AROUND  
THE GROUND AND LANDED SAFELY ON JETS ONLY! WE HAD MOST  
OF OUR K MODELS BY THE END OF OCTOBER 1968 ALTHOUGH WE  
DIDN'T SEND OUR LAST B model BACK UNTIL 3 JAN 69. IT HAD  
BE USED AS THE "BUG BIRD". DURING THE CONVERSION, MAINTENANCE  
WAS LIKE A 3 RING DANCE AS AT ONE TIME WE  
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A SPECIAL INTEREST ITEM CONCERNING THE FAMOUS "PATON" (362)  
IT WAS NEVER PAINTED AND WHEN IT ARRIVED WAS BEING USED  
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When it left and we got it back as a "K" on 21 Oct 1968. It was still silver (There was quite a fight to keep her from being painted). We used her again as a bug bird. I flew her to IAH in Taiwan on 23 Dec 68 and she returned on 1 Feb 69. I understand she was put in the AF Museum some time this year.

F. FACILITIES - Operations and maintenance facilities were scarce and in some cases marginal for combat operations. These facilities were located on the west <sup>End</sup> ramp of the West Ramp at Bion Hoa Air Base. The remainder of the Ramp was used by the Aerial Port for cargo and passenger movement and transient aircraft. There were no aircraft repair shops and aircraft received structural damage during rocket attacks on several occasions. On 5 May 68 rockets hit the ramp as crews were preparing aircraft for a mission. (The 315 wing D/O, who was given on a mission, was hit in the shoulder). Operations, personnel support and the maintenance offices were located in rooms in the hangar. Initially we used 20 of the hangar for aircraft maintenance, however, in May 68 we lost that plus 20 rooms to Communist forces in the area. Electrical power for the hangar was provided by a VINA

Generator which was often out of service. On 26 June 68 we had to redo the complete power plan to make room for a VNAF C-119 unit which moved in. Our periodic maintenance Docu was located on the north edge of the Ramp next to the taxiway. The only electrical power was from aircraft starting units and A-1 lighter units (Ground powered equipment). All tactical units on the base were required to provide the Security Police some of their A-1 lighter units. At times we had to complete periodic inspections as other maintenance work by Flashlight. Equipment and supplies were kept in several GONEX containers, a rather big one small QUARTER hut.

HYDRAULIC SERVICING was done from about 15 F-6 Refueling stations located just off the west edge of the Ramp and connected to ground with a piped and pumped system. RVN soldiers kept the Refueling Filled from 55 gal drums. This was a continuous system since we normally used 18000 gallons a day on about 360 barrels. Maintenance of the system was difficult since parts were hard to obtain. There was space to refuel 4 aircraft at a time.

INITIALLY, There was only one runway at Bien Hoa which caused considerable delay on Recovery the time off for the second mission. About 1 July 68 a second runway was opened which helped considerably.

Willoughby

Form 2861

The Base master plan for Bien Hoa called for all USAF operations to be on the east side of the Field with the VNAF using the west side. This involved a New Aerial Port Ramp and Terminal Facility at the <sup>EAST</sup> extreme end of the Field and the RMOH/HQ at about mid field. I started working on the project in July 68 and although we knew what type Facility we needed, it took a lot of coordination, requesting and selling. During meetings with the Base, 315<sup>th</sup> Wing and 7<sup>th</sup> AF Plans. On 26 Sept 68 I took a set of plans I had drawn to the PAC Design Conference in Saigon AFCE/DICC. The plans called for an Operations Building, a maintenance building, a parking Ramp with Revetments for 25 aircraft, periodic inspection and maintenance services. It also called for an engineered supportable maintenance service system. Work started in late 1968 and operations moved into their buildings in Jan 69. When I left on 2 Nov 69, some work had been done on the Ramp but we were still in a split operation. I don't know if the facility was ever completed or not. I understood the plan moved to Phan Rang sometime in 69 or 70.

Facilities for the detachment at Da Nang were fairly good. They were located at the North end of the Air Force Ramp. Aircraft were in Revetments and adjacent buildings were available

For the commandant command, operations and maintenance. Initially  
we kept 4 aircraft <sup>more</sup> with aircraft and crews rotated, on  
2 July 68 we put 7 aircraft <sup>more</sup> with maintenance personnel  
and aircraft PCS. During the remainder of my tour we operated  
7 to 12 aircraft depending on weather and mission requirements.

21. The source of data provided Korean consists of my daily  
diary (abbreviated) crews, Form 5, crew rosters and schedules from  
incoming missions, name pages and daily bulletins. I have some  
photos mostly B and W some at which I took an other  
official AF 8x10 prints.



ORIGINAL  
PAGINATION  
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7. Flew deputy lead in an out country road target mission on 17 October 1968. Mission consisted of 6 Ranch Hands plus 1 airborne spare (UC-123K), 1 FAC (Covey) and six A-1 Fighters (Spad) for heavy suppression. We took heavy ground fire during which 5 Ranch Hand aircraft were hit. One aircraft had an engine knocked out at start of run but continued the mission.

8. Awards received during this tour were: DFC w/1 olc; Air Medal w/ 12olc; Presidential Unit Citation w/1 olc; RVN Gallantry Cross w palm (unit) and 4 battle stars. Both DFCs and two air medals were for specific missions. One DFC was for a mission on 2 July 1968 near Ca Mau in IV Corps. I was leading a 6 ship Alpha mission in which we received heavy ground fire. The formation took 29 hits which was the second highest in Ranch History. The second DFC was for a mission on 22 July 1968 near Tan An in IV Corps. I was deputy lead in #2. We got hit just before "spray on", had a momentary fire and the aircraft filled with smoke. We went "piggy back", dumped and completed the run.

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9. Based on my diary, I was present during 20 rocket/mortar attacks at Bien Hoa and 8 at Da Nang. These occurred during the periods 7 Apr-29 May 68; 22 Aug-5 Dec 68 and Feb 69. There may have been more which weren't in the diary. The most significant of these were:

a. 7 Apr 68 - Rockets hit two hootches, the NCO club and a bunker in the quarters compound. There were some casualties, however, no Ranch Hands or quarters were hit.

b. 5 May 68 - Rockets hit the Ranch Ramp as crews were boarding aircraft. 3 aircraft were hit with schrapnel and the 315th Wing DM who was visiting to fly a mission was wounded.

c. 22 Aug 68 - During one rocket/mortar attack, the VNAF bomb dump on the north side of Bien Hoa blew up. It was estimated that there were 800-1000 750# bombs involved. The blast blew doors open in our hanger and put schrapnel in the quarters and aircraft ramp areas approximately 2 miles from the blast. During a second attack, four rounds hit between the runways just as we pulled a 3 ship formation onto the runway for take off.

d. 30 Aug 68 - A large napalm storage area went upon the north side of Bien Hoa but did not affect the Ranch area.

$\frac{2}{3}$  .....

e. 23 Feb 69 - One of the heaviest rocket/mortar attacks hit the east side of Bien Hoa. The attack lasted about 4 hours with an estimated 300 rounds. There were no hits in the Ranch area but 1 F-100 - 1 U1D, several vehicles and buildings were damaged in the 3rd TAC FTR Wq area.

f. 26 Feb 69 - At about noon "the 24 hr Battle of Bien Hoa" began. An estimated enemy force of two battalions had dug in just east of Bien Hoa. Friendly forces included the US 11th Cavalry, RVN Marine, Ranger, and Cavalry units. Air support initially provided by US Army Cobras and Slicks. At about 1500 hours TAC air strikes started with US F-100s and F-4s and VNAF A-1s. At dark the gunships took over. The 3rd Tac Ftr Wing Daily Bulletin dtd 28 Feb gave enemy losses at 141 killed and 50 captured.

10. On 24 May 68, I was flying lead in a 3 ship Hades bravo mission escorted by two A-37 Fighters (RAP). During descent to target, just before spray on, Rap 2 crashed and burned. At about the same time, the Alpha mission was on the west coast in IV Corps. They took ground fire and as they pulled up at the end one aircraft rolled over and crashed in the water. All three crew were lost (Rucker, Shanks and Schmidt). I was not on that mission.

$\frac{3}{4}$  .....

11. On 16 Jun 68, I was in #4 on a 6 ship heavy suppression mission on the Saigon River. The fighters had laid smoke on our right side which drifted into us. As we came through the smoke we encountered ground fire. We took one hit and #5 got seven hits, mostly in the cockpit area. Their windshield was shattered and one AK-47 slug hit the copilot (Jack Goury (??)) in the throat. Luckily we had the new Ranch Hand flak jackets with the wide collar and the slug was stopped by the collar so his injury was more like a hard blow. (The slug was found imbedded in the collar at the hospital). He and the pilot (Dick Shay) received some facial cuts from flying glass.

12. In addition to flying a normal aircrew tour, I had the additional

duty of staff maintenance officer for 5 months during a period of high sorties rates and enemy activity. I saw a lot of battle damage other than the routine AK-47 skin holes which required only a scab patch. This damage consisted of:

- a. Flight and engine control cable severed and hydraulic lines ruptured.
- b. Engine cylinders and intake//exhaust tubes penetrated.
- c. one slug went into a prop dome and locked up the gears so the prop could not be feathered. Luckily it was a K model.
- d. Several fuel cells were punctured by 30 and 50 cal. slugs but thanks to self sealing tanks, the aircraft recovered safely.
- e. On at least 3 occasions, hits in the cockpit area got windshields, radios and circuit breaker panels behind the pilot and copilot.
- f. On two out country missions 37 mm and 14.5 mm ZPU (?) fire caused spar and skin damage to the wing and empennage areas.
- g. On one mission lead took 18 hits in the nose of the aircraft. The left aileron bell crank was severed and the aileron went to the full up position. It took full power on the left engine, idle on the right and full aileron by both pilots to control the aircraft to landing where it ground looped on landing due to brake damage. This aircraft was out 25 days for repair.

13. I was not involved in mission planning except as lead pilot for individual mission tactics.

14. While in Ecuador assigned to the AF (?) USMILGP, I received orders to the 309th ACS in Viet Nam with C-123 aircraft training at Hurlbert. Due to the forth coming increase in the size of the Ranch Hand operation, a second location for spray training was started at Langley AFB. Several students including myself were selected from the airlift

class and asked to volunteer. We were briefed on the Ranch mission and went to Langley upon completion of airlift training.

15. I was told, both in training and in Viet Nam that the chemicals were a basic commercial herbicide and what the difference was between Orange, white, and blue. I have used 2-4D and 2-4-5-T commercial preparations before and after Vietnam. I also know about malithon (insecticide) from briefings in the Canal Zone.

16. My happiest memories of the Ranch are the good flying, interesting missions, and working with Sierra Hotel Fighter Jocks and FACs. My unhappiest memories are of ridiculous higher headquarters directives which prevented using sandbags for quarters protection (until April 68), pushed base beautification projects and tried to run the administrative (paperwork) and inspection systems in a combat zone as if we were in the states.

17 and 18 nothing noteworthy

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19. Our quarters were in the west compound of Bien Hoa which had been built by the French. The Hootchs were single story with wood roof overhangs with the upper half screened. Toilet facilities were in a separate building. After a while we got some of them pretty well fixed up through self help (skill and cunning) and some had airconditioning. After about 6 months, I got to move into a portacamper which was about (like?) a 24' trailer with one man in each end. They were airconditioned and very comfortable.

A routine day was to get up about 0300, eat breakfast at the mess hall and go to briefing about 0400. Takeoff would be about 0500-0600 depending on the distance to the target. Missions were about 1½ hours. Some as short as 1 hr, others as long as 3 hours. Upon return to base, the aircraft would be serviced, crews briefed for second mission and off again. Normally we would finish about noon. If we had an additional duty, that took up the afternoon. If not napping, letter writing or shooting the bull was in order. If we had a party (and we had lots of them) they would start about 5 or 6 pm and finish about 9 pm. There was

$\begin{array}{r} 7 \\ \hline 8 \end{array}$  . . . no going into town as Bien Hoa was unsafe to be in. I went to Saigon once by jeep on business. We were armed and had a guard with us. I went into Bien Hoa once when the squadron visited a girls school we were sponsoring. We were authorized a two week R & R at the midpoint of the tour. Our parties were of three basic types (1) cherry parties were the most frequent. The individual(s) whose aircraft were hit by enemy fire for the first time (lost their "cherry") were obliged to buy champagne for the Ranch. We had quite a few visitors who got to buy also including a Mrs. Gibson, a UPI reporter. (2) Formal?? parties where the squadron chipped in for a common purpose such as a farewell to a commander or an anniversary, etc. If it was really formal we wore purple flight suits and scarves. (3) Impromptu parties given at the O club, in a hootch or at a fighter squadron "hospitality room." Hardly any reason was needed for this type. Parties generally consisted of cocktails, singing Ranch special songs such as "where have all the Ranch Hands gone"; toasts "To the Ranch"! To Joyce Kilmer and to Him; singing; drinks; singing; drinks; etc. etc. Once in awhile there was food at a party especially if it was a "dining in" (had one).

$\begin{array}{r} 8 \\ \hline 9 \end{array}$  . . . . . At Bien Hoa, the entire squadron lived in hootches in the west compound which had been built by the French. 2 or 3 of the officer hootches had been burned out just prior to my arrival so things were pretty crowded initially. As some other units moved to new quarters on the east side of the base we got additional hootches and were able to spread out and by self help (skill and cunning) got them pretty well fixed up including airconditioners. There were a few porta campers for senior officers and after about six months I got one of them. They were like a 24' camper with one man in each end, airconditioning and very comfortable. At Da Nang aircrews were in a two story concrete building with two men per room.

$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ \hline 10 \end{array}$  . . . A routine day was to get up about 0300-0400, have breakfast in the mess hall and go to briefing. Takeoff was about 0500-0600 depending on the distance to target. Missions averaged about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours. Upon return to base, the aircraft were served and crews briefed for the second mission and off again. Normally we were finished by noon. If we had an additional duty, that took up the afternoon. If not, letter writing, shooting the bull or a nap was in order. Depending on crew and aircraft availability, we would fly two days with the third day off. However, sometimes we would fly as high as six days before a day off. If we had a party

(we had lots of them) it would start about 1700-1800 and finish about 2100. There was no going into town as Bien Hoa was off limits and the entire area was unsafe to be in. We were authorized an R&R at about mid tour.

Parties were of three basic types (1) cherry parties were the most frequent. Individuals whose aircraft were hit by enemy fire for the first time were obligated by tradition to buy champagne for the Ranch. (2) formal?? parties were for a special occasion such as farewell to a commander or an anniversary. If it was really formal we wore the purple flight suit with scarf. (3) impromptu parties were had at the "O" club, in a hootch or at a fighter squadron "hospitality room." Hardly any reason was needed for this type party.

20. I believe the Ranch was unique for several reasons:

a. It was the first time in military history that a major assault had been made against mother nature in order to deny enemy ground forces concealment from natural terrain.

b. The mission involved flying unarmed aircraft in formation at 100' at 120 knots over enemy terrain. The Ranch broke 3,000 hits on 22 July 68 and I believe when I left we had been hit over 3200 times.

c. Our aircrew experience (age, service and flying hours) probably had the highest range of any unit in Viet Nam. Some of our crewmembers were flying in their third war. Crews were highly respected by FACs and fighter pilots who flew our missions. They constantly expressed praise for the Ranch guts and professionalism.

d. At a time when young people in the CONUS were rioting and burning their draft cards and the American flag, our young maintenance people were behaving themselves and working their tails off seven days a week under very poor living and working conditions. I cannot find words to adequately express my praise and admiration for all the NCOs and airmen in the squadron during my tour.

e. All these factors resulted in a squadron of high esprit de corps.

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21. The following items cover subjects not included in your questions but should be considered as part of the Ranch history. You may or may not receive this information during your other research.

a. I'll provide my own training history as a representative example of pilots in the Ranch during my tour. I was in the USMILGP in Ecuador when I received orders (7 Jun 67) to the 309th ACS in Vietnam with CONUS training in route. I attended the USAF survival course at Fairchild AFB in Nov 67 and C-123 airlift training at Hurlbert Field for two months (12 Nov-13 Jan 68). Upon completion of airlift training, I went to Langley AFB for three weeks of spray training (good old plum tree island). I departed Travis AFB 1 Mar 68 for Clark AFB where I attended the PACAF Jungle Survival School (4-8 Mar 68) and got to Tan Son Nhut, VN on 10 Mar 68. There were 9 Ranch Hands and 15 FACs in our group and we had a lot of trouble figuring out how to get to Bien Hoa (only 35 miles). TET 68 was still under way and the Ranch was in TAC "E" hauling trash. Finally found a Ranch aircraft which was to haul a TAC control team to the special forces base at Song Be. The 24 of us (in suntans) piled on board with our baggage and flew a hot combat mission before we got to our units. Song Be was under heavy pressure so we got to see the tactics we learned at Hurlbert - i.e., high steep approach, short field landing and combat off-load (open the ramp - goose the engines and let the load roll out). We got to Bien Hoa just after dark.

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Ranch policy was to send new aircrews to Phan Rang to fly airlift missions with the 315 Wing for in-country and airfield familiarization. Nine of us went there on 11 Mar for 15 days TDY. During 14 days of flying, I got 70 hours on 76 sorties and landed at 27 different fields. Returned to Bien Hoa on 30 Mar and flew my first Ranch mission (strap) on 31 Mar. Flew another mission on 1 Apr 68 and won the right to buy champagne at my cherry party. Became theater qualified as pilot on 21 Apr, lead pilot 12 Jun, flight test on 19 Jun and instructor pilot on 9 Sept 68.

The training provided to Ranch Hand crews was excellent and I believe we had the highest overall average experience of any unit in Viet Nam. When I arrived there were 16 Lt Cols and one 1 Lt - the others were Capts and Majors. Due to the buildup in aircrews for the increase in aircraft we started receiving some UPT grads in Jun 68. On 1 Sept 68

(I have an aircrew roster) we had 111 aircrew members. 81 officers and 30 enlisted (flight engineers). The officers consisted of 11 Lt Col, 39 majors, 20 captains and 11 lt with ages 24 to 52. The flight engineers consisted of 1 TSgt, 23 S/Sgt, 5 Sgt and 1 A/1C with ages 21 to 41.

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b. Upon my arrival in VN on 10 Mar 68, the enemy's TET 68 offensive was still going on. Considerable fighting was going on in and around Saigon and Bien Hoa had been receiving regular rocket and mortar attacks. The 12th Air Commando Squadron (Ranch Hand) was flying UC-123B aircraft and was authorized (U/E) twelve aircraft and was based at Bien Hoa with a detachment at Da Nang. Operations and maintenance were housed in the VNAF hanger on the west ramp. The orderly room and quarters were in the old French compound south of the ramp. 2 or 3 officers hootches had been burned out by rocket attack and housing was very tight. At that time there had been no attempt to provide sand bag protection and the bunkers were marginal and would not withstand a direct hit. The old Ranch Hand call sign of "Cowboy" had been changed to "Hades."

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c. Organization - The 12th ACS was organizationally assigned to the 315th Air Commando Wing which was located at Phan Rang with three airlift squadrons. Operational control directly under 7th Air Force (TRCC) and all spray missions were directed by Frag order from that office. The squadron was a tenant unit at Bien Hoa under the 3rd TAC Fighter Wg which had three sqdns of F-100s and 1 Sqdn of A-37 fighters. This allowed excellent coordination and support for missions in III and IV Corps as the 3rd TFW normally provided fighter support and could attend pre-mission briefings. Full base support including field level maintenance was provided by the 3rd TFW. The Da Nang detachment was a tenant of the 366th Tac Ftr Wg which also allowed premission briefings when fighter support was provided by their F-4s aircraft and crews were rotated TDY to Da Nang with all inspections and heavy maintenance preformed at Bien Hoa.

The squadron consisted of the commander with administrative, operations and maintenance sections. Upon my arrival, LtCol Donald S. Stewart was the commander, LtCol Charles Avery was the operations officer and Lt Col Bert Kellogg was the maintenance staff officer (this



was an additional duty for a senior officer (pilot) with maintenance experience). In Jun 68 these people were replaced by Lt Col Arthur F. McConnell, Cdr, Lt Col William H. Wildman, Ops, and Lt Col David J. Willoughby, Maintenance. In December 1968 Lt Col Rex Stoner became Cdr, Lt Col Dave Stockton, Ops, and I remained maint until my departure at the end of Feb 69. On 1 Aug 1968 the 315th Air Commando Wing became the 315th Special Operations Wing along with the other squadrons the 12th ACS became the 12th SOS.

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d. Operational tactics and Procedures - Missions were directed by 7th AF (TACC) thru Frag orders which specified the target, times, forward air controller (FAC), fighter support and whether fighter escort or heavy suppression. Escort missions generally had two fighters which made individual passes with us on the run alternating sides. No ordnance was used unless we took ground fire and the FAC was able to locate and mark the target. On heavy suppression missions, the fighters dropped ordnance just ahead of the Ranch formation. On a few occasions, we had a prestrike just a few minutes ahead. These missions used 4 to 6 fighters and on at least one occasion used 10 fighters and 2 FACS. Initially the suppression procedure was to run smoke down one side and CBU-2 down the other side. However, after 3 or 4 incidents where the smoke drifted the wrong way required us to fly thru it (IFR low level formation!) and got hit pretty bad the smoke screen was terminated. The fighters then laid CBU-2 down both sides. Later on when we flew on especially hot targets, the fighters would drop 750# bombs with fuse extenders 30 seconds in front of the formation in addition to laying CBU-2.

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Ranch Hand missions normally used 6 aircraft on flatland targets (alpha and charlie missions) from Bien Hoa. Although in early 1969 we started using 9 ship formations on some targets. For mountain and crop targets we used 3 aircraft (Bravo and Delta missions from Bien Hoa and hotel and India missions from Da Nang). Initially all flights recovered to home base for turn around between missions. In mid 1968 we established herbicide and fuel servicing capabilities at NHA Trang and Phu Cat so we could turn around for long missions into northern III Corps and southern II Corps.

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e. Equipment - At the beginning of my tour we were flying the UC-123B which had been in use for many years with a U/E authorization of either 12 or 16 aircraft. In May 1968 we started converting to the UC-123K with an authorization of 25 aircraft. The modification from B to K was done in the CONUS with the aircraft ferried back and forth by CONUS ferry crews (due to the great cruising speed of the aircraft it required 60-80 hours flying time one-way). The squadron maintenance work hours was very high because in addition to flying combat missions, the aircraft had to be prepared for the ferry flights. For B models returned to the CONUS we had to remove the herbicide system and armor plate and install the heaters and oxygen systems (which had been out for years), install wing pylon tanks and fuselage fuel and oil tanks and insure all comm nav equipment was operational. Upon arrival of the K models, these systems were removed and the spray system installed. Since we were increasing the number of aircraft also, there was a shortage of spray systems at times and we had to locally fabricate additional armor plate systems. In addition to the basic modification to the K model, certain other modifications (TCTO) were performed in country at Phan Rang and an IRAN (inspect and repair as necessary) program was established in Taiwan.

The K model provided two J-85 pod mounted jet engines, an improved anti-skid brake system, a heavier windshield which provided improved resistance to bird strikes and a beefed up nose landing gear. The jet engines provided a tremendous increase in safety because the B model, with 11,000# of herbicide on board, was 1000# over gross weight for single engine performance (it took two minutes to dump) /sic, not true, dump took 30 seconds approximately. Also the aircraft would not maintain altitude at any weight if an engine was lost and could not be feathered. We saved at least 4 aircraft during my tour by having jets.

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Other modifications included a change to use engine oil for the prop instead of the independent oil supply, installation of updated UHF and IFF systems, addition of an FM radio and installation propeller reverse lites.

The first K model arrived in May 68 and the first mission (3 ship) was flown on 20 Jun 68. On K missions we used the jets for takeoff and climb, they were shut down for cruise to target, started and set at 60% for the target run, 100% and METO power for acceleration and climb out of target and shut down for return to base. The full capability of the

jets were demonstrated early one morning when an aircraft blew a recip on takeoff and because of cockpit confusion, both props were feathered. The crew got the aircraft around the field and landed safely on jets only! We had most of our K models by the end of October 68 although we didn't send our last B model back until 3 Jan 69. It had be used as the "Bug Bird." During the conversion, maintenance was like a 3 ring circus as at one time we had 33 aircraft on hand. Didn't get to full maintenance personnel strength until 4 Aug 68.

A special interst item concerns the famous "Patches," (362). It was never painted and when I arrived was being used as the "Bug Bird" because of that. It left for K modification in mid 1968 and based on my information is the only C-123 to fly around the world. It went west and flew spray missions in IRAN and Afghanistan. It had 547 hits when it left and we got it back as a "K" on 21 Oct 1968. It was still silver (there was quite a fight to keep her from being painted). We used her again as a Bug Bird. I flew her to IRAN in Taiwan on 23 Dec 68 and she returned on 1 Feb 69. I understood she was put in the AF Museum some time this year.

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21. The source of data provided herein consists of my daily diary (abbreviated) orders, form 5, crew rosters and articles from incountry magazines, newspapers and daily bulletins. I have some photos mostly black and white some of which I took and other official AF 8X10 prints.

23