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HEADQUARTERS AIR TRAINING COMMAND
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS



REPLY TO
ATTN OF: ATFCDC

11 OCT 1963

SUBJECT: Informational Brochures

TO: ATCCS

1. Attached brochures, Field Training Detachment 921R, Project "Go Ahead", and Field Training Detachment 917H, are forwarded for your information.
2. When attachments are withdrawn or not attached, the classification SECRET of this letter will be cancelled.

C. A. Martin, Jr.

C. A. MARTIN, JR.
Colonel, USAF
Asst DCS/Flying Tng

2 Atchs, a/s

~~DATE 24 Jul 75
CLASSIFICATION CHANGED
TO: ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
BY AUTH DOD DIR 5200.10
Declassify on: 31 Dec 75
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UNIT DESIGNATION: Field Training Detachment 917H

MISSION: Conduct In-Country Helicopter Pilot Training for VNAF Personnel

CONCOMITANT MISSION: Train VNAF Helicopter Maintenance Personnel

PARENT ORGANIZATION: 3635th Flying Training Group, Stead AFB, Nevada

LOCATION OF DETACHMENT: Tan Son Nheet Heliport, Vietnam

DETACHMENT COMMANDER: Lt Col Jimmy M. Hamill, 12243A

AUTHORIZED STRENGTH: 23 Officers, 73 Airmen

STUDENT PILOT CLASS SIZE: Presently 30

STUDENT MECHANIC CLASS SIZE: Presently 30

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~~SECRET~~GENERAL INFORMATION

In September 1962, Headquarters, USAF, requested ATC make a survey of the feasibility of establishing a temporary in-country H-19B Helicopter Pilot Training Program in Vietnam.

The survey was completed 7 October 1962. It was determined that it would be possible and advantageous to conduct in-country helicopter pilot and mechanic training. The Survey Team recommended that a Field Training Detachment, staffed by personnel from Stead AFB, Nevada, and Sheppard AFB, Texas, be established.

The FTD 917S (now designated the 917H) was organized on 3 Dec 1962; authorized strength was twelve (12) officers and forty-seven (47) airmen. Personnel to man this detachment were withdrawn from ATC resources. Logistic support furnished by the MAAG, AF Section, Vietnam. Officers and airmen assigned to FTD 917H arrived in Vietnam on 12 January 1963 and flight training was commenced 11 February 1963. The training was conducted in eight (8) H-19B helicopters that had been in storage in Vietnam. Students for the first Pilot Training Class (63A) were VNAF cadets who did not have previous flying experience.

In May 1963, Headquarters, USAF, informed ATC that plans were being formulated to augment FTD 917H with an additional eleven (11) officers and thirty-one (31) airmen to support nine (9) additional H-19B helicopters. The majority of the personnel were not available within ATC but were furnished by MATS, Air Rescue Service. With this augmentation, Class 63B would be increased to thirty (30) students. Of the eleven (11) new instructor pilots that arrived in Vietnam, nine (9) were considered by the Commander of FTD 917H to lack the training necessary to assume the duties of Instructor Pilot. Five (5) of these pilots were upgraded in Vietnam and four (4) were sent to Stead AFB for training. The four (4) pilots trained at Stead AFB were given thirty-five (35) flying hours of upgrade training in September 1963. After passing a standardization flight check they were returned to Vietnam.

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The first class of fifteen (15) students completed training 15 June 1963, and have been assigned to VNAF Helicopter Squadron for upgrade and operational training. Class 63B, consisting of thirty (30) students, commenced training 1 July 1963. Due to the lack of qualified instructor pilots and aircraft, only fourteen (14) students were entered into the flight training phase.

A Mechanics Training Program was initiated 1 July 1963 with thirty (30) Vietnamese student helicopter mechanics in Class 63A. Three (3) hours per day of classroom lectures totaling one hundred and eighty (180) hours of engineering subjects and three (3) hours per day of flight line practical experience is scheduled. Each student is assigned to a crew chief or specialist and assists with the daily maintenance of the helicopter. This practical application or "laboratory phase" allows each student mechanic to learn first hand the proper maintenance techniques, use of maintenance forms and records, and understand the inner workings of the helicopter. This program is closely monitored by personnel in Academic Section. All comments stemming from maintenance personnel have been complimentary in nature and excellent results are anticipated as a result of this training. The student mechanic displays much elation at the prospect of actually working on mission aircraft and is desirous of proving himself to his flight line supervisor.

The shortage of ground support equipment, hand tools, and spare aircraft parts is a matter of considerable concern. The FTD has to rely on the VNAF 211th Helicopter Squadron for support. As an example, two (2) engine specialist kits are authorized, with fifty-eight (58) items per kit. Only seven (7) items per kit are on hand. Fifty-two (52) mechanic kits are authorized, with sixty-one (61) items per kit and only four (4) items per kit are on hand. Eight (8) mechanics tool kits that were brought with the FTD are only 35% complete. The required items have been requisitioned and it is imperative that they be available before the FTD can operate as an independent unit or successfully conduct training under the proposed expanded program. Follow-up action has been initiated.

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A staggered personnel rotation plan is in operation and the original cadre of officers and airmen are in the process of being replaced. A personnel roster of the FTD is included as Attachment 1.

Present plans are to continue in-country training until 24 October 1964. At that time the VNAF should have adequate instructors to conduct their own training program, and FTD 917H can be phased out.

FOUR VNAF CLASSES:

63A

63B

64A

64B

CONCOMITANT MISSION OF FTD 917H
IS TO MAINTAIN ASSIGNED HELO'S AND TO
QUALIFY COUNTERPART VNAF PERSONNEL (OF
VNAF 215TH HELICOPTER TRAINING SQUADRON.

EFEC. 17/JUNE 1963

FTD 917H - DISCONTINUED G-47 (SPECIAL ORDER)
26/JUNE/64 EFEC. 20/AUG/64

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