

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
59TH CORPS AVIATION COMPANY  
12TH COMBAT AVIATION GROUP  
APO San Francisco 96388

AVBAU-VIP

5 March 1973

SUBJECT: After Action Report

1. PURPOSE: To report significant activities and planning involved with the stand down and closing out of the 59th Corps Aviation Company.
2. GENERAL: This report covers from 1 November 1972 to the Stand down and Withdrawal Phase.

A. Significant Organizational Activities

(1) Pre-X-Day Phase: The 59th Corps Aviation Company continued to provide ~~all~~ Aviation support in Military Region III to Headquarters, MACV, USAF, TRAC and CORDS. The "Deans", in addition to their normal utility missions, provided professional aviation support for numerous general officers, to include the Commanders of MACV, USAF and TRAC. These missions flown averaged more than 33 general grade officers per month. The Third Platoon headquarters was repositioned to "Plantation" at Long Binh in order to facilitate better aviation support for the CG, TRAC. The remaining two lift platoons continued to operate from Hotel 3 at Tan Son Nhut. In preparation for stand down, basic suspense dates were established and plans were formulated to insure a coordinated effort at all levels. Guidance from higher Headquarters along with changes were incorporated daily into our flow chart of activities to identify and solve any problem areas that could arise. The unit also received the additional requirement to provide maintenance support for the International Commission for Control and Supervision and 4 Power elements during the Stand down Phase.

(2) Stand down Phase: Information was continually up-dated and minor changes to the 1st Aviation Brigade OPLAN 215 were implemented. After special teams were identified and personnel requirements organized we commenced immediate shipment and processing of troops. The "Deans" received an additional mission requirement of flying the Vice President of the United States during his visit to Saigon and ~~nom~~ Phnom Penh. Coordination was effected between the US Secret Service Agents, MACV, 1st Aviation Brigade, and Dean Operations involving the use of ten aircraft in the Saigon area for the Vice Presidential Party, a ready reaction force for security purposes, and an additional five aircraft element prepositioned at ~~nom~~ Phnom Penh to support the Vice President during his stop over at the Cambodian Capital.

AVMAU-VIP

5 March 1973

SUBJECT: After Action Report

3. SPECIFIC:

A. Section 1: The unit had a logical and well planned stand down. Milestone charts eliminated most of the confusion that did occur. All requirements from higher Headquarters were accomplished on specified dates.

(1) Personnel: Changes to personnel lists and mission requirements has caused never-ending changes to personnel. Company records and funds were closed in an orderly manner without any difficulty.

(2) Equipment retrograde/turnover: Equipment was turned in with a minimum amount of trouble. Five aircraft were turned over to Air America, with the remaining aircraft transferred to the Vietnamese Air Force.

(3) Intelligence/security: Physical Security of the company became a problem due to the withdrawal of Air Force security personnel from around the unit area. The 59th Corps Aviation Company personnel were trained and utilized to secure the area. COMSEC equipment was delayed in being turned in because the need for secure communications existed longer than planned.

(4) Operations: The Vice President's visit to Saigon and Lai Ninh, PR Cambodia required special planning for operations. Aircraft were provided for the Vice Presidential Party and a ready reaction force placed on standby in the Saigon area. Five aircraft were sent to the Cambodian Capital to support the Vice President and his party during his visit to Cambodia. The 59th CAC was also selected to pick up the first US POWs to be released by Communist forces in South Vietnam. An advanced Party of three aircraft flew to Loc Ninh in order to facilitate the final coordination for the POW release. The lift aircraft used to fly the POWs away from the release point arrived at Loc Ninh a half hour after the advanced party. The Peoples Revolutionary Government representatives began to stall and cause delays that lasted over eleven hours. Finally, the pickup was made with no further difficulties. A special Command Operations Center was set up at the "Dean" VIP Helipad (FSM Air Base) to further facilitate and coordinate the operation. This operations center was specially equipped to meet the needs of the USARV Commander and representatives from all elements involved with the POW pickup.

AVEAU-VIP

5 March 1973

SUBJECT: After Action Report

(5) Logistics: The turn in of supplies was orderly and well planned. The main problems encountered were with weapons and weapons subsystems. These subsystems were taken off and put on three different times in a period of two weeks before they were finally turned in.

(6) Transfer of control of air combatant assets: Five aircraft were turned over to Air America. The remainder of the aircraft are to be turned over to the VNAF. Because of the good prior planning by Dean Maintenance, no problems have occurred in turning over aircraft.

(7) Transfer of functions and reporting: On X-25 all orderly room files were turned over to the AG. Operations continues to submit its daily OPSUM and weekly OPREP-5. All reporting functions will cease on X-45.

(8) Transfer of billeting, bases, installed property and equipment, and other real property: The billets were closed as personnel decreased and most of the station property will be turned over in place.

B. Section 2: Commanders Comments on Lessons Learned

(1a) Observation: On X Day, the 59th Corps Aviation Company Operations was tasked with the issue of personal weapons, SOI's and maps covering MR III to ICCS and 4 Power.

(1b) Evaluation: Weapons received from F Troops were in poor condition. This included crewserved and personal weapons. The issuance of SOI's to the additional pilots that were assigned or attached to the 59th Corps Aviation Company, could not be fulfilled. Sufficient SOI's were not available. Maps and other publications, such as tactical Aerodrome Directories, Low altitude instrument approach procedures charts, enroute charts, and enroute supplements could not be issued to every aircraft commander. ICCS and 4 Power team members did not have any publications and only a limited number of maps covering MR III area.

(1c) Recommendations: Crewserved and personal weapons should be maintained in accordance with Technical Manuals. Proper supervision of losing unit's weapons should have resolved the problems of rusty and dirty weapons. ICCS and 4 Power members should have retained their SOI's and other frequency publications for future use, or higher Headquarters should have attained additional SOI's and frequency publications for issue. Maps, Tactical Aerodrome Directories, and other Flight

AVB&U-VIP

5 March 1973

SUBJECT: After Action Report

Information Publication should have been ordered prior to X date, to insure that at a minimum, every aircraft commander had these publications at hand. Maps of specific areas and Special Maps of MR III should have been retained or acquired by higher Headquarters for use of ICCS and 4 Power pilots. The 59th Corps Aviation Company PRO should not have accepted any weapons without an inspection.

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