



NEWSLETTER



Number 004

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Welcome to the EC-47 History Site Newsletter

In this edition

- 50 Years Ago
- Squadron Histories
- Vietnam War Commemoration Events
- 94th History FOIA
- Reunion Plans
- Email listing

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✓ **1966 ON THE WEBSITE**

Timeline

What We Know From History



Hit Movies



Politicians & Military Leadership Quotes



50 Years Ago



Fifty years ago this week, the Air Force's Airborne Radio Direction Finding program in Vietnam was officially launched with the activation of the 6994th Security Squadron on 15 April 1966. Major William T. Ballard, accompanied by a First Lieutenant and 6 enlisted men from the 6922nd Security Squadron (Clark AB, Philippines), made up the entire squadron roster. A week earlier, the 360th and 361st Reconnaissance Squadrons—the new “owner operators” of the PHYLLIS ANN C-47 ARDF aircraft—had been activated at Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Airbase and the former French base up the coast at Nha Trang.

All units were short-handed, and as yet there were no airplanes to fly. (The first PHYLLIS ANN C-47 did not arrive until a month later, and the first mission wasn't flown until June.) Two C-47 SIGINT platforms were on hand, however, operating as project DRILL PRESS. The collection-only DRILL PRESS missions were an immediate success and, once the “Electric Goons” came on line, the Air Force ARDF mission began to pay dividends.

However, serious delays in the delivery of the RC-47 aircraft were encountered. In July, Detachment 1 of the 6994th was activated to provide “back end” operators for the 361st at Nha Trang, but it would be three months before an aircraft showed up. Much the same situation prevailed at Pleiku, where a third RC-47 squadron was established, collocated with Detachment 2 of the 6994th. But by the end of 1966, all three ARDF squadrons and their 6994th crews were flying missions throughout South Vietnam and parts of Laos.

In 1967, the Reconnaissance squadrons were redesignated as the more familiar Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadrons (TEWS) and the Electric Goons became EC-47s. Over the next eight years, the TEWS/6994th partnership would provide Free World forces with some of the most timely and significant actionable intelligence of the war.

For more detailed descriptions of PHYLLIS ANN and the events of 50 years ago, check “What's New ?” on the website.

At Last--the 6994th Histories Declassified !

As some of our readers know, we've attempted for some time, without notable success, to obtain copies of the 6994th squadron histories. The SIGINT community is notoriously loath to completely declassify its historical material, even documents nearly a half-century old. Thanks to some help from our friends at Angelo State University in San Angelo, ec47.com is pleased and proud to announce that the first semi-annual 6994th history

(January-June 1966) is now on-line, un-redacted, just as it was written back then. Check “What's New ?” on the website for a link to the history.

This wouldn't have happened without the help of several people, but Dr. Christine Lamberson of the ASU History Department deserves special mention. Dr. Lamberson submitted the FOIA request and has maintained close liaison with 25th Air Force in an effort to obtain a complete set of the unit histories. For the complete story, see Tom's “What is FOIA?” article on page 2.

History Reminder: Joe uploaded copies of the 1966-1968 TEWS squadron histories soon after this site was reestablished in 2014. These documents contain much information of mutual interest to front- and back-enders alike. Check out the available TEWS histories at:

<http://ec47.com/tews-histories-1966-1971>



Since the website counter was activated on March 30, 2015, there have been 20,700 sessions, 12,500 users, and 97,500 page reviews. There are nearly 350 subscribers to this newsletter. By permission, we compiled a listing for Newsletter/Guestbook members. See attached. If you have reconsidered and wish to unsubscribe, see the instructions in the box on the top left. Please do not redistribute this listing.

Welcome to the new EC-47 History Site Newsletter



The EC-47 History Site continues to work with other organizations to honor Vietnam War-era veterans through the 50th Vietnam War Commemorative Partner Program (CPP). All of these event after-action reports are available on the website. Upcoming programs: April 29th "Fall of Saigon" reunion in Philadelphia with the Vietnamese linguists (Doggers) group. Also April 29th, the Colorado Springs-Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Freedom Through Vigilance Association tribute to chapter Vietnam veterans at the Petersen AFB Air & Space Museum. May 11th, a 2-part program with the 94th Intelligence Squadron Heritage Day event. This includes a wreath-laying memorial service at the EC-47 'Baron 52' grave site at Arlington National Cemetery, followed by a potluck social and CPP ceremony hosted by the 94th IS and The EC-47 History Site at the American Legion post in Severn, MD. Additional commemoration events are being planned all the time, so please check our website for additional details.

<http://ec47.com/commemorative-partner-program>



Broken Link
archive.ec47.com

Starting last week, some of us received the error message "unable to connect" when trying to get on the archive.ec47.com website. In each instance, Tech Support advised that the site was online, but our user system security firewall settings were preventing access. So, be aware that if you receive that response from the archive site, the problem may be your firewall settings. On Tom's personal desktop, the Firefox/McAfee settings were the culprit.

What is FOIA?

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is a law that gives all of us the right to access information from the federal government. It is often described as the law that keeps citizens in the know about their government. (<http://www.foia.gov/>) It seems somewhat ironic that the FOIA amendment was signed into law in 1966 by President Lyndon B. Johnson, and now, 50 years later, we are using the provisions of this amendment to obtain copies of the then classified history of the 6994th Security Squadron that began in 1966.

In 2014, Dr. Christine Lamberson and Dr. Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai, faculty in the Angelo State University's History Department, were awarded a prestigious three-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to preserve experiences of veterans and their families and examine how those experiences have changed or remained the same over the past century. This project is titled **War Stories**. With our participation, urging and guidance, ASU accepted the 6994th Security Squadron histories as a part of this project. In October 2015, Lamberson and Wongsrichanalai submitted a FOIA request to 25th Air Force for copies of all the 6994th Security Squadron histories - 1966-1974. As of this month, ASU has received declassified/redacted copies of the following histories and attachments: Jan-Jun 1966, Jan-Dec 1967, Jan-Dec 1968, and Jan-Jun 1969. We are hopeful for a steady stream of additional history products over the next months. ASU and our own renowned history buff, Joe Martin, are working diligently to systematically process these history products and get them ready for public access on a new permanent home on the ASU War Stories website. This is a major declassification review task for the 25th Air Force, and we should all appreciate their work and that of all those involved...especially the faculty and students working the NEH grant project. Check out the War Stories online website.

www.angelo.edu/warstories/

Reunion

6994th Security Squadron
September 21-23, 2016

Note: Dates are **Wednesday** thru **Friday**
instead of Thursday Thru Saturday

Marriott Courtyard
2572 Southwest Blvd.
San Angelo, TX. 76901
(325) 703-6400

The theme of this reunion is a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the activation of the 6994th Security Squadron and the two detachments at Tan Son Nhut, Nha Trang, and Pleiku, respectively. Reunion events include a detailed tour of the USAF Heritage Award-winning EC-47 ARDF History Exhibit, a base tour, and a special 50th Commemoration of the Vietnam War ceremony honoring all the 94th SS Vietnam War-era veterans and their families. The USAFSS Roll Call group will take a day out of their San Antonio reunion to attend this commemoration ceremony scheduled for September 22nd. All veterans and their families from these and other groups or associations are invited to participate in the commemoration ceremony. Representatives from the **War Stories** project will be available to provide more information and invite these veterans to participate in their project. There is more information about the 94th reunion at:

http://6994th.com/?page_id=2355

A TESTIMONY TO ARDF: March 17, 2016, San Angelo Downtown Lions Club luncheon & Vietnam veterans commemoration ceremony: I met a man wearing a miniature Purple Heart ribbon pinned to his coat lapel. As we did our self-introductions and I mentioned the EC-47 ARDF program, he reached out to shake my hand...and then pulled me into a big, enthusiastic bear hug. WOW! He then told me that I was the first airborne Intel guy he had met since the war...and he had wanted all these years to tell at least one of us how thankful he was for saving his life - and probably the lives of at least 40 of his Marines. He said specifically that our fix information caused him to change his mission plans, a change that allowed his unit to circle and destroy enemy forces that they had been unknowingly walking into head-on. All of those men lived to fight another day because we did our mission well. So who was this guy? Major Donnie Dunagan, USMC, three tours in Vietnam, Bronze Star and 3 Purple Hearts. Google his name, you might be astonished at his career. As all of us celebrate the 50th Anniversary of ARDF in the Vietnam War, take heart in Major Dunagan's story. Joe and I have worked hard to develop and upload anniversary facts and trivia centered on our story that began in 1966. But, this is just the beginning. Please check out the website for Timelines, Songs, Movies, and Quotations. Check out the 94th declassified histories - there will be even more. Tom Nurre, NKP 70-71.