

# THE OFFICIAL HISTORIES OF THE 6994TH SECURITY SQUADRON



## “Top 10” Questions

**Question #1.** What role did ARDF play in predicting, or failing to predict, the Tet offensive of 1968? Were EC-47 assets specifically tasked to support the defense of Khe Sanh (Operation Niagara, etc.?) Did ARDF contribute significantly to the defense of Khe Sanh? Did USAFSS address these sorts of questions and document the findings?

**Response.** Brief extracts from

- The 6994th history for 1 January 1968 - 30 June 1968
- The Det. 2 history for the same period
- a USAFSS monograph, *New Eyes in War: The Story of Airborne Radio Direction Finding.*

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Question 1

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HISTORY  
 OF THE  
 6994th SECURITY SQUADRON  
 1 January 1968 - 30 June 1968  
 RCS: AU-D5 (USS-1)

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15 August 1968

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Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam

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utilizing sufficient RT communications to justify a greater effort.  
Early December 1967, the squadron added a VHF capability to all "Z"  
aircraft at Detachment 2. The linguist capability was also in-  
creased by additional TDY personnel from the 6990th Security Squadron. Al-  
though this effort was launched as support for project Dye Marker/Muscle  
it did mark the first major RT collection effort by the squadron.  
Subsequent PCS influx of linguists enabled the squadron to conduct hear-  
ing tests in some other areas. These tests, however, yielded negative  
results and the only source of RT continued to be from the DMZ area. During  
this time, the "B" band (60-260 MHz) tuners in the G-175J receivers were re-  
placed by "E" band tuners (10-30 MHz) and "A" band tuners (30-90 MHz). The  
addition of this HF FM capability, provided by the "E" band tuners, facilitated  
the intercept of RT communications below 30 MHz that were tentatively iden-  
tified as R1XX communications.

Active ECM Imminent

(SHVCCO) During early January 1968, indications were that MACV J3 would,  
with high probability, implement their EW OPLAN 1-68, which could result in the  
disruption of tactical communications. The situation became more serious with  
the signing of Khe Sanh, and the employment of the "Q" system aircraft in an

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active mode became imminent. Plans called for the deployment of the "Q" system aircraft to Detachment 2; therefore, the detachment was instructed to utilize factory-trained "Q" operators in the prospective target areas (MACV Areas 6, 7, 9, 11 and 12). The squadron also took follow-up action on pending modification to the "Q" consoles which had been submitted during November 1967. General Westmoreland, however, decided not to employ the system and directed that it be retained in a constant state of readiness.

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HISTORY OF DETACHMENT 2, 6994th SECURITY SQUADRON

1 January 1968 - 30 June 1968

RCS: AU-D5 (USS-1)

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it to our advantage to keep abreast of identification techniques and maintain identification aids for the II Corps area. *Ground Analysis Section*

(SHVCCO) During the Tet offensive this section began working as a pseudo direct support unit, in close coordination with the 509th Special Forces Unit analyst stationed at USM-604. Fixes attained in Kontum, Dak To, Pleiku area were immediately forwarded to the 509th Special Forces Unit via OPSCOMM. Even though reported to a normal direct support unit, we found that by utilizing the OPSCOMM circuit we could provide the Special Forces the opportunity to evaluate and react to our area fix input before they received the fix through CRITICOMM channels, via direct support unit or recovery report media. This support was commended by the Pleiku Air Base Commander verbally to the Detachment Commander in March 1968. He stated that the close direct support provided by this unit to local area commanders, via liaison with the 330th Radio Research Company and 509th Special Forces Unit, provided them with intelligence not readily available, nor so rapid as their normal sources. Further, that the intelligence provided was instrumental in providing the local defense forces prologues of enemy intentions.

(SHVCCO) To increase the aids for the radio operators during their missions, the Ground Analysis Section began providing them with the priority IAs of the surrounding areas and of areas passed through to and from their mission area. This additional technical support allowed for the quick identification of

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Question 1

NEW EYES IN WAR

The Story of  
Airborne Radio Direction Finding

By  
Thomas N. Thompson  
Command Historical Office



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15 January 1970

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Security Office  
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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE SECURITY SERVICE

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ARDF Highly Competent; More Generally Recognized

(U) ~~(S)~~ Steadily the appreciation of the value of ARDF increased among field commanders up and down the line as the ARDF fleet covered the war torn nation far and wide. General Westmoreland's enthusiasm at least



equaled that of the most avid supporters when he said:

Except for those targets designated as "off limits" by this headquarters, commanders are directed to take timely advantage of this valid intelligence to direct appropriate air strikes, naval gunfire, artillery, ground maneuvers, visual reconnaissance, FACs or other activities in the vicinity to destroy the enemy. ARDF targets should be involved in day and night harrassment and interdiction fires.

The operational fleet of nearly 50 EC-47s was just about full strength in numbers and supporting, to one extent or another, all ground operations. Paddington, Riley, Strike II, Shenandoah II, Akron III, Santa Fe, Benton, Wallowa/Wheeler, Pershing, Greeley, Malheur I & II, Bolling, Byrd, Francis Marion, MacArthur, Dak To, and many others, became almost household words in the nation's news and demanded sustained effort over 1967 and into 1968.

(u) ~~(S)~~ In some, where COMPASS DART provided all of the ARDF support, the results could be seen and appreciated. Supporting special forces troops in the Kontum Province, for instance, it flew the only coverage eliciting comments from the field commander that the service had saved many lives in his command; lives which might have been lost ". . . without advance warning of enemy element locations." He said further:

. . . On behalf of my men and myself I would like to thank you and all personnel connected with support operations to Blackjack 25 for a job extremely well done. It is assuring to know that we can rely on Detachment 1, 6994th Security Squadron (Nha Trang) for superior and outstanding support in the future.

(u) ~~(S)~~ In November 1967, the same USAFSS unit played a major role in a classic example of electronic intelligence in the Battle of Dak To. In

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mid-October in response to 1st U.S. Inf. Div requirements, COMPASS DART followed the movements of the North Vietnamese B-3 Front, 1st Division, 174th Independent Rgt., 24th Independent Rgt., 2nd Division, and other enemy units as they all headed from their last locations in the general direction of Dak To. The U.S. 4th Inf. Div. called in the U.S. 173rd Airborne Bde. to reinforce the city. By the end of the first week in November, enemy units had virtually encircled Dak To, and special intelligence sources reported signs of impending attack. It came on 7 November, and for 10 days the fighting was fast and furious. But whenever the enemy changed his tactical positions, ARDF detected the moves as radios chattered orders.

(U) ~~(S)~~ By the 17th of the month, the North Vietnamese began to withdraw in the direction of the Cambodian border as U.S. artillery, air strikes and infantry probes hounded their every move. The ARDF management agency called 1st Inf. Division's appetite for ARDF fixes "insatiable." As the North Vietnamese withdrew from Dak To, a South Vietnamese regiment set out to cut off his retreat. U.S. losses were high at Dak To, regardless, but an Army visitor to Nha Trang several weeks later said they would have been "infinitely higher" had it not been for ARDF.

(U) ~~(S)~~ Later, in the Spring of 1968, the story of Khe Sanh was similar, although it was an even greater intelligence effort over the long haul. The rugged terrain and the inclement weather reduced the use of normal intelligence-collection methods (radar, photography, visual, etc.) and ARDF

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emerged as a most important tool in locating and identifying enemy units. More significantly, however, was the spreading recognition of the technique as something of extreme value to field commanders. General Westmoreland had already asked for twice as much ARDF time as he was getting at the time; a demand later repeated by Gen. Creighton Abrams, his replacement.

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