

Series: AWM95
Australian Army commanders' diaries
[Vietnam]

Army Aviation units

Item number: 8/1/51

Item: 161 [Independent]

Reconnaissance Flight

Narrative

[1-30 Nov 1970]

COVERING LETTER

Reference No. 231

To: OIC, Military History Section, AHQ.

1. I enclose Commanders Diary (AF C 2118) (Adapted) as indicated at Part 2.

2. Please return receipt below.

(Signature)

Maj

Appointment OC, 161 (Indep) Recce Flt
(OC Unit or senior staff officer)

SECRET

ORIGINAL

~~DUPLICATE~~

Strike out where
not applicable

COMMANDERS DIARY

OF

Unit or Formation 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

From 1 Nov 70 To 30 Nov 70

INDEX

Narrative (AF C 2118)

ANNEXES

- * A Duty officer's log
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- F Orders of battle and location reports issued
- G Intelligence reports and summaries issued; appreciations made
- H Administrative orders and instructions issued
- I Administrative orders and instructions received
- J Administrative reports and bulletins; ammunition returns; field strength returns
- * K Standing orders issued
- L Commander's policy and demi-official letters
- M Action reports (if required)
- N Other papers, eg, maps and diagrams, air photos, reports from sub units
- O Periodical summaries of operations
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Enclosure Numbers

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† NIL
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† Despatched to

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* Only to be included during operations.
† Cross out whichever is not applicable.

161/1/187
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SECRET
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PART 3

COMMANDERS DIARIES
INSTRUCTIONS

AIM

- 1. The aim of a Commanders Diary is to provide data on which to base future improvements in Army training, equipment, organization and administration, and to furnish historians with a record of the activities of units and formations in operational and non-operational periods in peace and in war.

GENERAL

- 2. Entries are to be made daily on AF C 2118 (Adapted) each entry being initialled by the officer detailed to keep it.
- 3. Commanders Diaries will conform with the rules for drafting orders given in "Staff Duties (Australia)" Chapter 2, Section 12.

RESPONSIBILITY

During Non-operational Periods

- 4. A Commanders Diary is to be compiled by commanders of all formations.

During Operational Periods (1)

- 5. A Commanders Diary is to be compiled in duplicate by:
 - a. Commanders of all formations.
 - b. Each branch of the staff at formation headquarters commanded by a brigadier or above.
 - c. Heads of services not below the rank of lieutenant colonel.
 - d. Personal staffs and officers holding special appointments.
 - e. Unit commanders.
 - f. Commanders of a detachment of a unit when so ordered.

COMPILATION

- 6. Both original and duplicate copies are to consist of:
 - a. Cover (AF C 2119) (Adapted).
 - b. Index as printed on cover.
 - c. Narrative (AF C 2118) (Adapted).
 - d. Annexes as shown in the Index.
- 7. All details of the unit or formation (if a detachment is concerned, the name of the parent unit), period covered and enclosure numbers of the annexes are to be shown on the cover. If there has been a change of command since the last report, the date of assumption by the new commanding officer is to be included.
- 8. The annexes are to be assembled in the groups shown on the cover. If there are no enclosures for an annex NIL will be entered on the cover. If additional annexes are convenient for a particular headquarters, they should be assembled starting at B.

for operations form Annex "Z", "TOP SECRET" the document. It is to be prepared and disposed of as

ANNEXES

as well as map references), establishment, equipment and orders given. the day's fighting, including company movements. Commander with regard to equipment, tactics, organization

potential importance. to officers, men and equipment. equipment captured. employed in the time not accounted for. The type of

and to save work as much information as possible is to be given. All documents issued and received, routine returns, etc. All dates and the time of receipt or despatch is to be given.

the annexes, but need not give a precis of any of them.

(continued on back cover)

1 B P Coy—274/65—55m

AWM 95

[8/11 Nov 70]

SECRET

COMMANDERS DIARIES

AF C 2118 (Adapted)

SECRET

SECRET

SECRET

CD 70

DISPOSAL

13. **Original Commander's Diary.** This is to be forwarded monthly, unless otherwise ordered, by the seventh day of the succeeding month direct to AHQ.

14. **Duplicate Commander's Diary.** This must be clearly marked as a duplicate. It is to be sent separately from the original to AHQ one month after the original has been despatched but not before the former has been acknowledged.

15. When overseas, both copies of diaries are to be sent through the Army Records organization in the overseas theatre but at different times.

16. **TOP SECRET Supplementary Diaries.**

a. The documents referred to in Paragraph 9 together with a list of them made out on AF C 2118 (Adapted) must be placed in separate cover (AF C 2119) (Adapted). All details must be filled in and the cover clearly marked in red: "ANNEX Z — OFFICER ONLY". It may be convenient to group the papers by appendices.

b. Supplementary diaries must be forwarded under the normal rules for TOP SECRET correspondence, to AHQ. The inner envelope must be plainly marked:

TOP SECRET

ANNEX Z to

94846 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

Commanders Diary of..... (Formation or Unit)

From..... 1 Nov 70 to..... 30 Nov 70..... (Dates)

c. The duplicate supplementary diaries must be despatched as shown in Paragraph 14 as soon as receipt of the original has been acknowledged.

1 BP Coy—274/65—55m

AWM 95

[8/11 Nov 70]

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF-C2118 (Adapted)

MONTH AND YEAR NOV 70

REFERENCE MAP PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

UNIT/FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FL

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj P J CALVERT A A Avn

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
			<u>SUMMARY</u>	
			November proved to be one of the busiest months of 1970 with the	
			Flight flying a total of 1256.45 hours. Aircraft serviceability was at its	
			usual high of 97%. Rice harvesting was well under way in PHUOC TUY PROVINCE	
			with the enemy attempting to gain a share to overcome his current food shortage.	
			D 445 LF Bn carried out its first offensive action for some considerable time	
			with a night attack on XUYEN MOC on 29 Nov 70.	
			A feature of the flt's operations during the month was the loss of	
			A1-637 in the RUNG SAT due to ground fire. 2Lt T.J.M. HAYES was carrying out	
			low level VR with CO 2 RAR, Lt Col J.M. CHURCH when he came under heavy fire.	
			The engine was badly hit and stopped with the aircraft crashing into the	
			mangrove. 2Lt HAYES escaped unhurt while Lt Col CHURCH suffered a gunshot	
			wound to the buttock.	
			2Lt D. AIRD completed his tour of duty and was reposted to 1 Avn Regt	
			together with Lt L.A. MACHIN who completed his tour of duty as Senior Air	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF-C2118 (Adapted)

MONTH AND YEAR NOV 70 (Cont)

REFERENCE MAP PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

UNIT/FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FL

COMMANDING OFFICER MAJ P.J. CALVERT A A Avn

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
			Traffic Control Officer. 2Lt D.B. Dawson arrived to replace 2Lt Aird as F W Staff Pilot.	
			2Lt T.R. Partridge remained on detachment to 3/17 Air Cav US Army Avn.	
			<u>INCIDENTS</u>	
E32-36	1 Nov	1000	2Lt Gobson sighted heavy tracks at Grid YS 349701 which were followed	
N69-72		1200	from this point to an old camp at Grid YS 348697 and then on to Grid YS 306684. It was approximately 2 weeks old, and had been used by about 20 people.	
E80-82	1 Nov	0800	2Lt Monteith sighted a fresh track at YS 805763 running west to east,	
N76-80		1000	made by approximately 10 people 1-2 days ago. It was followed to YS 812761 and on to YS 821759 where it was lost in heavy canopy.	
E62-66	2 Nov	1420	Capt Cairns located a large campsite at Grid YS 632756 with 4 bunkers,	
N74-76		1600	6 fighting pits and about 50 metres of comms trench, cleared areas beneath the canopy indicating that there was probably more camp than appears. In good condition, but did not appear to have been used in last 1-2 months.	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF-C2118 (Adapted)

UNIT/FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FL

MONTH AND YEAR ... NOV 70 (Cont)

REFERENCE MAP PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj. P.J. GALVERT A A Avn

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
E25-30	3 Nov	1000	Capt Cairns located at Grid YS 283558 a camp consisting of at least 3	
N55-58		1200	bunkers with tables, chairs and gear lying around in the camp. It appeared to be occupied. Tracks led into the camp from all directions. Also sighted at Grid YS 282555 were 4 bunkers in good condition, recently used but showing no signs of present occupation.	
YS 294753	3 Nov	1500	2Lt Monteith located a hut system containing 5 huts in very good condition. The huts did not appear to be occupied however two tracks entered the camp from the northern side across the creek.	
E42-45	4 Nov	0800	2Lt Bell located a junction of 5 tracks at YS 425789. At YS 432792 and	
N78-81		1000	YS 437788 were fresh diggings under trees and several tracks nearby.	
E75-78	4 Nov	1430	2Lt Bell sighted at YS 764771 a heavy track and followed it from a lie up	
N79-82		1600	area at this point north to YS 763799 and then east to YS 783797 where it crossed Route 329. Also at YS 756807 a bunker system was sighted, it appeared quite old but had been used recently.	
E81-84	5 Nov	0800	2Lt Hayes located a track from the end of the fire trail SE to YS 806813	
N81-83		0950		

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF-C2118 (Adapted)

MONTH AND YEAR NOV 70 (Cont)

PHUOC TUY PROVINCE
REFERENCE MAP

UNIT/FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj P.J. CALVERT A A AVN

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
			The track had been used in last 2-3- weeks.	
E37-40	6 Nov	0800	2Lt Bell sighted at YS 403730 a heavy track used recently. It was followed	
N71-73		1000	west from this point to YS 390730. There were 2 lie up points along track, and it had been used within last fortnight.	
E24-27	9 Nov	0800	2Lt Gibson located at Grid YS 244637 a fresh camp site in palm area, an old	
N61-64		1000	sampan to the south. There were fresh footprints on the west side of the feature, and shelters for 6 people were in the area.	
E72-78	10 Nov	1000	Capt Cairns following up information given by Lt Ellwood followed a track which	
N81-84		1200	moved SW of Lake Bau Ham YS 6784. It had been used by 3 or 4 people, and led to a camp at YS 657827. There was a bamboo table and numerous cleared areas. An immediate airstrike was put in on the camp. BDA: One large secondary explosion and a hole about 6' x 2' exposed. A fierce fire was burning in the hole but the substance burning could not be identified. Numerous tracks were exposed.	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF-C2118 (Adapted)

MONTH AND YEAR NOV 70 (Cont)

REFERENCE MAP PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

UNIT/FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj P.J. CALVERT A A Avn

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
E64-68 N82-84	11 Nov	1200	At YS 652827 2 ^{Lt} Monteith located a camp with bunkers, tables which had been used within the previous week. Two major tracks passed through the camp. An airstrike was put in on the camp. BDA: 2 bunkers destroyed, 1 lean to and table destroyed.	
YS 360707	12 Nov	0800 1000	At the given grid Lt Ellwood located 2 tables and a possible bunker, not previously sighted, and had no recent use.	
E68-71 N83-87	12 Nov	1000 1200	2Lt Hayes sighted a fresh track which led to the NE to an old camp at YS 698854. It had been used by 3+ people in the previous week. There was a fresh sandal mark in a crater beside the track.	
E65-67 N82-85	12 Nov	1210 1420	Lt Ellwood in the southern 4 grid squares sighted tracks which had recent and regular use. At YS 663826 a very heavy track pattern and a track junction were sighted. There were cut twigs in the area but no sign of habitation.	
YS 657825	13 Nov	1000 1100	2Lt Gibson directed an airstrike on to the grid. BDA: 10 bunkers/pits destroyed and 2 pits uncovered. Camp area 100' x 100' exposed, with fresh track, and more bunkers appeared to have existed. Camp appeared larger than	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF-C2118 (Adapted)

UNIT/FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FL

MONTH AND YEAR NOV 70 (Cont)

REFERENCE MAP PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj P.J. CALVERT A A Avn

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
			the exposed area indicated.	
E63-66	13 Nov	1200	Lt Mackworth sighted numerous tracks in area. All had much recent traffic. One	
N78-81		1400	track was followed from a junction at YS 642797 to a lie up area at YS 644796 then	
			N and N W to a system with bunkers at YS 644799.	
E33-36	13 Nov	1400	2Lt Bell sighted numerous tracks in the northern portion of a clearing in YS	
N71-74		1600	3374. Appeared 1-2 weeks old. Footprints on other tracks indicated that they	
			had been used within the previous week by 3-4 persons.	
E69-72	14 Nov	0805	2Lt Bell carried out the VR and noted that all rice gardens in the following	
N83-86		0955	grids had been harvested: YS 701859, YS 697855, YS 696849, YS 698848, YS	
			695860. Numerous tracks in vicinity of gardens, but at least 1-2 weeks old.	
E34-36	14 Nov	1005	2Lt Sonneveld located a boat which was in good condition at YS340768, pushed	
N77-80		1155	well under overhanging foliage. Two bunkers were sighted at YS339769 also	
			under overhanging foliage. A foot track went north of the boat through a	
			grassed area, and had been used recently. Another track led from the boat	
			in direction of the bunkers. Dead camouflage covered 2 bunkers.	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF-C2118 (Adapted)

UNIT/FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCF FLT

MONTH AND YEAR Nov 70 (Cont)

REFERENCE MAP PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
YS368755	15 Nov	0800	2Lt Gibson located a large white tree that had 6-8 holes, 2-3" in diameter and about 5' deep. They were symetrically place around the tree. Activity in the area was 2-3 weeks old, and could have tied in with cache activity of the previous 2 weeks. At YS343768 a clump of trees in a clearing had beds of matted grass for 6-8 people around the perimeter. Also there were weapon pits with camouflage on top that had been used in last 1-2 months.	
YS805876	16 Nov	1400	2Lt Gibson sighted a hut and a large table; many tracks led to the area. A rice garden in the area had been harvested 1-2 weeks previously. A lot of rice was ready for harvesting but bore no signs of activity for previous 2 weeks.	
YS561578	17 Nov	1200	Lt Ellwood sighted footprints in area, and also an East-West track, about 2 days old. 1 set of barefoot prints led into mangrove swamps and was lost at YS563579. Another set of barefoot prints and two rolls of rice were sighted at YS 558579.	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF-C2118 (Adapted)

UNIT/FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCO FLT

MONTH AND YEAR ... Nov. 70 (Cont)

REFERENCE MAP ... PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj P J CALVERT A A Avn

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
YS752885	17 Nov	1400	2Lt Hayes sighted an old campsite on a ridge. 200m West a strong smell of human excreta was noticed.	
YS737793	18 Nov	0800	2Lt Bell sighted a heavy foot track which was followed South through old gardens at YS738778 past a small track junction and small lie up point at YS732775, and continued South to a lie up point at YS732768 and further to another lie up point at YS729757. The track turned West and was followed to YS727758. Movement on the track was Northwards and appeared to be 2 weeks old. Another well used track was followed East from YS712787 crossing a creek at YS717777 where some rubbish had been burnt. The track continued East through the previously mentioned gardens.	
YS750855	19 Nov	1000	2Lt Bell sighted a well worn track which ran from the firetrail through a lie up point. Track was followed further West as far as YS7428.	
YS661855	19 Nov	1600	2Lt Bell sighted fresh footprints approx 1-2 days old, made by party of 4.	
YS689846	20 Nov	0800	2Lt Hayes sighted a well worn track which came around the South side of a clearing, crossed a creek and moved South to South-east into thicker cover,	

COMMANDER'S DIARY NARRATIVE

AF-C2118 (Adapted)

UNIT/FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECOF FLT

MONTH AND YEAR Nov 70 (Cont)

REFERENCE MAP PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj P.J. CALVERT

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
			and was followed to YS694837 where it was lost. About 75m North lie up areas were seen. Branches were broken off from trees.	
YS534570	20 Nov	1000	En route to a VR Lt Ellwood sighted civilians carrying baskets on poles. 200m South, 2 VC were seen apparently waiting for the 2 civilians. One VC was carrying an AK47. There was a fairly extensive bunker system in the area. At YS562578 light tracks were sighted about an old bunker system.	
YS768790	21 Nov	1500	2Lt Bell sighted vegetable gardens which were growing well and were ready to be harvested. At YS773780 a hut which was either partly destroyed or nearly constructed was sighted. The timber seemed fairly new.	
YS480515	21 Nov	1600	2Lt Hayes while DS 7 RAR reported hearing several shots directed at the aircraft, passing well to the rear. No hits found on inspection.	
YS581577	23 Nov	1200	Capt Cairns sighted a track made by 2-3 people which was 2-3 days old. Track followed 30m East to West on the North side of a creek. At YS589577 marks of 2 sampans that had been pulled up were on beach, apparently 2 days old. There were several bare footprints in area. At YS588579 track crossed clearing.	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF-C2118 (Adapted)

MONTH AND YEAR Nov 70 (Cont)

REFERENCE MAP PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

UNIT/FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECON FLT

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj P J CALVERT A A Avn

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
YS698854	23 th Nov	1000	2Lt Gibson directed an airstrike into a large camp. There were fresh tracks and rice fields in the area, as well as many huts, bunkers and tables. BDA: 2 huts, 1 bunker, 1 table destroyed.	
YS670823	24 Nov	0800	2Lt Bell followed a well worn track from the West to this grid where it turned East and was joined by a larger track running North. The well worn part of the main track ceased at YS661892, and a small track then led West,	
YS451810	24 Nov	1200	Lt Ellwood sighted fresh well used tracks which led into scrub and were lost. At YS426814 a light track used in the previous week headed from East to West.	
YS583758	25 Nov	1400	Lt Mackworth located a very distinct smell of human excrement. There were signs of activity on the ground but nothing definite located. At YS 580730 three logs bound together by iron loops.	
YS654772 - YS639755	25 Nov	0800	2Lt Gibson located a large track used by approx 30 people up to 7 days old running between these grids, with a lay up area at YS646768.	
YS576662	26 Nov	0800	2Lt Bell sighted elephant tracks crossing an old paddy field to YS575658 moving South towards civil access area. Other elephant tracks cross the	

COMBAT DIARY NARRATIVE

AF-C2118 (Adapted)

UNIT/FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCO FLT

MONTH AND YEAR Nov 70 (Cont)

REFERENCE MAP PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj P.J. CALVERT A.A. Avn

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
			same paddy from YS579661 to YS582658 moving North. Tracks appeared about 24 hours old. A heavy track leads from large lie up area at YS689683 East through YS593683 and YS596688 to join Route 328 at YS608694 where it moves North along the road. A hole approximately 2' in diameter at YS601689 appears to be an entrance to a tunnel.	
YS286688	26 Nov	1300	2Lt Bell sighted a well worn track system which joined at YS286688. It led North to the side of a hill. At YS287691 there were large rocks and some caves. The tracks appear to have been used in previous 2-3 days and had brush marks along entire length.	
YS576663	26 Nov	1400	Lt Mackworth sighted a track made by elephants, leading to grids YS576657, YS 573647 and YS573641, where it went into bamboo. The bamboo was blown aside and many heavy foot tracks were revealed. The track turned North and passed through YS576646, 579650 and 580661. At YS578669 there were marks on the North bank of the river which could have been made by an elephant scrambling up the bank. A track led away to the North.	

COMBAT DIARY NARRATIVE

AF-C2118 (Adapted)

UNIT/FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECON FLT

MONTH AND YEAR Nov 70 (Cont)

REFERENCE MAP PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj P J CALVERT A A Avh

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
YS645713	30 Nov	1215	<p>At this point 2Lt Sonneveld sighted wheel ruts of approximately 5 carts which had been made in the previous 48 hours. The tracks were followed South and split up to go either side of Nui Dat 3 and entered Xuyen Moc. The marks were followed North to YS645720, then North-west to YS630732 where they entered heavy timber. The tracks split up again and linked up with timber workers tracks which went West. The other tracks travelled North and were lost in heavy canopy.</p>	
YS683642	30 Nov	1420	<p>2Lt Bell followed a fresh track used by 6+ people North-east through the grids YS688647, 696653, 713669 and joined the road at YS713670, where it appeared to turn East. Bunkers found at YS713669 were useable and in good condition.</p>	