

Series: AWM95
Australian Army commanders' diaries
[Vietnam]

Army Aviation units

Item number: 8/1/60

Item: 161 [Independent]

Reconnaissance Flight

Narrative

[1-31 Aug 1971]

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 are to be numbered as annexes 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.

of the day's fighting, including company movements.

of the commander with regard to equipment, tactics, organization

of special importance.

of officers, men and equipment.

of equipment captured.

of equipment employed in the time not accounted for. The type of

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

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

(continued on back cover)

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

Commanders Diary of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt.....(Formation or Unit)

From 1 Aug 71..... to 31 Aug 71..... (Dates)

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

AWM 95
[8/1/Aug 71]

This form is to be enclosed with annexes in AF - C2119 (Adapted)

(AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES)

AF - C2118 (Adapted)

Revised Apr 69

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

MONTH AND YEAR _____

REFERENCE MAP PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj N.H. HARDEN

Serial	Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Events or information	Reference to annex letter and or enclosure No (f)
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
				<u>SUMMARY</u>	
				With the introduction of the Kiowa helicopters into the unit	
				there has been a vast improvement in the service the unit can provide	
				for 1 ATF. The ability to move quickly and carry up to three passengers is	
				an immense asset to all user units. However, because of the Kiowas light	
				weight construction, extreme care has to be taken by the user units, to	
				avoid damage to the aircraft's honeycomb constructed fuselage. No other	
				problems have arisen and the Kiowas have successfully taken over all roles	
				originally done by the Sioux.	
				At present only two Sioux remain operational within the Flight,	
				three having already departed and one in preparation for departure to	
				Australia.	
				The Porters have been used to pick up mail arriving on the	
				Defence Charter and delivering it to Vung Tau and Nui Dat. This arrangement	
				has reduced delays caused by reduced Wallaby Flights.	
				The unit has been warned for a move to Vung Tau in late September	

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(AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES)

AF - C2118 (Adapted)

Revised Apr 69

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

MONTH AND YEAR AUG 71

REFERENCE MAP PHOUC TUY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj N.H. HARDEN

Serial	Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Events or information	Reference to annex letter and or enclosure No
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
		1 Aug 71	1000	Capt Monteith reported woodcutting in 3272.	
		2 Aug 71	0800	Capt Monteith found two large fishing nets at 582571 and a camouflaged pit in the near vicinity. Footprints in the area indicating use during the past 12 hours.	
		3 Aug 71	1200	Lt Hayes sighted oxcarts containing 5 persons at 339812.	
			1400	Lt Steel followed tracks of approximately 20 people, less than one week old leading from 483880 to 478877.	
		3 Aug 71		VR's reported nothing of significance.	
		4 Aug 71		VR's reported nothing of signifance.	
		5 Aug 71	0730	Lt Mackworth and Lt Sinnott returned to Australia. Lt Sinnott was replaced by 2Lt Marsden.	
			1430	Lt Steel reported two logging trucks operating in the Nui May Tao's.	
		6 Aug 71	0845	Lt Howard sighted three logging trucks to the South East of the Nui May Tao's.	
			1400	2Lt Triplett sighted a Vietnamese body and a pile of clothing at 505880. The body appeared to be 4-6 months old.	

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(AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES)

AF - C2118 (Adapted)

Revised Apr 69

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

MONTH AND YEAR AUG 71

REFERENCE MAP PHOU TUOY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj N.H. HARDEN

Serial	Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Events or information	Reference to annex letter and or enclosure No (f)
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
		6 Aug 71	1800	The second group of three OH 58A's arrived at the unit.	
		7 Aug 71	0630	The OH-58A's were used for the first time on VR's and document run.	
			1000	Lt Wright sighted a track, less than one week old at 415810.	
		8 Aug 71	1000	2lt Triphett sighted several tracks between one and two weeks old at 419812 and 421830.	
		9 Aug	1000	Lt Gibson located a regularly used track less than 5 days old at 413807.	
		10 Aug		VR's reported nothing of significance.	
		11 Aug	0900	2lt Sonneveld sighted a tiger at 607779.	
			1120	Whilst flying a voice mission over the Long Hai's, Porter A14-690, flown by Maj Harden, was hit by three rounds of ground fire.	
		12 Aug		VR's reported nothing of significance.	
			1410	Capt Matheson arrived to take up position of IO.	
		13 Aug	1200	Lt Gibson sighted a recently used track running from 644602 and 644583. Lt Steel marked for four airstrikes but nil BDA.	

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(AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES)

AF - C2118 (Adapted)

Revised Apr 69

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

MONTH AND YEAR AUG 71

REFERENCE MAP PHOU TUOY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj N.H. HARDEN

Serial	Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Events or information	Reference to annex letter and or enclosure No (f)
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
			2300	Whilst returning from FSB Ziggle, Lt Reynolds was asked to establish contact with a SAS patrol which was causing concern. No contact could be made after 30 minutes and he returned to NUI DAT.	
		14 Aug	1200	Lt Reynolds sighted numerous elephants tracks at 7476.	
			1600	Lt Steel sighted elephant tracks at 7477 and 7275.	
		15 Aug	1000	Maj Harden directed 5 Tp C Sqn 1 Armd Regt from COURTENAY to NUI DAT. This is probably the last operational movement of tanks in the province.	
			1600	Lt Dawson reported 2 logging trucks at 712940.	
		16 Aug	1015	An Allison representative, Mr Rigby, arrived in the unit to give advice on the OH-58A engines.	
			1600	Lt Steel sighted 4 oxcarts loaded with wood bark at 723697.	
		17 Aug	0800	Capt Monteith reported a large quantity of corrugated iron, two flat-topped trailers and a disused truck at 666882.	
		18 Aug		VR's reported nothing of significance.	
		19 Aug	0800	2lt Triplett sighted 13 oxcarts moving east from 315730. Each cart was	

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UNIT FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

MONTH AND YEAR AUG 71

REFERENCE MAP PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj N.H. HARDEN

Serial	Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Events or information	Reference to annex letter and or enclosure No (f)
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
				carrying small unidentified bundles. The sighting was checked one hour later and only 10 carts could be located. These were moving west without their bundles.	
		19 Aug	1000	Capt Matheson sighted footprints running from the waters edge to the jungle at 744615. The footprints had been made since the last hightide. 1 ATF confirmed a Press release that all Australian troops (excluding AATTV) would be out of SVN within 6 months. The majority would be out by Christmas.	
		20 Aug	0800	Lt Reynolds sighted 3 oxcarts at 311720. When the aircraft flew overhead they changed thier direction of movement.	
			1200	Lt Steel sighted an elephant at 744772.	
		21 Aug		VR's reported nothing of significance. Capt Matheson and Lt Steel left for Vung Tau to begin their OH-58A conversion with the 5th Aviation Detachment.	
		22 Aug	1400	Lt Bell sighted two bunkers and a fireplace at 611847. This area and surrounding tracks appeared to have been recently used.	

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(AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES)

AF - C2118 (Adapted)

Revised Apr 69

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

MONTH AND YEAR AUG 71

REFERENCE MAP PHOU TUO PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj N.H. HARDEN

Serial	Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Events or information	Reference to annex letter and or enclosure No (f)
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
		23 Aug		VR's reported nothing of significance.	
		24 Aug		VR's reported nothing of significance.	
		25 Aug		VR's reported nothing of significance.	
		26 Aug	0800	2lt Triplett found 6 fire trenches approximately 1 month old at 345778.	
		27 Aug		VR's reported nothing of significance.	
		28 Aug	1600	The last two OH-58A's were accepted and flown into the unit. Capt Matheson and Lt Steel returned after completing their conversion course.	
		29 Aug	0800	Col Argent visited the unit to observe and discuss surveillance equipment and to undergo continuation training.	
				VR's reported nothing of significance.	
		30 Aug		VR's reported nothing of significance. A total of 16.15 hours was flown on fixed wing surveillance.	
		31 Aug		Capt Monteith sighted 3 wpm pits which appeared to have been dug in the past two weeks. A cardboard carton of clothing and a new bicycle were found nearby.	

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AF - C2118 (Adapted)

Revised Apr 69

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

MONTH AND YEAR AUG 71

REFERENCE MAP PHOU TUOY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj N.H. HARDEN

Serial (a)	Place and grid reference (b)	Date (c)	Time (d)	Events or information (e)				Reference to annex letter and or enclosure No (f)	
				DAY		NIGHT			
				HRS	SORTIES	HRS	SORTIES		
	ANNEX A	PART 1		RW HOURS AND SORTIES					
				Pilot Recce	254.55	158	-	-	
				Pax Recce	122.40	161	-	-	
				Liaison	324.45	471	1.50	2	
				Air Op	22.50	21	-	-	
				Sniffer	12.15	12	-	-	
				Re Sup	11.50	15	-	-	
				Misc	3.20	4	-	-	
				Trg	27.55	27	2.20	4	
				Test	14.40	23	-	-	
				Dust Off	2.35	4			

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MONTH AND YEAR AUG 71

REFERENCE MAP PHOUC TUY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj N.H. HARDEN

Serial	Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Events or information				Reference to annex letter and or enclosure N (f)	
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)				(f)	
	ANNEX A	PART 2		FW HOURS AND SORTIES					
				DAY		NIGHT			
				HRS	SORTIES	HRS	SORTIES		
				Pilot Recce	71.50	53	-	-	
				Pax Recce	5.50	9	-	-	
				Liaison	83.20	149	-	-	
				547 Sigs	214.05	116	0.40	1	
				Psy Ops	7.15	7	-	-	
				Misc	9.50	7	0.30	1	
				Flare Drop	-	-	-	-	
				Sniffer	12.15	11	-	-	
				Trg	3.50	6	-	-	
				Test	5.15	11	-	-	