

Series: AWM95
Australian Army commanders' diaries
[Vietnam]

Army Aviation units

Item number: 8/1/32

Item: 161 [Independent]

Reconnaissance Flight

Narrative

[1-31 Jan 1969]

PART 1

COVERING LETTER

Reference No. R707 - 1 - 1

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)

Appointment

(OC Unit or senior staff officer)

Received
27 Aug 69

PART 2

AF C 2119 (Adapted)
Revised Jun, 1965

SECRET

ORIGINAL

~~SECRET~~

Strike out where
not applicable

COMMANDERS DIARY

OF

Unit or Formation 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

From 1 Sep 68 To 7 Aug 69

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Narrative (AF C 2118)

Enclosure Numbers

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- F Orders of battle and location reports issued to
- G Intelligence reports and summaries issued; appreciations made to
- H Administrative orders and instructions issued to
- I Administrative orders and instructions received to
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- * K Standing orders issued to
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- M Action reports (if required) to
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- O Periodical summaries of operations to
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† NIL
† RETAINED
† Despatched to

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

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COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF -C 2118(A) (dated)
Revised Jun 1966

UNIT/FORMATION.....161 (Indep) Recce Flt.....

MONTH AND YEAR.....Jan 69.....

REFERENCE MAP.....Phuoc Tuy Province.....

COMMANDING OFFICER.....Maj H.A.F. Benson.....

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
	1 Jan		2Lt Rogers marked for 2 Airstrikes at YS 315818 BDA 3 bunkers destroyed, 4 bunkers uncovered.	
			2Lt Stevens while on DS 1ATF tasks sighted Sampan 2x44 gallon drums and fighting pits at 223685. Engaged with artillery no visible damage. 400 VC reported in YS 2179 not sighted.	
	2 Jan		Capt Brooker and 2Lt McClymont discovered occupied camp at YS 315801. Capt Brooker and 2Lt Rogers discovered well used camp at YS 223685 for LFT. Hut partially destroyed. Another hut and jetty were found.	
	3 Jan		Capt Woodley, while on VR discovered large bunker complexes at YS 333794 and YS 279793. Airstrike on camp at YS 364785 BDA. 3 bunkers, 10 metres trench, 2 slit trenches destroyed, 2 bunkers uncovered.	
	4 Jan		2Lt Stevens marked for an airstrike BDA. 2 bunkers destroyed, 2 pits damaged. FW and RW A/c on task DS 1ATF	
	5 Jan		2Lt McClymont and 2Lt Thomson BDA B52 strike. 7 bunkers destroyed, 6 pits and 30 metres trench destroyed.	
			Lt Ellis while on VR discovered a base camp at YS 297987. Marked for airstrike at YS 314820. BDA 1 bunker and 30 metres trench uncovered 2Lt McClymont.	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF -C 2118(Adopted)

Revised Jun 1966

UNIT/FORMATION.....161(Indep) Recce Flt.....

MONTH AND YEAR.....Jan 69.....

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COMMANDING OFFICER.....Maj H.A.F. Benson.....

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
	5 Jan		AOP for Naval gunfire YS 7967 and YS 7262 drew ground fire engaged with Naval guns.	
	6 Jan		2Lt Rogers while on VR discovered base camps at YS 616912 and YS 627906. Sighting of 1 person by river (possible) BDA Naval gunfire. 4 fresh graves on beach not there on 5 Jan.	
			2Lt McClymont marked for airstrike at YS 644614. BDA 1 bunker destroyed. Capt Woodley marked for airstrike at YS 315819 and YS 310828. Nil BDA. Capt Brooker marked for airstrike at YS 308801 BDA. (1 bunker destroyed 1 bunker uncovered 10 metres of trench exposed) 1 hut destroyed 4 bunkers damaged 8 bunkers and 175 metres of trench uncovered.	
	7 Jan		2Lt McClymont marked for airstrike at YS 379721 BDA 1 bunker destroyed 1 bunker exposed 10 metres of trench exposed. Capt Woodley marked for airstrike at YS 593600 BDA. 2 bunkers destroyed, 2 bunkers damaged, 2 bunkers uncovered.	
	8 Jan		Maj Benson and Lt Ellis on VR while checking old camp saw 4 people in dark uniforms who dispersed on seeing A/c. Later found to be ARVN (YS293991). Heavy fresh track activity in the area.	
			Lt Ellis and 2Lt Thomson while on VR observed that the rice in Tam Bo gardens had been harvested. Numerous vegetable gardens in area. 2Lt Cook marked for airstrike. Later reports indicate camp was occupied at time of strike. Capt Brooker while on VR discovered 2VC at YS 335971 engaged with artillery nil BDA. Compound at YS 305967.	

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AF -C 2118(Adopted)

Revised Jun 66

UNIT/FORMATION...161 (Indep) Recce Flt

MONTH AND YEAR... Jan 69

REFERENCE MAP... Phuoc Tuy Province

COMMANDING OFFICER... Maj H.A.F. Benson

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
	8 Jan		Marked for airstrike at YS 336973.	
			Lt Gerard on Line Bravo found road block of straw en route Hwy 15 at YS 194850.	
	9 Jan		Capt Brooker AOP shoot with 155mm in camp YS 338975 BDA: 1 hut destroyed 3 huts intensively damaged, 1 bunker destroyed, 2 bunkers damaged and 1 tunnel exposed. Camp at YS 340977	
			by 105mm BDA: 1 bunker damaged, 4 tunnels uncovered and 5 metres trench exposed. 2	
			airstrikes on camp at YS 332971 BDA: 12 huts destroyed, 1 hut intensively damaged, 3	
			bunkers destroyed and 1 bunker damaged with numerous others uncovered.	
			2Lt McClymont and 2Lt Stevens on a VR for discovered numerous trails in vicinity of	
			YS 3779. 2Lt Rowe and 2Lt Cook on VR found fresh tracks at YS 307851. Capt Brooker	
			found camp at YS 305967 occupied with 2VC with 8-12 bunkers, 3 huts and numerous trenches	
			and tunnels. Proximity of friendly forces stopped use of artillery and airstrikes.	
			2Lt Stevens on an airstrike BDA: 1 bunker destroyed and 2 pits uncovered.	
	10 Jan		2Lt Rowe and Lt Ellis on a VR. 2 Huts and bunker complex at YS 789695, suspected it was	
			occupied. at YS 6777 10-15 graves 1 month old. 2 Lt Stevens airstrike BDA: 5 bunkers entrances	
			exposed, 3 bunkers exposed and 2 huts destroyed.	
	11 Jan		2Lt Muir on Line Bravo found Hwy 15 blown at following grids; YS 330612, YS 253698 and	
			YS 229793.	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF -C 2118(Adopted)
Revised Jun 66

MONTH AND YEAR..... Jan 69

REFERENCE MAP..... Phouc Tuy Province

UNIT/FORMATION..... 161 (Indep) Recce Flt

COMMANDING OFFICER..... Maj H.A.F. Benson

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
	11 Jan		2Lt Rogers and 2Lt Thomson on a VR found old trails at YS 2883x and Hwy 2 had been keyholed at YS 462813.	
			2Lt Rowe and 2Lt Dickson on VR found old camp at YS 199813.	
	12 Jan		2Lt Rogers and 2Lt Dickson on VR found numerous trails at YS 3085. 2Lt Rogers and Lt Ellis on BDA's of camp at YS 789695, 1 tunnel exposed, 1 possible hut destroyed, and 1 bunker destroyed. Camp at YS 789693, 3 huts destroyed, 10 metres of trench collapsed, 1 bunker exposed, 1 bunker destroyed and 3 spider holes uncovered. Further construction in camp at YS 773649.	
			Lt Ellis and 2 Lt Rogers on VR camp at YS 773649 containing huts, bunkers, tunnels and containers. At YS 768647 3 mats with meat drying in sun. 2 fishing boats close to shore later checked. Capt Brooker and 2Lt Dickson on VR at YS 5680 found 1 tunnel entrance and pit, 1 hut, 5 pits and 3 bunkers.	
	13 Jan		Lt Muir on Line Bravo received ground fire from YS 55870 from 2 sighted VC. Maj Benson and Capt Brooker on VR at YS 3677 found fresh foot prints, old bunkers, pits, and 3 spider holes. Capt Woodley and Lt Ellis on VR found at YS 6058 foot tracks, iron roofed hut and sunken sampan. Lt Ellis on airstrike at YS 773649 BDA: 1 large hut destroyed 1 bunker uncovered, 1 hut damaged, scattered containers and 1 hut & 1 bunker untouched.	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF -C 2118(A^oted)

Revised Jun 1966

UNIT/FORMATION..... 161 (Indep) Recce Flt

MONTH AND YEAR..... Jan 69

REFERENCE MAP..... Phouc Tuy Province

COMMANDING OFFICER..... Maj H.A.F. Benson

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
	13 Jan		2 Lt McClymont and 2Lt Stevens on VR sighted 1 VC at YS 209794, arty called and 4 more	
			VC sighted . Between arty 4 more VC ran from bamboo. Area then saturated with 155 & 105mm	
			exposing a camp. If light fire team had been available the VC could have been killed.	
	14 Jan		2Lt McClymont on airstrike at YS 333888 BDA; 1 bunker partially destroyed, 3 bunkers exposed, 2 structures destroyed	
			destroyed. 2Lt Stevens and 2Lt Dickson on VR found numerous tracks and old bunkers at YS 4384.	
	15 Jan		Capt Brooker and 2Lt Dickson on VR found a hut at YS 212754, 2 sampans, baskets, 2 caches,	
			hoochey, napsack and 1 pair sandals. Above target engaged by LFT. 1 sampan and 1 person on beach YS	
			212636. Fresh tracks area of YS 2166. 2Lt Rowe and Lt Ellis on VR at YS 2140 7937 saw a	
			male shift a ladder in scrub when A/c turned around it was gone. Friendly forces	
			investigated. 2Lt Dickson airstrike at YS 566807 BDA; 1 hut damaged, 3 bunkers uncovered,	
			1 destroyed and 5 tunnels uncovered.	
			2 Lt McClymont and 2Lt Dickson on VR found fresh tracks, old pits and a usable sampan	
			camouflaged at YS 2473. Capt Brooker on two airstrikes at YS 333971 BDA; 2 trenches	
			uncovered, 6 bunkers uncovered, 2 bunkers damaged, 1 bunker slightly damaged and 1 hut	
			damaged and 20 bunkers undamaged.	
	16 Jan		Lt Ellis on airstrike at YS 297987 BDA; 4 bunkers exposed and 5-6 bunkers and small hut	
			and several tables and cooking utensils undamaged. Artillery was then used BDA;	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT/FORMATION...161 (Indep) Recce Flt...

MONTH AND YEAR... Jan 69

REFERENCE MAP... Phouc Tuy Province

COMMANDING OFFICER... Maj H.A.F. Benson

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
	16 Jan		1 bunker destroyed and 2 large bunkers uncovered. 2Lt Stevens and 2Lt Dickson on a VR	
			found numerous tracks at YS 2387. 2Lt McClymonts BDA; of airstrike at YS 333881, 1 bunker	
			exposed and 1 pit exposed, 5 metres of trench exposed and 1 structure on top of a bunker	
			partially destroyed. Capt Brooker while DS 1ATF (FWD) sighted 30 plus VC at YS 230875. Dress, black-	
			greens and khaki carrying large packs none were armed. Engaged with arty BDA; 2 VC KIA (Poss)	
			2 VCKIA BC, numerous packs left in area. VC took cover in old camp.	
	17 Jan		2Lt Dickson with Jade 05 (US FAC) Sqn Ldr Eweing on a VR sighted 4 wooden structures at	
			YS 196893. Capt Brooker and 2Lt Rogers on a VR sighted at YS 373778 a camp under construction	
			with 11 bunkers plus comm trench used in last 24 hrs. Lt Ellis on an airstrike at YS 789695	
			BDA; 1 bunker uncovered, 4 bunkers destroyed, 10 metres of trench with OH destroyed, 1	
			tunnel entrance exposed, 1 hut destroyed, 1 thatch hut destroyed and 1 hut plus furniture	
			burnt by napalm. 1 round of RPG was fired at A/c during BDA no damage.	
	18 Jan		2 Lt Rogers on an airstrike at YS 764654 BDA; 2 huts destroyed, 1 food drying rack destroyed	
			1 bunker slightly damaged. 2Lt McClymont on airstrike at YS 33888 BDA; 1 pit destroyed	
			and 1 bunker exposed, 1 table with forms exposed and 1 pit exposed.	
			Capt Brooker on a VR while DS 1 ATF (FWD) found recently used VC camps at YS 376775,	
			YS 299975 and YS 305967.	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF -C 2118(A) (dated)

Revised Jun 1966

UNIT/FORMATION...161 (Indep) Recce Flt

MONTH AND YEAR... Jan 69

REFERENCE MAP... Phouc Tuy Province

COMMANDING OFFICER... Maj H.A.F. Benson

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
	19 Jan		Capt Brooker on airstrike at YS 305966 BDA; 1 bunker destroyed, 1 bunker damaged, 9 bunkers exposed	
			2 structures destroyed, 1 frame hut exposed and 2 tunnel entrances exposed.	
			Capt Brooker on airstrike at YS 373778 BDA; 3 trenches uncovered, 1 trench destroyed and	
			2 bunkers collapsed.	
	20 Jan		Capt Brooker on airstrike at YS 789695 BDA; 3 huts destroyed, 2 tunnels uncovered and 1	
			bunker uncovered. Capt Woodley and 2Lt Cook on a VR found numerous old camps and fresh	
			in YS 5389. Capt Woodley on airstrike at YS 536893 nil BDA required another airstrike.	
	21 Jan		2Lt Rogers on an airstrike at YS 764654 BDA; 2 huts burnt, 1 bunker uncovered and clothing and	
			utensils scattered.	
	22 Jan		2Lt Rogers and Capt Brooker on a VR found a covered charcoal pit in good condition at YS 295635.	
	23 Jan		Capt Woodley on an airstrike at YS 539893 BDA; 1 bunker damaged 2 bunkers exposed and 200- 300	
			metres of trench exposed. 9 bunkers were untouched. 2Lt Rowe and 2Lt Rogers on a VR	
			discovered a base camp at YS 320699 in good condition.	
	24 Jan		Capt Brooker sighted 51 ox carts in area of Y3869. Capt Woodley on a VR found a camp	
			containing 25-30 bunkers with OHC, 6-10 bunkers collapsed, 3-5 bunkers partially completed	
			400-500 meters of trench and 1 structure at YS 550896. 2Lt McClymont and 2Lt Dickson	
			on a VR found 2 thatch huts at YS 275601 and 2 more huts at YS 258637 with cooking utensils and 1 sampan.	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF -C 2118(Adopted)

Revised Jun 1956

UNIT/FORMATION.....161 (Indep) Recce Flt

MONTH AND YEAR.....Jan 69

REFERENCE MAP.....Phouc Tuy Province

COMMANDING OFFICER.....Maj H.A.F. Benson

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
	24 Jan		Maj Benson and 2Lt Rogers on a VR found at YS 603801 a fresh base camp consisting of 1 iron hut and 4 camouflaged bunkers.	
	26 Jan		2 Lt McClymont on an airstrike BDA; 25 metres trench exposed, 2 bunkers exposed, 2 tunnel entrances exposed, 1 pit and 300 metres trench untouched. Capt Woodley on AOP with 155mm from Blackhorse on camp at YS 549897 BDA; 2 bunkers destroyed and 2 uncovered. Capt Brooker sighted a body in a hammock 2-3 days dead.	
	27 Jan		2Lt McClymont and Lt Ellis on a VR found numerous fresh tracks at YS 3876. Capt Woodley on airstrike at YS 549897 BDA; 1 bunker damaged and 2 exposed. Further VR unveiled camp complex at YS 5489 and YS 5589 consisting of up to 80 bunkers and connecting trench. Recommended for B52 strike. Sqn Ldr Scrimshaw and 2Lt McClymont on VR found camp at YS 387794 containing 6 bunkers, 2 pits, 1 table and 1 cache. Maj Benson on BDA of airstrike at YS 603801 BDA; 1 iron hut destroyed, 3 bunkers destroyed, 2 damaged and a hut and bunkers untouched. 2Lt McClymont and Sqn Ldr Scrimshaw on VR found camp at YS 386769 consisting of; 2 Pits, 1 tunnel and 2 large platforms for floors of huts.	
	28 Jan		2Lt Rogers on 2 airstrikes. YS 320703 BDA; 2 bunkers destroyed, and 1 tunnel entrance exposed YS 626904 BDA; 1 bunker destroyed, 5 pits uncovered, 1 hut damaged.	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF -C 2118(Ac ted)
Revised Jun 66

UNIT/FORMATION...161 (Indep) Recce Flt...

MONTH AND YEAR... Jan 69

REFERENCE MAP... Phouc Tuy Province

COMMANDING OFFICER... Maj H.A.F. Benson

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
	28 Jan		Camp extends over 300x100 metre area. Lt Ellis and 2Lt Dickson on VR found camp at YS 378795 and YS 387794- both had black clothing laying around and pits. Possible IVC sighted in each camp.	
			Capt Woolley airstrike at YS 552896 BDA; 1 bunker destroyed, 2 bunkers damaged, 2 bunkers exposed, and 25 metres of trench damaged. Part of large base complex formed by 3 camps.	
	29 Jan		2Lt McClymont on airstrike at YS 387794 BDA; 1 bunker destroyed, 1 bunker exposed, 1 bunker entrance exposed, 1 pit exposed and 1 structure destroyed. 7 bunkers, 3 huts 3 pits and 1 structure untouched.	
	30 Jan		Capt Brooker and Sqn Ldr Scrimshaw on a VR found a VC camp in use at YS 314783 consisting of 80 metres of trench, 3 bunkers and 1 tunnel entrance. Another found at YS 317750 consisting of 5 bunkers and 30-40 metres of trench. At 309750 a camp, 3 VC in black sighted. Camp contained 20 metres trench, 1 large and 3 small bunkers, 44 gal water drum, 1 table and 2 shelters. Engaged with arty and airstrike BDA; 3 bunkers uncovered, 1 bunker damaged, 20 metres trench collapsed.	
	31 Jan		Lt Ellis and 2Lt Rowe on BDA of B52 strike; CAMP 1; scattered clothing, 4 bunkers destroyed, 3 bunkers damaged, 6 bunkers exposed and 1 large pit exposed. CAMP 2: contained approx. 80 bunkers and 600 metres comms trench. 20% was destroyed. CAMP 3: BDA: 2 bunkers destroyed, 1 bunker damaged, 1 table destroyed. 2Lt Rogers on airstrike at YS 686290 BDA: 6 bunkers uncovered,	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF -C 2118(Ad [redacted])

Revised Jun 1966

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REFERENCE MAP..... Phouc Tuy Province

COMMANDING OFFICER..... Maj H.A.F. Benson

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
	31 Jan		1 bunker damaged and 2 pits destroyed(one of these destroyed by WP from Possum A/c)	