

Series: AWM95
Australian Army commanders' diaries
[Vietnam]

Army Aviation units

Item number: 8/1/48

Item: 161 [Independent]

Reconnaissance Flight

Narrative

[1-31 Aug 1970]

PART 1

COVERING LETTER

Reference No

228

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

22/4/71

PART 2

SECRET

**ORIGINAL
PUBLICATION**

Strike out where
not applicable

COMMANDERS DIARY

OF

161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

To 31 AUG 70

INDEX

Unit or Formation

From 1 AUG 70

Narrative (AF C 2118)

ANNEXES

- * A Duty officer's log
 - * B Messages connected with log
 - C Operation orders and instructions issued
 - D Operation orders and instructions received
 - * E Sitreps issued
 - 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
 - Z Top Secret Supplementary Diary

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

~~RETAINED~~
espached to

on.

Enclosure Numbers

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, the relevant names should be grouped starting at B.

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

TENTS

es as well as map references), establishment, equipment

orders given.

the day's fighting, including company movements.

mander with regard to equipment, tactics, organization

potential importance.

to officers, men and equipment.

ipment captured.

employed in the time not accounted for. The type of

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

he 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

94846 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

(Formation or Unit)

Commanders Diary of

From..... 1 AUG 70 to..... 31 AUG 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.

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT/FORMATION 161 (INDEP) RECCE FLT

MONTH AND YEAR AUG. 70

REFERENCE MAP PHUOC TUY PROVINCE

COMMANDING OFFICER Maj. P.J. Calvert

AA AVN C

Annex letter and
enclosure number

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information
<p><u>SUMMARY</u></p> <p>Although the flt flew more hours than during the previous month, the total of 1073.25 was not intensive. The slight decrease in the flying rate for Jul-Aug can be attributed to a decrease in en activity and to a lesser extent the onset of the wet season. Ac serviceability was high at 97%.</p>			
<p>August saw the departure of two RW staff pilots at the completion of their tour, namely 2Lt P.A. Bysouth and 2Lt B.J. Dick. 2Lt I.R. Sinnott arrived to commence his tour of duty as FW staff pilot.</p>			
<p>The attachment of 2Lt D.H. Earley to 3/17 Air Cav US Army Avn was completed and he was replaced by 2Lt G.D. Monteith. However 2Lt Monteith returned to the flt after two weeks due to the redeployment of 3/17 Air Cav from DIAN to QUAN LOI.</p>			
<p>There were a number of aircraft incidents during the month:</p> <p>a. Maj P.J. Calvert was carrying out a recce for an intended airstrike in A1-729 in the LONG HAI mountains on 4 Aug 70 when he was engaged by ground fire. Nil hits were sustained.</p> <p>b. 2Lt P.A. Bysouth was carrying out a low level recce in the LONG HAI mts in A1-729 on 12 Aug 70 when the aircraft was engaged by ground fire. Hits were felt on the aircraft and during the subsequent landing at NDP BRIDGID the tail</p>			

This form is to be enclosed with the annexes in AF-C 2119 (Adapted).

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

AF - C 2118 (Adapted)
Revised Jun, 1965

MONTH AND YEAR

REFERENCE MAP

UNIT/FORMATION

COMMANDING OFFICER.

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
			<p>rotor cables failed. The pilot landed the aircraft safely within the NDP. A total of six hits had been sustained.</p> <p>c. 2Lt T.R. Partridge was marking for an airstrike in the LONG HAI mts in A1-728 on 12 Aug 70 when he was engaged by ground fire. Nil hits were sustained.</p> <p>d. Maj Calvert was carrying out a recce for an airstrike in the LONG HAI mts in A1-641 on 13 Aug 70 when he was engaged by ground fire. Nil hits were sustained.</p> <p>e. 2Lt D. Aird was carrying out a first light recce in A98-045 on Route 15 when he lost oil pressure. The ac was force landed safely on the highway with a failure of an oil cooler gasket.</p> <p>f. 2Lt Aird was landing at VUNG TAU airfield when the port door came loose from the aircraft and was damaged.</p>	

This form is to be enclosed with the annexes in AF-C 2119 (Adapted).

AF - C 2118 (Adapted)

Revised Jun, 1965

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT/FORMATION.....

MONTH AND YEAR.....

REFERENCE MAP.....

COMMANDING OFFICER.....

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
YS 465534	1 Aug	1300	2Lt Dick marked for an airstrike in the Long Hais. BDA 2 caves damaged, 1 cave destroyed.	
YS 465533	1 Aug	1500	2Lt Bysouth marked for an airstrike. BDA 1 cave entrance closed.	
YS 660764	5 Aug	0800	2Lt. Dick sighted an old bunker with some fresh tracks in the area.	
YS 649772	5 Aug	1000	2Lt. Dick sighted a well and two old bunkers amidst some fresh track activity. A well worn track with no recent activity was followed from YS 627768 to YS 635778.	
YS 734784	5 Aug	1100	2Lt. Dick sighted corn fields and gardens being harvested.	
YS 475511	5 Aug	1300	2Lt. Dick marked for an airstrike. BDA 2 caves damaged, 1 cave entrance destroyed.	
YS 600700	7 Aug	0800	Maj. Calvert sighted a fresh track leading south into the jungle from a clearing and used by 10-15 persons within the last 3 days.	
YS 475511	7 Aug	1300	2Lt. Dick marked for an airstrike. BDA 1 cave damaged.	
YS 474512	7 Aug	1300	2Lt. Dick marked for an airstrike. BDA 1 cave entrance damaged, 1 cave entrance destroyed.	
YS 385735	8 Aug	0800 -	2Lt Partridge located a track running E to W for 300 m before being lost under foliage.	
		1000	At Grid 3773 noted fresh track activity, poss friendly.	
YS 381762	8 Aug	0800 -	2Lt. Partridge sighted track activity near bomb craters judged to be about 10 days old.	
YS 353752	8 Aug	1000	2Lt. Partridge sighted a fresh track running North before turning West into heavy foliage.	
YS 465537	8 Aug	1300	Maj. Calvert marked for an airstrike. BDA 2 cave entrances destroyed and two plus secondary explosions initiated. Underground fire started and burnt for five minutes.	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT/FORMATION.....

MONTH AND YEAR.....

REFERENCE MAP.....

COMMANDING OFFICER.....

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
YS 473506	8 Aug	1330	Maj. Calvert marked for an airstrike. BDA 1. cave entrance missed but 2 other caves exposed.	
YS 465536	9 Aug	1300	Lt. Earley marked for an airstrike. BDA 1. cave damaged, 1. cave entrance destroyed.	
YS 800840	10 Aug	0700	Capt. Smith sighted a section of fire trail under cultivation and which had been worked as recently as the previous night. These gardens were close to an area in which D445 was suspected to be retraining.	
	11 Aug	1000 -	Lt Ellwood was tasked to check all garden areas in two VR blocks. All gardens checked	
		1200	appeared to have varied activity around them and some were obviously being tended. The following points were noted:	
YS 8270			1. A large part of this gridsquare was under cultivation with many tracks and possible bunkers.	
YS 838745			2. A large bunker in excellent condition with a water drain and trough nearby.	
YS 824747			3. Three bunkers and a hut in useable condition.	
YS 829750			4. One bunker in usable condition.	
			5. All bunkers and huts were located near to gardens.	
YS 653794- YS 663794	11 Aug	0800 -	Lt Earley located the following:	
		0950	Small rice gardens tended as recently as the previous day.	
YS 632860			Centre of mass of an area of yam digging which extends from the 62 Easting to the 65 Easting. A well used track led out of this area at 641857 and was followed SE for 1000	

This form is to be enclosed with the annexes in AF - C 2119 (Adapted).

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT/FORMATION.....

MONTH AND YEAR.....

REFERENCE MAP.....

COMMANDING OFFICER.....

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
			metres before being lost in thick undergrowth.	
YS 477510	12 Aug	1000	2Lt Partridge marked for an airstrike. BDA cave area damaged.	
YS 738776	13 Aug	1015	Capt Hills noted that a $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of corn was mature and was being picked. Adjacent to this was a 30m x 30m garden which was fenced. A heavy fresh track was followed NE to YS 748779 where an old camp was located. Tracks and activity indicated that part of the camp was in use.	
YS 661775	14 Aug	1215	Maj Calvert marked for an airstrike. BDA, 1 bunker destroyed, 3 bunkers damaged, 4 bunkers exposed.	
YS 789842	14 Aug	1010	Lt Earley located fresh tracks made by groups of 10 to 15 people.	
YS 776847	14 Aug	1405	Lt Earley followed up tracks found earlier in the day and located an extensive, occupied camp under construction. 14 complete and 4 incomplete bunkers were located along with 3 huts, numerous bush tables and a training area complete with obstacle course. One VC was seen before the mission was handed over to Lt Kerr who marked for an airstrike.	
YS 776847	14 Aug	1600	Lt Kerr marked for an airstrike on the occupied camp located by Lt Earley. Unfortunately the only aircraft available for the strike had napalm. BDA 1 structure destroyed.	
YS 776847	15 Aug	0730	Lt Earley marked for an airstrike on the complex located the previous day. BDA, 9 bunkers exposed, 1 hut destroyed, 1 hut exposed, 1 hut damaged, 1 lean to destroyed, 2 tables destroyed and 1 table damaged. Lt Earley recommended more airstrikes as the	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT/FORMATION.....

MONTH AND YEAR.....

REFERENCE MAP.....

COMMANDING OFFICER.....

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
			system was seen to be twice as large as was first reported and intelligence confirmed that the camp was a sub-unit of D445.	
YS 776847	15 Aug	1200	Lt Earley marked for an airstrike on camp. Due to weather a BDA was gained for the first strike only. BDA. 8 bunkers exposed, 2 huts destroyed, 1 hut damaged, 3 structures destroyed and 1 table destroyed.	
YS 776847	16 Aug	1200	Lt Ellwood marked for an airstrike. BDA, 3 bunkers exposed, 1 bunker destroyed, 2 huts damaged.	
YS 736776	18 Aug	0755	Capt Cairns located a quarter acre of corn which appeared to have been harvested, and at YS 734772 a half acre of corn with no recent activity. Activity in VR area was about a week old.	
	18 Aug	1000	Lt Earley was tasked to check on the condition of the gardens and cultivations with the following results:	
YS 836758			}	
YS 830761			} Gardens worked 3 days previously	
YS 820745			}	
YS 839743			This garden appeared to have been abandoned.	
			Corn in all gardens appeared to have been 50% harvested.	

This form is to be enclosed with the annexes in AF - C 2119 (Adapted).

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT/FORMATION.....

MONTH AND YEAR.....

REFERENCE MAP.....

COMMANDING OFFICER.....

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
YS	18 Aug	1150	Capt Cairns located the following:	
YS 803719			1. Small vegetable garden, no recent activity.	
YS 825705			2. Patches of freshly planted rice totalling about 2 acres and very fresh track activity	
YS 827708			3. At least 2 bunkers and a lean to located in possibly occupied area. Recommended an airstrike.	
YS 827708	18 Aug	1400	Lt Earley marked for an airstrike on living areas in proximity to gardens which appeared occupied. BDA. 1 bunker exposed, 1 corrugated iron lean-to destroyed, 1 tunnel entrance 100x100 metres of rice crop destroyed.	
YS 648783	19 Aug	1230	2Lt Monteith marked for an airstrike. BDA 1 bunker destroyed.	
YS 648783	20 Aug	1200	2Lt Dick marked for an airstrike. BDA Nil.	
	21 Aug	1000	Lt Ellwood noted the following:	
YS 784694			1. Gardens at this grid were receiving care from time to time.	
YS 697780			2. Hut at this grid is connected to a bunker 50 metres to the East but activity was not recent.	
YS 648783	21 Aug	1220	Lt Earley marked for an airstrike. BDA 1 hut damaged. During strike heavy track activity was noted at YS 643773.	
YS 648783	22 Aug	1200	Lt Kerr marked for an airstrike. BDA Nil.	

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COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT/FORMATION.....

MONTH AND YEAR.....

REFERENCE MAP.....

COMMANDING OFFICER.....

Place and grid reference	Date	Time	Event or information	Annex letter and enclosure number
YS 478511	23 Aug	1200	2Lt Partridge marked for an airstrike on a suspected occupied cave system. Ordnance was dropped in salvo due to low cloud cover. BDA, 3 caves closed, several entrances damaged.	
	24 Aug	0845	2Lt Monteith located the following:	
YS 716618-YS 775645			Located between the coast and the Nui Tam Bos were hundreds of yam holes.	
YS 716618			A camp area was located consisting of one bunker, bamboo articles and signs of occupation. Heavy fresh tracks led into the area.	
YS 645784	24 Aug	1200	2Lt Monteith marked for an airstrike. BDA, 1 hut destroyed, 2 bunkers exposed, NFA	
YS 716618	25 Aug	0800	Lt Kerr confirmed the existence of a camp and identified one hut and a bunker along with fresh track activity. Camp appeared to be living area for 6-10 people.	
YS 648778	25 Aug	1210	Lt Mackworth marked for an airstrike. BDA, 1 hut destroyed, 1 bunker exposed.	
	26 Aug	1400	2Lt Monteith noted the following:	
YS 608672			1. A 24 hr old track was followed to YS 596665 where it became fresh.	
YS 596665			2. The area appeared well used very fresh tracks evident.	
YS 595668			3. An old bunker system with fresh track activity in area. This area was found to be linked to YS 596665 by a fresh track.	
	27 Aug	1205	Lt Earley located the following:	
YS 334656			Clothing and equipment lying around under trees adjacent to area of heavy track activity	

COMMANDERS DIARY NARRATIVE

UNIT/FORMATION

MONTH AND YEAR.....

REFERENCE MAP

COMMANDING OFFICER