

56 SOW

Jul - Dec 72 vol. 3A

K-WG-56-HI

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VII. COMMANDER'S COMMENTS:

- (U) a. I assume command of the 1st Special Operations Squadron with great pleasure but with some regrets. Commanding the 1st SOS, the last USAF single engine, conventional fighter squadron, with the most unique, satisfying mission, along with an unparalleled record of accomplishments, is indeed a pleasure. I regret saying goodbye to our rotating "old heads", their experience and comradeship will be missed by all of us. The biggest shock to everyone was Ambassador Godley's announcement, at the Sawadee Party, of the impending loss of the A-1's. Therefore with great regret I look forward to an uncertain future for the A-1's and the 1st SOS as well.
- (U) b. If the A-1's are to be lost to the VNAF, based on the impending ceasefire, the return of the POWs and subsequent peaceful solutions to the problems of SE Asia, then the loss of our A-1's will be more acceptable.
- (U) c. An uncertain future is a factor that all fighter pilots learn to live with in combat and I am sure that each squadron member will continue to perform with unmatched excellence in the future as they have in the past.

LT COL WILLIAM H. LATHAM ASSUMED COMMAND
1 SOS ON 23 OCT 72

LAST A-1 CHANGE OF COMMAND

V.(S) NARRATIVE:

(U) The month of October was a very busy month for the 1st SOS. During the month there was a change in command, a large change in personnel, an outstanding "Sawadee Party" for Lt/Col Harding, and realization that the Squadron would be closing very soon. The Sandys were not called upon during the month to conduct a SAR; but they were busy with the Hobos supporting friendly forces in the Barrel. The Hobos also supported the Knives in a five day infill around the Saravane area. The Squadron continued the deployment of two aircraft to Da Nang and picked up a new deployment of two aircraft at Ubon on the 2nd of October.

(U) Lt/Col. Harding's "Sawadee Party" was a very fitting affair for the Squadron's past Commander. Some of the honored guest were: G. McMurtie Godley, U.S. Ambassador to Laos; Major General Vang Pao, Commanding General of Military Region II; Major General James D. Hughes, Deputy Commander for the 7th/13th Air Force; Brigadier General Jack Vessey, Deputy Chief MATTHAI. Ambassador Godley and Gen. Vang Pao formally thanked Lt/Col Harding and the 1st SOS for its' support in Laos. The following day, the 23rd of October, Lt/Col William H. Latham became the new Squadron Commander.

(S) The Hobos and Sandys took advantage of the improving weather to make some significant strikes in the Barrel. The Hobos started carrying a hard load, requested by the Ravens, and were credited with destroying numerous enemy storage areas and hard sites on the western edge of the PDJ. On the 19th, the Hobos started an infill with the Knives in the Saravane area. On the first day the