

**HISTORY**  
**OF**  
**377TH SECURITY POLICE SQUADRON**  
**1 April 1972 - 30 June 1972**

**377th AIR BASE WING**  
**SEVENTH AIR FORCE**  
**STATIONED AT:**  
**TAN SON NHUT AIR BASE, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**

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**CHRONOLOGY**

- 14 April 1972 Two 122mm rockets launched against Tan Son Nhut Air Base.
- 19 April 1972 Capt Bowman new OIC, Weapons System Security.
- 20 April 1972 12 on 12 off duty shifts began.
- 21 April 1972 General Vogt briefed on base defense and security.
- 26 April 1972 Capt Fleming new OIC, Law Enforcement Section.
- 17 May 1972 Security provided during Vice President Agnew's visit.
- 19 May 1972 102 personnel arrived from Cam Ranh Bay Air Base.
- 24 May 1972 Consolidation of key positions in Seventh Air Force and 377th Security Police Squadron.
- 25 May 1972 Lt Col Foley assumed command of Squadron.
- 25 May 1972 General Scott briefed on base defense and security.
- 29 May 1972 12 on 12 off duty shifts ended.
- 29 May 1972 TSgt Jones appointed Squadron Personnel Counselor.
- 04 June 1972 Maj Camaga became Operations Officer and CMSgt Adkins named new Operations Superintendent.
- 05 June 1972 Three new Squadron Councils established.
- 14 June 1972 Twelve NCO's enrolled in 50 hour, Air Force Management Course.
- 18 June 1972 Col Stewart, PACAF Director of Security Police made staff visit.
- 27 June 1972 Ambassador-at-large Connally afforded security protection during visit.

30 June 1972 Manpower authorizations dropped to 510.

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## **SECURITY POLICE**

### **MISSION**

The mission of the 377th Security Police Squadron expressed in the most basic terms was to provide security and law enforcement functions to Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Republic of Vietnam. No significant changes were experienced in this basic purpose but as a direct result of the phasedown of forces within Vietnam there was a consolidation of 24 May 1972 of the position of Chief Security Police, 377th Air Base Wing and Director of Security Police for Seventh Air Force. This consolidation was also extended to the Squadron Operations Officer who was designated as the Deputy Director of Security Police for Seventh Air Force and to the Squadron Superintendent who was to perform as Staff Superintendent for Seventh Air Force. (1)

### **THE HOSTILE THREAT**

Hostile activity remained at a low level in the Saigon / Tan Son Nhut area for most of this period. The squadron went to 12 hours on and 12 hours off duty shifts on 20 April (terminated 29 May) and also increased manpower in the night security flight to operationally meet any type of activity against the base. There were certain indications at the time that the possibility of a sapper attack had increased. (2)

On 14 April 1972 at 2055 , two 122mm rockets were launched against the base with

both impacting in the southwest sector of the perimeter. Only one of the two rockets exploded and there were no injuries or damages incurred. EOD personnel detonated the dud rocket at the scene.

## 1

The primary threat to the installation remained that of stand-off weapons (rockets) and sapper attacks. Again no large enemy maneuver elements appeared to threaten the installation or its resources.

### **OPERATIONS**

During May and June the squadron had the opportunity to provide security protection for two distinguished visitors. On 17 May 1972, Vice President Agnew arrived at Tan Son Nhut and on 27 June Ambassador-at-large, John Connally stopped for an official visit. Both dignitaries were afforded successful security protection. (5)

The new commander of Seventh Air Force, General John Vogt was briefed on the status of base defense and security. This briefing took place on 21 April 1972. A similar briefing was given to Brig General Scott, Commanding General MACV Special Troops, on 25 May 1972. (6)

As part of the squadron role in base defense the unit training section successfully trained and qualified 289 personnel in the use of weapons. These 289 trainees were from eleven different units. (7)

On 18 June, Colonel James S. Stewart, PACAF Director of Security Police arrived at Tan Son Nhut to begin a five day orientation visit of various security police functions in

Vietnam. Colonel Stewart was accompanied on his tour by Lt Col John C. Foley, 377th Security Police Squadron Commander and Director of Security Police for Seventh Air Force. In addition to Tan Son Nhut they also visited Bien Hoa and DaNang Air Base, (8)

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### WEAPONS SYSTEM SECURITY

As a result of the squadron manpower reduction the Weapons System Security Section has experienced a drop in personnel from 323 to 227. there was a corresponding loss in the number of daytime posts with 10 requirements being eliminated. This decrease in posts was made feasible through increased mobility of remaining forces. (9)

During May and June the Weapons System Security Section was called upon to provide security for two aircraft down off base for repairs. Approximately 12 personnel were involved in the two incidents, at Bai Loc and Dalat. As a result of these two instances a review of procedures was conducted and it was determined that in cases of this nature the security responsibility must be arranged through the senior US Commander or Advisor in the Military Region in which the aircraft is situated. This procedure is outlined in MACV Directive 95-7. (10)

Over 400 assorted weapons were received from Cam Ranh Bay Air Base in May. These weapons were cleaned and inspected by the armory and subsequently shipped to Takhli Air Base, Thailand. (11)

**LAW ENFORCEMENT**

The reduction in manpower also had its affect on the Law Enforcement Section. Prior to the cut there were 190 posts to man. This requirement was reduced to 171. Again the decrease in personnel and post requirements were deemed operationally feasible through increased use of mobile patrols. Personnel strength dropped from 147 to 129.

Operationally the Law Enforcement Section processed 262 investigative cases which included 102 Air Force incidents, 83 thefts, 27 complaints and 26 curfew violations. A total of 121 accidents were investigated. A special program in June to rid the base of stray dogs resulted in the elimination of 50 animals. (14)

The investigative section workload remained extremely heavy. There were 92 cases involving theft of government property processed, totaling \$473,000.00 Government property in the amount of \$8,300.00 or 12% was recovered. A total of 170 cases involving private property were handled. The estimated value of property lost was \$17,200.00 The value of private property recovered was \$2,100.00 or 13%. The case load averaged approximately six cases a day. (15)

## **ADMINISTRATIVE SECURITY**

A total of 45 cases were referred to the Office of Special Investigation (OSI). There were 16 Serious Incident Reports (SIR) submitted. Forty-two OSI investigations and nine SIR's were closed during this same time frame. A total of 1194 personnel security actions were handled during this quarter. This included 111 personnel security investigations and the granting of 173 final and 51 interim security clearances. An overall figure of 859 access review were completed. (16)

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The pass and registration function workload remained substantial. figures of interest are the number of DD Forms 2AF that were issued (943), war trophy fire arms registered (917), civilian employee passes issued (1194), and POV and Contractor Vehicle Passes issued (554). Also 92 inspections were conducted over this three month period. A breakdown shows that 12 were in funds, 66 in resources, 12 in administrative security and 2 in weapons storage. (17)

## **PERSONNEL AND MANNING**

There were several key personnel changes during April, May and June. The Weapons System Security Section received a new OIC on 19 April 1972 when Capt Gerald L. Bowman was assigned from Headquarters Seventh Air Force. He replaced 1Lt Lawrence S. Carrico who became the night duty officer, a position vacated by the departure of 1Lt Eric G. Arentz for a CONUS assignment on 28 April 1972. On 26 April 1972 Capt Richard B. Fleming arrived from CONUS to assume the position of OIC Law Enforcement Section. This slot had been vacant for thirty days. (18)



Command of the squadron changed hands on 25 May 1972. Lt Col John C. Foley arrived from Cam Ranh Bay Air Base, to become the new Squadron Commander. The former Commander, Maj Larry B. Hughes returned to CONUS on 02 June 1972. Maj Joseph R. Canaga became the Squadron Operations Officer on 04 June, transferring from Headquarters Seventh Air Force. Also coming from Headquarters Seventh Air Force on 04 June was the new Operations Superintendent, Chief Master Sergeant John T. Adkins.

(19)

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Manning and troop levels were the focus of attention during this entire three month period. As part of the troop withdrawal program, squadron manpower spaces were reduced from 643 to 510 personnel. A total of 430 personnel departed the organization while 297 were newly assigned. The largest influx of personnel was from Cam Ranh Bay Air Base on 19 May 1972. A total of 102 personnel arrived raising the squadron population to 727. (20) This figure was doubly significant at the troop ceiling was set at 510 for 30 June 1972. The six weeks between 19 May and 30 June were very hectic with 217 personnel successfully departing the unit for stateside and other assignments in Southeast Asia.

As part of this reduction 30 81XXXXA personnel were shipped to Bien Hoa Air Base, Republic of Vietnam. At the same time 41 personnel were sent TDY to Takhli Air Base, Thailand. All personnel going to Thailand had DEROS dates in July 1972 and were given a TDY enroute to their next assignment. The personnel pipeline was still a factor

and inputs from CONUS made necessary the identification of 39 additional individuals as surplus. These people had reassignment dates as far ahead as 31 December 1972.

(21)

At this point it became a paramount necessity to stop the pipeline so that people with experience could be retained. A request was sent to PACAF asking for diversion of all personnel being assigned during the months of July and August. This was approved and between 01 Jul and 31 December the unit is scheduled to receive only eleven PCS personnel. (22)

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### **SPECIAL ACTIVITIES**

On 05 June the Squadron formed three new councils: An Airmen Council, An NCO Council and a combined Airmen-NCO Council. Each was created and organized to aid the communications process between the different levels of personnel in the squadron. The Airmen and NCO Councils were designed to be run by the participants. On the other hand the Airmen-NCO Council was established with the Commander at the chairman.

(23)

As part of the communication program a personnel counseling system was setup throughout the squadron. Each first term Airman or NCO (E-4) was required to be counseled monthly by his supervisor and quarterly by his OIC. All interviews were documented in a personnel management folder. Both the supervisor and the individual were required to sign the counseling sheet. (24)

In an effort to increase the understanding between the various racial groups which make up the unit a systematic process was established to insure that as many supervisors as possible attend the Base Race Relations Seminar. In addition to this seminar, twelve NCO's were sent to the fifty hour Base Management Course from 14 - 28 June. A quota will be filled in this management course each month so that the supervisor can be continually exposed to the most current management techniques.

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Most significant of the efforts to improve the communications process was the establishment of the position of Squadron Personnel Counselor. This position was designed to operate on a full time basis. Problems such as those arising in the areas of personnel, finance, and administration would be handled. TSgt Robert R. Jones, a Security Policeman with over 16 years in service was chosen for the job on 29 May. (25) Sgt Jones was personally interviewed by both the Squadron Commander and the Wing Commander. His job and its results are being closely monitored as a pilot program for possible application throughout the Wing. TSgt Jones performs his duties on a full time basis and has quickly established himself as a focal point for the solving of "people problems." He has created a substantial rapport not only with the first term Airmen but the career NCO.

The councils were designed to improve the communication process on a formal, organized basis. The position of Squadron Personnel Counselor has augmented these councils and given the program and informal and personal touch.

**FOOTNOTES**

1. Ltr, 377th SPO to 377th SPS, 07 July 1972, Subj: Quarterly Historical Report.
2. Interview, Capt M.R. Schmunk, Historian with Maj. J.R. Canaga, Operations Officer, 11 July 1972.
3. Interview, Capt M.R. Schmunk, Historian with Capt G.L. Bowman, OIC Weapons System Security Section, 10 July 1972.
4. Interview, Capt Schmunk, Historian with Maj J.R. Canaga, Squadron Section Operations Officer, 11 July 1972.
5. Ltr, 377th SPO to 377th SPS, 07 July 1972, Subj: Quarterly Historical Report.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.
9. Interview, Capt M.R. Schmunk, Historian with Capt G.L. Bowman, OIC Weapons System Security Section, 10 July 1972.
10. Ltr, 377th SPO to 377th SPS, 07 Jul 1972, Subj: Quarterly Historical Report.
11. Ibid.
12. Interview, Capt M.R. Schmunk, Historian with Capt R.B. Fleming, OIC Law Enforcement Section 11 July 1972.
13. Ltr, 377th SPO to 377th SPS, 07 July 1972, Subj: Quarterly Historical Report.
14. Interview, Capt M.R. Schmunk, Historian with Capt R.B. Fleming, OIC Law Enforcement Section, 11 July 1972.
15. Ltr, 377th SPO to 377th SPS, 07 July 1972, Subj: Quarterly Historical Report.
16. Ltr, 377th SPA to 377th SPS, 07 July 1972, Subj: Quarterly Historical Report.
17. Ibid.

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18. Interview, Capt M.R. Schmunk, Historian with MSgt G.T. Jarrett, Squadron Chief Clerk, 12 July 1972.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.  
  
Interview, Capt M.R. Schmunk, Historian with CMSgt J.T. Adkins, Operations Superintendent 12 July 1972.
21. Ltr, 377th SPO to 377th SPS, 07 July 1972, Subj: Quarterly Historical Report.
22. Ibid.
23. 377th SP Squadron Operations Order # 72, 05 June 1972.
24. Ibid.

25. Ltr, 377th SP (CC), to all Security Police Personnel, 29 May 1972, Establishment of Personnel Counseling Position.

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**SUMMARY**

There were no significant changes in the squadron operation from 01 April 1972 to 30 June 1972. with the phasedown of the Vietnam troop level there was a consolidation of the Seventh Air Force Security Police Function with that of the 377th Air Base Wing Chief of Security Police. Command of the Squadron changed in May 1972 and there were several other key personnel changes.

Manning was the primary concern for the entire three months, Authorized strength dropped from 643 to 510 personnel and with a one time influx of 102 personnel from

Cam Ranh Bay, Air Base, the squadron had an unusually high turn-over of troops.

The accent on people continued to gain momentum as three councils were established, an Airmen Council, NCO Council and a combined Airmen-NCO Council. Each was designed to contribute to communication throughout the squadron.

Most significant and successful was the establishment of a Squadron Personnel Counselor to work with personnel who encounter various personal problems. This position has given specific and timely help to numerous squadron members and was designed as a pilot program for possible inception throughout the wing.

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### GLOSSARY

E.O.D.	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
MACV Vietnam	Military Assistance Command,
MACV Directive 95-7	Recovery of Downed Aircraft
DD Form 2AF	Armed Forces Identification Card
P.O.V.	Privately Owned Vehicle

CONUS

Continental United States

81XXX

Security Policeman

81XXXXA

Security Policeman/Doghandler

DEROS

Date Eligible to Return from Overseas