

Hawk radar and the 1969 SECRET program ‘Western Pistol’ by Jon M Corey. Includes his account of the night he used Hawk radar to direct and adjust artillery fire to destroy two Russian helicopters.

“To me, the Soviet helicopters were “fair game”—once they were on the ground—based on my First Lieutenant, company-grade officer rationale, as they were not in the air, per my original briefing and instructions!”

SECRET OPERATION “WESTERN PISTOL”—HAWKS & HOWITZERS vs USSR

“GOING FROM COURT MARTIAL TO ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL”

Jon M. Corey, PhD (SS, LM, DFC, SM, BSV, PH, MSM, AMV, ARCOM, RVNCOG w/PALM, VUA, MUC, CIB, ABN, RGR, ACFTCM, and SFG(A) RECONDO)

[Jon M. Corey, PhD was trained as an Airborne, RANGER, Special Forces RECONDO, and Jungle Expert combat arms officer; he served from 1968 to 1975 in Vietnam, Central America, Europe, and the United States—he later served as a Medical Service Corps psychologist/ intelligence operations officer between 1982 and 1985 in Heidelberg, Germany. He was one of four U.S. Army officers selected to attend a year-long course at the US Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School in Quantico, VA. He is a recipient of the Legion of Merit, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Soldiers Medal, Bronze Stars for Valor, Air Medal for Valor, Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman Badge, RVN Cross of Gallantry with Palm and numerous other U.S. and foreign awards. He earned his Bachelor’s degree (BA) at Washington & Jefferson College and his Master’s and Doctor of Philosophy degrees (MS and PhD) at the University of Southern California. His key board of director memberships encompass the Foundation for Service Dog Support; Arizona Military Museum; Arizona Rangers, and the Veterans Heritage Project. Key academic university dean and professor assignments have included institutions such as UCLA, University of Southern California, Grand Canyon University, Schiller International University-Heidelberg, University of Phoenix, Seattle Colleges, Walden University, University of Maryland; Boston University; Arizona Government University; federal government senior service professor, GSE-15; Washington State University; Asia Pacific International Graduate School of Management-Vancouver, BC; Argosy University; and University of Alabama.]

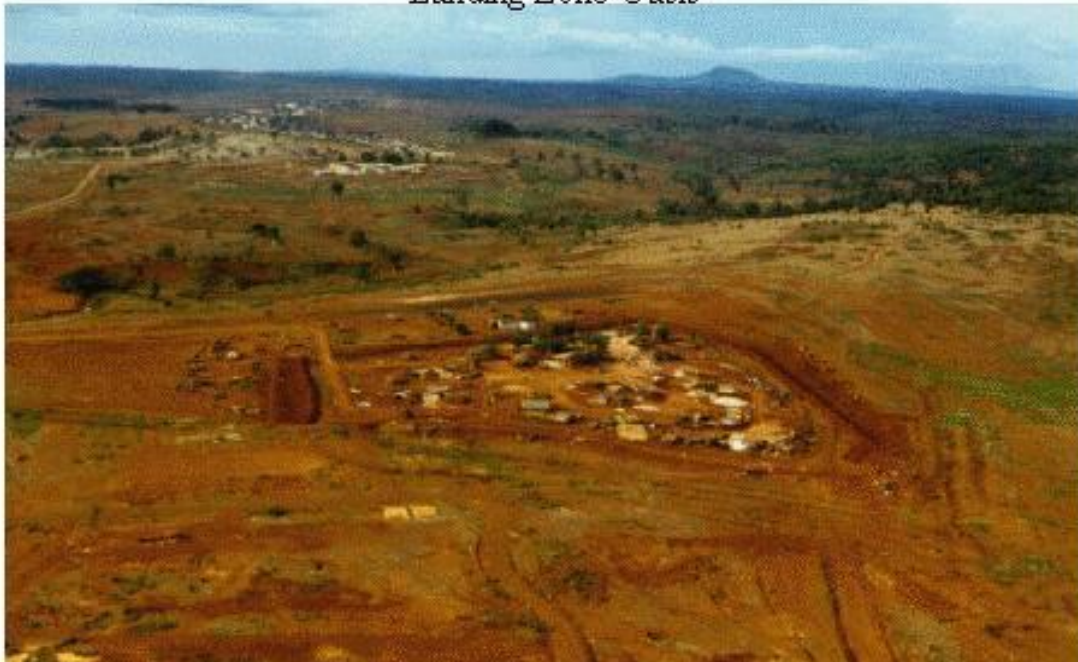
In February 1969, “WESTERN PISTOL” was a joint Army-Air Force SECRET program centering on C Detachment, 6th Battalion, 56th Air Defense Artillery (HAWK) to attempt identification and possible interdiction of Soviet helicopters manned by mercenary Soviet and French pilots, operating out of Cambodia, just to the west of Pleiku in South Vietnam. Landing Zone (LZ) Oasis was extremely small, only being additionally manned by a U.S. Army 8” Howitzer field artillery battery of the 7th Battalion, 15th Field Artillery and an infantry detachment of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

MIM-23 HAWK Guided Missiles



“WESTERN PISTOL” established a nightly prohibited flying area and assigned a special detachment from C Battery, 6th Battalion, 56th Air Defense Artillery (HAWK) with an array of acquisition and tracking radars to LZ Oasis, but *without* its HAWK missiles, which normally were key to an air defense artillery battery’s mission.

Landing Zone Oasis



LZ Oasis

The Air Force and Army additionally employed a wide variety of aircraft to investigate the hostile tracking of the enemy aircraft. The HAWK detachment was manned by all volunteers, three Air Defense Artillery (ADA) officers—a Detachment Commander, a Tactical Control Officer, a Ground Defense/ Back-up Tactical Control Officer—and 23 enlisted specialists in radars, generators, and communications. Their mission was to record the several HAWK radars' Doppler audio returns from enemy aircraft track detections for comparison with cataloged recordings of foreign nations' helicopters—all such data to be forwarded to The White House, Defense Intelligence Agency, and Chiefs of Staff.

As of 30 April 1969, over 365 unidentified tracks were received since the WESTERN PISTOL operation began, the majority of which were detected by the 6th Battalion, 56th Air Defense Artillery pulse acquisition and continuous wave radars; however, positive identifications of the aircraft were not established. A study of track data by the 7th Air Force and ADA battalion personnel indicated that the vast majority of tracks occurred between 2300 and 0200 hours. Tracks were consistently observed following stream beds and valleys—and appeared to terminate in areas displaying characteristics of natural or prepared landing zones. Track characteristics showed speeds from 60 knots to an excess of 150 knots. Doppler returns associated with the HAWK tracking radars also indicated aircraft of a rotary wing design.

Mi-4 "HOUND" Russian Helicopter



Mi-6 "HOOK" Russian Helicopter



On several occasions when being directed to the vicinity of UFO's, friendly air crews had observed airborne red lights. However, the UFOs consistently out maneuvered the friendly aircraft resulting in the aircrew's inability to make a positive identification. USAF's dropping of aerial flares over the unidentified aircraft was ineffective, obscuring them.

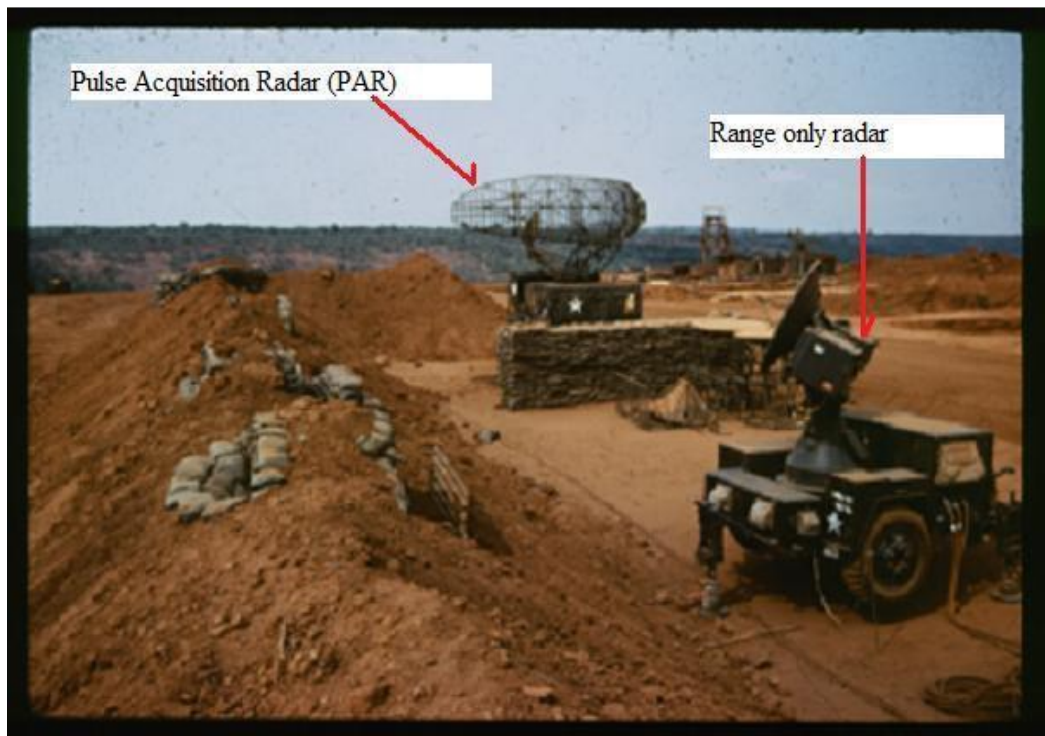
On 9 March 1969, representatives from the 6th Battalion, 56th Air Defense Artillery (HAWK) coordinated with the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam (CICV). CICV provided information on enemy ground activity within the Western II Corps area of interest in the form of a pattern analysis from 1 January to 31 March 1969. Analysis of all available CICV intelligence for possible correlation with UFO track data indicated that the UFOs appeared to originate in known enemy base camps in Cambodia and on numerous occasions terminated in the vicinity of known or suspected enemy concentrations and supply points in the 4th Infantry Division area of operations.

In early April 1969, a free fire zone for ground targets was established by the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. The zone was located in an area of high-density UFO track activity and probable landing zones. Within this area, any target on the ground, including UFO tracks appearing to land, could be fired upon.

I was a RANGER, Jungle Warfare Expert, Airborne, 5th Special Forces (RECONDO), and Air Defense Artillery-trained officer at that time, and I had been selected and afforded a unique opportunity by my Battalion Commander to volunteer as one of the two "WESTERN PISTOL" Tactical Control Officers (TCO). The prime mission of the secret HAWK unit was to electronically acquire, record,

and verify enemy aircraft operating out of Cambodia, but one night while the Detachment Commander and the other Tactical Control Officer were in Pleiku, I modified the mission to use HAWK radars to adjust artillery fire—a wholly independent and unauthorized operating change.

While serving as a TOC, I fortuitously found 8” Howitzer shells (i.e., very large metal objects moving through the air) generated radar returns—and their radar tracks, or the abrupt lack of them, could identify locations where the hostile helicopters set down on their re-supply and re-enforcement missions. Hence, I discerned it was possible to remotely direct and adjust heavy artillery fire on the stationary enemy helicopters once they temporarily landed at night!



IC Battery, 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery, Landing Zone Oasis, March thru April 1969, Operation Western Pistol, Photo by Cliff Wippel

Consequently, being out of communications with my detachment leader I was the “temporary” HAWK unit commander, I coordinated a plan with the adjacent Field Artillery battery commander—a former classmate of mine from the 5th Special Forces RECONDO School in Nha Trang (*“The Deadliest School in the World”*). Using a very make-shift communications hook-up between the Howitzer battery and my HAWK detachment mobile command post (including a grease pencil and a simple acetate overlay to mark basic grid coordinates on my radar target tracking scope), I created a wholly unauthorized “seat-of-the-pants” idea to target Soviet Mi-4 and Mi-6 helicopters with air burst detonations from the Howitzer battery, using the radars to adjust the guns.

Additionally, had the 8" Howitzer detachment commander not been a personal friend of mine, most likely my plans would have been aborted by anyone else for fear of dire consequences in taking the steps we did!

M-110 Self-Propelled 8" Howitzer Artillery Gun



I had initially been briefed that no HAWK missiles were authorized to be co-located with the "WESTERN PISTOL" HAWK detachment because I was advised all hostile helicopters were US Air Force priorities, "...given their airborne status..."—a clear directive that precluded U.S. Army fire power from engaging any Soviet aircraft. So, as long as they were in the air, "...they were U.S. Air Force targets...." Period.

MIM-23 HAWK Missile Mobile Command Post



As I and the Howitzer battery commander planned and coordinated with each other in the “WESTERN PISTOL” Tactical Operations Center (TOC), essentially an ADA command and control module mounted on the bed of a 2 ½ ton truck), all enemy helicopter track data were converted to polar coordinates and it was passed to the Howitzer battery Fire Direction Center (FDC) in an extremely rapid manner. How was this targeting and fire control accomplished? As noted previously: I affixed a used sheet of clear acrylic with duct tape over the radar display and I used a grease pencil to mark the Cambodia-Viet Nam border, along with grid coordinates—and a simple Army TA/312 field phone extending from my ADA TOC to the artillery FDC. When the HAWK radars lost track of generally 14-16 Soviet helicopters that were flying in the dark using ground tracking radar and no lights, I simply placed grease pencil marks where the radar tracks temporarily disappeared from the radar screen, but the helicopters’ locations were still evident under the clear acrylic sheet with my grease pencil reference points. I knew at that point the helicopters had landed to load or unload troops and equipment. However, I also knew I had only two or three minutes to put the plan into action.

The heavy artillery M-110 guns (7/15th Field Artillery [SP]) immediately responded and adjusted their fire missions I initiated based on the HAWK radar returns of fired, impacted shells as soon Soviet helicopters temporarily landed in South Viet Nam. I called for variable fuse projectiles that exploded approximately 100-200 meters above the ground in order to get maximum area lethality from the five 8” Howitzers (that were laid out in what was termed a “*Lazy W.*” To me, the Soviet helicopters were “*fair game*”—once they were on the ground—based on my First Lieutenant, company-grade officer rationale, as they were *not* in the air, per my original briefing and instructions!

M-110 Self-Propelled 8" Howitzer Artillery Gun Pit-7/15 Field Artillery (SP)-LZ Oasis



The result of this first “unauthorized” mission was: (a) the hitting and destruction of two Russian helicopters—a Mi-4 and a Mi-6; (b) the subsequent retrieval of several of their damaged aircraft parts, including a .51 caliber gunsight, the next morning by recon infantry of the 3rd Brigade 4th Infantry Division; (c) my getting an initial admonishment with a threat of court-martial by my returning Detachment Commander, as he asserted my actions “...*could have started a war with the Russians...*”; (d) my not receiving a court martial possibly because of my unorthodox defense rejoinder the enemy helicopters were “...*on the ground, temporarily landed, and not USAF priorities...*” when they were engaged—all based and backed-up by (e) the gleeful interdiction and counter-order of my Detachment Commander by my Battalion Commander, who’s entire HAWK battalion had never fired on any enemy aircraft during his almost two-year RVN tenure; and (f) my subsequently being awarded an “*Army Commendation Medal*” by my Battalion Commander, who had originally sent me to the 5th Special Forces (ABN) RECONDO School in Nha Trang pending my assignment to LZ Oasis—a medal awarded with only generalities and no specifics or narrative in the citation for my two-month deployment to the HAWK detachment! See below!

In sum, my actions turned out to be an amalgam of:

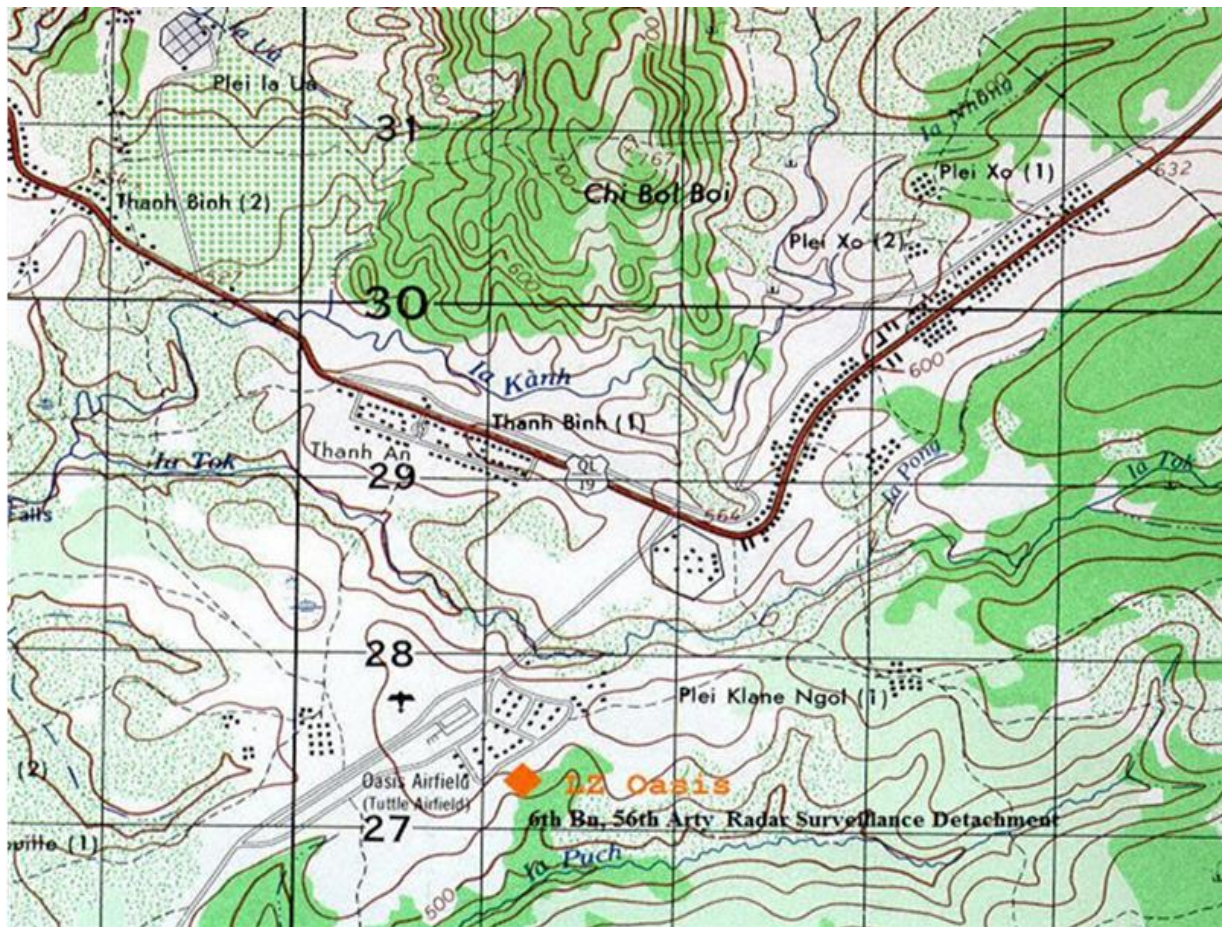
“THE RIGHT WAY, THE WRONG WAY, AND THE ARMY WAY!”

So, now you know how U.S. Army Air Defense Artillery ‘shot down’ (destroyed) Russian helicopters operating in South Vietnam using HAWK Radars and 8” Field Artillery Howitzers!

NOTE: This incident did not stop the enemy from still using Russian choppers inside South Vietnam. Radar contacts continued almost nightly and US choppers continued to chase them.

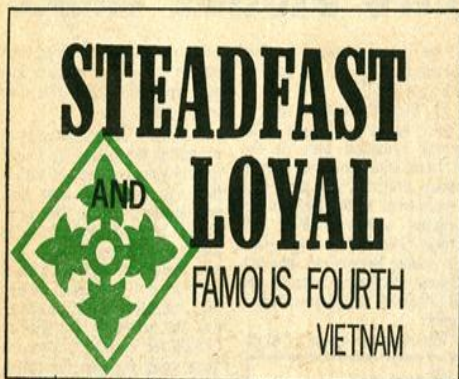
RETALIATION: Given the unexpected and unanticipated effectiveness of the unauthorized joint Air Defense Artillery-Field Artillery measure and the potential the NVA saw for the radar deployment in thwarting future use of Soviet helicopters in the area—as well as the NVA’s obvious motive for revenge—on the night of 11 May 1969, LZ Oasis came under heavy ground/sapper attack. C Detachment, 6th Battalion, 56th Air Defense Artillery had its prime radars destroyed by rockets and it also sustained major damage to other key equipment. Specialist Ed Donato, C Detachment, 6th Battalion, 56th Air Defense Artillery radar mechanic, shared several photos of the damaged HAWK radar equipment and a searchlight from Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery.

Map of LZ Oasis



Oasis Defenders Kill 45 NVA

By 1LT Jim Hughes



Vol. 1, No. 3

June 1, 1969

Enemy In Retreat, 57 Die

OASIS — Through the use of every weapon in their vast arsenal, units located at the (LZ) Oasis grouped a successful counterattack against an enemy force which had attacked the base one night earlier.

Gunship, artillery and Air Force firepower were utilized in a devastating reaction which accounted for 57 enemy deaths, after 45 North Vietnamese Army soldiers were killed in defense of the LZ.

The enemy force, estimated to be an NVA battalion working with a sapper company had attacked the headquarters of the 3rd Brigade at approximately 2 a.m.

Shortly after daylight the same morning, air scout teams from Delta Troop, 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry began visual reconnaissance of an area southwest of the Oasis from which the enemy had made its most concentrated attack.

Throughout the morning,

122mm rocket fire was received at the Oasis from an area six kilometers west of the base. Subsequently, Delta Troop scouts concentrated their visual reconnaissance in that general area.

The first sighting of the retreating enemy came at 1:30 p.m. when a Delta Troop Light Observation Helicopter (LOH) spotted a bunker complex containing an estimated 40 NVA soldiers.

Airstrikes were called in and Major Roger D. Tarr of Colfax, N.D., 3rd Brigade Forward Air Controller (FAC) responded, directing Air Force F100 Fighters and Skyraiders into the enemy area.

Gunships expended on the confirmed enemy location and artillery was also employed to complete the coordinated display of massed firepower.

When the smoke cleared, 37 confirmed NVA killed in action could be counted by the Delta Troop scouts.

OASIS — The night was typical of Vietnam, so dark you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. It was as quiet as it was dark. Only the drone of generators filled the void.

The Oasis, headquarters of the Famous Fighting Fourth Division's 3rd Brigade was at rest. Only the night people and the guards in the bunkers were awake.

At 2:00 a.m. the stillness was shattered and was not to return for the remainder of that night.

The first round impacted no one knows where. But those who heard it knew it was "incoming."

The alert was sounded and the scramble had begun. In the brigade headquarters company area a B40 rocket screamed wildly overhead and detonated harmlessly at the end of its aimless flight. To those who had the same experience before, it was like an announcement: "sappers!"

The bunker line went on 100 per cent alert and reaction forces assembled quietly.

The "incoming" intensified.

Later that same afternoon, Lieutenant Colonel R. D. Reinck of Fairfax, Va., commander of the 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry, spotted an estimated NVA company while reconning an area less than a mile south of the bunker complex.

Shamrock gunships from the 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry blasted the area of the sighting.

The guns of the "Mighty Ninth," 2nd Battalion, 9th Artillery, also responded to the contact from their location at the Oasis. Colonel Renick adjusted the fire as the deadly 105mm rounds hurtled into the enemy location.

Low line observation by Shamrock scouts revealed 20 NVA dead in the now battered area.

The enemy, unsuccessful in his attack on the Oasis had now gambled and lost in two days. His retreat damaged him even more than his attack.

During the night, 364 rounds of incoming 60mm mortar, 82mm mortar, B40 rocket, 122mm rocket and 140mm rocket fire was directed at the Oasis.

Ground probes were made on three sides of the perimeter by an estimated NVA battalion working with a sapper company.

The brigade commander, Colonel Richard L. Gruenther, took personal command of the defensive operations. His request for immediate artillery support was met by Delta Battery, 5th Battalion, 16th Artillery situated at the Rock Quarry only four miles away. High explosive 155mm Howitzers soon began pounding a ring around the perimeter.

As the ground probes were identified the bunker line responded, lacing red tracers like a stream into the night.

The enemy fire was also intense. At one point after numerous rocket hits, Bunker 9 disappeared in a cloud of dust.

Radio contact was lost and it was feared to have been knocked out.

The dust settled and once again the M60 machine gun began hammering away. The guards had been doing the right thing—keeping their heads down.

On the western side of the perimeter a sapper squad was spotted as they ran across the airstrip and prepared to fire a B41 rocket. The machine gun in Bunker 25 manned by the 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry, zeroed in on the first burst killing five NVA. A similar squad crossing the resupply pad met the same fate at the hands of a sharpshooting M79 grenadier.

In the vicinity of Bunker 22 the enemy made his only penetration and the men of the 366th Aviation Support Detachment drove them back in bitter close-quarters fighting.

Throughout the night, 40mm Dusters from Delta Battery, 4th Battalion, 60th Artillery, expended into the perimeter. Air Force C119 and CH117 gunships also joined the fight. Their deadly minigun fire raked the surrounding treelines and avenues of retreat resulting in four secondary explosions.

At approximately 5:00 a.m., contact ceased on the perimeter of the Oasis. The first light of dawn told the story. Forty-five NVA soldiers had died in an unsuccessful attempt to overrun the camp. Casualties and damage were light to defenders of the Oasis.

PFC John McLaughlin of D-221 was killed and three others wounded, while manning their M-42 armored "DUSTER" when the turret was hit with a B-40 rocket.

The result of the action 10 May 1969 at LZ Oasis:

US LOSSES

Personnel: 10 Killed in Action (KIA), 1 died of wounds (DOW), 16 wounded in action (WIA), 3 missing in action (MIA)

Equipment:

- 1 M151A, 1 50 Caliber Machine Gun, 1 Radio Beacon, 1 Water Truck, 1 Fire Truck,
- 3 5/Ton Trucks, 1 Pulse Acquisition Radar (C/6/56th Arty HAWK),
- 1 Continual Wave Acquisition Radar (C/6/56th Arty HAWK),
- 1 High power Illumination radar (C/6/56th Arty HAWK),
- 1 Battery Control (C/6/56th Arty (HAWK), 1 Conex, 3 M151A1, 3 M37, 1 V-100,
- 2 GP Medium Tents, heavily damaged; 5 GP Medium Tents, lightly damaged

ENEMY LOSSES

Personnel: 103 Killed in Action (Confirmed KIA)

Equipment:

- 5 Packs, 1 SKS, 1 Field phone, 4 AK-47 magazines, 1 Radio case, 3 B-41 Rockets
- 41 Increment charges, 3 Pith helmets, 8 Blocks of explosives, 3 US type signal pistols
- 4 Unknown type booster charges, 3 Pounds quinine, 2 B-41 Rocket launchers
- 1 B-40 Rocket launcher, 3 AK-47's, 6 B-41 Rounds, 1 9mm Pistol, 14 Satchel charges
- 1 60mm Round, 5 Pull charges, 3 RKG-3, 2 US watches, 6 M-79 Rounds
- 1 NVA Wire spool w/100 feet wire
- 15 50 Caliber ammunition cans full of rice
- 27 Pair undershirts, 38 Pairs pants, 49 Shirts, 21 NVA Mess kits, 650 Rounds AK-47 ammo
- 18 B-40 rounds, 46 CHICOM grenades, 1 MS Grenade, 40 Stick grenades, 8 Fuze assemblies
- 85 X-shaped charges, 30 Pounds rice, 82 Small C-4 explosives charges, 2 Picks, 18 Shovels
- 2 Pounds black powder, 67 Blasting caps, 4 Canteens

M-42 Self-Propelled Anti-Aircraft "Duster" w/Twin 40mm High-Speed Guns-4th Bn 60th Air Defense Artillery



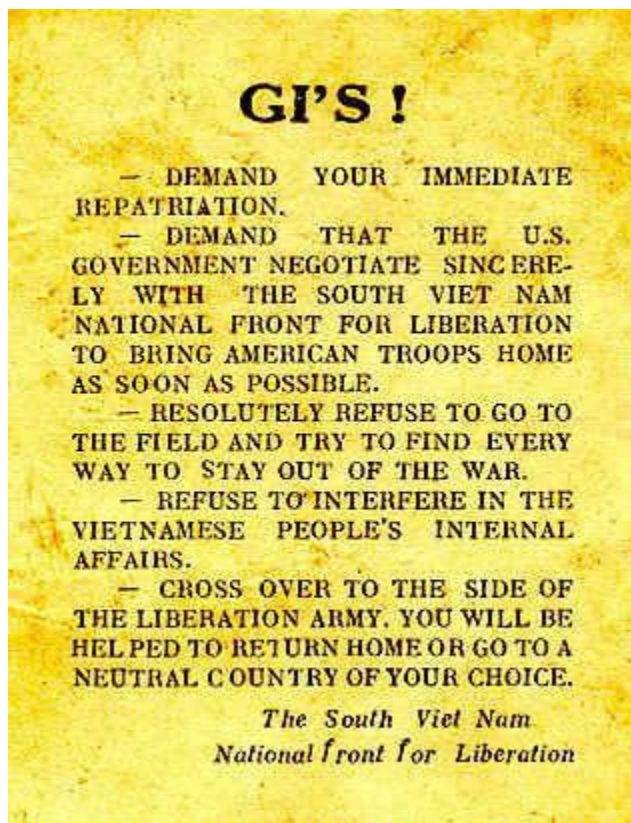
NOTE: Specialist Ed Donato, Det C-6th Bn 56th Air Defense Artillery radar mechanic, credits the Duster crews with providing the initial defense of the base and alerting the rest of the defenders. Still 14 GIs died in the battle. Searchlight units were also there.

NOTE: A U.S. Army after-action report later confirmed the count of enemy KIAs to be 103.

NOTE: After the attack, all previously recovered items from the damaged Russian helicopters were confiscated by U.S. authorities and the SECRET "WESTERN PISTOL" project was abruptly and non-ceremoniously terminated—only to be hidden within the annals of history. Until now....

Propaganda Leaflets

Leaflets picked up off the ground the morning after the 1969 Mother's Day battle at LZ Oasis, Central Highlands, Republic of Vietnam.



American officers and men

The Thieu-Ky administration is a militarist one, lackey of the U.S. aggressors, it has resorted to bayonets and bombs to carry out an extremely barbarous repression of the patriots in South Viet Nam, causing untold sufferings and mourning to the people.

Seething with anger, the South Vietnamese people are rising up to overthrow the Thieu-Ky administration with a view to establishing a truly equal and progressive administration.

The Vietnamese people do not bear the American people any hatred. You yourselves and your families are also victims of the aggressive and criminal policy of the U.S. imperialists in Viet Nam.

We appeal to you to refrain from interfering in the Vietnamese people's internal affairs and supporting the Thieu-Ky puppet administration in the suppression of our compatriots. Thousands of U.S. officers and men, hurled into the rescue of the Thieu-Ky clique during the recent all-out offensive of the

Revolutionary Armed Forces in cities, provincial capitals and towns throughout South Viet Nam, have been killed or wounded.

Don't let the U.S. aggressors force you any longer to fight and die or get maimed for the profits of the capitalist magnates and arm dealers. Your happiness is not to be found in the Viet Nam battlefield, 10,000 miles away from the United States, but in the United States, among your loved ones and compatriots who are valiantly standing up in vigorous struggle, demanding that the American government stop the criminal war of aggression in Viet Nam.

Withdrawal of U.S. troops and war materials from South Viet Nam!

Peace in Viet Nam!

Non-intervention in Viet Nam's internal affairs!

May you be reunited with your families and enjoy happiness soon.

THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL
FRONT FOR LIBERATION

Soviet Helicopters Operating in II CTZ

“...Two helicopters were identified in northern II CTZ near Special Forces Camp Plei Me (A-255). The first identification was on 10 April 1969 when the HAWK radar system at LZ Oasis detected an unidentified aircraft. Chase aircraft were dispatched and pursued the intruder which was later identified as the Soviet MI-6, a helicopter having a maximum cargo capacity of 13 tons. On 20 April 1969 the second identification was made when a chase aircraft pursued and identified a Soviet MI-4 HOUND cargo helicopter. Though there has been no confirmed evidence of the use made of these aircraft it is believed that they are employed to transport equipment and troops into II CTZ from Cambodia....”

Operational Report of 5th Special Forces Group (ABN) for Period Ending 30 April 1969. RCS GSFOR-65 (RI)

General Order for Army Commendation Medal (vice Court Martial!)

C003368102-004

Final Copy

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96374

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 6566

17 July 1969

AWARD OF THE ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL

1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced.

COREY, JON M, 183-36-0072, FIRST LIEUTENANT, AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY
Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery,
Americal Division Artillery APO 96374

Awarded: Army Commendation Medal

Date action: 2 June 1969 - 31 July 1969

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For meritorious achievement in connection with military operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. First Lieutenant Corey through his untiring efforts and professional abilities, distinguished himself despite the adverse conditions inherent in a combat environment during the period 2 June 1969 to 31 July 1969. By displaying a great desire to complete his mission, he set an example that inspired his comrades to strive for maximum efficiency. His outstanding actions, which contributed substantially to the success of the allied mission in the Republic of Vietnam, are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the Americal Division, and the United States Army.

Authority: By direction of the Secretary of the Army under the provisions of AR 672-5-1.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

JOHN W. DONALDSON
Colonel, GS
Chief of Staff

Harvard B. Chapin Jr.

HARVARD B. CHAPIN JR.
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

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(for official personnel file)

REFERENCES: DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY MASTER AFTER ACTION REPORT:

<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/AD0503958.pdf>

US ARMY AFTER ACTION REPORT: NOTE THE “AFTER ACTION” REPORT MAKES IT APPEAR IT WAS AUTHORIZED TO USE 8” ARTILLERY TO FIRE ON TARGETS—ONLY AFTER SUCH AN UNAUTHORIZED PRIOR ACTION WAS TAKEN!

Western Pistol

Western Pistol was a program to attempt identification of Soviet helicopters operating in Western II CTZ. It increased concern that it could represent a threat to the I FFORCEV operational area.

The operation was proposed by Seventh Air Force in January 1969, approved by COMUSMACV, and implemented on 1 February 1969.

The program established a nightly prohibited flying area, emplaced C Battery, 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery HAWK radars in the area and employed airborne vehicles to investigate the tracks.

For approximately three weeks in March, an Army anti-aircraft searchlight was positioned in the area. Also, representatives from the MACV Office of Scientific Advisors made three visits to record C Battery, 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery HAWK radar's Doppler audio returns from track detection, for comparison with cataloged recordings of foreign nation's helicopters.

Track data reported by the Combat Reporting Post at Pleiku and C Battery, 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery HAWK radar site at LZ Oasis were recorded and analyzed during April and early May. Most of the tracks were investigated by helicopters crews scrambled from strip alert at LZ Oasis.

On the night of 10 May 1969, LZ Oasis came under ground attack and C Battery, 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery had two prime radars destroyed by rockets and also sustained damage to other equipment.

On 27 June 1969, the Director of the TACC briefed COMUSMACV on the project status and recommended the termination of the project. Approval was granted by COMUSMACV.

Threat of Enemy Helicopters 2d LAAM Battalion, Chu Lai

Command Chronology Report, 2d Light Antiaircraft Missile Battalion, Marine Air Control Group 18, First Marine Aircraft Wing, Located at Chu Lai, Republic of Vietnam, 1 June 1968 to 30 June 1968 (SER:002A18468, 2 July 1968 (SECRET)

Part II. Significant highlights.

In the past month enemy helicopters have been operating in and around the DMZ, above Dong Ha. The 1st Marine Air Wing has become deeply concerned over the threat. The Air Force Combat Reporting Post (CRP) located at Dong Ha has been unable to detect or control aircraft to intercept the helicopters because their radars are unable to paint them at the altitudes day are flying. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing directed that 2d LAAM Bn conduct a series of tests to determine if the Acquisition and tracking radars in the LAAM Bn inventory could in fact detect, acquire and pass position information with sufficient accuracy to the CRP to allow airborne interceptors to destroy the threat.

To the above end, on 26 and 27 June 1968, the Battalion embarked on a series of tests to determine the feasibility of utilizing the Pulse Acquisition Radar, Continuous Wave Acquisition Radar and Continuous Wave Illuminator Radar in conjunction with the Battery Control Central to detect and acquire low flying helicopters and fighter interceptors. The position plots of the helicopters and fighter interceptors were passed from the BCC over land lines to the AAOC in geographic references coordinates (GEO REF), and were placed on the Vertical Plotting Board. A qualified Air Controller used the information from the plotting board to conduct the intercept. In the first test, four A-4's were utilized to attempt the intercept. The intercept information was fed to the lead A-4, the remaining three A-4's were two to three miles in trail of the lead A-4. The idea was to close the lead A-4 with the target and on command from the AAOC to drop illumination flares. The trail A-4's were then to close the eliminated helicopter, identify it and destroy it with rockets/20mm guns. The results of this test pointed out that the HAWK Radars are capable of detecting helicopters and fighter aircraft at low altitudes (1000 feet at 30 miles) and reporting the information with sufficient accuracy to complete an airborne intercept. Six attempts were made to illuminate the helicopters, on four occasions the helicopters reported that the flares were all around him at a distance of about 500 yards. The in-trail A-4's were unable to see the helicopter although the helicopter pilot reported seeing the A-4's.

A second test was conducted utilizing the same reporting and plotting procedures to control A-6's. The A-6 was vectored to the helicopter and then utilized its internal radar to acquire and lock on the target. Three out of four interceptors were successful wire acquisitions and lock ranges varied between 7 and 19 miles.

The tests concluded that the principle of reporting plot information from HAWK Radars to the AAOC is sufficiently accurate to conduct an airborne intercept with information taken from a vertical plotting board. The test further showed that the A4 dropping flares could not adequately illuminate the target to identify and destroy it. The second position of the test pointed out that the A-6 is capable of locking on and intercepting the helicopter with intercept information provided from the AAOC.

On 24 June 1968 a reconnaissance of the Dong Ha area was conducted by 2d LAAM Bn. A position collocated with the Air Force CRP was selected. Battery B, 2d LAAM Bn stands ready to move out on order with a Low Altitude Detection Unit, consisting of a Pulse Acq, CWAR, CWIR, BCC and

necessary support equipment and personnel to provide low altitude detection and to report plot information to the CRP for the conduct of low altitude airborne intercepts.

In September 1968 the 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery (HAWK) moved to the vicinity of Chu Lai, RVN, and conducted a relief of the 2d LAAM Bn (USMC), establishes command and control facilities and assumed responsibility for low and medium altitude air defense of the Chu Lai area.

Map of the 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery HAWK Radar Surveillance Detachment

LZ Oasis

Unidentified Enemy Helicopters in Western II Corps

In January 1968, reports of unidentified helicopter sightings in the Western II Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ) increased concern that this could represent a threat to I Field Force Vietnam (FFORCEV) operational area. This matter aroused operational interest because the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) might be transporting men and equipment by helicopter from Cambodia to strategic locations in South Vietnam.

A program to attempt identification of these tracks was proposed by 7th Air Force in January, approved by Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV) and implemented on 1 February 1968. This operation was code name "Western Pistol". As you can see by the below listed aircraft and HAWK radar equipment committed to this operation the threat was taken very seriously.

Operation Western Pistol HAWK Radar Surveillance Detachment

During the reporting period ending 30 April 1969 elements of the 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery continued Operation Western Pistol. Operation Western Pistol was a MACV directed joint Army/Air Force project.

The following items of HAWK equipment were used for this project:

- a. Battery Control Central
- b. Pulse Acquisition Radar
- c. Continuous Wave Acquisition Radar
- d. High Power Illuminator Radar
- e. Range Only Radar

The concept of operation required that an Air Force controller be station in the HAWK Battery Control Central. This officer uses ground-to-air UHF radio and HAWK radar returns to vector Army and Air Force aircraft to the vicinity of unknown tracks. Friendly air crews attempt visual and /or photographic identification of unknown flying objects (UFO). The following types of aircraft have been used:

- a. AC 119- Shadow
- b. AC 47 – Spooky
- c. A1E – Spad
- d. UH 1 – Shamrock
- e. OV 1 – Mohawk
- f. UH 1G – Cobra
- g. OH-6A – Cayuse

Throughout this period a restricted flight area west of LZ Oasis (From the Cambodian border at YA 8200, east to ZA 1000, north to ZA 1040, west to the Cambodian border at YA 6840) was in effect. 7th Air Force notice to airmen (NOTAM) 588 was distributed to all friendly agencies operating in the prohibited area. This NOTAM outlined the geographic limits of the prohibited flight zone and directed that all flights below 800 feet and operating in that area from 1800 hours to 0600 hours coordinate in advance with the Control and Reporting Post (CRP) at Pleiku.

The battalion commander 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery directed that a special operations center, a combined manual AADCP and modified FDC, be organized for project Western Pistol. The operations center is collocated with the HAWK radar detachment and has communication links to Army ground surveillance and counter radar sites, Air Force ground control radar, prime control and reporting post (CRP) radar at Pkeiku and Fire Support Coordination Center, 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. All sighting are reported to the CRP at Pleiku for correlation and possible identification.

Since the operation began the HAWK radars operated from 1800 – 0600 hours daily. The daylight hours were devoted to extensive equipment maintenance, which resulted in a minimal amount of HAWK system downtime.

As of 30 April 1969, over 365 unidentified tracks were received since the operation began, the majority of which were detected by the 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery pulse acquisition radar. However, positive identification of the aircraft was not established. A study of track data by the 7th Air Force and battalion personnel indicated that the vast majority of tracks occurred between 2300 and 0200 hours. Tracks were consistently observed following stream beds, valleys and appeared to terminate in areas displaying characteristics of natural or prepared landing zones. Track characteristics showed speeds from a normal 60 knots to in excess of 150 knots. Doppler returns associated with the HAWK tracking radar indicted aircraft of a rotary wing design.

On several occasions when being directed to the vicinity of USO's friendly air crews have observed airborne red lights. However, the UFO's consistently out maneuvered the friendly aircraft resulting in the aircrew's inability to make a positive identification.

On 9 March 1969, representatives from the 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery coordinated with the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam (CICV). CICV provided information on enemy ground activity within the Western II Corps area of interest, in the form of a pattern analysis form 1 January to 31 March 1969. Analysis of all available CICV intelligence for possible correlation with UFO track data indicates that UFO's appeared to originate in known enemy base camps in Cambodia and on numerous occasions, terminated in the vicinity of known or suspected enemy concentrations and supply points in the 4th Infantry Division area of operation.

In early April 1969, a free fire zone for ground targets was established by the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. The zone was located in an area of high density UFO track activity and probable landing zones. Within this area, any target on the ground to include UFO tracks appearing to land may be fired upon.

6th Battalion, 56th Artillery adjusted Field Artillery Guns

Collocated with the detachment at LZ Oasis was an eight inch howitzer battery. These weapons would immediately respond to fire missions initiated by the HAWK detachment commander. It should be noted that field artillery adjustment of fire was effected through the use of the Tactical Control Console in the HAWK Battery Control Central (BCC) by observing PAR returns of bursting projections. In the Western pistol Operation Center, all track data was converted to polar coordinates by detachment personnel and was passed to the battery FDC in an extremely rapid manner.

6th Battalion, 56th Artillery Command Observed NVA Helicopter

On the night of 10 April 1969, while flying in a friendly intercept aircraft the battalion commander, 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery and several members of the aircrew observed a UFO with the outline characteristics of a Soviet Mi-6 Hook helicopter. Again, on 20 April 1969, another aircrew sighting was made and the UFO observed had the characteristics of a Mi-4 Hound, Soviet helicopter.

LZ Oasis Mother's Day 10 May 1969

On Mother's Day 10 May 1969 12 km southwest of Pleiku City the 4th Infantry Division Headquarters at LZ Oasis received indirect fire from small arms fire from an unknown size enemy force resulting in friendly killed, wounded and missing with enemy killed. The Hawk site had two prime radars destroyed by rockets. One Hawk radar was destroyed by a direct hit.

Sgt. Clifford Wippel, Heroism at Landing Zone Oasis

It took almost four years for a former Ellensburg soldier's heroism to be recognized, but Clifford Wippel, 28, has finally received the Army's Commendation Medal with "V" Device for his conduct under fire in Vietnam on May 11, 1969.

He learned of the award only recently, according to his father, Mose Wippel of Ellensburg.

The award recognized Wippel's heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. Sergeant Wippel distinguished himself by valorous actions on May 11, 1969 while serving as Communication Sergeant with C Battery, 6th Battalion, 56th Artillery. On that date, Landing Zone Oasis came under an intense mortar, rocket and ground attack from a battalion size enemy force. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, Sergeant Wippel, with complete disregard for his personal safety, braved the hostile fire as he moved to each bunker position along the perimeter to insure that communications links were operating properly. He then established communications with the command bunker, and took part in holding of the instrumental in the successful defense of the landing zone. Sergeant Wippel's personal heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service, and reflect great credit upon himself great credit upon himself, the Americal Division, and the United States Army. Ellensburg Daily Record April 27, 1973

The result of the action 10 May 1969 at LZ Oasis:

US LOSSES

Personnel

10 killed in action (KIA), 1 died of wounds (DOW), 16 wounded in action (WIA), 3 missing in action (MIA)

Equipment

1 M151A, 1 50 Caliber Machine Gun, 1 Radio Beacon, 1 Water Truck, 1 Fire Truck,
3 5/Ton Trucks, 1 Pulse Acquisition Radar (C/6/56th Arty HAWK),
1 Continual Wave Acquisition Radar (C/6/56th Arty HAWK),
1 High power illumination radar (C/6/56th Arty HAWK),
1 Battery control (C/6/56th Arty (HAWK), 1 Conex, 3 M151A1, 3 M37, 1 V-100,
2 GP Medium Tents, heavily damaged, 5 GP Medium Tents, lightly damaged

ENEMY LOSSES

Personnel

103 KIA

Equipment

5 Packs, 1 SKS, 1 Field phone, 4 AK-47 magazines, 1 Radio case, 3 B-41 Rockets,
41 Increment charges, 3 Pith helmets, 8 Blocks of explosives, 3 US type signal pistols,
4 Unknown type booster charges, 3 Pounds quinine, 2 B-41 Rocket launchers,

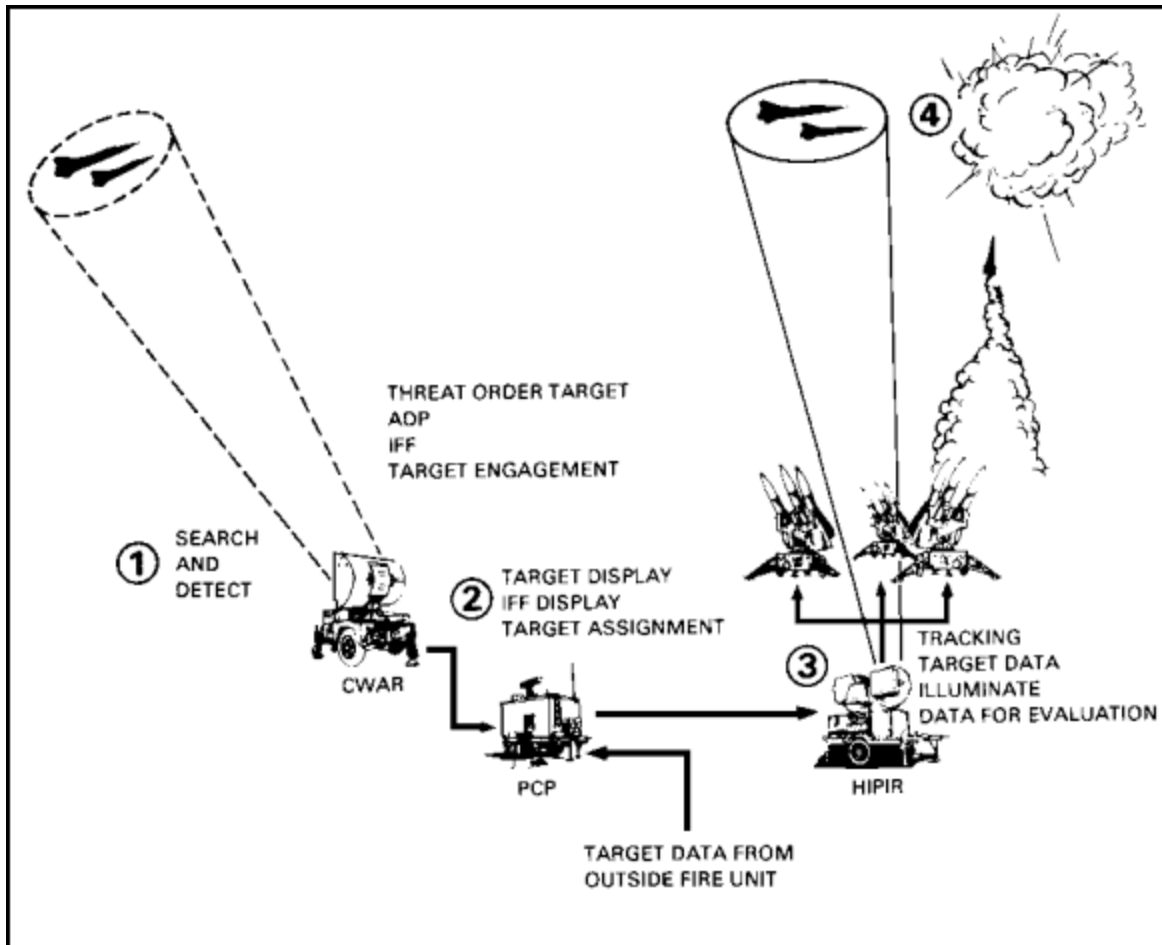
1 B-40 Rocket launcher, 3 AK-47's, 6 B-41 Rounds, 1 9mm Pistol, 14 Satchel charges,
1 60mm Round, 5 Pull charges, 3 RKG-3, 2 US watches, 6 M-79 Rounds,
1 NVA Wire spool w/100 feet wire, 15 50 Caliber ammunition cans full of rice,
27 Pair undershirts, 38 Pair pants, 49 Shirts, 21 NVA Mess kits, 650 Rounds AK-47 ammo
18 B-40 Rounds, 46 ChiCom grenades, 1 MS Grenade, 40 Stick grenades, 8 Fuze assemblies
85 X-shaped charges, 30 Pounds rice, 82 Small C-4 explosives charges, 2 Picks, 18 Shovels,
2 Pounds black powder, 67 Blasting caps, 4 Canteens

Propaganda leaflets picked up off the ground the morning after the 1969 Mother's Day battle at LZ Oasis, Central Highlands, Republic of Vietnam.

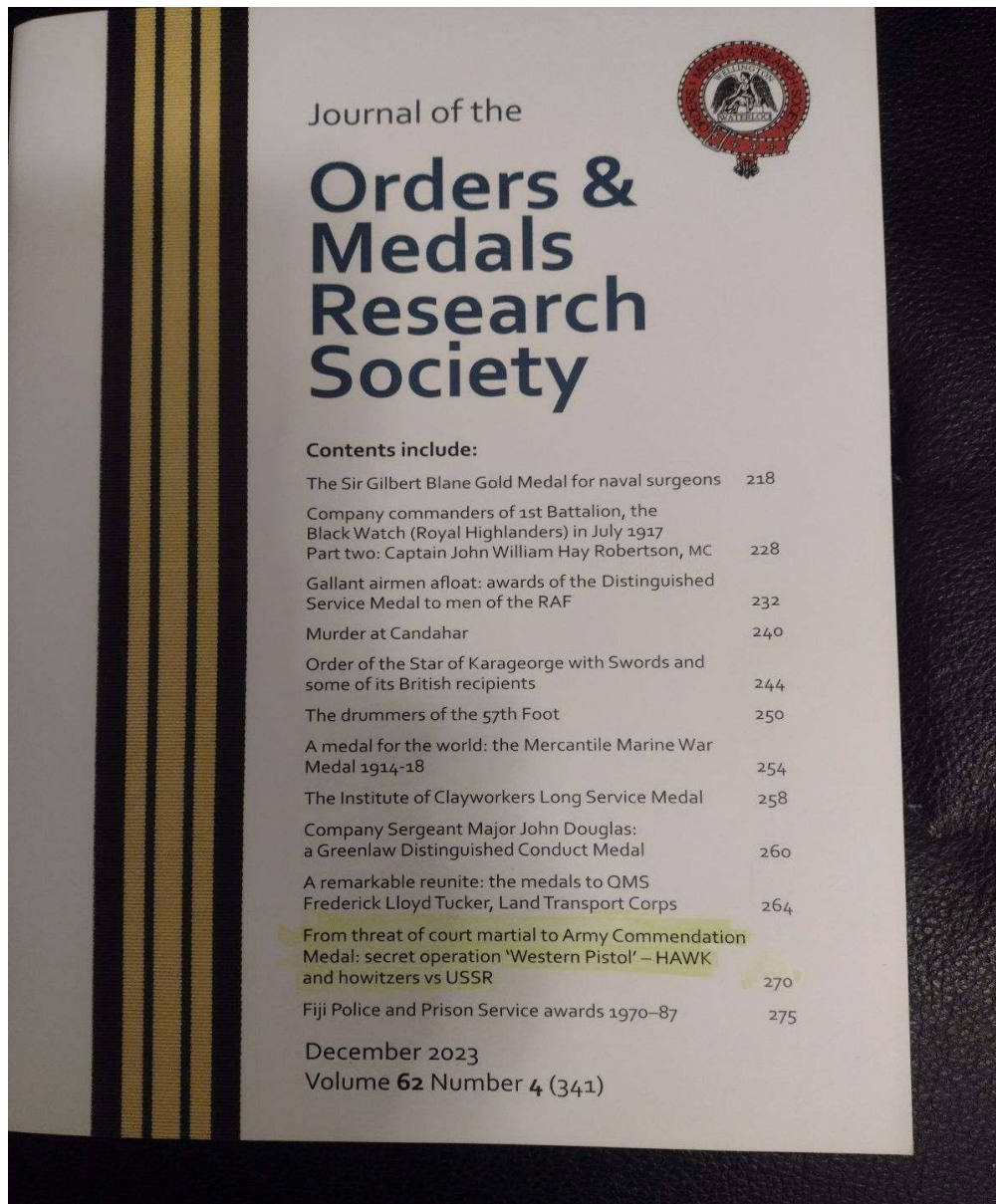
Soviet Helicopters Operating in II CTZ

Two helicopters were identified in northern II CTZ near Special Forces Camp Plei Me (A-255). The first identification was on 10 April 1969 when the HAWK radar system at LZ Oasis detected an unidentified aircraft. Chase aircraft were dispatched and pursued the intruder which was later identified as the Soviet MI-6, a helicopter having a maximum cargo capacity of 13 tons. On 20 April 1969 the second identification was made when a chase aircraft pursued and identified a Soviet MI-4 HOUND cargo helicopter. Though there has been no confirmed evidence of the use made of these aircraft it is believed that they are employed to transport equipment and troops into II CTZ from Cambodia. Operational Report of 5th Special Forces Group (Abn) for the Period Ending 30 April 1969. RCS GSFOR-65 (RI)

HOW THE HAWK MISSILE SYSTEM WORKS



https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR4300/RR4368/RAND_RR4368.pdf



“SECRET PROJECT WESTERN PISTOL” ACCOUNT PUBLISHED IN

OMRS JOURNAL—DECEMBER 2023-VOLUME 62—NUMBER 4 (341)

<https://www.omrs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/OMRS-journal-Dec-2023-for-web-V.5-07.11.23.pdf>

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96374

9 February 1970

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 1343

AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

2. TO 439. The following AWARD is announced.

COREY, JON H., 183-36-0072, FIRST LIEUTENANT, AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY,
Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 82d Artillery, Americal
Division Artillery, APO 96374

Awarded: Distinguished Flying Cross

Date of action: 9 September 1969

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of the Act of
Congress, approved 2 July 1926.

Reason: For heroism while participating in aerial flight as evidenced by
voluntary action above and beyond the call of duty in the Republic
of Vietnam: LT Corey distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous
actions on 9 September 1969 while serving as an aerial forward observer
with the Americal Division Artillery while on a reconnaissance mission
in the Tien Phuoc area. After spotting enemy troop movements on the
ground, LT Corey consistently called in and effectively directed air
and artillery strikes on a North Vietnamese Army troop concentration
in spite of exceptionally heavy enemy ground fire, which hit his air-
craft in several places. During the engagement LT Corey and his
pilot located a 12.7mm dual heavy machine gun emplacement which had
previously shot down one other U.S. aircraft and had caused damage
to their own helicopter. As friendly jet fighters had been unable
to destroy the position, LT Corey and his pilot, who were both struck
by shrapnel, elected to attack the enemy position in their LCH,
utilizing white phosphorous grenades to destroy the machine gun
emplacement as well as a confirmed squad size enemy unit. While
enroute to their base LZ, LT Corey demonstrated extensive experience
and keen judgment as he greatly assisted the more seriously wounded
aircraft commander in successfully crash landing their extensively
damaged helicopter. LT Corey's tenacious and aggressive actions
were primarily responsible for the great success of the entire mission
and the safe return of the aircraft. LT Corey's outstanding ability
and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the
military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the Americal
Division and the United States Army.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

W. L. Girvin
W. L. GIRVIN

T. H. TACKABERY,
Colonel, GS
Chief of Staff

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 1344

10 February 1970

AWARD OF THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

1. TC 439. The following AWARD is announced.

COREY, JON M, 183-36-0072, FIRST LIEUTENANT, AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY
Battery G, 55th Artillery, Americal Division Artillery APO 96374

Awarded: Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device

Date of service: 17 August 1969

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of Executive Order 11046, 24 August 1962.

Reason: For heroism while participating in ground operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. First Lieutenant Corey distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 17 August 1969 while serving with Battery G, 55th Artillery. On that date, in anticipation of an attack on Landing Zone Tra Bong, Lieutenant Corey had himself flown to an outlying forward position to coordinate the activities of an observation team and a searchlight and quad 50 team. Although he had been given the option of abandoning the post prior to the attack, Lieutenant Corey and his comrades volunteered to remain in the vulnerable position. When the outpost came under attack from a reinforced North Vietnamese Army company, Lieutenant Corey directed effective artillery and air strikes against the insurgents, and personally directed a devastating hail of machinegun and M16 rifle fire against the advancing enemy. His courageous actions repulsed the enemy's attempt to overrun his position and thwarted their planned attack on the Tra Bong Base. First Lieutenant Corey's personal heroism, professional competence, and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect great credit upon himself, the Americal Division, and the United States Army.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Handwritten signature
25 May

OFFICIAL:

T. H. TACKABERRY
Colonel, GS
Chief of Staff

Handwritten signature
LARRY D. FLOWERS
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

Headquarters, American Division
APO San Francisco 96374

10 February 1970

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 1344

AWARD OF THE SILVER STAR MEDAL

TO 449. The following AWARD is announced.

CORCY, JON M. 183-36-0072, FIRST LIEUTENANT, AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY
Battery G, 55th Artillery (M2), American Division Artillery APO 96374
Awarded: Silver Star Medal
Date of Service: 27 May 1969
Theater: Republic of Vietnam
Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of the Act of
Congress approved 9 July 1918.

Reason: For extraordinary heroism while participating in ground operations against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. First Lieutenant Corcy distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 27 May 1969 while serving as a Long Range Patrol Leader with the 5th Special Forces Group (ABN) MACV Reconn School. Lieutenant Corcy's five man team was enroute to a landing zone extraction point in the Deng Bo area when it made contact with the point element of an estimated reinforced North Vietnamese Army company. An immediate, intense fire fight erupted and the patrol's point man was seriously wounded. Lieutenant Corcy, using rapid and exceptionally sound judgment, deployed his men in the best positions the lightly forested area could offer. Lieutenant Corcy, realizing that the only way to rescue the wounded man was to silence an enemy machine gun and automatic weapons position, managed to crawl to a location close enough to destroy the element with two hand grenades, although he fell under intense enemy fire. Lieutenant Corcy then charged two other enemy soldiers, destroying them with rifle fire and dispersing several others. Lieutenant Corcy then dragged the wounded man approximately twenty yards to a position of relative safety, where he then began to direct exceptionally accurate and heavy support fire on the enemy unit from the gunship escort helicopters which had previously been enroute to the landing zone. As the evacuation helicopter approached, Lieutenant Corcy noted a squad of enemy soldiers attempting to organize an ambush for the aircraft, which he waved off. Lieutenant Corcy, then openly exposing himself to enemy fire, moved to a position which afforded him an opportunity to direct M-79 and rifle fire at the enemy position, which caused a secondary explosion in the enemy area, thwarting the ambush and routing the North Vietnamese element. The entire enemy unit withdrew and Lieutenant Corcy administered first aid to the wounded man and supervised the safe evacuation of his patrol. First Lieutenant Corcy's personal heroism, professional competence, and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect great credit upon himself, the American Division, and the United States Army.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

[Signature]
TERRY D. FLOWERS
1LT, ACB

T.M. TACKABERRY
Colonel, GS
Chief of Staff

<https://valor.militarytimes.com/hero/500075>

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES—SOVIET HELICOPTERS IN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA

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ALLIED ACCOUNTS OF SOVIET HELICOPTERS IN VIETNAM

<https://cherrieswriter.com/2016/10/19/the-mysterious-helicopter/>

jmathison@yahoo.com

<https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78T02095R000900030002-5.pdf>

Photo taken of helicopter flying north of the DMZ in 1970



Republic of Vietnam, May 1970

Background: I arrived in the Republic of Vietnam in August of 1969 as an armor major, bound for IV Corps to be the senior advisor to the 9th ARVN Division's organic armored cavalry squadron. Upon arrival in Sa Dec, however, I was informed that the division's policy was that everyone served in the infantry first. As a result, I did not get to the ARVN 2nd Cav until toward the middle of April. I had only a short time to get to know my counterpart, Major An, before we moved out for the area up by the Cambodian border. He had just assumed command of the squadron, although he had been in the unit for 14 of his 16 years of service.

The incident: 1 May was the date that we entered the area that we called the Parrot's Beak, and encountered a large force of folks who did not want us there. We indeed found the logistical and command facility that we had been told was there, and 3 days of intense fighting followed. We were supported by just about everything that could fly, and, in fact, had a disastrous mid-air over our area on the second day.

I am no longer certain on which day the incident in question happened, but I do remember that it was during a lull in air activity. I was sitting on top of the squadron command M113 when I saw a helicopter heading toward us from the wrong direction. He was coming from the interior of Cambodia! As soon as he got close enough to identify, I could see that it was a Soviet designed MI-4, which NATO had called a Hound. The Hound was a very distinctive bird, with fixed, wheeled landing gear instead of skids, looking very much like a US H-19. I remember it as being black, with no markings showing.

I was right next to Major An, and told him what the craft was, and suggested in the strongest possible terms that we shoot the sucker down. (We had several weapons that would reach the target.) The exchange went something like this:

Me: "That is an NVA helicopter, and we need to engage it."

An: "It might be US or VNAF. We need to get clearance."

Me: "There is no question about what it is. I have seen them in Europe, and there is no friendly helicopter like that in country."

An: "You call your people, and I'll call mine. We must be certain that it is not friendly."

At that moment, I only had control over a .45 pistol, so taking matters into my own hands was not an option. Meanwhile, the Hound, which was flying low and slow, landed behind a treeline. A few minutes later, it lifted off and landed again a couple of hundred meters away. After a short time on the ground, it lifted off again, and went back the way it came. Ironically, at a time when the sky was normally filled with our air assets, I had no contact with any friendly air that might have been able to pursue the Hound.



JMC CONFIRMATION NOTE: This is the same area where I was located at LZ Oasis....

-----Original Message-----

From: scthunderbird@etcmil.com <scthunderbird@etcmil.com>

Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 8:13 AM

To: Jon Corey <jonmichaelcorey@cox.net>

Subject: Capt. Bass

Jon,

Do you remember Capt. Bass, the C Battery commander when we were at Oasis?

Tried to contact him a few times to talk with him about Western Pistol.

It's apparent he doesn't want to talk about the mission. Suspect, at this point, he's not in great shape as his phone message says it's better to text than call.

Was hoping to gain more insight from Capt. Bass about what happened at Oasis. Would like to put together a more detailed story about the mission as in nonfiction.

When I came back from R&R and flew up to Pleiku from Saigon, was in a Jeep with Capt. Bass and a couple other officers. Capt. Bass turned to me and said, "What I'm about to say you never heard, understand?" Then he said that the UFO helicopters we were seeing on the scopes were being flown by French mercenaries. Have not seen mention of that in any of the FOIA documents I have acquired.

I'll if I can find the time to look deeper for any additional info of interest about Western Pistol in the National Archives.

Still wondering why, after the Mother's Day dustup, our equipment wasn't replaced as in, "the enemy targeted and destroyed us, so we must be on to something big so let's look deeper."

Looking at your Facebook photo you look slim and fit. Were you heavier when you were at Oasis? Have a difficult time recalling. I do recall Lt.

Bradberry. Looked him up - appears he passed away a good while ago. There was a captain at the O, West Point graduate. Grouchy guy, as I recall.

It's been more than 50 years, but even though we left Vietnam, it never left me.

Hope you're doing well,

Eddie Donato
