



MAKING A RUN — Two U.S. Army Mohawk surveillance aircraft scan the skies of Central Texas in support of the mission of Project MASSTER. The

Mohawks, stationed at West Ft. Hood with the 293rd Aviation Company, fly daily in support of the project. (U.S. Army Photo)

Mohawk Unit Now At W. Hood

The 293rd Aviation Company, which is now stationed at West Ft. Hood and assigned to the 55th Aviation Battalion, is one of the only two OV-1 Mohawk companies in the United States and is the only such unit assigned in the Fourth Army area.

Only six other Mohawk companies are in operation in the world. Five of these are in Southeast Asia and one is in Europe.

The company, under the command of Capt. Malcolm Gray, of State College, Miss., flies the most sophisticated and most effectively equipped surveillance aircraft in operation and arrived at Ft. Hood in February.

The 293rd quickly began to assemble its extremely large company. The company is composed of 57 different enlisted men's MOS and 9 different officer MOS. The 293rd is almost an entity unto itself as it provides its own direct support for airframes, engines, avionics and sensors. At the same time the unit provides its own motor pool and all related ground handling equipment needed to support the twin-turboprop Mohawk aircraft which are assigned to the unit.

Hand Picked

The men of the 293rd are a bredd apart. They are a hand-picked unit and each of the pilots has an average of 850 flying hours in the Mohawk. Vietnam has played an important role in the selection of the pilots for the 293rd. Every pilot in the unit has been in Vietnam for at least one tour of duty and combined the pilots have served in every Corps area in Vietnam.

The purpose for the 293rd being formed at Ft. Hood is centered around the development of Project MASSTER for which they are to provide surveillance support.

The pilot and crewman of the Mohawk supply the Army field commanders with immediate information on the strength, disposition and activity of enemy

studies, photographic maps of combat areas and to confirm visual reconnaissance sightings.

Love Of Flying

"The pilots are proud of the fact that they can contribute so much to the forces in the field and at the same time they are extremely excited about flying the Mohawk just for the pure love of flying," said Thomas.

"The Mohawks assigned to the 293rd are designated OV-1B and OV-1C by the official army manuals but to the men who fly them they are pure heaven.

"The Mohawk is so quiet and so maneuverable that there have been numerous instances in Vietnam where the pilots have approached an enemy sampan floating on an open river and then have passed over the boat before the men aboard even knew that they were being sighted by a low-flying Mohawk," said Capt. Jim Atkins, operations officer.

The aircraft is powered by two Lycoming turbine engines of 1150 horsepower each which can push the pilot and observer to speeds in excess of 400 miles per hour or can bring them down to 90 miles per hour. The aircraft can stay aloft for approximately four and a half hours and can reach altitudes in excess of 30,000 feet or as low as the highest tree top in the forests below the silent craft.

Seldom Hit

Despite heavy volumes of fire, the aircraft are seldom hit by enemy gunners because of their maneuverability and their quietness," said Atkins.

The only problems which have confronted the spirited men of this all-volunteer unit have to do with recognition and identity.

"Because our unit is young and newly arrived at Ft. Hood, we still have a lot of work to do concerning logistics and space requirements, but we are overcoming these problems," explained Gray.

"Another problem we have is

reason the men of the 293rd feel that they can contribute heavily to the successful operation of Project MASSTER and are proud to be serving in this capacity at Ft. Hood and with III Corps and the Fourth Army."

forces. The greatest asset to the field commander is that the Mohawk is capable of monitoring enemy operations in daylight, darkness and inclement weather.

"The capabilities of the aircraft and the amazing surveillance systems which it carries are perhaps the most interesting factors in the excitement which is felt by the men who work on and who fly the Mohawks," explained Capt. Bill Thomas, a graduate of the University of Arizona who serves as the 293rd's flight instruction officer.

Three Main Systems

"The Mohawk carries three principal systems with which to provide the ground commander with a near instantaneous read out on enemy activity. Side-Looking Airborne Radar (SLAR) provides a permanent film record of fixed and moving terrestrial targets on either or both sides of the aircraft flight path. The second major system is an Infrared (IR) Detecting set which is an airborne scanning device that provides instantaneous display and a permanent film record based on temperature differentials. Both to SLAR and IR systems have capabilities to data link their photographic records to receive stations on the ground.

The third system is a photographic system composed of belly and nose cameras. The nose camera scans from wing tip to wing tip along the flight path. One use of this system is to photograph proposed landing zones for helicopters. The film sequence provides the helicopter pilot a pictorial glide path to the landing zone for study prior to the mission. The belly camera is used to provide area

due to the lack of published information concerning the Mohawk which has led to misconceptions held by staff and ground commanders, and other aviators about the capabilities and safety of the aircraft. When we can make every staff member and ground commander knowledgeable as to how to effectively use the information which we give to them, then we will have become 100 per cent effective in our mission."

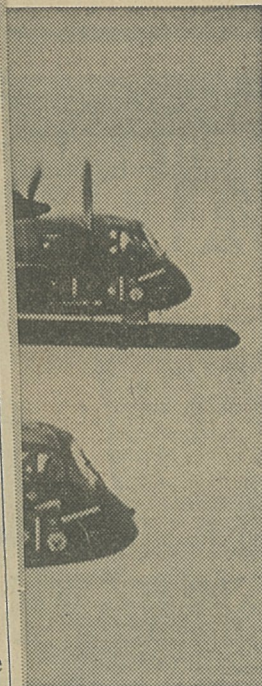
Manpower Shortage

Another problem which has confronted the 293rd since its arrival at Ft. Hood has been a severe shortage of enlisted personnel qualified as airborne sensor operators and sensor repairmen.

"We have only three of these men serving as observers and no qualified repairmen. We desperately need to find some more of these men," remarked Gray. "Flight pay is available and the positions are immediately open for anyone who has experience and is qualified in these MOS fields."

"The major mission of the 293rd is to be constantly prepared to support Project MAS-STER," said Gray. "For this

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at West Ft. Hood
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(U.S. Army Photo)

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5 Unofficial World Records Set Here In OV-1C Mohawk

Two Army officers from Ft. Hood's 293rd Avn. Co., 55th Combat Avn. Bn., have established five unofficial world performance records for the OV-1C Mohawk aircraft.

The two, Capt. Richard Steinboch of Klamath Falls, Oregon and CW2 Thomas G. Yoha of Mansfield, Ohio, piloted the Mohawk to three time-to-climb speed records at 3000, 6000 and 9000 meters.

The 293rd Mohawk also established the OV-1C class record for absolute altitude at 39,500 feet and the sustained altitude at 36,504 feet.

The Grumman OV-1C Mohawk that was used falls into class C-1-e, Group II, which is comprised of turbo-prop light airplanes weighing from 6614 to 13,227 pounds. There were no previous records set in this class.

The 293rd's record-setting flight, conducted from Ft. Hood's Robert Gray Army Air Field, was the first time any Army tactical unit had tried to set an aircraft record. Previous records have been set only by manufacturers or as a joint military and manufacturer effort.

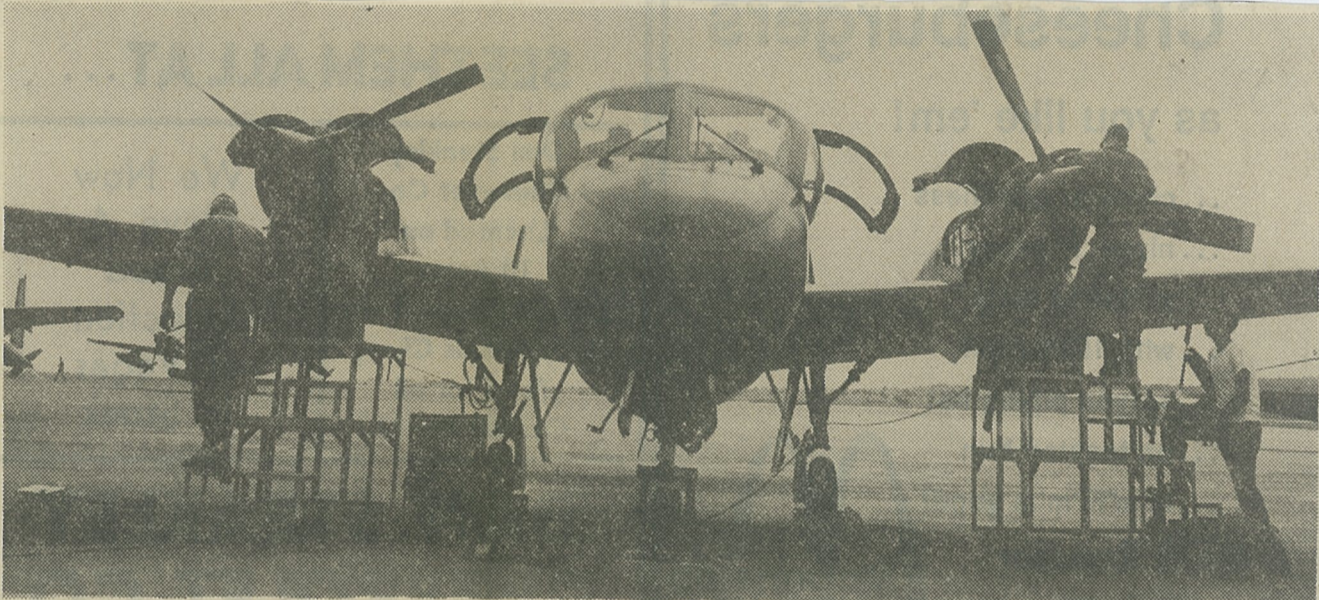
The Mohawk was prepared for the flight by the men of the 293rd Avn. Co. The aircraft was stripped of everything that would not be used during the flight, such as all external antennas and bomb racks. The aircraft was waxed and all cracks and doors were taped to cut down wind resistance. The Mohawk's engines were also worked on to produce as much horsepower as possible.

Not only was the aircraft given a going over, but also the pilots as well. The two spent time in pressure chambers simulating high altitudes, more time taking physicals and even more time undergoing pressure breathing exerci-

ses. Manufacturers' representatives from the Grumman Aerospace Corporation and AVCO Lycoming were present during the record flight. The flight was also monitored by A. Earl Hansen of the National Aeronautic Association (NAA), the U.S. Representative of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI), world authority for the certification of international records.

For the records to become

Continued On Page 2



RECORD SETTER — During the week prior to the record-setting flight the OV-1C flown to five unofficial world records gets a going-over by a maintenance crew from the 293rd Avn. Bn. All work done on the Mohawk was performed by the 293rd. (Photo by Bill Macrides)

rises, Incorporated, a private firm in the Army. The appearance of adver-

Mohawk

(Continued From Page 1)

official the instruments that recorded the flight will go to Edwards Air Force Base, California to be calibrated. Once the instruments have been checked for accuracy the findings will be sent to the FAI in Paris, France, to be recorded as official.

Powered by two Lycoming T53-1-15 engines producing 1160 shaft horsepower each, the OV-1C has a gross takeoff weight below 13,227 pounds to comply with its class requirements.

The Mohawk was first off the production line in 1960. The OV-1A, as it was then called, was equipped with a built-in camera system and was used primarily for transition training and photographic reconnaissance and surveillance missions.

Used today in Vietnam for surveillance and reconnaissance the Mohawk is used at Ft. Hood in conjunction with MASSTER testing.

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