



Photo: Larry Woods

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Fort Huachuca, Arizona, July 1964, for low level recon tests and competition, Air Force, Marines and Navy took part along with a couple of civilian aircraft. I was Crew Chief on the Battalion commander's OV-1 for a while during this period, and the aircraft was either a converted dual control B model or an early C model with dual controls. (This was not the aircraft). I remember he was determined to have the G.E. mini guns under the wings and not any recon junk. I even tried a pair of 20 mm cannon pods at one time. Once General Kinnurd saw them on the plane I had to take them off and give them back to the F-4 that they had been borrowed from. I have never seen another photo showing the 11th air assault insignia on the tail of an OV-1.

Hard to believe I was ever this young.

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I wish I could remember the tail numbers of these OV-1's. One of them was 62-5880. I'm pretty sure of this because I was crew chief on this aircraft at the time. One of the others was the 62-5868, I think, and the third was the 62-5874 (just a guess!).

The only loss of life in an OV-1 during our testing of the aircraft happened during a night exercise in 1964. On a night photo run and infra-red scan, a photo flare hung up in the flare pod, burning through the fuselage and into the fuel tank causing the plane to explode in the air. The aircraft was a C model, I think. The crew chief was John E. Nemetz; the pilot was Captain David F. Horton. I don't remember the observer's name, who was killed, but he did leave a wife and kids.

Our ace bombardier was a captain whose name escapes me — probably a good thing I can't remember. This captain got his name when on an exercise to drop a hand written message to command headquarters, instead of dropping the message, he dropped both wing tanks within a few feet of the battalion commander's tent. Right on target, wrong load. This individual was transferred to Vietnam the next day. Some colonels have no sense of humor.

One of our cowboy pilots came back from an exercise with the belly of the aircraft torn out from just behind the front

wheel well all the way back to beyond the camera bay. When he landed the plane, all systems were functional except the camera which was being dragged down the runway by its electrical connection. The pilot said that while on a low level photo run up a river, the aircraft hit a stump in the river. (Another volunteer to Vietnam).
—Larry Woods

*The turbine engine aircraft that were developed in the 50's led to fundamental changes in warfare and in the very structure of the Army. The Mohawks, Chinooks, and the Hueys allowed the soldiers in the field to deploy and support themselves with much less support from the Air Force. During Vietnam the Air Force tried repeatedly to disarm the Mohawk gunships. Incredibly, they wanted to take the guns off of combat flying Mohawks that were shooting the enemy on a daily basis. This is what happens when interservice rivalries become more important than battlefield results. Much of what the Army is and does today can be traced back to the testing the 11th did back in the early and mid 60's. A good historical novel on the subject is *The Aviators* by W.E.B. Griffen.*

Larry Woods ended up in the Special Forces in Vietnam. He lives in E. Holden, ME, retired from the Maine Central Railroad.

—Editor

The 11th Air Assault Division was officially recognized and entered in military records on 21 November 1963, the day before President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. It was rumored that the 11th Air Assault was a pet project of his to obtain close ground support for Army troops without stepping on the toes of the Air Force brass.

Before 21 November 1963, our outfit was called 226th Aerial Surveillance and *Attack* BN. On the 21st we became the 226th Aerial Surveillance and *Escort* BN. Supposedly our job was to provide complete air mobility, and that support for that mobility was possible without the help of another branch of the service, i.e. Air Force.

We were first based in beautiful downtown Fort Benning, and later moved out in the boondocks to a scenic spot known as McKenna Field. From McKenna Field we deployed to various parts of Georgia and South Carolina to determine the capability of the air craft under field conditions, and our ability to operate and repair the OV-1 under adverse conditions.

As a crew chief, I got to fly in the OV-1 quite a bit and with certain pilots, was able to handle the controls for myself, as I'm sure many crew chiefs did, even to the point of take-offs and landings. Now there's a hairy experience, the first time around.

During the time of the 11th Air Assault, we lost a few planes due mostly to stupidity and cowboy pilots. Three of our aircraft were ferried to Vietnam, two in 1963 and one in 1964. The two that were ferried to Nam in 1963 were C models, if I remember correctly, and the one in 1964 was a B model with recently installed Doppler Navigation system. I remember the Doppler Navigation System because I still have my TDY orders to Fort Rucker where the system was installed by Grumman tech. reps. I spent seven days standing on the brake pedals with the engines at 75% throttle, turning each of the three B models in turn on the compass rose.

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MAR 1964



APR 1964



Major Jim Crawford, former USMC pilot
at left
Jim was the 1st CO of the 226th.

9300

Ammo handling

0066

Mr Gault at the "Hot Point"

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OV-1's deployed in South Carolina, Field Tests — 1964

This was before there were different echelons of maintenance. We made all repairs, from ejection seats to the sun gears in the props. Later on, the Grumman Tech. Reps. had kittens when they found out and we were limited to first and second echelons of maintenance. We still did all hydraulic repairs even though we weren't supposed to. Our goal was to keep them flying and that's what we did. The OV-1 to the far left has G.E. mini gun pods under the wings. The OV-1 next to it has missile launch rails under its wings, and the OV-1 to the rear left has the 20 mm cannon pods. Notice the wing tanks on the OV-1 on the far right. I took the picture from OV-1A 59-2604. Not shown is A model 59-2603. It stuck out like a sore thumb, being painted gloss green O.D. and white, with gloss white wing tanks. — Larry Woods

OV-1^S deployed in south Carolina, Field tests - 1964

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We still did all Hydraulic Repairs ~~even~~ even though we were not supposed to

Our goal was to keep them flying and that's what we did.

The OV-1 to the far left has GE. Mini Gun Pods under the wings. The OV-1 next to it has missile Launch Rails under its wings, and the OV-1 to the rear left has the 20 mm. Cannon Pods. Wing Tanks on the OV-1 to the Right.

I took the picture from OV-1-A 59-2604. One of the other aircraft on the ground was the OV-1-A 59-2603. I don't think it's in the picture. (on behind the tree) it stuck out like a sore thumb being painted Gloss Green O.D. and white, with Gloss white wing tanks.