

~~SECRET~~ TAGBOARD

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Office of the Director
Office of Systems

OPN B-31(3)

10 February 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. NAKA
DR. McLUCAS

SUBJECT: Review of 4200 Support Squadron

Attached is a Historical Report for the 4200 Support Squadron, the operating unit for TAGBOARD. At your leisure I thought a review of this report would provide interesting insight into the potential and accomplishments of a small dedicated "Blue Suit" unit operating a highly sophisticated NRO system under specialized management procedures.

1 Attachment
Historical Report

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SUBJECT: 4200 Support Squadron Historical Report

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4200 Support Squadron
Control System

TIME PERIOD: 1 January 1968 TO 1 January 1971

GENERAL:

The 4200 Support Squadron is located at Beale AFB, Ca. The unit mission is to conduct worldwide photo reconnaissance operations using a D-21B vehicle launched from a B-52H in order to collect intelligence information essential to the security of the United States. To accomplish the mission the unit is manned with 38 officers and 158 enlisted men for a total manning of 196 men. The unit operates and maintains two specially modified B-52H aircraft and up to six D-21B vehicles at any one time.

BACKGROUND:

During the initial phase of this report (1 Jan 68 to 1 Mar 69) the 4200 Support Squadron operated out of Area 51 in the Nevada Test Area. It was necessary to operate out of Area 51 in the interest of security and also due to the lack of facilities at Beale AFB. On 1 Mar 69 the unit moved into its permanent facilities at Beale AFB.

LAUNCH MISSIONS:

Between 1 Jan 68 and 16 Jun 68 three missions were flown in what is referred to as the Initial Test Series. In this series the contractor had overall responsibility in all areas except flying the B-52. One of these test missions proved completely successful, covering the entire 3100NM track with a successful recovery. On 1 Jul 68 the unit entered a Test Series nicknamed Capt Hook. There were six launch missions flown in this series. The prime contractor maintained responsibility for the Launch Missions during Capt Hook I and II and in Sep 68 the test missions became a "blue suiter" operation. On the initial test series missions, and the first four Capt Hook missions the B-52's were flown from and recovered at Area 51. Of the six missions in the Capt Hook series 3 were completely successful (Hook III, V, VI). The remaining three Capt Hook missions were partial successes. Information gained from the problems encountered and their solutions, was used to improve and in some cases modify the D-21B system. Following the last Capt Hook mission the unit flew its first operational test mission over denied territory. The mission (Senior Bowl 02) penetrated denied air space but was never recovered. Following this the unit was again scheduled to fly a special test mission on the Pacific Missile Range (PMR). The test mission was nicknamed Long Drive and was completely successful. Since the successful completion of Long Drive the 4200 Support Squadron has been scheduled for two

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Operational Test Missions. Senior Bowl 03 was cancelled after an extended delay for weather in the target area. Senior Bowl 04 was flown on the 17th of Dec 70. The vehicle penetrated denied territory and all indications were that it flew the mission as planned, it exited on time and all sequence points were on schedule. The recovery however could not be completed due to a problem which developed in the hatch parachute system.

SQUADRON OPERATIONS:

During the 3 year period the Squadron has encountered many new and challenging problems in dealing with this highly sophisticated and exotic reconnaissance system. Squadron personnel have used all their initiative and knowledge in establishing unique procedures for more effective mission accomplishment in the areas of operations and maintenance. The crew force has established and maintained proficiency in many unique areas, in addition to mandatory MAJCOM requirements. The maintenance personnel have initiated many procedures for improved reaction time in vehicle maintenance and generation. The squadron has also performed surveys of foreign operating locations, and coordinated mission requirements with various military and government agencies.

IN-HOUSE PROJECTS:

The unit has performed numerous self-help projects for improving existing facilities. In addition, two major in-house projects have been accomplished to improve mission effectiveness. The first was the design and construction of a simulator for use in training and maintaining proficiency of Special System Operators (SSO's). The simulator took eight months in planning and construction, at total cost of \$5,000.00. The contractor estimate for the same project was \$100,000.00. The savings on this project are included in the totals for the A. F. Suggestion Program discussed later in the report. The second major in-house project was the completion of a D-21B Operators Manual for use by the SSO's. The SSO's required a document that would fill in the gaps in existing Tech Data and at the same time be operator oriented. The project started in Mar 69 and the first edition was given to the Contractor Project Director for review in Jan 70. Additional information became available subsequent to the review period and a second edition was submitted in Jun 70. Lockheed reviewed, printed, and bound the manual, however it has not yet been approved to supplement the existing Tech Data. While no dollar value has been set on compiling the manual, the knowledge gained and ultimately the time and manpower saved will more than compensate for the man-hours invested.

MILITARY AND CIVILIAN EDUCATION:

The personnel of the 4200 Support Squadron are all high calibre and highly motivated toward improving their military as well as their personal education levels. During the past three years one officer has been selected for the AFIT program, another officer has been assigned to the Armed Forces Staff College and five officers have attended Squadron Officers School in residence. In the enlisted ranks, 12 men have attended the NCO Academy and 4 junior airmen, the NCO Prep School. This

is in addition to the numerous technical and contractor schools attended. Also numerous USAFI and ECI courses have been completed by 4200 personnel. In the area of civilian education all enlisted personnel are either high school graduates or graduate qualified. Many of these individuals have credits toward a Bachelor's Degree. The officer's education level reflects 28 of the assigned officers (75%) have a Bachelor's Degree. The remaining 25% of the officers have college credits with some within 1 year of being awarded a degree. Of the officers holding a Bachelor's Degree nine (35%) are working toward a Masters. Seven of these officers expect to be awarded their Master's Degrees by Sep 71.

AWARDS:

Since Jan 68 there has been 1 Legion of Merit, 7 Meritorious Service Medals and 9 Commendations Medals earned by personnel of the 4200 Support Squadron. The Squadron has also won the SAC Minuteman Award and the Department of Treasury Award for Patriotic Service for its participation in the U.S. Savings Bond program. The Squadron also received the Base Personal Affairs Orientation Award for the unit that had the most complete and active family orientation program during 1970. The 4200 Support Squadron entered the A. F. Suggestion Program at Beale AFB in Jun 69. Many obstacles were encountered in participating in the program, in particular, the problem of security. The first award came in May 70. Since this time 11 monetary awards have been presented to members of the 4200 Support Squadron. The total money awarded has been \$2,735.00, the total savings realized from this program has been \$111,215.00.

SQUADRON ACTIVITIES:

The 4200 Support Squadron achieved 245% of its assigned dollar goal in the Combined Federal Campaign for 1970. This was the highest percentage on Beale AFB. In addition, the unit had the highest per capita contribution average and was the only one with 100% individual participation. The total amount collected for the campaign was \$2,733.00 or \$15.89 per man. Since 3 Apr 69 the unit has participated in 17 Blood Drives on Beale AFB. It has given a total of 139 pints of blood for Vietnam and 19 pints of blood for the local (Sacramento Blood Bank) drive. The squadron personnel are active in the base sports program and have already won trophies for golf and bowling in the Beale AFB championship playoffs.

As would be expected, the distaff members of this high calibre military unit are also extremely active in local affairs. Mrs. Dale Brummund the wife of the 4200 Chief of Standardization is the Beale AFB Officers Wives Club (OWN) candidate for Military Wife of the Year. The wives of the 4200 Support Squadron officers hold 3 of the 7 elected offices in the

Beale AFB OWC. In addition 3 of the 10 committee chairman, the editor of the wives club magazine (The Airborne Electric), the Choral director, and instructors in club special activities are wives of 4200 officers. The 4200 Spt Sq wives have also founded the Base Gourmet Club and the Base Antique Club. The wives of the Squadron's NCOs are also extremely involved in their wives club functions. Three of the elected officers in the NCOWC are from this unit and approximately 75% of the NCO wives are general members. Both officer and NCO wives are active in various local programs such as Red Cross Volunteers, Family Services Volunteers, Youth Club, Scouts, Teachers Aids and Nursery to name just a few. The wives of the 4200 Support Squadron complement their husbands and are an asset to the unit, the base, the local community and the Air Force.