

KOREAN WAR PROJECT

ANNEX OBOE, REPORT OF SPECIAL ACTION REPORT NO. 1 MARINE OBSERVATION SQUADRON 6, 1ST PROVISIONAL MARINE BRIGADE

Annex OBOE

Report of
Marine Observation Squadron 6

ANNEX OBOE TO 1ST PROVISIONAL MARINE BRIGADE SPECIAL
ACTION REPORT NO. 1

1. The purpose of this annex is to show the operations of Marine Observation Squadron 6 during the period 7 July 1950 to 7 September 1950. This squadron was assigned the mission of supporting the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade by conducting air reconnaissance, artillery spotting and other flight operations within the capabilities of assigned aircraft.
2. This organization has a strength of 13 officers and 97 enlisted men and is commanded by Major Vincent J. GOTTSCHALK, USMC.
3. During the period 7 July 1950 to 14 July 1950, the squadron completed the final phases of packing for the movement overseas. As soon as the Unit Personnel and Tonnage tables could be compiled they were submitted to MAG-33 who in turn allotted shipping space for both personnel and equipment.
4. On 13 July 1950 the squadron embarked aboard the U.S.S. BADOENG STRAIT, (CVE-116) at San Diego, California. On 14 July 1950 the squadron departed for duty overseas.
5. The squadron received transfer orders on such short notice that all available time was consumed in packing, therefore the squadron could participate in no training exercises.
6. On the evening of 31 July 1950, the U.S.S. BADOENG STRAIT docked at Kobe, Japan. Personnel of the squadron worked all that night getting equipment unloaded and stowed in the dockside warehouse. On the following day the forward echelon consisting of ten officers and six enlisted men with four OY's and four HO3S-1 helicopters departed for Pusan, Korea. They arrived at Pusan airstrip (K-1) on 2 August 1950. The rear echelon was loaded aboard an LST and departed on 2 August 1950, arriving at Pusan on 3 August 1950.
7. On the morning of 3 August the squadron began operating in support of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade OY aircraft were employed in the roll of reconnaissance and to check convoys moving toward Crang-won. The Commanding General was taken on a short helicopter reconnaissance flight as well as several of his staff. One staff officer was transported over the area to make a C.P. selection.

On 4 August 1950, the OY's were again employed for observation and reconnaissance. Three helicopter evacuations were made which were the first for the Korean operation. In addition the helicopters flew reconnaissance and resupply flights and were employed to carry blood plasma from Pusan to the forward area.

On 5 August 1950, both OY's and helicopters flew reconnaissance flights. On 6 August 1950, one OY aircraft was lost due to enemy action. The pilot ditched his aircraft in the water off the coast of Korea and both he and his passenger swam ashore. Later they were picked up by the South Korean Coast Guard and returned to their respective organizations.

As a result of flight operations, on 7 August 1950, a helicopter was damaged in the field due to an operational accident. The pilot with the assistance of squadron mechanics was able to repair the helicopter in the field and return to the base. OY aircraft made six resupply drops consisting of food, water and ammunition to units of the Brigade that were cut off. In addition, the OY's flew reconnaissance and observation flights. The helicopters flew reconnaissance, photographic and transportation flights.

On 8 August 1950, OY aircraft made three additional resupply drops of food, water and ammunition to units unable to receive supplies by other means. In addition the OY's flew reconnaissance, artillery spotting and observation flights. The helicopters performed reconnaissance and evacuation flights, one of which was successfully performed at night.

Routine observation and artillery spotting flights were made by the OY's on 9 August 1950, while the helicopters flew reconnaissance, evacuation and liaison flights.

On the following days until the Brigade was withdrawn from the Kosung-Sachon area the OY's flew observation and tactical reconnaissance, flights often as far as fifteen to twenty miles ahead of the front lines and at altitudes of less than a hundred feet. In addition to regular reconnaissance, liaison and evacuation missions the helicopters rescued two downed pilots who had ditched in the water and the body of a fighter pilot who had crashed behind the enemy lines. During the withdrawal from the Kosung-Sachon area, the helicopters were utilized by the Commanding General and his staff to observe progress of convoys and to reconnoiter routes of approach to the new C.P. area. In addition, the helicopters were used for transportation by staff

officers to accomplish the myriad of tasks that always accompany a major Brigade move. During the time the Brigade was in bivouac at Miryang, the helicopters were used to transport guard mail, post, and supply observation posts, and transport the Commanding General, his staff and unit commanders on high priority business.

When the Brigade was again ordered into the attack on 17 August 1950, the OY's were used to direct artillery fire and air strikes. The helicopters were employed for reconnaissance, liaison and evacuation. Two helicopters were modified to carry stretcher patients. This was accomplished by removing the window on the right side and installing straps in the cabin on the left side to hold the stretcher securely. With this modification, each of the two helicopters could evacuate one stretcher case. Throughout the battle of the Naktong River, the OY's were used for observation, reconnaissance, and artillery spotting. Here again they flew at dangerously low altitude and far beyond the front lines. The helicopters were used for forward reconnaissance and liaison by the Commanding General and members of his staff and for evacuation of wounded from forward areas.

After the battle of the Naktong River, while the Brigade was bivouacked in the Masan area, the OY's were employed for reconnaissance flights and the helicopters were utilized by the Commanding General and various staff officers for liaison missions and to post and resupply observation posts on mountain tops.

When the 11th Marines were committed to work with the 25th Division artillery, the OY's were employed in their normal roll of artillery spotting.

On 20 August 1950, one helicopter was dispatched to the U.S.S. SICILY to pick up a passenger. While the helicopter was aboard, one of the ship's pilots was forced to ditch his aircraft in the water. The helicopter was sent immediately to the scene and performed another successful rescue.

On 26 August 1950, an OY crashed, seriously injuring the pilot and observer. The cause is presumed to be the result of enemy action. Both pilot and observer were evacuated by helicopter to a rear area hospital train. On 3 August 1950, four Army wounded were evacuated by helicopter from a forward area.

From 27 August to 2 September, the helicopters flew many liaison flights and transported staff officers on high priority business. One reconnaissance and liaison flight was made for officers of the U.S. Army on 28 August.

From 2 September through 6 September, the OY's again flew observation, reconnaissance and artillery spotting missions. On one occasion the pilot of an OY gave timely information to friendly tanks and infantry that resulted in the saving of several lives and the destruction of two enemy tanks. The OY's also lead in several successful air strikes.

The helicopters flew many reconnaissance, liaison and evacuation flights. On 4 September, one helicopter landed near the front lines in the vicinity of Kang-ni and picked up a marine fighter pilot who had been forced to use his parachute after his plane was hit by enemy fire. The helicopters were also used to post and resupply outpost guards on mountain tops.

During all three battles, this squadron maintained one and often two OY's on station at all times between dawn and dusk. These pilots and observers performed not only their regular mission of artillery spotting but as previously stated, they often ranged far ahead of the point and operated at extremely low altitudes. This was necessary so that small enemy strong points could be accurately located and reported to the point. This gave them accurate information at all times of what lay ahead, thus saving many casualties. The helicopters flew reconnaissance and observation flights forward of the front lines with the Commanding General, members of his staff, and unit commanders. Many evacuation flights were made by helicopter from front line areas. All evacuees were the most seriously wounded cases and most of them would have survived no other type of evacuation. The Commanding General, 1st Provisional Marine Brigade on one occasion, was able to disengage a front line Battalion, turn it around and reemploy it in a new sector using the helicopter as his mode of transportation. He was able to confer with the Battalion Commander and take him on a reconnaissance of the new area. The Battalion Commander was able to reconnoiter the route over which his battalion was to pass and to view the proposed battalion area far in advance of the time he was to occupy it. As a result the battalion was moved and reemployed in a fraction of the usual time. The Commanding General, 1st Provisional Marine Brigade stated, on several occasions, that this, along with several other miracles of movement could never have been accomplished without the use of the helicopter.

During periods of time when the Brigade was committed the squadron operated a night check crew. By using this night crew, the squadron was able to have a one hundred percent availability.

8. Not applicable.

9. Not applicable

10. As a result of experience gained from the past three operations, the following recommendations are submitted. These recommendations are based on a composite squadron consisting of 8 liaison type helicopters, 10 OY type liaison aircraft and two transport type helicopters. The recommendations for the above aircraft **are contained** in the letter from Commanding Officer, Marine Observation Squadron 6 to Commander, Air Force, Pacific Fleet, serial 291-50 of 29 Aug 1950:

a. A composite squadron composed of light OY type liaison aircraft and liaison type helicopters is considered both desirable and necessary. The inclusion of helicopters within an observation squadron has increased the capabilities of the squadron tremendously. The helicopter has not, and present types cannot, completely replace the liaison aircraft. However, the helicopter, due to its versatility has placed an observation squadron into so many new fields that helicopters must be considered as additional aircraft.

b. It is recommended that the composite squadron be composed of 100 enlisted men and 25 officers. Of the 25 officers, 3 should be ground officers in the specialties of engineering, materiel, and intelligence.

c. The inclusion of the helicopter has also greatly increased the need for additional motor transport. The intricacy and maintenance problems of the helicopters require that more spare parts and tools be carried than for other types of aircraft. Due to the fact that observation squadrons often work independently, a fire truck or some type of mobile fire fighting equipment is considered absolutely essential. In addition, one more water trailer is required.

d. It is considered desirable to have VHF radio gear installed in all OY type aircraft. If the OY's could communicate with the fighter aircraft, it would greatly facilitate their leading in air strikes. Conversely, the helicopters should be equipped with MHP radio gear in order for them to communicate with certain ground units. It is necessary that the squadron be equipped

with an SCR 399 and an AN/VRC-1. As previously stated, the squadron usually operates independently and during this time communications are sometimes totally lacking.

- 11. Not applicable.
- 12. Not applicable.