3/1964 FIRST FERRY FLIGHT

[redacted]

News Item, AIR FORCE TIMES MARCH, 25 1964. "Deployment flights to Europe are so routine; AF rarely announces most of them these days. But this one was a bit different".

That was one of several news items related to the first in-flight delivery of Grumman OV-1 Mohawks oversea's. Similar news releases were in the Army Times, Army-Air Force Journal and Register, the Star's And Stripes, and several other national military related publications. All of this publicity was the result of the first flight delivery of OVA-I Mohawks to USURER in March 1964.

But, what is the real story behind the planning and testing which insured that such a flight would be successful?

In 1962, while assigned as an OV-1 Service Test Pilot to the Transportation Aviation Test And Support Activity (TATSA), (later to become an integral part of The Aviation Test Board,) Fort Rucker Alabama, I was tasked with evaluating the feasibility of flight delivering OV-1 A/C to overseas operational units.

An initial study indicated that with the necessary fuel, such a flight should be no more difficult or hazardous than flying an OV-1 across the United States except that the flight would conducted be over an extended expanse of open water. .

A more detailed deployment study was conducted with the professional assistance of the airframe and power plant manufacturers. It was determined that in order to safely fly the overseas flights from CONUS through Newfoundland and the Azores to Germany, it would be necessary to replace the dual 150 gallon fuel tanks with 300 gallon tanks. The additional fuel would provide the necessary range to make long-range flights a safe reality.

To validate the theoretical studies, a TATSA OV-1A (59-2613) Mohawk was fitted with two (2) 300 Gal. Fuel tanks. A weight and balance test revealed that the takeoff weight with full fuel tanks (approx. 900 gal) would be in the 15,500 lb range, but well within design limits.

Flights were made with empty 300-gallon drop tanks, 150 gallons of fuel, then 300 gal drop tanks full and fuselage tank full. The results were as predicted. The flight handling chararteics were basically normal. In-fact it was determined that the large 300 gal./ tanks provided a C/L of about 20% which helped quite a bit in providing lift. However the takeoff distance was significantly extended with full fuel tanks.

As a result of the evaluation, I was charged with developing a detailed plan for flight deploying four (4) new production OV-B A/C to EUSAREUR before the end of 1962. Commencerate with being given that task, I was reassigned back to the Mohawk Program Managers Office in He. AMC , Washington D.C.