

3/1964 FLIGHT EVALUATIONS

WEST GERMAN, FRENCH & JAPANESE OV-1 EVALUATION

In the summer of 1963 the German (FRG) Army expressed an interest in the OV-1B and OV-1C versions and requested several A/C for evaluation. The Dept. of Army proposed to the FRG that the Mohawk project Managers Office organize and staff a team, consisting of three (3) pilots including myself (the team chief), military technicians, and field service representatives. Attach the team to the FRG to provide all support and fly all missions for the German Government evaluation.

We arrived at the German Army Flying School, located at Buckeburg Germany in early September 1963 with two new hand prepped A/C, (an OV-1B and an OV-1C) and lots of special support material. Because of the nature of the program, all U.S. markings were removed from the A/C and replaced with the German Iron Cross on the wings and fuselage and with German identification. The B-model was Alpha Bravo Quebec and the C-model was Alpha Bravo Whiskey

As it turned out, the project was more than a routine evaluation. With the B-Model SLAR System our missions were usually flown late at night, along the east/west German border all the way to the north sea. All information or SLAR film gathered during a flight was removed from the system as soon as the mission was completed and was taken over by a American/German intelligence group. The C-Model was used for night photo and simulated IR missions on the West German side of the border but in selected classified areas.

The evaluation program was completed in late October, 1963. The bottom line was that although the German Army truly wanted the A/C, but the German Air Force was not in favor of letting the Army have that kind of capability. So the Army lost.

Just as we were preparing to return to the states, the State Department received a request for an OV-1 evaluation by the French Air Force so we diverted to France.. Enroute to a French Air Force base in Metz France, we stopped at a U.S. Army aircraft maintenance facility in Sandhofan Germany where all German markings were removed from the aircraft. They were replaced with the French Tri-Color identification.

Upon arrival at Metz it became apparent from the proposed mission plans that the French did not have any real interest in the A/C. But because the Germans had conducted an evaluation they did not want to be left out in the cold. We only flew day VFR unclassified missions. Their evaluators showed little interest in the results of the SLAR or IR data. This evaluation was concluded in early December 1963 and the team returned to their respective units in the states.