

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM)

NUMBER

60)

CLOSE AIR SUPPORT

1. Extensive training tests are now being conducted by XII Tactical Air Command with VI Corps to develop a more efficient system of close Air-Ground support. The plan now being studied and developed has been designated "Horsefly"

2. Control of fighter-bomber planes on close support missions will be effected through;

a. A flying officer from XII TAC operating as a forward controller from an L-5 plane equipped with radio to talk to planes in flight. The L-5 also carries a trained artillery observer-pilot equipped with 609 or 300 series radio in communication with the ground.

b. An officer of XII TAC at Corps Hq with Very High Frequency radio contact with both the "Horsefly" L-5 plane and the fighter-bombers. He also has a direct radio link with 64th Fighter Wing, which is authorized to fly these missions on direct call from Corps for the present.

3. In operation the system will function as follows: A Division Air OP or Corps recon plane locates a suitable air target. The target will be reported at once to ground station - either Div Arty or Corps airfield. The Corps Air Officer (Redwood 14) will be notified and he will call for a fighter-bomber mission direct to 64th Fighter Wing. If planes are available and the mission is accepted 64th Fighter Wing will flash back acceptance, and a "Horsefly" L-5 plane will take off from the Corps Air Strip. The fighter-bomber pilots will not have been briefed but will "scramble" to a rendezvous with "Horsefly" over the general target area. "Horsefly" must take off and get observation of the target as soon after the mission is accepted as possible. If the target is located by an Air OP the latter should remain in observation over the target until joined by the "Horsefly" plane. The latter will then remain in sight of the target until the arrival of the fighter-bombers, at which time he will describe the target to the flight leader and direct the attack on the target. The arty observer-pilot in the meantime will be in touch with the ground and will assist the controller when necessary. He may call for the artillery to fire colored smoke on the target. Being thoroughly familiar with the location of our troops and appearance of our vehicles, he will act as a safeguard for close support missions.

4. It is important that all possible safeguards be employed to permit close support without danger to our troops. A complete set of colored panels, white on one side and either orange or cerise on the other, is being issued. These panels must be displayed by front line troops when our fighter-bombers are in the area and on our vehicles in forward zones. These panels have proven very successful in other areas and are absolutely necessary to permit close support missions. Color to be displayed will be announced periodically.

5. Under this system a Bomb Safe Line is placed well out along some clearly recognizable terrain feature. All missions requested by higher headquarters and free-lance Air Corps missions will be kept outside the ESL. However, a second line, the Close Support Line, is designated daily and will follow generally the line of our forward elements. Between it and the BSL, "Horsefly" and other closely controlled prebriefed missions on clearly recognizable targets will be flown.

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6. The Air-Ground Support system outlined above is now in operation and available on call during all flying weather. A call to Redwood 14, giving location and description of target will start the mission. At the present time, with 64th Fighter Wing at DOLE, it takes about one hour to bring planes over target area. However, if planes are in the area when request is received the target should be covered in a few minutes.

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