

17th SOS (Special Operations Squadron) Chronology

The AC-119G Shadow Gunship served combat duty for the United States Air Force in Southeast Asia for two (2) years, nine (9) months starting with the 71st Special Operations Squadron in January 1969 & ending with the 17th SOS in September 1971. All AC-119G *Shadow* gunships were turned-over to the Republic of Vietnam Air Force (VNAF).

Chronology compiled by Dr. Larry Elton Fletcher. Dates & information taken from Jack S. Ballard's book, *Development & Employment of Fixed-Wing Gunships*, official 17th SOS unit records at the U. S. Air Force Research Center at Maxwell AFB, Alabama, & from Veterans of the 17th Special Operations Squadron.

Chronology

TIME PERIOD	HISTORICAL FACTS
June 1 1969	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation of the 17th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) replacing the 71st SOS which departed South Vietnam on June 5, 1969 & deactivated on June 18, 1969 at Bakalar AFB, Indiana. The 17th SOS absorbed approximately 65% of the 71st SOS personnel. • Eighteen (18) AC-119G <i>Shadow</i> Gunships In-Country. • 17th SOS Commander – Lt. Col. Richard E. Knie • Commander of A-Flight at Nha Trang – Lt. Col. Russell A. O'Connell
June 31 1969	<p>Deployment of AC-119G <i>Shadow</i> Gunships even though 14th Combat Support Group Special Order P103, dated 23 July 1969 shows that A- Flight was ordered to relocate from Nha Trang to Tuy Hoa with an effective relocation date of August 3, 1969.</p> <p>A-Flight, Tuy Hoa Air Base - 4 B-Flight, Phan Rang AB - 7 C-Flight, Tan Son Nhut AB - 5</p>
October 11 1969	<p>First AC-119G Aircraft Loss in the crash of <i>Shadow 76</i> at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. Five of eight crewmembers killed. An USAF photographer from the 600th Photo Squadron was also onboard & was killed.</p>
April 13 1970	<p>A-Flight at Tuy Hoa was ordered to relocate to Phu Cat by a 35th Tactical Fighter Wing Special Order AB-2777. Effective date: April 12, 1970. The move was made on the 12th (SOP)</p>
April 28 1970	<p>Second AC-119G Aircraft Loss in the crash of <i>Shadow 78</i> at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. Six crewmembers killed. Two survivors.</p>
May 1 1970	<p>Cambodia Incursion supported at night by AC-119 Gunships.</p>
June 1970	<p>Deployment of AC-119 <i>Shadow</i> Gunships:</p> <p>A-Flight, Phu Cat Air Base - 5 B-Flight, Phan Rang AB - 6 C-Flight, Tan Son Nhut - 5</p>
August 1 1970	<p>Daylight Missions start for <i>Shadow</i> Gunships in Cambodia.</p>
October 10 1970	<p>17th SOS relocated some <i>Shadow</i> & <i>Stinger</i> Gunships to Tan Son Nhut from Phu Cat & Phan Rang to meet operational demands in Cambodia.</p>
Dec29 1970	<p>A-Flight at Phu Cat deactivated. Personnel & aircraft assigned to B-Flight at Phan Rang</p>
Dec 29 1970	<p>Deployment of AC-119 <i>Shadow</i> Gunships:</p> <p>B-Flight, Phan Rang AB – 7 C-Flight, Tan Son Nhut - 9</p>
Sept 10 1971	<p>Last combat mission flown by C-Flight at Tan Son Nhut by USAF <i>Shadow</i> Gunship with C-Flight Commander, Lt. Col. James James as aircraft commander. Fighting C-Flight gunships & support at Tan Son Nhut turned over to the South Vietnam Air Force (VNAF) 819th Combat Squadron. <i>Black Dragon</i> replaced <i>Shadow</i> as radio call sign.</p>
Sept 24 1971	<p>Inactivation of 17th Special Operations Squadron & the 14th Special Operations Wing at Phan Rang. Another recorded inactivation date for the 14th SOW is 30 Sept 1971.</p>