



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Records About Naval Gunfire Support During the Vietnam War (CONGA), 3/1966 – 1/1973 Record Group 218

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1. What information is in these records?

This series contains data from daily and weekly Operations Summary Reports (OPREP-5) sent by teletype from Military Assistance Command-Vietnam in Saigon. The data document naval gunfire support missions in South Vietnam during the Vietnam War and the shore bombardment of North Vietnam as part of Operation Sea Dragon and subsequent bombardments. There are records for each firing mission and include information on: the date and beginning and ending times of the firing mission; the type of the firing ship; name of mission; type of operation; name and hull type of the warship; aircraft sortie data; target information; enemy war casualties; friendly battle casualties; and ordnance expenditures.

2. Why were these records created?

The agency created these records in order to prepare a number of reports.

3. What version of these records is available through the Access to Archival Databases (AAD) resource?

The fixed-length de-NIPS'd version of these records is currently available through AAD. The agency transferred the records in the National Information Processing System (NIPS) format and NARA subsequently reformatted the records to a fixed-length de-NIPS'd format and a variable length de-NIPS'd format.

In the fixed-length de-NIPS'd version of the records, there are records for each mission containing the Control Set, Fixed Set, and, if present, the first of each of the three types of Periodic Sets. And, if a mission had multiple Periodic Sets of the same type, there are records for the multiple Periodic Sets that only contain the Control Set and Periodic Sets information. Below is a list of the fields for each set.

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When staff reformatted the records to a de-NIPS'd format in the late 1970s, they assumed the de-NIPS'd records would be "read" by the computer sequentially whereby the first record for the mission would contain the information from the Control Set, Fixed Set, and the first Periodic Sets followed by the records for the multiple Periodic Sets. Hence the records for multiple Periodic Sets do not include the Fixed Set information (e.g. Name of Firing Ship, Hull Number of Firing Ship, Nickname of Operation Supported, Province Code). For more details about the original format and de-NIPS'd version of the records, please review the series description and the scanned technical documentation for this series.

4. What fields are part of the Control Set, Fixed Set, and Periodic Sets 1-3?

The following is a list of the sets (in bold), followed by the field titles included in that set.

Control Set

Mission Firing Date
Mission Start Time
Mission End Time
UIC of Firing Ship
Series Number

Friendly Personnel Missing (MIS)
What Inflicted Damage

Fixed Set

Date of Last Update
Name of Firing Ship
Hull Type of Firing Ship
Hull Number of Firing Ship
CTZ to which Firing was Directed
UTM Coordinates of Target
Operation Type
Nickname of Operation Supported
Force Supported
Period of the Day
Target Type Code
Province Code
Spotter Info
Des. or Dam. to Ship
Friendly Personnel Killed (KIA)
Friendly Personnel Wounded (WIA)

Periodic Set 1

Subset No. for Ordn. Info.
Caliber of Ordnance Expended
Ordnance Type Expended
Quantity of Ordnance Expended
Range to Target in Thousands of Yards

Periodic Set 2

Subset No. for Sortie Information
Aircraft Involved [sic] in Firing Mission
Number of Aircraft Available to Fly Sortie
Number of Sorties Flown During Mission
Number of Sorties Expending Ammunition

Periodic Set 3

Subset for Enemy Loss Info.
Enemy Loss Codes
Quantity of Enemy Loss
Enemy Loss by Unit Measurement
Enemy Des. or Dam. Designation
Enemy Personnel Killed (KIA)

5. How do I locate all the records for a mission via AAD?

Once you have identified a record for a mission, you can locate all the records related to that mission by searching the file using the information found in a combination of the fields in the Control Set, such as the field UIC of Firing Ship along with the fields Mission Firing Date, Mission Start Time and/or Mission End Time. You may need to use the "Show More Fields" option on the Fielded Search Page to select the fields in the Control Set you wish to use for searching.

6. Are the values in the field “Range to Target in Thousands of Yards” accurate?

The agency documentation indicates this field contains the range to the target in thousands of yards. However, when NARA staff reviewed the records they found that a significant number of the values produce distances beyond the accurate range of typical gunfire. The unit of measurement “thousands of yards” is in question. User have confirmed the questionability of this field. NARA has no additional information to clarify the unit of measurement or accuracy of the values for this field.

7. How can I access a copy of the full file(s)?

The raw data files, along with the associated technical documentation, may be downloaded from the National Archives Catalog at: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>. There you can search by the series name, Records About Naval Gunfire Support During the Vietnam War, or using the National Archives Identifier 572874, which is the description identifier for this series.

In the results, select to view the full series description. Click on the link “file(s) described in the catalog” next to “Includes:” for a list of the file units within this series. Then select the file unit containing the records of interest to you. The file unit description will include the list of electronic records and documentation files available for viewing and/or downloading.

Additional information about downloading electronic records from the Catalog is available at: <https://www.archives.gov/research/electronic-records/access-in-catalog-faqs>.

Please keep in mind that the data file consists of the raw structured data as loaded into AAD (i.e. the coded values without meanings), but without the AAD software that displays the meanings for coded values and field titles. For more details about using files containing raw structured data, you may wish to review our "Introduction to Raw Data" at: <https://www.archives.gov/files/research/electronic-records/raw-data-intro.pdf>.