

U.S. Army/Japanese Government
OV-1 Mohawk Evaluation Program Summary
24/25 June 1964
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In the spring of 1964, the Japanese government, through the American Embassy in Tokyo, expressed an interest in having a look at the operational capabilities of the OV-1 Mohawk for possible use as a patrol aircraft in short range maritime use. This information was passed along to the Department of The Army, HQ, Army Material Command, (AMC) Mohawk Program Managers Office (PMO) in Washington D.C. As the Mohawk project officer in that office, I was tasked with putting together a limited Demonstration/Evaluation program. Considerations were (a) To what level of evaluation would the Japanese be reviewing?, (b) Where would the evaluation be conducted? (c) From what in-Theater U.S. OV-1 Mohawk assets could an aircraft be obtained for use in the evaluation?, (The U.S. Army was already using the Mohawk in Korea for DMZ Border surveillance with acceptable results). (d) Who would conduct the flight demonstration and staff briefings portions of the evaluation?

During the months of April/May 1964, discussions between AMC Hq,s, the American Embassy in Tokyo, and 8th Army Korea resulted in the development of a comprehensive plan; (a) The Demonstration/Evaluation would be conducted in Japan at a former U.S. Army Aircraft Maintenance Facility located at Chofu, a short distance west of Tokyo. (b) Flight evaluation (to be flown by U.S. Army Aviator) would present the overall capabilities of the aircraft in various configurations, (d) 8th Army would make available, for a limited time, an OV-1C for use in the demonstrations, provided AMC fund all costs associated with the program, (e) The staff briefer(s) and demonstration pilot would be provided by the AMC Mohawk Program Managers Office.

The plan was approved by both D.A., the American Embassy and 8th Army for implementation on 24/25 June 1964. I was designated as the demonstration pilot and a three person staff from AMC resources would conduct the system in-depth briefings. I flew directly to Korea arriving in Seoul on the 19th of June. I reported to the 8th Army Aviation Officer for further guidance. I was at a bit of an advantage in that after a tour in Korea in 1951, in 1952/53, I was assigned to the U.S. my Aviation Maintenance Center, in Chofu Japan where the demonstration was to be conducted and in 1960 was initially assigned to Hq,s 8th Army Aviation staff in Seoul so I was somewhat familiar with the operation. The Mohawk unit operated from an airfield west of Seoul designated K-16, located on the west side of the Han river. On June 23rd, after assuring the Mohawk Unit Commander that I would return his aircraft in one piece and in good working order and receiving an acceptance "Check Ride", I signed for a stripped down OV-1C and filed IFR via established airways, non-stop to Chofu. After an uneventful flight of 3.1 hours I landed at Chofu where I was met by a Japanese delegation, an American Embassy Representative and the other AMC briefing team members. Briefings and demonstration flights were scheduled for the next two days.

As the briefings progressed, I was quite surprised to observe that the Japanese seemed more interested in learning the engineering and manufacturing details of the aircraft with the possibility of Co-Production by their aircraft manufacturers than possible operational use of an aircraft manufactured in the U.S. Many photos were taken of the cockpit, instrument panel, aircraft interior, landing gear etc. They listened very politely to all of the team briefings over the two day period. Several times they stood by the runway and observed several short field take-offs and landings, a single engine fly-by and a high-speed pass. Total demonstration flight time 2.0 hours. There was never any indication that they would like to have one of their test pilots fly along on a flight, although the offer was made. The briefings and demonstrations were concluded. We were thanked for our effort and bid good-by. On 26 June, after a flight of 3.4 hours, I returned the aircraft in one piece, to its rightful owner at K-16. Following a short debriefing to the 8th Army Aviation Division staff, I caught a commercial flight back to Washington. Thus ending the participation of the Japanese government in the Mohawk program.

There was an incident which did cause some stir in diplomatic channels several months after the program terminated. As mentioned earlier, upon departing K-16, I filed IFR over the established airways to Chofu. There was a Victory Airway that tracked up the east coast of Japan to an island just east of Tokyo. From that point, aircraft would be handed off to various airfield controllers. On the day of my flight, proximately 100 miles south of Tokyo and in clear unlimited visibility with Mount Fuji in full view, the air traffic controller changed me from IFR to VFR conditions and I was cleared DIRECT from present position to Chofu and to and to contact Tachakawa approach control for further instructions.

What I did not know at the time, was the DIRECT from my present position would result in a flight track directly over a Japanese artillery range located on the east side of Mount Fuji. It just happened that there was Live Fire artillery training going on that day which had to be interrupted while an aircraft flew through their line of fire. Through air traffic channels, the aircraft was identified as U.S. Military. A complaint was lodged through military channels with the report eventually ending up in Korea on the 8th Army Aviation Officers desk. It was then forwarded for action to AMC HQ,s and guess who, me. After several weeks of "he said/she said," the Japanese Government obtained the tape of my conversation with Air Traffic and confirmed that air traffic had made an error. I was subsequently informed that the controller had not seen a NOTAM advising about the live artillery fire that day. When there is no artillery fire, aircraft were cleared over the area. All ended well, I never heard what action, if any was taken against the controller.

END OF STORY.