

# Khmer Air Force U-1A Otters

by Dr. Joe F. Leeker



The wrecks of Khmer Air Force U-1A Otters at Pochentong Airbase  
(with kind permission from Ward S. Reimer)

## Number of U-1As assigned to the Khmer Air Force according to Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly reports November 73 to June 74:

1 (Nov.73 > June 74)

### Statistics:

- on 8 January 72, one U-1A crashed up country (Air America's Phnom Penh Station weekly report for 7-14 January 72, in: UTD/Leary/ I B14F1).
- in February 1971, MEDTC is interested in requesting 30+ U-1As from the US Army, Vietnam, for MAP Cambodia ("Meeting with Military Equipment Delivery Team – Cambodia [MEDTC], at MACV, 2 February 1971", Texas Tech University, document no. 2920106007).
- by the end of 1971, the Khmer Air Force had 16 U-1As (Conboy / Bowra, *The war in Cambodia*, p. 20).
- in 1972, AVNK had 16 U-1As (Sutsakhan, *The Khmer Republic at war*, p.183).
- according to Grandolini/Cooper/Troung, *Cambodia*, part 2, the Khmer Air Force lost at least 3 U-1As, when the Khmer Rouge attacked Pochentong in March 1972.
- in 1973, AVNK had 7 U-1As (Sutsakhan, *The Khmer Republic at war*, p.183).

- in March 73, 5 U-1A aircraft were at Pochentong Air Base, whose repair was beyond the capability of Pochentong; only 2 out of 7 U-1As were operational (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for March 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1)
- 2 U-1As were operational in April 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for April 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1)
- the whole U-1A program was unoperational in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1)
- in August 73, only 2 U-1As were available for utilization. "The remaining U-1A aircraft should be dropped from the record as they are beyond any practical and economical repair" (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for August 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).
- in 1974, AVNK had 1 U-1A (Sutsakhan, *The Khmer Republic at war*, p.183).

### Individual aircraft histories:

#### A) U-1As delivered during the second half of 1971:

- U-1A "0-52978" 51 Sept.71 US Army 55-2978  
**(real serial as borne unknown)**  
**Service history:** ?  
**Fate:** not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).
- U-1A "0-53277" 124 Aug. 71 US Army 55-3277  
**(real serial as borne unknown)**  
**Service history:** ?  
**Fate:** not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1)
- U-1A "0-53279" 127 Sept. 71 US Army 55-3279  
**(real serial as borne unknown)**  
**Service history:** ?  
**Fate:** not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).
- U-1A "0-53295" 149 July 71 US Army 55-3295  
**(real serial as borne unknown)**  
**Service history:** had a run-up accident requiring an engine change in February 72 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for February 72, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1); damage repair of U-1A "55-3295" was started on 27 February 72 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station weekly report for 1-7 March 72, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).  
**Fate:** languished at Pochentong beyond economical repair in June 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1); not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).
- U-1A "0-53299" 154 Sept. 71 US Army 55-3299  
**(real serial as borne unknown)**  
**Service history:** was awaiting new engines in January 72 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for January 72, in: UTD/Leary/ I B14F1).

**Fate:** not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

U-1A "0-53300" 156 Sept. 71 US Army 55-3300  
(real serial as borne unknown)

**Service history:** had a run-up accident requiring an engine change in February 72 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for February 72, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

**Fate:** not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

U-1A "0-53311" 173 Sept. 71 US Army 55-3311  
(real serial as borne unknown)

**Service history:** ?

**Fate:** not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

U-1A "0-53313" 175 Aug. 71 US Army 55-3313  
(real serial as borne unknown)

**Service history:** ?

**Fate:** not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

U-1A "0-53323" 192 Sept. 71 US Army 55-3323  
(real serial as borne unknown)

**Service history:** ?

**Fate:** on 16 March 73, U-1A "323" sustained major damage, when the pilot lost control while taking off from Pochentong Air Base (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for March 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1); believed to be the aircraft that languished at Pochentong beyond economical repair in June 73, although the report says that this was "55-3327" and not "55-3323"; but "55-3327" was still in active use in early July 1973, so cannot be the aircraft that languished at Pochentong for months (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

U-1A "0-53327" 200 71 US Army 55-3327  
(real serial as borne unknown)

**Service history:** ?

**Fate:** ground looped on landing on 2 July 73, while operating outstation; total loss (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for July 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).



Khmer Air Force U-1A "0-81707" destroyed at Pochentong Airbase on 5 May 72, after it took a direct hit by a 122MM rocket  
(with kind permission from Ward S. Reimer)

U-1A "0-81707" 322 Dec. 71 US Army 58-1707

**Service history: ?**

**Fate:** Khmer Air Force U-1A "0-81707" was destroyed at Pochentong Airbase on 5 May 72, after it took a direct hit by a 122MM rocket (e-mail dated 31 December 2005, kindly sent to the author by Ward S. Reimer); not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

U-1A "0-81709" 325 Sept. 71 US Army 58-1709

**(real serial as borne unknown)**

**Service history:** had a hard landing in June 73, causing minor damage to the main landing gear and tail gear attachment area (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1); was damaged during landing on 5 July 73, while operating outstation (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1); released for check flight on 19 October 73, but not yet test flown on 5 November 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for October 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

**Fate: ?**



The wreck of Khmer Air Force U-1A "0-81717" in the scrap pile at Pochentong in 1971/2  
(with kind permission from Ward S. Reimer)

U-1A "0-81717" 335 Aug. 71 US Army 58-1717

**Service history: ?**

**Fate:** due to suspected engine vibrations, 58-1717 crashed a short distance from Pochentong airfield in January 72 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report

for January 72, in: UTD/Leary/ I B14F1); not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

U-1A "0-81718" 337 Sept. 71 US Army 58-1718  
(real serial as borne unknown)  
**Service history:** ?  
**Fate:** not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

U-1A "0-92209" 346 Sept. 71 US Army 59-2209  
(real serial as borne unknown)  
**Service history:** ?  
**Fate:** not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

U-1A "0-92213" 351 Aug. 71 US Army 59-2213  
(real serial as borne unknown)  
**Service history:** was awaiting new engines in January 72 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for January 72, in: UTD/Leary/ I B14F1).  
**Fate:** languished at Pochentong beyond economical repair in June 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1); not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

U-1A "0-92227" 378 Sept. 71 US Army 59-2227  
(real serial as borne unknown)  
**Service history:** ?  
**Fate:** not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

#### **B) U-1As delivered in September 1972:**

U-1A "0-53244" 82 Sept.72 US Army 55-3244  
(real serial as borne unknown)  
**Service history:** ?  
**Fate:** not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

U-1A "0-53245" 83 Sept.72 US Army 55-3245  
(real serial as borne unknown)  
**Service history:** ?  
**Fate:** not flyable in July 73 (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

U-1A "0-53253" 93 Sept.72 US Army 55-3253  
(real serial as borne unknown)  
**Service history:** suffered a landing accident in June 73, causing damage to the belly of the aircraft (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1); a 3 feet diameter damage due to the hard landing was repaired on 27 July 73, when this aircraft was the only flyable U-1A of the Khmer Air Force (Air America's Phnom Penh Station monthly report for June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B39F1).

**Fate: ?**



Unidentified victims of the sapper attack of 22 January 1971  
(photo no. 1-CA2-2-PB50 at UTD/Abadie/B2F1)



Ex-Khmer Air Force Otters derelict at Pochentong Airbase in 1972  
(with kind permission from Ward S. Reimer)

When Cambodia fell to the Khmer Rouge forces of Pol Pot on 18 April 1975, no U-1A escaped to Thailand (Carroll, *World Air Forces Directory 1998/9*, p. 187); but no U-1A was captured by the Khmer Rouge (Grandolini/Cooper/Troung, *Cambodia*, part 2).

© University of Texas at Dallas, 11 August 2008