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28 OCT 1963

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FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CTF-79 ltr 103D:PME:jrd over 003000
Ser: 0015763 of 4 Oct 1963

From: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Pacific
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code A03)

Subj: Recent Republic of Vietnam (RVN) evacuation alert;
report of

1. Forwarded.

John S. Payne
JOHN S. PAYNE
By direction

TC 79

RVN evacuation alert report

20 Aug 1963
C. J. [illegible]

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HEADQUARTERS
Fleet Marine Force SEVENTH Fleet (TF 79)
c/o 3d Marine Division (Rein), FMF
FPO, San Francisco, California

103D:PME:jrd

003000

4 Oct 1963

0015763

SECRET

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From: Commander
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code A03)
Via: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Pacific

Subj: Recent Republic of Vietnam (RVN) evacuation alert; report of

Encl: (1) RVN evacuation alert report

1. The purpose of this letter is to submit report of the actions of Task Force 79 during the recent Republic of Vietnam (RVN) evacuation alert. It covers the period 21 August through 12 September 1963, during which this command was directed by higher headquarters to prepare certain units for possible deployment to RVN for security/evacuation operations in order to protect U. S. noncombatant personnel and installations in that country. Action taken during this period included the following:

a. The 9th Marines regimental headquarters and two (2) BLTs, were alerted for airlift in USMC and USAF transport aircraft. A portion of this force loaded vehicles, supplies, and equipment aboard aircraft to provide a position of advanced readiness.

b. The 3d Marines regimental headquarters and two (2) BLTs, were alerted for surface lift.

c. A Landing Force Headquarters, the 1st Comm Co (Prov) and a Logistic Support Group were alerted for either surface or air lift.

d. One of the alert surface lift BLTs embarked and proceeded to the vicinity of South Vietnam.

e. The Special Landing Force (SLF) was deployed to a position east of the mouth of the Saigon River.

f. Upon easing of tensions and reduction in alert status, advantage was taken of the opportunity to exercise certain of the airlift alert forces. This air mobility exercise consisted of a BLT, and the RLTH Headquarters, with equipment and supplies pre-loaded in aircraft, being moved from base camp, aboard the aircraft. 42 loaded aircraft and 33 empty aircraft were then launched at five minute intervals in order to test the air movement plan. The first aircraft was airborne in 3 hours and 55 minutes after troops received the order to move from base camp.

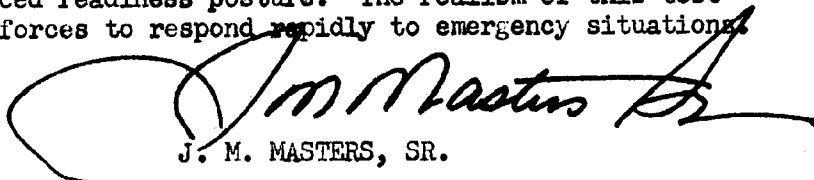
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Seven hours and 55 minutes later, all aircraft had been recovered, without an aborted mission, and the embarked troops established a hasty defense of the airfield. A high degree of inter-service teamwork and professional skill was demonstrated throughout the exercise.

2. The evacuation alert and airlift exercise was most beneficial to this command. The accelerated command, staff and unit actions taken placed our forces in a more advanced readiness posture. The realism of this test proved the ability of our forces to respond rapidly to emergency situations.



J. M. MASTERS, SR.

Copy to:
CTG 79.2
CTG 79.3

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Report of RVN Evacuation Alert

Wednesday, 21 August 1963: Special Landing Force is placed on 4 hour alert at Subic Bay due to deteriorating situation in RVN.

Monday, 26 August 1963: Amphibious Ready Group, with SLF aboard, is directed to a position one-days steaming distance from the entrance to the SAIGON RIVER.

Wednesday, 28 August 1963: PACAF and FMAW directed to position and hold all available C-130 aircraft on OKINAWA for possible airlift of two (2) Marine BLT's tailored for security operation in SAIGON in case evacuation of US civilians is required.

Thursday, 29 August 1963: 3d MarDiv placed airlift alert RLT (RLT HQ and 2 BLT's) on two-hour alert. FMAW positioned eleven KC-130F aircraft on OKINAWA 6 hours and 38 minutes after receiving the order. CTF 79 and CTF 76 were directed to prepare plans for introduction of one RLT into RVN for security duty, SLF to be included as part of RLT. They were also directed to plan for (1) surface lift only, (2) a combination of air and surface lift. TF 76 Amphibious Stand-by Ready Group ordered to OKINAWA. CTF 79 issues Warning Order 1-64 which established an RLT, LSG, Communications and Landing Force Headquarters elements and alerts a MAG for possible employment. BGen J. H. MASTERS designated CLF. The Landing Force Headquarters is directed to assemble on OKINAWA for planning purposes on 30Aug63. FMAW aircraft positioned on OKINAWA are placed under the operational control of the Comdr 315th Air Division, the designated airlift commander. CTF 79 advises COMSEVENTHFLT that consideration should be given to plans for deployment of organic fixed wing support if RLT committed and that loss of OPCON of FMAW KC-130F aircraft degrades readiness position of FMAW if a MAG should be required. COMSEVENTHFLT acts in support of this recommendation. PACAF is directed to position C-124 aircraft on OKINAWA to assist in airlift.

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Friday, 30 August 1963:

Personnel from FMAW, 3dMarDiv and Headquarters TF 79 assemble OKINAWA to form a skeleton Landing Force Headquarters; commences preparation frag orders and Outline Plans. CTF 76 outlines plans for use of SLF in SAIGON area. CMC authorizes release of Storm mount-out supplies. CG 3d MarDiv directs loading artillery units from FUJI for OKINAWA to support alerted units. CINCPACFLT directs embarkation one BLT to join Amphibious Ready Group in the objective area.

Saturday, 31 August 1963:

As a security measure, CINCPAC directs that air movements made to date and future ones in connection with the alert are to be identified as an Air Mobility Exercise, nicknamed RUNNING WATER. Surface lift BLT, less combat and service elements, completes embarkation on assigned shipping. 3d MarDiv Recon unit embarks for objective area.

Sunday, 1 September 1963:

Supplies and equipment for RLT Headquarters and one BLT loaded aboard assigned aircraft.

Tuesday, 3 September 1963:

Airlift alert eases to twenty-four hours. Landing Force Headquarters Outline Plan and Frag Orders completed.

Wednesday, 4 September 1963:

Recommendation made by CTF 79 that if aircraft mustered on OKINAWA are to be returned to normal OPCON, they be used for airlift exercise with RLT Headquarters and one BLT prior to departure. Recommendation approved and exercise held. Seventy-five (75) aircraft (42 loaded, 33 not loaded) launched and landed between 1330I and 2110I. No aborts. USMC and USAF aircraft returned to parent operational control. Remainder of surface lifted BLT completes embarkation and sails for objective area.

Thursday, 5 September 1963:

TF 79 units returned to normal readiness condition.

Friday, 6 September 1963:

LSG and other task organized units on OKINAWA deactivated from operational status but remain activated for planning.

Saturday, 7 September 1963:

Landing Force Headquarters disbanded.

ENCLOSURE (1)
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Thursday, 12 September 1963: Standby Amphibious Ready Group and Amphibious Ready Group, with BLT and SLF embarked, directed to return to SUBIC BAY. Subsequently, BLT with Standby Amphibious Ready Group relieves BLT with SLF as normal SLF reconstitution. Relieved BLT returns to OKINAWA. CTF 79 cancels Warning Order 1-64.

ENCLOSURE (1)

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