

MARINE OBSERVATION SQUADRON 6  
Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39  
1st Marine Aircraft Wing  
Fleet Marine Force Pacific  
FPO San Francisco, 96602

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From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding Officer, Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39  
(Attn: S-3)

Subj: Command Chronology for the period 1-30 June 1969

Ref: (a) WgO 5750.4  
(b) GruO 5750.1B

Encl: ✓(1) Part I; Organizational Data  
✓(2) Part II; Narrative Summary of Significant Highlights  
✓(3) Part III; Significant Events

1. In compliance with references (a) and (b), enclosures (1) through (3) are herewith submitted.

*A. K. Charlton*

A. K. CHARLTON

VMO-6 SAC FILES  
SER. # - 276-69  
DATE - 8 July 69  
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Group S-3  
#56-69

JUNE 1969

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## Part I: Organizational Data

## 1. Commanding Officer and Staff with inclusive dates:

Commanding Officer: LtCol B. D. BOULDIN 1-16 June 1969  
 Major A. K. CHARLTON 17-30 June 1969

Executive Officer: Major A. K. CHARLTON 1-16 June 1969  
 Major A. S. PIPER 17-30 June 1969

Operations Officer: Major A. S. PIPER 1-16 June 1969  
 Major J. A. BRANDON 17-30 June 1969

Intelligence Officer: Major C. R. BLEDSOE 1-30 June 1969

Administrative Officer: Major L. E. BYERS 1-30 June 1969

Logistics Officer: Major J. T. HAGAN 1-30 June 1969

## 2. Unit Location with inclusive dates;

Quang Tri, Republic of Vietnam 1-30 June 1969

## 3. Average monthly squadron strength:

<u>MARINE OFFICERS</u>	<u>MARINE ENLISTED</u>	<u>NAVAL OFFICERS</u>	<u>NAVAL ENLISTED</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
52	237	1	0	290

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## Part II: Narrative Summary of Significant Highlights

1 June 1969. Supporting the 3rd Marines on Operation VIRGINIA RIDGE, Seaworthy 97-9 directed Marine and Army artillery units on an enemy position and destroyed 4 .50cal pits, 4 bunkers, plus 80 meters of defensive trench lines. Seaworthy 97-3 was diverted to cover the 2nd ARVN Division and controlled Naval Gunfire plus Marine A-4's on an enemy supply area and demolished 13 bunkers and had 2 secondary explosions. Late in the day the OV-10/UH-1E team proved itself again in the successful extraction of 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion team Churchview. The team had been surrounded by NVA and taken light casualties. An OV-10 arrived on the scene first and commenced making runs with his own ordnance to stall the enemy attack. When the UH-1E's arrived they continued runs 360° around the team driving the enemy back and thus allowing the CH-46 transports of HMA-262 to make the extract. The recon credited Seaworthy aircraft with 6 KDA.

2 June 1969. In the early hours of the morning, the Seaworthy night alert package scrambled along with CH-46 aircraft and made an emergency extract of a recon team just South of the DMZ. Seaworthy 99-1 & 2 inserted six recon teams. On their first attempt to insert "FLIGHT TIME" they received heavy fire and 99-1 took one hit. After refueling and accessing their battle damage they returned and inserted the team on their alternate coordinates. In the afternoon they led an emergency extract of team SKY MERCHANT with Black Widow transports. Three Seaworthy OV-10's had covered the team after they came in contact and had run Marine and Air Force F/A in their support. 98-14 ran fixed wing and arty on NVA troops attacking team Elk Hunter. An HML-367 Huey gun section arrived and delivered their ordnance on the targets. The Huey leader then dropped his pods and picked up Elk Hunter's emergency MEDEVAC. Chatterbox 5 then proceeded to extract the rest of the team with 98-14 controlling the covering aircraft. Five Seaworthy OV's provided constant cover and control of rescue operations when a Cattlecall MEDEVAC chopper was downed attempting a sling pickup from "H", 3/9. As dusk approached, team Payable ran into a larger enemy force South of the Sanh. After OV-10A's had driven the enemy back with bombs and napalm delivered at close quarters by Marine F4's, SW 13-14 escorted CH-46's into the zone and completed a successful extraction.

3 June 1969. Answering a call for emergency medevacs from "H" 2/3, Seaworthy UH-1E's and OV-10's supported Cattlecall medevac CH-46's in five separate attempts to complete the mission. As each attempt was made the zone came alive with small arms, automatic weapons and mortar fires. The UH-1E's attacked each firing position again and again trying to drive back the enemy forces. The OV-10's controlled the flare ship during each try and when the choppers were shot up or left to refuel brought artillery and fixed wing fires into the fray. In the early morning light, the fifth time into the zone, the medevacs were completed.

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4 June 1969. Two recon packages were run today. The first section made 2 inserts and 6 extracts. They also covered the rescue of a downed CH-46 crew. The other section was shot out on two attempted inserts and completed one other. Four extracts were accomplished. Seaworthy O-1's supported the 4th Marines on Operation HERKIMER MOUNTAIN receiving heavy ground fire while controlling Marine F-4's. 20 bunkers were destroyed, 5 secondary explosions, and 6 KBA's were tallied. Just after dark, recons "FLIGHT TIME" came under heavy fire. Seaworthy OV-10's went to their aid, running fixed wing, artillery, and their own ordnance on the surrounding enemy. In the dark of the night radio contact with the team was lost, but the OV-10's stayed until dawn trying desperately to help. At first light the bodies of the team who had been overrun were spotted and we remained to assist in the recovery of the fallen Marines.

5 June 1969. At 0315 on the 5th, Seaworthy 97-14, 1st Lt. R. J. MORI RTY, launched on a night hop scheduled to allow him to complete his annual night minimums. The hop was secondarily airborne to assist in the night rocket belt watch. At dawn, while searching for a mortar site firing on A-2, he spotted 5 rockets sitting on launching pads aimed at Dong Ha. He immediately adjusted Naval Gunfire into the area and at Bingo Fuel turned the mission over to Seaworthy 98-5. 98-5 continued to assail the target with 2 flights of Marine A-4's and one of Navy F-8's while taking heavy .50cal fire from the ground. 27 enemy 122MM were destroyed and an attack on friendly forces was averted. 3 other VMO-6 O-1's were responsible for 10 KBA's within the 3rd Marine Division AO.

Seaworthy 98-12 found 12 NV4 walking on a trail at XD793391 while working with F Company, 2/4. His report to DASC was answered immediately by 6 flights of fixed wing. As each pass was made more and more bunkers were uncovered and enemy ground fire increased. Total BDI for the 6 flights was 7 KBA, 21 bunkers destroyed, 2 .50cal machine guns destroyed and one possible 23MM destroyed. Seaworthy 98-15 relieved 12 on station and continued to pound the enemy force with all available sources including Marine F-4's, and A-4's, 105's and 175MM guns. Adding 18 more bunkers and 3 secondary explosions to the total, 98-15 and the 2 flights he controlled received 23MM fire from Co Roc across the border into Laos.

7-10 June 1969. VMO-6 pilots, crews, and aircraft flew continuous cover for recon teams "FIGHTING MAD" and "AMERICAN BEAUTY", a downed helicopter crew who had attempted "FIGHTING MAD's" rescue, and the Sparrow Hawk units who went to their aid. "FIGHTING MAD" came into contact on the morning of the 7th. Seaworthy 98-8 was directed by DASC to cover the team and ran 3 flights of MAG-12 A-4's and one flight of HML-267 gunships in their support despite intense enemy ground fire. OV-10's continued to provide support until the extraction helicopters arrived. Cattlecall 5 was downed in the zone despite the volume of fire being put out by UH-1E gunships. An attempt to pull out the downed crew was tried after OV-10's had run 7 more flights of fixed

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wing on the well positioned, well dug-in enemy. Chatterbox 7 made the attempt but he too was crippled in the zone by enemy fire. VMO-6 TAC(A)'s continued to pound the VC forces with heavy fixed wing ordnance and as night fell the weather started to close in. Seaworthy 98-16 and his 40 started up artillery missions in an effort to "box in" the team and helicopter crews. A C130 flareship was on station along with C47 gunships and AC 119 gunships. Through the night a combination of these forces continued to protect the small Marine force. In the last hour before dawn the weather became so bad and the air so rough that the gunships could not maintain altitude in the hazardous mountain terrain and only the OV-10 remained, continually moving the artillery closer and closer and making daring and accurate night strafing runs in close proximity to the team between artillery shots. As the sun rose on the 8th the team was still intact. VMO-6 aircraft continued to lead the attempt to save the Marines. OV-10s prepped a nearby landing zone and Hueys covered the 46's as they attempted the assault, being shot out the first time, but completing the insert on the second go around. UH-1Es, OV-10s, and 46s all took hits in the assaults. As the day closed the reaction team was in place ready to move at dawn toward Fighting Mad's positions. Then, only 4,000 meters to the west, "American Beauty" was also in serious trouble. Twice, attempts to extract them with their medevacs ended with 46's taking hits as they approached the pick-up zone. Two UH-1E's and an OV-10 also took hits as they delivered continuous suppressive fire. With the artillery now closed in on all four sides of "Fighting Mad" giving them good protection the OV-10s spent the night over "American Beauty" using flareships, Spookies, Shadow aircraft, and Marine artillery to neutralize enemy thrusts at the beleaguered team. During the day on the day of the 9th "Fighting Mad" was joined by the reaction force and walked back to the LZ under cover of VMO-6 F1C(A)'s. Late in the day their medevacs were taken out and then the rest of the team and the downed chopper crews. On the 10th the reaction team joined "American Beauty" and escorted them to another LZ. While covering medevacs from this zone SW 98-3, Major A. K. CHARLTON and 1st Lt. J. E. STRUTEVANT, took .50cal fire in their engine. With only partial power left they executed an emergency landing without further damage and with no injuries. They were picked up immediately by the 46's they had been covering. The aircraft was lifted back to Quang Tri by a CH-53 the following day. Before dusk on the 10th "American Beauty" was lifted towards home. CG, 3rd MARDIV, praised VMO-6 pilots and crewmembers along with their counterparts throughout ProvMAG-39 for their outstanding ability and tireless efforts that resulted in the safe return of the two recon teams.

The other major action in this time from occurred with "H" Company, 2/9, and was similar in scope. A CH-46 crew attempting medical evacuations was shot down. Seaworthy aircraft supplied continuous support to the unit until a relief company could come to their aid.

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11 June 1969. The recon package of Seaworthy UH-1E's and OV-10's covering Black Widow transports inserted "Meeting House" deep into the DMZ. Black Widow 1 was slightly damaged when he engaged a tree branch on the insert. One hour later the team walked into an ambush and received 1 KIA and 1 wounded. Before the package could return to extract them, the total wounded had risen to 4. With VMO-6 birds skillfully providing covering fire the team was extracted intact.

12 June 1969. Seaworthy 98-12, Capt C. D. LEM and Sky Line, 1st Lt. E. A. HAMLIN ran 5 flights of air on enemy mortar positions firing at "Echo" Company, 2/3, and successfully destroyed 2 active 82MM mortars with 6 IBA's and 2 large secondary explosions.

15 June 1969. VMO-6 aircraft participated in the emergency extract of "Adventist" from YD090301 in the Da Krong Valley. Heavy fire was taken, but no aircraft were hit. After the extract Seaworthy 98-11 ran artillery throughout the area. Seaworthy 98-1 on an early morning launch ran 5 flights of Chu Lai based A-4's and F-4's on two NVA positions that had inflicted heavy casualties on "E" Company, 2/3. Total BDA was 10 bunkers destroyed, 2 huge secondary explosions. While the fixed wing was neutralizing the enemy position, Lazy "8" medevac went into "Echo's" position and removed their wounded and KIA's.

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17 June 1969. During the night the ARVN outpost at C-1 saw and heard an enemy unit of unknown size approaching them. A division of Seaworthy UH-1E's was airborne at once. As they arrived first light was breaking and they immediately spotted NVA troops in the pen and commenced a series of devastating rocket and gun runs. With all four aircraft firing at will the attack was crushed. One Seaworthy gunship was hit resulting in serious wounds to 1st Lt. J. ACREDACK and SSgt J. L. BRITTAIN. The pilot, Capt G. C. STEELE, immediately turned the plane towards the hospital ship on station and rushed his injured crewmembers to aid. Over 50 enemy soldiers were slain within 500 meters of the wire and the total count grew to over 200 as the enemy unit fled in defeat. VMO-6 aircraft also assisted Cattlecall medevacs on a mission with "E", 2/3, who needed 9 medevacs removed during the night. The first chopper into the zone was destroyed but the chase bird went into a second zone and picked up the medevacs and the injured crewmembers under our gunship cover. Seaworthy 98-17 controlled the flareship.

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 Major A. K. CHARLTON became Commanding Officer of VMO-6 today. LtCol B. D. BOULDIN was forced to give up command due to injuries received in last month's accident. He will be medevaced to Balboa Hospital, San Diego.

Due to runaway repairs at Quang Tri the squadron split into three sections today with the UH-1E's remaining home. The OV-10s will operate out of Phu Bai for this week while the O-1's will use Dong Ha.

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19 June 1969. Seaworthy 98-10 was searching for a Naval Gunfire target in the DMZ and received one round through the canopy. The small scratches received from flying plastic pieces did not keep 98-10 from completing the mission. 97-2 ran 2 flights of Lovebug F-4's on YD076631 prior to a sweep through the area by "F", 2/3. 10 bunkers were destroyed along with 2 secondary explosions. The ground troops later reported 3 KDAs. The recon package completed 2 inserts and 10 extracts for the day.

20 June 1969. Today Seaworthy 98-13 and Seaworthy Papa supported an Army unit by covering HMM-161 aircraft as they lifted 12 medevacs from a zone near Khe Sahn. After refueling at Vandergrift the UH-1E's returned to deliver ordnance on the suspected enemy position. Later in the day Seaworthy 98-2 ran more ordnance in the area and found 2 tunnel complexes. Seaworthy 97-4 ran Ringneck 367 on a bunker complex confronting the 3rd Marines and saw 3 large secondary explosions. Weather limited all other action the rest of the day and on the 21st.

22 June 1969. The weather started to clear today, but still hampered air operations. One O-1 found a bunker complex at YD 130740. Three flights of air left the area in total ruin. When the recon package approached one zone, they discovered it was occupied by NVA. The helicopters departed and SW 98-3 ran the C.F. aircraft on top of the enemy. Seventeen bunkers caved in on their heads and three KDAs were visible above ground. SW 98-3 & 4 and 97-8 provided gun and artillery cover for Cattlecall 46's taking Medevacs from "H" 2/4's position. After refueling 99-3 & 4 returned again gunning at enemy positions. SW 98-3 relieved 97-8 and directed Marine and Air Force F-4's onto the opposing forces.

23 June 1969. This morning two VMO-6 gunships covered the tactical lift of 3/9 into two zones South of Khe Sahn. Five CH-46's from HMM-262 conducted the lift. Prior to the insertion, a Seaworthy "Bronco" had prepped both zones with artillery and fixed wing ordnance. Skillful direction and execution by all concerned resulted in a perfectly executed helicopter assault. SW 97-6 searched the western DMZ and found active enemy movement at YD 182762. Artillery and air decimated the area and set off two secondary explosions while killing two NVA. In the afternoon the renovated runway was reopened and the fixed wing detachments returned home. Despite inclement weather and adverse conditions, VMO-6 had still met every commitment assigned to us.

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Enclosure (2)

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24 June 1969. Seaworthy pilots participated in two tactical lifts today. One O-1 conducted an air prep of the zone for "F" 2/3, and remained on station to cover the insert. SW 99-3 & 4 covered CH-46 aircraft who moved two companies of 2/4 to new positions just South of the DMZ as part of operation Herkimer Mountain. 98-10 ran three flights of F-4's and two batteries of artillery in the XD 9347 grid. This position was suspected to have launched rockets at Vandergrift Combat Base. Twice during the early evening, VMO-6 Hueys and Broncos covered Medevac choppers going into positions of 2/3.

25 June 1969. The recon package completed five insertions and one flip-flop of a radio relay team. In the afternoon one of the teams was extracted after coming into contact. OV-10's ran fixed wing around the team before and after the choppers took them out. SW 97-5 proceeded to an area where heavy enemy movement was being registered by G-2 sensors. The pilot and AO confirmed the activity and five flights of air produced five KBA, one .50 cal machine gun destroyed, with numerous secondary explosions and bunker destructions. 98-7 shot at four targets suspected of mortaring the 4th Marine outpost at Catapult. A short drop by an F-4, being controlled by SW 98-14, resulted in two minor friendly casualties. Two most probable causes are the abnormally high westerly winds that occur daily during the summer, and ground Marines standing up to water air strikes. Seaworthy air controllers constantly remind pilots and ground units alike to forestall similar accidents of this nature. The second F-4 in this flight developed engine trouble while on target, possibly being hit by ground fire, and the crew safely ejected over Dong Ha.

26 June 1969. Two VMO-6 OV-10's covering 3/9 on operation Utah Mesa came under heavy .30 cal machine gun fire while making suppressive strafing runs for a patrol in contact. SW 98-5 was credited with destroying the gun and its crew. 98-3 took two hits in his tail section, but returned to base without problems. 97-1 prepped the big razorback just North of the Rockpile to prepare it for 3rd Marine units attempting to clear the numerous caves of NVN snipers. O-1's controlled Naval Gunfire on targets near the mouth of the Ben Hai river, destroying over twenty ammo storage bunkers and filled the sky with exploding ammunition.

27 June 1969. VMO-6 "Broncos" controlled eleven flights of air onto enemy positions surrounding "G" 2/4 who were located at Landing Zone Sierra in the XD 9463 grid square. The fires effectively silenced the incoming mortar fire they had been receiving. SW 99-5 & 6 and 97-5 & 7 covered HMM-161 birds inserting the Bald Eagle reaction team near Hiway 9 between VCB and Khe Sahn. Recon completed two inserts, five extracts, and a flip-flop without taking fire. The slow down in enemy activity and resultant easing of our commitment becomes more apparent each day.

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28 June 1969. The fast thinking of 1stLt. R. D. O'CONNOR and his AO 1stLt. J. D. FORTUNE was responsible for quick reaction to the needs of a 4th Marine unit operating in the Herkimer Mountain area today and probably saved the lives of two injured Marines. Arriving over the patrol who was separated from its unit, they attempted to contact them without success. The patrols constant attempts to talk to the airplane without answering the aircraft's calls, lead the pilot and AO to suspect the ground unit had a receiver failure. Through a series of three hastily arranged message drops, the units situation as to wounded, enemy location, and desired assistance was obtained and 97-6 put a solid plan together and started the wheels in motion. A Medevac package was requested from DASC. While awaiting their arrival, they directed a relief patrol to the lost unit and another towards the enemy position. While moving forward, one of the point men suffered heat stroke and went into convulsions. 97-6's quick but thorough instructions to the approaching Medevac choppers led to a speedy extract of the wounded and sick who were rushed to needed medical aid.

Seaworthy Forward Air Controllers (Airborne) provided continuous cover to "L" 3/9, after they encountered a heavy enemy force in the hills Southwest of Khe Sahn.

30 June 1969. The 3rd Marines today called on VMO-6 to permanently close the caves on the razorback. Three flights of MIG-13 F-4's carrying 1000 lb. bombs were directed at cave entrances and many were sealed in the resulting rockslides. 97-9 controlled three flights on a rocket position on the plateau west of Vandegrift and destroyed ten bunkers while setting off two secondary explosions.

The all night rocket/mortar patrol was altered tonight. Due to friendly H&I fires, it had previously been forced to orbit East of the Quang Tri/Dong Ha complexes which is a full pacified and controlled area and had been of little value. New plans call for extensive restrictive fire plans over areas of previous rocket positions to the West of the field. Staggered and alternating times, combined with random dropping of flares and free fire zones are designed to keep enemy forces off balance.

For the third consecutive month VMO-6 accumulated over 3,000 flight hours in support of ground units engaged with Viet Cong and NVA units in Northern I Corps. Fiscal year total flight time was 29,378.5 hours.

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**Part III: Significant Events**

1. On 17 June 1969 Major A. K. CHARLTON relieved LtCol B. D. BOULDIN as Commanding Officer of VMO-6. Major A. S. PIPER became the Executive Officer.

2. Plans and preparations for arrival of our first Cobras within the next quarter are progressing, with emphasis on both aircrew and maintenance personnel training. Many squadron people have spent TAD periods with VMO-2 during this month.

3. For the third consecutive month VMO-6 surpassed the 3,000 hr mark by totaling 3,094.6. Fiscal year total of 29,378.5 must set several Marine Corps records for tactical squadrons.

4. The following officers were welcomed aboard during June:

Captain J. E. SHOEBER  
 Captain T. P. KEENAN

1/Lt R. D. O'CONNOR  
 1/Lt J. L. GULLIFORD

5. The following promotions were effected during June:

TO CAPTAIN

R. E. LUND  
 R. J. MURIARTY

TO STAFF SERGEANT

E. S. BRAMLET

TO SERGEANT

J. E. BEAL  
 L. T. ETTER  
 R. W. FRANZ

K. F. HARRINGTON  
 C. A. ROBBINS, jr  
 G. D. YARBOURGH

TO CORPORAL

R. M. BESSELL, jr  
 G. D. CADY  
 H. COOPERMAN  
 J. S. CUMMINGS

C. W. FRAMPUS, jr  
 J. R. MITCHELL  
 D. E. SNIDER  
 J. L. STONEKING

TO LANCE CORPORAL

K. COATS

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6. VMO-6 suffered the following casualties during the month of June:

Major L. M. DUKE  
1/Lt. J. R. ACREBACK  
SSGT. J. L. BRITTAIN

7. VMO-6 said farewell to the following officers during June:

Captain J. L. STEVENS III  
Captain J. E. BROWNE  
Captain L. G. ADAMS

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