

HEADQUARTERS

Marine Aircraft Group 12
 1st Marine Aircraft Wing
 Fleet Marine Force Pacific
 FPO San Francisco 96602

3:PDW:rro
 5750
 003A00973
 9 January 1973

SECRET

SECRET (Unclassified upon removal of enclosure)

From: Commanding Officer
 To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code HD)
 Via: (1) Commanding General, First Marine Aircraft Wing, Fleet Marine Force Pacific, FPO San Francisco
 (2) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Pacific, FPO San Francisco
 Subj: Semi-Annual Command Chronology for period 1 July 1972 to 31 December 1972
 Ref: (a) MCO 5750.1B
 (b) FMFPacO 5750.8B
 (c) ForO 5750.1A
 (d) WgO 5750.1B
 Encl: (1) MAG-12 (Fwd) Semi-Annual Command Chronology

1. In accordance with the provisions of references (a) through (d), enclosure (1) is submitted.
2. This cover letter is downgraded to unclassified upon removal of enclosure (1).

A.C. Macho
 D. C. MACHO

1st MAW S&C No.	Copy No.
90-73	#1

MAG 12 S&C	
CONTROL #	COPY #
009A73	1 of 3

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MAG-12 (Fwd)

Jul-Dec 1973

HEADQUARTERS
Marine Aircraft Group 12
1st Marine Aircraft Wing
Fleet Marine Force Pacific
FPO San Francisco 96602

SECRET

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

1 July 1972 to 31 December 1972

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ENCLOSURE (1)

~~SECRET~~PART IORGANIZATIONAL DATA1. DESIGNATION

CTU 79.3.7/MAG-12 (Fwd)

COMMANDERMACHO, D. C. Col USMC
(1 July - 31 December)SUBORDINATE UNITS

CTU 79.3.7.1/H&MS-12 Det

POWELL, W. B. Capt USMC
(1 July - 9 December)

CTU 79.3.7.2/MABS-12 Det

CONLEY, W. J. Maj USMC
(10-31 December)DUPONT, D. G. Maj USMC
(1 July - 31 August)ROBERTSON, H. R. Capt USMC
(1 September - 31 December)

Sub-Unit 2, H&MS-12

PIXTON, M. F. III Maj USMC
(1 September - 31 December)

CTU 79.3.7.3/VMA-211

RANNEY, D. G. LtCol USMC
(1 July - 31 December)

CTU 79.3.7.4/VMA-311

JOHNSTON, K. M. LtCol USMC
(1 July - 7 September)CALDAS, J. J. LtCol USMC
(8 September - 31 December)2. LOCATION

Bien Hoa Air Base, Republic of Vietnam (1 July - 31 December)

3. STAFF OFFICERS

Executive Officer

RAPP, J. M. LtCol USMC
(1-31 July)JACKSON, H. L. LtCol USMC
(1 August - 9 September)MAAG, E. R. LtCol USMC
(10 September - 31 December)~~SECRET~~

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S-1

MCELROY, T. R. Maj USMC
(1-27 July)PIXTON, M. F. Capt USMC
(28-31 July)CLINE, J. T. Maj USMC
(1 August - 19 December)DITTO, J. H. Maj USMC
(20-31 December)

S-2

SERRATA, A. T. CWO USMC
(1 July -31 December)

S-3

POORE, R. T. Maj USMC
(1-31 July)HOLLAND, K. D. Maj USMC
(1 August - 31 December)

S-4

INGLISA, A. M. Maj USMC
(1 July - 11 September)BLACKINGTON, R. C. Maj USMC
(12 September - 31 December)

HAD

PRIDGEN, N. E. Maj USMC
(3 September - 31 December)4. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

<u>USMC</u>		<u>USN</u>		<u>OTHER</u>		
<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>CIV</u>
79	752	3	13	0	0	2

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~~SECRET~~PART IINARRATIVE SUMMARY

1. During the reporting period, the average strength for Marine Aircraft Group 12 (Fwd) has been 82 officers and 765 enlisted. Personnel strength within Marine Aircraft Group 12 (Fwd) has declined steadily during the past six (6) months. However, liaison with higher headquarters concerning personnel problems is continuing and the trend of personnel losses without sufficient replacements is expected to be arrested during January and February 1973. In spite of the large turnover in assigned personnel, mission accomplishment remains high and is expected to remain so if adequate replacements are made available.

Casualties during the reporting period are as follows: hostile: one KIA, one MIA, nine WIAs. Non-hostile: one DAI, fourteen INJ/ILL/INCAP. Seventeen personnel were medevac cases.

During the reporting period there were 140 NJPs, 6 Summary courts-martial, 3 Special courts-martial, and 1 General courts-martial.

Planning with the MACV R&R representative concerning out-of-country R&R got underway during December 1972. Many Marine Aircraft Group 12 (Fwd) Marines will become eligible for out-of-country R&R during January 1973. Initial planning indicated that confirmed R&R quotas for MAG-12 (Fwd) will become available after 15 January 1973. During November MAG-12 (Fwd) had stand-by out-of-country R&R quotas made available for the first time and a total of 29 were utilized. Ten Marines were sent on 7 day R&R combined with 7 day annual leave under the 7 plus 7 program offered by MACV. Seven Marines were granted 7 day R&R in Hawaii and twelve were granted 7 day R&R in Bangkok. During the reporting period an additional 493 enlisted Marines were granted 3 day R&R in Vung Tau and 529 were granted one day R&R in Vung Tau.

2. MAG-12 (Fwd) S-2 continued to receive, process, and report intelligence information to the Group. During the reporting period 9,470 flights were briefed on the enemy and friendly situation in MR II, III, IV and Cambodia. The major units threatening Bien Hoa Airbase and necessitating most of the strikes in Bien Hoa Province were the 74B Artillery Bn, the 33rd NVA Infantry Regiment, and the 274th VC Regiment. Debriefing of combat missions resulted in the following BDA:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
KBA(C)	1743	
KBA(P)	116	
Structures	1387	736
Sampans	222	61
Forward Fighting Positions	945	293
Bunkers	1535	244
Gun Positions	81	27
Mortar Positions	31	2

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<u>Description</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
Tunnels	97	4
Tanks	6	2
Trucks	16	22
Bridges	42	51
Secondary Explosion	1567	
Secondary Fires	59	
OPs	9	
Fire Bases	1	
51 Cal Position	21	1
51 Cal Machinegun	2	
Trenches	15	
Roads cut	5	
Fighting Holes	110	
Storage Tanks	1	5
Command Posts	1	
105mm Howitzers	1	
Communications Center	1	
Bulldozers	1	
Water Buffalo KBA	25	
Ferrys	1	
Lambrettas	1	
Tents	4	
Meters Trenchline	1570	
130mm Field Gun	1	
POWs captured	9	
Artillery Positions	1	
Stacks of Supplies	73	15
Supply Caches	72	
Ammo Dumps	6	
Dams	1	
75mm Recoiless Rifle	2	
57mm Recoiless Rifle	2	

3. Combat operations for MAG-12 (Fwd) continued undiminished throughout the first half of the fiscal year. The scheduled combat sorties remained stabilized at 52 equating to a 1.62 sortie rate. Aircraft utilization over the reporting period has been 1.9 hours per aircraft per day with an average daily availability of 85%. The average squadron aviator has flown 35 sorties per month while the average Group aviator has maintained 19 sorties per month.

Anti-air activity has ranged from the intense .51 cal/23mm/37mm at Quan Loi airfield and around the An Loc area to the severe SA-7 threat present in the immediate western quadrant from Bien Hoa Airbase. Light to moderate ground fire has been encountered with decreasing frequency in MR IV while AAA in Cambodia and MR II has been erratic both in incident and intensity. Without a doubt MR III has been the hottest area in terms of frequency and severity of hostile reaction. September was the

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worst month for enemy fire as MAG-12 (Fwd) suffered four aircraft hit in action around Quan Loi Airfield. Two pilots were forced to eject from their striken A4Es. 1/Lt D. R. EISENBREY was rescued almost immediately while Capt J. P. WALSH parachuted into the heart of enemy held territory at Quan Loi and is still officially listed as MIA. (See MAG-12 (Fwd) Command Chronology 1-30 September 1972)

There were twelve attacks by fire during the period accounting for 343 122mm/107mm rockets fired at Bien Hoa Airbase. Total damage to MAG-12 (Fwd) was: one KIA, nine WIA; six A4Es received light to moderate damage; H&MS ordnance destroyed, Group Commander's HQ destroyed, several conex boxes destroyed; Operations office damaged, briefing room damaged, five M-35 trucks damaged, and the supply building/area damaged. A statistical breakdown of operations for the last six months follows:

	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEP</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>
Hours:	1842	1991	1771	1907	1828	1893
Sorties:	1499	1584	1476	1658	1564	1569
Ordnance (tons):	2844	2040	1749	2595	2444	2137
Availability:	84%	82%	82%	89%	89%	84%
A/C Utilization:	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.9
(hours per day/per A/C)						

AVERAGES

Hours:	1872
Sorties:	1559
Ordnance (tons):	2135
Availability:	85%
A/C Utilization:	1.9

TOTALS

Hours:	11,232
Sorties:	9,350
Ordnance (tons):	12,809

4. There have been basically three sources of supply for MAG-12 (Fwd): standard Navy/Marine Corps channels, interservice supply agreements, and informal field acquisition. After establishing regular communication and transportation links, Navy furnished supplies have been forthcoming in a fairly constant flow. Marine Corps supply support was inadequate for a number of reasons: items not in stock, long delays in filling requisitions, and lack of sufficient funds to satisfy the demands made on the system. The situation was ameliorated to some degree by the execution of interservice support agreements with USAF and U. S. Army. These agreements have been invaluable in procuring sorely needed first, second, and third echelon repair parts for MABS vehicles and equipment not available elsewhere. Through local sources, and at no expense to the Marine Corps, resourceful MAG-12 (Fwd) supply men were able to obtain a variety of items that have contributed to the overall efficiency of the command, such as house trailers for work spaces, typewriters, and copy machines to name a few.

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Military Airlift Command provided and continues to provide logistical support flights for the Group. This transportation channel has been the primary means for delivery of supplies and personnel. It has also been the prime mode for retrograde of equipment in excess or in need of repair/replacement. Experience has shown that the schedule of five flights weekly is normally sufficient provided the schedule is met. This has not always been the case. During the period October through November, there were fourteen flights cancelled or that overflow the base. The majority of cancellations were due to mechanical failure.

Embarkation plans for redeployment from Vietnam were completed and distributed to all interested commands. The plan is designed to be executed by either air or surface lift or a combination of both. Metal conex boxes were obtained from the Long Binh disposal point and have been provided to all units for mount-out. They have proven extremely useful in a secondary role by their adaptability as portable maintenance work shelters.

During this time frame MAG-12 (Fwd) assisted MAG-15 in acquiring various articles of equipment for the base in Thailand. Over 1000 metal frame bunks and mattresses along with wash sinks, fans, and air conditioners were shipped to Nam Phong.

The scaling down of the U. S. military commitment and the concomitant turn over of certain base facilities and functions have had an impact on the Group. Withdrawal of the major portion of USAF medical specialists has imposed an increasing burden on the MAG-12 (Fwd) medical section. In addition to treating Marines, our corpsmen and doctors are also caring for USAF and U. S. Army personnel as well as American and Vietnamese civilians.

Base air terminal facilities and functions are now in the hands of VNAF and a civilian contractor using Vietnamese workers. This situation initially led to problems and delays in shipping and receiving but was overcome by personnel gaining the requisite experience.

5. During this reporting period the Group maintained 95% trained personnel in the initial Human Relations training. MAG-12 (Fwd) has been 100% trained on two occasions but due to new personnel arriving it is a continuing process.

The orientation program for all newly arrived personnel continues to function well. Included is a brief by the Drug Exemption Officer, the Medical Section, Security Section, S-3, and the Chaplain. The aim is to make every new member of the command feel welcome and an integral part of the team.

The Human Affairs Office also conducted seminars with different Marines in the command on a bi-weekly basis. These have proven beneficial and informative. Since the beginning of this reporting period 2038 personnel have participated in the World Wide Urinalysis testing program with 89 being reported as confirmed users. Of these 49 were clinically confirmed and placed on the shop exemption program. Two Marines were medevaced to CONUS for drug detoxification. The easy accessibility of drugs at Bien Hoa continues to be a problem in rehabilitating individuals on the Drug Exemption program.

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~~SECRET~~PART IIISEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

2 July: MGen BROWN and party arrived 020500Z. Departed 021340Z.

4 July: First C-141 "MARLOG" transited Bien Hoa.

15 July: Group visited by ComFairWestPac and staff. RAdm MOORE, Captains BENSON, MOORE, LINDSEY and 1st MAW Supply Officer, LtCol WAITE discussed MAG-12 (Fwd) operations, maintenance/supply/GSE matters. Arrived 151210 local and departed 151431.

17 July: COMUSMACV and party visited MAG-12 (Fwd). Gen WEYAND arrived 1300H, was briefed by Group Commander on Air Group operations, toured flight line and addressed officers and men. Departed 1345H.

26 July: MGen FEGAN arrived and was briefed by Group Commander. Inspected security and RON.

27 July: MGen FEGAN and party departed 0645H. First MAW Band arrived and presented two excellent performances in consolidated mess. RON.

1 August: Between 0520H and 0540H Bien Hoa received a total of 101 rounds of 122mm rockets, 86 of which impacted the airbase. MAG-12 (Fwd) casualties were 1 KIA, 6 WIA, three aircraft sustained minor shrapnel damage. IMA Ordnance work center and Col MACHO's headquarters were destroyed. Flight operations were delayed 1 plus 40 due to runway closed for FOD/cratering.

6 August: Significant BDA this date: 4 tanks destroyed, 1 damaged (mobility kill). LtGen METZGER and aide arrived 052040H. Departed 060915H.

9 August: MGen BROWN and party arrived 081200Z. Departed 091630Z.

14 August: Mission #8885 (VMA-211) lead aircraft took .51 cal hit in wing fuel cell. Aircraft jettisoned all stores and made safe landing at Binh Thuy VNAF AB.

15 August: VMA-211 aircraft with battle damage recovered from Binh Thuy at 0800Z.

17 August: VAdm TALLEY, RAdm PRICE, RAdm OBERG escorted by Col FLEMING visited MAG-12 (Fwd) this date. Briefed by Col MACHO on operations and took tour of flight line.

20 August: Mission #F124 (VMA-311) lead aircraft took two .51 cal incendiary rounds in left intake. Aircraft recovered at Bien Hoa 0510Z.

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29 August: VMA-311 flew its 50,000 combat sortie in RVN this date. VMA-211 two sorties diverted to Ubon AB due to weather at homeplate.

31 August: Between 0555H and 0600H Bien Hoa Air Base received 61 rounds of 122mm rockets. No significant damage to MAG-12 (Fwd) facilities. Three VMA-211 aircraft sustained shrapnel damage. Two aircraft minor, one aircraft estimated 375 man hours to repair. Flight operations delayed due to FOD/cratering of runways and taxiways. First launch airborne 0910H, vice 0730H. All 52 sorties fragged were flown.

2 September: One A4E aircraft (VMA-211) lost as a result of direct enemy action in vicinity of XT812899 at 020955Z. Pilot ejected and was rescued by helo 021045Z, RTB uninjured. Wingman diverted to Tan Son Nhut due to weather at Bien Hoa.

6 September: BGen TAYLOR arrived Bien Hoa 1330H. Briefed by Group Commander and Staff. Toured MAG-12 (Fwd) facilities, departed 1630H.

7 September: One aircraft damaged (VMA-211). A4E took .51 cal hit which passed through drop tank and penetrated wing fuel cell. Recovered at Bien Hoa 071535H.

10 September: At 0955H a major portion of the VNAF ordnance dump exploded. Exact cause of the explosion remains unknown. Suspect ammo handling accident or sapper/sabotage. Damage to MAG-12 (Fwd) facility light. Over-pressure and flying debris caused minor damage, mostly to living quarters. Flight operations were delayed 40 minutes due to FOD on runways and taxiways. USMC casualties: 4 wounded, treated and returned to duty.

17 September: One A4E (VMA-311) received small cal hit through emergency generator panel. Recovered at Bien Hoa 170925H. Eighteen sorties cancelled by 7th AF due to target weather.

24 September: One A4E received battle damage when it was hit in port wheel well by 23mm HEI round. Recovered at Bien Hoa 241620H.

LtGen WILSON, CG, FMFPac arrived Bien Hoa 0815H. Briefed by Group Commander and Staff. Toured MAG-12 (Fwd) facilities, departed 1400H.

26 September: One pilot MIA and one A4E lost as a result of direct enemy action. Captain J. P. WALSH ejected after his aircraft was struck by enemy fire on pull-off from target attack vicinity Quan Loi airfield. Capt WALSH was observed to land in heavy foliage in a rubber plantation. His parachute was visible by the FAC for approximately 20 minutes after which it disappeared. Neither radio nor visual contact was established by the FAC or rescue aircraft. Recovery team helos were driven from the area by ground fire. SAR effort discontinued due to darkness and the uncertainty of downed pilot's position.

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27 September: Gen ANDERSON, Assistant CMC, arrived Bien Hoa 1320H. Briefed by Col MACHO and Staff and toured MAG-12 (Fwd) facilities. Departed 1545H.

01-31 October: Due to intelligence reports of high probability of ABF and sapper attack MAG-12 (Fwd) deployed two thirty man reaction platoons in the flight line and cantonment area for increased sapper detection. These platoons were drawn from H&MS and MABS and remained deployed each night from dusk to dawn throughout the month.

17 October: MGen BROWN, CG 1st MAW, and his staff arrived Bien Hoa 171200H. Briefed by Col MACHO and toured MAG-12 (Fwd) facilities. Departed 171700H.

19 October: Damage to one A4E. Pilot experienced electrical failure followed by fuel flow guage exploding in his face. Made immediate landing Bien Hoa with eight unexpended MK82 LDGP bombs. Cleared runway with hot brakes which ignited fuel flowing from dump inadvertently left on. Pilot received minor burns to hand and face. A4E received CHARLIE damage.

21 October: One A4E received minor battle damage when struck by single small arms round in port aileron. Aircraft recovered at Bien Hoa.

22 October: Between 0500H and 0520H Bien Hoa AB received sixty-one rounds of 122mm and 107mm rockets. USMC casualties: 1 WIA. No significant damage to MAG-12 (Fwd) facilities and flight operations were routine with full fifty-two fragged sorties flown.

01-11 November: Due to intelligence reports of high probability of attack by fire and/or sapper attack, MAG-12 (Fwd) continued to deploy two thirty man reaction platoons in the flight line and cantonment area for increased sapper detection. These platoons were drawn from H&MS and MABS and remained deployed each night from dawn to dusk until the 11th of the month.

9 November: Hellborne 04-1 (MSN #W007), VMA-211, aborted takeoff due to a blown tire, experienced control difficulty and ejected prior to departing runway. Pilot was uninjured. Aircraft rolled approx 300' down slight embankment, exploded, and burned for strike damage (See VMA-211 AAR 4-73A; A4E 151191; 9 Nov 1972, pilot KEMPER).

MGen BROWN, CG 1st MAW, and staff, enroute to Nam Phong visited briefly with the Group Commander.

10, 11 November: All officers and men of MAG-12 toasted the Marine Corps Birthday at four traditional celebrations. On alternate days each squadron scheduled 32 and 20 sorties respectively enabling all hands to participate in the festivities. CG Task Force Delta attended as guest of honor. Visiting dignitaries included BGen TINH, and Col CHIEU of the Vietnamese Air Force.

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12 November: At 0300H and again at 0515H Bien Hoa Air Base received fifty-five rounds of 122mm rockets. MAG-12 (Fwd) sustained no casualties or aircraft damage. One rocket scored a direct hit on the storage area behind Group Headquarters resulting in loss of paint, tires, tire tubes, and heavy damage to one MMF. Flight operations were delayed one hour due to runway cratering and FOD.

24 November: VAdm HOLLOWAY, ComSeventhFlt, arrived Bien Hoa at 241015H, was briefed by the Group Commander and his staff, and toured MAG-12 (Fwd) facilities. He departed at 241145H.

26 November: LtGen METZGER, CG III MAF, arrived Bien Hoa at 1415H. Briefed by Col MACHO and staff and toured Group area. Departed at 1600H.

29 November: BGen TAYLOR, CG Task Force Delta, arrived Bien Hoa 1000H, visited with Group Commander, and departed at 1200H.

1 December: At 0110H Bien Hoa Air Base received 17 rounds of 122mm rockets, one of which impacted the USMC supply area and caused light damage. There were no casualties and flight operations were routine.

4 December: At 0420H Bien Hoa Air Base received eight rounds of 122mm rockets. MAG-12 (Fwd) sustained no casualties or aircraft damaged. Flight operations were not affected.

9 December: At 1445H, Capt G. L. EISERT completed the 10,000th combat sortie flown by MAG-12 (Fwd) during the present deployment at Bien Hoa, RVN.

12 December: MajGen BROWN, CG 1st MAW, visited MAG-12 (Fwd) from 1040H to 1615H. Tour included luncheon with Chief of Staff, VNAF, and a brief by CG, TRAC, USA.

15 December: At 0100H and 0410H Bien Hoa AB received 17 rounds of 122mm rockets. MAG-12 (Fwd) sustained no injuries or major damage to facilities. Flight operations were normal.

16 December: At 0115H, 0320H, and again at 0910H Bien Hoa AB received 23 rounds of mixed 122 and 107mm rockets marking the first instance during the present deployment that there have been three attacks by fire in a twelve hour period. There was no damage to MAG-12 (Fwd) personnel, facilities or equipment. Flight operations were delayed forty minutes due to FOD.

22 December: BGen TAYLOR, Ass't Wing Commander, FMAW, arrived Bien Hoa AB at 1145H. During his visit he toured squadron working areas extending holiday greetings to all MAG-12 (Fwd) Marines. BGen TAYLOR departed at 1445H.

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24 December: 275 MAG-12 (Fwd) Marines were transported from Bien Hoa to Tan Son Nhut by Marine 6 x 6 vehicles where they saw the Bob Hope Show.

25 December: MAG-12 (Fwd) stood down from combat operations for twenty-four hours in observation of the Christmas truce.

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PART IV

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. MAG-12 (Fwd) Command Chronologies July through December 1972 forwarded monthly to Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code HD).

Tab A- News Release, #001 for 19 May 72 -----[See attached list]

SECRET

Tab A-----NEWS RELEASES-----by date line

1. [Missions in Support of SVN Forces], 22 May 72
2. [8th SOS conducts "familiarization hops"], 22 May 72
3. GOON STRIKE, 25 May 72
4. SERIOUS WORK, N/D (release #8)
5. AMMUNITION AREA DESTROYED, 1 Jun 72
6. MARINES AID OREHANS [of KE-SAT Orphanage], 2 Jun 72
7. BRIDGE DESTROYED, 22 Jun 72
8. RED TANKS DESTROYED, 13 Jun 72
9. STARS AND STRIPES [on Bomb], 14 Jun 72
10. AVIONICS ELECTRICIAN, 23 Jun 72
11. ORDNANCE MAN, 26 Jun 72
12. ORDNANCE CREW MEMBER, 27 Jun 72
13. GROUE TIRE SHOP, 1 Jul 72
14. SHOP TALK, 6 Jul 72
15. 100 ENEMY "KILIS", 15 Jul 72
16. 1,000th SORTIE, 10 Jul 72
17. GENERAL CHAT, 24 Jul 72
18. GUN POSITION DESTROYED, 7 Aug 72
19. ENEMY COMMAND POST, 7 Aug 72
20. NGUYEN-MINH DUONG ORPHANAGE, 13 Aug 72
21. TANK DESTROYED, 16 Aug 72
22. 50,000th COMBAT SORTIE, 30 Aug 72
23. 300th COMBAT SORTIE, 30 Aug 72
24. MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP-12, 20 Oct 1972
25. MARINES SUPPORT OEPHANAGES, 2 Nov 72

(Continued)

26. 10,000th Combat SORTIE, 11 Dec 72

CLIPPINGs

27. Pacific Stars and Stripes, 3 Aug 72 [Incomplete articles - "AB Zayday: Reds Cash in" and Red Shells Hit Lien Hoa"]
28. Richmond News Leader, p 32, 15 Aug 72 ["Air Marines Go to War Again"]
29. The Washington Post, 1 Oct 72 ["For Marine Airmen War is Still Very Real"]
30. Pacific Stars & Stripes, 30 Nov 72 ["Marines Still in Action in Vietnam's Air War"]

HEADQUARTERS
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP-12
FPO 96602

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

22 MAY, 1972
RELEASE NO. 001

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, May 19 - Marine A4-E "Skyhawks" arrived at Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam and within hours flew close air support missions in support of South Vietnamese forces.

Piloting the first strike was LtCol. Kevin M. Johnston (Indianapolis, Ind.), and Maj. Sid Snedeker (Honolulu, Hawaii), both with Marine Attack Squadron-311 (VMA-311), Marine Aircraft Group-12 (MAG-12). The Leathernecks' mission was in support of South Vietnamese troops engaged with enemy forces 65 miles southwest of Bien Hoa.

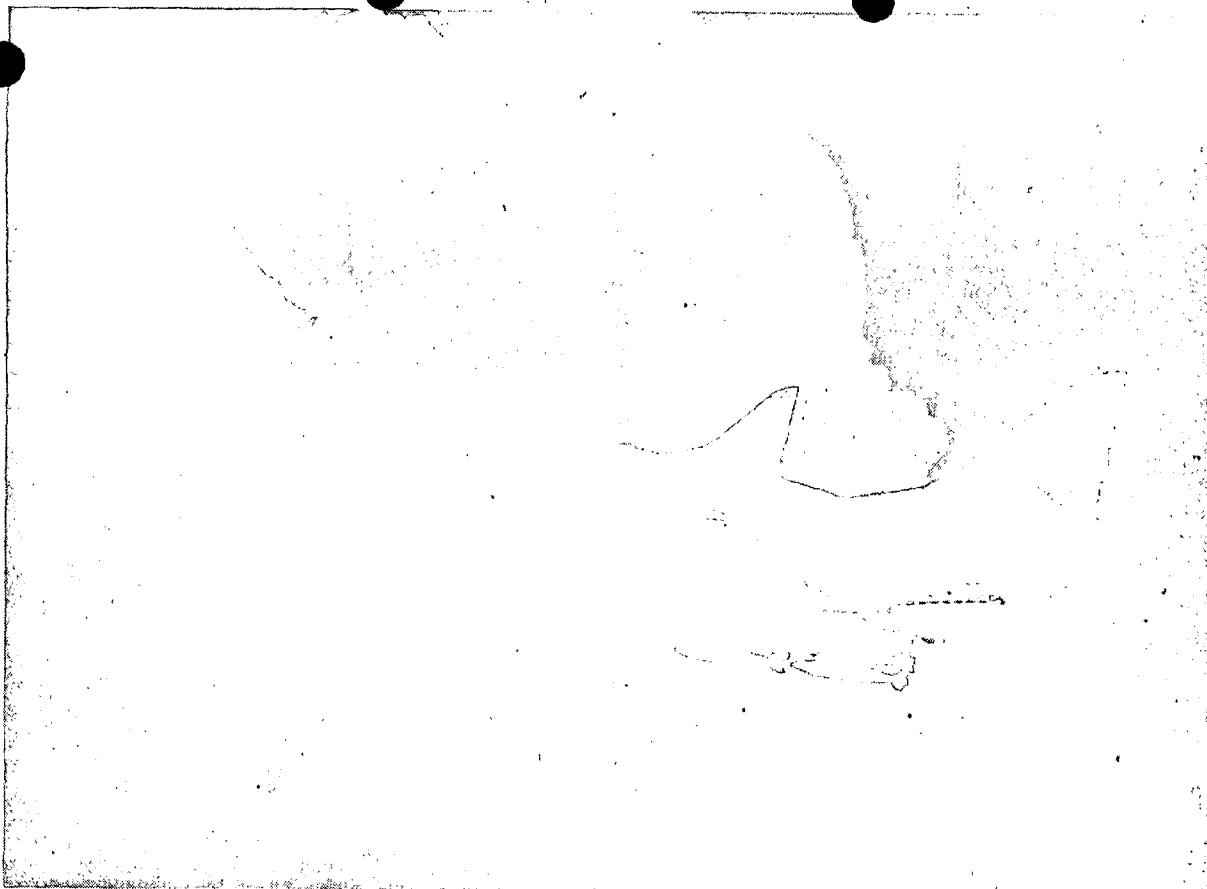
Johnston, squadron commander of the "Tom Cat" squadron said, "the flight was pretty standard. The Forward Air Controller flying overhead explained exactly what was going on in the target area. Along with us on the flight were two USAF A-37 "Dragonflies". As soon as the A-37s completed their drops my wingman and I laced the target area with 500 pound bombs."

Total number of sorties flown during the first day of operations include four by VMA-311 and an equal number by VMA-211 commanded by LtCol. Willis E. Wilson (Mission Viejo, Calif.).

Commanding MAG-12 is Colonel Dean C. Macho.

-usmc-

A-1



SKYHAWKS RETURN

Two bomb-laden A-4 Skyhawks of Marine Attack Squadron-311 Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, fly towards enemy positions south of Bien Hoa. Nicknamed the "Tom Catters" squadron, VMA-311 recently returned to Vietnam and is presently based in

Bien Hoa, north of Saigon. Within hours after arriving in Vietnam, the Tom Catters along with VMA-211 began flying their specialty, close air support missions.

(Photo by Capt. Joe Collins)

Marine 'Skyhawks' smash two NVA tanks at Anloc

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, — Through drizzling rain and overcast skies, two Marine pilots, flying A-4 Skyhawks, recorded their first Communist "tank kills" one mile south of embattled An Loc.

Credited with destroying the Red tanks were 1st Lt. Sebastien V. Massimini (Harahan, La.), flying lead ship and Capt. William C. Peters (Middletown, R. I.) in the wingman slot, both of Marine Attack Squadron 311, Marine Aircraft Group 12; 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Even though this was Massimini and Peters first

combat mission together, it is not their first duty together. In 1968, when Massimini was a candidate for Officers Candidate School, Quantico, Va., Peters served as his platoon commander. They did not see each other again until earlier this year when both were assigned to the 1st MAW.

The Forward Air Controller (FAC) for the mission advised that he spotted two enemy tanks in an open area, with friendly forces approximately 1,000 meters to the south of the

targets.

"The clouds seemed to cover

everything, until we descended low enough and a small patch of open ground was visible. The tanks were parked to one side of a wooded area like 'sitting ducks,'" said Massimini.

"Each of us made two runs with bombs, and after the first pass we could see one of the tanks burning. After the bomb runs we made a final pass firing "Zuni" rockets. It was after our final pass that the clouds seemed to engulf the target site, making it impossible for us to observe final results on the tanks," add Peters.

However, later assessment credited the Leathernecks with destroying two Communist tanks.

w/A-8

Vietnam

BIEN HOA AIR BASE — Marine A4-E "Skyhawks" arrived at Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam and within hours flew close air support missions in support of South Vietnamese forces. Piloting the first strike was LtCol Kevin M. Johnston.

(Indianapolis, Ind.), and Maj Sid Snedeker (Honolulu, Hawaii), both with Marine Attack Squadron-311 (VMA-311), Marine Aircraft Group-12 (MAG-12). The Leathernecks' mission was in support of South Vietnamese troops engaged with enemy forces 65 miles southwest of Bien Hoa.

LtCol Johnston, squadron commander of the "Tom Cat" squadron said, "the flight was pretty standard. The Forward Air Controller flying overhead explained exactly what was going on in the target area. Along with us on the flight were two USAF A-37 "Dragonflies." As soon as the A-37s completed their drops my wingman and I laced the target area with 500 pound bombs."

w/A-1

HEADQUARTERS
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP-12
FPO 9660225 MAY 1972
RELEASE NO. 002FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, May 22 - For the first time at Bien Hoa Air Base, Air Force pilots of the 8th Special Operations Squadron (8th SOS) are taking Marine pilots of Marine Aircraft Group-12 (MAG-12) on "familiarization hops" in South Vietnam.

This "familiarization hop" or orientation program came about with MAG-12s arrival at Bien Hoa Air Base and re-entry into Vietnam last week. The type of aircraft used is the Air Force A-37 "Dragonfly", a two-seat lightweight fighter-bomber. The A-37 was chosen because it is the most compatible to the Marine A4-E "Skyhawk", used by MAG-12 in Vietnam.

Before each flight the Marine pilots are briefed on rules of engagement, tactics, what to expect concerning enemy ground fire, and anything else concerning the target area.

On orientation missions two Marine A4-Es and two Air Force A-37s go out together. Air Force pilots fly the A-37s with a Marine pilot in their right seat and the A4-Es, a single-seat aircraft, piloted by Leathernecks.

The Forward Air Control (FAC) provides pilots instructions as to exactly what target area is to be hit and enemy activity within the target area. Marines in the A-37s right seat listen to the FACs instructions and observe the A-37 pilot's reactions.

During a recent flight ground fire was received by an A-37, which resulted in a minor injury to the pilot, Air Force 1st Lt. Kenneth L. Greene (Middletown, Ohio).

Flying with Greene was Marine 1st Lt. Mike Higgins (Charlotte, N.C.), VMA-311, who was on his first combat mission.

Greene, describing the action, said, "We had just let down for our first pass when a small arms round smashed the instrument panel in front of me. It came through the front end of the craft and shattered a plastic box in the cockpit with a piece catching me just below the eye. I was sort of scared and must have let up on the throttle for an instant because I found that we were

- more -

A-2

2-2-2

400 feet lower than we should be, so I immediately gained altitude and radioed the leader that we had taken a round."

Observing from the right seat, Marine Higgins added, "I could hear the round slap into the aircraft, but I didn't know where it was. I looked over at Lt. Greene and saw a small trickle of blood just below his left eye. At this time I wasn't sure just how badly he was hit, but he continued to fly the bird with no problem, so I assumed it was only a minor cut and nothing else. When everything was under control again I saw that the bullet had lodged behind the seat."

Although this was Higgins' first combat mission, this misfortune did not dampen his spirits. Less than 24-hours later, Higgins, piloting his A4-E "Skyhawk", flew his first solo combat mission.

- U S M C -

A-2

GOOD STRIKE
Release No 005
By: Cpl. Rick Alexander

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, May 25 -- Three Marine A4-E "Skyhawks" of Marine Attack Squadron ~~311~~³¹¹ (VMA-311), Marine Aircraft Group-12 (MAG-12), teamed up and blasted enemy positions 60 miles southwest of here destroying 15 fortified structures, damaging five others and killing 20 North Vietnamese defenders.

Leading the 3-ship flight was Capt. Bruce Cheever (Tucson, Ariz.) with Capt. Conrad H. Cadman (Orchard Park, N.Y.) and 1stLt. Charles F. Spietsma (Tampa, Fla.) serving as wingmen.

Spietsma, on his first solo combat mission, described initial contact with the target area and said, "A Vietnamese Forward Air Control (FAC) described the target as being NVA structures located on one side of a canal, with "friendlies" on the opposite side. As we descended over the target we could see the small enemy huts."

"Although we could not see enemy ground fire, the FAC radioed that there was .50 cal machine-gun fire coming from the target area. Since I was carrying rockets, it was my job to suppress this fire, so I made a few passes rippling the area with rockets," added flight leader Cheever.

Cadman, also on his first solo mission, commented that, "After the forward observer described the target area and exactly where to strike, it was easy. The small structures were spread down the canal and we just walked the line with our bombs."

VMA-311 is commanded by LtCol. Kevin M. Johnston.

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A-3

#006

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam

SERIOUS work as Marine SCpl Edward S. Williams (Washington D.C.) an ordnanceman with Marine Attack Squadron-211, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, readies bomb load under an A-4 Skyhawk jet. Within hours after arriving at Bien Hoa Air Base, 15 miles north of Saigon, Williams' squadron, the "Wake Island Avengers", began blasting targets in support of South Vietnamese forces fighting Communist forces. MA-211 is commanded by LtCol Delbert G. Ramsey.

(A-4 BIEN HOA BASE BY CAPT JES COOPER USMC)

-usmc-

AMMUNITION AREA DESTROYED
Release No. 008
By: Cpl. Rick Alexander

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, June 1 -- Two Marine A4-E "Skyhawks" flew a close air support mission to Kien Long, Kien Geng Province, 120 miles south of Bien Hoa, to destroy three ammunition warehouses and silence a .50 caliber gun position.

Piloting the lead jet was Capt. Gordon I. Eisert (Louisville, Ky.), with Capt. Judson D. Hilton Jr. (St. Paul, Minn.), flying in the wingman slot. Both of Marine Attack Squadron-211, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

The two-ship flight flew south into Military Region IV where they joined up with the forward observer (FAC), who led the Marines to a known enemy ammunition storage area.

Eisert in the lead plane, made the first pass on three structures located near a canal and spotted enemy troops running for cover.

"I didn't know exactly what to think," said Eisert.

Hilton added, "Immediately after Gordy shouted at me, the FAC directed me to drop my bombs just about the same place Gordy had dropped his except a little to the left where an enemy gun was pouring fire at Gordy. I couldn't actually see the gun position, but I thought I saw muzzle flashes so that's where I aimed my bombs."

With the menacing gun out of the way the Leathernecks directed their efforts towards the ammunition storage area.

"On our second pass Gordy went in first getting one secondary explosion. I made the final pass and pickled the target resulting in two additional secondary explosions," declared Hilton.

The FAC credited the Marines with destroying ammunition supplies, one .50 caliber gun position and three defenders killed.

From Vietnam

Marines once again carry out tasks of ground support acts, civic actions

by CPL. RICK ALEXANDER

AMMUNITION AREA DESTROYED

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, June 1 (Delayed) — Two Marine A-4E "Skyhawks" flew a close air support mission to Kien Long, Kien Gang Province, 120 miles south of Bien Hoa, to destroy three ammunition warehouses and silence a .50 caliber gun position.

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secondary explosions," declared Hilton.

The FAC credited the Marines with destroying ammunition supplies, one .50 caliber gun position and three defenders killed.

MARINES AID ORPHANS

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, June 2 (Delayed) — What's camouflage green, and brings smiles from more than 100 orphans near Bien Hoa Air Base.

Well if you guessed the Jolly Green Giant you're wrong, but if you guessed Marines stationed at Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam, of Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, you're absolutely correct.

The Leathernecks first discovered the orphanage through the group's chaplain, Navy LCdr. Thomas W. Kuhn.

Roman Catholic Sisters

opened Ke-Sat Orphanage in Ho-Nai Province, 7 miles from Bien Hoa in 1960, and today care for 113 homeless waifs ranging in age from newly born to 16-year-old.

Originally a project of the USAF, the orphanage, has been somewhat misplaced due to the near stand down of the base a few months ago. Air Force personnel still visit the orphans at least once a week, and do what they can for the children.

The Marines, who have recently "adopted" the orphanage, plan to make daily visits for as long as possible. On each visit, candy, cookies, sodas and donated articles have been delivered.

At present the Leathernecks are renovating sleeping quarters, repairing worn-out screening, and bringing to life an old generator which will provide additional electricity.

MARINES AID ORPHANS
Release No. 009
By: Cpl. Rick Alexander

BIEU HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, June 2 -- What's camouflage green, and
brings smiles from more than ¹⁰⁰ 100 orphans near Bien Hoa Air Base?

Well if you guessed the Jolly Green Giant your wrong, but if you guessed
Marines stationed at Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam, of Marine Aircraft
Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, your absolutely correct.

The Leathernecks first discovered the orphanage through the group's
chaplain, Navy LCDR. Thomas W. Kuhn (Tiffin, Ohio).

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daily visits for as long as possible. On each visit, candy, cookies, sodas
and donated articles have been delivered.

At present the Leathernecks are renovating sleeping quarters, repairing
worn-out screening, and bringing to life an old generator which will provide
additional electricity.

-usmc-

A-L



MAKING FRIENDS — Marine Cpl Donald R. Carroll (Park City, Kentucky) shares a can of pop with a young Vietnamese girl from Ke-Sat orphanage, seven miles from Bien Hoa Air Base. Carroll, a mechanic with Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron-12, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, visits the orphanage during his spare time and brings a little cheer to the more than 100 children cared for at Ke-Sat. (USMC Photo by Capt Joe Collins USMCR)

Orphanage Adopted By Marines

By Cpl Rick Alexander

BIEN HOA AIR BASE — What's camouflage green, and brings smiles from more than 100 orphans near Bien Hoa Air Base?

Well if you guessed the Army Green Cam you're wrong but if you guessed Marines stationed at Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam, of Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, you're absolutely correct.

The Leathernecks first discovered the orphanage through the group's chaplain, Navy LCdr. Thomas W. Kuhn (Tiffin, Ohio).

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HEADQUARTERS
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP-12
1st Marine Aircraft Wing
FFO 96602

BRIDGE DESTROYED

Release No. 020

By: Cpl. Rick Alexander

BTRW HOI AIR BASE, Vietnam, June 22 — Marine pilots, flying A-4 Skyhawks, and dropping conventional bombs destroyed a Communist re-supply bridge 30 miles northwest of Saigon in South Vietnam.

Piloting the recent bridge destruction strike was Capt. Gordon L. Eisert (Louisville, Ky.), and 1stLt. Albert E. Bauman III (Cartersville, Md.), both with Marine Attack Squadron-211, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

The pontoon bridge was used as a Communist tank crossing and a passage to truck materials for re-supplying North Vietnamese soldiers fighting against South Vietnamese forces.

The Forward Air Controller (FAC) led the Marines toward the target site until radio contact was made with the South Vietnamese ground commander, who was most anxious for the bridge to be destroyed.

Prior to making the first pass, the FAC asked the pilots if they would be able to destroy the bridge.

Eisert, in the lead A-4, asked, "How many beers do you have? I'd like to bet a couple that we get it on our first time around."

The FAC, unassured, replied, "I don't have that many beers to bet." However, immediately after the first blasting of the 50-foot span, the ground commander, overwhelmed at the accuracy, said, "I'll gladly owe each of you a couple of beers!"

-more-

bridge destroyed
2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2

"The guys on the ground directed our strikes to within a few meters of the target," said Bauman. "On our initial descent we battered the bridge with our 500 lb. bombs and on our second and third runs we got one secondary explosion and one secondary fire, using "Zuni" rockets."

No enemy ground fire was reported as the two A-4 Skyhawks left the target area engulfed in flames and the bridge completely destroyed by conventional bombs and "smart" Marines.

-20mc-

RED TANKS DESTROYED
Release No. 023
By: Cpl. Alexander

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, June 13 -- Through drizzling rain and overcast skies, two Marine pilots, ~~one once the platoon commander for the other at Officers Candidate School~~, flying A-4 Skyhawks recorded their first ~~two~~ Communist "tank kills" one mile south of embattled An Loc.

Credited with destroying the Red tanks were 1st Lt. Sebastien V. Massimini (Harahan, La.), flying lead ship and Capt. William C. Peters (Middletown, R.I.) in the wingman slot, both of Marine Attack Squadron-311, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Even though ~~it~~ this was Massimini and Peters first combat mission together, it is not their first duty together. In 1968, when Massimini was a candidate for Officers Candidate School ~~at~~ Quantico, Va., Peters served as his platoon commander. They did not see each other again until earlier this year when both were assigned to the 1st MAW.

The Forward Air Controller (FAC) for the mission advised that he ~~had~~ two enemy tanks in an open area, with friendly forces approximately 1,000 meters to the south of the targets.

"The clouds seemed to ~~be~~ cover everything, until we descended low ~~enough~~ and a ~~small~~ small patch of open ground ~~was~~ was visible. The tanks were parked to one side of a wooded area like 'sitting ducks', " said Massimini.

"Each of us made two runs ~~with~~ bombs, and after the first pass we could see one of the tanks burning. After the bomb runs we made a final pass firing "Zuni" rockets. It was after our final pass that the clouds seemed to engulf the target site, making it impossible for us to observe final results on the tanks," added Peters.

-more-

A-8

tank kills
2-2-2-2-2

12th assessment *LEADER*

However, ~~we~~ credited the ~~Massimini~~ with destroying two Communist tanks.
This ~~a~~ tank destruction flight marked Massimini's 20th combat mission
earning him his first Air Medal. Peters was ~~flying~~ his 25th mission.

-usmc -

CAPTION FOR ART
Release No. 023

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, June 18

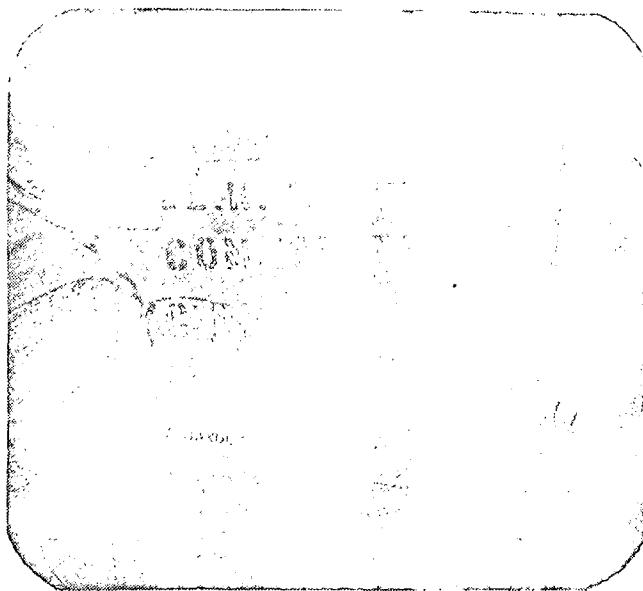
FIRST TANKS DESTROYED -- 1st Lt. Sebastien V. Massimini (Harahan, La.), (left), and Capt. William C. Peters (Middletown, R. I.), A4-pilots of Marine Attack Squadron-311, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, paint a tank silhouette on an A-4 Skyhawk. The Leathernecks were ~~expeditied~~ with destroying two Communist tanks one mile south of An Loc. VMA-311 is one of two Marine A-4 Squadrons serving at Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam.

(OFFICIAL U.S. MARINE CORPS PHOTO BY CAPT. JOE COLLINS USMCR)

-usmc-

A-8

Vietnam



FIRST TANKS DESTROYED — *Lt. Sebastien V. Massimini (Harahan, La.), (left), and Capt. William C. Peters (Middletown, R.I.), A-4 pilots of Marine Attack Squadron 311, Marine Aircraft Group 12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, paint a tank silhouette on an A-4 Skyhawk. The Leathernecks were credited with destroying two Communist tanks one mile south of An Loc. VMA-33 is one of two Marine A-4 squadrons serving at Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam. (USMC Photo by Capt. Joe Collins, USMCR)*

BIEN HOA AIR BASE — Through drizzling rain and overcast skies, two Marine pilots flying A-4 Skyhawks, recorded their first Communist "tank kills" one mile south of embattled An Loc.

Credited with destroying the Red tanks were 1Lt. Sebastien V. Massimini (Harahan, La.), flying lead ship and Capt. William C. Peters (Middletown, R.I.) in the wingman slot, both of Marine Attack Squadron 311, Marine Aircraft Group 12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Even though this was Massimini and Peters first combat mission together, it is not their first duty together. In 1968, when Massimini was a candidate for Officers Candidate School (here), Peters served as his platoon commander. They did not see each other again until earlier this year when both were assigned to the 1st MAW.

The Forward Air Controller (FAC) for the mission advised that he spotted two enemy tanks in an open area, with friendly forces approximately 1,000 meters to the south of the targets.

"The clouds seemed to cover everything, until we descended low enough and a small patch of open ground was visible. The tanks were parked to one side of a wooded area like 'sitting ducks,'" said Massimini.

"Each of us made two runs with bombs, and after the first pass we could see one of the tanks burning. After the bomb runs we made a final pass firing 'Zuni' rockets. It was after our final pass that the clouds seemed to engulf the target site, making it impossible for us to observe final results on the tanks," added Peters.

However, later assessment credited the Leathernecks with destroying two Communist tanks.

This tank destruction flight marked Massimini's 20th combat mission earning him his first Air Medal. Peters was flying his 25th mission.

20/98

CAPTION FOR ART
Release No. 024

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, June 14

STARS AND STRIPES -- This unusually painted bomb represents the 1,000,000th pound of ordnance dropped by Marine Attack Squadron-211, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, since the squadron's arrival at Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam, last month. The flight took place June 10th as Capt. John P. Bland (Springfield, Va.) piloted the 357th sortie, which carried the colorful bomb. VMA-211 is one of two A-4 Skyhawk squadrons flying close air support missions against insurgent Communist forces in Vietnam. From left are: Col. Dean C. Macho (Minneapolis, Minn.), group commanding officer, Sgt. Dennis M. Colbert (Hyattsville, Md.), an aviation ordnanceman of VMA-211, LtCol. Delbert G. Ranney (Council Bluffs, Iowa), VMA-211's commanding officer, and Capt. Bland, a pilot for VMA-211.

(OFFICIAL U.S. MARINE CORPS PHOTO BY CPL. RICK ALEXANDER)

-usmc-

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AUTHORIZED HOME TOWN NEWS RELEASE
NAVSO 5724/1 (1-72 TEST)To: **Front** Home Town News Center
Great Lakes, Illinois 60088

Part A - To Be Completed by Subject

Please Print

NAME (First, Middle Init., Last)

Dennis M. Colbert

RANK/RATE
SgtUSN
USMC
USCG

LEAVE BLANK

PARENTS OR GUARDIANS AND YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THEM (Omit if deceased)

 SON DAUGHTER NEPHEW MR. & MRS. MR. MRS. MISS

OTHER (Specify)

{

OF NAME OF PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

Robert C. Colbert

THEIR ADDRESS (No., Street, City, State)

1004 Threl Place, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20017

YOUR PERMANENT ADDRESS (If other than above)

7701 Frederick Road Hyattsville Maryland 20784

YOUR MARITAL STATUS

HUSBAND'S/WIFE'S (Maiden) NAME (First, Middle Init., Last)

Married Carolyn M. McCarthy

WIFE'S PARENTS OR GUARDIANS (Omit if deceased)

NAME OF WIFE'S PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

 MR. & MRS. MR. MRS.

F. J. McCarthy

THEIR ADDRESS (No., Street, City, State, Zip Code)

2025 Henderson Ave. Wheaton, Maryland 20902

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDED

St. Anthony

CITY, STATE

Wash. D.C.

GRADUATED

 YES NO

LAST YEAR ATTENDED

1963

COLLEGE/TECHNICAL SCHOOL

CITY, STATE

DEGREE EARNED

LAST YEAR ATTENDED

19

DATE ENTERED SERVICE
(Month, Year)

May 1965

DATE REPORTED THIS COMMAND
(Month, Day, Year)

Jan. 12, 1972

PRESENT BILLET/DUTY ASSIGNMENT

Aviation Ordinanceman

The above information is
certified to be correct.

SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT

Dennis M. Colbert

DATE

12 Jan. 72

Part B - To Be Completed by Public Affairs Office. Do Not Use for Hold Files

Check appropriate story block and add information indicated.

TAKE NUMBER		TIME: MINUTES	SECONDS
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DESIGNATED A (Specify)	MEDAL (Type)* *Attach copy of citation or letter		AWARD (Type)* *Attach copy of citation or letter
SERVICE SCHOOL GRADUATE	COURSE COMPLETED		WILL REPORT TO (Do Not abbreviate; list location)
COMPLETED RECRUIT TRAINING	HONORS/AWARDS		WILL REPORT TO (Do Not abbreviate; list location)
REENLISTED FOR YEARS	RETIRED AFTER YEARS ACT. DUT.	LIST KEY ASSIGNMENTS (Continue on reverse)	

OTHER (Continue on reverse)

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A-9

AVIONICS ELECTRICIAN
Release No. 030
By: Cpl. Rick Alexander

BINH HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, June 23 -- If the electrical system of a Marine A-4 Skyhawk were to malfunction, chances are that Marine Sgt. Kenneth C. Kotek (Cleveland, Ohio), would have the trouble spotted and the aircraft back in the air in a matter of minutes.

"Our job may not seem important, but if we make a mistake, we must then think of the pilot and the situation our error could get him into," says Kotek, an avionics electrician of Marine Attack Squadron-211, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Kotek is just one of the ~~several~~ avionics team members who work on Marine A-4 Skyhawks at Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam. He along with other Leathernecks work to keep the electrical systems of the aircraft in prime condition.

Kotek, working as a trouble-shooter, says "A-4s
Pilots come in with electrical break downs and we replace parts and keep the whole electrical system in tact. If a simple part or component needs to be replaced it can be done in minutes, but if a system needs to be rewired it sometimes takes over two hours to complete the job."

"It seemed that the heat affected everything during the first two weeks here, then the equipment began to adjust to the environmental temperatures and malfunctions aren't nearly as frequent now," explains Kotek.

While putting the final touches on a radio box of an A-4 Skyhawk, Kotek noted that his job was very interesting and he planned to endeavor the field further upon his discharge from the Marine Corps.

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A-10

ORDNANCE MAN
Release No. 031
By: Cpl. Rick Alexander

Bien Hoa Air Base, Vietnam, June 26 -- When a Marine A-4 Skyhawk departs Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam on a close air support mission, what is the most important element it carries? Ordnance, what else.

Who is responsible for this ordnance and its loading? Marines like Sgt. Willie D. May (Celina, Texas), who is an ordnance man for Marine Attack Squadron-211, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

May's primary jobs are as a SATS-loader driver, which is a machine used in loading ordnance, and as an M-60 crane operator, also used in loading the A-4 Skyhawk.

"We have a very important job in loading ordnance on these aircraft. Without us our A-4s wouldn't be able to destroy enemy positions or even fly close air support missions," says May.

Sometimes, even though the temperatures range in the 100s, bombs have to be loaded by hand. When this happens, a lot of sweat and muscle are called for from the ordnance crews.

May recalls, "On one particular day we loaded twenty-250 lb. bombs by hand onto the aircraft. This was due to a few rushed, add-on flights that we weren't expecting."

Sliding into his SATS-loader and heading for another bomb pick-up, May added, "Before we arrived here we only loaded dummy ordnance, but now things are real and our job has taken on a meaningful outlook."

-usmc-

ORDNANCE CREW MEMBER
Release No. 032
By: Cpl. Rick Alexander

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, June 27 -- Working 12 hours a day in scorching temperatures and sometimes lifting 250 lb. bombs by hand, are just a few of the conditions that Marine Sgt. Warren F. Winn (Blooming Prairie, Minn.) works under on a daily basis at Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam.

Winn, an ordnance man of Marine Attack Squadron-211, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, works driving a SATS-loader, which is a vehicle used in loading bombs, rockets and other ordnance onto Marine A-4 Skyhawks. Since the motor of the SATS-loader practically surrounds the driver, the temperatures is usually 20 to 30 degrees hotter for the operator.

"Most SATS-loader drivers go through school to learn how to operate this machine, but I've been in this field for 2½ years and all of my training has been on the job," says Winn.

Under ideal conditions, Winn noted that with two SATS (mighty-might) loaders operating along with two crew members, an A-4 can be fully loaded in six or seven minutes.

"When we first arrived here and weren't in the groove of working together we had a hell of a time keeping up. As soon as we would load a plane they'd take it away and we'd start all over from scratch. Now, working as a team, we are able to stay just one step ahead no matter what," explained Winn.

Just prior to loading his 10th plane of the day, Winn commented that no matter how hot the sun beat down or how many aircraft he had to load in one day, he enjoyed his work and its importance in flying close air support missions.

-usmc-

CIRCUIT TIRES SHOT
Release No. 033
By: Cpl. Dick Alexander

BINH HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, July 1 -- When a Marine A-4 Skyhawk of Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing at Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam makes a landing, a tremendous amount of wear and tear is put on the tires, and Sgt. Carl B. Mason Jr. (Ft. Campbell, Ky.) can well attest this as NCOIC of the group tire shop.

The Intermediate Maintenance Activity is the technical title given to the tire shop. The mission of the IMA is to support all aircraft assigned to MAG-12 by repairing all wheel assemblies.

Mason says, "We are capable of handling any part of the wheel assembly that goes bad on an A-4."

On an average, one tire per three to four aircraft hops needs to be changed or repaired.

"I think we have one of the most important jobs in the group. We have four men working in this shop and we are capable of handling 40 to 50 tire assemblies a day," explains Mason.

One thing is for certain, whether it be a bolt that needs replacing, a lock that requires patching or a whole wheel assembly that has to be changed, Sgt. Mason and his crew will be there to insure each Marine Skyhawk has good tires to help make safe landings.

-usmc-

A-1.3

CAPTION FOR ART
Release No. 036

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, July 6

SHOP TALK -- SSgt. Frank H. Peace (San Diego, Calif.), (right), of Marine Air Base Squadron-12, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and MajGen. Icslie E. Brown, commanding general, 1st MAW, talk shop during Gen. Brown's recent visit to Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam. Peace works in the ground utilities section of MABS-12.

(OFFICIAL U.S. MARINE CORPS PHOTO BY LCPL. RICK CHISTER)



100 "WVWY "KING"
Release No. 039
By: Cpl. Rick Alexander

DEUU USA AIR BASE, Vietnam, July 15 -- Two Marine A-4 Skyhawks of Marine Attack Squadron-311, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, teamed up and blasted an enemy position 25 miles northeast of An Loc destroying a .51 cal machine gun site and killing 100 North Vietnamese defenders.

Flying lead ship was Capt. Marvin P. Sixton, III (Tuscaloosa, Ala.), with Maj. Thomas L. Elser (Burton, S.C.) serving as wingman.

The two-ship flight was headed towards its original target when a South Vietnamese ground commander requested a change of target. Friendly forces were advancing towards a group of houses and buildings on a road that traveled east and west, when they came into contact with enemy defenders located on the northern side of the road.

Maj. Elser said, "We had a quick brief on the location of the friendlies who were about 200 meters to the east of the target. On our first roll in, the wind, which was gusting at 25 knots, presented some difficulty."

Sixton added, "On our first run we both hit a little long due to the wind, but on our additional passes we managed to master the remaining bombs and hit right where we were directed. On one pass we nailed two enemy soldiers who were on the run."

When ARVN ground forces swept the area and made final assessment, the Leathernecks were credited with knocking out one .51 cal machine gun site and killing 100 enemy soldiers.

Elser serves as VMA-311's executive officer, while Sixton fills the billet of assistant operations officer for VMA-311.

-usmc-

A-15

CAPTION FOR ART
Release No. 040

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, July 10

1,000TH SORTIE -- These bombs represent the 1,000th sortie flown by Marine Attack Squadron-311 since arriving at Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam in May. Flying lead ship and 1,000th sortie, was Col. Dean C. Macho (Minneapolis, Minn.), (right), commanding officer of Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, with LtCol. Kevin M. Johnston, (Indianapolis, Ind.), commanding officer of VMA-311 flying wingman slot. VMA-311 is one of two Marine A-4 squadrons flying close air support missions against insurgent Communist forces in Vietnam.



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Release No. 051

BINH THA AIR BASE, Vietnam, July 24

CENTRAL CHAT -- LtGen. Louis Metzger, (left), commanding general, III Marine Amphibious Force, chats with A-4 pilot, 1stLt. Russell W. Stromborg (Mavro, Montana), of Marine Attack Squadron-311, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, during a recent visit to Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam.

(OFFICIAL U.S. MARINE CORPS PHOTO BY JG1L. RICK CHISTER)

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A-17

GUN POSITION DESTROYED

Release No. 054
By: Cpl. Rick Alexander

BINH KHOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, Aug. 7-- Two Marine A-4E Skyhawks flew a close air support mission 45 miles southwest of Saigon destroying two enemy emplacements and silencing a .51 caliber gun position.

Piloting the lead jet was 1stLt. Jon L. Blocher (Pontiac, Mich.), with 1stLt. Dennis E. Greene (Mesquite, Tex.), flying in the wingman slot. Both are with Marine Attack Squadron-311, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

The two-ship flight flew southwest until they joined up with the forward observer (FAC), who led the Marines to a known enemy position.

Flying over the flat, swampy terrain the enemy emplacements with the menacing gun firing became visible to the Leathernecks.

Lt. Greene said, "After we made our initial pass I lost contact with Blocher in the lead jet forcing him to work the target as a solo for two passes."

"I had made several runs ~~selecting~~ before Greene and I joined back up and tried another radio frequency. After we re-established contact, Greene worked the target and then we both made final strafing runs," added Blocher.

When ARVN ground forces swept the area and made final assessment, the Leathernecks were credited with destroying two enemy emplacements and silencing one .51 cal gun position.

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A-18

ENEMY COMMAND POST
Release No. 055
By: Cpl. Rick Alexander

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, Aug. 7 -- A recent close air support mission by two Marine A-4 Skyhawks just 60 miles ~~south~~ southwest of Saigon, resulted in in five fortified fighting positions destroyed and two secondary explsoions.

Flying lead aircraft was LtCol. Kevin M. Johnston (Indianapolis, Ind.), with 1stLt. Sebastien V. Massimini (Harahan, La.), in the wingman slot. Both are with Marine Attack Squadron-311, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Johnston, squadron commander of the "Tom Cat" squadron, said, "The FAC overhead explained the target was an enemy command post. As soon as the foward observer completed his brief my wingman and I began making our passes lacing the target with 500 lb. bombs."

Final assestment of the target credited the Leathernecks with destroying five fortified fighting positions and two secondary explosions.

During a later strike on the same enemy command post, two more A-4s of Marine Attack Squadron-311, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing destroyed one bunker and demolished two enemy emplacements.

Flying lead on this mission was Capt. John P. Bland (Springfield, Va.), and filling the wingman slot was Capt. Theodore A. Demostheres (Tustin, Calif.).

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REF ID: A65212
Release 10, 2027
By: Sgt. Rick Alexander

DETROIT, Mich., Victoria, Aug. 13 -- Whenever a Marine vehicle pulls into the Daugerdinh Orphanage, excitement builds and smiles begin appearing on the faces of the more than 55 residents of the home, for they know their friends have come to help.

Members of Marine Aircraft Group-12, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing are here at work on an off-duty project to improve the living environment for the children at Daugerdinh Orphanage, 9 miles east of Da Nang.

The 10 Marines first gained knowledge of the orphanage through the group's newly acquired chaplain, Navy Chap. Paul J. Baker (Vt. Alexander, Mich.), who took over as group chaplain in July.

Under the direction of Father Daugerdinh Phung, 61, whom the orphanage is named after, the homeless youths, ranging in ages from five to sixteen, hope to make Dien Ben their permanent home. The orphanage originated in the Quang Tri area in 1971, but due to Communist aggression has been on the move ever since.

The orphans arrived in Dien Ben on June 16, 1972, with only the clothes they wore. Soon after arriving they acquired a small plot of land where they were permitted to build. Chaplain Baker, while participating in other civic action functions, came across Father Daugerdinh's orphanage through the base civic action program.

Almost immediately, Marines of Marine Attack Squadron-211, began constructing a complete housing area. Next, members of Marine Air Base Squadron-12, bought and donated clothing for each child at the orphanage.

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by government during our tenure
2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2

At present the Herbards are the sole supporting organization of the
organization. The Leathemers' future plans for this group will project
includes; painting buildings; gardening, and building a playground.

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A-20

TANK DESTROYED
Release No. 060
By: Sgt. Rick Alexander

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, Aug. 16 -- The commanding officer of Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and the squadron commander of Marine Attack Squadron-211, flew a close air support mission just 34 miles north of Saigon and destroyed a Communist tank.

In the lead jet was Col. Dean C. Macho (Colorado Springs, Colo.), commanding officer of MAG-12, with LtCol. Delbert G. Ranney (Council Bluffs, Iowa), commanding officer of VMA-211, filling the wingman slot.

The Forward Air Controller (FAC) for the mission advised that he spotted an enemy tank on Highway 13, which leads from Saigon to An Loc, with friendly forces approximately 1,000 meters to the south and north of the target.

"The visibility was good around the target site and the tank was stalled or parked right on the highway. It seemed to be disabled or perhaps out of gas," said Ranney.

"Each of us made several runs with bombs, before hearing the FAC saying we had collapsed the front end of the tank. On our additional passes Ranney put a "Zuni" (five-inch rocket) right up the back of the tank, while I made a few strafing runs using 20mm guns. Before we left the target area the FAC commented that we had done some excellent bombing," added Macho.

The tank destruction flight marked the first tank "kill" for both Ranney and Macho, since the "Ready Group's" return to Vietnam last May.

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50,000TH COMBAT SORTIE
Release No. 065
By: Sgt. Rick Alexander

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, Aug. 30 -- Marine Attack Squadron-311, Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, has added another "first" to its history by flying its 50,000th combat sortie over South East Asia.

A name soon to be etched into the history books is that of 1st Lt. Charles G. Reed (Seattle, Wash.), as he is the Marine credited with flying VMA-311's 50,000th sortie. This mission also marked Reed's 100th combat sortie.

Accompanying Reed on this history making flight was Maj. Sid Snedeker (Honolulu, Hawaii), who was flying his 350th combat sortie.

Reed describing his mission said, "Our target was a known enemy location approximately 50 miles northwest of Saigon. Visibility was poor due to overcast skies and light rain. As we made our second and third passes we could see some secondary explosions, naturally this made us happy, knowing that we were on target."

Final assessment of the target credited the mission with destroying a bunker and setting off two secondary explosions.

The 50,000th combat sortie is just one of many accomplishments by VMA-311. The "Tomcats" squadron's history reaches back to Dec. 1, 1942 when it was commissioned as a Marine Fighter Squadron at Cherry Point, N.C. With WWII raging, VMF-311, was ultimately moved to Yanton Airfield, Okinawa, where it recorded 71 enemy aircraft "kills". VMF-311 became the first Marine squadron to employ fighter aircraft for dive bombing tactics.

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50,000th combat sortie
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By the end of the Korean Conflict, VMF-311 had compiled 18,000 combat missions and set a fighter combat record in June 1951, unequalled in aviation history -- 2300 combat missions in one month. In 1958, the "Tomcats" received a new A-4D2 (A4B) "Skyhawk" and the unit was redesignated a Marine Attack Squadron (VMA).

The history of VMA-311 in their six years at Chu Lai, Vietnam is, of course, one which commands great respect. The "Tomcats" flew more combat missions than any other Marine jet squadron -- 47,600, before returning to Iwakuni, Japan on May 12, 1971.

Then just one year and five days after returning VMA-311 was ordered back to Vietnam. The first "Tomcats" arrived at Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam on May 17th and within hours were flying close air support missions in support of South Vietnamese forces.

VMA-311 is presently commanded by Major Thomas L. Elser (Riverside, Calif.).

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300TH COMBAT SORTIE
Release No. 066
By: Sgt. Rick Alexander

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, Aug. 30 -- Major Richard T. Poore, a former Air Force officer who became a Marine in July 1966, flew his 300th combat sortie over Vietnam Aug. 29.

Poore, who is presently serving as Marine Aircraft Group-12's Operations officer, has been serving in this capacity since May of this year. He will soon be transferred to Washington, D.C. where he will serve with Deputy Chief of Staff (Air).

Commenting on his 300th sortie, Poore said, "The weather was bad, but not serious enough to hamper our effectiveness. After the FAC had described our target we just rolled in and dropped our ordnance. We knew we'd hit the target because of the sustained fire we could see burning."

Flying with Poore for this mission was 1st Lt. Thomas M. Higgins (Mecklenburg, N.C.), who completed his 100th combat sortie. The two Leathernecks were given credit for destroying an enemy bunker and getting one sustained fire.

Maj. Poore, a native of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, served with MAG-12 once before in Vietnam. From 1967-68 he served with Marine All Weather Attack Squadron-533 at Chu Lai. During this period he served as Squadron S-1 officer and subsequently as the Chu Lai Air Base officer. Maj. Poore was credited with 127 combat sorties during his first tour.

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300th sortie
page 2-2-2-2

After Chu Lai he was transferred to attend the Amphibious Warfare School, Quantico, Va., where he was kept on as an instructor after graduation. In July 1971 he was transferred to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and once again served with VMA(AW)-533 until May of this year when he deployed with the "Ready Group" to Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam.

Maj. Poore is expected to be transferred to Washington D. C. and his new assignment by the end of September. His decorations include 3 Distinguished Flying Crosses, and 22 Air Medals.

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MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP-12
Release No. 070
By: Sgt. Rick Alexander

Bien Hoa Air Base, Vietnam, Oct. 20 -- With the troop strength of American forces dwindling the Marines at Bien Hoa Air Base find themselves still very much here, being one of two American fighter bomber units left in Vietnam.

The main mission of the A-4E Skyhawk is to provide close air support for South Vietnamese forces operating in Military Regions III and IV.

Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, is commanded by Colonel Dean C. Macho (Colorado Springs, Colo.). The group operates with two complete squadrons in Marine Attack Squadron-211 (VMA-211) and 311. VMA-211 is under the helm of LtCol. Delbert G. Ranney (Council Bluffs, Iowa), while VMA-311 is commanded by LtCol. John J. Caldas Jr. (New Orleans, La.).

MAG-12 arrived at Bien Hoa on May 18th and within hours were flying close air support missions against insurgent Communist forces.

A few days after the group's arrival, three Marine A-4 Skyhawks teamed up and blasted an enemy position 60 miles southwest of Bien Hoa destroying 15 fortified fighting positions and killing 20 North Vietnamese defenders.

This was the enemy's first real taste of the bombs of MAG-12. Flying this particular mission was Capt. Bruce Cheever (Tucson, Ariz.), Capt. Conrad H. Cadman (Orchard Park, N. Y.), and 1st Lt. Charles F. Spietsma (Tampa, Fla.), all of VMA-311.

In late May, when laser guided bombs were making the headlines, Marine pilots of MAG-12 were using the conventional iron bombs and a little "Kentucky Windage" for overwhelming accuracy on targets.

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MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP-12
Page 2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2

One example was the destruction of a Communist re-supply bridge 30 miles northwest of Saigon. Capt. Grodon L. Eisert (Louisville, Ky.) and 1st Lt. Albert E. Bauman III (Cartersville, Md.), both of VMA-211, destroyed a pontoon bridge which was being used as a Communist tank crossing and a passage to truck materials for re-supplying North Vietnamese soldiers fighting against South Vietnamese forces. The two A-4s left the target area engulfed in flames and the bridge completely destroyed by conventional bombs and "smart" Marines.

The fighting and bloodshed for embattled An Loc will surely be remembered in the future. The An Loc area was the site for many missions flown by MAG-12 during the current Communist Offensive. In fact, just one mile south of An Loc, A-4 Skyhawks recorded their first Communist "tank kills" since reentering the country.

Credited with destroying the Red tanks were 1st Lt. Sebastien V. Massimini (Harahan, La.) and Capt. William C. Peters (Middletown, R.I.), both of VMA-311. Since these initial "tank kills", the group as a whole has been credited with several times that many.

Although their names are never seen in the headlines, the men who keep the aircraft flying are not to be forgotten. These men work both night and day through scorching temperatures and monsoon rains to keep the A-4s mechanically fit.

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MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP-12
Page 3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3-3

Even though Bien Hoa Air Base has been rocketed three times since the group's arrival, the spirit of these Marines has not been dampened. They are willing and able to put out 100% no matter what. If anyone knows how important each and every man's job is in the group, it's the pilots who fly the A-4s and know they have to be completely ready and armed for each mission flown.

Though in a combat environment, the Leathernecks of MAG-12 have not forgotten the other half of the war. During their off-duty hours, both enlisted and commissioned Marines spend many hours aiding one of the four nearby orphanages which the group supports. Working at the orphanages includes tasks such as renovating sleeping quarters, providing food and clothing, delivering household materials and even playing a quick game of baseball.

Marine Aircraft Group-12 now, as always, is devoting itself to providing the best aviation support possible. And they have done just that. The devotion to duty and efficiency of the officers and men of the unit has made MAG-12, the "Ready Group", a respected name throughout the Marine Corps and Vietnam.

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MARINES SUPPORT ORPHANAGES

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, Nov. 2 -- Marines of Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, the last American fighter bomber unit left in Vietnam, are fighting two wars in one. The first is against the insurgent Communist forces, the second is against the environmental and living conditions of the four orphanages that they are supporting near Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam.

The first orphanage "adopted" by the Marines was Ke-Sat Orphanage, which was originally a project of the USAF. The orphanage, had been somewhat misplaced due to the near stand down of the base early this year.

Since this initial adoption over \$1,000, plus man hours for the construction of eating areas, renovation of sleeping quarters, and providing electrical circuits for lighting has been donated. Ke-Sat orphanage today cares for 113 homeless waifs ranging in age from newly born to 16-years-old. Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron-12 has taken this orphanage under its wing.

Marine Air Base Squadron-12 has pledged \$400 a month to the care of their orphanage, Dong Ha Orphanage. This orphanage houses 267 children and this number is expected to gradually increase to 300. Total donations in money, food and clothing by the group, mainly MARS-12, for these children is between four and 5,000 dollars.

Marine Fighter Squadron-311 supports the Nguc Ngat Orphanage. Over \$1,000 has been given in cash donations. In addition to these donations, approximately 1,000 dollars worth of food, clothing and other items have been given. The group Chaplain's office will supply another \$600 through the sale of leather goods and donations. This orphanage houses 113 children.

-more-

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marines support orphanages
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The Nguyen-Ninh Duong Orphanage is sponsored by Marine Attack Squadron-211. These Marines dedicated many man hours for the construction of the entire orphanage complex. The orphans housed here are originally from Quang Tri where they were forced to leave due to Communist aggression. They arrived in the Bien Hoa area in June of this year to find a helping hand from Leathernecks of MAG-12. Cash donations for this orphanage exceed \$1,500.

Under the direction of the present group chaplain, Father Connie J. Meehan, LCdr., USN, and his formers, Father Thomas W. Kuhn, LCdr., USN, and Father Fred W. Ryder, Lt., CRC, USN, cash donations, food, clothing, and building materials summing more than \$10,000 has been dedicated to the more than 800 orphans supported by the Leathernecks since the return of Marine Aircraft Group 12 to Vietnam in May of this year.

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10,000TH COMBAT SORTIE
Release No. 072
By: Sgt. Rick Alexander

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam, Dec. 11 -- Marine Aircraft Group-12, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, the only American fighter bomber unit left in Vietnam, has recorded its 10,000th combat sortie since returning to Vietnam last May.

Captain Gordon L. Eisert (Louisville, Ky.), is the Marine credited with flying MAG-12s 10,000th combat sortie at Bien Hoa. Accompanying Eisert on this particular mission was Maj. William F. Horner (Hornersville, Missouri). Both are pilots of Marine Attack Squadron-211.

Eisert describing his mission said, "Our target was a known enemy location approximately 35 miles southwest of Saigon. We teamed up with a VNAF forward observer who described the site as a group of bunkers occupied by VC in a wooded area near some rice paddies. We made several passes lacing the target with our bombs and left it engulfed in smoke."

The 10,000th sortie would never have been possible without the group working as a whole. It takes the tireless efforts of the men of MAG-12 to keep the A-4 Skyhawk in the air, to keep their weapons, safety systems and communications gear functioning properly.

Cpl. James R. Hesselgrave (Mound, Minn.), an avionics technician of Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron-12 says, "Our job may not seem all that important down here on the ground, but if we make a mistake we must then think of the pilot and the situation our error could get him into while on a mission."

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10,000th combat sortie
page 2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2

Commenting from an ordnance man's point of view, Sgt. Warren F. Winn (Blooming Prairie, Minn.), of VMA-211 says, "We have a very important job in loading ordnance on these aircraft. Without us, our A-4s wouldn't be able to destroy enemy positions or even fly close air support missions."

Whether it be humping bombs, putting a new jet engine together, repairing tires, providing supplies and equipment, fixing electrical systems or working behind a typewriter, the Marines of MAG-12 work together. This is the basic ingredient for accomplishing the group's 10,000th combat sortie in less than 7 months.

The "Ready Group" is commanded by Colonel Dean C. Macho.

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STARS AND STRIPES

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Vol. 28, No. 215

Thursday, Aug. 3, 1972



A MARINE SURVEYS A DESTROYED AIRCRAFT STORAGE SHED AT BIEN HOA AIR BASE.

AB Payday: Reds Cash In

By SPEC. 4 ALLEN SCHAEFER
SSS Staff Correspondent

BIEN HOA, Vietnam — Tuesday was going to be a good day — payday.

A U.S. Marine lance corporal left the air terminal, where men were already lining up to get their checks from the paymaster, and walked in the pre-dawn darkness to pick up the collection box for the orphan and refugee fund the air group supports.

As he neared the office at 5:10 a.m., a 122mm rocket screamed through the black sky and exploded 10 feet from him.

The Marine died almost immediately. A chunk of steel had punctured an artery.

At the same time, 400 yards away, another rocket smashed

(Continued on Back Page, Col. 2)

Red Shells Hit Bien Hoa

(Continued From Page 1) into the air terminal, blowing a sleeping Leatherneck from his bunk in an office there.

One soldier, hearing the rumble of the incoming rounds, had taken shelter in the corner of the building when the rocket exploded overhead and seriously wounded him.

In the early morning attack that killed one American and wounded 16, Communist gunners rained 71 Russian-made 122mm

rockets into the American side of the giant air base 15 miles northwest of Saigon, according to sources here.

The rounds peppered the area in an indiscriminate pattern that included runways and living quarters.

Three of the projectiles hit a Marine ordnance shop where two soldiers were sleeping. Unhurt by the explosion, the men battled to extinguish the fire that eventually leveled the build-

ing. Other rockets hit open revetments where rows of jet fighter-bombers were parked, slightly damaging three planes.

"I woke up, and it sounded almost like there were mortars being walked into the base," said Col. Dean Macho, commander of the Marine Air Group which had moved to Bien Hoa in mid May with two squadrons of A4 Skyhawks.

Macho, 49, of Colorado Springs, said flight line operations were delayed as workmen swept the runways and aprons clear of a layer of shrapnel and rubble.

Tuesday's attack was the first major one since the Marines arrived at the air base, the commander said. A few rockets hit the installation in late May.

The 122mm rocket, which has a range of about 4½ miles, can be launched with a standard tube or a makeshift bamboo trough.

First reports indicated that many of the rounds were fired from the north, and Macho said the first mission of the day was in an area five miles north of the base.

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32 Richmond News Leader, Tues., August 15, 1972

Air Marines Go to War Again

By GEORGE ESPER.

BIEN HOA AIR BASE, Vietnam (AP) — The Marines are back in Vietnam, supporting Cambodian troops as well as the South Vietnamese.

There are no ground troops. This is Marine Air Group 12, the last to leave Vietnam in May 1971 during President Nixon's phaseout of American forces and the first to return a year later during Nixon's buildup of air power to counter North Vietnam's offensive.

Capt. George Ampagoomian, 28, of Yonkers, N.Y., makes a last-minute check of his A4 Skyhawk, called the scooter because it is so tiny and compact despite its load of eight 500-pound bombs.

He is ready to strike out into Cambodia.

"Some of the flight spotted tanks and were shooting," he says. "I'm hoping maybe there's still some left so I can get my chance."

Ampagoomian, of Armenian descent, is a gunner type. He served an 18-month tour in Vietnam, on the ground, in an air command center. He left in 1968 to go to Marine pilots' school.

"I wanted to serve an active role in the war, but I just resigned myself to the fact that I missed my chance," he says. "I never thought about combat. I figured I was out of the game."

Back in the rear, Capt. Jeff Kelly, 25, of Pittsburgh, a Duquesne University alumnus with a degree in physics, is in charge of a mission in Cambodia.

He talks about the tanks he has seen.

"One of them was in the open field and I pretty well. The second one was obscured by a tree and I rolled and went for the tree."

"Basically," says Kelly, "we're a big biological boost."

This is a clean war for the air Marines, far removed from the booby-trapped jungles the Marine riflemen once roamed. The atmosphere is

AP News
Special

relaxed, the rooms air-conditioned, steak for dinner, entertainment at the club.

Not a single plane has been lost to enemy groundfire since the group's more than 30 A4 Skyhawks arrived May 17 at Bien Hoa, 15 miles northeast of Saigon. They had been based in Japan since leaving the Chu Lai air base in the northern quarter of south Vietnam last year.

"Knock on wood," says the group commander, Col. Jean Machic, 46, of Colorado Springs, Colo.

One of the few complaints is that there are

thing because the trees are so thick," says Capt. John Bohn, 26, of Corona Del Mar, Calif., a graduate of Brown University with a major in international relations. "It's very hard to see anything on the ground in detail. You very seldom see hard targets. You drop your bombs, see an explosion, but you can't see what you hit. It's mostly known enemy locations, troops under jungled trees and supply caches."

Says Capt. Ampagoomian, "It's hard to relate really, never really seeing the end result. The morale is up and down, based on what the pilot tells these men who load the bombs and maintain the plane. I always try to tell them I can."

During the Marines' van-

just before dawn on payday. Men coming off the night shift were lining up to get their checks. A lance corporal was walking out to pick up collection boxes for a Vietnamese orphan and refugee fund the air group supports. One of the first rockets landed a few feet from him.

Dean Macho, walking by the spot, observes, "I don't think he knew what hit him. I doubt if he was ever conscious."

There are happy thoughts, too, wending homeward far away from Bien Hoa.

There is a color portrait of a beautiful woman with black hair, painted by a Korean artist from a wallet-size photograph. She is strikingly beautiful in the photo.

The woman, Dolores Jackson, lives in Kailua, Hawaii.

"I plan to send it to her," says her husband, Lt. Col. Hal Jackson, 42, Dean Macho's deputy. "But I'd like to keep it in my room."

U.S. MARINE GROUND CREWMAN PREPARES FOR BOMBING MISSION

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AP Wirephoto

DECLASSIFIED

For Marine Airmen War Is Still Very Real

By Thomas W. Lippman
Washington Post Foreign Service

BIENHOA Air Base—The "general officers and their ladies" at U.S. Marine Corps headquarters in Arlington, Va., will be pleased to hear that the gift packages they made up for the marines stationed here have arrived safely.

There were 115 plastic sacks containing cigarette lighters, candy, paperback books, postcards of familiar American scenes and handwritten notes to the troops. A chaplain and a first sergeant unpacked them for distribution to the lowest-ranking enlisted men of Marine Air Group 12, the only operational U.S. Marine unit still on duty in Vietnam.

It was the kind of "support our boys" scene that is seldom encountered in Vietnam any more. The air war is being fought mostly from Thailand and Guam and aircraft carriers offshore, and most of the 36,500 American military personnel on duty in this country are far from any combat.

But the 1,000 men of MAG-12 are not here as advisers or planners or weapons systems trainers. They are here as active U.S. combatants in the Vietnam war, dwindling but still visible breed, still capable of stirring some folks back home to send them goodies and good-wishes.

MAG-12's two squadrons of A-4E Skyhawks, along with a squadron of U.S. Air Force A-37s also based at Bienhoa, provide most the air support for South Vietnamese troops in the provinces around Saigon and in the Mekong Delta. They have planes in the air from early morning until twilight, and the ground crews work 12-hour shifts.

Their involvement in the war is different from that of the air crews in Thailand or on the carriers, who may never actually set foot in South Vietnam or come into contact with any Vietnamese.

Half of Bienhoa is used by the South Vietnamese air force, and there are Vietnamese all around—including the Vietcong, who periodically fire rockets into the base, setting off explosions and damaging planes and buildings.

With armed Marine enlisted men standing perimeter guard duty against a genuine Vietcong threat at night, the war here lacks the sanitized atmosphere of the carriers or the Thai bases.

MAG-12 was stationed at Chulai, on South Vietnam's central coast, for five years during the height of U.S. involvement in the war. In 1970, as the United States accelerated the withdrawal of its troops, MAG-12 went

See MARINES, G2, Col 1

The Washington Post

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1972

OUTDOORS
GARDENS



U.S.M.C. photo

S/Sgt. Frank H. Peace of San Diego, a member of the last operational Marine unit in Vietnam, fills a generator

War Is Still Real for Marine Air Unit

MARINES, FROM G1
back to its home base in Japan. But last May, when U.S. air power was almost

all that stood between South Vietnam and defeat in the war, MAG-12 came back for an indefinite stay.



Lance Cpl. Edward Williams of Washington readies a bomb load under a Skyhawk jet at Bienhoa Air Base.

Its basic weapon, the Skyhawk, is a single-engine jet armed with bombs, rockets and two 20mm cannon. It has a single seat, which means that the pilot—who has to spot his targets visually—is also the navigator, bombardier and radio operator. In addition, all the pilots are trained to take off from and land on aircraft carriers if necessary.

MAG-12's commanding officer, Col. Dean C. Macho, 48, of Colorado Springs, said the Skyhawk is an "air weapons system perfectly adapted to its mission," close-in support of troops on the ground.

Perhaps 50 of MAG 12's 1,000 men are pilots, mostly young officers who plan Marine Corps careers, a few Annapolis graduates, the others products of ROTC at Georgia Tech and Brown and a score of other schools.

Even though the Skyhawk is considered a low-maintenance plane, it takes the rest of the group to keep the 30 to 35 planes in the air, to keep their sophisticated weapons, safety systems and communications gear functioning smoothly, and to maintain the pilot's equipment,

ranging from oxygen masks to pistols.

"This is something they never understand in Congress," one officer said, echoing a common complaint. "They don't know what it takes to run an outfit like this."

Even routine maintenance includes such precautions as sending an engine-oil sample to a laboratory for testing after every 30 hours of flying time, to see if metal particles or other foreign matter is appearing in it.

But there is also on-the-spot repair work, as a pilot returning from a mission radios ahead what needs to be done. A crew is waiting when he lands to begin work immediately so the plane can go back into the air the same day.

There was no flying one afternoon this week, because of a steady rain, but there had been a big success that morning — MAG-12 planes wiped out a flotilla of sampans hauling supplies to North Vietnamese forces in the Mekong Delta.

Over the past week, MAG-12 planes have hit targets uninspiringly described in the daily communiqué in

Saigon as "six bunkers" or "five fortified fighting positions" or "nine emplacements."

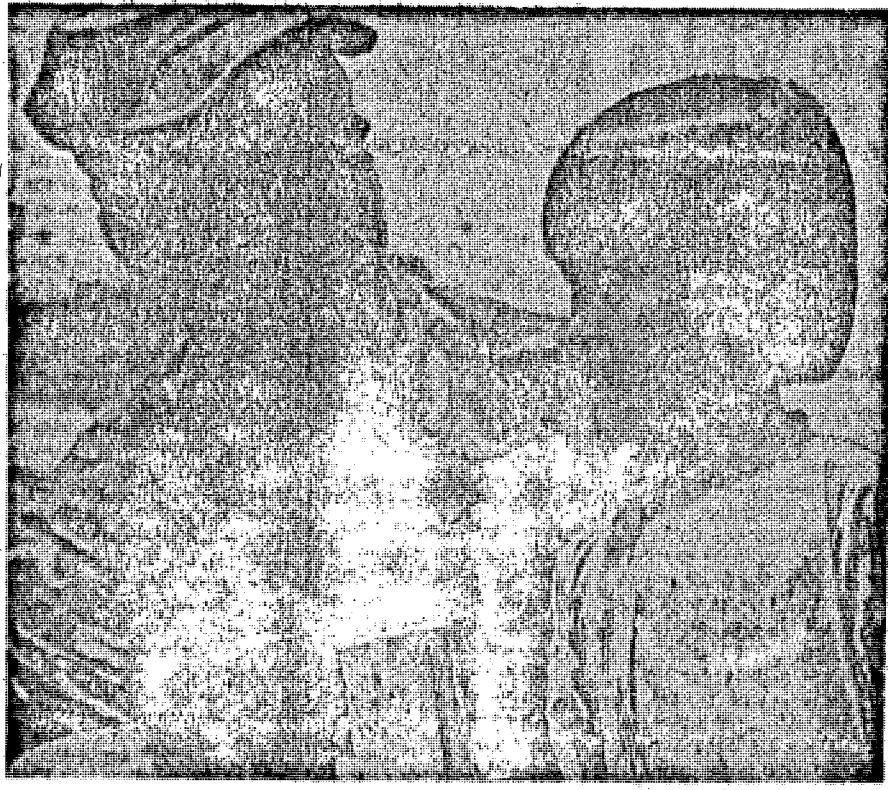
But their real mission, Col. Macho said is to kill Communist troops.

"If you know where they are," he said, "air is the best way to kill them. If I were a ground commander I'd call for air too," he said, brushing off suggestions that South Vietnamese troops tend to sit back and wait for air strikes instead of launching their own attacks. "Why go one-for-one in ground combat if you have air?"

The Marine planes take to the air two at a time according to a schedule drawn up the night before under the direction of the 7th Air Force, based at Saigon's nearby Tansonnhat air base, which has overall control of the entire Indochina air war.

Once aloft, they strike targets assigned to them by a "FAC" or forward air controller, an Air Force officer in a propeller-driven observation plane who receives requests for air strikes from commanders on the ground.

Some days there is no mention of the Marines in



U.S.M.C. Photos

Cpl. Donald Carroll of Park City, Ky., visits an orphanage 7 miles from Biên Hòa.

the daily press briefing in Saigon.

But other days there is plenty to do, especially when MAG 12 was flying over Anloc during the North Vietnamese siege of the town three months ago, through heavy ground fire,

and missiles from a new hand-held antiaircraft missile launcher being used by the Communists.

Asked why they sign up for such potentially hazardous duty, the pilots gave

Force counterparts have given in innumerable interviews over the past seven years: "pride," leadership, "adventure." And as one senior officer observed, "There are always one or two guys who will try anything."

Marines Still in Action

In Vietnam's Air War

By JACK FOISIE

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BIEN HOA, Vietnam — Even with their bags pretty much packed for a fadeaway as soon as a cease-fire is announced, the last American combat pilots based in Vietnam are flying daily strikes as if the war is never going to end.

The pilots are not Air Force — they are Marine aviators.

"Naturally," a Marine Corps publicist said. The Marines were first into Vietnam with combat ground troops, he said, and therefore "it's fitting we should be the last combat aviators to leave."

But Col. Dean Macho, who commands Marine Air Group 12, figures it was only an "accident" that his outfit was ordered back to Vietnam six months ago. MAG12, last in Vietnam three years ago, arrived at Bien Hoa just as the last Air Force fighter-bomber squadrons were leaving as part of President Nixon's steady disengagement of American armed forces from Vietnam.

Macho's "accident" was the North Vietnam offensive which began in April. American Air Force planes based in Thailand could reach most of the fronts to support embattled South Vietnam ground troops. But the area around Saigon and south through the Mekong Delta was too distant for the fuel-gobbling jets from Thai bases to be used effectively without mid-air refueling.

But Macho's two squadrons of A4 "Skyhawk" jets, if based at Bien Hoa, were seen as a natural quick-reaction close-support air unit to help South Vietnamese troops hold embattled An Loc. The air-and-ground An Loc defense, which succeeded, frustrated the North Vietnamese of-

fensive which may have had Saigon for its ultimate objective.

And so MAG12 island-hopped hurriedly from its base at Iwakuni, Japan, and set up operations at Bien Hoa, 20 miles north of Saigon. Macho, 49, just a few weeks into a year's tour in Japan from his home in Colorado Springs, Colo., found himself on his second combat tour in Vietnam.

Although he is supposed to be mostly chair-borne as a group commander, Macho has already flown more than 100 missions.

With the An Loc battle behind them, MAG12 fliers in their single-seat, subsonic, stubby-wing Skyhawks fly in pairs throughout the vast flat delta. They "marry up" with American or Vietnamese spotters in their light planes who mark targets to be strafed or bombed.

Although Macho could not discuss other missions, it is known that MAG12 also roams Cambodian skies in support of the Phnom Penh government's forces.

Even though South Vietnam's own air force is increasingly active, Macho and his pilots still average 70 to 80 strikes a day.

This level of action means that many Skyhawk pilots fly at least twice a day. By Marine aviation standards, Macho said, this is not stretching his outfit too far. But he does get some help from Thai-based Air Force A7 Corsairs. The Corsairs bomb enroute to Bien Hoa, land, reload bombs and refuel, and bomb again on their way back to Thailand.

The durable Skyhawks have taken plenty of battle damage, but only two MAG12 planes have been downed in six months of fighting, with one pilot killed, the other rescued.

"We generally know where the bad guys have guns which can

reach us," said Capt. Rich Donaghy of Yuma, Ariz. "But we have tactics to cope with the guns, and with the Strelas."

Strelas are heat-seeking rockets which can be fired by Viet Cong on the ground. North Vietnamese commanders added it to their antiaircraft arsenal for this spring's offensive.

The light losses in combat have made Macho's marines able to say that it's more dangerous on the ground than in the air. During its six months at Bien Hoa, the 900-man outfit has undergone five enemy rocket attacks, with one man killed, eight wounded and four planes damaged.

Rockets have hit Macho's hanger-office and a rocket-detonated ammunition explosion caved in the metal walls of his trailer home.

Lance Cpl. Edward Hubbard of Houston, Tex., says he doesn't exactly like being rocketed. "But it boosts my morale just the same."

As a flight line plane chief and mechanic, Hubbard sends his pilots into battle and welcomes them home. "But I don't feel involved in the war until there's incoming rockets."

