

HEADQUARTERS
Marine Aircraft Group 36
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPac
FPO San Francisco 96601

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12 February 1966
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From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (Attn: ACofS, G-3)

Subj: Command Chronology (U)

Ref: (a) Wing Order 3750.1B

- Encl: ✓(1) Part One - Organizational Data
- ✓(2) Part Two - Narrative Summary
- ✓(3) Part Three - Significant Events
- ✓(4) Part Four - Supporting Documents

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) thru (4) are submitted for the month of January 1966.

William G. Johnson
WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

Copies to:
CG, 1stMAW (Copy 1 of 6 plus enclosures)
CG, 1stMAW (Copies 2 thru 5 of 6 less enclosure (4))
File (Copy 6 less enclosure (4))

MA-36

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1st MAW 3750.1B
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PART I

1. Organizational Data - Period 1 to 31 January 1966
- a. Commanding Officer and Staff of MAG-36:
- | | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------|
| CO | JOHNSON, William G. | COL |
| XO | PORTER, Mervin B. | LTCOL |
| ADJ | AMBROSE, Raymond H. | 2NDLT |
| S-1 | BRAY, Richard P. | MAJOR |
| S-2 | SCHULER, John L. | CAPT |
| S-3 | SOMERVILLE, Daniel A. | LTCOL |
| S-4 | GARROTTO, Alfred F. | LTCOL |
| Chaplain | HOWARD, Marvin | LCDR |
| Flt Surgeon | SCHENK, Thomas | LT (USN) |
| MTO | MOFFETT, Forrest L. | CAPT |
| EMB | EVANS, Kenneth B. | CAPT |
| ORD | PARKER, George R. | 2NDLT |
| MAINT | GARDINER, Joseph C. Jr. | MAJOR |
| LEGAL | TROYER, Paul D. | 1STLT |
| COMM | MEEKS, Clarence I. | CAPT |
| Civil Affairs | MERRITT, Max A. | MAJOR |
| Avn Safety | GOODSELL, William | MAJOR |
| NATOPS | VOBORA, George | MAJOR |
| Security | JESSEN, Thomas F. | CAPT |
| Ground Safety | SOLTES, Anthony J. | 2NDLT |

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Commanders and Staff of attached units:

H&MS-36

CO	MOONEY, Thomas G.	LTCOL
XO	NAVORSKA, Donald R.	MAJOR
ADMIN	HATCH, Robert D.	MAJOR

MABS-36

CO	KENNEDY, Jack A.	MAJOR
XO	COLLINS, Michael E.	CAPT
ADMIN	EGAN, James	1STLT

HMM-261

CO	COSTELLO, Keith W.	LTCOL
XO	GUAY, Robert P.	MAJOR
OPS	PATE, Gerald S.	MAJOR

HMM-363

CO	KEW, George D.	LTCOL
XO	KELLOGG, Willis D.	MAJOR
OPS	GRAHAM, Wallace H.	MAJOR

HMM-364

CO	LUCAS, William R.	LTCOL
XO	NEEDHAM, Michell J.	MAJOR
OPS	MICHEELS, Herman M.	MAJOR

VMO-6

CO	ZITNIK, Robert J.	LTCOL
XO	PRESSON, Robert R.	MAJOR
OPS	PURCELL, Robert D.	MAJOR

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2. Task Organization and Unit Location:

Unit Designation	Location	Date
H&MS-36	KY HA	1-31 Jan 66
MABS-36	KY HA	1-31 Jan 66
HMM-261	S.L.F. aboard U.S.S. Valley Forge	1-6 Jan 66
	KY HA	7-31 Jan 66
HMM-362	KY HA	1-6 Jan 66
	S.L.F. aboard U.S.S. Valley Forge	7-31 Jan 66
HMM-363	QUI NHON	1-25 Jan 66
	KY HA	26-31 Jan 66
HMM-364	KY HA	1-31 Jan 66
VMO-6	KY HA	1-31 Jan 66

3. Average monthly strength: January 1966

Unit	Mar. Off.	Mar. Enl.	Navy Off.	Navy Enl.
H&MS-36	38	302		
MABS-36	15	363	4	27
HMM-261	51	176	1	
HMM-364	54	154	1	
VMO-6	28	152		

Average monthly strength of MAG-36 was 1366 officers and men.

4. Important visitors to the command:

2 January - MGen FIELDS, BGen PLATT and party.

7 January - BGen PLATT.

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- 9 January - General GREENE and party.
- 17 January - Admiral JOHNSON and party.
- 18 January - Senator J. MILLER (IOWA).

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PART II

1. Narrative Summary:

With the continued good weather during January, MABS-36 Utilities Section constructed an additional 22 buildings.

Survey of the Communications Center was completed.

Excavation commenced on a new well.

Casualties were light with just one WIA.

The spirit and morale of the members of this Group remains high, with a continued attitude of "can do" prevailing.

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PART III

1. Significant Events:

1 Jan: Six HMM-364 UH-34D's supported ARVN forces on a resupply from QUANG NGAI to NUI DAU (BS 874325) and NUI DANG (BS 8138). Enemy small arms fire was encountered at coordinates BS 880315, BS 858632 and BS 890316. No hits were received.

Two HMM-364 aircraft supported ARVN forces on a resupply mission from QUANG NGAI to various ARVN outposts in the vicinity of QUANG NGAI and from TAM KY to various ARVN outposts in the vicinity of TAM KY. These aircraft also carried one ARVN KIA from coordinates BT 020290 to TAM KY and one ARVN WIA from BS 768465 to the ARVN hospital at QUANG NGAI.

Five HMM-364 aircraft supported the 7th Marines on a reconnaissance retraction from coordinates BS 4998 to BT 536023.

VMO-6 aircraft performed routine TAOR, escort and Med Evac missions.

2 Jan: Two HMM-364 aircraft supported the 7th Marines by transporting a sick Marine from BINH SON (BS 605918) to coordinates BT 567043. The same aircraft supported ARVN forces by carrying two VC WIA from "B" Med to the ARVN hospital at QUANG NGAI.

Two VMO-6 aircraft combined with a HMM-364 flight to transport MGen FIELDS, BGen PLATT and party on a tour of the CHU LAI area. At 1500 two Hueys flew a search mission at the site of a U. S. Navy A4 crash about 14 miles south of CHU LAI, but the pilot was not found.

3 Jan: Two HMM-364 aircraft supported the 4th Marines by carrying two VC WIA from LZ QUAIL (BT 555045) to "B" Med.

At 1120 a VMO-6 flight took two Naval officers to the site of yesterday's A-4 crash. A body was sighted at the edge of a clearing and was identified as that of the Navy pilot. However, the body was too conveniently located in a place it had not been the day before, and Vietnamese were seen in trenches nearby,

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which led to the conclusion that it was set up for a trap; consequently, the body was not recovered. Some hostile fire was received in the area.

At 2150 the VMO-6 Med Evac crew picked up one U. S. WIA and took him to "B" Med. The man had been caught in a bear trap.

4 Jan: Two HMM-364 aircraft supporting the 12th Marines on an artillery spotting mission received intensive automatic small arms fire from coordinates BS 660866. No hits were received.

Two HMM-364 aircraft and three ARVN UH-34D's supported ARVN forces by carrying thirty five NUNGS and five American advisors from KHAM DUC (ZC 006092) to coordinates YC 737071. These aircraft landed the patrol in deep jungle above 3500 feet of elevation. Moderate blade damage was sustained. The mission was a success.

One HMM-364 aircraft supporting MAG-12 on SAR duty encountered enemy small arms fire at coordinates BT 680000 while making a practice night GCA. No hits were received.

At 1500 two VMO-6 and two HMM-364 aircraft launched to KHAM DUC where they joined two Air Force O-1F's and three VNAF H-34's. The O-1's provided the observation, the H-34's the transportation, and the Huey's the protection for 30 Chinese NUNGS and five U. S. Special Forces troops which were deposited in the mountains near the Laotian border for the purpose of establishing an ambush. The flight was conducted without incident.

While the VMO-6 Med Evac aircraft was delivering a U. S. WIA to "B" Med the escort pilot, Captain CONNER, noticed eight men waving for help in the surf off CHU LAI Beach. Responding to the situation, the escort crew pulled three of the men to shore, and a LVT rescued the remaining five.

5 Jan: Two HMM-364 aircraft, supporting the 4th Marines on an aerial reconnaissance flight of the area, immediately north of the TAOR encountered intensive enemy small arms fire at coordinates BT 412162 and one aircraft received a hit. There were no injuries.

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One HMM-364 aircraft, supporting MAG-12 on SAR duty, collided with a runway approach light while making a practice night GCA at the Chu Lai airstrip. The aircraft sustained a broken strut but was able to land on a portable trailer at KY HA without further incident.

Two HMM-364 aircraft and three ARVN UH-34D's supported ARVN forces by retracting the NUNGS and advisors from coordinates YC 737071 and carrying them to ZC 000081. The aircraft had to land on one wheel at 3500 feet of elevation in high jungle elephant grass. Retraction was successful.

Two HMM-364 standby aircraft were scrambled in support of the 4th Marines by carrying a Marine WIA from coordinates BT 427094 to "B" Med.

Four HMM-364 standby aircraft were utilized in support of the 7th Marines on a troop retraction from coordinates BS 553900 to BT 536023.

The VMO-6 0930 TAOR flight was told of a suspected road block on Highway 1 and immediately proceeded to the area to discover lightly armed VC there. As the Hueys arrived on the scene three of the VC jumped into a bus traveling north. The Hueys followed the bus to the bridge at AN TOON (1) where it was stopped by Popular Forces troops. The Hueys then returned to the road block site and found six VC still in the area. After obtaining clearance from the DASC, and coordinating with the Marine units on the ground, the Hueys fired into the area wounding one VC. They kept the VC under surveillance while the ground unit surrounded them. The Marines then killed three of the VC, wounded another, captured two, and confiscated two weapons. The two prisoners were then taken to the POW collection point at CHU LAI.

Around noon the VMO-6 Med Evac crew launched to GIA VUC, and then was led by an Army O-1 to a nearby mountain slope where the evac plane, piloted by Captain WRIGHT hoisted a U. S. Army Advisor through elephant grass and trees into the plane, and carried him back to GIA VUC. The plane then returned to the pick up site to hoist a second advisor to safety. The day before, this area had been the scene of a VC

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ambush that had separated these men from the rest of their patrol, and they had spent the night hiding from the VC. An atmosphere of tension and anxiety prevailed during the rescue, but no hostile fire was encountered.

7 Jan: One HMM-261 UH-34D escorted by two VMO-6 UH-1E's evacuated three ARVN WIA's and one ARVN KIA from a LZ near KHAM DUC (ZC 010060) to DANANG Hospital in support of the Second ARVN Division.

Five HMM-364 aircraft supported ARVN forces on a resupply from QUANG TIN (BT 292229) to coordinates BT 114138 and BT 328082.

Two HMM-364 aircraft supported the 7th Marines by carrying a sick Marine from coordinates BS 624991 to BT 567043.

Four HMM-364 aircraft supported ARVN forces on a resupply from QUANG TIN to coordinates BT 113137 and BT 072061.

At 0900, VMO-6 was host to a visit made by BGen PLATT. Shortly after the General's arrival, LtCol ZITNIK presented him with a model of the Huey, and proclaimed him to be an honorary "Klondiker". After an introduction to all the pilots, the General boarded a UH-1E to conduct a rehearsal flight for the coming CMC tour.

8 Jan: Five HMM-261 aircraft departed KY HA at 1232 on resupply missions 932 and 932A in support of I Corps. On mission 932, 23,700 pounds of cargo, forty ARVN's and 31 Vietnamese civilians were picked up at QUANG NGAI and transported to HA THANH (BS 393705). Four A4's were utilized as escort aircraft. The mission was completed without incident at 1435. On mission 932A, the flight attempted to supply an outpost at BS 785424. After the first aircraft had dropped a load of cargo in the one plane zone, and had taken off with seven ARVN's as passengers, the aircraft (BuNo 150250) was hit by hostile small arms fire. One round entered the pilot's windscreen and exited above the co-pilots head. Fragments of glass caused a minor wound on the face of the pilot, LtCol M. B. PORTER. The second aircraft (BuNo 150253) was on final approach to the zone at this time and received two hits from what was described as "moderate to heavy"

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small arms and automatic fire. Fire was returned with an estimate of one VC wounded or killed. The mission was aborted with all aircraft returning to QUANG NGAI to off load their cargo. All aircraft returned to KY HA without further incident. LtCol PORTER was treated at the MAG-36 Dispensary.

9 Jan: Eight HMM-261 aircraft departed KY HA at 0833 on resupply mission 978 from QUANG NGAI to NUI DAU (BS 880330). Four F8's were utilized as support. 11,400 pounds of cargo transported from QUANG NGAI to the outpost, and 15 ARVN's and four U. S. Military were returned to QUANG NGAI. Mission was accomplished without incident.

One HMM-364 aircraft was utilized for Med Evac standby at VMO-6 line. This aircraft and a VMO-6 "Gunship" were scrambled in support of the 4th Marines by carrying two sick Marines from coordinates BT 455042 to "B" Med.

Seven HMM-364 aircraft supported ARVN forces on a resupply from QUANG TIN (BT 292229) to coordinates BT 115138 and BT 115157. Enemy small arms fire was encountered at coordinates BT 195166 and one aircraft received a hit. There were no injuries.

Three VMO-6 UH-1E's were provided to transport General GREENE and his party on a tour of the CHU LAI enclave. The flight went smoothly and without incident.

10 Jan: Twelve HMM-261 aircraft departed KY HA at 0726 for resupply mission 116, staged from QUANG NGAI in support of I Corps. 46,000 pounds of cargo, 33 ARVN's and 21 Vietnamese civilians were transported from QUANG NGAI to NUI DAU and NUI VANG (BS 817384), utilizing a total of five F4's and 3 F8's as escort. Hostile small arms fire was received from BS 745545. No aircraft were hit and the mission was accomplished without further incident. At the completion of the mission, one ARVN WIA was evacuated from DUC PHO (BS 845395) to QUANG NGAI Hospital. Ten aircraft departed KY HA at 1300 on resupply missions 1115A and 1115B, which were staged from QUANG TIN in support of I Corps. Four A4's were utilized as escort. On mission 1115A, 13,600 pounds of cargo was transported to KY TRA (BT 328082) and 14 ARVN's and one Vietnamese civilian

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were returned to QUANG TIN. During mission 1115B, 23,000 pounds of cargo was carried into PHUOC LAM (BT 072061) and 17 ARVN's and 35 Vietnamese civilians were returned to QUANG TIN. Both missions were completed without incident.

Two HMM-364 aircraft supporting the 4th Marines on an aerial reconnaissance flight of the northern part of the TAOR, encountered enemy small arms automatic fire at coordinates BT 4108. One aircraft received a hit. There were no injuries.

11 Jan: Six HMM-261 aircraft assumed Condition 3 Standby for reserve forces in support of "Operation Needle". At 0730 on mission 1177, two aircraft joined a flight of nine UH-34D's from HMM-364 for a strike mission staged from QUANG NGAI to a LZ at BS 725865. Mission completed without incident. These same HMM-261 aircraft also evacuated 14 VC prisoners from BS 687852 to QUANG NGAI.

Ten HMM-364 aircraft supported ARVN forces on a strike/troop lift from QUANG NGAI to coordinates BS 725866 and from BS 725866 to BS 6885. Enemy small arms fire was encountered at coordinates BS 7183 and in the area immediately east of the LZ at BS 6885. No hits were received. Two of the strike aircraft were utilized to carry a Vietnamese civilian WIA from "B" Med to the ARVN Hospital at QUANG NGAI.

Two HMM-364 aircraft supported the 4th Marines on a reconnaissance retraction from coordinates BT 400090 to BT 532095. Enemy small arms fire was encountered at coordinates BT 400090 and one aircraft received a hit. There were no injuries.

12 Jan: Five HMM-261 aircraft carried 16 Nationalist Chinese VIP's, five Vietnamese civilians and nine U. S. Military from I Corps Headquarters to a LZ (AT 878577) and back to I Corps Headquarters. Other missions included visual recon, liaison and resupply within the CHU LAI TAOR.

Eight HMM-261 aircraft departed KY HA at 1305 on missions 1531A and 1531B. Mission 1531A carried 38,820 pounds of cargo and 109 ARVN passengers between QUANG TIN and TIEN PHUOC (BT 113137). Mission 1531B carried 25,600 pounds of cargo and

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23 ARVN passengers between QUANG TIN and PHUOC LAM (BT 072061). The missions were accomplished with no incidents.

13 Jan: Fourteen HMM-261 aircraft on mission 1578 departed KY HA for LZ DESERT (BT 515065) to lift "G" Company, 2/4 to QUANG NGAI, for a pre-planned strike at LZ RED (BS 834422). 105 ARVN's were also lifted from QUANG NGAI into LZ RED. L-Hour was 0915. The lift was accomplished without incident. Total U. S. troops transported for the mission was 279. Twelve HMM-261 aircraft departed KY HA at 1312 to withdraw the troops. The 12 aircraft were joined by 9 HMM-364 aircraft over the LZ at BS 826448. The withdrawal was completed in two lifts. The first lift transported the ARVNs back to QUANG NGAI and on the second lift "G" Company was lifted back to LZ DESERT. A total of 116 U. S. Marines and 141 ARVNs were transported on the withdrawal. Four A4's of MAG-12 were utilized as helo escort. The mission was completed without incident.

14 Jan: Eight HMM-261 aircraft were forced to abort resupply mission 1730, staged from QUANG TIN, due to adverse weather conditions in the operating area. On mission 1731, two aircraft escorted by four A4's and two F8's transported 13,525 pounds of cargo, 24 ARVNs and five Vietnamese civilians from QUANG NGAI to SA HUYNH (BS 938238) in support of I Corps. The mission was accomplished without incident.

Two HMM-364 aircraft supported ARVN forces by carrying one ARVN WIA from TAM KY to "C" Med at DANANG.

15 Jan: Eight HMM-261 aircraft on mission 1900 along with eight HMM-364 aircraft departed KY HA at 0645 with U. S. Marines for simultaneous landings in two LZ's north of CHU LAI. L-Hour was at 0700. HMM carried 143 U. S. Marines in two trips to the LZ at BT 424134. The flight was escorted by two UH-1E's of VMO-6 and four A4's of MAG-12. The mission was completed without incident. (See Appendix 1 to enclosure (4)).

At 1300, four HMM-261 aircraft departed KY HA on mission 1903, supported by a total of seven A4's from MAG-12. The aircraft lifted 27,500 pounds of cargo and 110 ARVN and 15 U. S. Military passengers between QUANG NGAI and NUI TRON (BS 515780) in support of

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the Second ARVN Division. On mission 1753, three aircraft departed KY HA at 1820 for the LZ at BS 615302 to evacuate a 16 man U. S. patrol and two VC KIA's to BA TO (BS 576335). The mission was accomplished without incident.

Eight HMM-364 aircraft supported the 4th Marines on a strike/troop lift from KY HA to coordinates BT 408155. Enemy small arms fire was encountered at coordinates BT 393172. No hits were received.

Seven HMM-364 aircraft supported ARVN forces on a troop lift from CAM DUC (ZC 006092) to TIEN PHUOC (BT 113137).

Two HMM-364 aircraft supporting the 4th Marines on an aerial reconnaissance flight encountered enemy small arms fire at coordinates BT 353136. No hits were received.

16 Jan: Sixteen HMM-261 aircraft departed KY HA at 0740 on mission 1941, named "QT 12". Ten aircraft from HMM-364 and five aircraft from VMO-6 joined the flight at QUANG NGAI. The aircraft departed QUANG NGAI at 0845 with the first lift touching down in the LZ (BS 440814) at 0857. The last of the troops were in the LZ at 1002. A total of 694 troops were lifted by HMM-261 aircraft in four waves in support of I Corps.

Fourteen HMM-261 aircraft assumed standby at QUANG NGAI for support of Operation "QT 12" if needed. Two of the standby aircraft departed QUANG NGAI at 1120 for GIA VUC (BS 380269) to evacuate one ARVN WIA to QUANG NGAI Hospital. At 1429, two standby aircraft supported by two UH-1E's of VMO-6 departed QUANG NGAI for DUC PHO (BS 423379) to evacuate one ARVN KIA to the QUANG NGAI Hospital.

Three HMM-261 aircraft departed KY HA at 1642 on a patrol insertion and retraction mission supported by four F8Us. The aircraft lifted 16 U. S. Marines from LZ QUAIL to the LZ at BS 493939. The aircraft then proceeded to the LZ at BS 453956 for the pickup of nine U. S. Marines who were transported to LZ QUAIL. No hits were received from hostile fire observed in the vicinity of the LZ at BS 453956.

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Ten HMM-364 aircraft supported ARVN forces on a strike/troop flight from QUANG NGAI to coordinates BS 440814. Enemy small arms fire was encountered at coordinates BS 450803 and BS 5573. No hits were received.

Four HMM-364 aircraft supported the 12th Marines on a resupply from KY HA to coordinates BS 568338.

17 Jan: While two HMM-261 aircraft were on mission 2109B, transporting 4800 pounds of cargo and nine U. S. Marines from LZ ROADRUNNER (AT 974709) to a LZ at AT 965615, one aircraft sustained minimal damage when it received hostile small arms fire from the vicinity of AT 995618.

Six HMM-261 aircraft with six A4E's for escorts, lifted 49,060 pounds of cargo, 46 ARVN soldiers, 71 Vietnamese civilians and five U. S. Military advisors between DANANG and DAI LOC (AT 918579).

Two HMM-364 aircraft supported ARVN forces by carrying two Vietnamese civilian KIA and two Vietnamese WIA from TIEN PHUOC (BT 113137) to TAM KY.

Four HMM-364 aircraft supported the 9th Marines on Operation "Sparrow Hawk". The aircraft were kept in a standby status in the morning and were utilized to perform a resupply from KY HA and DANANG to coordinates AT 963660 and AT 970620. On the return trip from the DANANG area to KY HA, the flight encountered enemy small arms fire approximately five miles northwest of KY HA. No hits were received.

At 1250, a flight of VMO-6 Hueys took Admiral JOHNSON and his party on a tour of the CHU LAI TAOR.

18 Jan: HMM-261 conducted a resupply mission hauling 49,550 pounds of cargo and 38 ARVN soldiers from QUANG NGAI to NUI DAU (BS 880330). During the mission two aircraft were diverted to NUI VANG (BS 818382) to heli-lift two ARVN WIA's to the QUANG NGAI Hospital.

Eight HMM-261 aircraft escorted by eight A4E's from MAG-12, lifted 27,440 pounds of cargo, 33 ARVN soldiers and 45 Vietnamese civilians between QUANG NGAI Airfield and SON HA (BS 393205). The flight was fired upon by small arms fire near BS 560763 but none of the aircraft were hit.

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At 1045 one VMO-6 Huey was launched on a tour of the CHU LAI enclave with Senator J. MILLER (IOWA) aboard.

At 1800 a flight of VMO-6 Hueys took BGen PLATT to DANANG to participate in the Vietnamese TET festivities. On the return trip the flight received about 25 rounds of .50 cal. fire from an area near Highway 1. No hits were sustained by either aircraft.

19 Jan: Ten HMM-364 aircraft supported ARVN forces on a resupply from QUANG TIN to coordinates BT 328082. Inclement weather caused the mission to be cancelled after one lift. Enemy small arms fire was encountered at coordinates BT 355184. No hits were received.

Nine HMM-364 aircraft supported ARVN forces on a resupply from QUANG TIN to PHUOC LAM and TIEN PHUOC. Jet aircraft escorting the flight encountered enemy .50 caliber automatic weapons fire at coordinates BT 2219. They received no hits.

20 Jan: Eight HMM-261 aircraft transported 21,300 pounds of cargo, 19 U. S. Military troops, 81 ARVN soldiers and 20 Vietnamese civilians to the outpost at NUI TRON (BS 517778). These figures include the withdrawal of troops and 105mm howitzers from the outpost to QUANG NGAI. During the operation the flight received fire from BS 603703, but no aircraft were hit.

One HMM-364 aircraft supported the 7th Marines by carrying six ill Vietnamese civilians from coordinates BS 624992 to the ARVN Hospital at QUANG NGAI.

Two HMM-364 aircraft supporting Task Force "D" on an administrative mission encountered enemy small arms fire at coordinates BT 482140. No hits were received.

21 Jan: In the early morning hours, HMM-261, HMM-364 and VMO-6 responded to a distress call from a sinking freighter (See Appendix 2 to enclosure (4)).

On this day Captain HELLRIEGEL of HMM-261 was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross (See Appendix 3 to enclosure (4)).

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VMO-6 conducting its' morning TAOR sweep sighted approximately 50 people in front of a large VC flag; the location, a mountain village, about five miles west of KY HA. The lead aircraft made a low pass and the people dispersed. Another low pass drew small arms fire and machine gun fire. However, the fire was not returned because of the "Truce for TET".

22 Jan: One HMM-364 aircraft accompanied by four VMO-6 Hueys and two MAG-12 fixed wing escorts proceeded to coordinates BS 532366 where a patrol of 13 Marines had been ambushed by VC. The patrol had scattered upon being ambushed and the task of the aircraft was to recover the men as soon as possible. Three of the Marines were spotted on the side of a 2000 foot mountain (BS 540383). In order to rescue them, the aircraft commander had to hover the aircraft at maximum power with one wheel on the side of the mountain while the crew chief and gunner assisted the Marines (one wounded) into the troop compartment. Throughout the operation, the aircraft was exposed to enemy automatic small arms fire, but no hits were received. After returning the men to their CP at BA TO, the aircraft commander was informed that nine more members of the patrol were located at coordinates BS 531365 and that unless they were picked up immediately, they would probably be overrun by VC. He launched aircraft immediately and along with two HMM-261 aircraft, two VMO-6 aircraft and two MAG-12 aircraft, rescued the nine men. While returning to BA TO, enemy small arms fire was encountered at coordinates BS 530390. No hits were received. The thirteenth member of the patrol was not found.

Ten HMM-364 aircraft (including five standby aircraft) supported the 7th Marines on a troop lift from coordinates BT 572029 to BS 565330. Inclement weather caused the mission to be aborted at coordinates BS 6260 and the troops were returned to the pick up zone at BT 572029.

23 Jan: One HMM-364 aircraft accompanied by two VMO-6 escort aircraft, supported the 4th Marines by making a hoist pick up of one Marine at coordinates BS 606372, reconnaissance retraction of six men at BS 598375 and a Med Evac of three Marine WIA from BS 568338 to "B" Med.

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24 Jan: A retrograde was conducted by three UH-34D's from HMM-261 lifting a total of 25 U. S. Marines from a LZ at BT 428075 and a LZ at BS 454904. While three aircraft carrying 13 U. S. Military and three ARVN soldiers were completing mission 2786, one aircraft was hit in the tail cone causing minor damage to one of the ribs. The hit was received at coordinates BS 802382.

Two HMM-364 aircraft supported the 7th Marines by inserting a reconnaissance squad from coordinates BS 624991 to BS 667994. The aircraft returned to coordinates BS 624991 to await a scheduled retraction of the squad. While on the ground, the flight leader was notified that an AO in a VMO-6 aircraft had seen a concentration of VC at coordinates BT 653014. The flight leader immediately launched for the area with a reinforced squad aboard his two aircraft. As the aircraft approached the VC were seen to hide their weapons and then attempt to run across a river. The VMO-6 escort aircraft cut off their route of escape, and the two squadron aircraft landed on either side of the group of VC. With the aircraft gunners firing to hold the VC in their position, the reinforced squad exited the aircraft, killed one VC and captured two others. Later, other ground troops and VMO-6 aircraft accounted for two more kills and two more captives. Three of the VC were wounded and the aircraft evacuated them to "B" Med.

Two HMM-364 aircraft on a routine administrative flight to DANANG encountered enemy small arms fire at coordinates BT 0263. No hits were received.

25 Jan: Three HMM-261 aircraft escorted by two A4E's of MAG-12 proceeded to a LZ at BS 444971 to pick up a 13 man patrol. The flight leader found the zone to be unsafe for helicopter operations and selected another zone about 100 meters to the southwest of the original zone. The mission was completed without any further difficulties.

Four HMM-364 aircraft supported ARVN forces on a re-supply from HOI AN to coordinates ZC 140530 and AT 918579. Enemy small arms fire was encountered at coordinates AT 857365 and AT 855373. No hits were received.

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Two VMO-6 Hueys met four VMO-2 Hueys at MABBLE MOUNTAIN Airfield and between them picked up numerous VIPs. The VMO-6 aircraft carried: Aide-de-Camp CG III MAF, Rufino LAS PIRO of Argentina, Ebbe MUNCH of Denmark, Phillip HABIB of the American Embassy, Mr. Fred PLATT, LtCol SHADE, Major GRAHAM, Captain B. A. CUSTER of MAC Protocol, and a MACV Photographer.

26 Jan: Nine HMM-261 aircraft conducted a troop lift of "E" Company 2/4 to NUI DAU (BS 880330). The lift was made in such a manner as to make it appear to the VC as a routine resupply mission to the outpost.

Eleven HMM-364 aircraft supported ARVN forces on a strike/troop lift from QUANG NGAI to coordinates BS 742808. Enemy small arms fire was encountered at the LZ. No hits were received. One aircraft sustained structural damage after landing on a grave which collapsed under the weight of the aircraft. There were no injuries and the aircraft was flown back to QUANG NGAI and then to KY HA without further incident.

27 Jan: Eleven HMM-261 aircraft heli-lifted "G" Company 2/7 to QUANG NGAI at 0552. Coordination between the units was excellent. The flight received fire (several rounds - possible automatic fire) just north of QUANG NGAI (BS 605803). None of the aircraft were hit. At approximately 1300, Pinchhitter 6 ordered "G" Company to be lifted from QUANG NGAI to the LZ at BT 503038. The retraction commenced at 1410 and was completed at 1440 without incident.

28 Jan: Operation "Double Eagle" commenced and VMO-6 launched two flights of Hueys to provide continuous on-station TAC(A)/TAO coverage in the operation area.

29 Jan: All operations this day were in support of Operation "Double Eagle".

Eight HMM-261 aircraft conducted a troop lift from QUANG NGAI to TRA BONG (BS 545775) carrying a total of 108 ARVN soldiers and six U. S. Advisors. The flight was fired upon by small arms fire at coordinates BS 533815 but none of the aircraft were hit.

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Eight HMM-261 aircraft launched at 2045 in a cold, dark rain to supply the BSA with 12,000 pounds of "C" rations. All aircraft returned safely to KY HA via actual instruments.

HMM-363 aircraft began to participate in Operation "Double Eagle" flying recon, resupply and Med Evac missions. Enemy sniper fire accounted for five hits on YZ 81 during an emergency Med Evac. There were no personnel injuries suffered.

Three HMM-364 aircraft performed the following missions: A resupply from coordinates BS 838416 (JOHNSON CITY) to BS 849390; a Med Evac of a Marine WIA from BS 849390 to "B" Med; and a lift of medical supplies from "B" Med to JOHNSON CITY.

Two HMM-364 aircraft performed the following missions: A passenger lift from KY HA to coordinates BS 838416; and a lift of newsmen to QUANG NGAI. The flight encountered small arms fire approximately one-half mile southeast of JOHNSON CITY. No hits were received.

At 0737, two VMO-6 Hueys proceeded to the BSA for Operation "Double Eagle" and the TATC directed them to pick up one U. S. WIA from the 3/1 Marines near PHAN THAT. Small arms fire was received during the approach to this zone. The wounded man was taken to the USS PAUL REVERE. The flight then picked up several men and loudspeakers for Psy-warfare broadcasts in the 3/1 area. However, the local Vietnamese appeared not to be swayed by the propaganda, and small arms fire was taken from the villages of TAP AN NAM, and THUY TRIEW. The Psy-warfare personnel were dropped off and the flight was directed to control artillery fire but was diverted to fly cover for two Hueys downed in a rice paddy near QUANG NGAI. Due to an erroneous fuel quantity gage the aircraft flown by 1stLt SHOEMAKER ran out of fuel and a precautionary landing was made. The flight leader, Captain WRIGHT picked up 1stLt SHOEMAKER and his crew and landed at a nearby ARVN outpost. A flight was launched from KY HA with 50 gallons of fuel and a pump, and a short time later the downed aircraft was airborne. The original flight then refueled at QUANG NGAI and returned to the operation area to act as TACA for a troop landing at BICH CHIEW (2). Automatic weapons fire was received from the nearby village of THIEP SON (2) and

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a flight of A4's were called upon to lay down rockets and 20mm fire in a tree line near the village, which silenced the hostile fire.

This same flight refueled aboard the USS VALLEY FORGE and was assigned to escort a flight of H-34's on a troop insertion. When the aircraft approached the drop zone many VC started running from the area. Some were in green uniforms, some were in tan, but all were seen taking them off. Some fire was put down in front of twelve men in green uniforms to make them turn back. Then someone came up on Guard Channel and said "Stop Firing" you are firing at friendly positions". Unable to determine where the call came from, the flight could only watch the VC continue to run out of sight. It was later determined that the call came from a VC station.

30 Jan: Twelve HMM-261 aircraft helilifted 327 U. S. Marines of Task Force "DELTA" from the USS VALLEY FORGE to a LZ at BS 716426 without incident.

Eight HMM-364 aircraft flew a strike/troop lift from the USS VALLEY FORGE to coordinates BS 715425. Enemy small arms fire was encountered in the landing zone. No hits were received.

Two HMM-364 aircraft performed the following missions: A Med Evac of five Marine WIA and one Marine KIA from coordinates BS 835429 to "B" Med; a lift of one VCS from BS 849391 to BS 835429; and a Med Evac of a sick Marine from BS 849391 to "D" Med at BS 835429. Enemy small arms fire was encountered at coordinates BS 813435. No hits were received.

Two HMM-364 aircraft performed the following missions: A VIP lift from coordinates BS 838416 to the USS PAUL REVERE; a passenger and cargo lift to BS 753421 from JOHNSON CITY; and a troop lift from BS 838416 to QUANG NGAI. Enemy small arms fire was encountered at coordinates BS 753421. No hits were received.

VMO-6 aircraft participated in VIP, TAC(A), TAO, helo escort and admin missions on the 30 and 31st of January.

All missions performed on 30 January were in support of Operation "Double Eagle".

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31 Jan: All operations this day were in support of Operation "Double Eagle".

Sixteen HMM-261 aircraft launched from KY HA to a LZ at BS 810480 to helilift 337 U. S. Marines to a LZ at BS 628392. The flight received small arms fire from BS 620430 but none of the aircraft were hit.

Two HMM-364 aircraft launched on a Med Evac of a sick Marine from BS 833442 to "B" Med. Enemy small arms fire was encountered at BS 805346. No hits were received.

Two HMM-364 aircraft launched on a Med Evac of a Marine WIA from "D" Med to the USS VALLEY FORGE and encountered enemy small arms fire at BS 822446. No hits were received.

Two HMM-364 aircraft on a leaflet drop in the vicinity of BS 834396 received enemy small arms fire at coordinates BS 8031. No hits were received.

HMM-363 aircraft flew two strikes with other MAG-36 aircraft in support of 2/4. The first, led by LtCol G. D. KEW, CO of HMM-363, landed "E" Company, 2/4 at BS 601394. The area atop a mountain, was a suspected VC observation post. All aircraft were forced to land in hazardous areas due to anti-helicopter stakes in the better sites. The second strike took the remaining elements of 2/4 into a dry rice paddy at BS 618360. Light resistance was encountered from nearby hamlets. One aircraft was hit sustaining minor damage and no crew injuries.

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PART IV

1. Supporting Documents (Newspaper articles and photographs)

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Operation "Quickstep"

CHU LAI, VIETNAM, 15 Jan 66 - At first light Marines could be seen on a hill overlooking KY HA Airfield, home of Marine Aircraft Group 36. They were watching their helicopters lift a company of U. S. Marines into a new Viet Cong emplacement within sight of the base.

"Quickstep", a one-day operation, was launched in the early morning mist (See page 2 of this appendix). Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 261 and Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 flew 16 helicopters from the landing mats at KY HA and began to circle almost immediately for the landing. With the troop carrying "copters" overhead, four "gun ships" from Marine Observation Squadron Six were streaking in beneath them to pound the Viet Cong with rockets and machinegun fire. Before the choppers could land, fixed-wing jet aircraft bombed the landing zones to clear them of any possible Viet Cong traps.

After the troops were put in the rice paddies, the helicopters returned to their base for two more loads. The planes were through in time for breakfast. As the onlookers filtered down off the hill, the battle continued with the ground Marines penetrating the Viet Cong stronghold.

By the middle of the afternoon the Marine Company had sent the Viet Cong packing, and were credited with killing two of the enemy.

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003A04366MAG-36 CHOPPERS HELP RESCUE THIRTY FROM
STRANDED SHIP

On 21 January 1966 helicopters from Marine Aircraft Group 36 joined with an Air Force patrol plane and two U. S. Navy ships to rescue the passengers and crew of the Panamanian registered freighter "Bright Star", stranded on a reef in the South China Sea.

It was just before daylight when the USS DYNAMIC and USS NICHOLAS received the first SOS from the freighter. She was aground and floundering in heavy seas, 35 miles southeast of CHU LAI near CU LAO RE Island. Instantly, the Navy rushed to aid the 30 passengers and crew of the disabled ship.

When they arrived a U. S. Air Force patrol plane was circling overhead. But due to the rough sea and breakers crashing against the coral reef, neither the seaplane nor the small boats from the Navy ships could get close enough to effect a rescue. Another SOS was sent. This time the Marines answered.

Marine Aircraft Group 36, based at KY HA, sent two UH-1E "Huey" helicopters from VMO-6.

As soon as the helicopters arrived they started to lift the passengers and crew from the stricken ship. Hovering just over the superstructure, the copters used their hoists to lift the men from the canted deck. When the first man was aboard the Huey, he was flown 300 yards to the USS NICHOLAS, where he was lowered to the Navy vessel. Knowing the Hueys would run low on fuel before the transfer of all passengers could be accomplished, the flight leader requested additional helicopters to assist.

Two Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 choppers responded. At the same time two more from HMM-261 heard the call from the ship while on a resupply mission south of KY HA. They delayed their original job and headed for the disabled ship.

When the four UH-34D helos arrived, the Hueys had flown 16 of the passengers to safety. With their fuel low, and the bigger birds to finish the job, the two VMO-6 choppers returned to KY HA.

The ship started to break-up as increased winds pounded it against the reef. The four helicopters worked with precision and speed to lift the remaining 14 men from the doomed freighter to the safety of the USS NICHOLAS. See page 2 of this Appendix.

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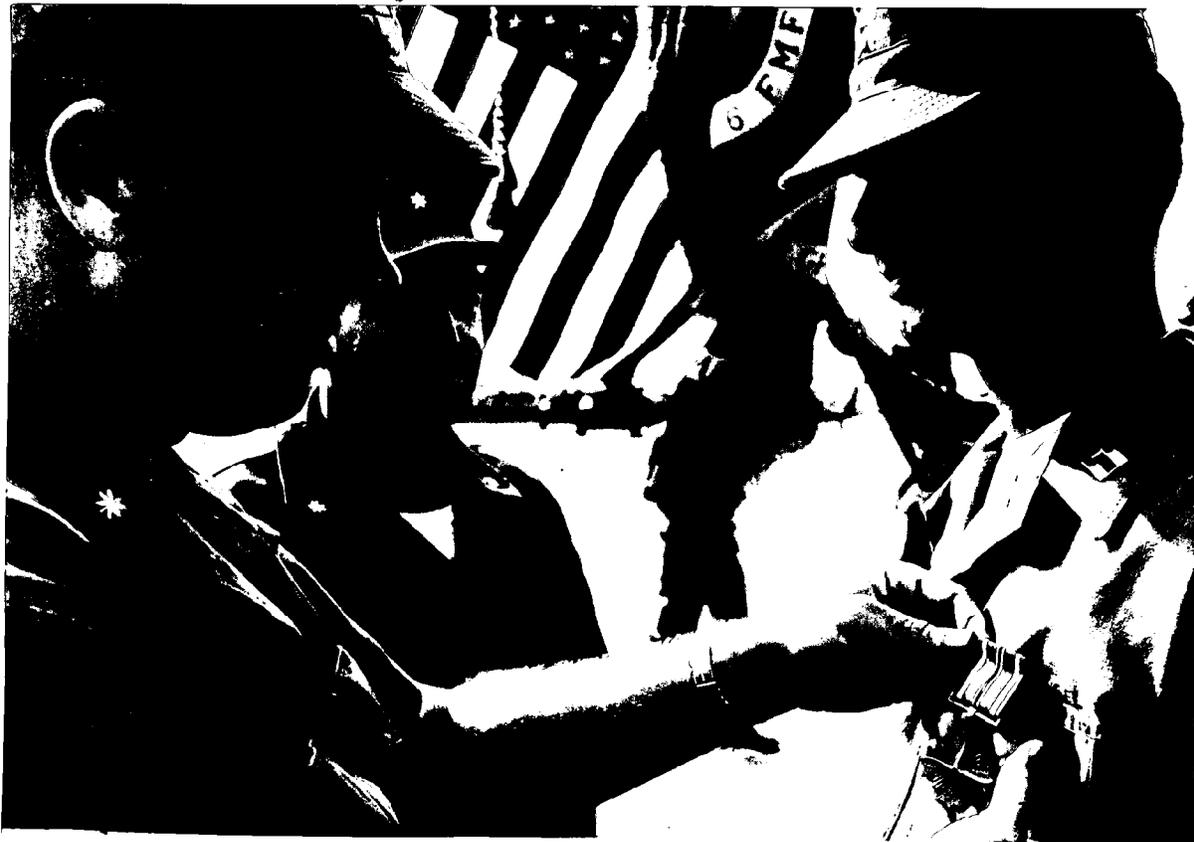


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CAPTAIN HELLRIEGEL RECEIVES DFC

On 21 January 1966, a Distinguished Flying Cross was awarded to Captain John A. HELLRIEGEL of HMM-261 for meritorious action above and beyond the call of duty. Captain HELLRIEGEL rescued the pilots and crewmembers of an Army UH-1B which crashed at BA GIA (BT 499775) while it was under a heavy Viet Cong attack on 5 July 1965. Lieutenant Colonel Mervin B. PORTER, Executive Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 36 is presenting the award, with Lieutenant Colonel Keith W. COSTELLO, Commanding Officer, HMM-261 looking on.



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10 Rescued With Hoist

DA NANG—For approximately a half-hour the two helicopters hovered. The rotor blades were just inches above the tree tops. The body of the 'copter was hidden in the depths of the trees.

The two 'copters from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM)-261 were lifting wounded Vietnamese soldiers up by the hoist cable. The area, 45 miles south of Da Nang, was covered by trees 100 feet high.

Before Capt. Donald V. Vacca (Pasadena, Calif.) arrived over the area the Vietnamese ground troops had cleared enough of the trees away with dynamite to enable the Captain to lower his chopper enough to use a hoist because of the dense jungle.

The ten wounded men were lifted out safely.

"Each of us in turn hovered over the spot cleared by the ground troops and used our hoist to lift five men each aboard," the Captain stated.

After the men were aboard the 'copters took them to a medical aid station and then returned to their base here.

Captain Vacca was presented the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with silver star for his action that day.

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Resupply Is Surrounded By 'Fifties'

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CHU LAI — They thought they had the helicopters ambushed, but they died in the brush ringing Minh Long.

Minh Long is an Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) outpost 32 miles southwest of here that is regularly resupplied by helicopters from Marine Aircraft Group (MAG)-36. On this day, a flight from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM)-364 was belly-loaded with food and ammunition. Said 1st Lt. William R. Crowe later:

"The OP (outpost) looked quiet enough as we approached, but we dropped down for a look anyway."

That "look" triggered an ambush the Viet Cong had set specifically to shoot down the resupply 'copters. Tracers, then a cloud of bullets, poured from heavy underbrush surrounding the compound. The VC had crept to the camp's outer fringes and set their guns to intercept the planes no matter which direction they approached from.

Dodging like skiers in a slalom race, the choppers banked around the outpost, then leveled for a run straight across the compound.

"We weren't about to give them standing targets," the San Gabriel, Calif., lieutenant explained, "so we flew as low and slow as we could without being ripped to pieces. When we were over the compound, the crew chiefs dropped the cargo to the waiting ARVNs."

Then came the problem of escape.

Every exit was covered with 50-caliber fireworks. Tracers lit the sky like "a Chinese New Year's celebration."

The only opening was up. The 'copters spiraled like corkscrews until they'd climbed out of range and as they cleared the airways, the Marines sprung their counter-ambush. Skyhawk jets which often accompany resupply runs streaked in beneath the 'copters, spewing their own brand of fireworks.

Later, an inspection testified to the skillful success of the 'copters' evasive tactics. They returned with only two bullet holes!

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'Ugly Angels' Now On 'Happy Valley'

CHU LAI—The "Ugly Angels" are now on the "Happy Valley". Formerly stationed at Ky Ha airfield with Marine Aircraft Group (MAG)-36, the Ugly Angels of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM)-362 are replacing HMM-261 aboard the USS Valley Forge. The "Happy Valley", as the USS Valley Forge is sometimes called, is a Helicopter Assault Carrier (LPH-8) and has one Marine helicopter squadron aboard at all times.



HAPPY VALLEY—LCol Mervin B. Porter (Bakersfield, Calif.), left, commanding officer of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM)-261 receives friendly advice from LCol James Aldworth (home town not available) about HMM-362's new home. LCol Aldworth is changing places with LCol Porter's squadron aboard the USS Valley Forge. HMM-261 will take HMM-362's place at Marine Aircraft Group-36's airfield at Ky Ha.

(OFFICIAL USMC PHOTO by LCpl. A. B. Halstead)

HMM-261 will leave the floating landing field for the landing mats of MAG-36. The Group has been at this base since September 1st. Squadron 261 has just completed a three month tour aboard the Valley Forge.

362 is no stranger to Vietnam. Flying in support of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) from April to July 1962, they were the first Marine helicopter squadron to serve here.

They also helped support U.S. Marine operations as well as lifting thousands of ARVN troops into battle. While working from here in the last few months they have logged 4,397 hours in the air. In the same period they have carried 25,000 battle equipped troops and refugees. The Ugly Angels have lifted more than 1,200 tons of cargo.

Squadron 261 has been in Vietnam since June 21 and has participated in all major Marine operations. The squadron was fully committed to Operation Midnight, the first night helicopter assault in history. In little over seven months HMM-261 has been stationed at all major Marine Helicopter airfields in Vietnam. Since they have been here the squadron has flown more than 10,000 hours in support of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam and U.S. forces.

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Copter Comes In on a Rotor And Prayer to Get Marine

CHU LAI, Vietnam—It was a mission that would normally require 20 minutes. It took an hour and a half. But Capt. Donald L. Wright and his helicopter crew got the dying man out of the rice paddies.

Gusts of monsoon rain were being lashed by high winds when Wright's Huey, plus one other, was dispatched from here to pick up a marine located nine miles from the nearest field hospital.

The man had pneumonia and his breathing had become labored.

"The weather was poor, but flyable as long as we could hug the ground for reference," the Orange, Cal., pilot recalls.

As the Hueys headed inland, however, the storm thickened and both crews lost visual contact with the ground. They navigated by instrument, getting directions by radio from the point where the sick marine lay.

There was a break in the weather about two miles from the pick-up zone. Using the open patch as an orbiting point, the two Marine Observation Squadron (VMO)-6 copters tried several times to penetrate the storm. The riflemen radioed they were signalling with a blinking flashlight, but the heli-Marines couldn't see it.

Finally, Wright asked the zone be illuminated by artillery flares. A few minutes later, a dull glow blossomed in the clouds. The Hueys headed for it.

"I was in the lead when my wingman called that he'd lost sight of me. He did the only thing possible to keep us from a mid-air collision. He turned back for our open spot and orbited."

Wright went on, but, just as he was over the medical evacuation party, the flares went out. He went into a tight orbit, praying that the hills which had been vaguely outlined weren't as high as his Huey. Then, with another artillery salvo came more light.

The pilot eased down, every light on the 'copter burning, trying to outline ground features. His first approach had to be aborted when sudden ground



CAPT. DONALD L. WRIGHT

winds blew him off course. By the dim distortion of flares, Wright banked around a hill and came in again.

He landed right beside the rifle unit.

Minutes later, the gasping Marine safely inside and being treated by a corpsman, the Huey was rotoring into the clear patch, teaming with its wingman.