

**ORIGINAL**

HEADQUARTERS  
PROVISIONAL MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP-39  
1st Marine Aircraft Wing  
APO San Francisco, California, 96602

3:RTR: gxm  
5750  
Ser: 03A16468  
12 June 1968

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From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding General, First Marine Aircraft Wing (Attn: G-3)  
Subj: Command Chronology for the Period of 1-31 May 1968; submission of  
Ref: (a) WgO 5750.1C

Encl: ☒ (1) Command Chronology for ProvMAG-39  
☒ (2) Command Chronology for ProvH&MS-39  
☒ (3) Command Chronology for HMM-161  
☒ (4) Command Chronology for EMM-262  
☒ (5) Command Chronology for VMO-6  
☒ (6) Command Chronology for HMM-163 (submitted under separate cover)  
☒ (7) Command Chronology for MATCU-66 Detachment "Alpha"  
☒ (8) Command Chronology for MATCU-62

*Filed*

*Dep*

1. In accordance with instructions contained in reference (a), enclosures (1) through (8) are submitted herewith.

*John E. Hansen*  
JOHN E. HANSEN

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446 39 SYC CONTROL  
No: 169-68

PROV MAG-39

CMD CHRON

MAY 1968

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PROVISIONAL MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP-39  
Command Chronology  
1 May 1968 to 31 May 1968

Part I - Organizational Data  
Part II - Narrative Summary  
Part III - Significant Events

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Part I Organizational Data1. Staff

## a. Provisional Marine Aircraft Group-39

(1)	Colonel John E. HANSEN	1-31 May 68	CO
(2)	LtCol. Louis A. GULLING	17-31 May 68	XO
(3)	Capt. Charles H. FEASELMAN	1-31 May 68	S-1/Adj
(4)	Capt. John A. HATHAWAY	1-31 May 68	S-2
(5)	Maj. Arthur C. CRANE	1-31 May 68	S-3
(6)	Maj. Guy L. LARKIN	1-25 May 68	S-4
(7)	Maj. David G. WORKMAN	26-31 May 68	S-4
(8)	Maj. William A. MCGAW JR.	1-31 May 68	AvnSafO
(9)	Lt. Frederick W. ARNESON	1-9 May 68	Chaplain
(10)	LCDR Rodney R. SCHEER	10-31 May 68	Chaplain
(11)	Lt. Drewry H. MORRIS	1-31 May 68	Flight Surgeon

## b. Provisional Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron-39

(1) See page 1 of enclosure (1) to enclosure (2)

## c. Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-161

(1) See page 1 of enclosure (1) to enclosure (3)

## d. Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-262

(1) See page 1 of enclosure (1) to enclosure (4)

## e. Marine Observation Squadron-6

(1) See page 1 of enclosure (1) to enclosure (5)

## f. Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-163

(1) Will be submitted under separate cover as enclosure (6)

## g. Marine Air Control Unit 66 Detachment Alpha

(1) See page 1 of enclosure (1) to enclosure (7)

## h. Marine Air Control Unit 62

(1) See page 1 of enclosure (1) to enclosure (8)

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2. Provisional Marine Aircraft Group-39  
1st Marine Aircraft Wing  
FME, Pacific, FPO San Francisco, California, 96602  
Quang Tri Air Base, Republic of Vietnam  
1-31 May 1968

3. Average Monthly Strengths

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
Prov. HAMS-39	28	390
HMM-161	58	218
HMM-262	49	200
VMO-6	39	158
MAFCU-62	8	77
MAFCU-66 Det. "Alpha"	2	27
<u>HMM-163</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>145</u>
Total	230	1215

4. Important Visitors

a. 17 May 1968 MGen. Norman J. ANDERSON, Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPac.

b. Brig Gen. Homer S. HILL, Assistant Wing Commander, 1stMAW made several visits during the month.

c. Mr. Lee DOUGLAS, Vice President of Boeing Vertol.

d. 4 May 1968, Capt. Leon DARKOWSKI, CHC USN 1stMAW Chaplain; Capt. Ralph BELOW, CHC USN III MAF Chaplain and Capt. Loren LINDQUIST, CHC USN OMC Staff Chaplain.

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Part II Narrative Summary

During the month of May, ProvMAG-39 units supported the following operations: Scotland II, Napoleon/Saline, Lancaster II, Kentucky, Jeb Stewart II, Rice and Mameluke Thrust.

ProvMAG-39 helicopter commitments were primarily directed in support of Operation Scotland II for the first half of the month. Due to the improved weather conditions and subsequent reduction of enemy fire, resupply and medevac missions were more efficiently accomplished. Although the intensity of fire had decreased from that of past months, there were numerous incidents of aircraft receiving mixed mortar and automatic small arms fire.

Operations Lancaster II and Napoleon/Saline were conducted in the coastal plain region of the Northern I Corps Tactical Zone generally in close proximity to the DMZ. Most of the resupply was delivered to rapidly moving troop units. Although most of the resupply and medevac landing zones were unsecure, few fire incidents occurred.

Operations Jeb Stewart II and Rice were conducted to protect the rice harvest and deny its access to the enemy. The harvested rice was picked up from landing zones and flown by CH-46's to secure areas for storage. As well as a tactical necessity these operations served as a fine civic action example.

During the latter part of the month the tempo of operations in the Khe Sanh area picked up with many contacts being made with the NVA. Several new Operations started and continued on into June with increasing tempo.

On 17 May 1968 Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-161 reported aboard and aircraft and crews were integrated with HMM-262 on assigned missions. HMM-161 quickly learned the operating areas and techniques necessary for completing their assigned missions.

Part III Significant EventsChronological Sequence of Events

1 May 1968. Heavy contact for Marines in the Northern I Corps Tactical zone was the order of the day. Aircraft from ProvMAG-39 flew 131.4 hours,

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477 sorties, carried 367 pax, 30.3 tons of cargo and 23 medevac missions with 50 emergency, 67 priority and 56 routine cases. At 1400H Highboy 4-1 (HMM-163, UH-34D) was shot down at YD 1963 grid after lifting out two emergency and two routine (KIA'S) medevacs. The aircraft was climbing out and at 200 feet received heavy automatic weapons fire, resulting in a fire in the aft fuel cell. The aircraft autorotated to the river bank West of Dong Ha. The crew evacuated the aircraft and it was destroyed by fire. There were no additional injuries to the crewmembers or medevacs but the crew was unable to remove the KIA'S from the fire. At 1728H Highboy medevac (HMM-163, UH-34D) received twenty hits from automatic weapons fire (.50 and .30 cal.) while climbing out of a zone at grid YD2162. The aircraft had eight emergency medevacs aboard but was able to continue flight to "D" Med at Dong Ha where an emergency landing was executed due to a rough running engine.

2 May 1968. HMM-163 rescued a Marine from 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines while VMO-6 gunships (UH-1E) provided cover. The rescue began at 1800H when the night quick reaction gunships of VMO-6 were launched to assist a company of 2/4 that was in heavy contact. Upon arriving at the scene a report was received from an Aerial Observer on station, that one Marine had been cut off from the rest of his unit, and the enemy was trying to encircle him. The UH-1E gunships expended all their ammo, while providing cover for the Marine attempting to return to friendly lines. A second section of gunships along with an UH-34D from HMM-163 was launched to assist in the rescue. As the first section returned, after rearming, and with two sections of gunships providing suppressive fire cover, the UH-34D made a landing and effected the rescue. None of the aircraft involved was hit by enemy fire although intensive fire was encountered.

4 May 1968. Two UH-34D's from HMM-163 and two UH-1E from VMO-6 made two reconnaissance team insertions, in the Khe Sanh area, by using the low level covert method of insertion. The four aircraft flew low level to the area of the insertion. At the predetermined landing zone one of the H-34's makes a quick landing as the team is inserted. The other aircraft continue on and the H-34 lifts off and joins on the tail end of the flight. All aircraft then continue making one or two inserts while returning low level to Khe Sanh. During the flight received .50 cal fire with one of the H-34's receiving limited damage that was quickly repaired.

5 May 1968. At 0305H the Quang Tri Airfield came under an enemy rocket attack which resulted in one CH-46 destroyed, one CH-46 with major damage and four CH-46's with minor damage. One UH-1E received minor damage. There were three WIA's and the CH-46 availability was severely affected.

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Two CH-46's from HMM-262 and two CH-46's from HMM-164 escorted by two UH-1E gunships from VMO-6 supported the Marines near Dong Ha with an emergency troop lift (YD346635). The troop lift received enemy fire from all surrounding areas of the drop zone. Later in the afternoon, with the Marines in heavy contact on the ground two UH-34's began evacuating medevacs from the Marine position to Dong Ha. At one point in the operation several wounded Marines were cut off from their unit by 500 meters and the enemy was within 100 meters. The UH-1E's provided suppressive fire while one UH-34 from HMM-163 snatched several of the wounded Marines from the enemy. The UH-34's received intense fire resulting in minor damage to the aircraft. At this point a CH-46 from HMM-165 made a pass into the zone and made three separate pickups. On take off from the last pickup point the aircraft was hit by intense fire, crashed and burned. All persons on board were able to get clear of the aircraft. They then came under enemy small arms fire resulting in the pilot KIA and several more WIA's. At this point a CH-46 from HMM-164 made the pickup of all persons in the zone.

7 May 1968. Two CH-46's from HMM-262 made a night rescue of the Army pilot and ARVN AO of a downed Army Ol. The rescued persons were returned to Quang Tri Airbase.

8 May 1968. A flight of four CH-46 helicopters from HMM-262 encountered heavy mortar and small arms fire while resupplying Hill 881 North.

11 May 1968. Khe Sanh and surrounding landing zones came under enemy arty fire when helicopters landed.

14 May 1968. Two UH-34's from HMM-163 launched on a night emergency SAR pickup north of the DMZ. The UH-34's proceeded to the mouth of the Cua Viet River and contacted Water Boy for coordination. Water Boy and Big Brother 7 did not have a visual contact and therefore attempted to cancel the mission. The UH-34's requested and were granted permission to make a pass in an effort to establish visual contact. The downed RIO fired several flares and the UH-34's were able to make visual contact. The pickup was accomplished without an incident about 1/2 mile off the North Vietnamese coast.

15 May 1968. At approximately 1335H, a USAF C-130 (Modex #37875) crashed while landing on runway 14 at Quang Tri bursting into flames upon impact. The left wing sheared off and the plane traveled approximately 2500 feet coming to a stop between the runway and taxiway. Crash Crew responded with two M-500A fire trucks and one M-79 other (tracked vehicle). The Crash Crew personnel rescued five personnel and assisted 48 other passengers off the burning aircraft.

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17 May 1968. HMM-161, a CH-46 squadron relieved HMM-163, a UH-34 squadron, at Quang Tri and began their first operational day in country.

18 May 1968. A flight of HMM-262 aircraft was instructed to extract a recon team in heavy contact with the enemy at a position Northeast of Khe Sanh. The aircraft proceeded to the site, made an approach under heavy mortar fire and remained in the landing zone several minutes. Mortar fire bracketed the aircraft and wounded all but one of the team members. The aircraft did not lift from the zone until all of the team members were safely aboard.

22 May 1968. Divert was the word heard most by the quick reaction gunships from VMO-6 today. The flight was able to handle each situation in turn as they diverted from recon inserts and extracts, close air support for troop in contact, convoy cover, armed helicopter escort and TAC(A) tasks. Fire was received on all tasks except the convoy cover task.

31 May 1968. One HMM-262 CH-46, with a CH-46 from HMM-161 acting as wingman, launched on a night emergency medevac mission to a landing zone located North of Dong Ha. The ground unit had requested the operation be conducted without flares. In attempting to approach the LZ, the lead CH-46 pilot lost sight of the zone and commenced a wave off. He was immediately taken under intense enemy automatic weapons fire resulting in hits in the engine compartment and loss of one engine. The damaged aircraft was flown back to Quang Tri and exchanged for a replacement aircraft. With the help of UH-1E gunships and flares from a flare ship the mission was successfully completed.

2. Personnel. Critical shortages exist as follows:

a. VMO-6

MOS

REMARKS

7563

A critical shortage exists in qualified Aviators particularly in second tour and TAC(A) qualified aviators.

6319

A critical shortage continues to exist in the supervisory ranks of E5 through E7.

b. HMM-161

MOS

REMARKS

No critical shortage exists.

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c. HMM-262MOSREMARKS

6320

Even though the total strength in this MOS exceeds the M/L a critical shortage exists in the supervisory ranks of E5 through E7.

d. ProvH&MS-39MOSREMARKS

No critical shortage exists.

e. MATCU-66 Det "A"MOSREMARKS

No critical shortage exists.

f. MATCU-62MOSREMARKS

No critical shortage exists.

3. Administration

Administration continues to be hampered with the lack of office equipment and supplies. Office equipment has been requested with no results.

4. Awards

The following award recommendations have been submitted during this period:

- a. Navy Cross - 1
- b. Distinguished Flying Cross - 13
- c. Silver Star - 6
- d. Bronze Star - 8
- e. Navy Comm - 12
- f. Air Medal - 863
- g. Navy Achievement Medal - 1

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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## 5. Casualties

The following were reported during this period:

### a. Hostile

- (1) KIA - none
- (2) WIA - eight (8)

### b. Non-Hostile

- (1) KAI - none
- (2) Other - eleven (11)

## 6. Morale Welfare

a. A new shower for aircrews has been opened on a twenty-four hour a day basis. The new messhall nears completion and plans are under way for clubs to be placed in operation soon.

b. Lt. Frederick ARNESON, CHC, USNR was relieved as Group Chaplain by LCDR Rodney R. SCHEER, CHC, USN on 9 May 1968. Chaplain ARNESON was the first chaplain to be permanently assigned to the Quang Tri complex. He had arrived on November 11, 1967, 10 days after the first C-130 had landed on the recently completed runway 35.

c. Divine Services were held each Sunday with a total monthly attendance of 479 with 265 taking part in communion.

d. A religious discussion group is in progress with an average attendance of 12 persons. A special indoctrination lecture was held for 180 members of newly reported HMM-161.

e. There were a total of 44 pastoral counseling cases for May.

f. On 21 May H&MS-39 Aerology section recorded a high outdoor sun temperature of 124°F to climax a twelve day period from 16 May to 27 May of daytime highs in excess of 100°F.

## 7. Civic Action

ProvMAG-39 contributed the following articles during the month of May to the following:

Quang Tri Orphanage: 2 boxes frozen carrots, 2 boxes frozen pork, 34 cartons of frozen fish, 5 dozen coloring books and 2 boxes (20 lbs/box) clothes.

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Quang Tri Refugee Center: 2 boxes (20 lbs/box) clothes, 100 bars of soap, 5 boxes (1 dozen/box) vitamins, 5 boxes (24/box) toothpaste and 10 dozen school pencils.

The protection of the rice harvest by CH-46 units of ProvMAG-39 also played an important part in the civic action program.

#### 8. Intelligence

a. General. Intelligence support for operations of the Group continued to improve during the reporting period. The Intelligence briefing area now features a large current intelligence map, fire incident map, enemy order of battle and recon inserts map. A Friendly Order of Battle map is maintained for the S-3 section. A group-wide system for intelligence screening of captured enemy material and weapons was instituted and representative weapons and equipment are displayed in the COC Bunker. An Intelligence SOP, visitor bill and photograph control bill were drafted and staffed.

b. Liaison. Liaison was established with the following units and agencies:

- (1) US AID/COORDS Advisor to SVN National Police Special Branch.
- (2) COORDS Advisor Team to Trieu Phong District.
- (3) Quang Tri Officer, 191st MI Det.

#### 9. Tactical Aviation Fuels Dispensing System

The H&MS-39 TAFDS unit dispersed 1,120,000 gallons of JP-4 and 233,000 gallons of AV gas at its Dong Ha, Quang Tri and Camp Carroll facilities.

#### 10. Air Operations

Units of ProvMAG-39 flew 5051.3 hours, 17,908 sorties carrying 23,207 passengers and 2,275 tons of cargo. There were 1084 medevac missions with a total of 3503 medevacs of which there were 848 emergencies, 1515 priorities and 1140 routine cases.

The detachment of CH-53's from HMM-463 flew 2,515 sorties carrying 6,844 pax and 3,353 tons of cargo of which 256 tons were internal and 3,097 were external loads.

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11. Air Control

	<u>Dong Ha</u>	<u>Khe Sanh</u>	<u>Quang Tri</u>
a. VFR Operations	23,222	5,990	26,037
b. GCA Operations	68	7	132
c. Radar Monitors	<u>9</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>8</u>
Total	23,299	5,999	26,177

12. Command and Control

UH-1E aircraft from VMO-6 are daily committed for C&C use of ground commanders.

13. Ground Defense

The ProvMAG-39 ground defense platoon continues to strengthen their defensive positions. New concertina wire is being put in place along with trip flares and other warning devices.

14. Training

A program of indoctrination lectures for HMM-161 was set up and completed requests for formal schools were submitted by the squadrons and forwarded to Wing.

15. Logistics

ProvMAG-39 continues to depend on MAG-36 for logistical support.

16. Utilities

The ProvMAG-39 Utilities section continues to provide services that go beyond the scope of equipment available. The 200 man messhall continues to feed an average of 1,000 men at each meal. A total of 972,000 gallons of potable water was provided for Quang Tri and neighboring 3rd Marine Division Units.

17. Communications

Blowing sand and high winds hampered communication facilities for the better part of the month of May

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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18. Construction

a. Three TAFDS Berms were completed; one at the northern pits at Quang Tri and two at the new development at LZ Cameo Stud. At LZ Cameo Stud a hole, bunker lumber and 5,000 sandbags were provided by ProvMAG-39 Initiative to use them was provided by the NVA.

b. A 300 foot connecting road was completed between the Helo Pad and Group Supply. This was accomplished by MCB-10 prior to their departure.

c. Construction of the Officers Club was started 30 May 1968.

19. Messages

a. The following message was received from Commanding General, 3rd MARDIV:

(1) The Hallmark of successful operations in the AO during rapidly changing tactical situations must be speed of movement. On 25 May a total of 1500 Marines or 9 Companies were moved on extremely short notice. The major portion of the tactical lift was accomplished subsequent to 1700, in some cases concluding during hours of darkness.

(2) The response of both infantry elements and units of ProvMAG-39 was nothing short of magnificent. I should like to pay special tribute to the professionalistic skill of HMM-161 and HMM-262. This example of air/ground teamwork presages well for the coming summer campaigning in the 3rd Marine Division Zone.

(3) Well done to all concerned. Major General DAVIS sends.

b. The following message was received from the Commanding Officer of the 1st Marines:

(1) Medevac/Emergency resupply 16 May 68 Companies I and M, 3rd Bn. h Marines were displaced from Dong Ha area to Khe Sanh Combat Base and continued overland to join their Bn, which was heavily engaged to their West from Hill 689 (XD 803409) enroute, these units became engaged with an enemy force located between the two companies and the remainder of the battalion. After an extensive fire fight and evaluation of the situation, it was determined that these units would consolidate night positions on Hill 552 (XD 821 401) in view of continuing to Hill 689.

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(2) Additionally Inventory of ammunition stocks with the companies and with the battalion headquarters revealed the Class V levels to be dangerously low despite previous resupply during the day and a continuing possibility of contact with enemy forces throughout the night still existed.

(3) A request for emergency resupply and extraction of medevacs was submitted via normal channels and was passed CO, ProvMAG-39 for action.

(4) The execution of this resupply/medevac mission was rapid and professional. The pilots of the aircraft coordinated closely with ground units. Followed suppressive fires excellently and in general displayed the skill and initiative that has made Marine Corps Aviation what it is today.

(5) Request that the officers and men be passed our appreciation and congratulations for an outstanding performance.

c. Following message was received from the USS Ranger:

Please convey our deepest appreciation for the generous efforts and invaluable assistance of the officers and men attached to Quang Tri Air Base, in the recent return of Jason 306 (A-7) to operational status. Special thanks to Col. HANSEN and Major CRANE ProvMAG-39 - CO RANGER COMCVW and JASON one sends.

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ENCLOSURE (1)