

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

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5750
Sert 03A22468
11 August 1968

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From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, First Marine Aircraft Wing (G-3)

Subj: Command Chronology for the period of 1-31 July 1968; submission of

Ref: (a) Wgo 5750.10

- Encl: (1) Command Chronology for Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39
(2) Command Chronology for Provisional Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 39
(3) Command Chronology for Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161
(4) Command Chronology for Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262
(5) Command Chronology for Marine Observation Squadron 6
(6) Command Chronology for Marine Air Traffic Control Unit 66 Detachment - Alpha
(7) Command Chronology for Marine Air Traffic Control Unit 62

Filed
Prov MAG-39
top

1. In accordance with instructions contained in reference (a), enclosures (1) through (7) are submitted herewith.

W. Sienko
W. SIENKO

CMD CHRON

Prov MAG-39
S+C # 271-68
copy # 1

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5750
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PROVISIONAL MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 39
Command Chronology
1 July 1968 to 31 July 1968

PART I
PART II
PART III

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

ENCLOSURE (1)
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3:RRR:gac
5750
Ser: 03A22468
11 August 1968

PART I ORGANIZATIONAL DATA1. Staff

a. Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39

(1)	LtCol. Paul W. NIBSON	1-4 July 68	C.O.
(2)	Col. Walter SIENKO	5-31 July 68	C.O.
(3)	LtCol. Louis A. GULLING	1-31 July 68	X.O.
(4)	Capt. Charles FEASLEMAN	1-31 July 68	S-1/Adjutant
(5)	Maj. John A. HATHAWAY	1-31 July 68	S-2
(6)	Maj. Arthur C. CRANE	1-31 July 68	S-3
(7)	Maj. David WORKMAN	1-31 July 68	S-4
(8)	Maj. William A. McGAW Jr.	1-31 July 68	Avn Safety O
(9)	LCdr. Rodney R. SCHEER	1-31 July 68	Chaplain
(10)	Lt. Drewery H. MORRIS	1-31 July 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 Air Traffic Control Unit 66 Detachment Alpha

(1) See page 1 of enclosure (1) to enclosure (6)

g. Marine Air Traffic Control Unit 62

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

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Sert: 03A22168
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2. Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39
1st Marine Aircraft Wing
FMF, Pacific, FPO San Francisco, California 96602
Quang Tri Air Base, Republic of Vietnam
1-31 July 1968

3. Average Monthly Strength

Marine Officer:	185	Marine Enlisted:	1039
Navy Officer:	4	Navy Enlisted:	14

4. Important Visitors:

Maj General Charles J. QUILTER

Brig Gen Harry G. OLSEN

PART II NARRATIVE SUMMARY

During the month of July, units of Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39 supported the following operations: Canton II, Lancaster II, Kentucky, Napoleon/Saline and Scotland II.

Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39 helicopters were committed primarily in support of operation Lancaster II. During July a total of 6108.8 hours were flown in 21,412 sorties. A total tonnage of 3377.7 tons and 36,674 passengers were carried by the Group aircraft. There were 1640 med-evacs.

The evacuation of Khe Sanh Combat Base was completed, and Landing Zone Stud became the replacement Combat Base for the ProvMAG-39 aircraft. A detachment of Marine Air Traffic Control Unit 62 was moved to LZ Stud from Khe Sanh Combat Base, and is currently conducting Air Traffic Control operations for the many landing zones in the Stud area.

At Quang Tri Airfield, a new messhall was opened, the Marine exchange moved to permanent quarters and many of the sand/dust areas have been oiled to alleviate the problems in the mat and messhall area. ProvMAG-39 Motor Transport has also received sixteen (16) new M-151A1 jeeps to make up for the transportation shortage previously experienced.

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3:RRR:gac
5750

Ser: 03A22168

11 August 1968

PART III SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Chronological Sequence of Events

1 July 1968. A total of 30 NVA confirmed kills were credited to the gunbirds of VM-6 in the Khe Sanh area.

2 July 1968. Recon team extractions proved to be the most interesting as the Seaworthy gunbirds of VM-6 covered the CH-46's of HM-161. After a routine, clandestine insert, the team came under fire from three sides. The highly accurate suppressive fire from Seaworthy and the presence of mind while under fire of Cattlecall aircraft enabled the team to be extracted without taking casualties or aircraft hits.

3 July 1968. III Mardv in contact called for help and Seaworthy aircraft answered the call, by controlling three flights of fixed wing and expending 130 rockets and 11,000 rounds of 7.62MM.

4 July 1968. Independence Day was fairly calm as the aircraft of ProvMAG-39 flew 155.7 hours in support of operation Scotland II.

5 July 1968. Seaworthy gunbirds were called upon today to provide suppressive fire which enabled a unit to rescue four men pinned down by a sniper 15 meters outside their perimeter.

6 July 1968. Khe Sanh Combat Base withdrawal was completed as well as the Marines on Hill 881. HM-262 led by LtCol. STEINBERG set a new squadron record by flying 98.9 hours, putting most of the pilots and crews over 18 hours flight time for the day.

7 July 1968. Hill 689 near Khe Sanh Combat Base was the center of activity in the Scotland II TAOR. NVA mortars and small arms hindered resupply of our western most outpost in Northern I Corps, however the resupply by ProvMAG-39 helicopters was carried out thanks in part to the fire suppression of the Seaworthy gunbirds, and their control of three flights of fixed wing.

8 July 1968. Hill 689 was again the scene of substantial action as the gunbirds of VM-6 escorted transport aircraft into the hill during a 200 man troop lift. Seaworthy found 30-40 NVA, called in a flight of fixed wing accounting for seven (7) KBA's.

ENCLOSURE (1)

UNCLASSIFIED

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3:RRR:gae

5750

Ser: 03A22468

11 August 1968

9 July 1968. Recon inserts and extracts were uneventful until the last one when the transport aircraft waved off because 30 to 40 NVA appeared to have a trap set. The insert was aborted and the gunbirds expended their ordnance but could not get a BDA. Back at Quang Tri airfield, the crash crew responded quickly to extinguish a fire that erupted on an Air Force HH-3 Jolly Green as it was refueling.

11 July 1968. Chatterbox aircraft with Seaworthy (UH-1E's) as armed escorts, participated in a 600 man troop lift from LZ Stud to Hill 715. After four (4) uneventful trips into the zone, Chatterbox 6-1 flown by Maj. THERIAULT, with the Group C.O. as his co-pilot took fire in the zone, wounding Col. SIENKO slightly in the right arm. Chatterbox 6-2 was hit, caught fire and had to be abandoned. The crew sustained minor injuries, the aircraft was a complete strike.

12 July 1968. Hill 689 was evacuated today by Cattlecall CH-46's. Cover for the troop lift was provided by Seaworthy gunbirds who controlled air strikes against NVA bunker complexes then marked two NVA mortar positions for Fingerprint 49 who ran an airstrike on them.

14 July 1968. Seaworthy aircraft flew 50 sorties for 26.6 hours in a visual watch for an upcoming operation.

17 July 1968. D-Day for operation Lancaster II saw ProvMAG-39 supporting Task Force Hotel with sixteen CH-46's, six gunbirds and two UH-1E slicks. The morning troop lift went smoothly, but the afternoon troop lift saw heavy anti-aircraft fire resulting in 13 of the 16 CH-46's taking hits, and four of the six gunbirds taking hits. Seaworthy claimed a total of twelve NVA's confirmed.

18 July 1968. WMO-6 flew 118.2 flight hours today, the majority of this was in support of operation Lancaster II during Battalion size troop lifts. The crash crew responded quickly to extinguish a fire that erupted on an Air Force HH-3 Jolly Green as it was refueling.

20 July 1968. Recon insertions were the order of the day with seven teams inserted and five flights of fixed wing airstrikes controlled in LZ preps.

21 July 1968. The crash crew of Quang Tri airfield responded very quickly as an Air Force OH-1E ran off the runway due to brake failure. Also at Quang Tri, the new 500 man mess hall was opened at ribbon cutting ceremonies performed by BrigGeneral HILL. The crew sustained minor injuries, the aircraft was a complete strike.

12 July 1968. Hill 689 was evacuated today by Cattlecall CH-46's. Cover for the troop lift was provided by Seaworthy gunbirds who controlled air strikes against NVA bunker complexes then marked two NVA mortar positions for Fingerprint 49 who ran an airstrike on them.

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5750

Ser: 03A22168

11 August 1968

23 July 1968. The Chatterbox OH-6A of HMM-262 launched on an emergency insertion of a quick reaction platoon in support of recon team ISTHMAS in minimum weather conditions.

24 July 1968. Fingerprint 28, and an air observer from III Mardiv found and destroyed 17 bunkers, 2 automatic weapons positions and got two confirmed kill on NVA.

25 July 1968. VMD-6 prepped a landing zone in operation Canton II when the Fingerprint on station could not run fixed wing airstrikes due to weather. The troop lift was successfully completed with no resistance found.

26 July 1968. Lancaster II's TACR was the scene of most of the flying for the squadrons of Prevail-39 who logged 222.2 hours.

27 July 1968. Once again the Quang Tri crash crew was quickly on hand to cover a Marine O-1B from VMD-6 when his starboard brake locked causing him to ground loop off the runway into the sand.

30 July 1968. While providing routine gun cover for the afternoon re-supply from LZ Stud, Seaworthy 4-9 discovered h2 rocket launchers and positions. After controlling 5 flights of fixed wing airstrikes on their location, 4-9 totaled 20 secondary explosions and all h2 positions destroyed.

1. Personnel. Critical shortages exists as follows:

a. VMD-6

NOS

REMARKS

6319

A critical shortage continues to exist in the supervisory ranks E-5 to E-7.

b. HMM-161

No critical shortages exists.

c. HMM-262

NOS

REMARKS

6320

A critical shortage continues to exist in the supervisory ranks of E-5 to E-7.

d. HMM-39

No critical shortages exists.

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3:RRR:gac
5750
Ser: 03A22468
11 August 1968

UNCLASSIFIED

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2. Administration. Administration continues to be hampered by the shortage of office equipment and materials.

3. Awards. The following awards recommendations have been submitted during this period:

- a. DFC's - 13
- b. Silver Star - 2
- c. Bronze Star - 2
- d. Air Medals - 29 Single Mission 1327 Flight/Strike
- e. Navy Commendation - 7
- f. Navy Achievement - 7

4. Casualties

a. Hostile: KIA: 0
WIA: 13
b. Non-Hostile: DAI: 1
OTHER: 10

5. Morale/Welfare Programs which continues to be hampered by the shortage of office equipment and materials.

a. The Enlisted and Officers Club are all expected to open within the first week of August. Awards recommendations have been submitted during this period:

b. A new 500 man messhall was opened on 21 July during ceremonies in which BrigGeneral HILL cut the ribbon.

c. A permanent Marine Exchange has now been located across from the new messhall.

6. Civic Action

The Group Chaplain, LCdr Rodney R. SCHEER, CHC, USN, a Lutheran Pastor

7

ENCLOSURE (1)

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3:RRR:gac
5750
Ser: 03A22468
11 August 1968

also serves as the Civic Action Officer. During July, the Civic Action Program continued to develop satisfactorily with the completion of the school in the Trieu Phong District nearly in sight. School supplies are on hand to be dispensed with the opening of the school.

7. Intelligence

a. General. Intelligence support of Group operations continued to expand and formalize during the month of July. A concept to lower aerial photographic response time from 48 hours to 6-8 hours was evolved in cooperation with the G-2, 3rdMarDiv, called the Immediate Imagery Interpretation Center Concept (IIIC), it utilizes the organic aircraft and interpretation capability of the 1stMAW and III MAF presently co-located at Da Nang Airbase. This concept was evolved to support a multi-regimental sweep in the Northern Lancaster AO below the DMZ.

The morning briefing of the Commanding Officer was expanded into a formal Command briefing with the addition of S-3 and weather briefers. The direct teletype link with Wing G-2/3 was reactivated with the receipt of new equipment. Direct liaison with the Joint Technical Advisory Detachment (USJTD) to the ARVN Military Intelligence was established.

b. Statistics

Fire Incidents	102
Aircraft Hit	35
Aircrew Casualties	9 WIA
Spot Reports	7
Recon Inserts/Extracts	57

c. Significant Intelligence Developments. During July the enemy avoided contact and initiated only small unit and harassment/terror actions in Quang Tri Province. Agent reports early in the month indicated that a countrywide "Autumn-Winter Offensive" would be mounted on or about 20 July and that maneuver elements were regrouping and training in their base areas. This date was not met and new reports indicate that the 19th of August is the new jump-off date.

Enemy action against ProvMAC-39 was limited to the ground-to-air fire incidents shown above. The first day of the Northern Lancaster AO

ENCLOSURE (1)

UNCLASSIFIED

5750
Ser: 03A22168
11 August 1968

UNCLASSIFIED

Operation, 17 July, saw 19 aircraft fired on and 15 hit. A growing counterintelligence threat in marijuana sales on the base periphery was noted.

8. Air Operations

a. July Totals

<u>CARGO</u>	<u>PAX</u>	<u>MEDEVACS</u>	<u>MEDEVAC MISSIONS</u>	<u>HRS</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>
3377.7 Tons	33,674	1,650	535	6,108.8	21,412

9. Air Control

a. A new letter of agreement with the Air Force RAPCON has been drawn up and will be presented to them during the coming week for their comments.

10. Motor Transport

a. 31 July 1968 saw the arrival of sixteen (16) new M-151A1 jeeps to alleviate the transportation shortage previously experienced. They have been allocated to the operating squadrons and various other sections throughout the air base.

11. Base Development/Military Construction

a. The below listed items were completed or started during July:

(1) Construction was completed on the Medical Bunker with the aid of MCB-11.

(2) Completion of the Assistant Wing Commander's facilities.

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