

HEADQUARTERS
 Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39
 1st Marine Aircraft Wing
 Fleet Marine Force Pacific
 FPO San Francisco 96602

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 5750
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 17 Apr 1969

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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 March 1969;
 submission of

Ref: (a) WgO 5750.1C

Encl: ✓ (1) Command Chronology for Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39
 ✓ (2) Command Chronology for Provisional Headquarters & Main-
 tenance 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 62

1. In accordance with instructions contained in reference (a),
 enclosures (1) through (6) are submitted herewith.

E.A. Parnell
 E.A. PARNELL

ProvMAG-39
 S&C # 317-69
 Copy 1 of 8 Copies

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PROVISIONAL MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 39

Command Chronology

1 March 1969 to 31 March 1969

PART I	ORGANIZATIONAL DATA
PART II	NARRATIVE SUMMARY
PART III	SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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UNCLASSIFIEDPART I - ORGANIZATIONAL DATA1. Staffa. Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39

(1) Col Walter SIENKO	1-6 March 1969	CO
(2) Col Edward A. PARNELL	7-31 March 1969	CO
(3) LtCol Paul W. NIESEN	1-31 March 1969	XO
(4) Capt Lawrence E. TANKSLEY	1-31 March 1969	S-1/Adjutant
(5) LtCol Billy D. BOULDIN	1-31 March 1969	S-2
(6) LtCol James A. WELLS, Jr.	1-24 March 1969	S-3
(7) LtCol Albert N. ALLEN	25-31 March 1969	S-3
(8) Maj Herman C. BROWN	1-31 March 1969	S-4
(9) Maj Robert C. SIMPSON	1-31 March 1969	AvnSafO
(10) LCDR Rodney R. SCHEER	1-31 March 1969	Chaplain
(11) LCDR Gordon F. KELLOGG	1-31 March 1969	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)

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f. Marine Air Traffic Control Unit 62

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

2. Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39
1st Marine Aircraft Wing
Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
FPO, San Francisco 96602

Quang Tri Air Base, Republic of Vietnam

1-31 March 1969

3. Average Monthly Strength

Marine Officers	206	Marine Enlisted	1147
Navy Officers	4	Navy Enlisted	16

4. Important Visitors

- a. Lieutenant General Herman NICKERSON Jr., Commanding General, Third Marine Amphibious Force on 17 March 1969.
- b. Major General C.J. QUILTER, Commanding General, First Marine Aircraft Wing
- c. Major General R.G. DAVIS, Commanding General, Third Marine Division
- d. Brigadier General F.E. GARRETSON, Assistant Division Commander, Third Marine Division
- e. Lieutenant General R.G. STILLWELL, Commanding General, XXIV Corps
- f. Major General N.G. TROUNG, Commanding General, First ARVN Division

PART II - NARRATIVE SUMMARY

In March support of the 3rd Marine Division operations was greatly hampered by adverse weather conditions, but were not entirely curtailed as MAG-39 squadrons, crews and ground personnel exerted the extra effort necessary to overcome obstacles. This included instrument flights, which commenced during February, carrying external/internal cargo and troops to operating areas and contour flights beneath overcasts when required in order to give maximum support to several concurrent operations within the 3rd Marine Division TAOR.

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The month of March heralded the commencement of Operations Maine Crag, Purple Martin, Kentucky Mauler and the end of the highly successful Dewey Canyon Operation which was terminated on 18 March 1969. The last of the 9th Marine Units were extracted still in contact with a stubborn enemy. With three new operations added to the old reliables Kentucky, Scotland II and Marshall Mountain, MAG-39 aircraft traversed the entire AO daily on missions in support of the Marines, U.S. Army and ARVN units. New territory exploited by ground units resulted in continuation of a high fire incident rate, and crews wounded increased by 30 per cent over the previous month.

Aboard Quang Tri Air Base several construction projects were undertaken by Mobile Construction Battalion 128 and Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 301, which includes 13,000 square yards of fixed wing aircraft parking apron (M8A1), 30,000 square yards of helicopter parking apron (M8A1), 18 SEA huts, a potable water distribution system, soil control projects, taxiways and parking mat under repair and 48,000 square feet of runway repair completed. The U.S. Army is constructing a dial communication system while Vietnamese contractors are constructing a basketball and tennis court.

PART III - SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Chronological Sequence of Events

- 1 March 1969: Walnut Hill 1-7 participated in an assault troop lift of approximately 180 ARVN troops and U.S. Advisors into the YD 1498 grid in support of Mission 203A. Escort gunship and TAC(A) support was provided by the Army and U.S. Air Force respectively. In spite of poor weather conditions and difficult landing zones the lift was successfully completed. All aircraft received enemy fire, but only two transports and one gunship sustained hits.
- 2 March 1969: Seaworthy 98-11, an OV-10, ran three flights of fixed wing aircraft on enemy positions which resulted in one secondary explosion and 31 bunkers damaged or destroyed.
- 3 March 1969: Seaworthy 99-5 and 6 directed artillery and three flights of fixed wing on enemy positions which resulted in one secondary fire, ten bunkers destroyed and five damaged.
- 4 March 1969: Though poor weather conditions resulted in cancelled troop lifts, some resupply and normal AO missions were accomplished. Seaworthy 97-2 adjusted artillery fire and directed fixed wing aircraft on enemy positions which resulted in two bunkers destroyed and two damaged. Cattlecall 92-2 and 3 escorted by Seaworthy 99-1 and 2 supported Heritage 81 (YD 138132) by delivering an emergency resupply of ammunition to their landing zone. Though both transport helicopters received fire on approach to the zone only 92-2 received a hit on the aircraft. While in the zone 92-2 extracted 9 emergency, 2 priority and 1 routine medevacs.

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5 March 1969: Low ceilings and ground fog delayed or cancelled morning missions in support of the 3rd Marine Division units until mid-day. As weather conditions improved aircraft were launched accordingly. Seaworthy 97-6, an Ol-C, directed three flights of fixed wing aircraft on an active enemy bunker complex which resulted in one probable KBA, eight bunkers destroyed, six damaged, and two secondary explosions and fires. HMM-262 aircraft performed an emergency extract of recon team Dock Leaf from LZ Argonne near the Laotian border. Both aircraft received small arms fire and grenades in the zone but extracted the team which included 3 KIA and 5 WIA. Both aircraft received minor damage from grenade fragments. Later in the day the wingman of a two plane section from HMM-262 received intense fire on departure from a zone at XD 982642 while on an emergency resupply mission to India Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines. The hits in the aft section of the aircraft caused a fire which rapidly spread to the cockpit. The aircraft was landed in the nearest landing zone, LZ Mack, which at the time was the objective of a ground assault by a Marine unit. The crew, injured by fire, exited the aircraft, evaded the NVA and awaited Marines to gain their objective and were subsequently evacuated.

6 March 1969: Poor weather again hampered flight operations, however medevac and limited resupply missions were launched. On a medevac mission the pilot of an HMM-161 aircraft was wounded by two .50 Cal rounds which struck the aircraft. The co-pilot assumed command and made an instrument approach to Quang Tri and 3rd Med Battalion. On a resupply mission the Commanding Officer of HMM-161 spotted an enemy mortar position which had been firing on the landing zone he was resupplying. Flying to the position, the aircraft gunners suppressed the mortars with .50 Cal machine guns and the pilot adjusted mortar fire on the position. The attack resulted in two probable enemy KBA.

7 March 1969: Due to inclement weather, operations were not fully underway until afternoon. A VMO-6 Ol-C directed fixed wing on an enemy position spotted by a recon team. The strike resulted in six bunkers destroyed and seven damaged. An OV-10 directed artillery on the same position resulting in one KBA. HMM-161 launched four aircraft on paradrop missions to units in Dewey Canyon. Arriving over the area the aircraft discovered breaks in the overcast which allowed VFR deliveries of supplies and pickup of medevacs.

8 March 1969: Weather again limited morning operations into Dewey Canyon. Resupply once commenced resulted in several fire incidents in the YD 2103 and YD 1903 grids. A total of 650 combat troops were transported by HMM-262 in tactical troop lifts for the 9th Marines, the 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines and the 2nd ARVN Regiment.

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9 March 1969: Low ceilings and poor visibility again restricted flight operations in support of the 3rd Marine Division Units. A VMO-6 01-C in supporting Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines on a medevac mission expended smoke rockets to screen withdrawal of wounded from enemy contact. Then VMO-6 gunships provided suppressive fire on enemy positions for an HMM-265 medevac helicopter. Intense enemy fire necessitated a hasty departure with only one of the wounded aboard. With further artillery prep and suppressive fire by VMO-6 gunships, the remaining medevacs were later extracted without incident.

10 March 1969: Helicopter aircraft from VMO-6, HMM-262 and HMM-161 were diverted to complete an extract of a 114 man SOG unit from Laos at XD 163003 south of Dewey Canyon. Proceeding beneath the overcast to Vandegrift and Khe Sanh, the flight climbed to VFR on top and flew to a position just north of the ARVN unit. Once coordinated and the LZ spotted, the transports approached the zone which could accommodate only one aircraft at a time. Enemy fire was received by all aircraft, but only the fourth transport was hit by grenades and small arms in the small LZ. The first four transports returned to Vandegrift with their loads. Due to low fuel state, the last four flew directly to Quang Tri, VFR on top and executed instrument approaches.

11 March 1969: Inclement weather again hampered flight operations in support of 3rd Marine Division units. Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines who had been in contact for five days received emergency resupply. The resupply and medevac was conducted by aircraft from HMM-161 supported by VMO-6 gunships. One transport helicopter received .50 Cal and small arms fire sustaining hits in both stub wings.

14 March 1969: Although low ceilings prevented normal resupply operations, emergency resupply and medevac missions were attempted with limited success to a unit of the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines on LZ Sierra. Escorted by VMO-6 gunships, an HMM-161 transport dropped supplies into the zone. The aircraft turned on the spot, touched down and was loading medevacs when the rear of the aircraft was struck by an RPG round. The aircraft nosed over off the zone and was destroyed. The crew escaped with minor injuries, but a corpsman and several medevacs were fatally wounded. The crew and other medevacs could not be extracted for another three hours due to incoming enemy mortars in the zone. A VMO-6 01-C directed artillery and gunships on enemy positions until fire was suppressed sufficiently to allow a medevac helicopter into the zone.

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15 March 1969: Under clearing skies MAG-39 aircraft flew 156.1 flight hours. VMD-6 OV-10's directed numerous air strikes and artillery missions. In the Cunningham area of Dewey Canyon an artillery and air strike mission on 8 observed NVA resulted in one secondary explosion. Artillery on a bunker complex netted one bunker destroyed, a secondary explosion and two KBA's. Observing artillery muzzle flashes Seaworthy 98-17 directed six flights of fixed wing on the position netting 5 secondary explosions, one gun position destroyed and one gun probably destroyed. HMM-161 on troop lift in Dewey Canyon transported 481 combat troops and carried 17.1 tons of cargo in 125 sorties with six aircraft.

17 March 1969: IFR weather curtailed operations once again. However HMM-161 launched eight aircraft in IFR conditions to VMC on top at 6000 feet to Dewey Canyon. Operations were curtailed not only by weather but by mortar fire in the only workable zone. Eight aircraft flew a total of 23.0 flight hours, during which time only 28 passengers and 1.0 tons of cargo were transported. The resupply and troop lift effort was shifted to Operation Maine Crag where weather permitted VFR flight operations.

18 March 1969: Though weather curtailed operations for a four hour period in the morning HMM-161 and HMM-262 transport helicopters supported by VMD-6 UH-1E gunships and OV-10's completed the final extractions of troop units in Operation Dewey Canyon. All aircraft received enemy fire at one zone or the other as elements of the 1st Battalion and 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines and 2nd Battalion, 12th Marines were retrograded to Vandegrift Combat Base. VMD-6 OV-10 aircraft directed fixed wing aircraft to quell enemy interference with the troop lift. The air effort resulted in 10 enemy KBA, damage to three bunkers, complete destruction of one other, one mortar position destroyed, damage to one active .50 Cal machine gun position and netted one secondary explosion.

19 March 1969: With the main troop effort shifted to Operation Maine Crag and Purple Martin, MAG-39 aircraft flew 264.7 hours in support of 3rd Marine Division Units. VMD-6 gunships utilizing Helicopter Trap Weapons prepared zones for recon inserts by U.S. Army UH-1H slicks. On a late evening flareship launch to support an emergency resupply, a VMD-6 OV-10 spotted a quad .50 Cal machine gun and a 57mm gun position. The pilot and Approach Control at Quang Tri Air Base heard a band sweep which indicated that radar controlled guns may be located at the position.

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20 March 1969: In Purple Martin on a platoon sized "Back to Argonne" troop lift, several MAG-39 aircraft received damage from enemy weapons. On a pre-assault insertion of recon team Frostburg a U.S. Army slick was shot down in the zone at Argonne, in spite of LZ prep by three flights of fixed wing. After fixed wing ordnance was brought to bear around the zone on NVA positions, two assault companies were landed successfully and the recon team with medevacs extracted.

21 March 1969: Teamed with VMO-6 gunships, HMM-262 lifted elements of the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines totalling 340 combat troops in support of operation Purple Martin into two zones unopposed.

23 March 1969: Weather delayed morning launches in support of Maine Crag and Purple Martin, but MAG-39 aircraft flew 270 flight hours conducting resupply, troop lifts, medevac, recon inserts/extracts, Sparrow Hawk, gunship escort, TAC(A) and AO missions. BDA's included 31 bunkers and hootches destroyed, 14 damaged, 10 secondary fires and two probable enemy KBA's.

24 March 1969: In Purple Martin, LZ Argonne remains a hot spot as it continues to receive incoming mortars when transport helicopters approach for resupply. As assault operations continue along the border in Maine Crag, helicopters receive enemy fire regularly. A VMO-6 gunship was hit six times by automatic weapons fire while escorting an ARVN troop lift into a position held by elements of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines.

25 March 1969: Under long awaited clear skies MAG-39 aircraft flew 282 hours moving combat troops and supplies all over the 3rd Marine Division TAOR on assault lifts and resupply missions. A total of 1,086 combat troops and 97 tons of cargo were transported but to mention medevac, recon AO, TAC(A) and C&C missions conducted.

26 March 1969: Though conducting normal missions in support of the 3rd Marine Division, several aircraft from almost all MAG-39 squadrons received damage from enemy fire. OV-10 from VMO-6 (98-11) was hit by a .50 Cal machine gun round in the cockpit which wounded the pilot. The pilot landed the aircraft successfully in spite of a wounded left arm. Another OV-10 (98-6) controlling fixed wing aircraft on a mortar site which was delaying a troop lift was hit by one .30 Cal round. In support of an assault troop lift, HMM-161 transports received fire on approach to the landing zone, but no aircraft were hit. Three HMM-262 aircraft on separate emergency missions received battle damage from the same LZ at YD 057587. The regular medevac transport took automatic weapons fire which damaged hydraulic and electrical systems, event 93-3 on an emergency resupply took fire which damaged fuel cells and the #1 engine, and 93-6 later in the day while attempting to hoist emergency medevacs received aft rotor blade damage from mortars in the zone but completed the medevac missions hoisting ten medevacs.

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30 March 1969: Weather again a factor in Northern I Corps delayed morning launches of MAG-39 aircraft. However at 0105H two VMD-6 gunships teamed with an HMM-161 medevac transport, an OV-10 flare ship and an Air Force "Spooky" aircraft and proceeded under adverse weather conditions to LZ Argonne for an emergency medevac. One Huey gunship (98-14) was forced to return to base because of malfunctioning equipment, but 99-13 elected to continue to the area some 30 NM from Quang Tri Air Base without proper navigation aids operating. With close coordination and teamwork however the mission was successfully completed and all aircraft returned.

1. Personnel. No critical shortages exist.
2. Administration. Administration continues to be hampered by the inadequacy of office equipment and material.
3. Awards. The following award recommendations have been submitted during this period:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| a. Silver Star - 5 | d. Air Medals - 30 single mission
557 Strike/Flight |
| b. DFC's - 19 | e. Navy Commendations - 18 |
| c. Bronze Stars - 4 | f. Navy Achievement - 9 |

4. Casualties

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------|----------|
| a. Hostile: | KIA: 2 | WIA: 33 |
| b. Non-Hostile: | DIA: 1 | Other: 5 |

5. Morale/Welfare Programs

- a. An increased effort to provide athletic facilities for MAG-39 personnel has been emphasized. Programs include:

- (1) Construction of a basketball and tennis court.
- (2) Intramural volleyball, handball and skeet shooting.
- (3) Requisition of athletic gear for individuals.

b. The Marine Exchange has expanded its operation and now provides a tailor shop, increased quantities of health and comfort items, an enlarged entertainment selection of stereo and hi-fi equipment, radios, etc.

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c. A Vietnamese staffed genuine ~~imitation~~ barber shop has been constructed near the Marine Exchange.

d. Emphasis has been placed on providing more USO shows for all MAG-39 personnel while weather conditions present a comfortable atmosphere.

e. Construction on a new modern chapel overlooking the river has been started on a do-it-yourself basis and is now about one quarter completed.

6. Statistical Analysis. The chaplain reports the following statistical categories as he functions in his pastoral roles of Priest, Educator, Counselor and Civic Action Officer.

<u>a. Sunday Celebrations:</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Communed</u>
Chaplain SCHEER (Lutheran)	5	236	126
Chaplain KLAPPS (Roman Catholic)	4	125	110
Chaplain ECKER (Roman Catholic)	6	178	157
 <u>b. Weekday/Holy Day/Memorial Services:</u>			
Chaplain ECKER (Roman Catholic)	5	57	56
LENTEN DEVOTION	5	42	N/A
CARS	3	32	9
MEMORIAL SERVICE	4	428	N/A
 <u>c. Education:</u>			
Religious Discussion Group	3	22	N/A
Religious Instruction	4	4	N/A
 <u>d. Pastoral Counseling and Therapy:</u>			
Religious	5		
Pre-Marital	2		

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Domestic Conflicts	6
Transfer-Discharge	41
Behavior Disorder	8
Psychoneurotic	5
Family Relations	3
Miscellaneous	3
Above individuals seen in therapy more than once	24
Total professional counseling cases for March 1969:	60
Red Cross	32
Brig Visits	2
Hospital Visits	5

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7. Civic Affairs: Twenty-Nine (29) Civic Affairs trips were made in the ProvMAG-39 Civic Action area of responsibility. One hundred thirty six persons from the Group composed the teams handling personal response and Civic Action projects. Nineteen hours of English was taught in the TRIEU HONG secondary school. Seven Med-Cap trips were conducted with 227 patients and 287 treatments. The following material was rendered to the Vietnamese:

- a. Fifty 25 lb bags of cement.
- b. Twelve sheets of tin.
- c. Two brick making machines.

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8. Intelligence

a. Enemy initiated activity remained at a low level during the month with the enemy generally avoiding contact with major units. Exceptions to this were the contacts in the FSB Argonne area by elements of the 4th Marines and Operation Montana Mauler conducted by units of the 1/5 Mech, U.S. Army in the Halo Valley/Mutter's Ridge area. The enemy did not fight any large scale ground actions in the Argonne area, however, the FSB was ringed with .50 Cal AA weapons, making flying extremely hazardous, and the FSB itself was targeted by enemy mortars on several occasions. In Montana Mauler, the Army units came in heavy contact with elements of the 27th NVA Regiment, inflicted over 300 KIA's and captured 36 individual and 7 crew-served weapons.

b. Enemy action against ProvMAG-39 was limited to ground fire against Group aircraft. This was the seventh consecutive month that Quang Tri Air Base was not targeted by enemy rocketeers. The number of aircraft receiving fire was up 52 from the previous month, with an increase in aircraft hit of 16. The number of aircraft which received five and number of aircraft hit were the highest of any month since ProvMAG-39 was activated in April 1968.

Fire Incidents: 156

Aircraft Hit: 44

Aircraft Destroyed: 2

Casualties: 2 KIA, 10 WIA, (E)
18 WIA (M)

c. Indications are that the enemy will attempt to maintain pressure by isolated mortar/sapper attacks while continuing to build up his logistical supply line which has been seriously depleted by destruction of large caches of food, supplies and weapons during friendly operations.

9. Medical

a. In accordance with reference (a), the following statistics present the activity of the Medical Department during the month of March 1969:

(1) Total patients seen at sick call	813
(2) Total number of in-patients	000
(3) Total number of physicals	110
(4) Total immunizations	670

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<u>HOURS</u>	<u>PAX</u>	<u>TONS OF CARGO</u>	<u>MEDEVAC MSNS</u>	<u>MEDEVACS</u>
4,935.5	16,030	1,073.8	404	1605

b. Quang Tri Air Base Operations

<u>(1) Aircraft Emer</u>	<u>Structural</u>	<u>Medevacs</u>	<u>Washdowns</u>
16	3	26	1

(2) 2055/1Mar69: Crash Crew equipment responded to the Mess Hall and extinguished a fire in the boiler room using 150 lbs of dry chemical powder and 200 gallons of water.

(3) 1325/21Mar69: A structural and water tanker responded to a grass fire near the Army POL area. The crash crew used 120 lbs of dry chemical powder, 25 gallons of light water and 1500 gallons of water to extinguish the fire.

c. Dong Ha Air Base Operations

<u>(1) Aircraft Responses</u>	<u>Structural Responses</u>	<u>Medevacs</u>
3	0	1

(2) The crash crew responded to an Army Ol-E aircraft with an engine failure. The aircraft made an uneventful landing.

(3) The crash crew responded to an Army Ol-E which was landed by a wounded pilot. The landing was uneventful.

d. Vandegrift Air Base Operations

<u>(1) Aircraft Responses</u>	<u>Structural Responses</u>
4	10

(2) 20Mar69: The crash crew responded to a fire on the bridge on Route 9 South of Camp Elliot. The fire was caused by a satchel charge. 1400 gallons of water were used to extinguish the fire.

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