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**SECRET**

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 161  
 Marine Aircraft Group 16  
 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMF, Pacific  
 c/o EPO San Francisco 96602

3:JLW:rfr  
 5216  
 003 A24866

From: Commanding Officer  
 To: Commandant of the Marine Corps, (Code A03D)  
 Via: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Forces, Pacific  
 Info: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 16

Subj: Combat Chronology for month of August 1966

Ref: (a) MCO 5720.2  
 (b) WgO 5750.1B

Encl: (1) Combat Chronology

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b), the combat chronology report for the period 1 through 31 August 1966 is submitted.
2. This cover letter is downgraded to unclassified upon the removal of enclosure (1).

*S. F. Martin*  
 S. F. MARTIN

	HMM-161
S&C #	273-66
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DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
 DECLASSIFIED AFTER 25 YEARS  
 DOD DIR 5200.10

**SECRET**

197-161

Aug 1966

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| 1. SQUADRON         | HMM-161              |
| 2. LOCATION         | HUE PHU BAI, VIETNAM |
| 3. REPORTING PERIOD | 1-31 AUGUST 1966     |
| 4. COMMAND STAFF    |                      |

**C.O.** LTCOL. W. R. QUINN 035575/7335 1-9 AUGUST 1966  
 LTCOL. S. F. MARTIN 027068/7335 10-31 AUGUST 1966  
**X.O.** MAJ S. F. LAWRENCE 058682/7335  
**S-1** CAPT. F. C. LEWIS 076554/7335  
**S-2** CAPT. G. L. STARR 085316/7335  
**S-3** MAJ L. W. JARMAN 062139/7335  
**S-4** CAPT. P. F. JANSS 075407/7335  
**MAINT.** CAPT. Z. V. LAMASCUS 076184/7335 1-24 AUGUST 1966  
 CAPT. P. N. SAMARUS 069223/7335 25-31 AUGUST 1966

**SQUADRON STRENGTH**

**OFFICERS:** 54 NA, 3 AG, 1 MC, 11 CHC  
**ENLISTED:** 156, 3 MC

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1 August 1966. Supporting Operation Hastings, squadron aircraft carried 502 passengers, 19,720 pounds of cargo, and 4 med-evacs in various missions, including an 11 plane lift of 403 troops and 17,500 pounds of supplies from XD 9856 to Dong Ha.

2 August 1966. A total of 165 passengers, 5,825 pounds of cargo, and 2 med-evacs were carried. All flights except a courier run to Marble Mountain were in support of Operation Hastings.

3 August 1966. This date saw the end of Operation Hastings and the beginning of Operation Prairie; the latter consisting, for the most part, of reconnaissance missions. Operation Prairie continued throughout the month. Squadron aircraft carried 127 passengers, 4 med-evacs, and 12,000 pounds of cargo, all of which, except for 2 administration flights in the Phu Bai area, were in support of Operation Hastings and Prairie.

On one recon retraction, involving 2 squadron H-34's escorted by 3 UH-1E's, one of the UH-1E's received 2 rounds of .50 cal. fire from XD 048663.

4 August 1966. 263 passengers, 2 med-evacs, and 2,150 pounds of cargo were carried.

A flight of 4 aircraft on a recon insertion found the landing zone unsuitable and had to orbit for 15 minutes to find a usable one. Upon landing in this zone, the troops came under fire and had to be taken out. They were returned to Dong Ha with no damage to aircraft or injuries to personnel.

5 August 1966. In support of Operation Prairie, 212 passengers, 4,700 pounds of cargo, and 13 med-evacs were carried.

6 August 1966. In a variety of missions, squadron aircraft stood med-evac at Marble Mountain, III MAF courier, Phu Bai med-evac, 1st Marine resupply, 9th Marine resupply, and assorted administrative runs, in addition to supporting Operation Prairie at Dong Ha.

At approximately 1720, 4 aircraft were involved in a recon insertion for Operation Prairie. After landing, the fourth aircraft, YR 9, experienced problems and subsequently crashed into the trees. The aircraft burned, but the crew escaped. The pilot received moderate injuries, the crew chief minor injuries, and the other crew members were unhurt.

Additional aircraft were launched to retract the troops and insert them into a different location.

Totals for the day included 136 passengers, 18 med-evacs, and 11,250 pounds of cargo.

7 August 1966. One hundred eighty six passengers, 13 med-evacs, and 5,400 pounds of cargo were carried supporting Operation Prairie.

Eight aircraft supported Operation Prairie and 6 other aircraft performed a recon retraction, recon insert, an aerial recon, and an administration run to Da Nang.

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8 August 1966. In support of Operation Prairie squadron aircraft carried 185 passengers, 2 med-evacs, and 1,200 pounds of cargo.

At approximately 1830, YR 22, involved in an emergency ammunition resupply, received automatic and small arms fire. One .50 cal. round passed through the cabin, wounding two passengers and killing the gunner. Two other aircraft in the flight received hits but sustained no casualties.

In support of the 4th Marines two aircraft carried 7,000 pounds of cargo, 120 passengers, and 2 med-evacs.

9 August 1966. In support of Operation Prairie and an administrative flight to Marble Mountain squadron aircraft carried 93 passengers, and 4,950 pounds of cargo.

10 August 1966. Med-evac aircraft today carried 3 priority I ARVN med-evacs, 2 routine ARVN med-evacs, 1 U.S. med-evac, and 3 VC med-evacs.

In support of the 4th Marines, squadron aircraft performed a variety of missions. An emergency recon retraction of 4 men from YC 905995 was performed with an escort of 2 A-4 aircraft of MAG-12, a resupply to hill 225 carried 3,100 pounds of cargo. On a routine recon insert and retraction 29 passengers were carried. While the flight was still airborne on this mission, 6 boatloads of VC were observed on the river at YD 730103, and ineffective small arms fire was received. DASC was notified and 2 F-8 aircraft from MAG-11 were diverted to the scene. Three boats were destroyed and the others damaged.

On an administrative run to Marble Mountain and in support of Operation Prairie squadron aircraft carried 57 passengers and 1,500 pounds of cargo.

11 August 1966. In support of the 4th Marines squadron aircraft flew a convoy escort from Da Nang to Phu Bai and return, took a medical team to the Junk Fleet base, and a resupply was made. Thirty four passengers were carried.

At approximately 0330 two aircraft were required in the vicinity of YD 325677 for a med-evac of 8 WIA and 2 KIA. They were U.S. Coast Guard personnel who were in a cutter mistaken by the U.S. AF to be a VC PT boat.

Other med-evacs flown in the area included 3 ARVN med-evacs and 1 USA med-evac.

12 August 1966. Med-evac aircraft were launched 4 times for ARVN med-evacs to D-5, Quang Tri, YD 684304, and YD-900187 for 16 ARVN med-evacs and 1 US med-evac.

Squadron aircraft in support of Operation Prairie and the 4th Marines carried 16 passengers and 100 pounds of cargo.

A reaction force of 49 troops was inserted in the vicinity of XD 930570 at the site of a downed UH-1E.

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13 August 1966. In support of Operation Prairie six aircraft carried 107 passengers, 4 VC, and 400 pounds of cargo.

In a resupply of Hill 225 2 aircraft carried 21 passengers and 7,950 pounds of cargo.

Two aircraft launched on I Corps med-evac 5 times carrying 5 med-evacs and 8 passengers.

Two aircraft flew to Marble Mountain for much needed aircraft parts carrying 9 passengers and 1,700 pounds of cargo.

14 August 1966. In support of Operation Prairie, 8 aircraft carried 101 passengers and 5,800 pounds of cargo.

In another Hill 225 resupply 2 aircraft carried 103 passengers and 9,600 pounds of cargo.

One aircraft flew to Marble Mountain with 6 passengers and 1,000 pounds of cargo.

15 August 1966. Four aircraft in support of Operation Prairie carried 6 passengers and 1,000 pounds of cargo.

Four aircraft in support of the 4th Marines carried 28 passengers and 500 pounds of cargo.

I Corps support consisted of 2 aircraft carrying 7 ARVN med-evacs and 2 VC.

Three aircraft of the 4th Marines support assisted an ARMY UH-1E in lifting 198 troops in search of 2 USA advisors captured from the ARVN's about 5 miles northeast of Phu Bai.

16 August 1966. In support of the 4th Marines 3 aircraft carried 56 passengers and 1 med-evac.

Operation Prairie had 2 aircraft that carried 27 passengers.

One aircraft flew a courier to Marble Mountain and carried 11 passengers and 1,450 pounds of cargo.

Two aircraft flew I Corps support and had 2 med-evacs.

17 August 1966. One aircraft was launched to Khe San with a UH-1E escort to pick up a med-evac at XD 691366. The Laotian med-evac would not get into the plane, so the flight returned. The UH-1E received 1 hit from small arms fire.

Two aircraft on I Corps support had one med-evac.

Fourth Marine support aircraft carried 65 passengers and 3,450 pounds of cargo with 2 aircraft.

Two aircraft on Operation Prairie support flew 4 passengers and 1 med-evac.

18 August 1966. One aircraft carried 10 passengers and 2,200 pounds of cargo on a courier to Marble Mountain.

On Operation Prairie 5 aircraft carried 61 passengers and 2,650 pounds of cargo.

One aircraft had 1 med-evac.

Four aircraft flew I Corps support. They carried 29 med-evacs and 14 passengers. At approximately 0100 the med-evac plane was launched to Hue to evacuate civilians who had been injured by a

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Hue hospital soon became overcrowded so "A" Med agreed to help out. Soon after the first plane load of med-evacs were taken to "A" Med decision was made to return all victims to Hue hospital.

19 August 1966. Seven aircraft stood support for Operation Prairie. They carried 110 passengers and 5,600 pounds of cargo.

Fourth Marine support was handled by 2 aircraft. They carried 19 passengers and 3,700 pounds of cargo.

A two plane courier was sent to Marble Mountain carrying 19 passengers and 1,300 pounds of cargo.

I Corps support was flown by one aircraft. There were 18 med-evacs and 20 pounds of blood taken from Phu Bai to Hue hospital.

20 August 1966. Six aircraft supporting Operation Prairie carried 22,370 pounds of cargo and 6 passengers.

Two aircraft standing med-evac carried 2 passengers and 1 med-evac.

Four HMM-161 aircraft together with three aircraft from HMM-163 and one Army UH-1D lifted 192 troops to YD 8524 and YD 8724 in search of two captured U.S. Advisors.

21 August 1966. Two aircraft stood med-evac and carried 6 med-evacs. They received fire from coordinates YD 999121 and YD 970160 but sustained no hits.

Six aircraft supported Operation Prairie and carried 153 passengers and 17,360 pounds of cargo.

Two aircraft supported the 4th Marines and carried 60 passengers and 3,350 pounds of cargo.

Two aircraft supported I Corps and carried 10 med-evacs, 1 VC, and 1,100 pounds of cargo.

A courier flight of 2 aircraft went to Marble Mountain carrying 9 passengers and 2,150 pounds of cargo.

22 August 1966. Two aircraft carried 26 med-evacs.

Five aircraft in support of the 4th Marine carried 90 passengers and 9,050 pounds of cargo.

In support of Operation Prairie 8 aircraft carried 79 passengers and 2,450 pounds of cargo.

23 August 1966. Two med-evac aircraft carried 8 ARVN med-evacs and 7 U.S. med-evacs.

Fourth marine support required 2 aircraft that carried 87 passengers and 49,298 pounds of cargo.

24 August 1966. In support of the 4th Marines 6 aircraft carried 33 passengers and 3 med-evacs.

One aircraft on a courier flight to Marble Mountain carried 10 passengers and 300 pounds of cargo.

One aircraft in support of I Corps carried 11 med-evacs.

One aircraft took B. Gen. English to Hue Citadel.

Eight aircraft supported Operation Prairie and carried 133 passengers, 7 med-evacs, and 8,425 pounds of cargo.

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25 August 1966. Four aircraft supported Operation Prairie and carried 67 passengers and 32,800 pounds of cargo.

Three aircraft in support of the 4th Marines carried 117 passengers and 4 med-evacs.

Two aircraft flew I Corps support and carried 7 med-evacs.

26 August 1966. Eight aircraft in support of Operation Prairie carried 291 passengers 15 med-evacs, and 1,000 pounds of cargo.

One aircraft flew I Corps support and carried 10 med-evacs.

Two aircraft flew local med-evac and carried 5 passengers and 29 med-evacs.

Two aircraft flew a courier hop to Marble Mountain with 12 passengers and 2,200 pounds of cargo.

27 August 1966. Seven aircraft in support of Operation Prairie carried 59 passengers and 16,500 pounds of cargo.

One aircraft flying support for I Corps carried 9 med-evacs.

28 August 1966. Six aircraft in support of Operation Prairie carried 104 passengers, 4 med-evacs, and 17,260 pounds of cargo.

Four aircraft flew 4th Marine support and carried 2 med-evacs and 18 passengers.

One aircraft on I Corps support carried 11 med-evacs.

Two aircraft flew a courier to Marble Mountain and carried 10 passengers and 2,050 pounds of cargo.

29 August 1966. In support of the 4th Marines 2 aircraft carried 15 passengers and 4 med-evacs. One med-evac was particularly noteworthy, as it necessitated a 90 foot hover at 1,000 feet of altitude and a basket pick up of a U.S. wounded. This was completed without incident.

Six aircraft in support of Operation Prairie carried 141 passengers, 4 med-evacs and 18,925 pounds of cargo.

Two aircraft flew I Corps support and carried 2 med-evacs, 17 passengers, and 18,150 pounds of cargo.

Four aircraft carried 28 passengers and 3,850 pounds of cargo in the DaNang area.

30 August 1966. Ten aircraft were committed to Operation Prairie. One aircraft was support for operation Pawnee and carried 6 med-evacs.

31 August 1966. Eleven aircraft stood Operation Prairie support flying resupply, recon, and med-evac missions.

One aircraft flew to Marble Mountain.

One aircraft stood local and Operation Pawnee med-evac. YR 24 during a med-evac at YD 425558, received automatic weapons fire resulting in numerous hits. One round went through the cockpit windshield, spraying the pilot with glass. The Pilot received minor cuts on the face and neck.

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A. Personnel. LtCol. S. F. Martin replaced Lt. Col. W. R. Quinn as Commanding Officer on 10 August 1966. During the month of August, 15 officers were joined and eight officers were dropped for a total of 54 officers on hand. During the same period, six enlisted were joined and 13 were dropped for a total of 156 on hand.

Three officers were awarded a regular commission in the United States Marine Corps during August.

One man was promoted to E-7, six to E-4 and four to E-3 all effective 1 August 1966.

B. Civil Affairs. Due to increased enemy activity within the TAOR during August, the squadron's civil affairs program was held to a minimum. A large amount of clothing has been gathered by the squadron and it is anticipated that it will be distributed throughout the civilian area during September.

C. Special Services. Late in August two professional shows entertained HMM-161. Both shows were thoroughly enjoyed by squadron personnel.

D. ISO. Home town news releases and short news articles have continued to be forwarded to appropriate home town news media and far east military news papers. These articles reflected personal awards and promotions during the month of August. Wing ISO personnel were attached to the squadron during this time, working in conjunction with the squadron ISO officer.

E. Awards & Decorations. Capt. P. F. Janss received the distinguished flying cross for his outstanding performance of duty while flying on a rescue mission south of Da Nang.

Capt. Z. V. Lamascus received the Bronze star for his outstanding performance of duty after his aircraft was downed by enemy fire south of Da Nang.

Sgt. D. D. Gordon received the Bronze star for his outstanding performance of duty when rescuing two downed air force personnel.

Sgt. J. C. Howard, Sgt. R. W. Sizemore and L/Cpl. J. R. Barry received the Navy Commendation medal.

Twelve first award Air Medals were also awarded during the month of August.

F. Casualties. On 6 August, 1/Lt. D. P. Cardinal received severe burns due to his aircraft crashing after an engine failure. The accident occurred approximately 50 miles NW of Phu Bai. 1/Lt. Cardinal was evacuated to CONUS.

On 8 August, the squadron sustained 1 KIA, CPL. R. L. Belknap was killed when the aircraft in which he was flying as aerial gunner was riddled by enemy fire while on an emergency resupply mission. The action took place approximately 50 miles NW of Phu Bai.

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On 31 August the squadron sustained 1 WIA when Capt. W. H. Rever was wounded while on a medical evacuation mission approximately 45 miles NW of Phu Bai. Capt Rever returned to duty with the squadron 1 September 1966.

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## 1. Flight Operational Statistics

Hours Flown	1,264.1
Sorties	3,629
Pax	5,011
Med-evacs	353
Cargo (tons)	221
ARVN Support (hrs.)	114.9

2. Special Operations. The squadron participated in the Operations below, with the results shown. More detailed information is contained on the narrative section of this chronology.

<u>OPERATION NAME</u> <u>(INCLUSIVE DATES)</u>	<u>PASSENGERS</u>	<u>CARGO</u> <u>(TONS)</u>	<u>MED-EVACS</u>
PRAIRIE (1-31)	3,248	162.5	211
OTTAWA (20-23)	238	1.5	10
PAWNEE (26-31)	18	0	6

ENCLOSURE (1)

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**SECRET****MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT**

1 August 1966, HMM-161 had physical and reporting custody of twenty four (24) aircraft. YR-16 (148077), however, was in an HC (non-flyable) status. The following aircraft transactions occurred during the month:

- 6 August 1966, 150252 was stricken from the Navy Inventory
- 10 August 1966, 148077 was sent to FAWPRA aboard a C-124
- 10 August 1966, 150723 was received from H&S-16 by HMM-161

The month closed with HMM-161 having physical and reporting custody of twenty-three (23) aircraft.

AVAILABILITY. During the month of August the squadron flew 1264.1 hours while maintaining an average availability of 43.8%. The following is a breakdown of the causes of nonavailability:

Aircraft out of commission parts (AACP's)	16.0%
Engine Changes	11.5%
Major Component Changes	9.7%
Calendar Inspections	4.6%
Component Adjustment	3.7%
Metal Work	2.9%
Troubleshooting	2.2%
Minor Component Changes	2.0%
Avionics	1.0%
Miscellaneous	2.6%

In terms of aircraft this means four (4) aircraft were down for AACP, 3 were down for engine changes, 2 were down for major component changes, 1 was down for calendar inspection, 1 was down for component adjustment and 1½ were down for miscellaneous reasons.

PARTS. The following is a breakdown of the components used during the month:

Engines	14	Main Rotor Blades	27
Magnets	13	Tail Rotor Blades	61
Carburetors	13	Trunion Spacers	16
Glitches	9	Counterweight Bearings	28
Fan Assy	4		
Contravane Assy	3		
Oil Collars	6		
Starters	2		
Hydraulics Pumps	2		
Fuel Pumps	2		
Tach Generators	7		
Main Gear Box	3		
Tail Rotor Assy	13		
Intermediate Gear Box	1		

The number of main rotor blades used in August was more than those used in the four (4) preceding months. The number of tail rotor blades used

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A. Because of the irregularity of courier flights to Marble Mountain priority O2 items (ACCP and ANFE) are being phoned into Group whenever a courier flight is unavailable.

B. A complete Marine Corps Property inventory was held during this past month

C. An additional EPN O1 allotment of \$ 7000 was granted to the squadron during the month.

D. The following POL expenditures were reported.

AVGAS	103,378 Gal	\$16,567.48
AVOIL	1,760 Gal	\$880.00

**SECRET****S-2 Summary for the Month of August 1966**

During the month of August, normal intelligence functions were conducted by the S-2. The enemy order of battle and all fire incidents were displayed on the situation map in the ready room. A current enemy order-of-battle file was also maintained. In addition, all friendly units were also maintained on the situation map.

The daily situation brief conducted by the 4th Marines were attended by squadron S-2 personnel. This is the only means of learning about the current situation in the TAOR. The Commanding Officer was kept informed of the situation in the Hue/Phu Bai TAOR.

The fire incidents for the month totaled 20, involving 24 aircraft, 4 of which were hit. One aircraft sustained 7 hits and one KIA and one minor WIA.

The loss of SSGT. Furtney and CPL. La Combe during the month of August has left a large vacancy in the intelligence personnel situation. The squadron S-1 officer and the GrCo S-2 officer are aware of this problem. This squadron will be provided with the necessary intelligence personnel as soon as the men become available.

The weather for August showed a marked increase in both rainfall and cloud cover. However, this did not have any significant effect on flight operations conducted this month.

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