

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 161  
Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39  
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPAC  
FPO San Francisco 96602

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5750  
2 March 1969

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From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code AAZ)  
Via: (1) Commanding Officer, Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39  
(2) Commanding General, First Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPAC

Subj: COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.2A  
(b) MCO 5750.1  
(c) FMFPACO 5750.8

1. In accordance with references (a) through (c), the information contained herein is submitted.

*D. L. Elam*  
D. L. ELAM

HMM 161 S&C 523-C

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*HMM-161*

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*FEB 1969*

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MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 161  
QUANG TRI, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM  
1 FEBRUARY THROUGH 28 FEBRUARY 1969

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~PART I. Organizational Data (U)a. Command and Staff (U)

Commanding Officer . LtCol D. L. ELAM .. 1 - 28 Feb 69  
 Executive Officer .. Major J. L. FELTER 1 - 18 Feb 69  
 Executive Officer .. Major C. E. THOMPSON 19 - 28 Feb 69  
 S-2 Officer ..... 1stLt R. T. GAGNON 1 - 28 Feb 69  
 S-3 Officer ..... Major R. W. CARR .. 1 - 28 Feb 69  
 Safety Officer ..... Major R. H. BROWN . 1 - 25 Feb 69  
 Safety Officer ..... 1stLt L. F. MURANYI 26 - 28 Feb 69  
 NATOPS Officer ..... Capt T. H. SMITH .. 1 - 28 Feb 69  
 SgtMaj ..... SgtMaj J. H. GOODFELLOW 1 - 28 Feb 69

b. Designation/Location (U)

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161, Provisional  
 Marine Aircraft Group 39, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing,  
 FMFPAC, Quang Tri, Republic of South Vietnam.

c. Average Strength (C)

Officers Assigned (Naval Aviators)	44
Officers Assigned (Ground)	4
Officers Assigned (navy)	1
Enlisted Strength	172
Total Strength	221

d. Important Visitors (U)

There were no important visitors to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161 during the period 1 February through 28 February 1969.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~PART II: Narrative Summary (C)

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161 provided the following helicopter services for the Third Marine Division, the majority of which supported Operations SCOTLAND II, DEWEY CANYON and MARSHALL MOUNTAIN.

Statistics: 8,323 troops/passengers carried, 603.8 tons of cargo transported, 1,357 personnel medically evacuated, 38 reconnaissance teams inserted, 16 teams extracted. This support resulted in 1,266.6 flight hours, 3,520 sorties flown and 1,969 tasks accomplished. The squadron was fragged for 144 missions of which 135 were completed for a completion rate of 93%.

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PART III. Significant Events (C)

- 1 Feb 69: All resupply and troop missions were cancelled due to very adverse weather. HMM-161 aircraft did launch an emergency Quick Reaction mission. Mission was flown under low clouds and ceiling. Huey gunships provided cover.
- 2 Feb 69: HMM-161 flew 128 sorties, 87 tasks, carried 387 passengers, and 19.8 tons of cargo. Two aircraft launched on mission 203 and flew 9.6 flight hours. They flew 27 sorties and 14 tasks. They received SAF while extracting a Recon Team from YD 278-418. Huey gunships provided cover.
- 3 - 5 Feb 69: HMM-161 provided helicopter support to the Third Marine Division. Operations were severely impaired by low ceilings and poor visibility.
- 6 Feb 69: HMM-161 operations were hampered by poor visibility and low ceilings. Two aircraft led by LtCol ELAM, (Commanding Officer) paradropped a resupply to YD 216-175 in which all loads were recovered by ground units. On the second trip, LtCol ELAM was radar vectored thru a hole to a successful landing where three emergency Med-Evacs were picked up. Mission 505 inserted a 73 man Reaction Team at YD 150-775 flying 4.0 hours in 9 sorties, completing the mission.
- 7 - 8 Feb 69: HMM-161 provided support to the Third Marine Division. Squadron operations were affected by inclement weather.
- 9 Feb 69: HMM-161 flew 106 sorties, 74 tasks, carried 309 troops/passengers and 13.0 tons of cargo. Twenty-four (24) Med-Evac missions resulted in the transporting of fifty-six (56) Med-Evacs including thirty (30) emergencies.
- 10 Feb 69: HMM-161 participated in a troop lift in support of Operation DEWEY CANYON carrying 484 troops with 93 sorties and 38 tasks for 33.4 flight hours. Provided support for the Third Marine Division.

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- 11 Feb 69: HMM-161 flew 134 sorties, 72 tasks, carrying 177 troops/passengers, 22.0 tons of cargo for a total of 44.6 flight hours.
- 12 Feb 69: HMM-161 provided helicopter support for the Third Marine Division.
- 13 Feb 69: HMM-161 flew mission 203 completing four (4) inserts and two (2) extracts. This involved 29 sorties, 15 tasks for a total of 14.0 flight hours. In trying to complete one insert one aircraft was shot out of the zone YD 809-378. No hits were sustained and the mission thereafter was completed.
- 14 Feb 69: HMM-161 flew a tactical troop lift carrying 423 troops. Huey gunships provided cover. The morning launch was delayed due to low ceilings and visibility.
- 15 Feb 69: HMM-161 removed two (2) emergency Med-Evacs and one (1) routine Med-Evac on mission 503. Flareships were used to complete the mission. On mission 501 HMM-161 aircraft removed four (4) emergency, four (4) priority, and one (1) routine Med-Evac.
- 16 Feb 69: HMM-161 flew 130 sorties, 85 tasks, carried 406 troops/passengers, 21.3 tons of cargo for a total of 42.0 flight hours. YR-49 received seven (7) hits while effecting an emergency Med-Evac at XD 210-097. The aircraft had to be shut down at VANDERGRIFT Combat Base; was repaired and returned to Quang Tri. The Crew Chief was wounded in the arm, but not seriously.
- 17 Feb 69: HMM-161 provided support for the Third Marine Division.
- 18 Feb 69: HMM-161 flew 218 sorties, 128 tasks, carried 554 troops, lifted 46.4 tons of cargo for a total of 71.0 flight hours. Two aircraft on an emergency night resupply took a load of ammunition to LZ CUNNINGHAM. Two Huey gunships provided cover. One aircraft received SAF at YD 185-136 near LZ ERSKINE. No hits were taken.

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- 19 Feb 69: HMM-161 participated in a tactical troop lift utilizing 8 aircraft. They carried 696 passengers, carried 22.1 tons of cargo in 201 sorties, 107 tasks for a total of 53.2 flight hours. Gun coverage was provided by two Huey gunships and two OV-10's of VMO-6. The lift involved 2 assaults at YD 019-658 and YD 992-658.
- 20 Feb 69: HMM-161 flew 178 sorties, 100 tasks, carried 241 troops/passengers, 47.7 tons of cargo lifted for a total of 56.3 flight hours in support of the Third Marine Division.
- 21 Feb 69: HMM-161 flight operations were limited due to low ceilings and poor visibility.
- 22 Feb 69: HMM-161 successfully completed all emergency Med-Evac and resupply missions despite very unfavorable weather conditions. The pilots flying drew praise from TASK FORCE HOTEL and all involved will be awarded.
- 23 Feb 69: HMM-161 flew 156 sorties, 92 tasks, carried 590 troops, lifted 12.7 tons of cargo for a total of 53.7 flight hours. While extracting an emergency Med-Evac from XD 819-346, one aircraft took four (4) hits of SAF. No injuries were sustained by any of the crew.
- 24 Feb 69: HMM-161 flew 110 sorties, 67 tasks, carried 109 troops, 33.8 tons of cargo for a total of 53.6 flight hours. One aircraft received several hits of SAF from YD 158-139 at 1515. A forced landing was made at LZ CUNNINGHAM where repairs were made. No injuries were sustained by the crew.
- 25 Feb 69: HMM-161 flew a total of 59.9 flight hours despite very poor weather. Completing 120% of missions assigned, 12 instrument approaches were made. Major R. J. ADAMS, successfully completed an emergency Med-Evac mission at YD 138-026 while on a resupply mission. Having delivered his external load in the zone, he landed and after getting half of the Med-Evac aboard his aircraft began receiving intense

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SAF forcing him to lift out of the zone. Under the cover of Huey gunships he returned to the zone shortly after to pick up the remainder of the Med-Evacs, which he did despite the damage caused by seven (7) hits to his aircraft. No injuries were sustained. On another mission 1stLt. W. R. FABINSKY under the cover of a Huey gunship rescued the crew of another UH-1E which had gone down at YD 134-070. No fire was encountered.

- 26 Feb 69: HMM-161 squadron operations were greatly hampered by low ceilings and poor visibility at home field and in the operating areas. Even with adverse weather conditions HMM-161 managed to launch 12 aircraft to fly according to instrument procedures in order to deliver emergency supplies to units of the Third Marine Division. The squadron flew 58 sorties, in 27.1 flight hours carrying 20.2 tons of cargo supporting the Third Marine Division. The resupply was accomplished with ceilings as low as 300 feet at home field with visibility hampered by thick rain and fog. Seventeen (17) instrument approaches were made enabling the accomplishment of the emergency resupply.
- 27 Feb 69: HMM-161 operations were hampered by adverse weather conditions.
- 28 Feb 69: HMM-161 flew 67 sorties, 42 tasks, carried 38 troops, and 20.1 tons of cargo for a total of 26.2 flight hours. Two aircraft launched to recover a UH-1E that had been shot down. Upon the location of their bodies by a recon team, the lead aircraft went into the zone and recovered the remains.

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