

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

3:FHH:mbb  
 5750  
 5 April 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

Encl: ✓(1) COMMAND CHRONOLOGY for period 1 through 31 March 1969

1. In accordance with references (a) through (c), enclosure (1) is submitted.

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

MM-161

CMD CHRON

MM 161 S&C 542-C

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 DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS  
 DOD DIR 5200.10

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MAR 1969

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COMMAND CHRONOLOGY OF

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 161

QUANG TRI, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIETNAM

1 MARCH THROUGH 31 MARCH 1969

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Enclosure (1)

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

Commanding Officer . LtCol D. L. ELAM .. 1 - 31 Mar 69  
 Executive Officer .. Major G. E. THOMPSON .1 - 31 Mar 69  
 S-3 Officer ..... Major R. W. CARR .. 1 - 31 Mar 69  
 S-2 Officer ..... 1stLt R. T. GAGNON .1 - 31 Mar 69  
 S-4 Officer ..... Major C. D. RIORDAN 1 - 31 Mar 69  
 Maintenance Officer Major J. S. LOOP .. 1 - 31 Mar 69  
 Safety Officer ..... Capt P. D. ALFORD . 1 - 31 Mar 69  
 NATOPS Officer ..... Capt T. H. SMITH .. 1 - 31 Mar 69  
 SgtMaj ..... SgtMaj J. H. GOODFELLOW 1 - 31 Mar 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 ..... 174

a. General Strength ..... 223

d. Important Visitors (U)

There were no important visitors to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161 during the period 1 March through 31 March 1969.

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Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161 provided helicopter services for the Third Marine Division, the majority of which supported operations DENNY CANYON, SCOTLAND II, P. LE MARTIN, and MAINE CRAIG. Supplementary services were also performed in support of the Army's 5th Mechanized Brigade.

Statistics: 8,166 troops/passengers carried, 553.8 tons of cargo transported, 883 personnel medically evacuated, 10 reconnaissance teams inserted, 8 teams extracted. This support resulted in 1287.0 flight hours, 3,454 sorties flown and 1,843 tasks accomplished. The squadron was fragged for 110 missions of which 107 were completed for a completion rate of 97%.

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CONFIDENTIALPART III. Significant Events (C)

- 1 Mar - HMM-161 flew 56.9 flight hours despite low ceilings and poor visibility. Two aircraft performed 3 Recon inserts and extracts. Two VMO-6 aircraft provided cover while a third VMO-6 aircraft ran fixed wing in the area of (YD 175-085). The lead bird of HMM-161 extracted two teams that had been in contact for 3 days. They were extracted under poor weather conditions and hostile fire.

HMM-161 aircraft participated in a lift of approximately 180 ARVN troops making up a recon element plus their U. S. Advisors to the (14-98) grid in support of mission 203A. Two EAGLE CLAW gunships provided cover while three COVEY aircraft coordinated fixed wing support. All aircraft received fire with two HMM-161 aircraft taking hits. Three (3) crew members of the second aircraft received minor wounds. All aircraft were able to RTB while the damaged aircraft located a safe recovery area and landed. In spite of the fire incidents, poor weather conditions and unsatisfactory landing zones, the mission was completed.

- 2 Mar - HMM-161 operations were severely hampered by weather in the objective area. The weather lifted slightly in the late afternoon permitting 6 loads of external resupplies, and the medical evacuation of 21 Marines.

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- 3 Mar - HMM-161 aircraft participated on a mission in support of Operation DEWEY CANYON flying 46.0 flight hours. 176 sorties were flown while 92 tasks were completed. The eight CH-46D's carried 5.3 tons of cargo with gun support provided by VMO-6. Two aircraft of HMM-161 launched on a Recon mission completing 18 sorties and 4 tasks. They inserted 3 Recon teams and extracted one. Gunship coverage was provided by VMO-6.
- 4 Mar - Squadron operations were again hampered by poor weather conditions. Two aircraft launched on an emergency Med-Evac to (YD 138-132). Supporting aircraft were of VMO-6 who provided airborne coverage. The ground element had been ambushed early that morning and had 9 emergencies, 2 priority and 1 Killed-in-Action. When the aircraft arrived on station, the ground forces were still in contact. The lead bird went into the zone and got all Med-Evacs on board and lifted out, taking fire most of the time and receiving one (1) hit. The chase aircraft then went into the zone with an emergency supply of ammunition. The aircraft took fire going into the zone and coming out but received no hits.

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5 Mar - HMM-161 flew 25.6 flight hours completing 58 sorties, 19 tasks and carried 181 passengers and carried 1.0 tons of cargo in support of Operations DEWEY CANYON. Two CH-46D's completed 4 routine Recon inserts and three extracts. Supporting gunships were from VMO-6. Operations were limited due to deteriorating weather conditions.

6 Mar - HMM-161 flew a total of only 17.9 flight hours due to weather. In attempting to pick up priority passengers on an emergency resupply mission in support of Operation DEWEY CANYON, 1stLt T. H. POWELL was seriously wounded by one of two .50 caliber rounds which hit the aircraft. The co-pilot, Captain P. D. ALFORD flew the aircraft back to Quang Tri where he executed a GCA and delivered Lt. POWELL to the Third Medical Battalion.

Also while flying in support of Operation DEWEY CANYON, LtCol. D. L. ELAM (C.O. HMM-161) spotted an enemy mortar position which had been firing at the position he was resupplying. LtCol ELAM effectively silenced the mortar position with the use of his gunners and adjusted artillery with the result of two probable enemy KIA.

7 Mar - HMM-161 operations were again hampered by low ceilings and poor visibility. Four aircraft on a paradrop resupply mission in support of Operation DEWEY CANYON were able to spiral down through holes in the clouds and pick up Med-Evacs and priority passengers. While delivering a load in the (19-40) grid, one aircraft received heavy SAF and intense mortar fire in the zone, but sustained no hits or injury to the crew.

8 Mar - HMM-161 operations were again limited due to minimal weather.

9 Mar - A tactical troop lift for HMM-161 was cancelled due to bad weather. 10.8 flight hours were flown on Med-Evac missions in support of the Third Marine Division. A total of 9 casualties were evacuated to medical facilities.

10 Mar - HMM-161 launched two aircraft on a troop lift augmenting HMM-262 in order to lift a reconnaissance element out of the (16-00) grid. Supporting gunships were provided by VMO-6.

Two aircraft enroute to VANDERGRIFT Combat Base were diverted on an emergency Recon extract at (XD 825-606). The extract was made without incident. VMO-6 provided airborne cover.

11 Mar - HMM-161 operations were severely hampered by poor weather and visibility. One aircraft received .50 caliber and SAF from the (82-60) grid, taking hits in both stub wings. No injuries were sustained by the crew.

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- 12-13 Mar - Weather again hampered Squadron operations. Low ceilings and poor visibility left the field open to IFR traffic only.
- 14 Mar - HMM-161 launched 6 aircraft on resupply. At 1030H, 2 aircraft launched on an emergency resupply to LZ SIERRA. The aircraft were to also extract numerous Med-Evacs at the LZ. The lead aircraft piloted by LtCol. D. L. ELAM (C.O. HMM-161) and 1stLt. M. FIDWERTY arrived at the position and dropped their resupply in the zone. While in the zone a mortar round hit the rear of the aircraft killing the Corpsman aboard and seriously wounding the gunners and Crew Chief. The pilots were also slightly wounded. The aircraft caught fire and completely burned after all the crew were out of it. After staying at the LZ for over three hours during which time the position was under mortar attack, the survivors were evacuated by helicopter.
- 15 Mar - HMM-161 provided 6 aircraft for a tactical troop lift in support of Operation DEWEY CANYON. Flying 125 sorties in 54.9 flight hours the CH-46D's completed 69 tasks. They carried 481 troops and 17.1 tons of cargo. Supporting aircraft were two OV-10's of VMO-6.
- 16 Mar - IFR weather again hampered flight operations of this squadron.
- 17 Mar - HMM-161 launched 8 aircraft on a tactical troop lift in support of the Third Marine Division's Operation DEWEY CANYON. The aircraft were launched in IFR weather and instrument climbouts were made to the tactical area. The aircraft flew a total of 23.0 flight hours and carried only 28 passengers due to severe weather.
- 18 Mar - HMM-161 aircraft participated in completing Operation DEWEY CANYON. 56 troops were extracted from the operational area along with 5 tons of cargo. All aircraft received fire at various times during the removal of troops. One aircraft was hit by two rounds of .50 caliber fire at (YD 955-655) while attempting to hoist Med-Evacs out of the zone. One gunner received minor injuries.
- 19 Mar - Today HMM-161 participated in an assault troop lift into LZ PASSPORT (XD 797-228), with VMO-6 gunships and jet attack aircraft providing cover in support of Operation MAINE CRAIG. During the zone prep, attack aircraft destroyed one .50 caliber position. One CH-46D received one hit of SAF causing limited damage. 382 troops and 6.0 tons of cargo were carried into the strike zone.

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20 Mar - HMM-161 participated in a Battalion sized assault on LZ ARGONNE (77-573). Enemy resistance was heavy as three aircraft sustained hits. One aircraft had the controls damaged and was forced to land at (725-525). The crew was picked up and the aircraft was later recovered by a CH-54 Sky-Crane. The other aircraft within the flight that sustained hits continued the mission. The lift was completed with a total of 506 troops moved into the operational area.

HMM-161 also provided a troop lift in support of Operation MAINE CRAIG, moving 131 troops. The squadron was supported by several flights of fixed wing in addition to armed Huey gunships and OV-10's of VMO-6.

21-22 Mar - For two days HMM-161 aircraft launched on assigned missions in support of the Third Marine Division and completed all missions as assigned.

23 Mar - HMM-161 flew a total of 76.1 flight hours during the day's operational commitments. One aircraft was shot down at (19 828-628). The pilot, 1stLt C. D. HENDRICKS, was fatally wounded by a .50 caliber round while trying to hoist out an emergency Med-Evac. No other crew members were injured. A Recovery Team was put in around the downed helicopter to secure the area. The aircraft was later flown out by a Recovery Crew led by Major J. S. LOOP.

24-25 Mar - HMM-161 flew helicopter support for the Third Marine Division.

26 Mar - HMM-161 launched 8 aircraft on a tactical troop lift in support of the Third Marine Division on Operation MAINE CRAIG. They flew a total of 43.7 flight hours, flying 131 sorties, carrying 56.7 tons of cargo and 134 passengers for a total of 42 tasks. Med-Evac aircraft conducted an emergency evacuation of 7 emergencies, 3 priorities and 1 permanent.

27 Mar - HMM-161 flew 42 sorties, 23 tasks, carrying 240 troops and 5.6 tons of cargo for a total of 35.2 flight hours in support of Operation MAINE CRAIG. Supporting aircraft of VMO-6, VMO-2 and fixed wing elements provided airborne security. When inserting the troops into the (043-644) grid, the aircraft received fire but sustained no hits. The lift was completed despite enemy fire.

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of 36 sorties for a total of 65 Marines were lost during the medical evacuation.

29 Mar - F-4s again flew Med-Evac in support of the Third Marine Division. While holding out a Med-Evac aircraft received intense SAM and sustained several hits. The aircraft was flown back to base as soon as the Med-Evac was completed.

30 Mar - Helo operations were again hampered by adverse weather conditions. However, a combat troop assault was attempted into the (95-23) and (97-33) grid squares. Only one Company was able to be inserted before weather forced the mission to be aborted.

31 Mar - Helo operations were curtailed by low ceilings and poor visibility.

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Canc: Apr 00

HDBul 1601

HDS-1

28 Mar 00

**HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION BULLETIN 1601**

From: Security Chief, Marine Corps History and Museum Division  
 To: Distribution List

Subj: MCHC DUTY ASSIGNMENT FOR THE PERIOD OF 1 Mar 00-31 Mar 00

Ref: (a) HDO 1601.1E

1. Purpose. To establish a list of watch standards for the period of 1 Mar 00-31 Mar 00.

2. Action. The Below listed personnel are assigned as the Duty Marine and Duty Driver for the MCHC on the dates indicated and will be guided in their duties by the reference.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Duty Marine</u>	<u>Duty Driver</u>
01 Mar 00	Wednesday	LCpl Nelson	LCpl Ohnstad
02 Mar 00	Thursday	Cpl Cardio	LCpl Nelson
03 Mar 00	Friday	Sgt Benjamin	Cpl Cardio
04 Mar 00	Saturday	LCpl Ohnstad	NONE
05 Mar 00	Sunday	LCpl Nelson	NONE
06 Mar 00	Monday	LCpl Nelson	LCpl Ohnstad
07 Mar 00	Tuesday	Sgt Smith	LCpl Nelson
08 Mar 00	Wednesday	LCpl Ohnstad	Cpl Cardio
09 Mar 00	Thursday	SSgt Cousins	LCpl Ohnstad
10 Mar 00	Friday	Cpl Cardio	LCpl Nelson
11 Mar 00	Saturday	Cpl Cardio	NONE
12 Mar 00	Sunday	Sgt Benjamin	NONE
13 Mar 00	Monday	LCpl Nelson	Cpl Cardio
14 Mar 00	Tuesday	SSgt Johannes	LCpl Ohnstad
15 Mar 00	Wednesday	Sgt Benjamin	LCpl Nelson
16 Mar 00	Thursday	LCpl Nelson	LCpl Ohnstad
17 Mar 00	Friday	LCpl Ohnstad	LCpl Nelson
18 Mar 00	Saturday	SSgt Johannes	NONE
19 Mar 00	Sunday	SSgt Cousins	NONE
20 Mar 00	Monday	SSgt Cousins	LCpl Ohnstad
21 Mar 00	Tuesday	LCpl Ohnstad	Cpl Cardio
22 Mar 00	Wednesday	LCpl Ohnstad	LCpl Nelson
23 Mar 00	Thursday	Sgt Benjamin	Cpl Cardio
24 Mar 00	Friday	Cpl Cardio	LCpl Ohnstad

Subj:MCHC DUTY ASSIGNMENT FOR THE PERIOD OF 1 Mar 00-29 Mar 00

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Duty Marine</u>	<u>Duty Driver</u>
25 Mar 00	Saturday	SSgt Johannes	NONE
26 Mar 00	Sunday	SSgt Cousins	NONE
27 Mar 00	Monday	LCpl Nelson	LCpl Ohnstad
28 Mar 00	Tuesday	SSgt Johannes	LCpl Nelson
29 Mar 00	Wednesday	LCpl Ohnstad	Cpl Cardio
30 Mar 00	Thursday	Cpl Cardio	LCpl Ohnstad
31 Mar 00	Friday	Sgt Benjamin	LCpl Nelson

3. Changes to this duty roster will be coordinated with the Security Chief.

M. D. COUSINS

DISTRIBUTION:  
Cognizant Personnel  
NDW Security  
NDW Ops  
Security Chief  
Duty Binder  
Bulletin Board

**Cousins SSgt Michael D**

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**From:** Craig LtCol Leon  
**Sent:** Friday, February 25, 2000 2:24 PM  
**To:** Johannes SSgt Robert A; Cousins SSgt Michael D; Dyer GS12 John T  
**Subject:** FW: ART for MGEN FIELDS OFFICE

SSgt Cousins,

I did not read this request until 1420 today. Lt Patilo is on emerlv, therefore, no action has been taken on this request. Please coord with Mr. Dyer first thing Monday AM. Thanks. R/S LCjr

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Dyer GS12 John T  
**Sent:** Friday, February 25, 2000 7:41 AM  
**To:** Craig LtCol Leon  
**Cc:** Patillo 2ndLt Katrina D; Sullivan LtCol Robert J  
**Subject:** FW: ART for MGEN FIELDS OFFICE

Sir, Is there a chance of getting a MCHC vehicle to transport four art and myself to the Pentagon today, Friday, 25 Feb 00, wait for about 40 minutes and take me back to MCHC?

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Powalski Maj Cathy M  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 24, 2000 5:19 PM  
**To:** Dyer GS12 John T  
**Cc:** Allen Maj Scott A  
**Subject:** RE: ART for MGEN FIELDS OFFICE

Sir,

Please fax the info. I am CERTAIN Maj Denning's replacement, Maj Allen, will be happy to account for the art work :)

Please have an MCHC vehicle deliver. Thank you!

vr/s,  
Maj P.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Dyer GS12 John T  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 24, 2000 4:07 PM  
**To:** Powalski Maj Cathy M  
**Cc:** Sullivan LtCol Robert J; Monigan Col Michael F; Craig LtCol Leon  
**Subject:** ART for MGEN FIELDS OFFICE

Dear Major Powalski, MGEN Fields visited MCHC on Friday, 18 Feb 00. He selected three art and opted for a fourth on logistics.

The four pieces are in my office if you wish to arrange to pick it up, OR, I'll request an MCHC vehicle to carry them to you.

Since Major Denning left we've had no replacement RO appointed. If I FAX you an RO and Transport form would you be able to effect such an assignment? Please send your FAX number.

It's not necessary to wait for the RO assignment before you advise on the pickup. VR, JT Dyer