

MARINE FIGHTER/ATTACK SQUADRON 115
Marine Aircraft Group 13
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMF, Pacific
FPO San Francisco, 96602

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10 Dec 1968

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From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 13
Subj: Command Chronology

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.1A
(b) WGO 5750.1C
(c) GruO 5750.1D

Encl: ✓(1) VMFA-115 Command Chronology for the period 1-30 November 1968

1. In accordance with references (a), (b) and (c), enclosure (1) is submitted for the period 1-30 November 1968.

R. R. Norton
R. R. NORTON

VMFA-115 S&O
CONTROL NO. 05587-68

DATE REC'D 10 DEC 1968

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VMFA-115

CMD CHRON

Nov 1968

MARINE FIGHTER/ATTACK SQUADRON 115
Chu Lai, Republic of Vietnam
1-30 November 1968

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PART I

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

1. Commander and Staff

- NORTON, R. R.	Commanding Officer	LtCol	28-30
- HUDSON, J. I.	Commanding Officer	Maj	1-27
- KROPP, R. G.	Executive Officer	Maj	1-30
- BRITTON, O. W.	Operations Officer	Maj	1-30
- DENTON, J. R.	S-1 Officer	Capt	1-30
- CRIPE, D. L.	S-2 Officer	1stLt	1-30
- ACUFF, W. III	Logistics Officer	Capt	6-30
- YATSKO, A. A.	Logistics Officer	Maj	1-5
- HUNTER, D. R.	Aviation Safety Officer	Capt	18-30
- DERBY, P. D.	Aviation Safety Officer	Capt	1-17
- SLONE, H. A.	Aircraft Maintenance Officer	Maj	1-30
- HOLZKAMP, F. W.	Sergeant Major	SgtMaj	1-30

2. Task Organization and Data

VMFA-115 Chu Lai AB, RVN LtCol Robert R. NORTON 28-30 Nov 1968

3. Average Strength

a. Marine Officers	35
1. Naval Aviators	16
2. Naval Flight Officers	17
3. Aviation Ground Officers	2
b. Naval Officers	1
c. Marine Enlisted	231
d. Naval Enlisted	0
e. Total	267

PART II

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

During the month of November, VMFA-115 flew 396 combat sorties in support of operations throughout the I Corps area and [REDACTED] in support of the 7th Air Force.

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Operations supported included Commando Hunt [REDACTED], Dragon Victory V, Nevada Eagle, Scotland II, Vernon Lake II, Henderson Hill, Project Delta, Lancaster II and Meade River. Marine units supported by the Silver Eagles were 1st Recon Bn, 5th, 7th, 9th, and 26th Marines. The 1st and 3rd Marine Divisions, Americal Division, Task Force Hotel, 1st and 2nd ARVN, the Army's 101st Airborne and 108th Artillery units received fire support from VMFA-115. The Silver Eagles flew more air-to-air missions in November escorting B-52's and flying BARCAPs off the coast of North Vietnam.

It is estimated the Silver Eagles destroyed 230 meters of trench line, 26 bunkers and damaged 5; 75 structures were leveled with 24 receiving significant damage. VMFA-115 recorded 3 secondary explosions and 16 fires, 2 KBA's, 1 bridge damaged, 3 sampans destroyed and 2 damaged.

To acquire this BDA, VMFA-115 expended 613.63 tons of ordnance against the enemy. Ordnance dropped by type were:

535 MK-81 250 lb bombs

1244 MK-82 500 lb bombs

244 MK-77 500 lb fire bombs

61 5 inch Zuni rockets

2604 rounds of 20 M.M. ammunition

A good example of the Silver Eagles work during November was the flight Lovebug 006, led by Major BIBLER and Captain CARROLL with Captain KALINER and Major KROPP in the wing position. Making five passes in a 30° dive with 20 MK 81's unretarded bombs, Lovebug 006 destroyed 4 storage areas, damaged 2, damaged 1 bridge, saw 1 secondary fire and was credited with 1 KBA.

Also in November, Lovebug 008 led by Major SLONE and 1st Lieutenant CRIPE with Captain PARKER and Captain TRUE in the number two position displayed VMFA-115 professionalism. The FAC assigned 008 a fortified village as a target and making 6 passes in a 30° dive with 19 MK 81 unretarded bombs, seven structures were destroyed and four damaged. The flight also spotted one secondary explosion.

PART III

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1. Personnel. The month of November brought many changes in the lair of the Silver Eagles. On November 28, LtCol R. R. NORTON officially assumed command

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of Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 115, receiving the Eagle Lead from Major J. I. HUDSON who departed to 2nd MAW MCAS Cherry Point. The squadron joined one new pilot and one new RIO in November. Captain W. A. HENDERSON joined from the 2nd MAW as did 1st Lieutenant J. J. COUGHLIN. Leaving the Silver Eagles to return stateside were Major J. N. BIBLER who will be reporting to the Naval Aviation Safety Center NAS Norfolk, Virginia; Captain E. H. CORSON reporting to 2nd MAW and 1st Lieutenant M. J. SHARBAUGH also reporting to the 2nd MAW. Captain A. D. PARKER left the squadron to join MAG-39.

2. Casualties. On Sunday morning 17 November 1968, Captain Paul D. DERBY and 1st Lieutenant Thomas A. REICH were killed as a result of enemy action on a close air support mission twenty five miles southwest of Chu Lai in Quang Ngai Province. On the 9th of November, 1st Lieutenant Bruce A. BLAHNIK suffered minor burns when VE 17 ran off the runway. The pilot, Captain Joseph L. CANNAVA, escaped injury.


3. Awards. During November, crew members of VMFA-115 earned 45 Strike Flight Air Medals and received 4, those going to Captains MAGO, KALHER, HARDY and Lieutenant BLAHNIK. Four Single Mission Air Medals were received by Major KROPP, Captains CHURCH and MCMAHON also GySgt SIMS. Captains DENTON and CHURCH received Purple Hearts. Members of the squadron were recommended for 73 Strike Flight Air Medals, 5 Navy Commendation Medals, 2 Navy Achievement Medals, 2 Bronze Stars, 4 D.F.C.'s and 1 Commanding General's Certificate of Commendation. The squadron also saw 13 Meritorious Masts.

4. Promotions. During the month of November, 11 members of VMFA-115 received promotions. Major YATSKO assumed his present rank on 1 November. Former 1st Lieutenants BAKER, CANNAVA, CARROLL, CHURCH and HARDY were promoted to Captain during the month. SSgt LAKOMY, Cpl KUHN and LCpl BRENNEN were promoted to their respective ranks and Sgts SCHMIDT and TAKAHASI received meritorious combat promotions.

5. Visitors. On 27 November, Major General Charles J. QUILTER was present for the Change of Command Ceremonies along with other dignitaries from the 1st Marine Air Wing.

6. Aircraft Maintenance. During November, the number of aircraft on hand fell to 15. VE 00, 10 and 13 are currently at PAR and VE 04 and 17 were destroyed in accidents. However VE 08 returned to the Eagle nest on November 26. The men in maintenance and on the flight line did a tremendous job of getting 8 - 10 aircraft with all systems up to meet a very demanding flight schedule. The Silver Eagles proudly salute the men behind the scenes.

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7. Operations. The list of aircrews flying significant missions during November is headed by Major J. N. BIBLER who reached a record mark of 447 combat missions. Major SLONE and Lieutenant KRALOVEC brought their total number of combat missions to over 100.

8. Bonds. At the end of November Lieutenant WATSON reported the Savings Bonds had a 84.6% participation rate and members of VMFA-115 participating in either the Savings Bond or Savings Deposit program hit 88.4%.

9. Civic Action. Between the period of 1 November and 30 November 1968, the VMFA-115 Civil Action Team worked on the following projects:

a. On the 1st and 5th repair work was completed on the school at Long Phu II.

b. Med Caps were escorted on the 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th with good participation and response on all occasions.

c. On the 28th of November a well was cleaned and covered at Chu Lai New Life hamlet with the help of Mr. DU the school principal. Another well was repaired on the 29th.

d. On 26 November newspapers, psychological operations posters and Chieu Hoi materials were obtained from Vietnamese officials at Li Tinh district headquarters. A regular weekly distribution of such materials was set up.

e. On 30 November Mr. TRU, Hamlet Chief of Long Phu II was contacted and details arranged for the installation of a volleyball court at the Long Phu II school yard. Wing ISO will cover the event.

f. The VMFA-115 Civic Action team consists of 1st Lieutenant WRASSE, Staff Sergeant SIMONOVICH, Sergeant COX and Lance Corporals MAGNESS and WHITE.

10. Informational Services. 1st Lieutenant SINGLETON, Squadron ISO sent out 100 home town news releases during November, describing the work and accomplishments of individual Marines in all shops and departments of VMFA-115.

11. Training. During the month of November, Marines of VMFA-115 were undergoing training at a number of schools throughout the Far East. Captain BAKER and Lieutenant REICH attended the Jungle Escape and Survival course in the Philippines. Lieutenant BLAND attended the Maintenance Management Course at Danang and SSgt OWENS the KY 28 course also at Danang.

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12. Morale. During November 13 officers and men of VMFA-115 took advantage of R & R quotas to Sydney, Australia, Hawaii, Bangkok, Thailand and Tokyo, Japan. Activity continued at a fast pace on construction of the new EM Club and a very successful beach party was held the day before the Change of Command Ceremony.

13. Air Operations

Total Flight Hours	477.7
Total Sorties	396
Combat Flight Hours	411.0
Combat Sorties	362
High Day Hours	28.8
High Day Sorties	25
Average Pilot Hours	28.1
Average Pilot Sorties	23
Average RIO Hours	27.5
Average RIO Sorties	22
Non Squadron Aircrew Hours	26.8
Non Squadron Aircrew Sorties	10.6