

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON-163  
Marine Aircraft Group-16  
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMF, Pacific  
FPO San Francisco 96602

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2 April 1967

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From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group-16

Subj: Command Chronology, 1-31 March 1967 (U)

Ref: (a) GruO 5750.1

Encl: ✓(1) Command Chronology, 1-31 March 1967

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.
2. This letter is declassified to unclassified upon removal of enclosure (1).

*R. D. Bianchi*  
R. D. BIANCHI

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HMM-163

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Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-163

1-31 March 1967

MCAF, HUE PHU BAI, Republic of Viet-Nam

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## A. PART ONE - ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

### 1. Commanding Officer and Staff

- a. Rocco D. BIANCHI, LtCol., Commanding Officer, 1-31 March 1967
- b. Glenn A. STEPHENS, Major, Executive Officer, 1-31 March 1967
- c. Daniel V. McDONALD, Major, Operations Officer, 1-22 March 1967
- d. Frederick A. RUECKEL, Major, Operations Officer, 23-31 March 1967
- e. John D. WAY, Major, Logistics Officer, 1-22 March 1967
- f. Lonnie S. UNDERHILL, Captain, Logistics Officer, 23-31 March 1967
- g. Peter N. SAMARAS, Major, Maintenance Officer, 1-13 March 1967
- h. Daniel V. McDONALD, Major, Maintenance Officer, 14-31 March 1967
- i. John E. CARROLL, Major, Aviation Safety Officer, 1-31 March 1967
- j. Charles M. HAVICAN, Captain, NATOPS Officer, 1-31 March 1967
- k. Robert L. THIEN, Captain, Administration Officer, 1-31 March 1967
- l. James R. FOWLER, Lieutenant, USN(MC), Medical Officer, 1-31 March 1967
- m. Floyd W. HURLBUT, Captain, Intelligence Officer, 1-31 March 1967
- n. Robert F. O'NEIL, 1/Lt., Custodian, S&C, 1-31 March 1967

### 2. Task Organization

- a. Location - MCAF, Hue Phu Bai, Republic of Viet-Nam, 1-31 March 1967

### 3. Average Monthly Strength

Marine		Navy	
<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>
46	202	1	3

### 4. Important Visitors

- a. None, during this period

## B. PART TWO - NARRATIVE SUMMARY

1 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas. Nine (9) medevac missions were flown in the Dong Ha area and one (1) in the Phu Bai area for a total of ten (10). On two (2) of the medevac missions in the Dong Ha areas Lt. HUGHES, the flight leader, received small arms fire. No hits were recorded to the aircraft. On an admin flight in Dong Ha area Major CARROLL executed an autorotation to a rice paddy due to rough running engine and subsequent loss of power. No injuries to either crew or passengers were recorded.

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2 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. A total of twenty-three (23) medevac missions were completed today. Eight (8) of these missions were flown as night medevacs. Captain THIEN, while on one medevac in the Dong Ha area, received small arms fire (sniper) while in the zone. No hits were recorded. Major BENO, while on a medevac mission in the Phu Bai area at night received mortar and small arms fire while in the zone. One (1) hit was recorded but no injuries received.

3 March 1967 - Normal operations in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. A total of fourteen (14) medevac missions were flown by the squadron today. Three (3) of the medevac missions were night medevacs. Captain BARNETT flew SAR for downed UH-34D attached to HMM-361 in the Phu Bai area (Pilots were recovered). Lt. BRICKELL, while on medevac mission in the Dong Ha area, received mortar fire while in the landing zone. No hits or injuries were recorded. Lt. KAWALEK, acting as chase on a medevac in the Dong Ha area was climbing out of the zone when he experienced rapid rise in oil temperature and a engine chip detector light. An autorotation was executed to a field below them with no injuries resulting. The aircraft was later retrieved from the field.

4 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas. A total of sixteen (16) medevac missions were flown in both areas today.

5 March 1967 - Weather limited flying in both areas today. A total of six (6) medevac missions were flown by the squadron. All in the Dong Ha area. On one (1) medevac mission Lt. HUGHES, flight leader, received fire while in final approach to the zone at about 200 feet. The aircraft received numerous hits to both rotor blades and fuselage. No injuries were reported. On two subsequent medevac missions Lt. O'CONNELL, acting as chase for Lt. HUGHES, received fire and numerous hits to his aircraft. On both occasions the Pilot and Co-pilot received minor shrapnel wounds from flying glass and metal in the cockpit. No other crew members recieved injuries. On a forth medevac mission, Captain HURLBUT, acting as Lt. HUGHES's chase, received small arms fire while coming out of the landing zone. He received small arms hit to his aircraft and the corpsman received gunshot wounds to his lower abdomen.

6 March 1967 - Weather limited flying in both areas today. Three (3) medevac missions were flown by the squadron today. Major McDONALD led a flight of three aircraft on an emergency retraction of three (3) recon teams today. Muster I, Nettlerash II and Muster II were the teams involved. Sniper fire was recieved while extracting Nettlerash II, however, no hits were taken by the aircraft.

7 March 1967 - Bad weather limited flying today to two (2) medevac missions.

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8 March 1967 - Bad weather limited flying today to three (3) medevac missions. On one (1) night medevac mission today, led by Captain THIEN, an enemy grenade was thrown at the aircraft while in the landing zone. The aircraft took hits from shrapnel, however, no injuries were recieved.

9 March 1967 - Bad weather limited flying in both areas today. Five (5) medevac missions were flown by the squadron today. Major McDONALD led a flight of three aircraft on emergency retraction of one recon team, "Nettlerash I", with no fire being taken by the flight. Major BENO led a flight on a night emergency retraction of a recon team. Major BENO was orbiting the zone after picking up his half of the recon team when he experienced an engine chip detector light. An autorotation was made immediately and the engine quit on touch down. There were no injuries reported and the aircraft was later externalled back to Phu Bai.

10 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. Three (3) medevac missions were flown by the squadron today.

11 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. Twelve (12) medevac missions were flown by the squadron today, two (2) being night medevacs.

12 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. The squadron completed thirteen (13) medevac missions today, three (3) being night medevacs.

13 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas. Seventeen (17) medevac missions were flown today, one (1) being a night medevac. Major SAMARAS, while leading on two (2) medevac missions in the Dong Ha area, received small arms fire from area around the LZ. No hits were taken. Lt. HENDERSON, while leading a flight on a medevac mission in the Phu Bai area, received fire about 1000 meters from the LZ. No hits were taken. Captain KESTLER, while leading a flight on a medevac mission in the Dong Ha area, received mortar rounds to the landing zone as the aircraft was lifting out. No hits were recorded. Major SAMARAS, while on an emergency recon team retraction, recieved fire as he was touching down in the zone. The aircraft received several hits and the pilot immediately lifted off. He continued to recieve fire and the aircraft subsequently lost power and crashed into the trees. The aircraft exploded before the other two crewmembers could be freed. The pilots were retrieved from the area the following day and were taken to the USS REPOSE.

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14 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. Thirteen (13) medevac missions, three (3) of them being night were completed. Major RUECKEL, while on an recon overflight received fire on three (3) occasions. No hits were taken. Captain HEIN, experienced a generator failure while on a night medevac today. Aircraft flown back to Phu Bai with no damage or injuries.

15 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. The squadron flew a total of ten (10) medevac missions today, one (1) being a night medevac.

16 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. The squadron flew a total of seventeen (17) medevac missions today, five (5) of them being night medevacs. Major RUECKEL led a flight of three aircraft on an emergency retraction of recon team "Nettlerash II". The aircraft took fire during the pickup, but no hits were taken to the aircraft.

17 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. The squadron flew a total of twenty-one (21) medevac missions, six (6) of them being night medevacs. Lt. HUGHES while on a day medevac mission received small arms fire from area around the landing zone. No hits were taken. Lt. HUGHES, on a night medevac and emergency resupply of ammo, received fire while in the landing zone. One (1) hit was taken to the aircraft but no injuries occurred. The mission was completed.

18 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. The squadron flew a total of fifteen (15) medevac missions, two (2) of them being night medevacs. Lt. HUGHES was leading a section of two (2) aircraft from Dong Ha to Phu Bai on an emergency evacuation of Dong Ha, when his section took heavy fire. The aircraft were forced to fly low due to bad weather. The second plane, piloted by Lt. SNIDER, received a hit to his aircraft and the fuel quantity gauge fell to zero. He made a precautionary landing to a rice paddy by Highway # 1. No injuries occurred. Captain BOWMAN also received fire today while on a night flight returning to Phu Bai south along Highway # 1. One (1) round hit the spar of his rotor blade. No injuries occurred.

19 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. The squadron flew a total of ten (10) medevac missions today, one (1) being a night medevac. Lt. HEIN received small arms fire today while on a medevac mission. He had just lifted from the landing zone when he received sniper fire. He took one (1) round through the spar of the main rotor blade. No injuries occurred.

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20 March 1967 - Poor weather hampered flying in both areas today. The squadron flew a total of nine (9) medevac missions today, three (3) of them being night medevacs. Lt. HEIN, while flying a medevac mission during the day, damaged his aircraft by flying into a tree. He was forced to low altitude by the weather, and while following a river for navigational purposes he inadvertently struck a tree causing considerable damage to the aircraft. No injuries reported. Lt. HEIN, while flying on a night medevac mission, received what appeared to be fire from an anti-aircraft weapon. He noticed five (5) airbursts close to the aircraft, however, no hits were taken. Major McDONALD, while on an emergency medevac at night, had an enemy grenade thrown at his aircraft. He was just setting down in the zone when the grenade exploded inflicting shrapnel damage to the aircraft. No injuries were recorded.

21 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. The squadron flew a total of nine (9) medevac missions today.

22 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. The squadron flew a total of seven (7) medevac missions, three (3) of them being night medevacs.

23 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. A total of ten (10) medevac missions were flown today, seven (7) of them being night medevacs. On one (1) night medevac mission Lt. BANCELLS, the flight leader, took automatic weapons fire from the area around the landing zone. No hits were taken to the aircraft.

24 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. Fourteen (14) medevac missions were flown by the squadron today, seven (7) being night medevacs. Major STEPHENS led a flight of three (3) aircraft on an emergency extract of two recon teams. The flight took fire on both missions however no hits were taken. Major STEPHENS and flight also received fire while on a recon overflight in the Phu Bai area. No hits were taken to the aircraft. Captain THIEN, while on an emergency resupply in the Dong Ha area received fire. No hits were taken.

25 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. The squadron completed sixteen (16) medevac missions today, two (2) being night medevacs. On one (1) medevac missions in the Dong Ha area Captain HALL took small arms fire from area near the landing zone. No hits taken by the aircraft.

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26 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas today. A total of eleven (11) medevacs were flown in both areas, eight (8) were emergency and three (3) were priority. Four (4) were flown at night. Captain HEIN was flying the night medevac at Dong Ha and received fire, but no hit were taken in the aircraft.

27 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai and Dong Ha area today. A total of twenty-six (26) medevacs were flown in both areas today. There were twelve (12) night medevacs flown. Lt. HUGHES received fire on one of the night medevac missions. No hits were recorded.

28 March 1967 - Normal operations in Phu Bai and Dong Ha area today. A total of fifteen (15) medevac missions were flown. Four (4) of the medevac missions were flown at night. Captain ZOLLER received fire on one of the night missions. No hits were taken in the aircraft. Captain HURLBUT made an emergency landing with engine trouble. The aircraft was repaired and flown back to Phu Bai. Several VIP hops were flown, VIP were code 2 and 3.

29 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha areas. The total number of medevac missions flown was ten (10). Lt. O'CONNELL flew the only night medevac mission but was unable to complete it when he made a hard landing after going IFR due to dust in the landing zone. Several VIP hops were flown carrying the Congressional party.

30 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai/Dong Ha area. A total of fifteen (15) medevac missions were flown. Two (2) of the medevacs were flown at night. Major McDONALD made a full autorotation due to engine trouble. None of the crew were injured.

31 March 1967 - Normal operations conducted in the Phu Bai and Dong Ha area. A total of six (6) medevac missions were flown.

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## C. PART THREE - SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

## 1. Personnel

a. The squadron experienced a slight decrease in personnel over the month, with eleven (11) personnel being joined and thirteen (13) being detached. The total number of personnel on hand as of 31 March 1967 were forty-five (45) officers and two hundred and three (203) enlisted.

## 2. Administration

a. During the month, the squadron experienced seven (7) promotions to the rank of Sergeant and one (1) to the rank of Gunnery Sergeant.

## 3. Awards

a. The following Awards were presented during the month of March 1967:

## (1) Bronze Star with Combat "V" device

(a) THIEN, R. L., CAPT., 075876 USMC

## (2) Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V" device

(a) FRAZIER, J. A., SGT., 2027799 USMC

(b) THOMAS, F. C., CPL., 2083868 USMC

## (3) Purple Heart

(a) GUNNISS, G. H., CAPT., 086268 USMC

(b) KISSLING, R. G., CAPT., 089988 USMCR

(c) HUGHES, R. C., 1/LT., 091695 USMC

(d) O'CONNELL, G. J., 1/LT., 090982 USMCR

(e) SWETE, R. E., 2/LT., 092766 USMCR - 2 Medals presented

(f) DERRICK, W. D., SGT., 2056155 USMC

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## (4) Certificate of Commendation

(a) SCHECTER, L. P., SSGT., 1199199 USMC

(b) ATTEBERRY, J. R., SGT., 1889462 USMC

## (5) Air Medal

(a) One (1) officer and nine (9) enlisted personnel were presented their first Air Medal.

(b) One hundred and fifty (150) additional Air Medals were presented during the month of March 1967.

## (6) Combat Crew Wings

(a) Thirty-one (31) enlisted personnel received their Combat Crew Wings during the month.

## 4. Casualties

a. The following personnel were casualties during the month of March as a direct result of enemy action:

(1) O'CONNELL, G. J.	1/LT	090982	Shrapnel wound	5Mar67
(2) KISSLING, R. G.	CAPT	089988	plexiglass in eyes	5Mar67
(3) GUNNISS, G. H.	CAPT	086268	Lacerations	5Mar67
(4) HUGHES, R. C.	1/LT	091695	Lacerations	5Mar67
(5) SWETE, R. E.	2/LT	092766	Second Degree Burns	13Mar67
(6) HARRIS, P. W.	PFC	2128760	Killed In Action	13Mar67
(7) TERWILLIGER, V. B.	LCPL	2191364	Killed In Action	13Mar67
(8) SAMARAS, P. N.	MAJOR	069223	Died of Wounds Myocardial Infraction	19Mar67

## 5. Civic Action

a. No significant events

## 6. Morale/Welfare Programs

b. No significant events

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7. Information services

a. Six (6) general stories and forty (40) personal Hometown News releases were submitted this month.

8. Intelligence/Counter Intelligence

a. Intelligence conducted normal procedures during this period.

9. Air Operations

a. Flight hours - 1271.3

b. Flights/Sorties - 654/1246

c. Passengers - 1310

d. Cargo - 28.6 short tons

e. Medevacs - 335

10. Special Operations

a. March 1-18 Prairie II

(1) HMM-163 provides a detachment of ten (10) UH-34D's for general support in the area of operation. The bulk of responsibility concerning the squadron is medevac missions, reconnaissance flights and limited logistic support in the Dong Ha area.

b. March 18-31

(1) At the termination of Prairie II, Prairie III was initiated. HMM-163 provides a detachment of eight (8) aircraft for general support in the area of operation. Continuing bulk of responsibility is medevac missions, reconnaissance flights, and limited logistic support in the Dong Ha area.

c. March 22

a. 1st Battallion, 4th Marines was landed for the initiation of "Beacon Hill" operation in the Dong Ha area. HMM-363 provides main bulk of support for the operation. HMM-163 provides additional support in the Dong Ha area.

d. 1-31 March

a. Saw the continuation of "Chinook II" in the Chinook area of operation. HMM-163 provides support from aircraft based at Phu Bai. This includes medevac missions, reconnaissance flights, and limited logistic support.

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11. Ground Defense

- a. No significant events

12. Training

a. Three (3) enlisted men were ordered to attend the Escape and Evasion School, at Cubi Pt., R.P.

b. On 25 March 1967, eighteen (18) Aerial Gunner candidates attended instructions on the .45 cal. pistol, .38 cal. pistol, and M-60 machinegun. Classes were conducted by the NATOPS NCO, Sgt. Andrews.

13. Logistics

- a. No significant events

14. Motor Transport

- a. No significant events

15. Maintenance

- a. No significant events

16. Avionics

- a. No significant events

17. Base Development

- a. No significant events

18. Communications/Electronics

- a. No significant events

D. PART FOUR - SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. None

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