

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 165
 Marine Aircraft Group 15
 Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade
 FPO San Francisco 96602

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 5 March 1968

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HMM-165 S&C Files
Control # <u>003A06568</u>
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From: Commanding Officer
 To: Commander, Task Group 79.5

Subj: Combat After Action Report, Operation BADGER CATCH

Ref: (a) CTG 79.5 OPLAN 120(A)-67 (S)

Encl: ✓(1) Chronology of Significant Events
 ✓(2) Analysis of Helicopter Operations
 ✓(3) Statistical Summary

1. In accordance with the instructions contained in reference (a), enclosures (1), (2) and (3) are submitted.

2. This letter may be downgraded to Unclassified upon removal of enclosures (1), (2), and (3).

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Encl (2)

HMM-165
 UIC, BADGER CATCH

23 Jan - 18 Dec 68

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23 January 1968

Thirteen aircraft were launched at 1807 in support of Operation BADGERCATCH. Continuing into the hours of darkness, KILLO Company and MIKE Company were inserted at YD 343 696. At the termination of the troop lift, HMM-165 had transported 422 troops in 72 sorties and 28.2 flight hours in the first day of the operation.

24 January 1968

As the Operation moved into the second day, MIKE Company was inserted at YD 318 696. One aircraft, YW-11, received one hit during the airborne assault, but continued the mission.

Throughout the day the pilots of HMM-165 made numerous sorties into the various company positions transporting troops and cargo. The Squadrons' support of Operation BADGERCATCH this day showed 578 troops, 3 medevacs, and 36,200 lbs of cargo transported in 119 sorties and 30.8 flight hours.

25 January 1968

The Squadrons' support of Operation BADGERCATCH continued as six CH-46's were launched during the day on re-supply missions. 108,300 lbs of cargo and 111 troops were transported as 65 sorties and 24.2 flight hours were logged.

33 medevacs were evacuated from the battlefield to the USS VALLEY FORGE.

26 January 1968

Medevac and resupply hops were the order of the day as Operation BADGERCATCH continued into the fourth day. The Squadron lifted 48 Medevacs, 73 troops and 47,500 lbs of cargo in support of the Operation while logging 72 sorties in 21.7 flight hours.

27 January 1968

Besides the daily medevac and resupply missions, which evacuated 30 medevacs and lifted 72,750 lbs of cargo, the Squadron launched four aircraft on a troop lift of Lima Company from YD 307 665 to YD 339 701. All in a days work, the pilots and crews of HMM-165 lifted 470 troops in 143 sorties and 35.6 flight hours.

28 January 1968

Continuing to support the troops ashore, HMM-165 crews transported 49 medevacs although the aircraft assigned to afternoon missions were mortared in four different zones. Small arms fire was also encountered at YD 291

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691 and YW-14 received one hit. Resupply and Admin missions resulted in 67 sorties and 14.9 flight hours with 43 troops and 63,050 lbs of cargo lifted.

29 January 1968

The majority of the Squadrons' support for Operation BADGERCATCH was concerned with combat resupply. 52,500 lbs of cargo were transported and 46 troops in 65 sorties and 17.6 flight hours. 11 medevacs and 1 VC suspect was evacuated.

30 January 1968

Four aircraft were launched during the morning and afternoon on medevac and resupply missions. 10 medevacs were evacuated and 31,850 lbs of cargo and 64 troops were lifted during the day.

Admin hops showed 5,100 lbs of cargo and 64 troops lifted. 58 total sorties for the day were logged and 14.4 flight hours were flown.

31 January 1968

As Operation BADGERCATCH moved into the 9th day, the Squadron continued to meet its commitment flying. 202 sorties and 33.8 flight hours while lifting 352 troops and 140,250 lbs of cargo. 58 medevacs were evacuated.

1 February 1968

Morning and afternoon medevac resupply missions were launched evacuating 30 medevacs and lifting 62,740 lbs of cargo ashore.

One aircraft was launched to transfer 18 medevacs to the USS REPOSE. 15.0 total flight hours were flown and 62 sorties were logged.

2 February 1968

Four aircraft were launched during the morning and afternoon on medevac and resupply missions. The Squadrons' support of Operation BADGERCATCH resulted in the evacuation of 35 medevacs and the lifting of 24 troops. 75,830 lbs of cargo were carried and 14.5 flight hours were logged.

One aircraft received fire at YD 284 693 and took 6 hits. No crew members were injured.

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3 February 1968

In addition to the regular morning and afternoon medevac and resupply hops, two aircraft were launched on Mission 83B to lift personnel and cargo from Bearcat to Dong Ha. The days statistics revealed 23 medevacs and 231 troops carried, while transporting 80,580 lbs of cargo.

The Squadron flew 33.0 flight hours and recorded three fire incidents. No aircraft were hit and no crew members were wounded.

4 February 1968

The Squadrons' support of Operation BADGERCATCH was again centered around medevac and resupply missions, with twelve medevacs and 76,490 lbs of cargo being carried in 20.8 flight hours.

5 February 1968

With Operation BADGERCATCH moving into its 14th day, the pilots and crews of HMM 165 continued to lend their support. Resupply and medevac missions were launched evacuating 12 medevacs and lifting 34,750 lbs of cargo ashore. One resupply aircraft received enemy fire at YD 286 673 but no hits.

Four aircraft were launched to Quang Tri and Dong Ha carrying personnel and cargo. The Squadron this day flew 18.5 flight hours and logged 47 sorties.

6 February 1968

No Flight Operations

7 February 1968

Six aircraft were launched on resupply and medevac missions resulting in the evacuation of 4 medevacs and lifting 38,078 lbs of cargo. One hundred and three troops were carried and 20.5 flight hours logged.

8 February 1968

The Squadrons' support of Operation BADGERCATCH resulted in the launching of four aircraft on emergency medevac missions and routine

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resupply. Six emergency WIAS were evacuated and 24,300 lbs of cargo carried.

9 February 1968

Two fire incidents were reported as HMM-165 continued its support of the Operation, with YW-20 taking one hit. During the days resupply missions, 44,470 lbs of gear were lifted and 15.3 flight hours flown.

10 February 1968

Emergency medevac missions were launched throughout the day for the recovery of 3 medevacs. One fire incident was reported at YD 286 673 but no hits were received.

11 February 1968

Four aircraft were launched on routine resupply missions to the troops ashore with 38,400 lbs of cargo and lifted 156 troops in 7.9 flight hours.

12 February 1968

The Squadron continued to support BADGERCATCH as aircraft were launched on resupply missions to the units ashore and to transfer troops from LPH-2 to LPH-8. Forty one thousand lbs of cargo were lifted and 116 troops in 11.9 flight hours. No medevacs were carried.

13 February 1968

The Squadron launched four aircraft on routine resupply missions, transporting 25,600 lbs of cargo and 41 troops. No medevacs were carried this day.

14 February 1968

With Operation BADGERCATCH entering its twenty third day, the Squadron continued its support launching four aircraft for resupply of the units ashore. The days activity showed 66,000 lbs of cargo carried and 26 troops. A total of 9.1 flight hours were logged and no med evacs were carried.

15 February 1968

Besides its normal resupply and medevac missions, the Squadron

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began the task of transporting the Battalion Headquarters ashore in preparation for the ships departure. These projects resulted in 70,500 lbs of cargo and 180 troops lifted in 15.8 flight hours. Two medevacs were evacuated to the USS VALLEY FORGE.

16 February 1968

In support of Operation BADGERCATCH, the Squadron transferred to the units ashore 58,000 lbs of cargo and lifted 58 troops. Fifteen medevacs were evacuated under fire, as Squadron medevac pilots reported two fire incidents. No aircraft were hit and the Squadron accumulated 15.2 flight hours.

17 February 1968

On the last full day of support to Operation BADGERCATCH, HMM-165 lifted 32,750 lbs of cargo and 271 troops. Ten medevacs were evacuated and 16.4 flight hours logged.

18 February 1968

The Squadrons' mission of support to Operation BADGERCATCH complete, Squadron personnel and 19 aircraft were flown ashore and HMM-165 turned its attention toward land-based operations.

Casualties

NONE

Intelligence/Counter Intelligence

<u>A/C Fired On</u>	<u>Incidents</u>	<u>A/C Hit</u>	<u>No. Hits</u>	<u>Sorties</u>	<u>Hours</u>
5	5	5	8	1780	414.2

Breakdown of fire incidents with respect to altitude:

<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Incidents</u>	<u>A/C Hits</u>	<u>A/C Lost</u>
0-499	5	8	0
500-999	0	0	0
1000-1499	0	0	0
1500-2000	0	0	0

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~~SECRET~~ - NOFORNANALYSIS OF HELICOPTER OPERATIONS1. General

Operation BAIGER CATCH commenced at 1830 23 January 1968 as I/3/1 was helo lifted to LZ Robin (YD 343697) followed by K/3/1. Simultaneously L/3/1 landed by LVT at Red Beach (YD 349698). The BLT had been given the mission of conducting a search and destroy operation within their assigned AOA, generally along the north bank of the Cua Viet River, in the Northeast portion of Quang Tri Province, I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Viet Nam.

In support of the operation was the AHG shipping, which remained until 190001H Feb, and LPH-8 with HMM-165. LPH-8 remained in support as a resupply and med-evac facility until 18 February when the squadron was moved ashore and the ship departed for up-keep.

2. Analysisa. Ship-to-Shore Operations

(1) Late in the evening on 23 January it was decided to land the Battalion Landing Team. Some confusion resulted from the fact that all units concerned had been given a probable D-Day of the 24th. Within hours it was determined that the evening of the 23rd was most suitable for the assault and in response, 13 CH-46's were launched lifting Lima and then Kilo companies ashore.

(2) No fixed wing or gunship support was utilized as LZ Robin was a secure LZ within a Marine compound.

(3) Problems were encountered as darkness fell and coordination became more difficult, but within hours the heli-borne assault was complete.

b. Ashore Operations

(1) Flight operations ashore consisted of the usual resupply, med-evac, troop transport and administrative missions. After the initial lift ashore on the 23rd, M/3/1 and the mortar battery were put ashore at LZ Sparrow (YD 317696) on 241030H. On the 25th Lima Company was lifted to LZ Finch (YD 302661) in preparation for a search and destroy operation on an island in the Cua Viet River.

(2) Generally, communications between the helicopters and HST personnel in the LZ was good.

(3) Use of fixed wing during the operation was often held to a minimum by weather.

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c. Offloading Operations

The offloading operations consisted of transferring troops, supplies, and equipment from LPH-8 to LZ's Robin, Sparrow, and Finch. Resupply and med-evac missions were executed throughout the operation.

3. Problems Encountered

a. The first problem encountered was in the initial landing. The hurried decision to launch resulted in the majority of the lift being carried out at night. A large night assault with helicopters requires as much, if not more, preparation than a large night ground assault. If a night lift had been expected, the necessary brief and coordination could have been made which would have resulted in a much smoother operation.

b. On a few occasions helos were sent to company positions with supplies that were actually for other units. This created undue delay and created other problems as gear was re-shuffled among companies.

4. Conclusions

a. The more preparation time allowed, the more efficient the helicopter assault. Cognizance of this by controlling authority, situation permitting, is necessary for a successful operation.

b. Incorporation of squadron proposals such as combining med-evac and resupply missions result in greater utilization of aircraft and faster reaction time.

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STATISTICAL SUMMARY
OPERATION BADGERCATCH
23 January 1968 to 18 February 1968

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TROOPS/PASSENGERS</u>	<u>MED EVACS</u>	<u>CARGO (lbs)</u>	<u>FLIGHT HOURS</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>
23Jan	422	Ø	300	28.2	72
24Jan	678	3	36,200	30.8	119
25Jan	111	33	108,300	24.2	65
26Jan	73	48	47,500	21.7	72
27Jan	470	30	72,750	35.0	143
28Jan	43	49	63,050	14.9	67
29Jan	46	11	52,500	17.6	65
30Jan	64	10	31,850	14.4	58
31Jan	352	58	140,250	33.8	202
1Feb	19	30	62,740	15.0	62
2Feb	24	35	75,830	14.5	86
3Feb	58	23	42,980	9.9	48
4Feb	78	12	76,490	20.8	91
5Feb	75	12	34,750	18.5	47
6Feb	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø
7Feb	103	3	38,073	20.5	59
8Feb	13	6	24,300	5.4	22
9Feb	8	Ø	44,470	15.3	55
10Feb	4	3	Ø	2.0	10
11Feb	156	3	38,400	7.9	104
12Feb	116	Ø	41,000	11.9	85
13Feb	41	Ø	25,600	7.5	31
14Feb	73	Ø	66,000	9.1	73
15Feb	180	1	70,500	9.1	46
16Feb	58	11	43,650	9.8	49
17Feb	271	10	32,750	16.4	49
18Feb	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø

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