

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 165  
 Marine Aircraft Group 15  
 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade  
 FPO San Francisco 96602

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 6 March 1968

From: Commanding Officer  
 To: Commander, Task Group 79.5

HMM-165 S&C Files

Control # 03406668

Copy # 1 of 30

Subj: Command Chronology, Period 1 February to 3 March 1968

Ref: (a) CTG 79.5 Operation Plan 120-467

Encl: ✓ (1) Command Chronology

✓ (2) *After Action Report Operation Badger Catch*  
 1. In accordance with the provisions of reference (a), enclosure (1) is hereby submitted.

2. This letter becomes unclassified upon removal of enclosure (1).

*R. E. Romine*  
 R. E. ROMINE

HMM-165 - CMD CHRON

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## PART I

1. Organizational Data

a. Commanding Officer	R. E. ROMINE, LTCOL	1 Feb-3 Mar 68
b. Executive Officer	J. E. PRATHER, MAJ	1 Feb-3 Mar 68
c. Operations Officer	D. SAYES, MAJ	1 Feb-3 Mar 68
d. Administrative Officer	W. B. LONG CWO-4	1 Feb-3 Mar 68
e. Maintenance Officer	J. J. THARP, MAJ	1 Feb-3 Mar 68
	J. M. MORGAN, CAPT	3 Feb-3 Mar 68
f. Logistics/Supply Officer	N. H. BOMLAMP, CAPT	1 Feb-3 Mar 68
g. NATOPS Officer	R. E. PEARCE, CAPT	1 Feb-3 Mar 68
h. Safety Officer	D. G. MCDYRE, CAPT	1 Feb-3 Mar 68

2. Task Organization and Unit Location

a. HMM-165, Marine Aircraft Group 15, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade (REBN), FPO San Francisco 96602.

3. Average Strength of Squadron

<u>NAVAL AVIATORS</u>	<u>AGO</u>	<u>FLIGHT SURGEON</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>	<u>BOBING FUEL</u>
43	4	1	188	2

4. Important Visitors to the Squadron

a. NONE

## PART II

a. Summary of Operations

1 February 1968 - It was on this date that the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army launched their insidious offensive in the city of Hue. HMM-165 rallied in support of determined ARVN troops who were bent on keeping this ancient imperial city free from enemy control. Squadron Commanding Officer LTCOL R. E. ROMINE led a flight of 9 OH-46's into Dong Ha, where ARVN troops were staged prior to helilifting into the 1st ARVN Hospital Pad at Hue.

128 troops were inserted in one wave, in a daring display of operational know how. Initially, mortar fire was encountered in the drop zone, but the valiant escort SEAWORTHY UH-1E gunships were successful in keeping enemy heads down, and the zone became quiet.

As the lift was completed, the flight returned to Quang Tri for fuel, with two aircraft drawing enemy fire enroute. No hits were sustained, however, and, after refueling, the flight returned to the USS VALLEY Forge.

Squadron totals for the day reflected 264 sorties in 60.4 flight hours,

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lifting 701 troops/passengers and 72.8 tons of cargo. Sixty five battlefield casualties were evacuated.

2 February 1968 - This second day of February found the city of Hue under full siege. Again responding to the call, as they did the day before, HMM-165 mustered eight aircraft for an emergency lift of ARVN troops into the ARVN Hospital Pad at Hue.

Led by MAJ J. J. THARP, the flight departed the USS VALLEY BARGE and flew to Dong Ha, where the first wave of crack ARVN 1st Division troops were enplaned.

Enroute to Hue, the flight picked up two SCARFACE UH-1E gunships for escort, and broke up into two plane sections, with the gunships leading the way to the drop zone.

The first wave was successfully inserted with no fire taken; however, the hotly contested battle for the city could be seen raging in close proximity to the zone.

Enroute, low level, to Quang Tri for fuel, prior to picking up the second wave of troops at La Vang airstrip, a few miles south of Quang Tri, CAPT D. B. MCDYRE drew intense enemy automatic weapons fire, sustaining hits to electrical wiring in the aircraft, resulting in complete loss of generator power to his instruments, radios, and electronic systems. CAPT MCDYRE nursed his crippled aircraft to Quang Tri, where he shut down for inspection and repair, leaving seven aircraft to continue the lift.

After refueling, the flight made the pickup of the second wave of troops and headed for Hue via the coastal route. Picking up the gunships off the coast, MAJ THARP'S section again inserted its load of troops without encountering enemy fire enroute to the drop zone; however, upon lift-off, proceeding back to the coast, his section came under intense automatic weapons fire, and the flight leader was seriously wounded in the leg.

Demonstrating the ultimate in professional airmanship, co-pilot CAPT D. M. DONAGAN assumed command of the aircraft and rushed his wounded aircraft commander to waiting medical attention at Hue/Thu Bai airfield. Enroute, crew-chief CPL T. E. DONNELLY wriggled his way into the cockpit and applied a tourniquet to MAJ THARP'S leg, in a professional display of cool-thinking followed by life-saving action.

With the flight leader's and wingman's aircraft down at Thu Bai for damage assessment, five aircraft continued the lift, until MAJ D. SAYES was forced to divert to Thu Bai due to multiple hits and loss of flight control boost system caused by enemy fire. The remaining four aircraft successfully completed the lift, with the flight as a whole lifting 340 ARVN troops in a long and harrowing day.

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Squadron totals for the day were 628 troops/passengers and 54 tons of cargo lifted in 238 sorties for 84.3 flight hours. Forty eight battlefield casualties were evacuated.

3 February 1968 - The White Knights of HMM-165 flew 115 sorties in 34.4 flight hours, lifting 197 troops/passengers and 21.5 tons of cargo. A flight of 3 CH-46's led by Capt D. B. MCDYER, departed the USS VALLEY FORGE on a cargo/passenger/admin run to the Danang area. The flight came under enemy fire enroute, with the second aircraft sustaining six hits, but the helicopter proved airworthy, and the flight completed the mission before returning to the ship.

4 February 1968 - A flight of four CH-46's, led by Capt R. L. SHREVEES, departed the USS VALLEY FORGE on a resupply of Camp Carroll, Co. 3, at the Rockpile, out of Dong Ha LSa. In under four hours, 82,000 pounds of cargo were lifted. At the end of the day, the squadron had carried 76.4 tons of cargo and 84 troops/passengers in 147 sorties for 35.7 flight hours. Ten battlefield casualties were evacuated.

5 February 1968 - The embarked squadron flew 52.1 flight hours, in which 170 sorties were flown, and 258 troops/passengers and 88 tons of cargo were lifted. Twelve battlefield casualties were evacuated. No significant events occurred.

6 February 1968 - No flight operations due to weather.

7 February 1968 - This day found HMM-165 busy, as squadron totals show. 131.4 tons of cargo, as well as 297 troops/passengers were lifted in 222 sorties for 63.9 flight hours. A section of 2 CH-46's, led by Capt D. B. MCDYER, lifted an astounding 96,000 pounds of cargo and 70 troops in eight hours, in a long but productive day.

8 February 1968 - Hampered by weather, the squadron flew 10.2 flight hours, but lifted 12.1 tons of cargo and 45 troops/passengers in 32 sorties.

9 February 1968 - A section of 2 CH-46's, led by Capt C. H. BILTMER, departed the USS VALLEY FORGE on a resupply mission to SLF units in the field. In under three hours, the section lifted an impressive 42,000 pounds of cargo for the day. The squadron logged 87 sorties in 21.1 flight hours, lifting 50.5 tons of cargo and 48 troops/passengers. Seven battlefield casualties were evacuated.

10 February 1968 - Again hampered by monsoon weather, the squadron logged 26 sorties in 8.9 flight hours, lifting 52 troops/passengers. Three battlefield casualties were evacuated. A section of 2 CH-46's, led by Capt R. L. SHREVEES, received mortar fire in the landing zone on the pickup of an emergency medevac, but no hits were received, and the section returned to the USS VALLEY FORGE.

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11 February 1968 - Again, in spite of being hampered by weather, HMM-165 nonetheless lifted 19.2 tons of cargo and 162 troops/passengers in 53 sorties for 10.3 flight hours. One battlefield casualty was evacuated.

12 February 1968 - Six CH-46's working in two plane sections, departed the USS VALLEY FORGE for an off-load of emergency cargo from the USS ALAMO. At day's end, the aircraft had carried 131,700 pounds of gear. Squadron totals showed 109.8 tons of cargo carried, and 158 troops/passengers lifted in 211 sorties for 68.5 flight hours. One battlefield casualty was evacuated.

13 February 1968 - A section of 2 CH-46's, led by Capt J. M. [redacted], departed the USS VALLEY FORGE to continue the off-load of the USS ALAMO. In a little over six hours, the section had carried 40,000 pounds of cargo. The squadron as a whole carried 125.2 tons of cargo and 127 troops/passengers in 234 sorties for 80.7 flight hours.

14 February 1968 - A section of 2 CH-46's, led by Maj W. A. [redacted], departed the USS VALLEY FORGE, and continued the off-load of the USS ALAMO. In eight hours, and eleven trips, the section lifted a staggering 70,000 pounds of cargo and 10 troops/passengers. Squadron totals for the day listed 160.2 tons of cargo and 82 troops/passengers lifted in 286 sorties for 79.7 flight hours.

15 February 1968 - HMM-165 terminated its' off-load of the support ships of CTG 79.5 with a record 367,000 pounds of cargo lifted. Squadron totals for the day reflected 91.6 tons of cargo and 255 troops/passengers lifted in 244 sorties for 70.5 flight hours. Two battlefield casualties were evacuated.

16 February 1968 - A section of 2 CH-46's, led by Capt K. H. [redacted], departed the USS VALLEY FORGE on an insert of fresh troops into the SLF operating area. While in the drop zone, the flight encountered enemy mortar fire, but no hits were sustained. Squadron totals showed 29 tons of cargo and 115 troops/passengers lifted in 104 sorties for 21.5 flight hours. Five battlefield casualties were evacuated.

17 February 1968 - Squadron totals this date showed 16.4 tons of cargo and 295 troops/passengers lifted in 111 sorties for 30.7 flight hours. Twenty one battlefield casualties were evacuated.

18 February 1968 - HMM-165 helilifted squadron personnel and cargo to Phu Bai as the USS VALLEY FORGE steamed toward the Republic of the Philippines for replenishment.

19 February 1968 - The White Knights' first task ashore was the carrying externally of much-needed fuel from "Cocoa Beach" to Phu Bai. Squadron totals reflected 38 troops/passengers and 14 tons of cargo lifted in 36 sorties for 19.2 flight hours.

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20 February 1968 - A flight of four CH-46's led by CAPT A. J. ALLEGA departed Phu Bai on a combat cargo resupply mission in support of OPERATION HUE CITY. The flight encountered enemy small arms fire at one point, but successfully resupplied the beleaguered Marines at Hue with 45,000 pounds of much-needed cargo. Squadron totals for the day showed 62 troops/passengers and 56.8 tons of cargo lifted in 103 sorties for 49.4 flight hours.

21 February 1968 - HMM-165 launched a flight of three CH-46's, led by CAPT C. H. BILTMER, into the Hue-Citadel stadium area on an insert of fresh combat troops. During each of the five approaches into the area, the aircraft came under intense enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire, resulting in two aircraft sustaining hits. The mission was temporarily delayed until a more suitable approach and exit route could be devised. This accomplished, a flight of four CH-46's, led by MAJ D. J. [redacted], launched and completed the mission without further incident. Squadron totals for the day showed 315 troops/passengers and 86 tons of cargo lifted in 177 sorties for 66.7 flight hours. Twenty two battlefield casualties were evacuated.

22 February 1968 - A section of two CH-46's, led by CAPT R. E. PEARCE, departed Phu Bai on a resupply mission to Nam Hoa. The section made 15 trips, and drew fire 4 times enroute, but completed the mission, lifting an astounding 90,000 pounds of cargo and 58 troops/passengers. The squadron as a whole flew 167 sorties in 45.1 flight hours, lifting 104.8 tons of cargo and 150 troops/passengers.

23 February 1968 - Harpered by monsoon conditions, HMM-165 flew 20 sorties in 11.3 flight hours, and lifted 1.8 tons of cargo and 21 troops/passengers.

24 February 1968 - A flight of 3 CH-46's, led by CAPT R. L. BARRETT, departed Phu Bai for Quang Tri, thence to Khe Sanh for a combat cargo resupply to the Marine positions at Hills 558 and 861. The aircraft took incoming mortar rounds in the fuel pits at Khe Sanh, but no hits were sustained. Squadron totals reflected 16 sorties in 8.7 flight hours, lifting 53 troops/passengers and 3.6 tons of cargo.

25 February 1968 - A flight of four CH-46's, led by CAPT A. J. ALLEGA, departed Phu Bai in support of OPERATION HUE CITY. The flight drew fire three times while carrying cargo into the besieged walled city. At day's end, the squadron had flown 163 sorties in 40.6 flight hours, lifting 79.5 tons of cargo and 36 troops/passengers.

26 February 1968 - A section of two CH-46's led by CAPT K. R. MACKIE, departed Phu Bai for Quang Tri, and thence to Khe Sanh. The section took incoming mortar rounds in the revetment area while shut down, but no hits were sustained, and the section launched at various times throughout the day on assigned medevac missions. The squadron flew 119 sorties in 41.2 hours.

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27 February 1968 - A flight of two CH-46's led by CAPT A. J. ALLEGA, departed Phu Bai on an insert of ARVN troops into the Hue Hospital Pad. In 7.5 hours, the section successfully lifted 377 ARVN troops. HMM-165 flew 209 sorties in 73.2 flight hours, lifting 630 troops/passengers and 68 tons of cargo. Five battlefield casualties were evacuated.

28 February 1968 - HMM-165 this date logged a total of 203 sorties in 60.2 flight hours, lifting 179 troops/passengers and 82 tons of cargo. Nineteen battlefield casualties were evacuated.

29 February 1968 - A section of two CH-46's departed Phu Bai on a cargo mission, hauling precious JP-4 bladders between "Cocoa Beach" and Phu Bai. In 3.3 hours, the section hauled a record 41,000 pounds of cargo. Squadron totals this date reflected 122 sorties flown in 34.3 flight hours, with 46 troops/passengers and 50.4 tons of cargo lifted.

1 March 1968 - HMM-165 this date flew 109 sorties in 39 flight hours, lifting 163 troops/passengers and 14.5 tons of cargo. Forty-two battlefield casualties were evacuated.

2 March 1968 - With the return of the USS VALLEY FORGE from the Philippines HMM-165 commenced to off load squadron gear in preparation for return to OPCON and ADCON of MAC-36. Hampered by deteriorating weather, the squadron flew 60 sorties in 26.3 flight hours, lifting 137 troops/passengers and 26.3 tons of cargo.

3 March 1968 - The off loading of squadron gear and personnel comprised most of the squadron's efforts today. HMM-165 launched 10 aircraft to facilitate the off-load. Despite this heavy commitment, the White Knights answered the call for an emergency troop-lift. Three aircraft, led by MAJ. D. SAYES, tallied up 10 flight hours while lifting 74 troops/passengers and 33,000 pounds of gear. This was accomplished although one aircraft was forced down with an engine failure. Not to be deterred, however, the crew soon had another bird and was back on the job. Squadron totals for the day reflected 222 sorties flown in 72.5 flight hours, lifting 228 troops/passengers and 96.2 tons of cargo.

#### b. Operations

During this reporting period, HMM-165 flew 3663 sorties, carrying 6683 troops/passengers and 1866.1 tons of cargo for a total of 1374.2 flight hours.

(a) Operation Badger Catch. A total of 1780 sorties were flown in support of this operation, carrying 3446 troops/passengers. Two hundred battlefield casualties were evacuated, and 635.1 tons of cargo were lifted in 414.2 flight hours.

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(b) Operation Houston. A total of 12.0 hours were flown in support of this operation, carrying 110 troops/passengers and 8.4 tons of cargo. Forty-nine sorties were logged.

(c) Operation Hue City. A total of 420 sorties in 110.6 flight hours were flown in support of this operation. 827 troops/passengers and 156.9 tons of cargo were lifted.

(c) Operation Lancaster/Dye Marker. Twenty-nine sorties in 11.0 flight hours were logged in support of this operation. Six troops/passengers and 11.4 tons of cargo were lifted.

c. Maintenance

(1) Average aircraft availability for the period 1 Feb 1968 to 3 March 1968 was 66 2/3%.

d. Casualties.

(1) MAJ J. J. THARP was wounded in the leg on 2 February 1968 in support of Operation Hue City. He was promptly medevaced to Cam Ranh Bay and thence to CONUS.

PART III

1. Listing of Significant Events

a. Personnel

(1) Transfers to HMM-165

(a) Five

(2) Transfers from HMM-165

(a) Four

(3) Promotions

(a) SGT J. P. SILVIERA was promoted from Cpl.

PART IV

1. Supporting Documents

a. NONE

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