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MARINE ATTACK SQUADRON 223  
Marine Aircraft Group 12  
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPac  
FPO, San Francisco 96602

1:HSM:jtg  
5750  
4 June 1968  
01A15768

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 12 (Attn: S-3)  
Subj: Command Chronology for May 1968; submission of  
Ref: (a) GruO 5750.1C  
Encl: ✓(1) VMA-223 Command Chronology

1. In accordance with the provisions of reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.
2. Upon removal of enclosure (1) this is downgraded to UNCLASSIFIED.

*E. D. Smith*  
E. D. SMITH

VMA-223  
CMD CHRON

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MAY 1968

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MARINE ATTACK SQUADRON 223  
Marine Aircraft Group 12  
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPac  
FPO, San Francisco 96602

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

1 May 1968 to 31 May 1968

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## PART I

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

1. Designation                      Commander
- |         |                         |               |
|---------|-------------------------|---------------|
| VMA-223 | LtCol Arthur W. ANTHONY | 1 May 1968    |
|         | LtCol Erin D. SMITH     | 1-31 May 1968 |
2. Location
- Chu Lai Air Base, Republic of Vietnam
3. Staff Officers                      Name                                      Date
- |                              |                           |               |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Executive Officer            | LtCol Charles W. HENRY    | 1-31 May 1968 |
| Operations Officer           | Major Lawrence J. GODBY   | 1-31 May 1968 |
| Aircraft Maintenance Officer | Major John A. MORRA       | 1-31 May 1968 |
| Materiel Officer             | Major James L. CUNNINGHAM | 1-31 May 1968 |
| Administrative Officer       | 1stLt Ralph P. HUNDLEY    | 1-31 May 1968 |
4. Average Monthly Strength
- |                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| A. Marine Officers        |     |
| Naval Aviators            | 25  |
| Naval Flight Officers     | 0   |
| Aviation Ground Officers  | 5   |
| B. Naval Officers         |     |
|                           | 1   |
| C. Marine Enlisted        |     |
|                           | 206 |
| D. Naval Enlisted         |     |
|                           | 0   |
| E. Total Average Strength |     |
|                           | 237 |

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## PART II

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

During its first month of combat air operations in Vietnam, VMA-223 established a new record for newly deployed A4 squadrons at Chu Lai. A dedicated effort by all hands resulted in the compilation of an enviable record of 1,038 sorties and 1,134.7 flight hours. This figure eclipsed the previous first month, in-country record of 748 sorties and 923.0 hours established by VMA-223 in March 1967.

Combat air operations during the month of May consisted primarily of close air support missions in support of the 3rd Marine Amphibious Force and U. S. Army units in the I Corps area. Additional direct air support was provided to the 3rd Marine Division units by TPQ missions into the DMZ and North Vietnam. A total of 994.359 tons of aviation ordnance was delivered on enemy targets by VMA-223 pilots during the month.

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## PART III

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS1. Administrative

A. On 1 May 1968, LtCol Arthur W. ANTHONY was relieved as Commanding Officer of VMA-223 by LtCol Erin D. SMITH during ceremonies at Chu Lai Air Base, RVN.

B. During the month of May, the squadron experiences a net loss of 37 personnel in total strength. A total of 7 aviators were transferred to other in-country billets, while 3 aviators and one Naval Officer (Medical Corps) were joined. Enlisted transfers totalled 37, while 3 enlisted personnel were joined. A comparative strength table is presented below:

	<u>31 May 1968</u>	<u>T/O</u>	<u>Manning Level</u>
Aviator Officers	23	35	28
Aviation Ground Officers	5	6	4
Enlisted	<u>188</u>	<u>218</u>	<u>187</u>
Total	216	259	219

C. Major John DITTO was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, and three other squadron aviators were recommended for the DFC. One officer and two enlisted personnel were recommended for the Navy Commendation Medal, while one enlisted Marine was recommended for the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. During the month, squadron pilots earned 62 Air Medals.

2. Operations

A. VMA-223 conducted combat air operations on all 31 days of the month of May. A total of 1,038 sorties were launched and 1,134.7 flight hours were logged, of which 1,008 were combat sorties and 1,099.6 were combat hours.

B. Close air support missions were conducted primarily in support of 3rd Marine Amphibious Force units, and U. S. Army Airborne and Air Cavalry elements operating in the I Corps area of South Vietnam. Major ground operations supported were ALLENBROOK, MAMALUKE THRUST, NEVADA EAGLE, SCOTLAND II, NAPOLEAN SALINE, LANCASTER II, WHEELER WALLOWA, SAMURAI V, HOUSTON, KENTUCKY, DELAWARE, AND BRILLIANT DRAGON III. In addition, direct air support missions were flown into the DMZ and North Vietnam against active artillery sights, in support of the 3rd Marine Division.

C. During the month, two squadron aircraft received strike damage. On 6 May, Capt. M. A. GUZMAN was involved in a mid-air collision with an A/E aircraft during a close air support mission in the A Shau Valley. On 24 May, Capt. S. J. DRISCOLL was shot down by .50 caliber fire while attacking an enemy gun position 30 miles northwest of Chu Lai. Both pilots ejected successfully and were rescued by helicopter.

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Four other aircraft received minor battle damage when struck by single enemy small caliber rounds. Two of the aircraft received holes in the wing area, and two were struck in the tail section. A fifth aircraft received moderate damage to the starboard slat and a landing gear door when the aircraft struck a tree while evading hostile fire during a napalm run on an active enemy bunker complex in the mountainous terrain southwest of HUE.

D. On the night of 13 May, Cpl A. L. WALDORF was critically burned in a flash fire which occurred during refueling operations on the flight line. Cpl WALDORF was med-evacuated to Japan, but later succumbed to his injuries. Two other Marines who received moderate injuries were also med-evacuated to Japan and are recovering. Cpl A. J. FAUNG is being recommended for the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his heroic attempt to rescue Cpl WALDORF from the flames.

E. The VMA-223 Maintenance Department again displayed its exceptional capabilities by providing an 81% average aircraft availability level. The Progressive Aircraft Rework program progressed normally with one aircraft inducted and two returned during the month. Two aircraft remained at the O&R facility on 31 May 1968.

F. Through the combined efforts of all hands, squadron pilots delivered 994.36 tons of aviation ordnance on enemy targets during the month. Individual expenditures were as follows:

MK 81	52	LAU 10 (ZUNI)	28 pods
MK 81 S.E.	1796	LAU 60 (2.75")	16 pods
MK 82	48	MK 12 FS	4
MK 82 S.E.	1656	MK 77 CS	8
M 117	273	CBU 1/1A	18
MK 84	2	CBU 24	8
MK 77	332	CBU 29	2
		20 MM	27, 834

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