

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 261
 Marine Aircraft Group 36
 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMF, Pacific
 FPO, San Francisco, 96601

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 17 January 1966

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From: Commanding Officer
 To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 36

Subj: Command Chronology, submission of

Ref: (a) WgO 5750.1B

1. HMM-261 was attached to TG 79.5 as a unit of the Special Landing Force from 10 October 1965, to 6 January 1966. In accordance with reference (a), the Squadron Command Chronology is enclosed.


 M. B. PORTER

Copy to:
 CTG 79.5

SFC FILES WMM-261

LOG NUMBER 46-66-S 7
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C O M M A N D C H R O N O L O G Y

PERIOD: 10 OCTOBER 1965 TO 6 JANUARY 1966

LOCATION: U.S.S. VALLEY FORGE (LPH-8)

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PART I1. ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

a. List of Commanding Officer and Staff:

- (1) Mervin B. PORTER, LtCol, Commanding Officer, 10 Oct - 6 Jan
- (2) Robert P. GUAY, Maj, Executive Officer, 10 Oct - 6 Jan
- (3) Gerald S. PATE, Maj, Operations Officer, 10 Oct - 6 Jan
- (4) Vincent J. GUINEE Jr., Maj, Administrative Officer, 10 Oct -
15 Nov, Maintenance Officer, 16 Nov - 6 Jan
- (5) Stephen BOSBONIS, Maj, Logistics Officer, 10 Oct - 6 Jan
- (6) Lorin C. WALLACE, Capt, Administrative Officer, 16 Nov -
6 Jan
- (7) Frank P. ACCOMANDO, Capt, Maintenance Officer, 10 Oct -
15 Nov
- (8) Charles E. YATES, Capt, Intelligence Officer, 10 Oct - 6 Jan
- (9) Joseph D. BOWLING, Capt, Aviation Safety Officer, 10 Oct -
6 Jan
- (10) John M. SCHMIDT, MSgt, 1stSgt, 10 Oct - 22 Oct
- (11) Charles T. FOREMAN, 1stSgt, 1stSgt, 23 Oct - 6 Jan

b. Operational Control CTG 79.5 aboard USS Valley Forge, LPH-8 12
Oct - 6 Jan

c. Average Monthly Strength:

(1) October:

<u>MARCOR</u>		<u>NAVY</u>		<u>NAVAL AVIATORS</u>	<u>NA'S COMBAT READY</u>
<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>		
56	188	1	2	53	52

(2) November:

<u>MARCOR</u>		<u>NAVY</u>		<u>NAVAL AVIATORS</u>	<u>NA'S COMBAT READY</u>
<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>		
55	186	1	2	52	52

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(3) December:

<u>MARCOR</u>		<u>NAVY</u>		<u>NAVAL AVIATORS</u>	<u>NA'S COMBAT READY</u>
<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>		
52	187	1	2	49	49

d. Important Visitors to the Command: None.

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PART II1. NARRATIVE SUMMARY.

a. During the reporting period, 10 October 1965, to 6 January 1966, the Squadron was attached to CTG 79.5 as a unit of the Special Landing Force.

- 10 Oct - Departed Marble Mountain Air Facility aboard USS Iwo Jima, LPH-2. Operational control CTG 79.5.
- 10-12 Oct - Enroute Subic Bay, Philippine Islands.
- 12-13 Oct - Transferred from the USS Iwo Jima to the USS Valley Forge (LPH-8)
- 14-28 Oct - Conducted carrier qualification, liaison, instrument, and support flights in the Subic Bay area.
 - 29 Oct - Conducted rehearsal landing and CPX at Green Beach, Subic Bay, transporting units of BLT 2/1.
- 30 Oct-3Nov - Flew various administrative and maintenance flights in the Subic Bay area.
 - 4 Nov - Helilifted BLT 2/1 in rehearsal landing at Green Beach, Subic Bay.
 - 5-6 Nov - Flew instrument training and administrative flights in the Subic Bay area.
 - 7-9 Nov - Enroute RVN.
 - 10-11 Nov - Standby alert for Operation "BLUE MARLIN".
 - 12-16 Nov - Conducted liaison and administrative flights in the Chu Lai and Danang areas.
 - 17-18 Nov - Standby alert for Operation "BLUE MARLIN".
 - 19-20 Nov - Enroute Manila Bay, Philippine Islands.
 - 21-23 Nov - Flew administrative flights in the Manila Bay area.
 - 24-25 Nov - Enroute RVN.
 - 26-29 Nov - Flew liaison and administrative flights to Chu Lai, Danang and Qui Nhon.

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PART III1. SIGNIFICANT EVENTS.

a. Casualties:

(1) Sergeant Malcolm E. MILLICAN, 1429907, USMC, died at Clark Air Force Base Hospital, Philippine Islands on 17 November, 1965 of wounds received while serving as Crew Chief on 3 October, 1965.

(2) Lieutenant Charles E. JOHNSTON, 674718, MC, USN, received a minor wound of the face on 10 December, 1965. Doctor JOHNSTON was treated aboard LPH-8 and returned to duty.

(3) Lance Corporal George R. ARNOLD, 2015951, USMC, received a minor wound of the leg on 10 December, 1965. LCpl ARNOLD was treated aboard LPH-8 and returned to duty.

b. Civic Action: See Part IV with appendix A. Appendix A original only.

c. Aircraft Damage:

(1) 14 Aircraft incurred minor damage as the result of being hit by hostile small arms fire a total of 28 times.

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- 30 Nov - D-Day, Operation "DAGGER THRUST CHARLIE". 12 UH-34D's escorted by 4 UH-1E's and 4 A-1's, commenced airborne assault departing LPH-8 at 0605H. First wave touched down in LZ (ZS 245861) at L-Hour, 0630H. Simultaneously, 1 UH-34D dropped leaflets in objective area instructing civilians in procedures to follow to insure their safety. UH-1E's struck LZ in the minutes prior to L-Hour with machine gun and rocket fire. One reinforced company was landed without opposition, and the initial assault was completed by 0700H. Squadron assumed standby status aboard LPH-8, and for the remainder of D-Day transported food, water and support personnel to objective area as requested. UH-1E's provided TAO and Armed Helo support during daylight hours. 2 UH-34D's were on Med Evac standby aboard LPH-8 from sunset to sunrise.
- 1 Dec - Continued resupply of cargo ashore and to company CP's within TAOR. Evacuated 1 USMC injured and 3 USMC sick to LPH-8. VMO detachment continued TAO missions within TAOR.
- 2 Dec - Commenced backload of "G" Company and "F" Company from LZ (ZS 265855) at 0826H. Completed withdrawal at 1026H with the removal of Command Group "A".
- 5 Dec - D-Day, Operation "DAGGER THRUST UNIFORM". 19 UH-34D's escorted by 4 UH-1E's and 4 A-1's commenced airborne assault of 2 reinforced rifle companies, consisting of 450 USMC and 6 ARVN. First wave of H-34's touched down in the LZ (BR 965863) at L-Hour, 0640H. Psychological Warfare leaflets were again dropped in objective area at L-Hour. Light intensity hostile small arms fire encountered from ridgeline in the vicinity of (BR 965875). 1 UH-34D and 2 UH-1E's received minor damage but continued mission without further incident. Evacuated 4 USMC WIA from strike LZ. Initial assault completed 0735H. UH-1E's took ridgeline under machine gun and rocket fire during and after initial assault. Squadron assumed "on-call" standby, and shortly thereafter evacuated 3 USMC KIA, 2 USMC WIA, 9 Viet Civilians WIA and 1 Viet Cong WIA to LPH-8. Transported elements of 81 mm mortar Platoon and other support sections of H&S Company ashore. 3 H-34's received minor damage from hostile small arms fire during resupply missions in the hours following L-Hour. No injuries, no further incidents. UH-1E's observed group of VC's on ridgeline near (BR 943868). Target was attacked by UH-1E and A-1 aircraft. Ridgeline struck twice more during afternoon by A-1's controlled by UH-1E's. During this period, UH-34D's continued to bring supplies ashore to designated LZ's within the TAOR. 12 UH-34D's transported 223 USMC and 7 ARVN of a reinforced rifle company from the Bn. CP (BR 975885) to LZ (BR 962853). Light hostile fire was encountered and 1 USMC WIA was evacuated to LPH-8. 4 UH-34D's flew to Chu Lai to pick up additional FFAR's for

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VMO detachment. Squadron maintained 2 H-34's Med Evac stand-by's from sunset to sunrise.

- 6 Dec - Commenced partial withdrawal of personnel and cargo to LPH-8 during mid-morning. At 1155H, commenced general withdrawal of "G" Company (BR 963878), "F" Company, (BR 964885) and Recon Platoon and Command Group "A" (BR 976888). Lift completed at 1305H. Evacuated 7 USMC WIA and 3 USMC KIA from LPH-8 to Chu Lai. Evacuated 4 Viet Civ. WIA to Qui Nhon. Carried 414 USMC, 7 ARVN and cargo from (BR 980895) to beach area for further surface reembarkation. Evacuated 4 injured crew members of UH-1E that crashed after experiencing tail rotor failure. A/C received strike damage and was later intentionally destroyed after salvageable parts were removed. Transported Command Group "B" from beach area to LPH-8. Rescued 3 crewmen of LVT that sank in surf off beach and evacuated them to LPH-8. Backload completed at 1810H without hostile opposition. UH-34D's inflicted 1 confirmed VC kill, 1 probable VC kill during the 2 day operation. VMO detachment was credited with 11 confirmed VC kills and 1 probable kill.
- 9 Dec - At 1245H, the Squadron received orders to launch all available aircraft in support of Operation "HARVEST MOON". 12 aircraft launched at 1345H and reported to the LSA, LZ Oak (BT 154450). Flight was joined shortly thereafter by 3 additional aircraft returning from a previous commitment, and all participated in initial assault of 3/3 to (BT 145302). Throughout the afternoon and early evening, these aircraft continued flying in support of 3/3 and 2/7 carrying men and equipment principally to Que Son, (LZ Birch BT 045350) and LZ Spruce (BT 015327). VC POW's captured by ground units were flown to LZ Birch.
- 10 Dec - At 1012H, 15 aircraft began off-loading elements of BLT 2/1. Flight delayed in LZ Oak until fixed wing aircraft became available for pre-assault attack on the LZ (BT 076229). At 1100H, the Squadron, after being joined by 6 aircraft of HMM-364, departed LZ Oak. First wave touched down at 1120H. Hostile automatic and small arms fire was received in the LZ. BuNo 149365 was hit and was forced to land at LZ Birch. Repairs were made and aircraft flown back to LPH-8 without further incident. On the second trip to LZ, 2 aircraft were hit immediately after landing. BuNo 150203 received 7 hits, one of which struck the Squadron Flight Surgeon, Lt C. E. JOHNSTON, 674718, MC, USN, causing a minor wound to the face. BuNo 147168 received 9 hits, one of which struck the Aerial Gunner, LCpl G. R. ARNOLD, 2015951, USMC, resulting in a minor leg wound.

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Both aircraft returned to LPH-8 without further incident. Both men were treated aboard LPH-8 and returned to duty. LZ was changed to (BT 047297) and further landings were unopposed. All members of "F" Company, "G" Company and the majority of H&S Company were in the LZ by 1600H.

- 11 Dec - At 1230H, commenced off-load of "E" Company into LZ (BT 081303). Hostile small arms fire was received in LZ during initial landings, and 3 USMC WIA were evacuated from the LZ. All troops were in the zone by 1500H. Squadron continued support for remainder afternoon and early evening with troop transport and cargo supply missions. BuNo 149338 was hit once by small arms fire from (BT 295385) but was able to continue mission.
- 12 Dec - Missions flown this date included further resupply of forces ashore, movement of CP's and evacuation of sick and wounded. Flights received occasional small arms fire, but no aircraft received damage.
- 13 Dec - In addition to a major resupply mission of 105 mm ammunition from the LSA (LZ Oak) to LZ Birch, and other resupply and medical evacuation missions, the Squadron off-loaded elements of a HOWTAR Platoon with equipment and ammunition from LPH-9 to positions on Hill 407 (BT 078278).
- 14 Dec - Flew additional men and ammunition from LPH-8 to HOWTAR positions on Hill 407. Adverse weather conditions in the operating area precluded additional supply missions to other ground units.
- 15 Dec - Began evacuation of numerous USMC requiring treatment of "immersion foot" from 2/1 operational area to LPH-8. At 0920H commenced off-load of SLF Provisional Platons from LSD-35 for security duties at LZ Oak and Hill 407. Exchanged 2 rifle companies between LZ Oak and (BT 131283). Evacuated bodies of 4 USMC and 8 ARVN killed in the crash of a UH-34D which had been shot down by hostile .50 cal. fire near Viet An on 7 December. Continued evacuation of USMC and ARVN WIA's. One flight received .50 cal. fire from vicinity of Viet An (BT 043271) while on routine supply mission. No aircraft were hit. Withdrew small security force of USMC from scene of downed UH-34D at (BT 094394) after aircraft was successfully repaired and flown out of zone.
- 16 Dec - Evacuated USMC WIA's from LPH-8 to Danang and transported members of CTG 79.5 staff on liaison mission to LZ Birch and 2/1 CP (BT 072247). Additional missions cancelled due to adverse weather conditions.

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- 17 Dec - 10 Aircraft reported to LZ Oak for on-call missions. Evacuated numerous USMC requiring treatment for "immersion foot" from LZ Oak to LPH-8. Flight was able to fly two supply missions before weather forced cancellation of further missions.
- 18 Dec - Began gradual withdrawal of troops and equipment to LZ Birch (BT 045350), Danang and LPH-8. BuNo 149365 received one hit from small arms fire from (BT 218435). Aircraft was forced to land at LZ Oak where repairs were made and aircraft was flown back to LPH-8. Notable increase in hostile small arms fire throughout objective area. Evacuated numerous USMC WIA's incurred during withdrawal of ground units from objective area.
- 19 Dec - Began general withdrawal of 2/1 at 0653H with the removal of men, equipment and cargo from Hill 407 (BT 078278) to LPH-8. Mission was completed at 1059H at which time withdrawal of the three remaining rifle companies, H&S Company and Command Group "A" commenced from (BT 190230). 10 Aircraft transported these units aboard LPH-8 by 1500H. Security forces were flown from LZ Birch to LZ Oak to relieve the SLF Provisional Platoons who were subsequently withdrawn to LSD-35. All troops of SLF aboard parent ships by 1700H.
- 20 Dec - Evacuated USMC WIA's from LPH-8 to Danang and conducted an exchange of rifle companies between LPH-8 and Hill 41, southwest of Danang.
- 21 Dec - Commenced off-load of BLT 2/1 and commenced back-load of BLT 3/4 from Hue Phu Bai to LPH-8.
- 23-24 Dec - Continued transporting men and equipment of BLT 3/4 aboard LPH-8.
- 25-29 Dec - Enroute Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
- 29 Dec-2 Jan - Administrative flights flown in Buckner Bay area.
- 3-5 Jan - Enroute Chu Lai.
- 6 Jan - Squadron ashore, MCAF, Ky Ha, RVN. Operational control MAG-36.

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2. STATISTICAL RESUME:

a. "DAGGER THRUST CHARLIE":

	<u>TROOPS</u>	<u>TONS CARGO</u>	<u>MED EVACS</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>	<u>FLT HRS</u>
30 Nov	504	12.7		208	36.0
1 Dec	107	16.8	4	167	40.0
2 Dec	502	9.6		266	32.2
Total:	1,113	39.1	4	641	108.2

b. "DAGGER THRUST UNIFORM":

	<u>TROOPS</u>	<u>TONS CARGO</u>	<u>MED EVACS</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>	<u>FLT HRS</u>
5 Dec	780	16.8	28	374	70.2
6 Dec	823	22.6	8	434	86.9
Total:	1,603	39.4	36	808	157.1

c. "HARVEST MOON":

	<u>TROOPS</u>	<u>TONS CARGO</u>	<u>MED EVACS</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>	<u>FLT HRS</u>
9 Dec	867	6.1		186	65.6
10 Dec	512	7.6	23	205	86.8
11 Dec	465	26.9	6	274	71.9
12 Dec	500	56.2	13	449	117.7
13 Dec	52	56.2	5	181	72.7
14 Dec	10	19.1		82	38.1
15 Dec	920	8.8	95	323	103.4
16 Dec	3	.3	5	12	8.2
17 Dec	51	10.2	83	103	30.4
18 Dec	741	12.9	83	269	80.0
19 Dec	1,066	25.4	20	337	103.1
Total:	5,187	229.7	333	2,421	777.9

d. Totals for Reporting Period:

	<u>TROOPS</u>	<u>PAX</u>	<u>TONS CARGO</u>	<u>MED EVACS</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>	<u>FLT HRS</u>
Tactical	7,903		308.2	373	3,870	1,043.2
Non-Tactical	5,594	775	441.0		5,616	1,478.5
Total	13,497	775	749.2	373	9,486	2,521.7

PART IV

1. CIVIC ACTION. The following is an extract from the USS VALLEY FORGE Sentinel of November 1965, Vol. 20 No. 9.

An emergency landing by a Marine helicopter near the remote Filipino fishing village of Lucky Beach on the morning of October 28 brought the Marine Corps and the Navy into a most unlikely people to people program.

It all began when 1stLt D. C. WEATHERLY, a pilot in Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM) 261, embarked aboard the USS Valley Forge (LPH-8), was on a routine flight from the ship in his helo, EM-19, about 30 miles south of Subic Bay, the anchorage site of the Valley Forge. As the result of cockpit indications Lt WEATHERLY decided to make a precautionary landing in a small cove. Just before landing he noticed a small village nestled in the trees along the beach. It did not take long for the village's inhabitants to reach the site of the helo's landing, and they quickly began gathering around, all the while speaking surprisingly good English. They were very hospitable and offered their assistance.

Cpl R. F. CRONKHITE, the crew chief, found that the problem with the aircraft was metal contamination in the rotor transmission, and this information was immediately relayed to the Valley Forge. It was decided that the aircraft was to remain overnight until mechanics and parts could be flown in one of the USS Sacramento's (AOE-1) helos. The helo crew was replaced by a security guard of 4 marines from the squadron. As the guards were preparing their evening meal of "C" rations, the natives brought out bunches of bananas and pots of food to share with the Marines.

After the meal, when everyone was sitting around the helicopter, Cpl I. A. JOHNSON noticed a sore on a young girl's leg. He brought out the helicopter's first aid kit and put a bandage on the sore, and immediately everyone began telling the guards of their own illnesses.

The next day when the maintenance aircraft arrived its crew was told of the people and their medical hardships. Capt F. P. ACCOMANDO, the maintenance pilot, flew back to the Valley Forge and asked Lt C. E. JOHNSTON, the Squadron Flight Surgeon, if he could be of any help to the villagers. Lt JOHNSTON, D. W. MICHAELS, HN, from HMM-261, and Cdr D. F. THOMAS from the Valley Forge then flew back to Lucky Beach and held sick call. As news of the doctor's arrival spread, boats from neighboring villages began to arrive, whereupon the village leader declared a holiday.

That evening all the sick having been treated, the doctors flew back to the Valley Forge.

The next day, when EM-19 was repaired, the Marines departed Lucky Beach. They left with the knowledge that, together with the Navy, under the most unlikely circumstances, they had initiated and carried out a highly successful people to people program.



