

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 262
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 36
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPac
FPO, San Francisco, California 96602

S-3:RLG:jrs
5750

HMM-262 03A03568
4 February 1968

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
~~DECLASSIFIED~~

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 36 (Attn: S-3)

Subj: Command Chronology; Period 101600H - 312400H January 1968

Ref: (a) GruO 5750.1B

Encl: ✓ (1) Command Chronology

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

D. L. Althoff
D. L. ALTHOFF
Acting

HMM-262
CMD CHRON

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1 of 5

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~~DECLASSIFIED~~

10-31 JAN 1968

DECLASSIFIED

PART I

1. ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

a. Commanding Officer	Melvin J. STEINBERG	LtCol	10-31 Jan
b. Executive Officer	David L. ALTHOFF	Maj	10-31 Jan
c. Operations Officer	Guy L. LARKIN	Maj	10-31 Jan
d. Maintenance Officer	Edwin G. MELXNER	Maj	10-31 Jan
e. Logistics Officer	John D. ALEXANDER	Capt	10-31 Jan
f. Personnel Officer	Robert J. RICHARDS	Capt	10-31 Jan
g. Aviation Safety Officer	Ronald R. GROVES	Capt	10-31 Jan
h. Intelligence Officer	Robert F. YEAGER	Capt	10-31 Jan

2. TASK ORGANIZATION AND UNIT LOCATION.

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262, Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMF, Pacific, FPO, San Francisco, California 96602, Quang Tri Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, 10 - 31 January 1968.

3. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH OF SQUADRON.

<u>Naval Aviators</u>	<u>Air/Ground Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>
37	5	163

4. Important Visitors to the Squadron - None

PART II

NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT HIGHLIGHTS.

10 Jan 68 - At 1600H the intrepid HMM-262 Detachment Alpha was dissolved and joined her parent unit at Quang Tri Air Base. The entire squadron then CHOPPED to Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPac from CTG 79.5.

20 Jan 68 - While resupplying Hill 881 near Khe Sanh, Capt ROPELEWSKI took a .50 cal. hit through a main fuel line. Capt ROPELEWSKI crash landed the burning CH-46 in a nearby zone. Two crew members were hurt seriously and the aircraft sustained strike damage.

21 Jan 68 - Intelligence estimates indicate the enemy has launched the biggest offensive in five years against the two northern provinces of I Corps. Khe Sanh was the first and hardest hit. HMM-262 lost two

Enclosure (1)

NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT HIGHLIGHTS (Cont'd)

aircraft in revetments at Khe Sanh during a heavy rocket, mortar, and artillery attack. The squadron took no casualties.

23 Jan 68 - HMM-262 continued to put forth an all out effort to support Operation SCOTLAND and the besieged Khe Sanh. Attempting a resupply to Hill 950, Major THEBBIAUM crashed near the landing zone, and the aircraft was destroyed. No casualties occurred.

20 - 31 Jan 68 - During this period, twelve HMM-262 aircraft received battle damage ranging from minor small arms damage to strike damage. The squadron continued to fly in support of Operations SCOTLAND, KENTUCKY, and LANCASTER II.

PART III

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS.1. PERSONNEL.

- a. Transfers to HMM-262 - 17 Enlisted.
- b. Transfers from HMM-262 - 27 Enlisted.
- c. Promotions to present rank: Capt John A. COOPER, Capt Robert ROPELEWSKI and Capt Robert L. SEWELL.

2. AWARDS.

- a. Purple Heart - LCpl Robert W. MCKINNEY 2252593.
- b. Purple Heart - LCpl Lonnie W. BENFORD Jr. 2226110.
- c. Purple Heart - Cpl Curtis A. LARSEN 2162868.
- d. Purple Heart - Cpl Michael T. NORMAN 2246435.

3. CASUALTIES - Same as paragraph 2.

4. CIVIC ACTION. On 15 January 1968 squadron Civic Action Representatives met with members of the Quang Tri Air Base Civic Action Group to decide what to do to help the Vietnamese in the Quang Tri area to celebrate the Lunar Holiday, TET. The representatives decided to give a sack of assorted candy, a gift, and an envelope containing a 10 piastre coin to the children of a near by school. The Quang Tri Air Base mess facility agreed to furnish a cake large enough for 505 children.

Enclosure (1)

CIVIC ACTION (Cont'd)

The gifts were presented by squadron representatives, SSgt Steven E. DAYKIN, Sgt Harold L. COLLINS, Sgt Joseph DELREAL, Cpl Bernard R. LEE, and LCpl Patrick BENJAMIN along with representatives from other squadrons. After receiving the gifts, the children presented the civic action Marines with a gifts, and a program in appreciation.

5. INTELLIGENCE. During the period 24 - 31 January the enemy initiated 11 attacks against the USMC Quang Tri Air Base where HMM-262 was stationed. There was only one squadron casualty, as a result of the attacks, in spite of the fact that small arms fire, rocket and mortar fire was received in the working and living areas. Eight squadron OH-46A aircraft received damage from the attacks. Ordnance expended by the enemy during this period was 283 rounds of 82 mm mortars, 34 rounds of 60 mm mortars, 13 rounds of 75 mm recoilless rifle, 70 rounds of 122 rockets, and 15 rounds of 105 mm howitzer. Throughout this period there was sporadic enemy sniper fire received in the working area with only one casualty.

Fire incidents during this period, accounted for 25 aircraft receiving fire, resulting in 7 aircraft hit.

6. REACTION PLATOON. Upon their arrival at Quang Tri, HMM-262 was assigned the mission of providing the base with a reaction platoon to augment the base perimeter defense. This perimeter is primarily manned by 1st Battalion 3rd Marines.

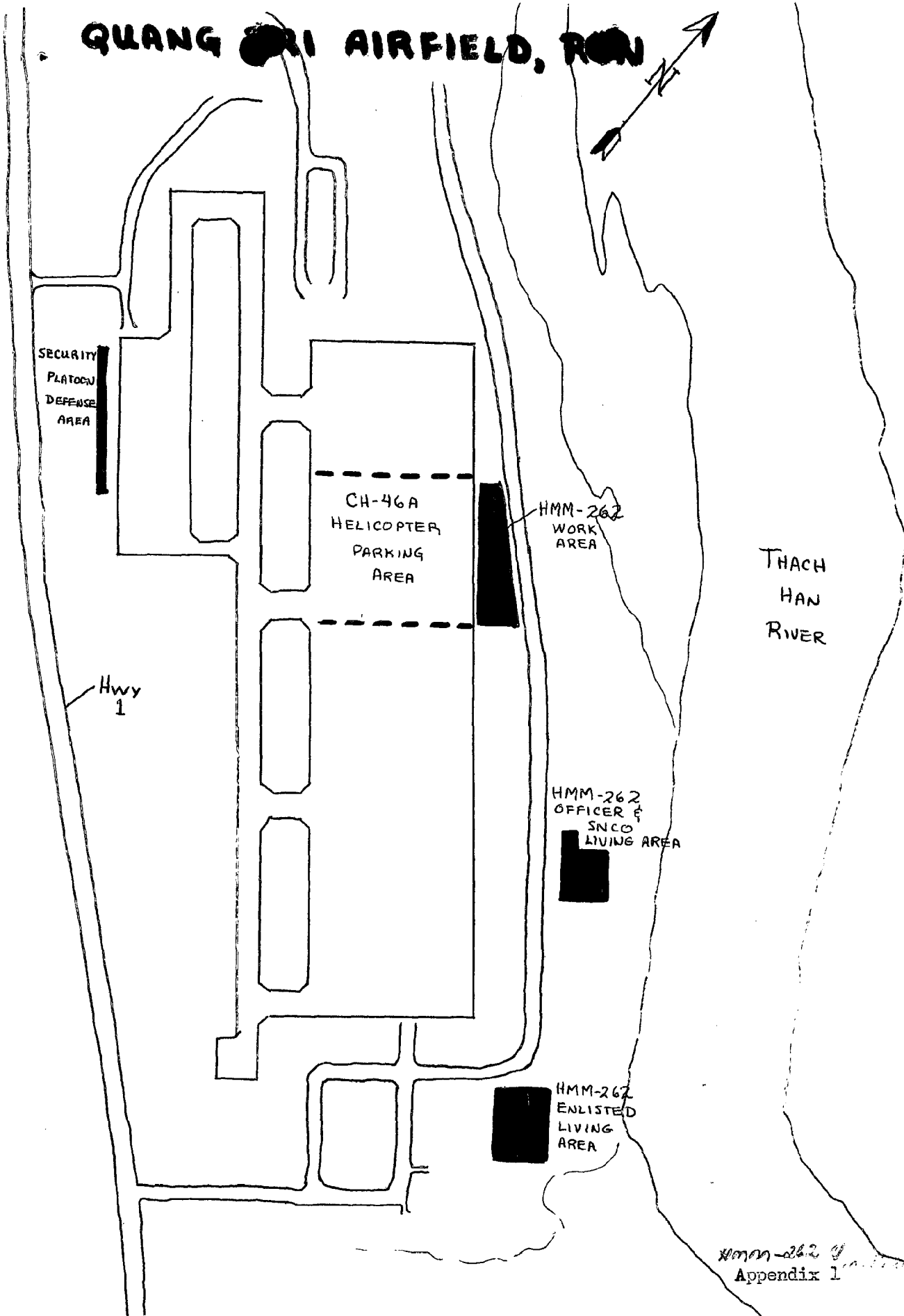
Forty-eight hours later the first complete muster was taken and the platoon was organized. It consisted of 3 squads; each squad consisted of thirteen men armed with M-14 rifles. Each squad had an M-60 machine gun.

The day after the muster the platoon dug in fighting positions along their A. O. R. which comprised a stretch of ground along the western outside edge of the air freight matting, mid way at the WMO line and extending North along the mat to the CB's A. O. R. on the northern perimeter. (see appendix 1 Crig Only)

On the night of 24 January Quang Tri was hit for the first time since the squadron's arrival. The reaction platoon deployed at this time and for eight subsequent nights.

To this date, the reaction platoon has not had to enter a fire fight. Although the perimeter took 120 mm rocket fire on the night of 27 January and several rounds landed within 20 meters of the positions, no casualties have resulted.

Enclosure (1)



HMM-262 of
Appendix 1



PART IV

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (Original Only)

- ✓ APPENDIX I News Release
- ✓ APPENDIX II. News Release
- ✓ APPENDIX III. Flight Schedules

ENCLOSURE (1)

APPENDIX I

Cloud Cover, Enemy Mortars Make Mission on 881 Rough

QUANG TRI—Marine resupply helicopters operating from Quang Tri found flying conditions difficult when diverted to pick up a wounded Marine near Hill 881.

Two CH-46 Sea Knights of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262 flew under almost impossible weather conditions.

Two separate attempts were made by HMM-262 pilots to get into the landing zone. The first was by Capt. S. Dickey (Tacoma, Wash.). "The area we were called into was so cloudy that you could hardly see," he said.

"We made three attempts to get into the zone but just couldn't make it. I brought the copter to the base of the hill and was trying to hover my way up to the landing zone when we started receiving fire. Two mortars went off below us and as we were pulling off, a third just missed," he continued.

After the unsuccessful attempts by Dickey and his crew,

another try was made to reach the Marine by another HMM-262 helicopter.

The pilot, Capt. R.F. Yeager (Roslyn Heights, N.Y.), and his co-pilot, 1stLt. C.L. Corookall (Staten Island, N.Y.), under the cover of darkness, tried to locate the landing zone—this time with success.

"By flying at night we had hoped that the clouds would have lifted and we would have no problem getting in and getting the wounded man," said Corookall.

"When we arrived in the area," he continued, "we found it almost impossible to see. We had some idea of the zone's location but we weren't sure. After making three passes at the area we finally spotted the zone, thanks to the help of a flareship and illumination by Marines on the ground.

The wounded Marine was then transported to Khe Sanh and later taken to Dong Ha for treatment.

A Marine helicopter crew attempted to evade North Vietnamese mortar rounds on Hill 881 to medevac Leatherneck casualties. They ended up displaying more heroics when a round trapped them on the hill, gaining the gratitude of the casualties' friends.

Khe Sanh Aviators Tell Tales

QUANG TRI — Two pilots of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-262 have stories that essentially apply to all copter crews operating near Khe Sanh recently.

While on resupply and medevac missions to Khe Sanh and neighboring Hills 881, 861 and 950, HMM-262 pilots have experienced their share of moments.

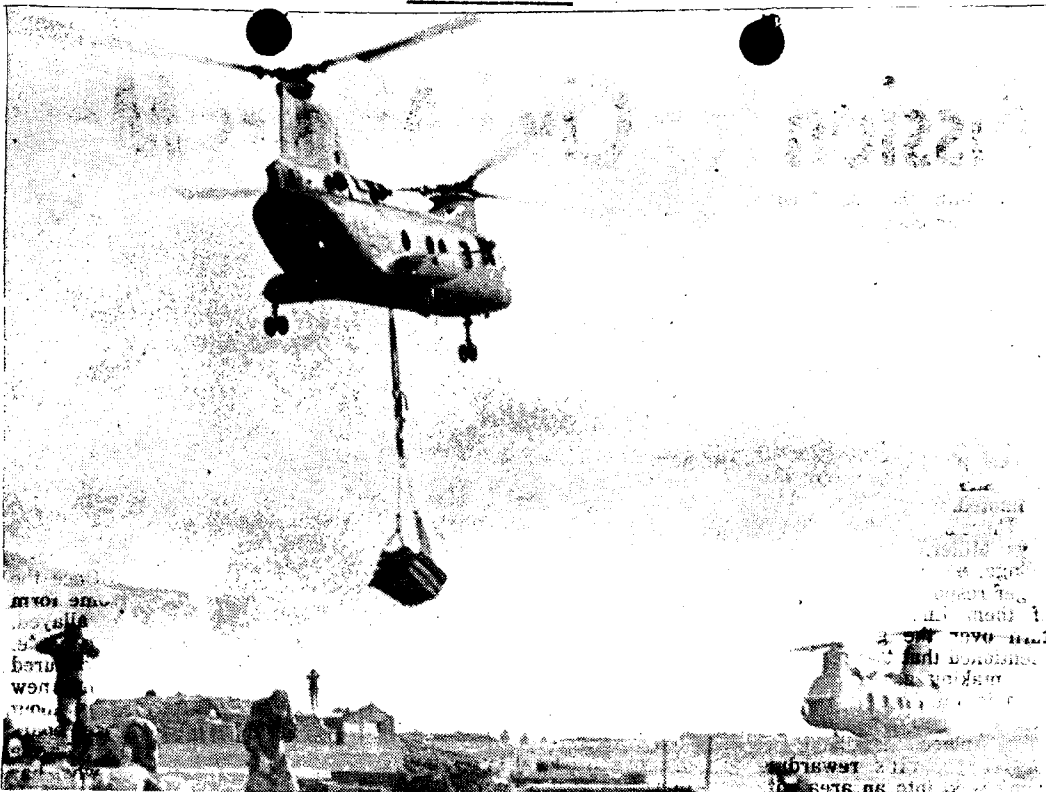
Capt. Steve Dickey (Everett, Wash.), tells of the time his crew set down at Khe Sanh one afternoon. "We had just landed and were walking across the airstrip when enemy rockets and mortar rounds started falling all around us. We all managed to squeeze into a drainage pipe just along the strip. We stayed for the next 45 minutes while the enemy fired rounds into the zone."

The pilot concludes by saying, "I wish you never had to expect next except more incoming fire."

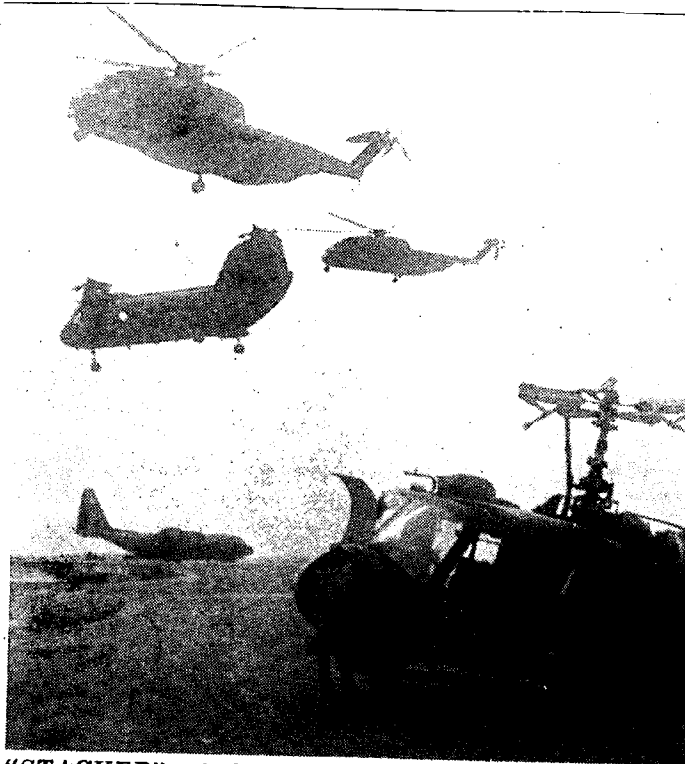
As for incoming fire, the pilots of HMM-262 have received plenty. "Everytime a pilot from our squadron goes up there on a mission he gets shot at by the enemy," said Capt. Robert J. Richards (Jacksonville, Fla.).

Despite the conditions, the crews of HMM-262 were busy. In a six-day period from Jan. 20 to 26, while flying in support of Operation Scotland, HMM-262 flew 202 sorties, picked-up 79 wounded Marines and transported 287 troops, including one detainee. Most important to the Leathernecks on the ground was the ammunition, water and food brought to them by the helicopters.

APPENDIX II



RE-SUPPLY—A CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter swirls the dust at ²KH⁸ ¹⁰²⁹¹Sanh as it descends with a sling-load of supplies Jan. 23 at the northwestern-most combat base in I Corps.



"STACKED"—A CH-46 Sea Knight is brought back to Quang Tri for repairs. A maintenance recovery crew stripped the copter of excess weight so it could be heli-lifted by the CH-53 Sea Stallion. In the foreground, a damaged Huey awaits repair while a C-130 Hercules prepares to take off in the background.

(Photo by Sgt. R. Zielinski)

APPENDIX III
FLIGHT SCHEDULE

HMM-262, MAG-36, FPO SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 96602
 FLIGHT SCHEDULE AND ADMINISTRATIVE NOTLS FOR TUESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 1968

OPERATIONS DUTY OFFICER: CAPT BARBA
 SQUADRON DUTY OFFICER: LT HERBERG
 DUTY TEST PILOT: AM MAJ MEIKNER/REAMON
 AM MAJ ALTHOFF/BLAHN

SUNRISE: 0652
 SUNSET: 1805

FLIGHT SCHEDULE					
EVENT	BRIEF	ETD/LTA	A/G COMDR	CO-PILOT	MISSION
20-1	0600	0700/1200	GROVES	STEGICH	S.H. 55
20-2	"	" "	RICHARDS	BYRNE	"
21-1	TBA 0930	TBA 1050	MAJ ALTHOFF	MULLEN	WORKING
21-2	"	" "	ALEXANDER	MORRISON	BIRDS 660
22-1	0600	0700/COMP	RENGEL	COLE	RHE SANH 5
22-2	"	" "	YEAGER	CROCKALL	"
23-1	1130	1200/1800	MAJ MEIKNER	FICKEL	S.H. 55
23-2	"	" "	TBA	HERBERG	"
24-1	TBA	TBA/TBA	MAJ THERRIault	SEVELL	WORKING VIRG
24-2	"	" "	GROVES	ENGLEHART	
25-1	NR	1800/0700	MAJ ALTHOFF	BRATTON	B.E. 55
25-2	"	" "	ALEXANDER	MULLEN	"
25-3	"	" "	MAJ THERRIault	WESSE	"
"%*"	"	" "	RICHARDS	REAMON	"

W. L. Barba
 W. L. BARBA
 CAPT USMC
 OPERATIONS DUTY OFFICER