

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 262
Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMF Pacific
EPO, San Francisco, California 96602

3: RCP:rlc
03A28068
5 October 1968

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From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39 (Attn: S-3)

Subj: Command Chronology, Period 1 September 1968 to 30 September 1968

Ref: (a) Grud 5750.1B

Encl: (1) Command Chronology
(2) Flight Schedules

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) and (2) are hereby submitted.
2. This letter becomes UNCLASSIFIED upon removal of enclosure (1).

A. N. Allen
A. N. ALLEN

HMM-262

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HMM 262 SEC. 0133-68
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MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 262
COMMAND CHRONOLOGY
1 SEPTEMBER 1968 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 1968

- PART I ORGANIZATIONAL DATA
- PART II NARRATIVE SUMMARY AND OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
- PART III SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~PART IORGANIZATION DATA1. Organization Data

a. Commanding Officer	Melvin J. STEINBERG Albert N. ALLEN	LtCol LtCol	1-20 Sept 21-30 Sept
b. Executive Officer	Leo J. IHLE	Major	1-30 Sept
c. Operations Officer	Donald S. WAUNCH	Major	1-30 Sept
d. Logistics Officer	Herman C. BROWN	Major	1-30 Sept
e. Personnel Officer	Marvin R. NELSON	Major	1-30 Sept
f. Aviation Safety Officer	Harvey E. BRITT	Major	1-30 Sept
g. Intelligence Officer	Donald L. TEMPLETON Richard L. BARTON	Capt. 1stLt	1-21 Sept 22-30 Sept
h. Maintenance Officer	James A. WELLS	Major	1-30 Sept
i. Sergeant Major	Alexander J. SONCRANT	1stSgt	1-30 Sept

2. Task Organization and Unit Location

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 262
 Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing
 EMF Pacific, IPO, San Francisco, California 96602
 Quang Tri Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, 1-30 September 1968

3. Average Monthly Strength of SquadronNaval Aviators

47

Air/Ground Officers

6

Enlisted

180

Naval Officers

1

4. Important Visitors to the Squadron

MajGen Charles J. QUILTER	Commanding General, 1st MAW	20Sept68
MajGen Arthur H. ADAMS	Commanding General, 3rd MAW	27Sept68

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PART IINARRATIVE SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

During the month of September, HMM-262 supported two (2) operations: Lancaster II and Scotland II.

Lancaster II again, was the main operation supported by HMM-262. This operation accounted for 645.1 flight hours. While flying Lancaster II, HMM-262 lifted 6970 troops and 361.6 tons of cargo for a total of 2864 sorties. In further support of this operation, numerous med-evac missions were successfully completed.

Scotland II with it's main operating force TASK FORCE H, was supported by HMM-262 in September with a total of 99.1 flight hours being flown. 1550 troops and 56.3 tons of cargo were carried for a total of 506 sorties in support of this operation.

During two periods in September, squadron operations were hampered by bad weather. On 6 September, Tropical Storm Bess passed westward between Phu Bai and Quang Tri. As a result of this storm passage, Quang Tri experienced heavy rains, low ceilings, and moderately high wind conditions on 4, 5, and 6 September. The squadron flew only 19.6 hours on the 4th, 28.8 hours on the 6th and no flights on the 5th.

On 28, 29, and 30 September, Quang Tri again experienced rain and low ceilings; this weather considered to be associated with the beginning of the monsoon season. A battalion size lift of major importance was postponed on the 29th and again on the 30th as a result of the inclement weather.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF TACTICAL TROOP LIFTS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NO. TROOPS</u>	<u>CARGO</u>	<u>PARENT UNIT</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>NO. AIRCRAFT</u>
2Sept68	a. 104	0	3/4	XD894376	XD820466	2
	b. 120	15 tons	2/4	XD909377 XD873445	XD873428	2
3Sept68	*a. 452	3 tons	1/3	Vandergrift	XD968617	4
7Sept68	a. 320	0	1/3	XD985545	XD965615	3
	b. 560	1.5 tons	3/9	Vandergrift	XD903588	3
	c. 200	0	3/4	XD835445	Vandergrift	2
	d. 164	0	1/4	XD863469	Vandergrift	2
9Sept68	*a. 565	0	3/9	Vandergrift	XD905590 XD903588	5
10 Sept68	a. 123	0	3/4	XD 937410	XD 957379 XD 925329	2

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13Sept68 a.	525	7 tons	2/4	Vandergrift	XD928437	4	
					XD927442		
					XD874429		
	b.	1 ton	3/4	Vandergrift	XD935412	4	
14Sept68 *a.	181	0		1st Brig	YDL15702	6	
				5th Mech Div	YD053672		
					YD058668		
17Sept68 *a.	444	0	1/9	Vandergrift	XD946685	9	
18Sept68 a.	140	0	3/4	XD935412	XD917390	4	
	b.	148	0	3/4	XD950390	XD935412	4
	c.	134	0	3/3	YD085521	YD279483	2
25Sept68 a.	243	0	2/9	Vandergrift	XD910563	3	

*asterisk indicates those lifts which were opposed. Details of these lifts are included under Operational Highlights below.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

3 September 1968

At 1215H, events 6-1, 6-2, 6-3, and 6-4 flown by Major V. E. HOBBS, Captain R. G. CANADA, Captain R. HERBERG, Jr., and 1st Lt M. R. MULLEN respectively, launched on a troop lift mission. Being supported by two VMC-6 UH-1E gunships and four U. S. Army COBRA gunships, their mission was to lift C and D Companies of 1/3 from XD978599, a position north of Vandergrift Combat Base, into a landing zone at XD968617, approximately 3000 meters northwest of the pick-up point.

During their first approach into the new zone, 6-1 and 6-2 were taken under fire by .50 caliber machine guns. One round entered the lower cockpit of 6-1 causing a small fire. After extinguishing the fire, 6-1 flew to a secure area, checked his aircraft for substantial damage, determined there was none, and continued to fly until completion of the mission. 6-2 had received hits in the aft pylon and one aft rotor blade but was able to maneuver his aircraft to a secure zone and shut down. Upon shut down, Captain CANADA discovered that the main spar of one of his aft blades had been nearly severed by a .50 caliber round.

There were no further hit incidents and the mission was completed as assigned.

6 September 1968

Events 6-1 and 6-2, flown by Major V. E. HOBBS and Captain A. F. DAVIS flew emergency resupply missions in the afternoon hauling supplies from Vandergrift Combat Base to units in the field. 6-1 and 6-2 together carried more than 25 tons of resupply to the outlying units. These units had received no supplies for the previous two days because of bad weather during which resupply missions could not be accomplished. The emergency resupply missions were completed in spite of marginal weather conditions which existed throughout the afternoon.

~~ENCLOSURE (1)~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~9 September 1968

At approximately 0900H, events 6-1 through 6-5, piloted by Captain A. F. DAVIS, 1st Lt M. R. MULLEN, Captain R. HERBERG, Jr., Captain D. L. TEMPLETON, and Major M. R. NELSON respectively, commenced a lift of 565 troops of 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines from two pick-up points, Vandergrift Combat Base (YD995490) and Camp Carrol (YD062540), into two landing zones thirteen kilometers northwest of Vandergrift at XD903588 and XD903590.

At 1100H, the aircraft began receiving sporadic small arms fire on their approaches into the drop zones, but the mission was completed without injury to personnel or damage to aircraft. Providing cover for the lift were four UH-1E gunships of VMO-6.

10 September 1968

While conducting a troop lift, Major D. S. WAUNCH, flying event 6-5, was diverted at approximately 1500H in the afternoon for the purpose of executing an emergency extract of a recon team which was in enemy contact. During his landing approach and while sitting in the pick-up zone,

XD972644, north of Vandergrift Combat Base, 6-5 received heavy small arms fire but was able to complete the extract with only minor damage to the aircraft and no injury to personnel.

Later in the afternoon, 6-5 was again diverted for the extraction of another recon team which was in contact with the enemy at XD895465, ten kilometers west-southwest of Vandergrift. The aircraft came under small arms fire during the approach and received mortar fire while in the zone but again the mission was completed with no injury to personnel and only minor damage to the aircraft.

13 September 1968

At approximately 1330H, while returning from a troop lift mission, event 6-1, piloted by Captain R. HERBERG, Jr., spotted two CHIEU HOIS (NVA soldiers voluntarily surrendering to the South Vietnamese Government) waving white flags as they walked along Route 9 at XD919418 (fifteen kilometers southwest of Vandergrift). After determining that it was safe to do so, 6-1 landed, picked up the CHIEU HOIS, and delivered them to the 4th Marines C.P. at Ca Lu (XD009459).

14 September 1968

At 0830H, events 6-1 through 6-6, flown by Major D. S. WAUNCH, Captain W. S. ENGLEHART, Major M. R. NELSON, Major J. A. WELLS, Captain A. F. DAVIS, and Captain D. L. TEMPLETON respectively, conducted a troop lift in support of the U. S. Army 5th Mechanized Division. 181 troops were lifted from A-4 (YD115702) into two drop zones eight kilometers to the southwest; YD053672 and YD058668. Sporadic small arms fire was encountered in both landing zones but no hits were received.

15 September 1968

Major M. R. NELSON and Captain D. L. TEMPLETON, flying events 6-1 and

ENCLOSURE (1)

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6-2 respectively, had been working during the morning on recon team insertions and extractions when at 0705H they were directed to execute emergency extractions of two teams which they had previously inserted but which had come in contact with the enemy. The first team was to be picked up at XD 050412, approximately nine kilometers southeast of Vandergrift, and the second, from XD 025335, a position fifteen kilometers south of Vandergrift. Enemy fire was received in both zones during the respective extractions, but the mission was completed without injury to personnel or damage to aircraft.

16 September 1968

At approximately 0915H, event 6-1 was attempting to deliver resupply to E- 2/3 at XD 940630, fifteen kilometers north-northeast of Vandergrift Combat Base. ECHO Company had a marginally suitable zone for CH-46 operations but had little choice in zone location or suitability because of enemy activity in the area. While attempting to maneuver the aircraft so as to be able to drop his external load, 6-1 struck trees with his aft rotor blades and crashed in the zone.

Both aerial gunners aboard the aircraft sustained minor injuries and ten persons on the ground received minor injuries as a result of the shattered blades and subsequent crash.

The aircraft was substantially damaged and had to be heli-lifted from the zone after it had been improved and secured against enemy activity. The aircraft was lifted by a U. S. Army CH-54.

17 September 1968

At 0910H, MM-262 launched 9 aircraft in flight with 3 aircraft of HMM-161 and 3 from HMM-364 on a combined, two battalion, troop lift of 1/4 and 1/9 from Vandergrift Combat Base into Landing Zones Pacific (XD 912637) and Canada (XD 946635) respectively. The zones were on the southern banks of the Ben Hai River, approximately 20 kilometers north-northwest of Vandergrift.

Sporadic small arms and mortar fire was received on the initial waves into each zone but there was no damage to aircraft nor injury to personnel.

The zones had been prepped earlier in the morning by artillery and B-52 bombers and by fixed-wing attack aircraft just prior to the initial waves of helicopters. Close support was provided by 6, UH-1H gunships of WMO-6 and UH-1H-387.

21 September 1968

Events 6-1 and 6-2, piloted by Major L. J. IHLE and Captain D. L. TEMPLETON, respectively, were flying a resupply mission in the early afternoon. At 1345H 6-2 was hit by enemy fire. He had just delivered a load of supplies to E- 2/3 at XD 924626, sixteen kilometers north of Vandergrift, and was on climbout from the zone when he reported being hit. Captain TEMPLETON broadcast his intention to fly the aircraft to

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a secure area if possible. For reasons not precisely determined, 6-2 crashed into a dense jungle mountain side at XD920618, a position approximately 1000 meters southwest of the landing zone near which he had been hit. All five crewmen, including one gunner of HMM-39, plus the passenger which had been picked up at F Company's position, were killed.

At 2230H, HMM-262 Med-evac, flown by Captain A. F. DAVIS launched from Quang Tri on an emergency med-evac mission. The pick-up was to be 4 emergency and 11 priority MIA cases at the position of F-2/3, the same position from which event 6-2 had been shot down earlier in the day. Standing by to support the mission were two UH-1E gunships of VMO-6 and a flare ship to provide illumination.

Captain DAVIS was given a detailed brief upon his arrival in the operating area which included information that there had been no enemy contact since the incident involving event 6-2 earlier in the day but that there was a 300-400 foot ceiling over the zone, intermittent light ground fog in the zone, that the zone itself was barely large enough for a CH-46, and was surrounded on all sides by 25 foot trees.

After considering all factors involved and after insuring proper coordination with the gunships and the flare ship, Captain DAVIS commenced his first approach into the zone. Because of the high trees, Captain DAVIS came to a hover 40-50 feet above the zone and commenced a let down. At this point, the med-evac aircraft was taken under fire from two directions by small arms and automatic weapons and mortar fire was received in the zone itself. Captain DAVIS continued his let down to a point about 10 feet above the ground at which time he was waved-off by the ground unit because of increasingly intense fire.

Orbiting clear of the pick-up zone, Captain DAVIS decided that the mission could be completed if the ground unit, the gunships, and his own gunners fired continuous suppressive fire during a second attempt. After the necessary coordination, a second approach was commenced and this time the aircraft was taken under fire during the approach itself but Captain DAVIS was able to continue all the way to touch down. In spite of heavy suppressive fire, small arms and automatic weapons fire was received continuously while the aircraft was sitting in the zone and at times the enemy mortar fire was so intense that the med-evac bird was obscured from the view of the gunship pilots.

After having loaded 4 emergency and 4 priorities aboard the aircraft, the ground unit requested that the aircraft depart the zone. Captain DAVIS complied with the request.

Two of the emergency cases were so serious that they were delivered directly to the hospital ship, after which, the remaining cases were delivered to the 3rd Medical Battalion at Quang Tri.

Through Captain DAVIS' courage and skill, this mission was completed, and fortunately without injury to personnel or damage to the aircraft.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~PART IIISEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS1. Personnel

a. A Change-of-Command ceremony was conducted on the flight line of HMM-262 on 20 September 1968 in which LtCol Melvin J. STEINBERG was relieved as Commanding Officer by LtCol Albert N. ALLEN. The Reviewing Officer for the formation was MajGen Charles J. QUILTER, Commanding General, 1st MAW.

Also, during this ceremony, MajGen QUILTER presented most of those awards which are listed in paragraph 2. below.

- b. Transfers to HMM-262 - 4 officers, 32 enlisted
- c. Transfers from HMM-262 - 6 officers, 26 enlisted
- d. Promotion to present rank:

1stLt Thomas L. SODERBERG	7 September 1968
Cpl Gerald A. CASE, Jr.	10 September 1968
LCpl William F. NORTON	10 September 1968

2. Awardsa. Silver Star

CUPELE, John D. Jr.	SSgt	20 September 1968
HAYDEN, Thomas R.	LCpl	20 September 1968
NORTON, Chandois M.	LCpl	20 September 1968

b. Distinguished Flying Cross

SNEAR, Samuel C. F. Jr.	Capt	20 September 1968
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c. Bronze Star

HAMIC, Gerald G.	SSgt	20 September 1968
HOLLAND, Kenneth W.	SSgt	20 September 1968

d. Purple Heart

DARGER, Rocky E.	Capt	20 September 1968
MURPHY, William A.	1stLt	20 September 1968
MULLEN, Michael R.	1stLt	20 September 1968
MURPHREE, James A.	GySgt	20 September 1968
HANCHETT, Ben J.	Cpl	20 September 1968
LOGAN, William M.	Cpl	20 September 1968
STALSBY, Frankie	LCpl	20 September 1968

ENCLOSURE (1)
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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~e. Air Medal (Strike/Flight Award)

BRATTON, Andrew J. III	Capt	20 September 1968
ENGLEHART, William S.	Capt	20 September 1968
EARNHART, James A.	Cpl	27 September 1968
KUEHN, Donald E.	Cpl	20 September 1968
LIVINGSTON, Norman W.	L Cpl	20 September 1968

f. Good Conduct Medal

AMOS, Wendell L.	Cpl	21 September 1968
HILL, C. V. Jr.	Cpl	3 September 1968

g. Combat Aircrew Wings

BEECHAM, Henry E.	Sgt	2 September 1968
BRADLEY, Donald B.	Cpl	1 September 1968
JACOB, Charles W. Jr.	Cpl	1 September 1968
PETERS, Homer D. Jr.	Cpl	1 September 1968
TOOMEY, Patrick A.	Cpl	1 September 1968
CARVER, Malcolm M. Jr.	L Cpl	1 September 1968
CUTTERIDGE, Glenn L.	L Cpl	1 September 1968
HAGER, Mark D.	L Cpl	1 September 1968
LAMOREE, Ronald J.	L Cpl	1 September 1968
MAYNE, Stephen W.	L Cpl	1 September 1968
NASSER, Raymond E.	L Cpl	1 September 1968
PARR, Lyndon E.	L Cpl	1 September 1968
SHELBURNE, Gary D.	L Cpl	1 September 1968

3. Casualties

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>DATE</u>
TEMPLETON, Donald L.	Capt	KIA	21 September 1968
LAWSON, Stanley G.	1st Lt	KIA	21 September 1968
BERRY, William M.	Cpl	KIA	21 September 1968
FEEZEL, Harold E.	Cpl	KIA	21 September 1968
BROWNELL, David R.	Sgt	MIA (minor)	22 September 1968

4. Reenlistments

None

5. Safety. Listed below are the aircraft incidents and accidents for the month of September 1968:

Ground Accidents	-----	None
Ground Incidents - Due to Enemy Action	-----	None
Air Accidents - Operational	-----	None
Air Incidents - Due to Enemy Action	-----	1 Alpha
		1 Charlie
		4 Echo

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Injury to Personnel-----1 Minor
4 KIA

6. Logistics

HMM-262 remained in a non-combat ready status during the month of September. Throughout the month the squadron maintained an average daily availability of 7 aircraft, of 24 authorized, as compared to 9 per day during August. During August, the month in which the squadron entered its technically non-combat ready status, an average of 8 aircraft per day were grounded due to a lack of essential repair parts and T58-GE10 engines. During September that figure has risen to 9.

The average daily listing of essential repair parts outstanding during August was 45, compared to an average of 83 daily in September.

As of 30 September, the squadron lists 81 essential repair parts and 7 T58-GE10 engines outstanding.

As a result of the critical situation in the supply of aircraft parts, HMM-262 has a residual combat capability which is estimated at 50 % of that of a fully combat ready HMM.

7. Intelligence

The month of September saw a decrease in enemy activity throughout Quang Tri Province, believed due, in part, to inclement weather during a portion of the month. Quang Tri Air Field did not record any incoming fire during the month.

On 17 September, HMM-262 participated in an operation into the DMZ which was completed with only minor fire incidents and no injury or damage to aircraft.

On 21 September, while flying a resupply mission, aircraft ET-5 received what is believed to have been intense .50 caliber fire in the XD9262 grid square. This resulted in the total destruction of the aircraft and the deaths of five crew members and one passenger.

During the month of September we had 21 fire incidents and of this total we had 9 hits on 4 aircraft. The breakdown of fire received during these 21 incidents is as follows: (ET-5 incident not included)

12 .30 caliber
6 .50 caliber
3 mortar

The friendly situation in September showed increased activity in the DMZ, both in the eastern coastal area and the northern portion of the LANCASTER II Area of Operation. The 2nd ARVN Regiment, escorted by U. S. Marine Corps tanks, struck the eastern DMZ. Marine forces also invaded the northern section of LANCASTER II, in the DMZ. This operation met with little resistance. Several caches were found, with large quantities of both food and ordnance.

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