

MARINE MEDICAL HELICOPTER SQUADRON 262
Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, MAF Pacific
APO, San Francisco, California 96602

3:WJL:lcl
5750
03A15269
1 JUN 1969

UNCLASSIFIED

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

Subj: Command Chronology, Period 1 May 1969 to 31 May 1969

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).

J. A. Wells, Jr.
J. A. WELLS, JR.

MAR 262 S&C 0195-69
C 5 OF 6

MM-262

CMD CHRON

*Group S-3 Files
#515-69*

MAY 1969

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 262
COMMAND CHRONOLOGY
1 MAY 1969 to 31 MAY 1969

PART I

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

1. Organization Data
2. Task Organization and Unit Location
3. Average Monthly Strength of Squadron
4. Important Visitors to the Squadron

PART II

NARRATIVE SUMMARY AND OPERATION HIGHLIGHTS

1. Narrative Summary of Significant Events
2. Operational highlights

PART III

SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1. Personnel
2. Awards
3. Casualties
4. Reenlistments
5. Safety
6. Intelligence

ENCLOSURE (1)

PART 1ORGANIZATIONAL DATA1. ORGANIZATION DATA

a. Commanding Officer	James A. WELLS, JR.	LTCOL	1-31 May
b. Executive Officer	Leo J. IRLI	Major	1-31 May
c. Operations Officer	Marvin R. NELSON	Major	1-31 May
d. Logistics Officer	Doyle O. HOGANA	Major	1-31 May
e. Personnel Officer	Donald J. MESHAN	Major	1-31 May
f. Aviation Safety Officer	Harvey E. BRITT	Major	1-19 May
	Howard M. WHITFIELD	Major	20-31 May
g. Intelligence Officer	Richard P. EVANS	1STLT	1-11 May
	Charles L. STORY	1ST LT	12-31 May
h. Maintenance Officer	Raymond G. PINSON	Major	1-31 May
i. Sergeant Major	Alexander J. SONORANI	1STSQT	1-31 May

2. Task Organization and Unit Location

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 262
 Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing,
 MAF Pacific, FPO, San Francisco, California 96602
 Quang Tri Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, 1-31 May 1969

3. Average Monthly Strength of Squadron

<u>Naval Aviators</u>	<u>Air/Ground Officers</u>
43	3
<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Naval Officers</u>
140	1

4. Important Visitors to the Squadron

SGM R. H. SPANJER

ENCLOSURE (1)

UNCLASSIFIED

PART IINARRATIVE SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

HM-262 flew a total of 1234.1 flight hours, the majority of which were in support of the Third Marine Division. The squadron evacuated a total of 1,002 med-evacs as follows: 140 emergency, 316 priority and 546 routine.

The following is a breakdown of the work completed by the squadron during May including significant operational highlights.

	<u>NO. OF SORTIES</u>	<u>HOURS FLOWN</u>	<u>TROOPS LIFTED</u>	<u>TONS OF CARGO</u>
Virginia Ridge	1169	305.9	1485	237.5
Apache Snow	689	211.8	1566	116.7
Herkimer Mountain	574	140.6	1135	97.8
Maine Craig	131	30.1	109	25.1
Purple Martin	261	68.7	936	47.5
Cameron Falls	126	29.9	306	27.0
Massachusetts Bay	9	3.2	6	0.0
III Mar Div & III MAF	1574	443.9	3978	232.7
TOTALS	4533	1234.1	9521	784.3

The weather during the month did not significantly curtail operations. However, during the last weeks of the month, a front moved through the area bringing along showers & low ceilings which did affect operational flights to a slight degree.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS1 MAY 1969

Major D. J. Meskan while leading a section on a med-evac mission was called upon to pick up 13 WIA's at YD-025644, the site of an ambush of a Marine patrol. The unit on the ground prepared a hasty pick-up point from which the med-evacs could be hoisted. Major Meskan went into the zone and commenced hoisting the wounded men. He spent approximately 30 minutes in the zone during which time sporadic small arms and automatic weapons fire was received. The operation was successful and the med-evacs were brought to Quang Tri.

ENCLOSURE (1)

2 MAY 1969

While on a resupply mission, Chatterboxes 93-1 and 93-2 commanded by Lt. Col. J. A. Wells and 1/Lt R. E. Trigalet carried supplies to KD-847614. When in the zone, 93-2 picked up 7 passengers for transportation to Vandegrift Combat Base. While departing from the area, 93-2 experienced a mid-air collision with an Army UH1H, fell out of control and crashed, with all aboard being killed. The crew consisted of the pilot 1/Lt R. E. Trigalet, the co-pilot 1/Lt T. E. Williams, the crew chief L/Cpl T. M. Pyle, and the two gunners L/Cpl M. W. Eakins and L/Cpl L. D. Stoller (HMS-39)

4 MAY 1969

Chatterboxes 93-1 through 93-4 were involved in a troop lift consisting of ARVN's. Upon completion of the lift, with the aircraft shut down at Quang Tri, two pop-up flares with the pins pulled were found jammed between the seats on 93-2. A frag grenade with the pin partially pulled was also found on 93-4.

10 MAY 1969

UH-262 launched an 8 A/C assault lifting troops of 1/9 into LZ Erskine located at YD-162106. Small arms fire was received by one of the A/C while in the zone during the first wave, yet no hits were taken. On the second wave, 93-8 while approaching the zone had a power loss, fell short of the zone, crashed and burned. The pilot, co-pilot and one gunner, Major M. M. Whitfield, 1/Lt. P. J. Traube and L/Cpl J. W. Stewart, received minor injuries. However, the crew chief and the second gunner, Cpl M. W. Wheeler and Cpl P. Gibson (HMS-39) received fatal injuries together with three of the troops aboard the A/C. The lift was continued without incident by the other 7 A/C.

13 MAY 1969

Med Evac and med Evac Chase commanded by Capt. D. L. White and Capt. S. F. Stover respectively received a call to pick up an emergency med evac located at KD-867607. The extraction of the med-evac had to be done with a hoist through 80 foot trees. There were no gun-ships available so Capt. Stover provided coverage for Capt. White while the pick-up was being made. Mortar and 50 cal. fire was received while the extraction was being made and also upon departure. No hits were taken and the med-evac was taken to Quang Tri.

ENCLOSURE (1)

15 MAY 1969

Chatterboxes 93-5 and 93-6, commanded by Major W. A. Nelson and 1/Lt G. B. Warren respectively, were diverted from a resupply mission for an emergency extract of the reconnaissance team "Grasshopper" located on LZ Hargo, XA-9061. Due to poor visibility and no markings in the zone, Major Nelson had difficulty finding the team. Automatic weapons fire from 360° was received during the extraction but no hits were sustained by the A/C. The team was extracted successfully and then taken to Quang Tri.

25 MAY 1969

While on a reconnaissance mission, Chatterboxes 93-3 and 93-4 commanded by 1/Lt G. B. Warren and 1/Lt W. J. Lemoine were called upon for an emergency extract of the reconnaissance team "Marshall Hall" located at YD-225166. The team was pinned down by an enemy force of unknown size which was entrenched in a thick tree line 20 meters from the team. While 93-3 made his approach, gun coverage was provided for by two UH-1H's. Small arms and automatic weapons fire was received by 93-3 while on final, while in the zone and on departure. Just before lifting, the crew members opened up on observed enemy and four of the enemy were seen to fall. Several hits were taken by the A/C but no one was injured and the team was taken to Quang Tri.

27 MAY 1969

Chatterboxes 93-7 and 93-8 commanded by Major D. C. McGaha and Major H. N. Whitfield were diverted from a resupply mission for an emergency extract of the reconnaissance team "Skymerchant" located at XA-9853. Gun coverage was provided for by two UH-1H's and two OV-10's. 93-7 when in the zone had trouble setting down because of trees and stumps. While in the zone, small arms fire and hand grenades were directed at the A/C but no hits were received. The extract was successful and the team was brought to Quang Tri.

30 MAY 1969

Med-evac and med-evac Chase commanded by Major D. C. McGaha and 1/Lt J. A. Dau respectively, were called to XD-988412 to pick-up 4 med-evacs. Coverage was provided for by two UH-1H's and one OH-6A. Major McGaha, while in the zone, received small arms and automatic weapons fire, where he remained for 15 minutes hoisting the med evacs out.

Upon completion of this mission, med-evac and med-evac Chase were called to the position a second time for one more emergency med-evac. Gun coverage was provided for by two UH-1H's and two OV-10's. Major McGaha had made his approach and come to a hover over the zone when automatic weapons fire opened up on the A/C from about 40 meters away. The A/C was hit and the engine instruments were lost so Major McGaha brought the A/C back to Vandegrift Combat Base. Upon shutdown the A/C was found to have sustained 15 hits with the following results: 3 blades hit, engine instruments inoperable, vertical shaft damaged, stationary swash plates damaged and the ramp area damaged.

ENCLOSURE (1)

PART III

1. Personnel

- a. Transfers to HMM-262 -- officers 1, enlisted 18
- b. Transfers from HMM-262 -- officers 9, enlisted 33
- c. Promotions to present rank:

Cpl. BITTLE, James E.	1 May 1969
Cpl. ELLISON, James M.	1 May 1969
Cpl. JONES, Thomas F.	1 May 1969
Cpl. LEVANDOWSKI, Gary D.	1 May 1969
Cpl. RIVERA, Jose L.	1 May 1969
C/Cpl. HOCKE, Gary E.	1 May 1969
Cpl. GIERLICH, Eddie G.	1 May 1969
MCySgt PALMER, Gene D.	1 April 1969

2. Awards.

HIGGINS, Clifford B. Navy Commendation Medal w/Combat "V" L/Cpl

3. Casualties.

GRAVIN, Billy E.	L/Cpl	WIA	22 May 1969
STEWART, James W. JR	L/Cpl	WIA	10 May 1969
TRAUBE, Philip J. III	1/Lt	WIA	10 May 1969
HITFIELD, Howard M.	Major	WIA	10 May 1969
WHEELER, Kenneth W.	Cpl	KIA	10 May 1969
EAKINS, Melvin W.	L/Cpl	DAI	2 May 1969
TRIGGALLT, Robert E.	1/Lt	DAI	2 May 1969
WILLIAMS, Thomas E. JR	1/Lt	DAI	2 May 1969
RYAN, Timothy H.	L/Cpl	DAI	2 May 1969

4. Reenlistments

NONE

5. Safety. Listed below are the aircraft accidents and incidents for the month of May 1969.

Ground Accidents-----0
 Ground Accidents - Due to Enemy Action-----0
 Air Accidents - Operational-----1

Air Incidents - Operational-----3
 Air Accidents - Due to Enemy Action-----2
 Air Incidents - Due to Enemy Action-----15

Injury to Personnel-----5 ALPHA
 4 BETA
 ENCL (1)

6. Intelligence.

The month of May resulted in a record increase of enemy antiaircraft reaction to helicopter operations. Although the reporting period (1-31 May 1969) consisted of fewer sorties than the previous month the percentage of fire-incidents and hits per sortie has increased drastically. This increase is an intelligence indicator of large enemy units pre-positioning for future operations.

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>	<u>FIRE INCIDENTS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT RECEIVING BATTLE DAMAGE</u>
MAY	4533	47	9
APRIL	5560	16	8

The areas receiving the largest volume of fire-incidents were:

- (1) Dong Ha Mountains YD 036597 (air-bursts were observed in this threat area).
- (2) Helicopter Valley to the West YD 0063 - YD 0763 - 0067 (this threat area included 11 mortar incidents)
- (3) LZ Mac northwest up the Song Cam River XD 901611 north along the Song Cam River to XD 805640 (this threat area included 24 AW fire incidents with the fire becoming heavier further north up the Song Cam with airbursts being reported)
- (4) South of DA KRONG River YD 0912 - 0904 - 1804 - 1812 (this threat area includes 37AM airbursts and increased 50 cal. activity).

A total of 47 fire incidents resulted in 9 aircraft receiving battle damage with a total of 46 hits, resulting in one (1) strike aircraft and 9 casualties (5-KIA/4-WIA). Total fire incidents included the following types of fire:

23 - Small Arms	(Apr 69 - 9)
19 - Automatic Weapons	(Apr 69 - 6)
28 - .30 Caliber	(Apr 69 - 6)
7 - .50 Caliber	(Apr 69 - 4)
13 - Mortar	(Apr 69 - 4)
1 - Grenade	(Apr 69 - 0)
1 - RPG	(Apr 69 - 0)
3 - Air Burst	(Apr 69 - 0)

The S-2 conducted two SERE/Gunners schools during the period and a total of 69 hours intelligence training was accomplished. An OPSUM for the AO which includes future plans is posted daily in the ready-room, and a request for the Squadron to be added to the distribution list of the 7th Air Force WIS has been made.

ENCLOSURE (1)