

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 263
Marine Aircraft Group 16
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPac
FPO San Francisco, 96602

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From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 16
Subj: Command Chronology for period 1 - 31 January 1971

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.1
(b) FMFPacO 5750.8B
(c) WgO 5750.1C
(d) GruO 5750.1C

Encl: ✓(1) Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 263, Command Chronology
for period 1 - 31 January 1971.

1. In accordance with references(a) through (d), enclosure (1) is
submitted.

L. K. Keck
L. K. KECK

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COMMAND CHRONOLOGY 1 JANUARY to 31 JANUARY 1971

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PART IORGANIZATIONAL DATA1. DESIGNATIONCOMMANDER

HMM-263

LTCOL L. K. KECK 1-31 JANUARY 1971

2. LOCATION

During the period of 1-31 January 1971, the Blue Eagles of HMM-263 were located at Marble Mountain Air Facility, Danang, Republic of Vietnam.

3. STAFF OFFICERS

EXECUTIVE OFFICER	Major W. S. HUMBERT	1-18 JAN
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	Major D. N. ANDERSON	19-31 JAN
OPERATIONS OFFICER	Major T. J. TOBEN Jr.	1-31 JAN
ASST. OPERATIONS OFFICER	1/Lt M. C. JONES	1-31 JAN
LOGISTICS OFFICER	Major L. L. PAYTON Jr.	1-31 JAN
AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE OFFICER	Major D. N. ANDERSON	1-18 JAN
AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE OFFICER	Capt. T. R. EDMUNDS	19-31 JAN
ASST. MAINTENANCE OFFICER	Capt. D. D. FROST	1-26 JAN
ASST. MAINTENANCE OFFICER	Capt. W. J. CAMP	27-31 JAN
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	Capt. L. R. BANCELLS	1-31 JAN
NATOPS OFFICER	Capt. H. P. BREAZEALE	1-13 JAN
NATOPS OFFICER	1/Lt P. F. GOETZ	14-31 JAN
AVIATION SAFETY OFFICER	Capt. T. R. EDMUNDS	1-18 JAN
AVIATION SAFETY OFFICER	Major J. A. BARRY	27-31 JAN
INTELLIGENCE OFFICER	1/Lt L. M. STEWART	1-31 JAN
AWARDS OFFICER	Major L. L. PAYTON Jr.	1-31 JAN
SERGEANT MAJOR	SgtMaj W. J. BILLEB	1-19 JAN
SERGEANT MAJOR	SgtMaj L. H. EDMONDSON	20-31 JAN

4. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

	<u>USMC</u>	<u>USN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
OFFICER	37	1	0	38
ENLISTED	172	0	0	172

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PART II

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

January was a busy month for the Blue Eagles of HMM-263. Peachbush aircraft launched on 1131 flights, 64 of these being flown during the hours of darkness. During the month 4282 sorties were flown resulting in 1080.8 flight hours. Helicopters of HMM-263 carried 190.4 tons of cargo while 10540 passengers enjoyed rides in Peachbush aircraft. A total of 112 medevac missions were flown and 193 injured personnel were transported to medical facilities, of these 73 were emergencies, 61 were priority and 64 were routine. Enemy activity was on the rise as 5 fire incidents were reported and no hits were taken by Peachbush aircraft.

HMM-263 was involved in strikes, recon inserts and extracts during this period. Separate briefs and debriefs were given to pilots and aircrews.

To provide up to date intelligence, the intelligence unit conducted briefs at AOM's and before recon missions. Current fire incidents, recon and order of battle maps were kept and made available before all flights.

Six officers and three enlisted Marines attended Jungle Survival School at NAS Cubi Point R.P..

During the month enlisted personnel earned a total of 217 Strike Flight Awards and officers earned 143.

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PART III

SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- 1 Jan 71 With his usual savoir faire and daring-do Major T. J. TOBEN graciously consented to forego the floor show at the club in order to greet the new year with unblurred eyes and a quick mind by volunteering for nite medevac. However, while old Father '70 was passing the colors to Baby '71, Major TOBEN was called upon to bail out the Army deep in Injun territory to the west of An Hoa. Army Dust-offs refused an emergency medevac because of weather. Peachbush 3, with typical Blue Eagle can do spirit performed the mission and returned IFR. The rest of the New Year's Day shows the mission 80 package transformed into an R&R, PX run since the gates were closed to vehicular traffic.
- 2 Jan 71 The end of the New Year's cease fire saw air support from the Blue Eagles carrying on par usual. Forty one point seven hours were logged carrying out the multitudinous chores that the helo muledrivers in Vietnam are routinely called upon to perform. The mission 86 package carried the bulk of the load lead by Major T. J. TOBEN.
- 4 Jan 71 Mission 80 today put on their apron change machines and their yellow cab meters. The gates to MMAF were closed and the Peachbush line looked like the 52nd Street bus terminal as the entire base seemed to pick today for their PX runs and general chores day. Lt "Zeke" ZILJA managed to log an incredible 3.5 hours on the MMAF to LZ 11 circuit. One caustic passenger even stuck his head in the cockpit and screamed "Hey, could you step on it, Mac?"
- 7 Jan 71 Major T. J. TOBEN managed to take the mission 73 package to a 2.3 carrying out admin and flip-flops for our friends from LZ 401, the 1st Recon Battalion. For once, those swift and silent warriors managed to remain unsurrounded and Peachbush 3 and 99 RTB'd to join an inactive HMM-263.
- 8 Jan 71 Alas, but the peaceful days of 1971 had to come to an end. Peachbush flew 60.5 hours today. The mission 86 package averaged 6.0 hours per crew flying strikes and resupply into the resurgent enemy's back yard. Six hundred and sixty passengers were carried and 31.0 tons of combat resupply reached their precariously situated LZ's. A good bit of the time was logged by the Baldy medevac section lead by 1/Lt Isaac Lafayette EPPERLY (better known as "Skippy"). The recent lack of allied casualties in the Baldy area did not hold true today. Fire was taken in two medevac zones. But the hostile fire was ineffective as the illusive Lt EPPERLY brought his section home unscathed.

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- 10 Jan 71 Twenty seven point six hours were logged as mission 80 stood by. Only the mission 73 birds managed to log 5.0 hours per crew. Lead by Peachbush 9, Capt. EDMUNDS, the recon package capped off a back breaking day of inserts and extracts by pulling a flawless emergency medevac and extract in the Que Son Mountains.
- 12 Jan 71 The mission 40 medevac package hacked the load for the Blue Eagles today. The winged warriors from 263 turned into angels of mercy by pulling eight medevac missions including 6 of an emergency nature.
- 14 Jan 71 As usual Baldy provided an opportunity for low time pilots to put a little meat on their monthly flight times. Due largely to the mission 86 package's efforts the squadron logged 56.8 hours, carried 493 passengers and almost 8 tons of cargo for the 5th Marines.
- 16 Jan 71 Major "Lima Lima" PAYTON lead his mission 73 recon aircraft into the forbidding Que Sons today. After routinely carrying out numerous inserts and extracts, Major PAYTON was called upon to once again bail out a team in heavy contact. Professionally and in the face of lowering ceilings and intense hostile fire the mission was completed.
- 17 Jan 71 Medevac, resupply, C&C and admin runs today accounted for a routine but nevertheless back-breaking 52.6 total flight hours. All in a days work, Peachbush.
- 20 Jan 71 The unsung heroes of the Vietnam war are the resupply pilots. Carrying heavy loads into high zones is hard enough. But as 1/Lt Rob MEYERS can attest Victor Charlie is as present during those missions as he is on Recon or medevac. Luckily the V.C. as yet seem to have been unable to augment their obviously limited supply of optometrists. Peachbush 14 escaped unscathed.
- 22 Jan 71 LtCol KECK's ability to draw the action was proved once again today on mission 80. LtCol KECK's section launched to save a seven man recon team who had been surrounded by a determined and heavily armed enemy force. Apparently their swift reaction and timely arrival on the scene caught the enemy by surprise. The mission was completed so quickly that the enemy was unable to organize his anti-aircraft capabilities. Result: no fire and no hits.
- 25 Jan 71 It was Major ANDERSON's turn to lead the afternoon mission 80. He perfectly executed an emergency extract of a recon team Southeast of An Hoa. A potentially very hazardous mission was calmly and expertly performed by the Peachbush stalwarts. Again there were no hits and no errors. In regularly scheduled action, Lt EPPERLY's mission 73 birds worked for 4.8

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hours inserting and extracting recon teams until another team came into contact. Lt EPPERLY's aircraft came under fire but he was quick and escaped with a healthy aircraft and recon team.

- 27 Jan 71 Today the Blue Eagles flew only 24.4 hours but almost all of it was medevac missions. First Lieutenant Rob MEYERS' afternoon section was committed to extract two badly wounded pilots whose LOH had been shot down west of the French Fort. Amid intense small arms fire, the medevac crew coolly executed their duties and completed the mission with no damage and two lives saved. The night medevac section lead by Major L. L. PAYTON logged 3.4 hours of medevac flight, landing in 2 insecure positions which had recently taken enemy induced casualties. The skill and swift reaction time of the medevac crews reaffirms the prowess of the fighting 263rd.
- 29 Jan 71 Forty three point nine flight hours attest to the work done by Peachbush aircraft. Three hundred and ninety six passengers placed their tokens in the machine and 6.9 tons of cargo were delivered on schedule.
- 30 Jan 71 LtCol KECK braved the dangers of night medevac with the usual talent for drawing the enemy. Four hours of flight through treacherous terrain, and into unsecure positions are enough to weaken the stoutest resolve. Nevertheless seven emergency and two priority medevacs were whisked to safety and medical aid by Peachbush 6 and his band of merry men.
- 31 Jan 71 Never one to give up his title of Magnet of the Year easily (not event to Peachbush 6), 1/Lt MEYERS, in order to secure his now precarious hold on this crown, lead his mission 73 birds into the jaws of extremely foreboding emergency recon extract. But as usual, although intense fire was taken in the zone, the team was extracted, the aircraft was unventilated and Lt MEYERS surged into the lead in his race for Magnet of the Year.

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PART IV

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

NONE SUBMITTED

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