

MARINE FIGHTER ATTACK SQUADRON 323
Marine Aircraft Group 13
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMF, Pacific
FPO, San Francisco 96602

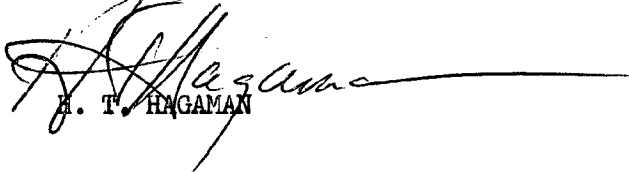
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5750
8 Feb 1968

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 13
Subj: Command Chronology; submission of

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.2
(b) WgO 5750.1B
(c) BrigO 5750.1B
(d) GruO 5750.1C

Encl: ✓(1) Command Chronology for the month of January 1968

1. In accordance with references (a) through (d), enclosure (1) is hereby submitted for the period 1 to 31 January 1968.


H. T. HAGAMAN

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VMFA-323

Cmd Chron

JAN 1968

COMMAND CHRONOLOGYUnit: Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323Location: Chu Lai Air Base, Republic of VietnamPeriod: 1-31 January 1968PART I - Organizational Data1. Commander and Staff

<u>NAME</u>	<u>BILLET</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>PERIOD</u>
Harry T. HAGAMAN	Commanding Officer	LtCol	1-31 Jan
Paul G. BOOZMAN	Executive Officer	Major	1-31 Jan
Henry G. MILLER JR.	Operations Officer	Major	1-31 Jan
Edward R. BAILEY	S-1 (Administration)	Major	1-31 Jan
Noel E. DOUGLAS	S-4 (Logistics)	Capt	1-12 Jan
Dennis F. O'BLOCK	S-4 (Logistics)	Capt	12-31 Jan
Warren A. FERDINAND	Maintenance Officer	Major	1-31 Jan
Rabun N. PATRICK	Aviation Safety Officer	Capt	1-31 Jan

2. Task Organization and DataOrganization

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323
 Marine Aircraft Group 13
 1st Marine Aircraft Wing,
 Fleet Marine Force, Pacific

Location

Chu Lai Air Base, Republic of Vietnam

Commanding Officer

Lieutenant Colonel H. T. HAGAMAN

Date of Office

13 Oct 67 - Present

3. Average Monthly Strengtha. Marine Officers

(1) Naval Aviators..... 19
 (2) Naval Flight Officers..... 15
 (3) Aviation Ground Officers..... 5

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b. Naval Officers..... 1
 c. Marine Enlisted..... 241
 d. Naval Enlisted..... 0

4. Important Visitors to the Command

a. General Leonard F. CHAPMAN Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, visited Marine Aircraft Group Thirteen on 7 Jan 1968 and viewed the operating areas of all squadrons including VMFA-323.

PART II - Narrative Summary

The month of January was the sixth month of combat operations for the squadron on its present tour in the Republic of Vietnam. Weather conditions were unexpectedly good for the month of January as the appearance of the dreaded monsoon was virtually non-existent. The squadron flew 513 combat sorties during this period, which is an increase of 85 sorties over the previous month. Combat hours flown totaled 546.0. The squadron flew a total of 524 sorties, 580.6 flight hours, and expended 1178.61 tons of ordnance during this reporting period.

Close Air Support and Direct Air Support missions were flown in support of all Marine ground operations in the I Corps Tactical Zone (ICTZ) including operations Kentucky, west of Dong Ha; Lancaster, west of Dong Ha; Oseola, southeast of Dong Ha; Scotland, in the Khe Sanh area, and Neosho, northwest of Hue-Phu Bai. VMFA-323 supported the Americal Division in operations Muscatine and Wheeler/Wallowa in the ICTZ.

Tally-Ho strikes in North Vietnam and Steel Tiger interdiction strikes in Laos, along the Ho-Chi-Minh Trail, were deemphasized during January because of the increased tempo of Communist activity in I Corps.

The squadron flew a few sorties in support of recon team extractions and insertions, helicopter escort, landing zone preps, and visual reconnaissance missions. Night TPQ-10 radar directed bombing missions increased during January due to low cloud cover in late evening and early morning hours particularly in the Khe Sanh area. The Air-to-Ground pad had great success the week of 20-27 January launching 80 sorties, mostly in support of Operation Scotland. Air-to-Air pad activity was sporadic due to the up and down status of Da Nang's primary pad. Most Air-to-Air scrambles were for practice with new and inexperienced RIO's in order to gain more Air-to-Air Intercept training.

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Enemy opposition increased to fever pitch with the new "Spring Offensive". The month of January saw baptism under fire for many of the "Snake" crews. Ten Aircraft sustained battle damage; 9 of which were hit incidents recorded as "echo" damage, and one being "alpha". The alpha damaged aircraft was an accident due to direct enemy action on 22 January 1968. (See Highlight Missions below.)

During January there has been a large officer turn over and re-shuffling of collateral duties. FAC commitments and staff jobs have taken a good bite into our experienced Pilots and RIO's. Seven officers were transferred and three joined; however, two officers were killed in action during a rocket/mortar attack on Chu Lai in the early morning hours on 31 January. The enlisted numbers continued to deteriorate with 40 transfers and only 27 personnel joined.

At 0400 on 31 January this command was subjected to an intense rocket and mortar attack with devastating results. The MAG-13 area received some 48 rounds of 122MM rocket fire of unbelievable accuracy. One rocket impacted directly on one of the bunkers killing three of the seven occupants. Capt Arthur J. DELAHOUSAYE was killed immediately and 1stLt Richard A. KERR died after a tremendous effort to save his life aboard the USS Sanctuary hospital ship where he had been med-evaced. The other officer killed was Lt(MC) LEWIS USN of VMFA-314. The remaining occupants sustained minor to severe injury. Captain Daniel J. SULLIVAN Jr. of VMFA-323 escaped with a minor ear laceration and was flying again the next day. The acts of heroism and calm clear headed thinking of both officer and enlisted personnel of this command during this attack will be long remembered by everyone assigned to VMFA-323. Aircraft damage was amazingly slight considering the terrific pounding the entire MAG-13 flight line received. Two 323 aircraft had slight skin damage and were both repaired in a few days. Extensive damage was done to the 323 hangar and officers hut area. The huts were quickly repaired and the hangar and revetment area was cleared up in record time. Flight operations commenced again on the afternoon of 31 January.

Some of the highlight missions flown during January were:

18 January: Major BOOZMAN (RIO 1/Lt KERR, WM Major TAYLOR/Capt STIMLER) destroyed 7 bunkers and had 4 KBA's confirmed.

22 January: LtCol HAGAMAN (RIO Capt BRANDON, WM Major TAYLOR/Capt DRAGE). LtCol HAGAMAN's flight was diverted to a target south of Khe Sanh suspected to be an active enemy artillery site. On the first run, when not cleared to drop his ordnance, Col HAGAMAN was pulling off target when he was severely hit by a round of unknown caliber.

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The aircraft immediately began to tumble in an upward moment and was completely engulfed in flames. He and Capt BRANDON ejected immediately, however, no one observed their chutes. They were subsequently picked up by helicopters that were in the immediate vicinity and transported to Khe Sanh. The aircrew arrived back at 323 the same evening via a circuitous route through Wing Headquarters. Both LtCol HAGAMAN and Capt BRANDON received minor injuries in their ejection and rescue but are hail, hearty and flying again. God bless Martin-Baker and the invention of the helicopter.

22 January: Capt CONLON (RIO 1/Lt PAWLOSKI, WM Capt LYMAN/Lt BARRON) scrambled from the hot pad to a target in close proximity to troops. Both aircrews destroyed two bunkers with pin point accuracy within 50 meters of a friendly recon team allowing the team to break contact and move to a better area for extraction. Well Done !!

23 January: Major BOOZMAN (RIO 1/Lt KERR, WM Capt SULLIVAN/Capt DRISCOLL) destroyed 15 enemy bunkers under intense ground fire.

24 January: Major FERDINAND (RIO Capt DRISCOLL, WM Capt CONLON/Capt NORTHLICH) scrambled from the hot pad on a priority target and received the following BDA: 1 KBA, 16 Secondary Explosions, and 30 meters of Trenchline destroyed.

During January, Battle Damage Assessments were received from controlling agencies on less than 10% of all missions flown as follows:

Enemy Killed by Air.....	15	Confirmed/5 Probable
Structures.....	74	Destroyed/26 Damaged
Bunkers.....	57	Destroyed
Secondary Explosions.....	18	
Trenchline.....	40	Meters Destroyed
Road Cuts.....	24	
Ford Cuts.....	1	Destroyed/1 Damaged
Tunnel Complexes.....	1	
Trucks.....	1	Destroyed/1 Damaged
Bridges.....	1	Destroyed

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PART III - Significant Events

1. Personnel: Joined Officer 3 Enlisted 27
 Dropped Officer 9 Enlisted 40
 Promotions Officer 0 Enlisted 2

2. Awards: Air Medals - 4

3. Air Operations: January statistical summary as follows:

Total Combat Sorties	513	#Group/Other Pilots Flying	7
Total Flights	524	Avg Group/Other Pilot Sorties	12
Total Combat Hours	546.0	Avg Group/Other Pilot Hours	14.3
Total Flight Hours	580.6	Avg NFO Strength	14
Avg Pilot Strength	16	Avg NFO Hours	41.5
Avg Pilot Sorties	33	High Day (Sorties) - 17th	25
Avg Pilot Hours	36.3	High Day (Hours) - 17th	27.6

4. Maintenance: January Monthly Averages:

Aircraft Assigned	17
Avg Aircraft On-Board	12
Avg Aircraft Available	6 (50%)
Avg Hrs per A/C On-Board	38.6

Aircraft Transferred/Received: None

Aircraft Sent/Returned from PAR, NAS Atsugi, Japan:

<u>BuNo</u>	<u>Date</u>	
151483	1 Jan 68	Rec'd from PAR
151484	3 Jan 68	Acft to PAR
149449	11 Jan 68	Acft to PAR

Aircraft Sustaining Battle Damage:

<u>Incident No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Damage</u>	<u>BuNo</u>	<u>Side No.</u>
22-68I	02Jan68	ECHO	151484	WS-14
23-68I	12Jan68	ECHO	151013	WS-11
25-68I	14Jan68	ECHO	151013	WS-11
26-68I	18Jan68	ECHO	152275	WS-15
27-68I	20Jan68	ECHO	152275	WS-15
28-68I	21Jan68	ECHO	151414	WS-16
30-68I	24Jan68	ECHO	151013	WS-11
2-68G	31Jan68	ECHO	148391	WS-17
3-68G	31Jan68	ECHO	151424	WS-07
5-68A	22Jan68	ALPHA	151414	WS-16

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5. Ordinance: January expenditures in tons as follows:

MK81	2501b LD GP Bomb.....	70.33 Tons
MK81	2501b Snake-Eye Bomb.....	137.91 Tons
MK82	5001b LD GP Bomb.....	340.37 Tons
MK82	5001b Snake-Eye Bomb.....	302.30 Tons
MK117	7501b LD GP Bomb.....	244.60 Tons
MK77	5001b NAPALM.....	74.62 Tons
2.75"	FFAR.....	266 (Total # of Rockets)
MK83	10001b LD GP Bomb.....	<u>5.5 Tons</u>

Total 1178.61 Tons

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