

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

1:HGM:rls
5750
11 May 1968

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 13 (Attn: S-3)
Subj: Command Chronology; submission of
Ref: (a) MCO 5750.1A
(b) WgO 5750.1
(c) GruO 5750.1D

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

1. In accordance with reference (a) through (c), enclosure (1) is herewith submitted for the period 1 to 30 April 1968.


H. P. HAGAMAN

VMFA-323

CMDCRON

Apr 1968

COMMAND CHRONOLOGYUnit: Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323Location: Chu Lai Air Base, Republic of VietnamPeriod: 1-30 April 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	1-30 April
Henry G. MILLER Jr.	Executive Officer	Major	1-30 April
Henry G. MILLER Jr.	Operations Officer	Major	1-30 April
Edward R. BAILEY	S-1 (Administration)	Major	1-30 April
Philip R. KRUSE	S-4 (Logistics)	Captain	1-30 April
Warren A. FERDINAND	Maintenance Officer	Major	1-30 April
Rabun N. PATRICK	Aviation Safety Officer	Captain	1-30 April

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 Harry T. HAGAMAN

Date of Office

13 October 1967-Present

3. Average Monthly Strengtha. Marine Officers

(1) Naval Aviators	14
(2) Naval Flight Officers	15
(3) Aviation Ground Officers	4

ENCLOSURE (1)

(4) Marine Enlisted 287
 (5) Naval Enlisted 0

b. Other Officers

(1) Naval Officer (MC). 1

4. Important Visitors to the Command

a. Lieutenant General Lewis W. WALT, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, visited Marine Aircraft Group 13 on 27 April 1968 and observed operations of VMFA-323 in the flight line and maintenance area.

b. Brigadier General Homer S. HILL, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Deputy Commander visited Marine Aircraft Group 13 on 29 April 1968 and observed VMFA-323 in combat operations.

Part II - Narrative Summary

The month of April 1968 was the ninth month of Combat Operations for VMFA-323 on its current tour of duty in the Republic of Vietnam. The weather was generally good over most of the I Corps until the latter days of the month. The tail end of the summer monsoon materialized and became stationary in Southern I Corps as it had done in the month of March further north. This weather had no significant effect on flight operations during this reporting period.

The Squadron had one week of air-to-ground alert which got off to a slow start but recovered the last few days. Many interesting sorties were flown from the alert pad but it was evident that enemy contact was light due to the increased number of reconnaissance team inserts that were supported.

Several areas in the I Corps seem to be getting hotter along with the daily temperature. Hit incidents of aircraft delivering soft ordnance became increasingly frequent. The majority of all soft ordnance delivery close air support missions are receiving ground fire of some type ranging from small arms to automatic weapons fire. "Charlies" on the job training is paying off as he has received more and better weapons and seems to be more effective in their use.

Maintenance exceeded its planned number of sorties but had some difficulty associated with rainy weather during the latter part of April. Shortage of personnel on the flight line and in the Ordnance Department had a definite effect on aircraft turn around time and sortie rate. There is a shortage of ground handling equipment at this time which also increases turn-around time.

The temperature is rising along with the humidity and the increasing amounts of blowing dust. The average Marine works in a tee shirt or bare chested whenever his job permits. Hasty bunkers were built after the beginning

of the TET offensive and are now being replaced with standard and more adequate construction. Repairs to enlisted and upgrading of officer quarters are in full swing with protection from the elements and comfort during the hot months being the prime objective.

On 23 April 1968 the MAG-13 cantonment received (18) 122 millimeter rocket rounds which did little or no damage. There were no casualties from the attack itself but MAG-13 reported 53 persons injured on metal pallets enroute to the bunkers. VMFA-323 had the least injured as the removal of this type of walkway has been in progress for some time.

Aircrews had their best month in April since the beginning of this combat tour. A shortage of Pilots and RIO's was caused by several TAD commitments, injuries to personnel who were subsequently hospitalized, and aircrews out of country delivering PAR/Shoehorn aircraft.

Transfers without replacements have taken a toll on experienced aircrews. Major Paul BOOZMAN departed for the Khe Sahn Air Operations post followed by several other aircrews rotating home or to other duties within RVN.

Some of the highlight missions flown during April were:

19 April: Major MILLER and Lieutenant BARRON were launched from the hot pad with Captain PATRICK and Captain DRISCOLL for a close air support mission to Hue Phu Bai just at dusk. While on target Major MILLER's aircraft received severe battle damage and returned to Chu Lai. The aircraft will have to be returned to the U. S. for repairs.

27 April: Major FERDINAND and Captain VADNAIS along with Captain LYMAN and Lieutenant BARRON as wingman launched from the pad in extreme weather conditions to destroy an enemy force in contact with friendlies. The FAC controlling this hop has written a statement recommending the Distinguished Flying Cross for both crews. A job "well done".

23 April: Major BAILEY and Lieutenant LASHLEE along with wingman Captain KRUSE and Captain HIGBEE launched to Khe Sahn from alert pad and subsequently destroyed two active rocket sites and received an outstanding statement from the FAC.

April: Sorties in general were all flown in an ever increasing hostile fire environment. Aircraft hit incidents have increased significantly due to the effort of the VC/NVA to reduce air mobility by firing every conceivable weapon in an anti-air mode.

During April the combined squadron battle damage assessment received from controlling agencies, amounting to about 10% of all missions flown, delineated as follows:

ENCLOSURE (1)

Enemy Killed by Marine Air (KBA) . . . . .	.60	Confirmed/5 probable
Structures . . . . .	.38	Destroyed/12 Damaged
Bunkers . . . . .	.49	Destroyed/29 Damaged
Secondary Explosions . . . . .	.26	
Fighting Holes . . . . .	.8	Destroyed
Road Cuts. . . . .	.10	Achieved
Mortar Positions . . . . .	.1	Destroyed/1 Damaged
Rocket Positions . . . . .	.3	Destroyed/1 Damaged
Automatic Weapons Positions . . . . .	.2	Destroyed
Trench Line . . . . .	.495	Meters Destroyed
AAA Sites . . . . .	.1	Destroyed
Caves . . . . .	.3	Destroyed
Hedge Row . . . . .	.250	Meters Destroyed
Bridges . . . . .	.2	Destroyed/1 Damaged

Part III - Significant Events

1. Personnel:

Joined	Officer 3	Enlisted 31
Dropped	Officer 2	Enlisted 9
Promotions	Officer 0	Enlisted 5

2. Awards:

Air Medal - 98	-
Navy Commendation Medal - 2 (V)	
Navy Achievement Medal - 1 (V)	
Meritorious Masts - 1	

3. Air Operations: April Statistical Summary as Follows:

Total Combat Sorties	563	# Group/other Pilots Flying	7
Total Flights	575	Average Group/Other Pilots Sorties	14
Total Combat Hours	625.4	Average Group/Other Pilot Hours	16.6
Total Flight Hours	640.9	Average NFO Strength	15
Average Pilot Strength	14	Average NFO Hours	43.4 -
Average Pilot Sorties	41	High Day (Sorties)	21 April =26
Average Pilot Hours	45.7	High Day (Hours)	21 April -30.0

4. Maintenance: April Monthly Averages

Aircraft Assigned	19
Average Aircraft on Board	16
Average Aircraft Available	8
Average Hours for Aircraft on Board	40.05

Aircraft Transferred/Received:

<u>BuNo</u>	<u>To/From</u>	<u>Date</u>
152211	To Shoshorn MOD	23Apr68
149449	From PAR NAS Atsugi	29Apr68
152245	From PAR NAS Atsugi	26Apr68

ENCLOSURE (1)

Aircraft Sustaining Battle Damage:

<u>Incident No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Damage</u>	<u>Bu. No.</u>	<u>Side No.</u>
41-68 I	8Apr68	ECHO	152237	WS-17
42-68 I	12Apr68	ECHO	151844	WS-14
6-68 I	19Apr68	CHARLIE	148406	WS-5
43-68 I	26Apr68	ECHO	148405	WS-16
44-68 I	29Apr68	ECHO	151442	WS-9

5. Ordnance: April Expenditures by Type and Number

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Tons</u>
MK81 250 lb Snakeye Bomb	1390	199.7
MK82 500 lb LD GP Bomb	69	17.9
MK82 500 lb Snakeye Bomb	2752	794.6
MK117 750 lb LD GP Bomb	724	289.9
MK77 500 lb Napalm	368	97.2
2.75 "FFAR"	110	23.0
5" Zuni Rocket	16	7.5
D27 CBU	16	5.4
	<u>5445</u>	<u>1435.2</u>

Total Ordnance Pieces Loaded: 5473

Drop Percentage: 99.47%