

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

3:KSS:gra  
5750  
6 June 1968

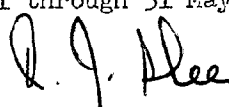
From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 13 (Attn: S-3)

Subj: Command Chronology, submission of

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.1A  
(b) WgO 5750.1B  
(c) GruO 5750.1D

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

1. In accordance with reference (a) through (c), enclosure (1) is herewith submitted for the period 1 through 31 May 1968.

  
D. J. SLEE

VMFA-323

CMD CHRON

MAY 1968

COMMAND CHRONOLOGYUNIT: Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323Location: Chu Lai Air Base, Republic of VietnamPeriod: 1-31 May 1968Part I - Organization Data1. Commander and Staff

| <u>Name</u>         | <u>Billet</u>           | <u>Rank</u> | <u>Period</u> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Don J. SLEE         | Commanding Officer      | LtCol       | 16-31 May     |
| Daniel I. CARROLL   | Executive Officer       | Major       | 1-31 May      |
| Henry G. MILLER Jr  | Operations Officer      | Major       | 1-6 May       |
| Karl S. SMITH       | Operations Officer      | Major       | 7-31 May      |
| Edward R. BAILEY    | S-1 (Administration)    | Major       | 1-31 May      |
| Philip R. KNUSE     | S-4 (Logistics)         | Captain     | 1-8 May       |
| Larry T. HIGGINS    | S-4 (Logistics)         | Captain     | 9-31 May      |
| Warren A. FERDINAND | Maintenance Officer     | Major       | 1-31 May      |
| Rabun N. PATRICK    | Aviation Safety Officer | Captain     | 1-8 May       |
| Philip R. KNUSE     | Aviation Safety Officer | Captain     | 9-31 May      |

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 OfficerDate of Office

|                                     |                           |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lieutenant Colonel Harry T. HAGAMAN | 13 Oct 1967 - 16 May 1968 |
| Lieutenant Colonel Don J. SLEE      | 16 May 1968 - Present     |

3. Average Monthly Strengtha. Marine Officers

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| (1) Naval Aviators.....           | 14  |
| (2) Naval Flight Officers.....    | 15  |
| (3) Aviation Ground Officers..... | 4   |
| (4) Marine Enlisted.....          | 277 |
| (5) Naval Enlisted.....           | 0   |

Enclosure (1)

b. Other Officers

(1) Naval Officers (NC).....1

4. Important Visitors to the Command

a. Brigadier General Homer S. HILL, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Deputy Commander visited Marine Aircraft Group 13 on 16 May 1968 to participate in the Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323 change of command ceremony.

b. General C. W. ADAMS, USA Commander, US Forces Vietnam, visited the Chu Lai Air Base and Marine Aircraft Group 13 on 30 May 1968 as part of his assumption of Commander of US Forces, Republic of Vietnam.

## Part II - Narrative Summary

The month of May 1968 was the tenth month of combat operations for VMFA 323 on its current tour of duty in the Republic of Vietnam. The weather was excellent over most of I Corps except for occasional layers of low clouds in the Khe Sanh and Dong Ha areas. This caused some flights to be diverted to other targets within I Corps. This local condition had no significant effect on overall flight operations during this reporting period.

VMFA 323 had nine days of the air to ground alert during the month of May. Increased availability coupled with the enthusiastic efficiency of maintenance made May the most active month in terms of combat sorties flown since October 1967.

The value and accuracy of air to ground ordnance delivery by VMFA 323 received new significance and incentive when this squadron, and others in the Chu Lai area were called upon to destroy confirmed enemy rocket sites which were within sight of the airfield. These rocket sites were determined to be part of the complex that had fired several volleys of 122MM rockets into the Chu Lai Air Base. It is to be noted that no attacks by rocket have occurred since May 28, the date of attack by concerted air strikes, and the time of this writing. Numerous secondary explosions and fires resulted from this action. The efforts of VMFA 323 were particularly rewarding to our enlisted personnel who were able to watch the air strikes from the squadron revetment area. Their individual feelings of satisfaction increased with each bomb, rocket, and napalm delivery.

On 16 May 1968, command of VMFA 323 passed to Lieutenant Colonel D. J. SLEE. In precise ceremony the new squadron commander pledged his efforts to the squadron and called for the continuing excellent support of officers and men.

Enclosure (1)

Marine Aircraft Group 13 received enemy rocket fire on May 5th, 14th, and 23rd resulting in damage to four aircraft of VMFA 323. There was fortunately no injury to personnel of this squadron. One round impacted roughly 51 yards from the squadron ready room but caused only an increased interest in secure bunkers.

During May, flight crews enjoyed the highest sortie rate of the current Vietnam tour. An increase in aircraft availability coupled with a limited number of aircrews resulted in more flights per crew member. As the hours per aircrew increased so did his enthusiasm. Repeated exposure of aircraft to daily close air support missions and the ground fire that ensues resulted in seven aircraft receiving hits by enemy fire. No aircrew injury or loss of aircraft occurred.

During May VMFA 323 supported thirteen different operations in the I Corps area. Of these flights the most noteworthy was on 4 May. A flight of two F4B aircraft manned by Maj. R. R. BAILEY and WFO 1/Lt H. A. HILL with Capt. R. L. THOMAS Jr. and WFO 1/Lt R. D. MARON near Dong Ha received a battle damage assessment as follows; 4 bunkers destroyed, 4 structures destroyed, 2 secondary explosions, and 37 killed by air. For this action both pilots have been nominated for the Distinguished Flying Cross. Both Naval Flight Officers have been nominated for the single mission air medal.

During May the combined squadron battle damage assessment received from controlling agencies is delineated as follows:

|                                  |                            |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Enemy Killed by Air (MIA).....   | 87 Confirmed/16 Probable   |
| Military Structures.....         | 232 Destroyed/32 Damaged   |
| Bunkers.....                     | 127 Destroyed/28 Damaged   |
| Secondary Explosions.....        | 48                         |
| Fighting Holes.....              | 12 Destroyed/10 Damaged    |
| Road Cuts.....                   | 2                          |
| Mortar Positions.....            | 1 Destroyed                |
| Rocket Positions.....            | 6 Destroyed                |
| Automatic Weapons Positions..... | 6 Destroyed/1 Damaged      |
| Trench Line (Meters).....        | 1,405 Destroyed/50 Damaged |
| Trails (Meters).....             | 100 Destroyed              |
| AAA Sites.....                   | 1 Destroyed                |
| Secondary Fires.....             | 9                          |
| Bridges.....                     | 1 Destroyed                |
| Storage Area.....                | 1 Destroyed                |

### Part III - Significant Events

|                      |            |         |   |          |    |
|----------------------|------------|---------|---|----------|----|
| 1. <u>Personnel:</u> | Joined     | Officer | 6 | Enlisted | 11 |
|                      | Dropped    | Officer | 2 | Enlisted | 2  |
|                      | Promotions | Officer | 1 | Enlisted | 11 |

Enclosure (1)

2. Awards: Air Medal..... 90  
 Distinguished Flying Cross.... 1  
 Navy Achievement Medal..... 1 (V)  
 Meritorious Masts..... 11

3. Air Operations: May Statistical Summary

|                        |       |   |
|------------------------|-------|---|
| Total Combat Sorties   | 589   | # Group/Other Pilots Flying - 7         |
| Total Flights          | 617   | Average Group/Other Pilots Sorties - 13 |
| Total Combat Hours     | 628.3 | Average Group/Other Pilots Hours - 15.1 |
| Total Flight Hours     | 660.9 | Average NFO Strenght - 14               |
| Average Pilot Strength | 11    | Average NFO Hours - 45.1                |
| Average Pilot Sorties  | 47    | High Day (Sorties) 2 May - 33           |
| Average Pilot Hours    | 55.5  | High Day (Hours) 2 May - 37.2           |

4. Maintenance: May Monthly Averages

Aircraft Assigned..... 19  
 Average Aircraft on Board..... 16  
 Average Aircraft Available..... 8  
 Average Hours for Aircraft on Board... 41.3

Aircraft Transferred/Received:

| <u>BuNo</u> | <u>To/From</u>  | <u>Date</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 152313      | From VF-21      | 7 May 68    |
| 152270      | From VF-21      | 7 May 68    |
| 151483      | To VF-21        | 7 May 68    |
| 152322      | To VF-21        | 7 May 68    |
| 152313      | To Shoehorn MCD | 23 May 68   |

Aircraft Sustaining Battle Damage:

| <u>Incident No</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Damage</u> | <u>BuNo</u> | <u>Side No</u> |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| 7-68A              | 4 May 68    | Bravo         | 152275      | WS-15          |
| 4-68G              | 5 May 68    | Echo          | 148406      | WS-5           |
| 5-68G              | 5 May 68    | Echo          | 152275      | WS-15          |
| 6-68G              | 5 May 68    | Echo          | 152270      | WS-8           |
| 45-68I             | 11 May 68   | Echo          | 149449      | WS-6           |
| 46-68I             | 11 May 68   | Echo          | 151012      | WS-18          |
| 7-68G              | 23 May 68   | Echo          | 148405      | WS-16          |
| 47-68I             | 25 May 68   | Echo          | 152270      | WS-8           |
| 48-68I             | 25 May 68   | Echo          | 148405      | WS-16          |
| 49-68I             | 27 May 68   | Echo          | 152245      | WS-12          |
| 50-68I             | 28 May 68   | Echo          | 152211      | WS-4           |

Enclosure (1)

5. Ordnance: May Expenditures by Type and Number

| <u>Type</u>               | <u>Number</u> | <u>Tons</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Mk 81 250lb Snakeye Bomb  | 1648          | 242.9       |
| Mk 82 500lb L/D G.P. Bomb | 35            | 9.3         |
| Mk 82 500lb Snakeye Bomb  | 2586          | 740.0       |
| Mk 117 L/D G.P. Bomb      | 495           | 197.5       |
| Mk 77 500lb Napalm Bomb   | 516           | 134.3       |
| 2.75inch F.F.A.R.         | 166           | 31.9        |
| 5inch ZUNI Rocket         | 1291          | 60.3        |
| D-27 CEU                  | 8             | 3.2         |

Total Ordnance Pieces Loaded.....7172

Total Ordnance Pieces Dropped/Shot.....6745

Total Bombs Loaded.....5485

Total Bombs Dropped.....5288

Total Tonnage.....1419.4

Total Tonnage (Bombs).....1327.2

Drop Percentages.....96.45%

Enclosure (1)