

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 362
Marine Aircraft Group 36
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPac
FPO, San Francisco 96602

10:REM:tal
5750
5 Sep 1966

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 36
Subj: Command Chronology for the period 1-31 August 1966
Ref: (a) WgO 5750.1B
(b) GruO 5750.1A
Encl: (1) Command Chronology, month of August 1966
1. In accordance with references (a) and (b), enclosure (1) is submitted.

M. B. Armstrong
M. B. ARMSTRONG

MM-362

Comm Chron

Aug 1966

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 362
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COMMAND CHRONOLOGY, 1 AUGUST 1966 - 31 AUGUST 1966

Part One - ORGANAZATIONAL DATA

1. Squadron Staff:

Commanding Officer	LtCol ALFRED F. GARROTTO	1-31Aug66
Executive Officer	Major RAYMOND L. DUVALL	1-31Aug66
Administrative Officer	Capt DONALD B. HIRSCH	1-31Aug66
Intelligence Officer	Capt ROBERT C. WILLEUMIER	1-31Aug66
Operations Officer	Major RICHARD P. BRAY	1-31Aug66
Material Officer	Capt WILLIAM C. MCCLUSKEY	1-31Aug66
Maintenance Officer	Major PETER C. SCAGLIONE	1-31Aug66

2. Task Organization:

a. Throughout the reporting period, HMM-362 functioned alongside HMM-361 and HMM-364 at MCAF, Ky Ha, Republic of Vietnam as a helicopter transport squadron in MAG-36.

3. Average Strength:

Marine Officers:	51	(44 Naval Aviators)
Marine Enlisted:	157	
Navy Officers:	1	
Navy Enlisted:	0	
Total:	209	

Part Two - NARRATIVE

August of 1966 brought the beginnings of additional responsibility for HMM-362, as the Republic of Korea's Marine Corps elements began moving into the area immediately south of the Song Tra Bong and east of Highway One. At the beginning of the month there were only a few scattered aerial reconnaissance flights for the ROKMC, but by the end of the month a significant portion of the squadron's daily flight time was being devoted to support of that organization.

For the first half of August the watchword was "Colorado" as Operation COLORADO began in Quang Tin Province on 6 August. Between then and the end of the operation on 15 August, HMM-362 encountered a higher volume of accurate enemy fire than during any previous similar period. In typical fashion, however, the Ugly Angels continued to finish the job, earning several nominations for high personal decorations.

The opening Marine strike of COLORADO, a composite MAG-36 and MAG-16 lift led by 362 CO, LtCol A. F. GARROTTO, placed a Marine battalion in the vicinity of Hiep Duc. Approximately 90 aircraft were involved in the strike, making it by far the largest lift to originate in the Chu Lai area. On this day as on every day thereafter, operations were made more hazardous by afternoon thunderstorms which brought low ceilings and visibility.

The Marines moved east from Hiep Duc on 7 and 8 August, having little direct contact but effectively forcing the VC TO MOVE EAST AND NORTH into airstrikes and artillery. Major Peter C. SCAGLIONE and 1stLt Walter W. SMITH were wounded in separate incidents on 9 August as the squadron continued to fly at maximum effort for COLORADO.

On 10 August the Marines made their first solid contact with "Charley" and the Ugly Angels were intimately involved. Three companies of 1/5 came upon the back side of a VC regiment waiting to spring an ambush only three miles northwest of the Logistic Support Area at Tam Ky. As the heavily engaged Marines began to incur casualties, Capt G. W. LEE and 1stLt E. E. LAITALA were launched to effect medical evacuation. As casualties mounted, the Ugly Angel pilots were thwarted in their attempts to locate and land in the pick-up zone by heavy enemy fire and sporadic O/O weather conditions. After several attempts Capt LEE and 1stLt LAITALA made their first pick-up, penetrating low clouds and a hail of fire. On their second trip to aid the beleaguered Marines, Capt LEE's plane was hit by enemy fire and forced to return to Tam Ky. Lt LAITALA continued to fly, riding what ground troops later described as "a solid sheet of tracers" into and out of the zone each time.

Meanwhile, Major R. L. DUVALL and Capt R. J. SHEEHAN launched to aid in evacuating the wounded Marines. Major DUVALL's aircraft was down for bullet holes after the first few trips, leaving Capt SHEEHAN to fly independently. After 10 trips for medevacs Capt SHEEHAN took advantage of a lull to inspect his aircraft, YL-54, discovering that a direct hit through the carburetor was one of four he had received during the course of his flight.

Lt LAITALA continued flying alone, eventually picking up 27 seriously wounded Marines. Miraculously, his aircraft was never hit. On each trip after the first, Lt LAITALA carried ammunition and medical supplies from the LSA to the ground forces.

When the medevac was finally completed, Lt LAITALA joined Capts R. C. WILLEUMIER and R. A. BRACY and aircraft of another squadron in lifting a company of reinforcements for 1/5, a lift which continued after dark through unrelenting fire. Sgt Peter B. JENSEN, a portside gunner, was wounded slightly when an enemy round ricocheted off his flack vest.

During the night of 11-12 August the LSA was mortared by the VC, causing several casualties. As a result of this attack, HMM-362 flew continuous airborne cover over the LSA from dusk to dawn, 12-13 August.

On 13 August Capt R. A. BRACY and 1stLt J. R. STRATTON flew medevacs for a Vietnamese Marine battalion surrounded by an estimated VC regiment near the center of the Phuoc Valley. Capt BRACY's aircraft received 4 hits, Lt STRATTON's had 17 holes, but the mission was successfully carried out.

On 14 August 1stLt J. P. LODGE's YL-50 was shot down near Tam Ky while resupplying 3/5 at dusk. Guarded by 3/5 overnight, the aircraft was repaired by 362's field maintenance crew the following morning and flown to safety. The squadron flew 605.9 hours during COLORADO, logging 1980 sorties and carrying 3028 troops and 107.3 tons of cargo.

With COLORADO ended, the Ugly Angels began a series of I Corps resupplies, carrying 684 passengers and 248.94 tons of cargo in 328.6 hours. On one of these on 18 August, YL-31 (Capt R. A. BRACY) experienced engine failure and landed in a rice paddy north of Duc Pho. The unfortunate site was squarely in the middle of an estimated VC battalion. A company was inserted to guard the aircraft while the field maintenance crew effected repairs but the VC managed to riddle the aircraft. Four members of the maintenance crew were slightly wounded while the aircraft was being stripped. All parts except the tail pylon were lifted out by CH-46's. The aircraft sustained overhaul damage from 66 bullet holes.

On 20 August HMM-362 resupplied the Popular Forces outpost at Tra Cao, which was out of food, water and ammunition after several days of VC pressure. Three aircraft were hit by enemy fire but all supplies were landed successfully.

Operation JACKSON was commenced in the Song Tra Bong Valley on 27 August and ended soon thereafter with no significant enemy contact. In support of JACKSON the squadron flew 62.6 hours and 191 sorties, carrying 473 troops and 2.9 tons of cargo.

On 31 August the Ugly Angels bid farewell to LtCol A. F. GARROTTO who became MAG-36 S-4. Relieving him was Major Marshall B. ARMSTRONG, who was heartily welcomed aboard by all hands at a party on the beach during the afternoon.

Part Three - SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1. Personnel

a. The squadron was joined by 6 Naval Aviators and 2 ground officers during August. Two pilots were transferred.

b. Enlisted promotions for the month included 3 men to PFC, 19 to LCpl, 10 to Cpl and 1 to SSgt.

2. Awards - recommendations

1 Silver Star Medal

- 5 Distinguished Flying Crosses
- 8 Navy Commendation Medals
- 1 Secretary of the Navy Commendation for Achievement
- 1 Commendation Certificate

3. Awards - received

- 1 Silver Star Medal
- 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses
- 280 Air Medals
- 3 Navy Commendation Medals
- 8 Purple Hearts
- 2 Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star
- 2 Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Bronze Star

4. Aircraft

a. HMM-362 gained two new aircraft during the month, losing two to O&R. Number of aircraft assigned ranged from 22 to 24 with an average daily availability of 83%.

b. During HMM-362's first year in Vietnam, a period ending 31 August 1966, aircraft availability averaged 82%.

5. Squadron Operational Statistics 1-31 August 1966

- a. Flight Hours - 1768.6
- b. Sorties - 5656
- c. Cargo carried - 424.8 tons
- d. Troops/pax - 7952
- e. Medevacs - 338
- f. Casualties - 8 WIA