

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 364
Marine Aircraft Group 16
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPac
FPO, San Francisco, California 96602

3:FEEL:adr
5750
3 January 1971
Ser: 03A00371

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From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 16
Subj: Command Chronology for period 1 through 31 December 1970

Ref: (a) WgO 5750.4
(b) GruO 5750.1

Encl: ✓(1) Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 Command Chronology

1. In accordance with the provisions set forth in references(a) and (b) enclosures (1) is hereby submitted.
2. Downgrading instructions. Group 4, UNCLASSIFIED upon removal of enclosure (1).

N. R. Van Leeuwen
N. R. VAN LEEUWEN
By direction

MMH - 364 S & C FILE
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Copy 2 of 8

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MMH-364

DEC 1970

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COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

1 December 1970 to 31 December 1970

INDEX

- PART I ORGANIZATIONAL DATA
- PART II NARRATIVE SUMMARY
- PART III SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS
- PART IV SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (NONE)

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PART I
ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

1. DESIGNATIONCOMMANDER

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364

LtCol H. W. STEADMAN

2. LOCATION

1-31 December 1970. Marble Mountain Air Facility, Da Nang, RVN.

3. STAFF OFFICERS

Executive Officer	Major N. R. VAN LEEUWEN	1-31 December 1970
Administrative Officer	Major D. S. JENSEN	1-31 December 1970
Operations Officer	Major J. M. SOLAN	1-31 December 1970
Aircraft Maintenance Officer	Major G. F. DOOLEY	1-31 December 1970
Logistics Officer	Captain D. W. NELSON	1-31 December 1970
NATOPS Officer	Captain A. J. GARCIA	1-31 December 1970
Flight Surgeon	Lt USN (MC) R. A. MOYER	1-31 December 1970
Intelligence Officer	1stLt J. C. MORHARDT	1-31 December 1970
Motor Transport Officer	1stLt D. COOPER	1-31 December 1970
Sergeant Major	SgtMaj A. J. RAPPOLD	1-31 December 1970

4. Average Monthly Strength

	<u>USMC</u>	<u>USN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Officer	44	1	0	45
Enlisted	167	0	0	167

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3 January 1971

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

It was an extremely difficult zone due to the almost vertical hill and the high trees in the area. As the medevac was being hoisted aboard the left gunner lost his intercom and was unable to speak to the rest of the crew. Despite his frantic efforts to warn the pilot of the trees around the area the gunner had to watch as one tree was getting a Christmas tree trim job. At the completion of the medevac Lt. BARON pulled out of the zone and started to gain airspeed when a tremendous beat developed. He notified the chase aircraft that he would meet up with him at LZ Ross where they switched the medevac off to the chase for further transport to a medical facility. Upon shut-down, it was easy to see what caused the vibration. There were four blades heavily damaged by the tree trimming. It should be noted it was an almost impossible zone, under enemy fire and yet Lt. BARON completed the extract and saved the Marine's life. The honors were many this day but the unmentioned honors go to the maintenance section who somehow had the aircraft for 17 commitments despite temporarily losing three aircraft due to hostile fire and blade damage.

On the 19th of December, again on mission 86, HMM-364 ran into trouble. LtCol STEADMAN and his wingman, Lt LEEK were doing a flip flop of troops from LZ Ross to AFB3343 in the Que Son mountains. LtCol STEADMAN was on short final to the zone when he lost power and settled into the trees and rocks. Immediately his wingman flew back to LZ Ross to drop his troops so he could stand by for any medevacs. Upon arriving back on the scene, Lt. LEEK orbited overhead while the ground forces were proceeding with rescue operations. The aircraft was engulfed in flames and was exploding from G-4 and ammunition burning aboard the aircraft. While the injured were being brought to a clearing, Lt. BRANDT arrived on the scene with his wingman, Lt. MORHARDT. Since Lt. BRANDT had a Corpsman aboard he went into the zone. While he was in the zone ammo was still exploding, but this didn't stop him from picking up three emergency medevacs. The next medevac available required a Neil Robertson so Lt. MORHARDT went in and dropped a rig to the people on the ground. He waited until the man was on the rig and went back into the zone and hoisted him aboard. About this time, Lt. BRANDT was back from delivering his medevacs. The ground forces informed Lt. BRANDT and Lt. LEEK that due to the difficulty of the terrain it would be another 20 minutes before they could get any medevacs up to a clearing. Lt. LEEK flew down into the crash area and dropped off a Neil Robertson rig after which the gun birds, Lt. BRANDT and Lt. LEEK flew back to Baldy to refuel. Upon arriving back on the scene, Lt. BRANDT went in and pulled out three more emergency medevacs. Lt. LEEK followed five minutes later and pulled out one emergency and four routine medevacs. Finally, Lt. MORHARDT went in and pulled the rest of the injured out. In all there were 8 emergency, and 12 priority and routine medevacs.

A word of mention about LtCol STEADMAN. Despite his injuries, he stayed on the scene and directed rescue operations. Undoubtedly, his quick thinking saved the lives of Lt. DAVIS and LCpl TROSTERUD who were trapped in the aircraft. ~~DECLASSIFIED~~

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Ser: 03A00371

PART IINARRATIVE SUMMARY

The "Purple Foxes" of HMM-364 flew 1143.4 hours during the month of December. This effort represented 1153 tasks for 4505 sorties including the transport of 9879 passengers/troops and 212.3 tons of cargo. One hundred and one missions were flown in support of two hundred and thirty two casualties. These casualties represented 94 emergency, 54 priority, and 76 routine evacuees.

The "Purple Foxes" received fire 10 times during the month and had 10 hits in their aircraft. It seemed that December was going to be a pretty quiet month the way everything went for the first two weeks. The only real excitement occurred on the 6th of December when the Purple Foxes beat HMM 262 in a football game to take the Group trophy. This is a real tribute to the men of HMM-364, who, despite the heavy commitments and never having the same people on the field from game to game, were still able to compile a 9-1-1 record.

It was bound to happen sooner or later. Despite a quiet beginning, on the 16th of December the dam broke. The Purple Foxes had a total commitment of 17 aircraft that day and despite the subsequent happenings they upheld those commitments completing every mission.

The day started out with Captain BLADES leading the mission 86 flight. His section inserted a reactionary force to try and trap about 30 enemy operating at BT034438. After that was completed his section returned to FSB Baldy where the rest of his flight was briefed on inserting more troops in the area. Again Captain BLADES launched but this time with a Division. There were two one bird zones that the division was to operate in. As one aircraft approached each zone everything was going fine. Captain GARCIA was approaching a zone at BT034438. He was no sooner in the zone than he received heavy automatic weapons fire. His crew chief, Sgt OTTO, was shot in the neck and Captain GARCIA aborted his portion of the mission to fly the injured crew chief to medical facilities. While the helo gunships were searching the area for enemy, the rest of the troop insert was completed.

Not more than 30 minutes later, Lt. TENNENT was flying to AT966394 to extract an emergency medevac by jungle penetrator. Just as Lt. TENNENT brought his aircraft into a hover over the zone, he received heavy fire, one round of which hit his crew chief Cpl MORRIS in the leg.

Lt TENNENT aborted his medevac to get his crew chief medical attention. His wingman, Lt. BARON, took over and after waiting for another H-46 and gunships to arrive on the scene, he went into the zone.

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Enclosure (1)

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3 January 1971
Ser: 03A00371

The probable cause of the crash is direct enemy action. Marines on the ground and in the aircraft reported tracers and heard firing as the aircraft approached the zone.

The 24th of December rolled around and Bob HOPE and his show were in the Da Nang area once again. Lt BARON and Lt CAHILL had the honor of flying Bob HOPE and his cast around for the shows in the Da Nang area. These are combat pilots?

For the second time in as many years HMM-364 extended the hand of friendship to our brothers in field. Major VAN LEEUWEN and Lt GRASSO along with Major SOLAN and Lt TUCKER flew cold beer and soda to the grunts in the field. This beer and soda was donated by the men of 364 and the crew of the two aircraft devoted their off duty time to fly it to them in the field. Needless to say, the grunts were not expecting it and for them it was a welcome Christmas Eve surprise.

The following day again the Purple Foxes spent their time bringing a little bit of Christmas to the field. They delivered hot chow to the grunts and their effort was appreciated by the CO of the 1st Recon Bn as evidenced by his comment, "My sincerest thanks for bringing Christmas to my men in the field - where would we be without the "Swift Birds".

PART III

SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- 6 December 1970 - While landing in a zone (AT 955402) on mission 86 the pilot struck a stump and rock in the zone puncturing a hole in the ramp and stub wing. Returned to LZ BALDY with no further incident.
- 8 December 1970 - During a medevac in poor weather and low altitude the pilot of A/C 153376 received fire resulting in (1) one hole in the nose, (1) one in the blade and (1) one in the cabin area. (AT 905538)
- 16 December 1970 - The pilot of aircraft 154014 flying mission 86 was on short final into a zone at 034281 when he received (4) hits in the cabin area injuring the crew chief.
- 16 December 1970 - The pilot of aircraft 153350 was hovering in a zone at AT 966394 performing a medevac extract. Fire was received resulting in (3) three hits in the cabin area, (1) one hitting crew chief in leg.
- 16 December 1970 - At AT 966394 the pilot of A/C 154807 damaged forward blades while performing a jungle penetrator extract.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

3 January 1971
Ser: 03AC0371

19 December 1970 - The pilot of 153351 received fire on short final zone at AT 963343 power was lost and aircraft settled into trees. The aircraft caught fire and was a total loss. All crew members were injured with the co-pilot, crew chief and a gunner evacuated out of Vietnam.

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Enclosure (1)