

PROV MAG-39 SVC  
Control No 443-68

HEADQUARTERS  
Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39  
1st Marine Aircraft Wing  
Fleet Marine Force Pacific  
FPO San Francisco, 96602

3:RRR:gac  
5750  
Ser: 03A260-68  
16 September 1968

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From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding General, First Marine Aircraft Wing (G-3)  
Subj: Command Chronology for the period of 1-31 August 1968; submission of  
Ref: (a) WgO 5750.1C

- Encl: J(1) Command Chronology for Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39
- J(2) Command Chronology for Provisional Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 39
- J(3) Command Chronology for Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161
- J(4) Command Chronology for Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262
- J(5) Command Chronology for Marine Observation Squadron 6
- J(6) Command Chronology for Marine Air Traffic Control Unit 62
- J(7) Command Chronology for Marine Air Traffic Control Unit 66

*Filed  
Sep*

1. In accordance with the instructions contained in reference (a), enclosures (1) through (7) are submitted herewith.

*W. Sienko*  
W. SIENKO

1st MAW S&C No.	Copy No.
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PART 1 ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

1. Staff

a. Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39

(1)	Col.	Walter SIENKO	1-31 Aug 68	C.O.
(2)	LtCol.	Louis A. GULLING	1-31 Aug 68	X.O.
(3)	Capt.	Lawrence E. TANKSLEY	1-31 Aug 68	S-1/Adjutant
(4)	Maj.	John A. HATHAWAY	1-31 Aug 68	S-2
(5)	Maj.	Arthur C. CRANE	1-31 Aug 68	S-3
(6)	Maj.	David C. WORKMON	1-31 Aug 68	S-4
(7)	Maj.	William A. McGAW Jr.	1-31 Aug 68	Avn Safety O
(8)	LCdr.	Rodney R. SCHEER	1-31 Aug 68	Chaplain
(9)	Lt.	Drewry H. MORRIS	1-31 Aug 68	Flight Surgeon

b. Provisional Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 39

(1) See page 1 of enclosure (1) to enclosure (2)

c. Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161

(1) See page 1 of enclosure (1) to enclosure (3)

d. Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262

(1) See page 1 of enclosure (1) to enclosure (4)

e. Marine Observation Squadron 6

(1) See page 1 of enclosure (1) to enclosure (5)

f. Marine Air Traffic Control Unit 62

(1) See page 1 of enclosure (1) to enclosure (6)

g. Marine Air Traffic Control Unit 66

(1) See page 1 of enclosure (1) to enclosure (7)

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- 2. Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39  
First Marine Aircraft Wing  
Fleet Marine Force Pacific, FPO San Francisco, 96602  
1-31 August 1968

- 3. Average Monthly Strength

Marine Officers	205	Marine Enlisted	1040
Navy Officers	5	Navy Enlisted	17

- 4. Important Visitors:

General LEONARD F. CHAPMAN Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps  
Major General PAUL J. FONTANA, Deputy Commanding General, FMF, PACIFIC

PART II

During the month of 1-31 August 1968, units of Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39 supported the following Operations: KENTUCKY, LANCASTER II, SCOTLAND II and NAPOLEON/SALINE. Flying in support of Task Force Hotel and Operation LANCASTER II utilized most of the resources of the Group, with only minor troop and logistical requirements in the SCOTLAND II TAOR. Operation KENTUCKY did not account for many hours of the Group, though costly in aircraft and personnel.

Weather has not been a hampering factor except for the heavy cross wind conditions which cut down on the O-1 operations.

Statistically, Provisional Marine Aircraft Group 39 flew 5,072.5 hours in 18,088 sorties. There were 35,037 troops carried, and 2,631.2 tons of cargo, in a total of 745 med-evac missions flown there were 418 emergencies, 668 priorities and 578 routine med-evacs carried.

Aboard the airfield, the Enlisted Club was opened in the old Mess-hall and the construction of the Officers' Club was completed and is now open.

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PART III SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Chronological Sequence of Events

1 August 1968. The UH-1E Gunships of VMO-6 started the month with 86.5 hours and the sighting of rocket positions as they fired on the Rockpile. Suppressive fire was delivered but no damage assessment could be made at the time.

3 August 1968. The VMO-6 UH-1E Gunships assigned to cover a scheduled troop lift were diverted to an emergency extraction of a recon team. Working under a 400' ceiling, the initial section of gunships were unable to provide adequate cover for the CH-46's of HMM-161. The CH-46's took heavy small arms fire on approach and waved off. After moving the LZ 150 meters, and with the arrival of another section of gunships on station, the CATTLECALL aircraft again went down and was able to effect the pick up, with the guns delivering effective suppressive fire.

4 August 1968. The CH-46's of HMM-161 and HMM-262 covered by the gunships of VMO-6 worked on two troop lifts carrying 1100 troops and 19.1 tons of cargo. An active mortar position spotted by the O-1 aircraft of VMO-6 was taken under fire by the HUEY gunships resulting in two KBA's and two secondary explosions.

6 August 1968. During a recon insertion with aircraft of VMO-6 and HMM-262, the second CH-46 took fire on the approach, knocking out one of his engines. Due to his load, the CH-46 could not remain airborne and a controlled crash landing was made in a thick jungle canopy. After destroying the radios and with the aid of the recon team's radio, the crew plus the recon team moved to the west of the crash site to a stream bed. The lead CH-46 piloted by Captain HERBERG went into the stream bed and successfully picked up the crew and the team under the face of the enemy fire.

At Quang Tri Airfield, the crash crew responded to a fire on an Army UH-1. The fire was extinguished with no injuries to flight crew or the crash crew personnel.

8 August 1968. Recon insertions and extractions were the order of the day, along with logistical support of Task Force Hotel based at VANDERGRIFT Combat Base, formerly LZ STUD. The UH-1E slick flew 5.0 hours carrying the CG, 3rd MarDiv to nearly all the fire bases in his TAOR to visit his Field Commanders.

9 August 1968. A night emergency extraction of a recon team surrounded by NVA was accomplished through the teamwork of HMM-262 and VMO-6.

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14 August 1968. Recon extractions again proved to be the highlight of the day as they were successful in an emergency situation due largely to the close coordination of the VMO-6 and HMM-262 aircrews. Suppressive fire by SEAWORTHY kept the NVA fire minimal as the CHATTERBOX aircraft went into a zone under fire to extract a team that had one man wounded. The extraction was completed successfully without further injuries to personnel or battle damage to the aircraft.

15 August 1968. VMO-6 gunships were launched to support a recon team that was surrounded by NVA. The two gunships operated in marginal weather created by a rainstorm to effect the relief of the recon team by a company of Marines supported by tanks. After rearming and expending their ordnance three times, the units were joined, due largely to the direction of the SEAWORTHY section which achieved 8 KBA's during the mission.

16 August 1968. All the squadrons of ProvMAG-39 flew in support of Operation LANCASTER II, with several emergency missions in the form of troop lifts and resupply. HMM-262 sustained several battle damaged aircraft and wounded crewmen in efforts to accomplish their mission often in minimal weather.

17 August 1968. Troop lifts were the order of the day, with 1986 troops carried. The Group flew 173.5 flight hours in 673 sorties.

19 August 1968. A tactical troop lift along the southern boundary of the DMZ occupied most of the assets of ProvMAG-39. Going into zones which had been prepped by artillery and airstrikes, all of the CH-46 aircraft took fire on the approaches to the various LZ's, and casualties were sustained. During the afternoon, one CH-46 of HMM-262 was destroyed by enemy fire as he attempted to land, resulting in the death of the crew chief and two gunners and serious injury to the two pilots.

21 August 1968. A recon extraction proved to be the highlight of the day when the team to be picked up spotted several NVA around their zone. The UH-1E gunships of VMO-6 expended their ordnance on the NVA and directed a FINGERPRINT O-1 from VMO-6 to their location. After the gunbirds departed the FINGERPRINT pilot ran a flight of fixed wing on the NVA position. Upon returning, the gunbirds fired suppressive fire as the CH-46 went into the recon's LZ and completed the extraction without further incident.

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22 August 1968. Resupply of 3rd MarDiv units in the field was hampered by enemy fire. During a recon team insertion, a HMM-161 CH-46 took heavy small arms fire which killed one crew member and wounded two others. An O-1 from VMO-6 was working with a Marine ground unit in contact with NVA. Directing airstrikes against the enemy, FINGERPRINT 49 was able to claim 3 bunkers and 10 NVA destroyed on one drop alone.

24 August 1968. While covering a resupply mission to Hill 950, two of the gun birds of VMO-6 discovered an enemy mortar position and destroyed it. In the evening, the CH-46's of HMM-262 received an emergency extract mission of a team surrounded by NVA and under attack. Once airborne, the mission was changed to pick up a platoon and reinforce the recon team. Trying to insert the platoon, the two CH-46's took heavy fire which wounded two crewmen and the co-pilot of the second aircraft. The pilot took the wounded back to their pick up point with one engine knocked out and transferred the wounded to the lead aircraft. The pilot of the second aircraft then managed to get the battle damaged aircraft back to Quang Tri. Getting another aircraft and crew, the same section went out to continue the mission but the second aircraft crashed on the approach to the troop pick up zone, probably due to enemy fire. A CH-46 from HMM-161, assigned night med-evac, with the aid of VMO-6 gunships, located the crashed aircraft and landed to extract the crew. All of the med-evac crew except the pilot in command got out to rescue the crew, some of which were pinned in the wreckage. With a new section formed, the mission was again resumed, but forced to discontinue because of intense enemy fire in the zone.

25 August 1968. The recon team that had gotten into the trouble on the previous night was extracted by the CHATTERBOX aircraft of HMM-262 without sustaining any battle damage.

28 August 1968. Recon extractions again proved to be the highlight of the day. During an extraction of HASTY FOOT recon team, the gunbirds of VMO-6 fired suppressive fire on 3 to 4 .50CAL positions, enabling the CH-46's to make the extraction. After its successful completion, the VMO-6 section returned to register artillery on the NVA positions.

31 August 1968. The aircraft of ProvMAG-39 flew 159.8 flight hours to end the month, primarily in support of Operation LANCASTER II.

1. Personnel. Critical shortages exist as follows:

a. VMO-6

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16' childrens rubber swimming pool  
14 lbs. of clothing  
100 bars of soap  
3 truck loads of scrap lumber  
1 resettlement kit  
1 masonry kit  
1 blacksmith kit  
3 carpenter kits  
20 lbs. of candy

8. Intelligence

a. General. Intelligence support of Group Operations continued to expand during the month of August. The S-2 Officer was appointed Liaison Officer to the 3rd Marine Division G-2/G-3 and now makes weekly visits to the 3rd Marine Division CP to exchange ideas and promote better understanding between air and ground units in the planning and carrying out of air operations. Daily visits are made to 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion to exchange information and expand coordination of Recon insertions/ extractions. The Recon SITREP is picked up each morning and included in the S-2 portion of the Commanding Officer's morning briefing.

b. Statistics

Fire Incidents	100
Aircraft Hit	41
Aircraft Destroyed	4
Air Crew Casualties	33 WIA, 6 KIA
Spot Reports	10
Recon Inserts/Extracts	95

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c. Inspection

On 14 August, Wing G-2 conducted an A & M Inspection of the Group S-2. A grade of satisfactory was given, with noteworthy items noted as follows: An excellent display of current intelligence and situation maps for briefings, excellent dissemination of intelligence information, excellent liaison and coordination with other intelligence agencies, and the professional attitude and personal enthusiasm of the intelligence personnel toward their assigned duties.

d. Significant Intelligence Developments. During most of August the enemy generally avoided contact and initiated only small unit and harrassing or terror incidents in Quang Tri Province. Agent reports throughout the month indicated that a country-wide "Autumn-Winter Offensive" would start on 19 August, but the date was not met and new reports indicated that 2 September would be the new jump-off date. Dong Ha, Camp Carroll, Cua Viet and several other OP's were hit by artillery fire from the DMZ on 26 August causing minor damage and a small number of casualties. At 0100H on 23 August QTAB received 7-8 rounds of 122MM rockets, which impacted primarily in the VMO-6 and HMM-262 areas. There were no casualties, one plane received moderate damage, and all others received minor damage. Higher Headquarters said this attack, along with similar acts throughout I Corps, were the opening moves of the Autumn-Winter (Third) Offensive. At month's end, spoiling operations by 3rd Marine Division units denied the enemy ease of movement, the ability to mass, and ruined his resupply efforts on the coastal plain. Three divisional size units, with two more across the DMZ, still continued to menace Quang Tri as the month drew to a close.

9. Air Operations

a. August Totals

<u>CARGO</u>	<u>PAX</u>	<u>MEDEVACS</u>	<u>MEDEVAC MISSIONS</u>
2631.2 TONS	35,037	1,664	745
<u>FLIGHT HOURS</u>		<u>SORTIES</u>	
5,072.5		18,088	

10. Medical Department

a. The following statistics represent the activity of the Medical Department during the month of August 1968:

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