

Mite,

Yours

He was also the Air Liaison Officer with
the Fourth Marines out of Vandegrift Combat
Base in mid '69.

December 1994

Gary Roush
VPHA

Gary

Dear Gary,

I recently received the 1994 Membership Directory - Super job! The attempt to fill in all the "blanks" is an awesome task. Please allow me to contribute to our collective (pun intended) memories.

Helicopter Marine Medium Squadron 363, Red Lions, departed pier Echo, Long Beach Naval Yard, 11 Aug '65, on board the Landing Platform Helicopter Ship-5, Princeton. The ship was crammed full of Marine Aircraft Group-36 aircraft, support gear and personnel. I was the embarkation officer, so I was up close and personal with the cargo. We had a total of 105 aircraft lashed down top-side and on the hangar deck with just enough flight deck space available for very limited flight operations. Besides our UH-34Dogs, the inventory included a few H-37 Deuces, some AD Spads and F-5s (for the ARVN's, I think). We were enroute 20 days which included a few days stop-over in the Phillipines for training exercises.

HMM-363, with other elements of MAG-36, off-loaded a click or so north of Chu Lai in an undeveloped area that would soon become another great Marine beach-side vacation spot, Ky Ha, RVN. We went north to Da Nang for a few weeks and then moved south to Qui Nhon. Our mission was troop/cargo transport and Med Evac in support of various Army units including the 101st. We witnessed the "invasion" of the Korean Tiger Division and ROK Marines; they were a fantastic bunch of warriors. Our gun escorts were ~~Due~~ off, probably the 197th but I'm not sure. The squadron returned to Ky Ha in March, '66.

In April, HMM-363 and HMM-364, Purple Foxes, had a large pilot exchange. Soon after, the Foxes went aboard the LPH-5 again. We were on the Princeton for three months of clean living while supporting the Special Landing Force off the coast of I Corps. In July, we returned to the red mud of Ky Ha. Most of us returned to CONUS on individual orders in October of '66.

Obviously, memories of this fourteen-month tour include more than the few paragraphs above. Just wanted to send off a quick synopsis.

Dick Clifton

A fellow vet,

Dick Clifton M07449