

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 262  
Marine Aircraft Group 15  
Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade  
FPO San Francisco, 96601

S-3/TFO/wab  
3480  
03A25267  
9 September 1967

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From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commander, Task Group 79.5

Subj: Command Chronology, Period 23 August 1967 to 5 September 1967

Ref: (a) CTG 75.9 Operation Plan 120A-67

Encl: (1) Command Chronology

*✓ A/A, Opn BELT DRIVE, 27 Aug - 5 Sep 67*

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is hereby submitted.
2. This letter becomes unclassified upon removal of enclosure (1).

G. A. CORLISS

HMN-262

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23 Aug 1967

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

PART I

1. Organization Data

a. Commanding Officer	G. A. CORLISS, MAJ	23 Aug 67-5 Sep 67
b. Executive Officer	J. W. ALBER, MAJ	23 Aug 67-5 Sep 67
c. Operations Officer	D. L. ALTHOFF, MAJ	23 Aug 67-5 Sep 67
d. Aviation Safety Officer	G. L. LARKIN, MAJ	23 Aug 67-5 Sep 67
e. Logistics Officer	R. B. OREY, MAJ	23 Aug 67-5 Sep 67
f. Maintenance Officer	R. G. RITCHIE, MAJ	23 Aug 67-5 Sep 67
g. Intelligence Officer	L. R. MOYER, MAJ	23 Aug 67-31 Aug 67
	P. C. JAMES, 1/LT	1 Sep 67-5 Sep 67
h. "A" Flight Commander	F. H. KELLER, CAPT	23 Aug 67-5 Sep 67
i. "B" Flight Commander	H. L. KUNKEL, CAPT	23 Aug 67-5 Sep 67

2. Task Organization and Unit Location

a. HMM-262, Marine Aircraft Group 15, Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade, FPO San Francisco, California 96601.

3. Average Strength of Squadron

<u>NAVAL AVIATORS</u>	<u>AGO</u>	<u>ENLISTED</u>
37	4	187

4. Important Visitors to Squadron

a. None.

PART II

23 August 1967: HMM-262, under the command of Major G. A. CORLISS, embarked aboard the USS TRIPOLI(LPH-10), relieving HMM-265 as supporting squadron to CTG 79.5. All flight operations were in support of moving the squadron aboard from Marble Mountain Air Facility.

ENCLOSURE (1)

Thirteen HMM-262, CH-46A's executed a formation flyby at 1441H just prior to reporting aboard.

24 August 1967: HMM-262 conducted day and night carrier qualifications, flew two administrative runs and had an overfly of landing zone (YD400460) in support of a forthcoming operation.

A total of 16 crews were day qualified and 14 crews were night qualified. The squadron also made the 5000th landing aboard the USS TRIPOLI. The Crew - Pilot: CAPT F. H. KELLER, Co-Pilot: CAPT R. L. GATEWOOD, Crew Chief: CPL L. R. ARBOUR, Gunner: SSGT P. T. ANDERSON.

25 August 1967: HMM-262 flew four administrative and two logistic troop missions. Another overfly and further planning was also conducted in support of the forthcoming operation.

26 August 1967: HMM-262 launched one aircraft on an administrative hop to Da Nang. Also six aircraft were launched on Mission 82 which carried troops and cargo from Phu Bai to the ship.

27 August 1967: Operation BELT DRIVE commenced when the first heliborne wave of CH-46A's loaded with an entire company consisting of 213 troops from LPH-10 touched down in LZ "CARDINAL" at 0656H.

The second wave landed another company in LZ "WREN" at 0747H. No enemy fire was received during the landings.

At 1030H the third company was landed in LZ "CARDINAL". Eight aircraft were used and the lift was completed by 1150H. Fire was received and one hit taken at YD362456. Medical evacuations, resupply and local administrative missions were flown throughout this day.

28 August 1967: HMM-262 launched eight aircraft on resupply missions in support of Operation BELT DRIVE. There were several administrative missions and three Medical Evacuation Missions flown.

29 August 1967: HMM-262 launched four aircraft on a resupply mission in support of Operation BELT DRIVE. There were also three administrative and two Medical Evacuation missions flown.

30 August 1967: HMM-262 launched four aircraft in support of Operation BELT DRIVE and four aircraft for Dong Ha Augmentation. There were also several Medical Evacuation and administration missions flown.

ENCLOSURE (1)

31 August 1967: HMM-262 flew a total of 90.5 flight hours for the day in support of Operation BELT DRIVE, I CORPS and Dong Ha Augmentation. During one Medical Evacuation Mission, while the section was enroute to the USS TRIPOLI, the lead aircraft disintegrated in the air. Two pilots, two crewmen and one passenger (Med-Evac) were on board. There were no survivors.

1 September 1967: HMM-262 launched two aircraft in support of Operation BELT DRIVE and two aircraft for Dong Ha Augmentation. At 1035H all CH-46A's were recalled to the ship when word was received that all CH-46A's were grounded.

2-5 September 1967: HMM-262 pilots flew as co-pilots for VMO-6 and HMM-362 while CH-46A's were restricted to emergency operations only. Operation BELT DRIVE was terminated at 052000H.

### PART III

#### 1. Listing of Significant Events

##### a. Personnel

- (1) Transfers to HMM-262. None.
- (2) Transfers from HMM-262. None.
- (3) Deaths.
  - (a) One Major
  - (b) One First Lieutenant
  - (c) One Gunnery Sergeant
  - (d) One Lance Corporal
- (4) Promotion.
  - (a) One Sergeant to Staff Sergeant.
  - (b) Four Corporals to Sergeant.

ENCLOSURE (1)

b. Operations

(1) HMM-262 flew 386.1 flight hours, carried 2,447 troops and 82 tons of cargo in 910 sorties for the period 23 August 1967 - 5 September 1967.

(2) Operation BELT DRIVE -

Flight Hours	163.4
Sorties	417
Cargo	47.5 Tons
Troops	1,405
Med-Evac	79

(3) Dong Ha Augmentation -

Flight Hours	35.9
Sorties	84
Cargo	3.5 Tons
Troops	203
Med-Evac	25

(4) I Corps Support -

Flight Hours	15.3
Sorties	52
Cargo	700 lbs.
Troops	300

c. Training

- (1) One officer returned from Sea Survival School, Japan.
- (2) Two enlisted men returned from Jungle Environmental Survival School, NAS Cubi Point, P. I.

ENCLOSURE (1)

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- [REDACTED]
- (3) One enlisted man returned from Corrosion Control School, Tachikawa AFB, Japan.

d. Maintenance

- (1) Average availability for the period 23 August 1967 through 5 September 1967 was 94%.

e. Awards

- (1) Five Distinguished Flying Crosses.
- (2) One Single Mission Air Medal.
- (3) Four Purple Hearts.
- (4) One Secretary of the Navy Commendation of Achievement Award.

f. Informational Services

- (1) The ninth edition of "Tiger Tales", a monthly publication of HMM-262, was published.

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Marine Aircraft Group 15  
Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade  
FPO San Francisco, 96601

S-3/HLK/jmo  
3480  
003A25267  
9 September 1967

[REDACTED]

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commander, Task Group 79.5

Subj: Post Operation Report, Operation BELT DRIVE; submission of

Ref: (a) CTG 76.5 OPERATION PLAN 120A(A)-67

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following is submitted.
2. Chronology of Significant Events.

27 August 1967 (D-DAY)

Operation BELT DRIVE commenced when the first heliborne wave of 16 CH-46A's, loaded with an entire company consisting of 213 troops from LPH-10, touched down in LZ CARDINAL at 0654H. The next wave landed the second company in LZ WREN at 0747H. Both LZ's were prepped by First MAW aircraft and controlled by a UH-1E from VMO-6 who also furnished four UH-1E gunships to cover the CH-46A's. No fire was received in either zone. At 1030H the third company was landed in LZ CARDINAL. There were eight CH-46A's used and the lift was completed by 1157H. A provisional company from LSD-35 was also lifted to YD4047.

Medevacs, resupply and local administrative missions were flown throughout the day.

28 August 1967

Eight CH-46A's were used for resupply in support of Operation BELT DRIVE. There were three MEDEVAC missions flown. Administrative missions were also flown.

29 August 1967

Four CH-46A's were used for resupply in support of Operation BELT DRIVE. In addition, three administrative and two MEDEVAC missions were flown.

30 August 1967

Four CH-46A's were used for resupply in support of Operation BELT DRIVE. Four CH-46A's were launched to augment Dong Ha area operations. Administrative and MEDEVAC missions were flown throughout the day.

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DECLASSIFIED AND DOWNGRADED AT 5 YEAR INTERVALS;  
DECLASSIFIED AND DOWNGRADED AT 12 YEARS.  
DOD DIR 5200.10

Handwritten notes on the right margin: "HMM 262", "copy of Operation Plan 120A(A)-67", "Chronology of Significant Events".

31 August 1967

A total of 90.5 flight hours were flown in support of Operation BELT DRIVE, I CORPS, and Dong Ha.

During a MEDEVAC mission, the lead aircraft disintegrated in flight. There were no survivors from the four man crew and the one MEDEVAC passenger.

1 September 1967

Two CH-46A's were launched in support of Operation BELT DRIVE and two CH-46A's were launched to augment Dong Ha. At 1035H the aircraft were recalled to LPH-10 when the word was received that the CH-46A's will be restricted to emergency operational missions only, pending investigation of the accident on 31 August 1967 and a similar CH-46A accident at Marble Mountain Air Facility on 1 September 1967.

2 - 5 September 1967

HMM-262 pilots flew as co-pilots for VMO-6, HMM-362, and the ship's UH-34D. Operation BELT DRIVE was terminated at 2000H, 5 September 1967.

### 3. Statistical Summary of Flight Operations

	<u>BELT DRIVE</u>	<u>3RD MARDIV</u>	<u>I CORPS</u>	<u>ADMIN</u>	<u>MAINT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Flight Hours	163.4	35.9	15.3	67.8	13.1	295.5
Sorties	480	84	52	123	17	756
Troops/Pax	1405	203	300	130	0	2038
Medevacs	79	0	0	0	0	79
Cargo (Tons)	47.5	3.5	0.4	5.3	0	206.7

### 4. Problems Encountered

a. ITEM. Withdrawal of "F" Company from an unsecure area by a flight of nine helicopters without a thorough briefing of the flight leader and flight.

#### (1) Discussion

(a) Past experience has proven that a withdrawal of a company from a tactical situation should be carefully planned and the flight properly briefed, tactical situation permitting, in order that the necessary number of troops remain in the zone for security until the last heliwave returns to complete the withdrawal.

(b) A flight of nine helicopters were assigned the mission. Eight of the nine were airborne completing three separate missions and one

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was launched from the LPH at the time the Flight Leader, also airborne, received the commitment. Organizing and briefing the flight over the air caused many unnecessary transmissions and could have caused confusion that would have jeopardized the mission.

(2) Recommendation. When the tactical situation permits, the flight leader of the helicopter flight should be briefed as to the accurate number of troops and enemy situation far enough in advance that adequate flight planning and briefing of the flight may be accomplished.

b. ITEM. Not all the co-pilots were able to be night carrier qualified.

(1) Discussion. Although it did not occur, the possibility existed that an injury to an Aircraft Commander during a night flight would have placed the aircraft, crew, and passengers in the hands of a non-qualified pilot thus increasing the chances of a mishap.

(2) Recommendation. That night carrier qualification periods be conducted to insure that all pilots are qualified, if at all possible.

c. ITEM. The arbitrary changing of the call signs (event numbers) of aircraft airborne.

(1) Discussion. Once a flight has been briefed and airborne with an assigned call sign, the pilots and particularly the flight leader have enough to do without the changing of call signs to fit a new mission for the convenience of the controlling agency.

(2) Recommendation

(a) Once a flight is airborne, the call signs remain the same. If two or more flights are reflagged in the air to do the same mission, the Squadron Operations Duty Officer should be notified and he will designate the overall flight leader.

(b) In a situation where aircraft are not shut down but the pilots are switched, it should be decided in the Ready Room, prior to the new pilots leaving, what their call sign will be.

5. Noteworthy was the expeditious handling and organization of resupply missions by the BLT, the judicious use of helicopters, the expeditious and safe handling of the aircraft by the Flight Deck and refueling personnel.

G. A. CORLISS

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