

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 263
Marine Aircraft Group 16
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPac
FPO San Francisco, 96602

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5750
03A30970
6 NOV 1970



From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 16
Subj: Command Chronology for period 1 - 31 October 1970
Ref: (a) MCO 5750.1
(b) FMFPacO 5750.8B
(c) WgO 5750.1C
(d) GruO 5750.1C

HMM-263, S & C Files
Control #. 244-0...
Date rec'd. 6 NOV 1970
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Encl: ✓(1) Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 263; Command Chronology for period 1 - 31 October 1970.

1. In accordance with references (a) through (d), enclosure (1) is submitted.

W S Humbert III
W. S. HUMBERT III
Acting

HMM-263

OCT 1970



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Marine Aircraft Group 16
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COMMAND CHRONOLOGY 1 OCTOBER to 31 OCTOBER 1970

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Enclosure (1)
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PART I

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

1. DESIGNATION COMMANDER
HMM-263 LTCOL L. K. KECK 1-31 OCTOBER 1970

2. LOCATION

During the period of 1-31 October 1970, the Blue Eagles of HMM-263 were located at Marble Mountain Air Facility, Danang, Republic of Vietnam.

3. STAFF OFFICERS

Executive Officer	Major W.S. HUMBERT	1-31 Oct
Operations Officer	Major T.J. TOBEN Jr.	1-31 Oct
Asst. Operations Officer	Capt. L.R. BANCELLS	1-31 Oct
Logistics Officer	Major L.L. PAYTON	1-31 Oct
Aircraft Maintenance Off.	Major D.N. ANDERSON	1-31 Oct
Asst. Maintenance Officer	Capt. D.E. FROST	1-31 Oct
Administrative Officer	1/Lt J.L. FORESMAN	1-31 Oct
NATOPS Officer	Capt. H.P. BREAZEALE	1-31 Oct
Aviation Safety Officer	1/Lt M.K. MORRISON	1-28 Oct
Aviation Safety Officer	1/Lt J.C. MCGARIGLE	28-31 Oct
Intelligence Officer	1/Lt L.K. WILLIAMS	1-31 Oct
Awards Officer	Major L.L. PAYTON	1-31 Oct
Sergeant Major	Master Sergeant H.F. RAKOP	1-31 Oct

4. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

	<u>USMC</u>	<u>USN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
OFFICERS	47	1	0	48
ENLISTED	227	0	0	227

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PART II

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

October was a busy month for the Blue Eagles of HMM-263. Peachbush aircraft launched on 851 flights, 104 of these being flown during the hours of darkness. During the month 3825 sorties were flown resulting in 1076.1 flight hours. Helicopters of HMM-263 carried 151.7 tons of cargo while 8230 passengers enjoyed rides in Peachbush aircraft. A total of 98 medevac missions were flown and 148 injured personnel were transported to medical facilities, of these 56 were emergencies, 75 were priority and 117 were routine. Enemy activity reached a new high for recent months as 20 fire incidents were reported and a total of 13 hits were taken by our planes.

HMM-263 was involved in strikes, Recon inserts and extracts during this period. Separate briefs and debriefs were given to pilots and aircrews.

To provide continuous up to date intelligence, the intelligence unit conducted briefs at AOM's and before Recon missions. Current fire incidents, Recon and order of battle maps were kept and made available before all flights.

Three officers and three enlisted Marines attended Jungle Escape and Survival Training NAS Cubi Point R.P.

During the month enlisted personnel earned a total of 170 Strike Flight Awards and officers earned 110. Three enlisted were promoted to their present ranks. During the month 7 officers and 11 enlisted joined our ranks and 5 officers and 6 enlisted departed for new duty.

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03A30970PART IIISEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- 1 Oct 70 Inclement weather heralded the beginning of October in the "Big Nam". Peachbush aircraft only managed to log a tough 9.1 total hours on an assortment of tactical IFR flying.
- 4 Oct 70 Today the sun shone again as the rain gods were temporarily shunted aside for the first time this month. The Blue Eagles logged 60.8 flight hours, carried 13.9 tons of cargo and provided ready transportation for 537 passengers.
- 5 Oct 70 The always ready for combat "Fighting 263rd" made its presence felt in a very humane way today during medevac sorties from LZ Baldy. Peachbush pulled ten medevac missions during which 12 badly injured marines were swiftly and efficiently evacuated to hospitals in the Danang area despite enemy attempts to add some Blue Eagles to the casualty totals.
- 6 Oct 70 A rather slow day today was evidenced by the 34.9 flight hours logged by Peachbush Sea Knights. The weather continued to hamper operations and provided ample tests for the Blue Eagles elite corps of aviators.
- 8 Oct 70 52.2 flight hours were logged today on Recon, medevac and resupply missions.
- 11 Oct 70 The night medevac package led by Maj ANDERSON and chased by Lt MORRISON brought back their casualties safely inspite of hits taken by both A/C during an emergency medevac in poor weather conditions. Lt CORNETTA today displayed the indomitable spirit of the Peachbush pilots. Lt CORNETTA was launched out as the second plane of a section assigned recon extracts in poor weather conditions. While attempting an extraction one of the Huey gunships crashed. Lt CORNETTA followed the only approach route into the area of the downed pilots and lowered his jungle penetrator. Before he could complete the rescue he was completely covered by clouds. The lead gunship advised him to get out and then they could try again later when the weather lifted. Lt CORNETTA said since he was already down there he would complete the rescue. After getting all the downed airman aboard which took forty minutes of hovering Lt CORNETTA had to make an IFR takeoff through a jagged mountain pass. Well done "Hawk".
- 12-Oct 70 The monsoon once again forced the Blue Eagles to launch only emergency missions as the ceilings lowered to 200' and near 0 visibility. Only 18.0 hours were flown.

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- 17 Oct 70 Peachbush gunners got a rare opportunity to pay back the VC in kind today. Lt WILLIAMS ("Easy") had taken his plane into a recon insert zone near H 270 South when his gunners spotted 3 VC/NVA. Score PB 3 confirmed, VC 0.
- 19 Oct 70 The remains of Joan's killer winds and torrential rains provided hazards aplenty as the Blue Eagles logged 40.0 hours of tactical instrument time carrying out emergency medevacs and resupply.
- 23 Oct 70 After a week of residual rains and generally poor weather, 1st Lt Mike Gilligan ("The Dog") reported that a new and powerful typhoon was approaching the Peachbush TAOR. Checks and double checks proved the squadron to be as ready as possible for this newest blow to our war effort.
- 25 Oct 70 Typhoon Kate hit today in all of her fury. Winds of 60 knots and more battered the area. Sheets of rain reduced visibility to less than 100 ft. LtGen McCutcheon paid a surprise visit to the squadron area and jokingly inquired, "Why isn't my Peachbush VIP Helo flying today?"
- 27 Oct 70 Today a slight break in the weather allowed the Blue Eagles to put in emergency supplies to units in the field who had been battered and drenched by almost 3 weeks of monsoon/typhoon weather. Peachbush 46's logged 41.7 flight hours today.
- 29 Oct 70 The last two days weather had been so poor that the Blue Eagles only managed to log a total of 20.1 hours. The weather was forecast to remain the same for another week.
- 30 Oct 70 WX: 200' ceiling, visibility- $\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, winds 45+ knots. The area south and west of Danang was totally inundated. Hundreds of Vietnamese civilians were being swept to their deaths by swift waters that rushed through their homes at more than 8 feet above flood level. Landmarks were non-existent. In spite of these nearly insurmountable obstacles Peachbush aircraft logged 83.1 hours of rescue work while evacuating over 1400 military and civilian victims of the killer flood. In the process of performing their life-saving mission the Blue Eagles sustained a total of seven aircraft hit by enemy fire, two of which were shot down in the evacuation area. No one was injured and in spite of the perils the "fighting 263rd" did their part during the Mercy Mission of the Year.

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