

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

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6 JAN 1971

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

Encl: ✓(1) Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 263, Com-  
mand Chronology for period 1-31 December 1970.

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

*L. K. Keck*  
L. K. KECK

MM-263, S & C Files  
Control #. 2-1.....  
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MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 263  
Marine Aircraft Group 16  
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COMMAND CHRONOLOGY 1 DECEMBER to 31 DECEMBER 1970

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03A00571PART IORGANIZATIONAL DATA1. DESIGNATIONCOMMANDER

HMM-263

LTCOL L. K. KECK 1-31 DECEMBER 1970

2. LOCATION

During the period of 1-31 December 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 DEC
OPERATIONS OFFICER	Major T. J. TOBEN Jr.	1-31 DEC
ASST. OPERATIONS OFFICER	1/Lt L. K. WILLIAMS	1-31 DEC
LOGISTICS OFFICER	Major L. L. PAYTON Jr.	1-31 DEC
AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE OFFICER	Major D. N. ANDERSON	1-31 DEC
ASST. MAINTENANCE OFFICER	Capt. D. D. FROST	1-31 DEC
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	Capt. L. R. BANCELLS	1-31 DEC
NATOPS OFFICER	Capt. H. P. BREAZEALE	1-31 DEC
AVIATION SAFETY OFFICER	Capt T. R. EDMUNDS	1-31 DEC
INTELLIGENCE OFFICER	1/Lt L. M. STEWART	1-31 DEC
AWARDS OFFICER	Major L. L. PAYTON Jr.	1-31 DEC
Sergeant Major	SgtMaj W. J. BILLEB	1-31 DEC

4. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

	<u>USMC</u>	<u>USN</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
OFFICERS	37	1	0	38
ENLISTED	172	0	0	172

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Enclosure (1)

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PART II

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

December was a busy month for the Blue Eagles of HMM-263. Peachbush aircraft launched on 863 flights, 68 of these being flown during the hours of darkness. During the month 3413 sorties were flown resulting in 959.7 flight hours. Helicopters of HMM-263 carried 169.4 tons of cargo while 7989 passengers enjoyed rides in Peachbush aircraft. A total of 109 medevac missions were flown and 231 injured personnel were transported to medical facilities, of these 71 were emergencies, 65 were priority and 98 were routine. Enemy activity was on the rise as 7 fire incidents were reported and a total of 20 hits were taken by Peachbush aircraft.

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.

Two officers and no enlisted Marines attended Jungle Survival School at NAS Cubi Point R.P..

During the month enlisted personnel earned a total of 231 Strike Flight Awards and officers earned 155.

PART IIISEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- 1 Dec 70 No amount of rainy weather blues or VC bullets could wrest the coming holiday spirit from the hearty men of HMM-263. With their eyes set on making the end of 1970 a glorious one, the Blue Eagles carried out their missions with vigor logging 7 medevac missions and carrying 345 passengers safely to their destinations.
- 2 Dec 70 Ole Sol's unseasonal warmth dried up the soggy air, leaving the fighting 263rd a flawless day to run routine resupply, C & C and admin to the tune of 55.6 flight hours.
- 4 Dec 70 But all good things must come to an end. Today the rain gods again shrouded MMAF with their gloomy weather. Flight operations were curtailed to the bare minimum. However, the night medevac package lead by Lt. Col. KECK managed to sprout a few new gray hairs by logging 6.6 flight hours in extremely inclement weather.
- 5 Dec 70 The weather, invariably as dangerous to aviators as 100 myopic V.C. could ever hope to be, again was the limiting factor as the stalwarts from the Peach-bush patch launched. Much as these famed men of the postal service, Maj. T.J. TOBEN lead his 6 birds to Baldy in spite of the weather. Although only 29.2 hours were flown all day, Lt. Col. PITMAN brought his bird home with two vents not found in any NATOPS Manual. Apparently Charlie has heard something about "neither rain nor sleet nor snow....."
- 6 Dec 70 A mission 80 day is usually very quiet. Today was no exception. Eight crews stood by all day to meet that emergency that thankfully never came. The rest of the squadron amassed a total of 25.8 flight hours running the routine but nonetheless vital Marble Mountain taxi service.
- 11 Dec 70 As the little lady on the salt shaker used to say "when it rains it pours." The 7th through the 11th brought the squadron to a virtual stand still. The total hours flown for the 4 day period was only 69.3 hours. However, as usual the medevacs carried the loads, braving the elements as well as the V.C. On the 8th, Capt BREAZEALE and Lt. EPPERLY flew out of Baldy to pick up a medevac in Injun Territory only to pickup 5 unscheduled airframe changes.

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Enclosure (1)

- 12 Dec 70 A brief lull in the stormy weather gave the squadron a chance to get back in the air in some semblance of force. 280 pax were carried, 12.6 tons of cargo lifted and 131 sorties flown before the weather regained its vice-like grip on the area.
- 15 Dec 70 44.4 flight hours marked the first day since the 4th of December that the squadron had flown over 30 hours in a single day. And, as usual, the night medevac package did their share lead by Lt. GOETZ with 3.6 hours in the black, liftless Viet-Nam darkness.
- 17 Dec 70 Today looked as though it would be one of those unspectacular days when weather would sufficiently hamper operations to the extent of being mere harassment. However, things quickly livened up when Capt. Larry (Hans Brinker) BANCELLS and his copilot Lt. Bob (Maverick) GARNER received a call to extract our swift, silent, and surrounded friends from the 1st Recon Battalion. In poor weather, and after being shot out of the zone once, Capt. BANCELLS against tremendous odds, not to mention that infamous "hail of enemy fire", returned to the zone and expertly extracted the gravely endangered recon team. The team was swift in boarding the aircraft, but not silent in their praise of Peachbush I. No sooner had Capt. BANCELLS pulled his heroics that Lt. Col. KECK was called upon to duplicate the feat. Hovering at 120 ft. while lowering a ladder, Lt. Col. KECK calmly remained at his post and professionally extracted a seemingly doomed recon team while watching tracers flash by his cockpit. These two crews exemplify the caliber of the men of the fighting Blue Eagles.
- 18 Dec 70 Today was one of those when you could see forever. 63.7 hours served notice that Peachbush was about her business. The spectacular events of the 17th served only to spur the men of HMM 263 to new heights performing the day to day tasks that belong to transport helicopters. The jobs are routine but they are the backbone of the Marine Corps in Viet Nam.
- 19 Dec 70 Alas, it was but an Indian Summer. The monsoons descended upon us again. Nevertheless, resupply went as scheduled and 18.7 tons of C-rations, ammo and equipment were hauled to the troops in the field. Six emergency and 5 priority medevacs were transported to medical facilities. The usual VIP and admin missions were run, as they say, with "No Sweat".

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- 20 Dec 70 The mission 80 package was converted into a mini-strike package today for a quick reaction force on Charley Ridge. Three Peachbush aircraft lead by Capt. BANCELLS successfully and without incident inserted a sniffer squad which was picked up by Maj. HUMBERT and his afternoon section of 80/85.
- 24 Dec 70 Christmas was drawing near. And as sure as sugar-plums, Bob Hope was dancing in our heads. Peachbush aircraft were fragged to carry various and sundry VIP's to and from the perennial show. Lt. Col. KECK, Maj. PAYTON, and Lt. MUIR were all lauded for their work on the usually thankless job of playing the Ralph Kranden's of H-46's. However, in the midst of the Hope gayla, Lt. Pete GOETZ was pulling an emergency recon extract under heavy small arms fire. He still made it to the show.
- 25 Dec 70 Christmas in Viet Nam is no one's idea of a great time. Nevertheless, the official cease-fire provided a welcome lull to the routine and our hearts were at home.
- 27 Dec 70 Everyone was in good spirits today since our squadron Christmas party at China Beach was to be held tonight. But Charlie couldn't let us alone for one day. Charlie, Lt. RODENBERG, managed to take 2 hits on resupply at 1800 ft. from Charlie, V.C. The party was great, by the way, Charlie or no Charlie.
- 31 Dec 70 1970, A GOOD YEAR PEACHBUSH; 1971, A BETTER ONE!!!!

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PART IV  
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

NONE SUBMITTED