

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 265
Marine Aircraft Group 15
Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade
FPO, San Francisco, California 96601

OFS:CCB:mbp
5750
5 Sep 1967

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commander, Task Group 79.5

Subj: Command Chronology, period 1 - 23 August 1967

Ref: (a) CTG 79.5 Operation Plan 120A-67

Encl: ✓(1) Command Chronology
(2) *After Action Report, Operation Kangaroo Kick*

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

William R. Beeler
WILLIAM R. BEELER

HMM-265

Cmd Chron

HMM-265
S?C No. *104-67*
Copy 2 of 10

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

1-23 1967

Part I Organization Data

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| a. Commanding Officer | LtCol. W. R. BEELEH |
| b. Executive Officer | Maj. E. L. SANEORN |
| c. Operations Officer | Maj. L. E. SCHNEIDER |
| d. Administrative Officer | Capt. D. W. ARISS |
| e. Material Officer | Capt. H. H. CLARK |
| f. Maintenance Officer | Maj. C. H. PITMAN |
| g. Intelligence Officer | Capt. S. T. HEINICK |

2. Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265
 Marine Aircraft Group 15
 Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade
 FPO, San Francisco, California 96601

3. Average monthly strength: 40 Officers and 170 Enlisted.

Part II Narrative Summary

1 August 1967: Operation KANGAROO KICK began on I-Day by landing two divisions of four troop loads of CH-46A's into LZ SWAN at 0700 L-Hour. Immediately thereafter, heliborn troops were landed in three other zones, LZ EAGLE, LZ GULL and LZ HAWK from both LPH-10 and LPD-5 to provide a maximum troop build-up ashore. Sporadic sniper fire was received near LZ SWAN and LZ GULL; however, no hits were received.

At 1350H, the STARROW HAWK force, consisting of 107 troops, was helilifted from LPD-5 into YD 475415 by four CH-46A's to act as a blocking force. Light enemy automatic weapons fire was received resulting in single hits on two aircraft. Both continued the lift.

During the remainder of the afternoon, the balance of the Battalion was off-loaded to the established LZ's and Camp Evans (LZ SCAT). Routine resupply, medical evacuation and local administrative missions were flown.

2 August 1967: One aircraft, EF-159, received five hits while resupplying GRAY REBEL "H" (YL495426). The damage was minor, and the aircraft continued its mission.

Throughout the day, flights were conducted to strengthen the established landing zones.

At 1800H, the SLF was chopped to the Third Marine Division.

2 August 1967: Five aircraft were launched to Marble Mountain Air Facility with 12 crews and maintenance personnel to support MAG-16 while the remaining aircraft and personnel proceeded with the LPH-10 for Subic Bay, P.I. for refitting.

Enclosure (1)

4 August 1967: Normal operations and administrative flights were flown.

5 August 1967: At 1010H, a two plane SPARROW HAWK was launched on an emergency medevac mission, about 6 miles south of Da Nang on highway #1. A Marine truck had hit a mine and six Marines were injured. Sniper fire was received near the scene but no hits were received.

During the afternoon, three recon teams were extracted without incident.

6 August 1967: The insertion of Recon Team CONSULATE at AT 803705 was aborted due to enemy .50 caliber automatic weapons fire near the LZ. A second insertion of Recon Team Bhispane, was aborted due to small and heavy caliber fire near the LZ, ZC 205705.

An emergency medical evacuation was launched for 21 Vietnamese civilians injured when their bus hit a mine on highway #1, seven miles south of Da Nang.

7 - 9 August 1967: During this three day period, only routine resupply missions were flown.

10 August 1967: No flights due to switching of aircraft crews between Subic Bay and Marble Mountain Air Facility.

11 - 12 August 1967: Normal operations.

13 August 1967: During the morning, three recon insertions and four extractions were flown. Small arms fire received on the insertion of BHEMDFUL, ZC 1964 and extraction of LATE LINE, ZC 147854, but no hits were received.

Normal resupply missions were flown in the afternoon.

14 August 1967: Four recon teams were inserted and five were extracted, receiving fire on one extraction near BT 112278. No damage was received.

15 August 1967: Two aircraft were used in a troop lift for Project "B". One recon team was extracted without incident.

16 August 1967: No flights, two aircraft stood SPARROW HAWK standby, but did not launch.

17 August 1967: Normal resupply missions were flown throughout the day.

18 August 1967: One routine resupply mission was flown.

19 August 1967: One recon team was inserted and one medevac flight to the USS Repose.

20 August 1967: Several VIP and administrative flights were carried out during the day. Aircraft deployed at Marble Mountain Air Facility returned to LPH-10.

Enclosure (2)

21 August 1967: The backloading of the Battalion 2/3 commenced, moving gear and troops to LPH-10.

22 August 1967: Backloading continued throughout the day. Several administrative flights were flown.

23 August 1967: The squadron moved its aircraft and operations from the LPH-10 to MAG-36, located at Marble Mountain Air Facility.

Part II Significant Events:

1. Personnel:

a. No personnel were joined or transferred during this report period.

2. Awards:

a. There were no awards presented during this report period.

3. Casualties: No casualties were taken during this report period.

4. Intelligence/Counter Intelligence:

a. Briefings were given by the Intelligence Section prior to each flight and debriefings were given after the termination of each flight as applicable.

5. Air Operations:

a. Total Hours Flown: 375.2

b. Number of sorties: 1005

c. Tons of cargo: 132.7

d. Number of Medical Evacuations: 59

e. Number of passengers carried: 3471

6. This squadron participated in the following operations:

a. KANGAROO KICK

7. Information Services:

a. 77 News Releases were sent out during this report period.

Enclosure (1)

[REDACTED]

8. NBC Warfare:

- a. No NBC Warfare training was conducted during this report period.

9. Trainings:

- a. FAM Firing of T/O weapons was conducted from the side of the ship while under way.

10. Logistics:

- a. Logistics co-ordinated squadron movement with various departments.
- b. Supply continued surveying flight clothing and requisitioning parts & tools for maintenance.
- c. Motor Transport took vehicles off of LST and performed Preventative Maintenance upon arrival.

11. Maintenance:

- a. An average daily availability of 38.5% was maintained with an average of 15.5 aircraft possessed. Aircraft down due to NOHS - 29.0%, and aircraft down due to NOFM - 32.5%.

Enclosure (1)
[REDACTED]

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 265
Marine Aircraft Group 15
Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade
FPO, San Francisco, California 96602

OPS:DES:faa
3480
2 September 1967

[REDACTED] - NOFORN

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commander, Task Group 79.5

Subj: After Action Report, Operation KANGAROO KICK; submission of

Ref: (a) CTG 79.5 Operation Plan 120A-67

Encl: (1) Chronology of Significant Events
(2) Analysis of Helicopter Operations
(3) Statistical Summary

1. In accordance with the instructions contained in reference (a), enclosures (1), (2) and (3) are submitted.

2. This letter may be downgraded to Unclassified upon removal of enclosures (1), (2) and (3).

William R. Beeler
WILLIAM R. BEELER

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|-------------|---------|
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HMM-265
a/a KANGAROO KICK
1-3 Aug 67

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CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS1 August 1967:

Operations KANGAROO KICK began on D-Day by landing two divisions of four troop loaded CH-46A's into LZ SWAN at 0700 L-Hour. Immediately thereafter heliborne troops were landed in three other zones, LZ EAGLE, LZ GULL and LZ HAWK from both the LPH-10 and LPD-5 to provide a maximum troop build-up ashore. Sporadic sniper fire was received near LZ SWAN and LZ GULL; however, no hits were received.

At 1350, the SPARROW HAWK force, consisting of 107 troops, was heli-lifted from the LPD-5 into YD475415 by four CH-46's to act as a blocking force. Light enemy automatic weapons fire was received resulting in single hits on EP-155 and EP-161, however, both aircraft continued the lift.

During the remainder of the afternoon the balance of the battalion was off-loaded by CH-46A's and CH-53's to the established LZ's and Camp Evans (LZ SCAT). Routine resupply, medical evacuation and local administrative missions were also flown.

At 2335H an emergency medical evacuation flight of two CH-46A's was launched from the LPH-10 to Grey Rebel "H" position at YD495426. Five medical evacuees were helilifted back to the LPH-10.

2 August 1967:

At 0615H two CH-46A's were launched on a routine water can pick-up and resupply. At 0830H one of the aircraft (EP-159) received five hits while resupplying GREY REBEL "H" at YD495426. Minor damage was inflicted with no injuries and after a 15 minute shut down aboard the LPH-10, EP-159 returned to, and completed, its mission.

Throughout the remainder of the day, routine resupply, medical evacuation and local administrative flights were conducted by HMM-265 from the LPH-10. These flights were used to build troop strength and supply quantities in the established landing zones as well as establish the battalion ashore.

At 1800H the SLF was chopped to the Third Marine Division.

3 August 1967:

HMM-265 launched five aircraft to Marble Mountain Air Facility with

ENCLOSURE (1)

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12 crews and 41 Maintenance personnel to support MAG-16 while the remaining aircraft and personnel proceeded with LPH-10 for Subic Bay, P. I. for refitting.

Casualties:

None

Intelligence/Counter Intelligence

| <u>A/C Fired On</u> | <u>Incidents</u> | <u>A/C Hits</u> | <u>No. Hits</u> | <u>Sorties</u> | <u>Hours</u> |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 30 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 470 | 144.4 |

Breakdown of fire incidents with respect to altitude:

| <u>Altitude</u> | <u>Incidents</u> | <u>A/C Hit</u> | <u>A/C Lost</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 0-499 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 500-999 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| 1000-1499 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 1500-2000 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

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ANALYSIS OF HELICOPTER OPERATIONS

1. General

Operations KANGAROO KICK began at 010632H August by landing heliborne troops in LZ's GULL and SWAN while simultaneously conducting a waterborne feint with LVT's towards GREENBEACH at L-Hour and H-Hour. Subsequent helo-lifts were made in LZ EAGLE and HAWK. The operations were executed in two phases by first fixing and blocking the enemy's avenues of access and egress and next to rapidly search and destroy within the AOA.

The helicopter operational concept was sound and employed in accordance with FMFM 3-3.

2. Analysis

a. Ship-to-Shore Operations

(1) In accordance with the landing plan, eight CH-46A's were to conduct the first heliborne wave from the LPH to LZ SWAN. These same aircraft were to make subsequent assault waves into adjacent LZ's GULL and EAGLE thereby providing the initial shock effect and a rapid troop build-up ashore. The initial shock effect was provided by (1) not prepping LZ SWAN and GULL and (2) entering these two LZ's by a low level approach started at the shore line and flying at tree top level. This tactical maneuver proved very effective dependent upon the fact that Operation BEAR CHAIN was conducted in the same AOA just two weeks before. The element of surprise was eminent. Since LZ EAGLE was the final zone used during the heliborne amphibious assault and since the element of surprise was somewhat lifted, fire preparation was employed through on-call fixed wing aircraft controlled by the TAC(A) gunships.

(2) Because of the limited deck spots actually available to the transport helicopter, carefully preplanned and flexible launch techniques were used to meet the requisite landing plan. The helicopter launch plan called for launching five aircraft (minus their troops) into the ships DELTA pattern. The fifth aircraft acted as a spare and SAR. The next five aircraft were launched in the same manner and because of previous operational success recycling the last half of the first wave, fifteen minutes were allowed to respot, unfold and launch the helicopters. Several unexpected events happened. Two helos went down in the first launch instead of the expected one as planned for. This required one aircraft from the second five plane launch to be immediately respotted at the same time the two downed helos were being folded and respotted in the standby pack.

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Space, time-motion, and adequate daylight became a premium in order to meet the next scheduled launch within the fifteen minute time frame allocated. The problem was further compounded by the fact that the same number of aircraft went down during the second launch of five helos resulting in the launching of seven aircraft five minutes late vice eight helos being launched on time. Enough flexibility was programmed into the ship-to-shore time - distance factor to account for such difficulties. L-Hour was set for 0630H; touchdown occurred at 0632H.

To allow for such eventualities, twenty-five minutes should be scheduled between launching of the first and second divisions of CH-46's.

All subsequent assault waves were executed smoothly in accordance with the landing plan.

(3) The augmentation of the SLF helicopter assets consisted of two CH-53's and two UH-1E gunship escorts plus one UH-1E C&C provided by 1stMAW. UH-1E's provided vital TAC(A)/armed escort support. Tactically, for the size and scope of the operation involved, two UH-1E gunships were considered the minimum acceptable number. The continued demand for their services resulted in flying the crews in excess of 10 hours per day. The CH-53's were an indispensable aid by providing the heavy lift capability of hauling the BLT artillery pieces, its ammunition and personnel on D-Day.

(4) Additional support aircraft and limited LPH deck space, as well as operating from several ships simultaneously, required precise and realistic planning.

b. Ashore Operations

(1) Flight operations ashore consisted of the normal resupply, medical evacuation, troop transport and administrative missions by the CH-46's, and C&C and TAC(A) missions by the UH-1E's.

(2) The TACP and LZ control net, as such, were on the same frequency. This resulted in improved control of the SLF helicopter support. The "14 Actual" was available to iron out, on the spot, difficulties that would arise between the helicopter pilots and the HST personnel in their respective LZ's.

Also, the "14 Actual" was often more qualified than the HST personnel to give the helicopter pilots an idea of the LZ enemy tactical situation due to his command location.

Outside air support by the 1stMAW consisted of on-call fixed wing cover, two CH-53's for the heavy lift capability and three UH-1E's for C&C and gunship escort. Operational control of BLT 2/3 (-) plus Det "A", HMM-265 was passed ashore at 030300H August 1967 to CG III MAF.

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c. Offloading Operations

(1) Since the BLT (-) was to be placed under the control of the Fourth Marines in a defensive position initially, heavy flight operations were conducted on D+1 offloading 85.4 tons of supplies, equipment and personnel.

Upon completion of the operation and with the BLT finally established ashore, five squadron aircraft were dropped to MMAF on D+3 in support of the 1stMAW. The USS Tripoli departed for Subic Bay with remaining squadron aircraft for maintenance upkeep and needed blade x-ray inspections as directed by III MAF.

3. Problems Encountered

a. The operational readiness of the squadron continues to deteriorate as a result of the non-availability of aircraft spare parts. They are continually requisitioned and followed-up until received. However, the squadron still has an unacceptably large backlog of un-received parts.

b. The leadtime necessary to achieve a sunrise L-Hour dictates handling, spotting, spreading, manning and launching aircraft in the hours of darkness, especially when multiple launches are involved. The over-all tempo of effective operations is decreased and the possibility of an accident increases even when the work is done by experienced and highly trained deck handling crews as is the case in point. The very nature of an LPH's limited deck space, the possibility of respotting down aircraft and the relative size of the CH-46 fully spread in relation to ships only compound the problem already existing through the needed skill and training working in darkness.

c. Night medevac missions flown under combat conditions require the utmost coordination between the air-ground team. Each phase of the mission must be professionally planned on the part of the pilot, control agencies and the unit on the ground requiring medical support. Any factor left undone can result in disaster. One such factor is the proper lighting of the landing zone. Marking must be adequate so that the pilot can distinguish the zone without hesitation. The lack of ready land reference points, poor weather, and the difficulty of observing a light at 2000 feet of altitude only tend to confuse the issue. Presently the HST personnel use low powered flashlight (s) or whatever lighting may be available. Precious time is spent by the pilot trying to locate a point of light in unknown terrain. The radio is used in an effort to orient the helicopter pilot. Although the HST personnel are somewhat experienced in talking to the helicopters, night control procedures from the ground stations require exactness.

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4. Conclusions

a. That the non-availability of aircraft spare parts remains a recurring problem for all echelons of command.

b. That the tactical necessity of such an early L-Hour should be weighed against the paramount problems it generates in control and safety. If acceptable tactically, an L-Hour which affords more daylight would be greatly beneficial from the standpoint of avoiding inherent predawn deck handling difficulties encountered by the crews of both the squadron and the LPH.

c. That low level tree top approaches into the LZ be considered as a sound tactical maneuver during the initial heliborne assault waves in order to provide a conclusive element of surprise and initial shock effect.

Although this precision maneuver is not recommended as a replacement for the normally accepted standard high level approach, which basically affords certain advantages such as better command control procedures, immediate terrain orientation and the potential of wave-off conditions if unexpected enemy fire is received near or in the landing zone, the low approaches should be considered and weighed against the overall tactical situation that would give a better chance of total success when employed.

d. That HST personnel should be provided with a strobe light for night helicopter operations in order to properly light and distinguish the LZ. The following model strobe light is available to all pilots serving in RVN and it is available through the normal USN supply channels: Light, Marker, Distress, FSN 6230-067-5209. It is also recommended that illumination provided by the SLF artillery units be placed on-call through the BLT ALO/FAC as requested by the pilot. This would afford the pilot better terrain orientation and a quick birdseye view of unknown LZ obstacles. To add an additional safety factor in night helicopter operations, it is highly recommended that an officer man the LZ Common Net at the supported LZ. This person has the advantage of giving the pilot quick reliable information required under what is considered adverse flying conditions.

4

ENCLOSURE (2)

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STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Operation KANGAROO KICK

1 - 3 August 1967

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Sorties</u> | <u>Passengers</u> | <u>Cargo</u> | <u>Medevacs</u> | <u>Flight Hours</u> |
|-------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 Aug | 175 | 913 | 8.3 | 14 | 50.3 |
| 2 Aug | 241 | 612 | 63.7 | 5 | 72.4 |
| 3 Aug | <u>54</u> | <u>105</u> | <u>12.4</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>21.7</u> |
| Total | 470 | 1630 | 85.4 | 19 | 144.4 |

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