

1989



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HELICOPTER MINE COUNTERMEASURES SQUADRON 15
FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 96601-5701

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From: Commanding Officer, Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)

Subj: SUBMISSION OF COMMAND HISTORY, CALENDAR YEAR 1989

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12D

- Encl:
- (1) Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15, 1989 Command History
 - (2) Command PAO photo
 - (3) Squadron "Brief Sheet"
 - (4) Rotor Review Winter 1990, (HM-15 Disaster Relief in San Francisco/WESTPAC-89 Marks First MH-53E Deployment)
 - (5) Rotor Review Summer 1989 (Why the MH-53E?)
 - (6) Alameda Journal, "Relief being flown to homeless"
 - (7) Alameda Journal, "Helicopter squadron mobilizes for Earthquake relief effort"
 - (8) NAS North Island, "Squadrons provide quake relief"
 - (9) NAS Alameda Carrier, "NAS Alameda earthquake update"
 - (10) Alameda Journal, "Alameda met the challenge"
 - (11) NAS Alameda Carrier, "Blackhawks embark on WESTPAC"

1. Per reference (a), the following Command history for Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15 (HM-15), enclosures (1) thru (11) are submitted.

BRUCE F. RUSSELL
Acting

Logged

HELICOPTER MINE COUNTERMEASURES SQUADRON 15 1989 COMMAND HISTORY

1. Command Composition and Organization.

Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15 (HM-15) is an airborne mine hunting/neutralization and destruction squadron capable of rapidly deploying within 72 hours in response to any potential hostile mining threat in the world via Air Force C-5 Galaxy aircraft. The squadron is commanded by Commander Keith W. Martello, USN, and homeported at the Naval Air Station, Alameda, CA. HM-15's immediate superior in command is Commander, Anti-Submarine Warfare Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet, located in San Diego, CA. The Squadron flies the MH-53E helicopter built by the Sikorsky Corporation of Stratford, Conn. Employing eleven MH-53E aircraft, the squadron is home to 620 enlisted and 40 officer personnel. Nicknamed "The Blackhawks", HM-15 is a redesignated squadron from decommissioned HM-16, originally homeported at NAS Norfolk. With the redesignation and relocation to NAS Alameda, the Navy has a rapid deployable Airborne Mine Countermeasures Squadron on the West Coast. Squadron call sign "Hurricane" and Unit Identification Letters "Tango Bravo".

COMASW
WING
PAC

2. Chronology.

a. HM-15 has completed a second full year as part of the ASWWINGPAC and AIRPAC team with dramatic achievements in all areas. Through a unified commitment to mission accomplishment, HM-15 has sustained across-the-board superior performance and achieved consistently outstanding results. Most significant accomplishments include:

- * Awarded Battle "E", Naval Aviation's most prestigious award for battle efficiency in special mission category by Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
- * Awarded Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Aviation Safety Award for calendar year 1989 in Special Mission Category for outstanding aviation, ground and motor vehicle safety training and operations.
- * Achieved full operational capability goal.
- * Completed highly successful, first major deployment.
- * Maintained full mission ready detachment at NAS Alameda while second detachment deployed.
- * Flew 103% of flight hours allocated utilizing 100.4% of OPTAR.
- * Demonstrated ROC multi Det, shipboard and remote site deployed operations, self lift and air lift capabilities, plus secondary logistics support mission.
- * Maintained superior combat readiness as substantiated by reporting data.
- * Maintained outstanding training and readiness standards for embarked detachment as well as homeport element.

- * Attained 39% of flight time as AMCM time, and 53% of AMCM time as tow time.

b. Deployed Operations.

(1) Detachments:

<u>Det#</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Dates</u>
89-1	USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH-11)	14 Feb - 16 Feb 89
89-2	USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10)	17 Apr - 05 Jun 89
89-3	NAS WHIDBEY ISLAND, WA.	12 Jun - 19 Jun 89
89-4	NAS NORTH ISLAND, CA.	19 Jul - 26 Jul 89
89-5	USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10)	12 Sep - 07 Oct 89
	POHANG, KOR.	07 Oct - 22 Oct 89
	KADENA AB, JA./WHITE BEACH, JA	22 Oct - 01 Nov 89
	USS TRIPOLI (LPH-11)	01 Nov - 11 Dec 89
89-6	NAS NORTH ISLAND, CA.	27 Nov - 01 Dec 89

(2) Exercises:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DATES</u>
MARDEZEX 89-1	SAN FRANCISCO BAY	25 Jan - 30 Jan 89
PACEX '89 WORK UP	USS TRIPOLI/EASTPAC	17 Apr - 05 Jun 89
PACSCOPEX 1-89	NAS WHIDBEY ISLAND, WA	12 Jun - 19 Jun 89
MARDEZEX 89-2	SAN FRANCISCO BAY	13 Sep - 17 Sep 89
PACEX '89	NORDAC/WESTPAC	20 Sep - 31 Oct 89
* KERNEL POTLATCH 89-2	SITKIN SOUND, AK.	20 Sep - 23 Sep 89
* TANDEM ALLY(JMSDF DEMO)	TSUGARU STRAITS, JA.	02 Oct - 03 Oct 89
* VALIANT BLITZ 90-1K MINEX	POHANG, KOR	16 Oct - 18 Oct 89
* VALIANT USHER MINEX 90-1	WHITE BEACH, JA	29 Oct - 31 Oct 89
* MINEX/EODEX 89-1PN	SUBIC BAY, R.P.	06 Nov - 08 Nov 89
* INTEGRAL TO PACEX '89		

c. Fleet Support Operations.

(1) Loma Prieta earthquake disaster relief operations: HM-15 Detachment Three, located at NAS ALAMEDA during Detachment Two pacex deployment aboard USS TRIPOLI, provided post quake disaster relief support from 17 Oct to 08 Nov 89. Working in conjunction with state and local agencies, HM-15 flew over 98 flight hours transporting over 240 tons of desperately needed relief supplies and equipment to quake ravaged communities throughout the SAN FRANCISCO bay area.

(2) Airshows Supported (Static Displays)

<u>Location/Event</u>	<u>DATES</u>
NAS LEMOORE	06/07 May 89
HAMILTON AFB	03 Jun 89
TRAVIS AFB	10/11 Jun 89
ROSE FESTIVAL, PORTLAND, OR	10/11 Jun 89
USS CARL VINSON, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ACHIEVEMENT LUNCHEON	24 Jun 89

COMASWINGPAC CHANGE OF COMMAND	28 Jun 89
LIVERMORE, CA	22/23 Jul 89
USS TRIPOLI, DEPENDENTS CRUISE	28/29 Jul 89
NAS WHIDBEY ISLAND	08 Aug 89

(3) VIP Support

COMCARGRU 3	16 Jun 89
COMNAVBASE SAN FRANCISCO	09 Nov 89

d. Achievements in Aviation Safety

(1) Class A Mishaps	0
(2) Class C Mishaps	1
(3) Number of NATOPS changes submitted	81

e. Achievements in Command Inspections:

(1) Completed ISIC Inspection 29 MAR 89 - Grade Satisfactory

(2) Completed NATOPS Unit Evaluation 27 - 30 JUN 89 - Grade Satisfactory

f. Achievements in Personnel Readiness

(1) Retention:

	<u>ELIGIBLE</u>	<u>NOT ELIGIBLE</u>	<u># REENLISTED</u>	<u>GROSS%</u>
FIRST TERM	30	8	15	39%
SECOND TERM	9	1	8	88%
CAREER	28	0	27	96%

(2) Advancement:

	<u>TIS ELIG</u>	<u>TIR ELIG</u>	<u>TOOK EXAM</u>	<u>NOT RECOMMENDED</u>	<u>SELECTED</u>	<u>PNA'S</u>
CYCLE 123 MAR 89						
E-4	69	69	63	3	18	44
E-5	70	70	66	2	7	59
E-6	59	59	51	2	4	46
CYCLE 124 SEP 89						
E-4	100	100	87	2	24	62
E-5	84	84	84	0	10	70
E-6	78	78	78	0	10	62

g. Contributions to Tactical Development Improvement

(1) Significant Tactical Projects:

a. Developed, tested and submitted new procedures for stream and recovery of AMCM gear by the MH-53E. Procedures have been incorporated in MH-53E NATOPS mission system supplement.

b. Participated in Precise Navigation System (PNS) training at Naval Coastal System Center, Panama City, Florida, in preparation for MH-53E/PNS OT-III A Testing.

c. Participated in Air-to-Air transfer system introduction training at Naval Coastal System Center, Panama City, Florida.

d. Developed and submitted, for Navy-Wide use, Airborne Mine Countermeasures Operations Specialist Personnel Qualification Standard Program. CO, HM-15 ltr, Ser 311, DTD 21 August 1989.

e. Participated in COMINWARCOM Adhoc Working Group 5 Sep - 8 Sep 89 establishing long term developmental objectives for the Mine Warfare Community.

h. Awards

(1) Squadron Awards. In addition to being awarded the 1989 Battle "E" and the CNO Safety Award, HM-15 has been nominated for the Navy Unit Commendation (NUC) by Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Wing, US Pacific Fleet.

(2) Individual Awards.

<u>AWARDING AUTHORITY</u>	<u>AWARD</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
COMPATWINGSLANT	Letter of Commendation	3
COMNAVAIRPAC	Navy Achievement Medal	3
COMNAVAIRLANT	Navy Commendation Medal	3
COMNAVAIRLANT	Letter of Commendation	3
COMNAVBASE	Letter of Commendation	35
USS ENTERPRISE	Navy Achievement Medal	1
NAVHOSP	Letter of Commendation	1
COMNAVAIRPAC	Safety Pro's of the Week	3

353 Squadron personnel have been nominated for the Humanitarian Service Medal by Commander, Naval Base San Francisco.

3. Narrative.

1989 was a year of great challenge and greater accomplishment for HM-15. Over the last calendar year this command has grown from an eight aircraft squadron at initial operating capability (IOC) to a twelve aircraft/600 man squadron, one of the Navy's largest.

In successfully completing two shipboard deployments, plus participating in five West Coast operations employing the primary mission of Airborne Mine Countermeasures, HM-15 unquestionably demonstrated the scheduled attainment of

Countermeasures, HM-15 unquestionably demonstrated the scheduled attainment of full operational capability (FOC).

While deployed in support of PACEX '89, HM-15 participated in five major exercises from Alaska to the Philippines. The squadron successfully exercised its rapid deployment/self lift capability, independent remote site operations and conducted the first operational MH-53E shipboard MK-105 AMCM operations.

Exceeding CY 88 flight hours by 34%, HM-15 flew nearly 4000 hours for 1989, and in July celebrated one year of class "A" mishap free flight.

With two maintenance departments totalling over 400 personnel, HM-15 has provided quality repairs to 11 aircraft, 6 AMCM waterborne turbine hydrofoils and over 66 pieces of tactical support equipment including boats, trucks and cranes. Setting the Airborne Mine Countermeasures (AMCM) community standard for Aircraft, AMCM and CESE equipment readiness, HM-15 has maintained 100 percent mission system availability for all operational/training commitments.

As the Navy's first MH-53E fleet squadron, HM-15 has pursued an aggressive NATOPS program. Responsible for over 80 major NATOPS changes, the squadron has lead the way in procedural development and evaluation for effective AMCM system employment.

HELICOPTER MINE COUNTERMEASURES SQUADRON
FIFTEEN
"BLACKHAWKS"
CALLSIGN: "HURRICANE"

HM-15 was established on 2 January, 1987 as the first of two currently active, deployable US Navy Airborne Mine Countermeasures squadrons. Flying the Sikorsky MH-53E Sea Dragon helicopter, the squadron conducts training flights in and around San Francisco Bay, towing a variety of mine countermeasures devices through the water.

Initial squadron flight operations commenced in Norfolk, Va. in July, 1987 with receipt of the first MH-53E. In September of that same year, 3 aircraft departed NAS Norfolk and arrived at NAS Alameda, California, completing a homeport change from East to West Coast and establishing the nucleus for the unit to grow to present strength. The squadron is under operational and administrative control of Commander, Anti-Submarine Warfare Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet, located in San Diego, California.

MISSION

Operate a deployable twelve aircraft MH-53E Airborne Mine Countermeasures (AMCM) Squadron. Maintain a 72-hour quick response readiness posture, providing rapid deployment AMCM detachments as required, world-wide, via air or surface lift. Squadron personnel, aircraft and airborne mine countermeasures assets may be deployed in support of theater (Joint Chiefs of Staff directed) mine countermeasures operations. Conduct AMCM operations from fixed land bases, aircraft carriers, air capable and amphibious aviation ships.

AIRCRAFT

Sikorsky MH-53E Helicopter: "Sea Dragon"
Engines: Three/T64-GE-416 turboshaft,
producing 4380 shaft horsepower each
Armament: Two .50 caliber machine
guns for mine neutralization; Anti-
missile chaff and flares
Length: 99' 1/2"
Main rotor blades: 7
Tail rotor blades: 4
Blade path diameter: 79'
Max gross weight: 73,500 lbs.
Top speed: 180 knots
Max external lift capability: 36,000 lbs

MCM

Rigid Inflatable Boats: 7
Four Wheel Drive Trucks: 8
6 Wheel Drive 2 1/2
Ton Trucks: 4
15 Ton Trucks: 2
Vans: 5
Forklifts: 6
MK-105 Mine Countermeasure
Sleds: 6

ADMINISTRATION

Annual squadron salary:	\$12,700,000
Operating budget:	\$4,900,000
Number of aircraft:	11
Personnel:	591 enlisted 42 officers