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(1972)



472-0040-33-20

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MACAG-PD (8 Jan 73) 3rd Ind
SUBJECT: Recommendation for Navy Unit Commendation to Task Force Delta

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM,
APO 96222

13 MAR 1973

TO: Commander, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, FPO 96610

Recommend approval of the Navy Unit Commendation to Task Force Delta for
the period 23 May 1972 to 31 December 1972.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

1 Incl
nc

JAMES C. GRIFFITH
COL, USA
Adjutant General

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REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED WHEN
SEPARATED FROM CLASSIFIED INCLOSURE

FF/7/NDH:wrc
1650
Ser N1/PD-07-A

01 FEB 1973

CONFIDENTIAL - (Unclassified upon removal of basic correspondence)

SECOND ENDORSEMENT on CG 1st MAM ltr Ser 07A36672 1650 of 31 Dec 72

From: Commander SEVENTH Fleet
To: Secretary of the Navy (NDSIM)
Via: (1) Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam ✓
(2) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
(3) Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet
(4) Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code DL)
(5) Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Navy Unit Commendation for Task Force DELTA; forwarding of

1. Forwarded recommending approval.
2. Commander SEVENTH Fleet concurs with the recommendation of Task Force DELTA for the Navy Unit Commendation for their consistent superlative performance in support of the Republic of Vietnam. Upon approval of this award approximately 5000 officers and men will be eligible for participation

Copy to:
CG, III MAF
CG, FIRST MAM

JAMES L. HOLLOWAY III

RECORD OF RECEIPT OPNAV FORM 8611-10 (REV. 4-81) <i>This receipt must be signed and returned</i>			CONTROL NO. 25-73	
RECEIVED MATERIAL AS DESCRIBED BELOW				
DATE OF MATERIAL	SERIAL	COPY NO.	ENCLOSURES	
31Dec72	07A36672	9	w/encl (1)	
ADDRESSEE (Activity receiving material) CNO				
SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED RECIPIENT			DATE	
S/N 0107-788-0000				

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7/twb

1650

8. JAN. 1973

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FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CG, 1st MAW ltr 6:LEB:wpc Ser: 07A36672
1650 of 31 Dec 1972

From: Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force, FMP
To: Secretary of the Navy
Via: (1) Commander, Seventh Fleet
(2) Commander, U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
(3) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
(4) Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet
(5) Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code DL)
(6) Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Navy Unit Commendation Recommendation; case of Task
Force Delta

1. Forwarded recommending approval.
2. This recommendation reflects the distinctive performance of this unit while under my operational control and is forwarded at this time in view of my detachment as Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force. Task Force Delta continues to be engaged in operations in Southeast Asia.

LOUIS METZGER

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HEADQUARTERS
1st Marine Aircraft Wing
Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
FPO San Francisco 96602

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From: Commanding General
To: Secretary of the Navy
Via: (1) Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force, FMF
(2) Commander, Seventh Fleet
(3) Commander, U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
(4) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
(5) Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet
(6) Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code DL)
(7) Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Navy Unit Commendation Recommendation; case of Task Force Delta

Ref: (a) SecNavInst 1650.1D

Encl: (1) Proposed Citation (U)

1. (U) In accordance with the provisions of reference (a), it is recommended that Task Force Delta be awarded a Navy Unit Commendation for exceptionally meritorious service in the performance of duties while based at Nam Phong Air Base, Thailand from 23 May 1972 to 31 December 1972.

2. (C) Conceived to maintain vital air support for the Republic of South Vietnam, the establishment of Task Force Delta actually began with the arrival of a 1st Marine Aircraft Wing team in Thailand on 17 May 1972. This team (consisting initially of 20 officers and 5 enlisted) began the extremely difficult task of transforming a primitive bare base into a modern self-contained combat air base. After initial liaison and coordination with the U. S. Air Force, Thai military, U. S. Embassy and local Thai officials, the complex and unique task of planning and supervising the development of Nam Phong and Task Force Delta began. On 23 May 1972, Task Force Delta, under the command of Brigadier General A. M. O'DONNELL, USMC, was officially designated and ordered to Nam Phong, Thailand.

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CLASSIFIED BY (CG, 1st MAW)
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFY ON 31 DECEMBER 1978.

1stMAW S&C No 25-73

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Subj: Navy Unit Commendation Recommendation; case of Task Force Delta

a. The establishment of a U. S. Marine Corps air base at Nam Phong presented unique problems. Never before had the Marine Corps established an expeditionary base so far inland nor in so short a time. Nam Phong was isolated in a primitive area over 220 miles from the coast. The logistics problems were indeed awesome, requiring the coordination of some 269 C-141 lifts, 185 C-130 lifts, 7 C5A lifts, 3 LSTs and 1 MSC. Over 10,000 tons of cargo and 2400 men were quickly moved into Nam Phong and the base was established with amazing speed and efficiency.

b. Monsoon rains and tropical heat were major obstacles in meeting the mid-June operational deadline. Construction and earthmoving was accomplished with the coordination of the 30th Naval Construction Regiment and the tireless on-site efforts of Mobile Construction Battalion 5. They worked around the clock in the worst possible weather to turn the red clay quagmire into an operational base for the hundreds of Marines who would soon call it home and from which important combat operations would be conducted.

c. Problems unique to the tropical environment of Nam Phong plagued the men of Task Force Delta and from these came Nam Phong's unofficial name - "The Rose Garden". Insects were so bad that they clogged generators. Special filters and protective devices had to be designed and produced. Task Force Delta personnel spent their early weeks at Nam Phong living in tents and their shower facilities were the daily monsoon rains. Recreational facilities were non-existent; nor was there time for recreation had they been available.

d. Despite an endless list of obstacles and setbacks, Task Force Delta, displaying an unparalleled determination, met its operational deadline and received its first combat aircraft less than one month after the advance elements started work. The F-4Es of Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 115 arrived on 16 June and the next day launched the first combat missions to be flown from Nam Phong Air Base. By 20 June the remaining

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squadrons of Marine Aircraft Group 15 arrived and Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 232 and Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 533 began combat operations. A detachment of 4 KC-130s from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152 had arrived a week before to provide aerial refueling and a detachment of CH-46s from Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron-36 was in place to provide search and rescue support to Task Force units.

e. From the earliest weeks at Nam Phong, Marine Aircraft Group 15 provided Task Force Delta with a potent and effective combat capability. The mixture of F-4 and A-6A aircraft provided flexibility and depth to Task Force Delta's combat contributions. The F-4 Phantom provided both an extremely effective air-to-ground weapons platform and an air superiority fighter. The A-6A gave Task Force Delta the capability to accurately deliver impressive bomb loads against the enemy at night and in all weather conditions. The effectiveness of this team is attested to by the commendable combat record accumulated from 17 May 1972 to 31 December 1972. During this period flying from the primitive bare base at Nam Phong, Marine Aircraft Group 15 flew 7,362 combat sorties totalling 11,926 combat hours while delivering 18,653 tons of ordnance on enemy positions. The Group also flew 500 Barrier Combat Air Patrols in support of "Linebacker" sorties in North Vietnam. This outstanding performance was accomplished despite the need for aerial refueling on most missions and the maintenance/logistics complications of using the F-4 Phantom in a dual fighter/bomber role simultaneously.

f. This force played a vital role in the defense of Kontum, Hue, An Loc and in the recapture of Quang Tri City. The effectiveness of Marine Aircraft Group 15 aircrews in these operations is attested to by the many highly complimentary forward air controller damage reports. In its support of ground forces in South Vietnam, the Group was credited with approximately 1014 enemy "Killed by Air", 662 bunkers destroyed with

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an additional 159 damaged. Also destroyed were 817 military structures with 161 damaged and 3053 secondary fires and explosions. Other bomb damage assessments worthy of special note include 57 anti-aircraft and artillery positions, 18 mortar positions and 49 tracked vehicles and tanks destroyed. In its interdiction of supply movement, the Group is credited with destroying 200 trucks and 33 sampans. This outstanding performance was not without its price: 11 Marine pilots/aircrew members were lost in these combat operations.

g. The professionalism and inspiring devotion displayed by the men of Task Force Delta in the face of hardship and adversity were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

3. (U) The facts in the proposed citation are personally known to me.

4. (U) Headquarters, Task Force Delta has been awarded no previous unit awards.

Marine Aircraft Group 15 has been awarded no previous unit awards.

Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 15 has been awarded no previous unit awards.

Marine Air Base Squadron 15 has been awarded no previous unit awards.

Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 115 has been previously awarded the following unit awards:

Presidential Unit Citation

Vietnam (11 October 1965-12 January 1966,
11 April 1966-15 February 1967,
15 May 1967-15 September 1967)

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Navy Unit Commendation

Vietnam (15 September 1967-30 April 1968)

Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 232 has been previously awarded the following unit awards:

Presidential Unit Citation

Vietnam (15 November 1966-15 September 1967)

Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 533 has been previously awarded the following unit awards:

Presidential Unit Citation

Vietnam (1 April 1967-15 September 1967)

Navy Unit Commendation

Vietnam (15 September 1967-31 March 1968,
1 April 1968-31 March 1969)

Mobile Construction Battalion Five has been previously awarded the following unit awards:

Navy Unit Commendation

Vietnam (1 September 1966-31 July 1967)

Meritorious Unit Commendation

Vietnam (10 December 1967-22 December 1967)

Marine Air Traffic Control Unit 62 has been awarded no previous unit awards.

5. (U) Task Force Delta has been recommended for no other awards for service during this period.

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Subj: Navy Unit Commendation Recommendation; case of Task Force Delta

6. (U) In accordance with reference (a), the following list of eligible units within Task Force Delta and dates of eligibility is provided:

Headquarters, Task Force Delta
23 May 1972 - 31 December 1972

Marine Aircraft Group 15
16 June 1972 - 31 December 1972

Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 15
16 June 1972 - 31 December 1972

Marine Air Base Squadron 15
16 June 1972 - 31 December 1972

Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 115
16 June 1972 - 31 December 1972

Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 232
20 June 1972 - 31 December 1972

Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 533
20 June 1972 - 31 December 1972

Marine Air Traffic Control Unit 62
16 June 1972 - 31 December 1972

Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 36 Detachment Delta
20 June 1972 - 31 December 1972

Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152 Detachment Delta
20 June 1972 - 31 December 1972

7th Counterintelligence Team Detachment Bravo
23 May 1972 - 31 December 1972

Marine Aircraft Control Group 18 Detachment Delta
16 June 1972 - 31 December 1972

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Force Delta

Subunit 1, Headquarters and Service Company, Headquarters
and Service Battalion, 3d Force Service Regiment
(Logistics Support Group Delta)
23 May 1972 - 31 December 1972

Supporting Units:

Navy Mobile Construction Battalion Five
23 May 1972 - 31 December 1972

Naval Construction Regiment 30 (Forward)
23 May 1972 - 31 December 1972

11th Signal Group (Nam Phong Detachment), U. S. Army
23 May 1972 - 31 December 1972

MACALCE (6th Aerial Port Detachment, Nam Phong) U. S.
Air Force
16 June 1972 - 31 December 1972

7. (U) Approximately 5000 men would be eligible for this award.

L. E. BROWN

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PROPOSED CITATION

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting
the NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION to

TASK FORCE DELTA

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For exceptionally meritorious service in the performance of duties at Nam Phong, Thailand in support of U. S. military operations in Southeast Asia. During the period 23 May 1972 to 31 December 1972, a U. S. Marine Corps expeditionary air base was carved from the jungle of northeastern Thailand and simultaneously combat operations were conducted on a continuous basis. The advance echelon of Task Force Delta arrived 23 May 1972 and commenced an unprecedented construction and operational schedule. Despite torrential rains, sweltering heat and countless other obstacles, by laboring day and night, seemingly impossible operational deadlines were met, the first combat aircraft arrived on 16 June 1972, and continuous combat air operations commenced the next day. The massive construction effort necessary to develop the base for sustained combat continued while air operations expanded concurrently. Around-the-clock operations included air-to-ground close air support, fighter barrier combat air patrols and night systems bombing throughout North and South Vietnam and Laos. Almost immediately, daily sortie rates were equalling those expected of an air group operating from a sophisticated, permanent base and monthly ordnance delivery rates were exceeding 2200 tons. The deeds of all those assigned to Task Force Delta are now legend and will stand for all times as a symbol of unparalleled determination, unprecedented cooperation and impressive efficiency. The men of Task Force Delta exemplify the highest form of combat responsiveness and readiness. Theirs was an almost impossible task which was performed with great distinction.

The performance of the personnel of Task Force Delta was a significant contribution in the support of the South Vietnamese counter-offensive as well as the U. S. air offensive of 1972. The courage, professionalism, and inspiring devotion to duty displayed by the officers and men of Task Force Delta were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service."

For the President,

Enclosure (1)

All personnel attached to or serving with Task Force Delta during the above period, or any part thereof, are hereby authorized to wear the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon.

During this period, Task Force Delta consisted of the following units:

Headquarters, Task Force Delta
Marine Aircraft Group 15
Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 15
Marine Air Base Squadron 15
Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 115
Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 232
Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 533
Marine Air Traffic Control Unit 62
Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 36 Detachment Delta
Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152 Detachment Delta
7th Counterintelligence Team Detachment Bravo
Marine Air Control Group 18 Detachment Delta
Subunit 1, Headquarters & Service Company, Headquarters &
Service Battalion, 3d Force Service Regiment (Logistics
Support Group Delta)
Navy Mobile Construction Battalion Five
Naval Construction Regiment 30 (Forward)
11th Signal Group (Nam Phong Detachment) U. S. Army
MACALCE (6th Aerial Port Detachment, Nam Phong) U. S. Air Force

Enclosure (1)