

USS MARS (AFS-1)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS MARS (AFS-1)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, D. C. 20390
Subj: USS MARS (AFS-1) Command History 1969; forwarding of, (OPNAV
Report 5750-1)
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A of 31 October 1968
Encl: (1) Chronology of Events
(2) Basic Narrative
(3) Documentary Annexes

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (3) are forwarded herewith.


J. O. NUTT

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CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS 1969

- 1-2 January - Enroute Vung Tau
- 2 January - Anchored Vung Tau for replenishments
- 3 January - Replenishments Cam Ranh Bay area
- 4-7 January - Replenishments in and around Da Nang
- 8-11 January - Yankee Station Operations
- 12-13 January - Enroute Subic
- 13-25 January - Resupply Subic
- 25-28 January - Enroute An Thoi
- 28 January - Anchored An Thoi for replenishments
- 28-30 January - Enroute Vung Tau
- 30 January - Anchored Vung Tau for replenishments
- 31 January - Replenishments in Cam Ranh Bay area
- 1-3 February - Replenishments in Da Nang area
- 3-5 February - Enroute Hong Kong
- 5-11 February - Inport Hong Kong
- 11-14 February - Enroute Yokosuka
- 14 February - 10 March - Inport Yokosuka
- 10-14 March - Enroute Kaoshiung
- 14-16 March - Inport Kaoshiung for replenishments
- 16-17 March - Enroute Yankee Station
- 18-22 March - Yankee Station Operations
- 22-25 March - Enroute Subic Bay
- 25 March - Replenish ENTERPRISE Task Group
- 25-30 March - Inport Subic Bay
- 30 March - 2 April - Enroute An Thoi

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2 April - Anchored An Thoi for replenishments
2-4 April - Enroute Vung Tau
4 April - Anchored Vung Tau for replenishments
5 April - Replenishments Cam Ranh Bay area
6-8 April - Replenishments Da Nang area
9-15 April - Yankee Station Operations
15-19 April - Enroute Yokosuka
19-28 April - Inport Yokosuka
28-30 April - Enroute Yellow Sea
30 April - 1 May - Yellow Sea Operations
1-3 May - Enroute Yokosuka
3-4 May - Inport Yokosuka
4-6 May - Enroute ORISKANY replenishment
6 May - ORISKANY Group replenishment
6-7 May - Enroute Yokosuka
7-13 May - Inport Yokosuka
13-17 May - Enroute Kachsiung
17-18 May - Inport Kachsiung for replenishments
18-19 May - Enroute Subic
19 May - ENTERPRISE replenishment
19-20 May - Enroute Yankee Station
20-24 May - Yankee Station Operations
24-26 May - Enroute Manila
26 May - KEARSARGE Task Group replenishment
26-28 May - Inport Manila
28 May - Enroute Subic Bay

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28 May - 1 June - Inport Subic Bay
1-4 June - Enroute An Thoi
4 June - Anchored An Thoi for replenishments
4-6 June - Enroute Vung Tau
6 June - Anchored Vung Tau for replenishments
6-8 June - Enroute Da Nang
8-10 June - Replenishments Da Nang area
10-15 June - Yankee Station Operations
15-19 June - Enroute Yokosuka
19 June - 13 July - Inport Yokosuka
13-15 July - Enroute Sasebo
15-16 July - Inport Sasebo for replenishments
16-18 July - Enroute Kachsiung
18-21 July - Inport Kachsiung for replenishments
21-23 July - Enroute Yankee Station
23-28 July - Yankee Station Operations
28-30 July - Enroute Subic Bay
30 July - 1 August - Inport Subic Bay
1-5 August - Enroute An Thoi
5 August - Anchored An Thoi for replenishments
5-7 August - Enroute Vung Tau
7 August - Anchored Vung Tau for replenishments
7-9 August - Enroute Da Nang
9-11 August - Replenishments Da Nang area
12-18 August - Yankee Station Operations
18-20 August - Enroute Hong Kong
20-25 August - Inport Hong Kong

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25-29 August - Enroute Yokosuka
29 August - Operational Readiness Inspection
29 August - 23 September - Inport Yokosuka
23-25 September - Sea trials
25 September - 3 October - Inport Yokosuka
3 October - Change of Command Ceremony
3-5 October - Inport Yokosuka
5-10 October - Enroute Subic Bay
10-13 October - Inport Subic Bay
13-15 October - Enroute Yankee Station
15-18 October - Yankee Station Operations
18-19 October - Replenishments Da Nang area
19-22 October - Enroute Vung Tau
22 October - Anchored Vung Tau for replenishments
22-24 October - Enroute An Thoi
24 October - Anchored An Thoi for replenishments
24-26 October - Enroute Yankee Station
26 October - Yankee Station Operations
26-28 October - Enroute Subic Bay
28-30 October - Inport Subic Bay
30 October - 3 November - Enroute Yokosuka
3-25 November - Inport Yokosuka
25-28 November - Enroute Kaohsiung
28-30 November - Inport Kaohsiung
30 November - 1 December - Enroute Subic Bay
1-2 December - Inport Subic Bay

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- 2-4 December - Enroute Yankee Station
- 4-8 December - Yankee Station Operations
- 9-11 December - Replenishments Da Nang area
- 11-13 December - Enroute Vung Tau
- 13 December - Anchored Vung Tau for replenishments
- 14-16 December - SS THAMES BREEZE SAR Operations
- 17 December - Anchored An Thoi for replenishments
- 18-23 December - Enroute Yokosuka
- 23-31 December - Inport Yokosuka

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1. Command Organization and Relations

a. Captain Paul A. ANDERSON, USN, was the Commanding Officer of the USS MARS (AFS-1) for the first nine months of 1969. Captain ANDERSON was relieved by Captain Thomas O. NUTT, Jr., USN, on 3 October 1969, in a change of command ceremony held on board the ship in Yokosuka, Japan.

b. MARS remains homeported in Yokosuka, Japan, as it has been since 23 September 1964. Operating out of Yokosuka reduces the long transit time required by ships operating from the United States. MARS also utilizes the ports of Kaohsiung, Taiwan to obtain sensitive chill items, and Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines, for freeze resupply, in addition to Yokosuka, where GSK items are obtained after shipment from NSD Oakland.

c. The mission and function of MARS remain the same: logistic support for the SEVENTH Fleet and other forces in Southeast Asia. During 1969, MARS was called upon for support of our forces in the Yellow Sea, off the coast of Korea, as well as for support in aiding the Vietnamese operations.

d. MARS normally operates and provides services independently as opposed to operating as part of a multi-ship replenishment group. This is in keeping with the SEVENTH Fleet policy of cycling an AFS through the operating areas on an average of once every 18 days. Since each SERVICE Force type operates on a different cycle, group replenishment has not been used.

e. To support the vertical replenishment capability (VERTREP) of MARS, a detachment from Helicopter Combat Support Squadron SEVEN, based at Naval Air Station, Atsugi, Japan, is attached to MARS during deployments. This detachment consists of two UH-46A Boeing-Vertol "Sky Knight" helicopters and is manned with four to six pilots and eighteen air crewmen and ground support airmen.

f. MARS' complement is 413 enlisted men and 25 officers. The enlisted allowance is 384. As of 31 December 1969, MARS had 362 enlisted men and 27 officers assigned.

g. MARS is under the administrative and operational control of Commander, Service Group THREE/Service Squadron THREE who is based at Sasebo, Japan, and who for operational purposes carries the title Commander Task Group 73.3. While operating in the Southeast Asia area, operational control is delegated to Commander, Service Squadron NINE/CTG 73.5.

2. Operations and Activities

On 1 January 1969, MARS was rounding the southern tip of South Vietnam heading for Vung Tau. On 2 January, 29 units were replenished, 26 in port at Vung Tau. For this replenishment, MARS began a test of "MARS-TAINERS" (large tri-walled cardboard containers for packing stores).

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Thirty-seven of these containers, which are used for resupply via IST, were obtained to determine their practicability for the following uses:

- a. providing better security of stores in transit, especially ship's store stock.
- b. improving ease of handling, as compared to normal palletization and banding of stores.
- c. reducing lost, misplaced, and misrouted pallets of stores up-river and in-country.
- d. minimizing damage to stores in handling or from weather.

Evaluations of these "MARS-TAINERS" were solicited from all units who received them. Several units responded, recommending expansion of their use. Cost to MARS' OPTAR became a problem, though, since the "MARS-TAINERS" cost \$7.50 each. Nevertheless, limited use was continued.

During the morning of 4 January, MARS intercepted an urgent MEDEVAC requirement from the USS R. K. HUNTINGTON (DD-781) to pick up a crewman who had suffered a fractured skull. He was treated by MARS' doctor, and then flown to USS HANCOCK for further treatment.

On 6 January, 171 pallets of stores were VERTREPPED to the USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62) during a rainstorm while she remained at her gunfire support station. Although a combination VERTREP/CONREP would have taken less time, full VERTREP allowed NEW JERSEY to stay in position to respond immediately to shore bombardment missions, whereas a CONREP would have taken her miles away from her station. MARS has been involved in a number of such replenishments where gunfire support ships have been able to continue their operational commitments almost without interruption while being VERTREPPED. In some cases, stores deliveries have been made between gun salvos.

The operational freedom allowed the customer ship by VERTREP was demonstrated again on 11 January when the USS HORNET (CVS-11), during a 100 pallet VERTREP, merely waved the helos aside for several minutes while she landed five aircraft. Five carrier task groups were replenished during the swing, with the USS CONSTELLATION (CVA-64) and USS RANGHER (CVA-61) each receiving over 200 pallets of material.

The only night VERTREP was to the USS SANCTUARY (AH-17). The hospital ships, which are required to receive helos day or night, have excellent helo deck lighting.

MARS conducted her 112th replenishment at 0430 on 12 January in Da Nang Harbor and headed for Subic Bay. The forthcoming resupply was the third and last in that port during MARS' extended South China Sea deployment.

MARS entered Subic Bay on 13 January and moored to a buoy, due to non-availability of pier space. Most of the GSK and IQ COG resupply was loaded on barges and brought to MARS for loading. The ship then moved to

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the NSD Freight Terminal pier for provisions top off. A total of 244 short tons of provisions were loaded during this visit.

For the first time since MARS started her five month South China Sea deployment, reordering and receipt processing functions were not plagued by major EAM casualties. One brief UNIVAC 1004 casualty occurred, but the Subic Bay 1004 repairman was on board in less than one hour, and repaired the equipment immediately.

MARS departed Subic Bay on 25 January. The actual on-line period began on 28 January at An Thoi and ended six days later while crossing the South China Sea enroute from Da Nang to Hong Kong.

Vung Tau again presented a busy morning with stores for 24 customers being transferred in less than three hours. As during the Vung Tau replenishment in early January, use of "MARS-TAINERS" to pack customers' stores facilitated the transfer and resulted in enroute to ultimate recipient losses being negligible. MARS has received numerous favorable comments from our customers about use of these containers and it is clear that this is the way to transfer stores to "up-river" and "in-country" customers who receive their stores via resupply LSTs.

Another busy day was 31 January, during which fifteen replenishments were scheduled. Due to on-line operations of some of the customers, mainly Amphibious Force ships in support of combat operations ashore, and a surge in MEDEVAC casualties being lifted to the LPHs and hospital ships, a number of the replenishments were rescheduled several times by the customers. Connected replenishments changed to vertical replenishments and vice versa, but all pallets of stores were delivered. As the following message from CTG 76.5 attests, it was a busy day:

UNCLAS EFTO

VERTREP/UNREP TG 76.5

A. NUMEROUS MSGS

1. REF A SCHEDULED, CHANGE, SUPERCEDED, SWITCHED, SUBSTITUTED, AND PROBABLY CONFUSED BUT NEVER ALTERED THE CAN DO SPIRIT OF MARS. SINCERELY APPRECIATED FLEXIBILITY OF YOUR SHIP TO MEET OUR REQUIREMENTS. REALIZE THE IDEALLY EXECUTED VERTREP/UNREP REQUIRES CAREFUL PLANNING AND ONCE STORES ARE STAGED IT IS DIFFICULT TO MAKE LATE CHANGES. YOUR ABILITY TO ADJUST TONIGHT ATTESTS AGAIN TO THE OUTSTANDING SERVICES YOU RENDER.

2. WELL DONE

BT

The final replenishment business of the deployment was conducted in Hong Kong, where the station ship and American Consulate received routine replenishments, and authorized emergency issues were made to a submarine, destroyer and the COMSEVENTHFLEET Flagship.

The long deployment ended upon MARS' return to Yokosuka on 14 February.

MARS inport period (14 February - 9 March) was the first in our home port of Yokosuka since an eight-day resupply in October 1968. The first

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few days of the resupply period were spent on supply maintenance, primarily consolidation of multiple locations and taking of inventories. Resupply material from CONUS and NSD Yokosuka was loaded.

MARS departed Yokosuka on 10 March, conducted the first replenishment since getting underway on 13 March, and arrived at Kaohsiung, Taiwan on 14 March. Eight replenishments took place in port and 27 tons of fresh provisions were loaded before departing on 16 March for Yankee Station.

Among 34 replenishments on Yankee Station were four carrier task groups. A fifth, the ENTERPRISE Group, was met outside Subic Bay and received 455 pallets of stores in exactly two hours.

MARS entered Subic Bay on 25 March, having issued 715 tons of provisions, about one half of our load, since departing Yokosuka.

MARS left Subic Bay on 31 March, and began the Market Time swing at An Thoi. Proceeding north, 29 replenishments were conducted in Vung Tau on 4 April, most of these to two LSTs and to Naval Support Facility Detachment, Cat Lo, for further transfer. As in previous Vung Tau INREPS, "MARS-TAINERS" were utilized to facilitate stores handling and minimize losses.

Rough weather interrupted or prevented some replenishments on 5 and 6 April, requiring meeting up with customers later or transferring their supplies to another ship for further transfer.

In addition to the USS VALLEY FORGE (LPH-8), four carrier task groups were replenished during the second Yankee Station swing. On the night of 8 April, with the USS RANGER (CVA-61) alongside, one of MARS' helos crashed and was lost due to engine failure. There were no personnel casualties.

While MARS was enroute Kobe for a port visit, North Korean aircraft shot down a U. S. Navy reconnaissance plane over international waters. Orders soon were received to proceed to Yokosuka at best speed. MARS was directed to load as rapidly as possible and be ready for emergency deployment to the Sea of Japan to replenish a large task force to be assembled in that area. The deployment ended upon arrival at Yokosuka on 19 April.

Upon receiving the orders for a possible emergency deployment to replenish Task Force 71 in the Yellow Sea, messages were sent immediately to CTU 73.1.5, USS VEGA (AF-59), and NSD Yokosuka, outlining loading plans and ordering interim requirements. An hour after arriving in port, the crew, divided into Blue and Gold teams on 12 hour shifts, began loading around the clock. On 20 April, VEGA was moored to port of MARS and a ship-to-ship alongside CONSOL began. A total of 1182 short tons of provisions was transferred in around the clock operations, taking just under 43 hours to complete.

MARS reported ready to deploy on Friday, 25 April, six days after arrival in port, and left for the Yellow Sea on the morning of 28 April.

By the time MARS arrived in the rendezvous area, most elements of TF 71 had been withdrawn and only ENTERPRISE (CVA(N)-65) and nine destroyers and missile ships remained. They were replenished on 30 April and 1 May.

MARS returned to Yokosuka on 3 May and received sailing orders at 0200, 4 May, in answer to an urgent replenishment request from the USS ORISKANY (CVA-39) and her escorts, who were diverted from a port call in Yokosuka. At 1800 on 4 May, MARS sailed for the rendezvous area southeast of Japan. The replenishments were made on 6 May, and the ship returned to Yokosuka late 7 May.

MARS departed Yokosuka on 13 May, proceeded to the Yellow Sea, and replenished the USS KITTY HAWK (CVA-63) and her escorts on the morning of 15 May, after a delay caused by dense fog. Upon completion of these replenishments, MARS headed for Taiwan, arriving in Kaohsiung on 17 May. Two ships were replenished in port before MARS departed for Yankee Station on 18 May. Arriving on Yankee Station on 20 May, MARS replenished 20 ships in 5 days, including two carrier task groups. A third group, USS KEARSARGE (CVA-33) and her six escorts, participating in a SEATO exercise, was replenished on 26 May during its sortie out of Manila Bay.

After a one day stopover in Manila, MARS departed on 28 May, arriving in Subic Bay that afternoon to begin a small CONSOL with the USS VEGA (AF-59). MARS spent most of her Subic in port period moored to a buoy, and had difficulty obtaining timely delivery of stores due to scheduling problems with barges and tugs.

MARS left Subic on 1 June and began the Market Time swing at An Thoi on 4 June, replenishing six ships with requirements for seven customers. Vung Tau was reached on 6 June, and the USS MADERA COUNTY (LST-905) was brought alongside to receive material for herself and 7 other customers. Cat Lo boats were not available, but a U. S. Army Mike boat was used to transfer material for 3 customers. The Navy Vung Tau Liaison Division's newly improved helo pad was used to VERTREP material for 8 more customers, and USS TUTUILA's (ARG-4) requirements were VERTREPPED directly to her.

On the morning of 9 June, MARS replenished her first Amphibious Ready Group of the swing. The second Group was scheduled for replenishment that afternoon; however the USS IWO JIMA (LPH-2) advised by message that she was being delayed in Da Nang and could not meet her replenishment rendezvous. MARS proceeded to Da Nang and commenced VERTREPPING her and the USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7) in port. CTG 76.4 stated by message that MARS' quick response "... allowed (him) to expediate backload of battalion and help NSA Da Nang clear hard-pressed ramps and staging area without interruption".

Four ships were replenished in Northern I CORPS on 10 June, including the USS OKLAHOMA CITY (CLG-5), the SEVENTHFLT Flagship. Also, the USS FRANK KNOX (DD-742), in Da Nang Harbor on a gunfire support mission, was replenished between salvos.

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MARS returned to Yankee Station on 11 June and replenished 17 customers during the next few days. This represented a significant reduction from the 30 to 40 ships which had previously been assigned to Yankee Station during earlier deployments.

MARS celebrated her 6th birthday on 15 June and was privileged to welcome aboard Captain B. R. DOGGE, USN, Commander Service Squadron NINE and CTG 73.5, for a brief visit. On that evening, MARS departed Yankee Station for Yokosuka to begin an 1100 ton CONSOL with the USS GRAFFIAS (AF-29), followed by a normal resupply period beginning 19 June.

MARS departed Yokosuka on 13 July and arrived in Sasebo the morning of 15 July. Here a concentrated inport replenishment was conducted using all available resources in which 26 replenishments were conducted in a day and a half. MARS then departed for Kaohsiung, replenishing six more ships while enroute.

Arriving at Kaohsiung on 18 July, four replenishments, all by VERTREP, were provided and eleven tons of fresh provisions were loaded. After two more days in port, MARS departed on 21 July for Yankee Station. A 51-ton CONSOL was conducted at sea from the USS VEGA (AF-59) while enroute.

A total of thirty replenishments were conducted on Yankee Station, including services to three carrier task groups. The USS ORISKANY (CVA-34), which had earlier offloaded her frozen stores due to a reefer casualty, was able to complete repairs and was loaded by MARS on 25 and 26 July. The USS TICONDEROGA (CVA-14) also had a reefer casualty, but was not able to complete repairs before MARS left Yankee Station. She was given a basic replenishment on 23 July and then a special replenishment on 28 July to keep her in supply of frozen stores which she was able to carry only in limited quantities.

A quick trip also was made to the Da Nang area where a special fresh provisions replenishment was given to the USS REPOSE (AH-16), and the USS SANCTUARY (AH-17).

While enroute to Subic on 29 July, MARS received 81,000 pounds of apples from the USS NIAGARA FALLS (AFS-3), as part of a program to efficiently reduce fleet excesses by making them readily available to customers.

Arriving in Subic Bay on the afternoon of 30 July, MARS loaded for 3 days in torrential downpour.

Departing Subic on 2 August, MARS headed for the Vietnam coastal areas starting at An Thoi, providing replenishment services to 62 units through 10 August. 49,000 pounds of apples were transferred to NSA Da Nang for distribution through the Civic Action Program. The following message was received from Commander Naval Support Activity Da Nang:

1. SINCERE THANKS FOR SURVEYED APPLES TRANSFERRED ON 9 AUG 69 TO THIS ACTIVITY FOR CIVIC ACTION PROJECTS. THE APPLES WERE

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DISTRIBUTED TO THOUSANDS OF VIETNAMESE PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY CHILDREN, IN CATHOLIC, PROTESTANT AND BUDDHIST ORPHANAGES, SCHOOLS, AND NURSERIES, TO PATIENTS IN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN HOSPITALS, TO PATIENTS IN LEPOSARIIUMS, TO MANY REFUGEES LIVING MEAGER EXISTENCES IN THE DANANG AREA AND BY NAVY SWIFT BOATS TO FRIENDLY VILLAGES ALONG THE COAST AND RIVERS OF I CORPS TACTICAL ZONE. YOUR GIFT WAS MUCH APPRECIATED BY THANKFUL PEOPLE AND MADE A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THIS COMMAND'S CIVIC ACTION PROGRAM.

2. AGAIN, OUR SINCERE THANKS.

BT

Proceeding to Yankee Station, MARS replenished 26 ships, including four carrier task groups, from 12-18 August. On 15 August, 43 tons of provisions were transferred to the USS SACRAMENTO (AOE-1) as a stores consolidation. On 17 August, 306 tons of dry provisions were CONSOLIDATED back from SACRAMENTO to MARS. MARS then concluded Yankee Station operations and proceeded to Hong Kong, arriving on 20 August for a most welcome and enjoyable 5 days of R&R.

Ending the Hong Kong visit on 25 August, MARS proceeded to Yokosuka. On 29 August, the COMSERVGRU THREE Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) team was helo/lifted aboard from Yokosuka and the ORI conducted thereafter. That afternoon, after completion of the inspection, MARS arrived in port Yokosuka to begin a restricted availability and resupply period which extended through 4 October.

During the RAV period, extensive repairs were made to main propulsion and auxiliary machinery and equipment. MARS received an Administrative Inspection on 15-16 September, conducted by Captain L. E. DAVIS, Jr., Chief of Staff, Service Group THREE. Rear Admiral R. L. J. LONG, Commander Service Group THREE, paid a personal visit to MARS on 18 September. Sea trials were held on 24-25 September, and minor problems were resolved prior to beginning the next deployment.

On Friday, 3 October, Captain Thomas O. NUTT, Jr., USN, relieved Captain Paul A. ANDERSON, USN, as Commanding Officer of MARS in an on-board ceremony attended by Rear Admiral D. J. SMITH, Jr., Commander, Naval Forces Japan.

MARS sailed a day early, on 5 October, to receive 80,000 pounds of beef from the USS NIAGARA FALLS (AFS-3) in an at-sea CONSOL. Following the CONSOL MARS headed for Subic Bay for a major provisions load out.

Arriving on the morning of 10 October, MARS loaded over 740 tons of provisions, and departed on 13 October for Yankee Station, minus one helo which had suffered an electrical casualty and was left at NAS Cubi Point for repairs. The Yankee Station SAR/PIRAZ ships were replenished on 15 October and the USS ORISKANY (CVA-34), USS HANCOCK (CVA-19), and their escorts were replenished on 17 October. Da Nang proved to be the heaviest replenishment area of the swing, with services provided to 26 ships and

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units in and near Da Nang during the period 18-20 October. To help fulfill all VERTREP requirements, the USS NEW ORLEANS (LPH-11) provided a CH-46A helo and a Marine pilot to supplement MARS' one helo for replenishments on 18 October, and the Marine Air Group, Marble Mountain, provided a CH-46D helo and two Marine pilots for operations on 19 October. The Marine pilots did an excellent job and enjoyed making deliveries to a "safe" landing zone. Commander D. G. GREGORY, Commanding Officer Helicopter Support Squadron SEVEN (HC-7), also rode MARS for a few days and assisted in VERTREP operations.

On 19 October, the ship's UNIVAC 1004 computer system was CASREPTED. A UNIVAC technical representative from Saigon, attempting repairs on 19-20 October, could not resolve the problem. On 20 October another UNIVAC TECHREP boarded MARS in Cam Ranh Bay and completed repairs on 21 October.

Units in Cam Ranh Bay were replenished on 21 October. Sixteen units were replenished in Vung Tau on 22 October, with the USS LUZERNE COUNTY (LST-902) serving as the up-river resupply ship for all but one of these customers. Vung Tau business was at about one-half the level of previous deployments, reflecting the continuing phase-down of Navy units and operations in this area. Upon completion of replenishment services to units at and near An Thoi on 24 October, MARS headed for Yankee Station and a provisions CONSOL with the USS REGULUS (AF-57), receiving 165 tons on 27 October. On 28 October, MARS arrived in Subic and loaded 111 additional tons of provisions. Departing Subic on 30 October, MARS replenished the USS CAMP (DER-251) while transiting the Taiwan Straits on 31 October. Upon arrival Yokosuka, MARS commenced a three-week re-supply period loading and providing provisions to in port units.

MARS departed Yokosuka on 25 November for the final swing of the year and embarked two CH-46A helicopters from Okinawa, which were being transferred to HELSUPPRON SEVEN from the Marine Corps. Heavy seas with gale force winds were encountered in transit and proved to be the order of the day throughout the deployment.

First port of call was Koahsiung, where MARS provided services to two ships on 28 and 29 November. Proceeding next to Subic Bay, MARS arrived on the morning of 1 December and loaded 438 tons of provisions, plus fleet freight for customers on the line.

MARS departed Subic on 2 December and proceeded to Yankee Station through extremely heavy weather which made customer break-outs difficult to accomplish. The USS HALAKALA (AE-25) and the USS LONG BEACH (CGN-9) were VERTREPPED on 2 and 3 December respectively. On 4 and 5 December, nine replenishments were conducted including a CON/VERTREP to the USS RANGER (CVA-61). The USS HANCOCK (CVA-19) and her escorts were replenished on 6 December and four VERTREPS conducted in and near Da Nang Harbor on 7 December.

Returning to Yankee Station on 8 December, MARS encountered a sea state that became increasingly severe. A small, mutual CONSOL was held

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with the USS CAMDEN (AOE-2) in the morning, and after VERTREPPING the USS RAINIER (AOE-5), and the USS O'BRIEN (DD-752), preparations were made for conducting a CON/VERT with the USS CONSTELLATION (CVA-64) with simultaneous CONREPS to the USS BUCKLEY (DD-308) and the USS HULL (DD-945), scheduled to begin at 2100. MARS rendezvoused with the task group in mid-afternoon and it was mutually decided that it would be best to attempt a daylight VERTREP with the destroyers rather than risk a nighttime CONREP. USS BUCKLEY (DD-308) was successfully replenished, but as HULL moved in to take her station, two of her sailors were washed overboard. Fortunately, MARS' helo was airborne and a quick recovery was made. Unharmed, the sailors were received aboard MARS, and no further attempt was made to replenish HULL that day.

CONSTELLATION began an approach at 2053 and after two unsuccessful attempts, all stations finally were connected at 2224. During the next one and one-half hours, only 71 of 298 pallets could be transferred, as the now excessively high sea state, compounded by the extreme turbulence created between the two ships, caused great difficulty with station keeping and made the rigs hard to control. At about 2400, the replenishment was broken off, when pallet loads of stores began spilling on deck and fork trucks began sliding and nearly tipping over. At 0700 the following morning, a successful connection was made again with the CONSTELLATION and 145 pallets of stores were transferred, when it became necessary for her to break off for other operations.

Fourteen more replenishments, were conducted in and near Da Nang Harbor during 9, 10, 11 December.

After nine additional replenishments, in the Can Ranh Bay area, MARS entered Vung Tau on 13 December, received the USS MOIMOUTH COUNTY (LST-1032) to port and transferred 37 pallet loads of stores for her and nine other customers. Also transferred were three 5,000 pound anchors and associated beaching gear for the local Harbor Clearance Unit Detachment.

Leaving Vung Tau at 1300, MARS replenished the USS DUBUQUE (LPD-8) and the USS EXCEL (MSC-439) enroute to An Thoi. At 2300, however MARS received an immediate precedence message from CTF 73 advising that the SS THAMES BREEZE, a British merchant ship, was hard aground on Fiery Cross Reef, and due to heavy seas, was requesting a helo to remove her crew. MARS proceeded at best speed arriving on the scene at 2300 on 14 December. Upon arrival, however USS CURRENT (ARS-23), which was coordinating rescue operations, advised that only fifteen of the crew remained on board, and it was expected that they could be removed safely the next morning, as the seas were calming rapidly. As directed by CTF 73, MARS came about at 0130 on 15 December and began heading back to provide services in An Thoi on 16 December. USCGC CHASE (WHEC-718) was VERTREPped at 2300 on 15 December when MARS was notified via a USS CURRENT SITREP that all but six of the crewmen had been safely removed from THAMES BREEZE and although it appeared that a boat evacuation could be safely made, the master had again requested the services of a helo for aid in evacuation.

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Once more MARS reversed course and proceeded at best speed toward Fiery Cross Reef. At 1500 on 16 December, MARS received the CURRENT'S message stating that the remaining six crewmen had finally been safely removed. MARS retraced her well-worn track and at last proceeded to An Thoi, arriving at 1300 on 17 December, after having VERTREPPED six ships that morning on the way into the roadstead. Services were completed to three inport customers at 1530, through the cooperation of all concerned. MARS was steaming for Subic and a consol with USS REGULUS (AF-57) when a most welcome message was received from COMSERVGRU THREE directing MARS to proceed directly and at best speed to Yokosuka, which would permit arrival home before Christmas. On the afternoon of 23 December, MARS arrived in Yokosuka. On 31 December, MARS was moored in Drydock SIX, Fleet Activities, Yokosuka.

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3. Special Topics

a. Operational Statistics

REPLENISHMENT TOTAL 1969

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOTAL REPLENISHMENT</u>	<u>LINE ITEMS</u>	<u>PROV S/T</u>	<u>GSK S/T</u>	<u>TOTAL S/T</u>
31 DEC 68- 12 JAN 69	112	17,856	897	435	1,350
28 JAN 69- 11 FEB 69	76	9,076	420	246	666
10 MAR 69- 25 MAR 69	46	7,057	715	206	921
19 APR 69- 7 MAY 69	32	3,212	225	85	310
13 MAY 69- 15 JUN 69	115	20,006	1,079	498	1,587
13 JUL 69- 29 AUG 69	160	26,510	1,753	667	2,420
5 OCT 69- 31 OCT 69	79	12,276	712	285	997
25 NOV 69- 23 DEC 69	73	10,988	903	252	1,155

DEPLOYMENT 1969

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>DAYS UNDERWAY</u>	<u>DAYS INFORT (HOMEPORT)</u>	<u>DAYS INFORT (NOT HOMEPORT)</u>
JAN	17.7		13.3
FEB	7.7	14.4	5.9
MAR	14.2	9.4	6.9
APR	20	9.1	
MAY	17.5	7.1	6.1
JUN	17	11.4	.5
JUL	13.1	12.4	5.5
AUG	22.4		5.2
SEP	1.1	28.8	
OCT	20.2	4.4	5.2
NOV	6.1	22.1	1.8
DEC	20.6	8.4	1.0

b. Performance of Weapons Systems. From 1 January to 31 December 1969, MARS expended 622 rounds from her four twin 3"/50 rapid fire mounts, successfully completing eleven exercises designed to enhance the operational readiness of the systems and mold weapons personnel into a more efficient fighting team. Many discrepancies in the reliability of equipment and teamwork were revealed during these exercises in the latter part of the year. All but two of these discrepancies have been corrected. Mount 31 is without an electrical limit stop synchro and Mount 32 is not operable in the local surface mode of control because of a faulty tachometer in the one-man control station. The after battery is in good operating order.

The two Gun Fire Control Systems MK 56 MOD 39 had a 100% reliability quotient during the past year. Both systems have been tracking targets to near maximum range (28,000 - 30,000 yds) consistently. Computer solutions have been accurate. The CIC mode of operations for the target Designation System MK1 MOD 0 has defied all maintenance efforts to remedy the existing problems. This system has not functioned properly since the commissioning of MARS in 1963. We have applied to Naval Ordnance System Office Pacific for technical assistance. There have been no outstanding maintenance problems with either of the MK 56 systems.

The Planned Maintenance System which was integrated on board MARS in August 1968, and revised in May 1969, has created many useful guidelines for both Fire Controlmen and Gunner's Mates alike. Man hour utilization and efficiency has been greatly improved.

The only alteration on the gun mounts worthy of note was the replacement of the firing cut-out cams on Mount 34 in February 1969. During the recent ammunition exchange, MARS has gained 2,500 new rounds of VTF, VTNF, and dummy projectiles bringing our bins up to an optimum supply level.

c. Major Conversions and Modifications.

(1) AFS-25 - Three additional communications equipments were installed as part of AFS-25 SHIPALT.

(a) Two R-1051/URR Radio Receivers in April 69

(b) One AN/SRR-19A Radio Receiver in September 69

d. Developments in Command and Control Systems. As vertical replenishments continue to become a more and more accepted and preferred method of replenishment, MARS has risen to the challenge by handling VERTREP operations more smoothly and efficiently than ever before.

In September of 1969 the Second Division was enlarged by the splitting of the First Division. This step was undertaken to facilitate better administrative control of the First Division by reduction in number of personnel. Each division now has approximately 50 men. Second Division assumed the new responsibility of deck work aft of the superstructure in addition to its VERTREP functions. The division is now organized under one division officer who acts as Flight Deck Officer directing the vertical

replenishment operation. The flight deck cargo handlers are drawn from the Second Division, and assigned semi-permanently to insure familiarization with the job.

e. Communications. Over the six month period from July 1969 through December 1969, MARS handled a total of 8370 messages. Of these, 6014 were received and 2356 transmitted. The average monthly traffic load consisted of 1395, with 1002 incoming and 393 outgoing. The average number of messages handled per day was 47, including 34 incoming and 13 outgoing.

These statistics are deceiving, however, since two of the six months were spent almost entirely in MARS' homeport of Yokosuka, where the traffic load was considerably lower than when "on the line". During the four months of unrep operations, the average monthly traffic load was 1779, almost 800 more than the in port months. The average daily load during "on the line" months was 60 messages, of which 40 were received and 20 sent. In contrast, only 33 messages were handled daily during in port months: 26 received and 7 sent.

The personnel manning level remained the primary problem during the past year. Experienced rated men were ordered out and either replaced with inexperienced strikers or just not replaced. In June there were twelve radiomen: eight rated men and four experienced strikers. By December only five rated men and four relatively inexperienced strikers were assigned to OC Division. With the homeport change, the situation will likely deteriorate further.

Propagation conditions were excellent during the past year. Very few Fleet Broadcast numbers were missed and those that were were usually picked up quickly on rerun channels. Only in the area around the southern tip of Vietnam were difficulties encountered, particularly in maintaining ship-to-shore communications with WESTPAC communications stations. Circuit discipline was the principal problem with both ship/ship and ship/shore Orestes circuits. The circuits were often crowded, and occasionally ships failed to wait their turn before transmitting. Customer ships sometimes were unable or neglected to come up Unrep Orestes the required four hours before unrep.

f. Supply and Logistics. Supply and logistics support to the operating units of the SEVENTH Fleet continues to be MARS' mission. In accomplishing this mission, MARS carries almost 40,000 line items of general stores, repair parts, and ship's store stock, plus a provisions load of 1525 short tons. With the decommissioning of the USS CASTOR (exAKS-1) and of the USS POLLUX (exAKS-4) in the fall of 1968, MARS became the sole AFS/AKS in WESTPAC. This situation continued into early 1969, when the NIAGARA FALLS (AFS-1) returned to its homeport of Sasebo, Japan. MARS returned to its homeport of Yokosuka, Japan, in February for a brief rest and loadout before beginning a normal six-week swing in mid-March. Resupply channels during the first

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six months of 1969 included an initial availability check against CASTOR/PDILLUX off load assets in Yokosuka, until these were eliminated on 1 July when NSC Oakland became MARS primary resupply point again. In September, WHITE PLAINS (AFS-4) arrived in WESTPAC for its first deployment and during the last quarter of the year alternated line swings between NIAGARA FALLS and MARS giving both ships a much needed opportunity to perform supply maintenance.

Quality control and systems analysis became the key phrases in describing MARS management approach to improving supply effectiveness and efficiency in 1969. A Quality Control Team was formed to validate, consolidate, purify, and inventory MARS' entire range of stores. A major restowing was accomplished in the bulk general stores hold. A memory expansion feature was installed in MARS UNIVAC 1004 computer, increasing its ability to provide management tools. MARS became the first stores ship to provide its customers a complete, final billing during a replenishment. Three-way quality control checks became the standard operating procedure when breaking out and transferring highly pilferable ship's store and clothing items.

As a result of these improvements, MARS supply achievements in 1969 include the following:

1. winner of SERVPAC large mass NEY Memorial award
2. award of OUTSTANDING on Annual Supply Inspection
3. winner of SERVPAC Blue Supply E for excellence in logistic performance
4. assisted ship in winning Battle Efficiency E
5. attained the highest net effectiveness ever for MARS (95.8%) for issues of all stores.

g. Casualties of Man and Equipment.

(1) Personnel casualties

(a) No personal casualties

(2) Major equipment casualties

(a) AN/SRC-27 Radio Transceiver

CASREPT 160113Z JAN 69
CASCOR 051314Z MAR 69

Reason: No Frequency Multiplier Oscillator

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(b) AN/WRT-2 #2 Radio Transmitter

CASREPT 210100Z JUN 69
CASCOR 142024Z JUL 69

Reason: AM 2121 section of WRT-2 inoperative - will not load on various frequencies

(c) AN/URC-32A Radio Transceiver

CASREPT 250100Z JUN 69
CASCOR 021352Z AUG 69

Reason: Inoperative without SRA-22 coupler

(d) AN/WRT-2 #1 Radio Transmitter

CASREPT 080145Z JUL 69
CASCOR 140206Z JUL 69

Reason: AM 2121 section will not load on various frequencies

(e) AN/SRG-20 #2 Radio Transceiver

CASREPT 080200Z JUL 69
CASCOR 180504Z SEP 69

Reason: Operative at reduced power only

(f) 3"/50 Rapid Fire Gun Mount

CASREPT 110630Z JUL 69
CASCOR 130440Z JUL 69

Reason: Elevation drive motor inoperative, causing motor to oscillate and have unstable operation

(g) Emergency Feed Pump

CASREPT 150600Z JUL 69
CASCOR 222332Z SEP 69

Reason: Liquid Cylinder Liner cracked; failure of liquid piston packing

(h) 1000 GPM Emergency Fire Pump

CASREPT 091400Z AUG 69
CASCOR 091235Z SEP 69

Reason: Zero Ground in Motor; starter winding insulator breakdown due to heat

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(i) SRN-6A TACAN

CASREPT 130820Z OCT 69
CASCOR 050024Z DEC 69

Reason: Inoperative due to freon leaks in filters, causing high standing wave ratio

(j) UNIVAC 1004

CASREPT 200844Z OCT 69
CASCOR 211645Z OCT 69

Reason: System does not put card informations into memory

(k) Degaussing Coil

CASREPT 201200Z OCT 69
CASCOR -----

Reason: Contractor Reversing Coils burned out. System has no ability to compensate for induced magnetic field during northerly or southerly heading

(l) AN/SPS-40 Air Search Radar

CASREPT 250650Z NOV 69
CASCOR 272351Z JAN 70

Reason: Tube (6A2) inoperative

(m) AN/SRN-6A TACAN

CASREPT 070130Z DEC 69
CASCOR -----

Reason: Failure of rectifier tubes caused by electrical surge. Unable to generate required high voltage.

h. Personnel, Including Manning Level, Re-enlistment Rates and Legal Matters.

(1) Manning Level: Throughout most of 1969, the manning level was satisfactory. As of 31 December, MARS had 434 enlisted personnel and 25 officers. This does not include the air detachment, which consists of eighteen enlisted personnel and five officers.

(2) Legal Matters: There were two Summary Court Martials and sixty one non-judicial punishments.

(3) Reenlistment Rates: First term reenlistments totaled 4%; career designated reenlistments 95%; overall average of those eligible for reenlistment, 21.7%.

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i. Medical Activities.

(1) In February 1969 a cook was diagnosed by the ship's medical officer as having infectious hepatitis. One day after his admission to sick bay, he was flown to a nearby naval hospital, while every man aboard ship was given a prophylaxis immunization of Gamma Globulin before being allowed to leave the ship. The following month, one additional case of hepatitis was discovered while at sea. The two cases of hepatitis were casually related. The second case was transferred to a naval carrier for further transfer to a suitable Navy medical facility.

(2) In December 1969, a CS3 had his right arm caught in the dough mixing machine, resulting in the traumatic amputation of three fingers, right hand, and minor contusions to his right forearm, upper arm, and right chest wall. After giving the patient medication for pain and applying saline dressings, he was evacuated to the USS REPOSE (AH-16) for surgery.

(3) Personnel thirty years old and under on board MARS received the dental fluoridation treatment at approximately six month intervals. The program, has proven to be 73% effective in the prevention of the forming of new cavities.

(4) Statistics, calendar year 1969:

There were: 6,457 medications prescribed and administered
5,355 visits to sick bay
2,154 immunizations administered
604 laboratory tests made
577 X-rays taken
154 blood donations made to the Yokosuka Naval Hospital blood bank
100 Physical examinations made
29 men admitted to the sick list

j. Chaplain's Activities.

(1) One Protestant Chaplain is assigned to MARS. Chaplain Healer relieved Chaplain Pitts in July 1969.

(2) The Chaplain conducts sermons, heads fund drives, maintains the ship's library, and organizes tours in all WESTPAC ports. Tours were organized in Kaohsiung, Hong Kong, and Tokyo.

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k. Community Relations.

Several Boy Scout Troops toured the ship in 1969.

l. Awards and Commendations.

(1) In 1969 MARS won the Battle Efficiency "E" for the second year in a row. In addition to the Battle Efficiency "E", MARS also received the Supply Blue "E" for the first time in her history and also the Red Engineering "E", for the first time.

(2) MARS had two personnel who were awarded the Bronze Star during the year 1969 and eight people who received the Navy Achievement Medal. In addition to this, seven letters of commendation were also received by members of the crew.

(3) HM2 Fred Lbra GUTIERREZ was nominated as the MARS representative in the "Sailor of the Year Afloat" annual contest.

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