



From the files of Captain David W. Hambrick, U. S. Marine Corps (Retired)

HML 367, now HMLA 367

Mission

Support the Marine Air-Ground Task Force commander by providing offensive air support, utility support, armed escort and airborne supporting arms coordination, day or night under all weather conditions during expeditionary, joint or combined operations.

Vietnam War

As the United States increased its presence in the Republic of Vietnam, the Marine Corps reactivated VMO-3 at Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton on August 1, 1966 and assigned it to Marine Aircraft Group 37. The squadron arrived in Vietnam in December 1966 and were now flying the UH-1E. VMO-3 became fully operational at Hué/Phu Bai on 16 January 1967.

In 1966 and for the first half of 1967, the squadron's radio call sign was "Oakgate," which sometimes got confused for the term OK. Major Bill Murphy is credited with first using the call "**Scarface**" while on TAD and lobbied to have the substantially more macho **Scarface**

designation adopted as VMO-3's signature when all Marine squadrons in-country changed call signs during the summer of 1967. On November 14, 1967 Major General Bruno Hochmuth, then Commanding General of the 3rd Marine Division was killed when a UH-1E Huey from VMO-3 exploded and crashed 5 miles northwest of Huế. Four others also died in this crash.

The squadron assumed a new identity in March 1968 when VMO-3 was re-designated HML-367 and immediately began operations in direct support of ground combat units. Based at Hue and Phu Bai, the squadron flew the Bell UH1E Huey throughout I Corps in support of the 1st and 3rd Marine Divisions, the United States Army, and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. In addition to the countless other missions flown they most notably supported Operations Medina, Fortress Ridge, Prairie Fire, Project Delta, Sparrow Hawk, Dewey Canyon, Apache Snow, Swift Saber and Lam Son 719.

In addition to participating in the above operations, the **Scarface** crews also flew near daily missions in September 1970 in support of MACV-SOG on what were then **top secret reconnaissance missions deep into Laos and covered in the book "Operation Tailwind – Memoirs Of A Secret Battle In A Secret War" (Barry Pencek 2022).**

Squadron assets quickly grew from eighteen aircraft (UH-1E) to twenty five. In 1969, HML-367 exceeded 2000 flight hours for the month of June. October 1969 saw the departure of Marine Air Group 36 from the Republic of Vietnam. Due to the continued necessity for armed helicopter support, HML-367 remained in Vietnam and was assigned to Marine Aircraft Group 16 (Forward) at Phu Bai.

In December 1969, HML-367 began flying the AH-1G Cobra, thus becoming the first operational "Cobra" Squadron in the Marine Corps. Soon after, all the squadron's Hueys were transferred to another squadron (HML-167) and replaced with the Bell AH-1G Cobra.

On April 24, 1971, in another show of maintenance magic, the Squadron had all of their twenty five aircraft in an "Up" status. This was the first time a Helicopter Squadron had attained 100% aircraft availability in Vietnam. To celebrate the event, a 25-plane "fly-over" of Marble Mountain was conducted with Plane Captains called on to fill the front seats of all 25 Cobras. Total flight time for Fiscal Year 1970 was 22,378 hours.

HML-367 completed its combat tour in Vietnam in June 1971, and relocated to MCAS Futenma, Okinawa, rejoining MAG-36. Once established, the Squadron began peacetime operations using the UH-1E.

In April 1975, HML-367 (REIN), with nine UH-1E's and twelve CH-46's deployed aboard the USS Midway and the USS Hancock in support of "Operations Eagle Pull and Talon Vise / Frequent Wind", participating in the evacuation of Phnom Penh and Saigon. In June 1975, HML-367 returned to Okinawa and resumed normal operations.

My comments - According to my official Marine Corps Records I was transferred to HML-367 in March 1975 stationed in Futema, Okinawa. Administrative Remarks page (11) reveals an entry dated 7 November 1975 "Served in Operations Eagle Pull and Frequent Wind as

Composite Administrator for Marine Air Group 36 Composite consisting of HML-367, HMM-165, HMM-164, VMO-6, H&MS-36, MABS-36, MASS-2 and MACU-4. Signed by Captain T. J. Henderson.”



Unit Patches from the MAG-36 Composite, PROV MAG 39.

*HML-367 Administrative Remarks page (11) reveals an entry dated 29 August 1975 Application for selection for the **FY-76 Limited Duty Officer (T)** forwarded to the Commandant of the Marine Corps this date recommending approval with the highest enthusiasm, signed by James R. Gentry, LtCol Commanding.*

*HML-367 Administrative Remarks page (11) reveals an entry dated 15 January 1976 Application for selection for the **FY-77 Warrant Officer Program** forwarded to the Commandant of the Marine Corps this date recommending approval with the highest enthusiasm, signed by James R. Gentry, LtCol Commanding.*

*In February 1976 I rotated back to Camp Pendleton and in **April ('76)** I was promoted to **Gunnery Sergeant** and on **28 October 1976** I was promoted to **Warrant Officer-1**, bars pinned on by my wife Gail Donald Hambrick and Major General Wilcox, CG, MCB Camp Pendleton, CA and sent to Quantico VA for WO Training.*

I concretely believe that my previous two tours in Vietnam as an enlisted man (1965-66 Combat Engineer 7th Engineer Battalion and 1968-1969 Administrative Chief, 1st Tank Battalion), coupled with the extraction/evacuation in Vietnam in '75 with two highly recommended endorsements for officer ship, that I was selected based upon my participation in the complex coordination with the various units in a two successful operations – Eagle Pull [Phnom Penh, Cambodia] and Frequent Wind [Saigon, SVN].

Now, the Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 367 (HMLA-367) is a United States Marine Corps helicopter squadron consisting of AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopters and UH-1Y Venom utility helicopters. The squadron is based at Marine Corps Base Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii and falls under the command of Marine Aircraft Group 24 (MAG-24) and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW).

“No event in American history is more misunderstood than the *Vietnam War*. It was misrepresented then, and it is misremembered now.”

—[Richard M. Nixon](#) (b. 1913)

HMLA-367



From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 367



HMLA-367 insignia

Active

- December 1, 1943 – August 20, 1949
- August 1, 1966 – April 22, 2022
- December 16, 2022 – Present

Country

[United States](#)

Allegiance

[United States of America](#)

Branch

[United States Marine Corps](#)

Type

Attack

Role

[Close air support](#)

[Air interdiction](#)

[Aerial reconnaissance](#)

Nickname(s)

Scarface

Oakgate (Vietnam War)

Motto(s)	"When you are out of Scarface, you are out of guns" (Vietnam) "Hieu Duuc" ("Can Do" VMO-3) "Hover Cover"
Tail Code	VT
Mascot(s)	"Venom" the Snake
Engagements	<p>World War II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Battle of Peleliu * Battle of Okinawa <p>Vietnam War</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Operation Dewey Canyon * Operation Lam Son 719 * Operation Eagle Pull * Operation Frequent Wind <p>Gulf War</p> <p>Operation Iraqi Freedom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Second Battle of Fallujah <p>Operation Enduring Freedom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Operation Moshtarak
Commanders	
Current commander	LtCol Steven "Sauce" Piacente

Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 367 (HMLA-367) is a [United States Marine Corps](#) helicopter squadron consisting of [AH-1Z Viper attack helicopters](#) and [UH-1Y Venom utility helicopters](#). Originally commissioned during [World War II](#), the squadron participated in combat operations on [Peleliu](#) and [Okinawa](#). Reactivated during the [Vietnam War](#), the squadron has served during numerous conflicts since. The squadron is based at [Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, California](#) and falls under the command of [Marine Aircraft Group 39 \(MAG-39\)](#) and the [3rd Marine Aircraft Wing \(3rd MAW\)](#).

Mission^[edit]

The mission of HMLA-367 is to support the [Marine Air-Ground Task Force \(MAGTF\)](#) Commander by providing offensive air support, utility support, armed escort and airborne supporting arms coordination, day or night, under all weather conditions during expeditionary, joint, or combined operations.

History[edit]

World War II[edit]

Artillery Spotting Division, Marine Observation Squadron 351 (ASD(VMO-351)) was commissioned on December 1, 1943 at [Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia](#).^[1] On January 15, 1944, the squadron was re-designated as **Marine Observation Squadron 3** (VMO-3) while preparing to deploy overseas.^[2] During February 1944, VMO-3 departed [San Diego](#) and arrived at [Espiritu Santo](#) on March 4, 1944. The squadron spent the next few months in the [Russell Islands](#) continuing to train.^[2] On September 17, 1944, the forward echelon of VMO-3 landed on [Peleliu Airfield](#), two days after the [initial invasion](#). The squadron supported operations on Peleliu and on September 28 it also supported the assault on [Ngesebus](#). On October 22, 1944 VMO-3 departed [Peleliu](#) for the Russell Islands to begin training with [III Marine Amphibious Corps](#) artillery.

On March 10, 1945, VMO-3 sailed for [Ulithi](#) where it transferred to escort carriers for movement to [Okinawa](#). On April 3, 1945, two [OY-1 Grasshoppers](#) from VMO-3 landed on [Yontan Airfield](#). These were the first American planes to land on the island. The squadron commenced operations from Yontan the following day immediately supporting four artillery battalions. By April 11, VMO-3 was supporting eleven artillery batteries ashore.^[3]

Following the [surrender of Japan](#), VMO-3 departed for Northern China in September 1945. On October 10, the [USS *Bougainville* \(CVE-100\)](#) arrived at the [Taku Forts](#), and disembarked VMO-3, which was tasked to support the [3rd Marines](#).^[4] The squadron participated in the occupation of North China from October 1945 through June 1947. VMO-3 relocated to [Guam](#) in July 1947 and moved again in May 1949 to [Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina](#) being assigned to the [2nd Marine Aircraft Wing](#). The squadron was decommissioned on August 20, 1949.^[1]

Vietnam War[edit]

As the United States increased its presence in the [South Vietnam](#), the Marine Corps reactivated VMO-3 at [Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton](#) on 1 August 1966 and assigned it to [Marine Wing Support Group 37](#). The squadron arrived in Vietnam in December 1966 and were now flying the [UH-1E](#). VMO-3 became fully operational at [Huế/Phu Bai](#) on 16 January 1967.

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[6]

The squadron supported almost every type of helicopter mission flown by Marines in Vietnam. Most missions were flown in support of Marine units, but many were flown for the U.S. Army and for the Korean Marines. With the increased Vietnamization of the War, numerous sorties were flown supporting the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.



Mortar impacts near two AH-1G Cobra helicopters from HMLA-367, Khe Sanh Combat Base

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Post Vietnam 1970s^[edit]

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In 1976, the squadron took receipt of the new UH-1N and in 1977, AH-1J's Cobra gunships.

After more than eight years on the island of Okinawa, HML-367 was reassigned to [Marine Aircraft Group 39](#) (MAG-39), [3rd Marine Aircraft Wing](#), at MCAS Camp Pendleton. The majority of squadron personnel stayed behind, having been transferred to other units of the [1st Marine Air Wing](#). New personnel were selected from the parent command, and by August 1981, unit strength was up to 165 men and 16 aircraft.

1980s & 1990s[\[edit\]](#)

During this timeframe the HMLA-367 spent approximately six of each eighteen months split into rotations to [Marine Corps Air Station Futenma](#), Okinawa, [Japan](#) as well as attached as Det "A" in [Subic Bay](#), [Philippines](#), and as part of an [Aviation Combat Element](#) (ACE) aboard an [amphibious assault ship](#), typically the [USS Tarawa](#) while in rotation with two other squadrons also based at MCAS Camp Pendleton.

While not on their rotation overseas, HMLA-367 supported major exercises deploying for training frequently to the [Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms](#), California, [Marine Corps Air Station Yuma](#), [Arizona](#), [Nellis Air Force Base](#), [Nevada](#) and [Naval Air Station Fallon](#), Nevada.

HMLA-367 also supported combined US Navy & USMC security operations, "Kernel Usher & Kernel Blitz" aboard the USS *Tarawa* and other naval ships for exercises around the Pacific Coast of California.

Desert Storm/Desert Shield[\[edit\]](#)

Shortly after the invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 HMLA-367 was quickly chosen as the Light Attack component for [Marine Aircraft Group 70](#) (MAG-70) in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm and immediately deployed.

Scarface arrived in Al Jabail, Saudi Arabia on 29 August 1990, as the first operational U.S. Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron in theater. HMLA-367 recorded the first Iraqi tank kill by an AH-1W "Super Cobra" Helicopter during the battle of "Al Elbow" in Southwestern Kuwait on 30 January 1991.

HMLA-367 also had confirmed kills of military targets during both the [Battle of Khafji](#) on 30–31 January 1991 and the ground war which commenced on 24 February 1991.

HMLA-367 accrued confirmed kills of 48 tanks, 24 armored personnel carriers and 23 other troop transport vehicles, trucks, etc., as well as many other military targets, more than any other operational combat squadron during Desert Storm/Desert Storm.

On 12 March 1991, Scarface concluded operations and began departing Saudi Arabia, returning to Camp Pendleton, California.

HMLA-367 Scarface Marines were all awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal with 2 bronze stars, the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia), & the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait) for their service during Operation Desert Storm & Desert Shield combat operations.

Operations in Iraq & Afghanistan^[edit]

The squadron was deployed for 13 months to Okinawa from 2002–03 and this was followed less than a year later by a deployment to [Al Taqaddum](#), Iraq in support of [Operation Iraqi Freedom](#).

While there, the squadron flew in support of numerous ground units including the 1st Marine Division during the [Battle of Fallujah](#). In the next three years, Scarface would return to Iraq two more times in support of OIF 05-07.2 and OIF 08.1-08.2.

After three deployments to Iraq in only four years, Scarface returned to MCAS Camp Pendleton in November 2008 to transition its Huey pilots to the new UH-1Y, and to prepare for upcoming operations in [Afghanistan](#).

After yet another turnaround of less than a year, HMLA-367 deployed to Afghanistan in October 2009 to support international security and assistance forces during [Operation Enduring Freedom](#). The seven-month deployment was the first combat deployment of the UH-1Y. The squadron's skills were again put to the test as Scarface simultaneously provided support for seven infantry battalions and participated in the battles for [Marjah](#) and [Now Zad](#) in the [Helmand Province](#) of Afghanistan.

In April 2011 "Scarface" HMLA-367 was the first squadron to have both the newest upgraded four-blade rotor UH-1Y "Yankee" Huey utility helicopter and the AH-1Z "Zulu" Cobra gunships along with a state of the art flight simulator for each helicopter.


In 2012, Scarface moved to its current location of [Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay](#) on island of [Oahu](#) in [Hawaii](#). The unit reverted to the venerable AH-1W Super Cobra prior to the relocation to MCAS Kaneohe Bay. They have also conducted numerous deployments as part of the 31st MEU and to Okinawa as part of the Unit Deployment Program (UDP).

In March 2018, Scarface and the Marine Corps bid their final farewell to the AH-1W Super Cobra helicopters on Marine Corps Base Hawaii.^[z]

HMLA-367 was decommissioned in April 2022 as a part of the [Commandant of the Marine Corps](#) Force Design 2030 initiative and reactivated on December 16, 2022 aboard [Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton](#), [California](#).

Unit awards^[edit]

A unit citation or commendation is an award bestowed upon an organization for the action cited. Members of the unit who participated in said actions are allowed to wear on their uniforms the awarded unit citation. HMLA-367 has been presented with the following awards:

Ribbon	Unit Award
	Presidential Unit Citation with four Bronze Stars

	Navy Unit Commendation with one Silver and three Bronze Stars		
	Meritorious Unit Commendation with one Silver and one Bronze Star		
	Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with two Bronze Stars		
	World War II Victory Medal		
	National Defense Service Medal with two Bronze Stars		
	China Service Medal		
	Vietnam Service Medal with two Silver Stars and one Bronze Star		
	Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation Civil Action Medal		
	Southwest Asia Service Streamer with two Bronze Stars	August 1990 – February 1991	Desert Shield, Desert Storm
	Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait)	August 1990 – February 1991	Desert Shield, Desert Storm
	Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia)	January 17, 1991 – February 28, 1991	Desert Shield, Desert Storm

	Iraq Campaign Medal with two Bronze Stars	
	Afghanistan Campaign Medal	
	Global War on Terrorism Service Medal	