

MACTN-AB

17 May 1965

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report

TO: COMUSMACV
ATTN: J32
APO San Francisco 96243

1. NAME OF OPERATION: Prisoner Rescue Operation AN NHIN.
2. DATES OF OPERATION: From 140930 to 141800 March 1965.
3. LOCATION:
 - a. 22nd Division Area
 - b. BINH DINH Province, from coord BR 7454 to coord 8254.
4. CONTROL HEADQUARTERS: 22nd Div, Operation Directed by II Corps.
5. PARTICIPATING UNITS: 3rd Abn Bn.
6. SUPPORTING FORCES: 52nd Army Aviation Bn

Air Force ALE's.

All pre-strikes were accomplished by Army Aviation although ALE pre-strikes were planned. Pre-strikes were timely and effective and were accomplished by four armed ships using rockets and machine gun fire. 4 ALEs were on station during entire operation, but suitable targets for their employment were not encountered.

NOTE: According to 22nd Division armed helicopters cannot remain on station when Air Force support is available. This is contrary to support received from III Corps.

7. U.S. ADVISORS:
 - a. Senior Division Advisor.
 - b. Maj BELL, Division G-3.

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c. 3rd Airborne Battalion Advisors

- (1) Capt P.M. TRINKLE
- (2) 1/Lt GERALD L. SEWELL

8. INTELLIGENCE: Intelligence was accurate to the last detail. Estimate was that there was 1 VC company in operational area. Company had actually evacuated the area 12 hours prior to assault.

9. MISSION: Make two company heliborne assault north of village of AN NHIN, search the village, rescue friendly P.O.Ws held there, and destroy enemy forces in zone. Fire support to be provided by armed helicopters initially and by fighter aircraft on station during the operation.

10. CONCEPT OF OPERATION: 31st Company makes heliborne assault 141000 LZ coord BR 742543 and begins search operation, 32nd Company lands at the same LZ 141015 and begins search. The remainder of the Bn to be in reserve at BEN KHE, coord BR 7538. Evacuate released prisoners by helicopter. Units to evacuate the area by helicopter LZ coord BR 746523, 141200 March 1965.

11. EXECUTION:

- 141000: 31st Company landed LZ
- 141015: 32nd Company landed LZ.
- 141020: Women directed 31st Company to P.O.W. camp.
- 141030: 31st Company overran P.O.W. camp, met light resistance.
- 141040: Informed that 2 American P.O.Ws evacuated previous evening.
- 141115: 31st Company, while continuing search, met light resistance in village south of P.O.W. camp.
- 141215: Prisoners and suspects evacuated. 32nd Co secures LZ. 31st Company continues search. Instructed that Evac choppers were on the way for two company lift.
- 141300: Inquired about evac choppers, instructed they would arrive 1400.

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141400: Still no choppers.

141445: Maj DIEU and Maj BELL arrive by chopper with new mission. 31st and 32d Co's will move east by foot. 34th and 33d Co's will make assault coord BR 817539 and move west. Both elements to search and link up at extraction LZ coord BR 787539.

141500: 33rd Company assault.

141530: 34th Company assault.

141630: 33rd and 34th searched and secured LZ, arrested 20 suspects which were males of military age found in village. All villages under VC control, village heavily fortified. Fresh anti American slogans written in chalk in village square. Three primitive foot traps found on north-south trail vic coord BR 810534. All regular VC elements apparently had moved out.

141650: 31st and 32nd Company linked up with 33rd and 34th at LZ.

141700: Extraction began.

141800: All elements cleared LZ.

141820: Helicopters closed QUI NHON with 93 personnel.

141915: Remainder of Bn closed QUI NHON by truck.

12. RESULTS: 55 suspects arrested.

38 Friendly P.O.Ws rescued.

5 VC KIA.

1 12 gauge shot gun captured.

3 grenades captured.

Numerous documents captured:

Friendly KIA - 0

Friendly WIA - 0

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13. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

- a. No resupply necessary.
- b. Med Evac provided for but not used.
- c. Communications:
 - (1) American excellent.
 - (2) Vietnamese much better than usual.

14. ADVISORY ANALYSIS: The plan was tactically sound and the mission was executed smoothly. In view of the change in mission, the number of personnel to be moved, and the limited number of aircraft available, the speed with which the operation was executed was excellent. The accomplishment of the mission hinged on surprise through speed. The condition of the village and P.O.W. camp showed that it had been evacuated quickly, therefore some degree of surprise was achieved.

Unfortunately all planning on division level was done by American Advisors, and most of the execution on Division level was accomplished by Americans. Because American's seemed to be running the operation Maj DIEU, the Battalion Commander, became very disgusted and seemed to be against the operation at the beginning. His reluctance was well founded in that it was not known until the early morning hours of D-day enough helicopters would be available to take one or two companies in on the initial assault. A compromise solution was finally reached where by two companies would go in 15 minutes apart with the remainder of the Bn in reserve 7 minutes away by helicopter. Maj DIEU accepted this solution with some reluctance.

FOR THE SENIOR ADVISOR:

Wesley B. Hull
WESLEY B. HULL
Major, Infantry
Dep Sr Adv, Opns

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