

SMA, MACV, After Action Reports 1968 - 1969

SMA, MACV, Capital Military District Hqs, Combat Operations After Action Report, Tran Hung Dao, 3 Feb-11 Mar 1968, dated 7 June 1968, S & C #327 202 (C)

SMA, MACV, 1st Div, ARVN, Combat Operations After Action Report, Hue City (Song Than 739-68), 8-25 Feb 1968, dated 25 July 1968, S & C #802 390 (C)

SMA, MACV, 2nd Bn, VNMC, Combat Operations After Action Report, Truong Cong Dinh, 17 Apr-9 May 1968, dated 29 May 1968, S & C #327 202 (C)

SMA, MACV, 5th Bn, VNMC, Combat Operations After Action Report, Truong Cong Tinh, 30 July-7 Aug 1968, dated 2 Oct 1968, S & C #808 183 (C)

SMA, MACV, Airborne Div, ARVN, Combat Operations After Action Report, Toan Thang 119-770(VNAB), 10-20 Sep 1968, dated 16 Oct 1968, S & C #806 470 (C)

SMA, MACV, 3rd Bn, VNMC, Combat Operations After Action Report, IV Corps Tactical Zone Amphibious Task Force Operations-Phase I, Dinh Tuong, Kien Hoa, Vinh Long Vinh Binh, Phong Dinh, Kien Giang, & Dhuong Thien Provinces, 1 Dec 1968-5 Jan 1969, dated 30 Jan 1969, S & C #904 346 (C)

SMA, MACV, 5th Bn, VNMC, Combat Operations After Action Report, Cheyenne Saber I, 16-27 Feb 1969, dated 17 May 1969, S & C #908 341 (C)

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3480  
24 May 1969

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on Captain BENTLEY's After Action Report  
dated 17 May 1969

From: Senior Marine Advisor, Naval Advisory Group, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
To: Commander U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
(Attn: MACJ 3-05)  
Via: Chief, Naval Advisory Group, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS: MACJ 3-32)  
(K-1)

1. Forwarded.

2. The subject of overcrowded advisor nets is a continuing problem which can be resolved by adequate planning on the part of the control headquarters involved. The tendency to put all stations on one net without regard to the probability of overload is widespread. It is recommended that frequencies and nets be so established as to preclude such over crowding.

*Tom D. Parsons*  
TOM D. PARSONS  
By direction

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Sgt, Major

AFB, DIFFERENT SUBJECT

16-221206 1969

OFFICE OF THE SENIOR MARINE ADVISOR  
Naval Advisory Group, Box #9  
FPO San Francisco 96626CSB:mj  
3480  
17 May 1968

UNCLASSIFIED

From: Captain Charles S. BENTLEY 084317/0302 USMC  
To: Commander, U. S. Military Assistance Command,  
Vietnam (Attn: MACJ 3-05)  
Via: (1) Senior Marine Advisory, Naval Advisory  
Group, MACV  
(2) Chief, Naval Advisory Group, MACV  
Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS:  
MACJ 3-32) (R-2)  
Ref: (a) MACV Directive 335-8  
(b) MAP, BIEN HOA: 1:50,000 Series L7014  
Sheet 63301, Edition 2-AMS (29ETB)

Encl: (1) Overlays (a) through (1)

1. Name of Operation: CHEYENNE SABER 1, Fifth Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps, act as a reserve for commitment anywhere in the LONG BINH Special Zone area of responsibility and provide security for the POW Compound (YT038128).

2. Dates of Operations: 161200H Feb69 to 271630H Feb69.

3. Location: HO NAI Village, DUC TU District, BIEN HOA Province.

4. Control Headquarters: LONG BINH Special Zone.

5. Reporting Officer: Captain Charles S. BENTLEY, USMC.

a. Advisors Participating:

Captain C. S. BENTLEY, USMC, Senior Advisor,  
5th Battalion

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1stLt R. E. BUICE, USMC, Assistant Advisor,  
5th Battalion

b. Advisory Effort in Planning and Execution:

(1) The advisory effort consisted of coordinating and establishing liaison with the numerous U. S. Command and Support Bases surrounding the VN Marine area of operation. As the threat to the BIEN HOA complex increased the advisors were continually occupied with keeping friendlies from shooting friendlies.

(2) In the planning phase the advisors did assist in the decisions on the placement of troops, but due to the soundness of the Vietnamese Battalion Commander's decisions, little help was required from the advisors.

(3) During the execution phase the advisors again were concerned with coordinating nearby friendly units and supporting arms. At times, because of the Senior Advisor's access to the LONG BINH Special Zone U. S. Advisor's Command Net, the advisor was able to keep the Vietnamese Commander advised as to the locations and activities of the several units involved in the other areas of contact. This information prevented the Vietnamese from straying into areas of danger and assisted in the tight coordination absolutely necessary in the rapidly changing tactical situation.

6. Task Organization: Fifth Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps.

7. Supporting Fires:

a. One (1) LHFT was used and five (5) FIRE-FLY's were utilized. Two (2) USAF Spookys were used.

b. US L19's were utilized as they became available from the other area of contact.

c. Artillery was used for one (1) mission in an attempt to set a fire with negative results. Because of the small AO, immediate commitment of aircraft, the constant presence of aircraft, many unknown until sighted, and the rapid deployment of troops, there was no area into which artillery could be used.

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d. One (1) platoon from the U. S. 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment was used in a minor supporting role on one (1) sweep with limited results. The situation had developed too rapidly by the time the platoon arrived for them to have any measureable effects.

e. Whenever any type of supporting arm or force was requested the reaction was immediate and in the strength desired. The TAC Net of the Senior Advisor, LONG BINH Special Zone, was used for all supporting arms requests.

8. Intelligence:

a. The Fifth Battalion was a part of the LONG BINH Special Zone Task Force established in reaction to intelligence to the effect that the BIEN HOA complex was to be the subject of a multi-regiment attack sometime after the TET Holiday. The source of this information was a Hoi Chanh. Any detailed discussion of the intelligence available will have to be solicited from the headquarters of the LONG BINH Special Zone at BIEN HOA.

b. The terrain in the VN Marines area of responsibility consisted of low, gently rolling hills which had been re-tilled and denuded of all concealment save for heavy brush and trees along the streamline and one grove of heavy bamboo at YT040137 (See enclosure (1), overlay (a)). Running east from a line formed by YT056144 to the northeastern limit of the VN Marines' AO (YT056150) was a heavy tangle of brush and trees which afforded excellent concealment for movement from the northeast or east. The main avenue of approach into the AO from the east was along the trail shown at YT060150. This area was completely shielded from any observation from either the highest point in the AO (YT056136) or the main battalion defensive positions. Critical terrain in the AO was the hilltop at YT056136 and the military crest of the hill complex in the vicinity of YT046143. The area of YT056136 was initially manned by RF/PF Forces from HO NAI Village and one (1) platoon of the U. S. Army 199th Light Infantry Brigade. Neither the RF/PF's or the U. S. Army platoon was a part of the LONG BINH Special Zone Task Force. There was limited cover available in the streamline which ran through the AO and in numerous tank pits which dotted the area. There were negative obstacles in the AO.

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c. The Fifth Battalion encountered approximately 250 mixed VC and NVA from the 275th VC Regiment, killed 131 and captured 24.

9. Mission: The Fifth Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps, to act as a reserve force for commitment anywhere in the LONG BINH Special Zone area of responsibility and to provide security for the POW Compound (YT038128).

10. Concept of Operations:

a. See enclosure (1), overlay (a) for initial defensive posture of the Fifth Battalion upon assignment to the LBSZ TAOR on 16 Feb 1969.

b. See enclosure (1), overlay (b) for the defensive posture on 23-25Feb69.

c. See enclosure (1), overlay (c) for the defensive posture on 25-26Feb69.

d. See enclosure (1), overlay (d) through (1) for the sequence of deployment of troops for the period 26-27Feb69.

11. Execution:

a. On 16 Feb 1969, the Fifth Battalion moved into an area of operation east of the BIEN HOA Airbase (see enclosure (1), overlay (a)), with the battalion elements deployed as shown in enclosure (1) overlay (a). The commanding officer and the reporting officer were summoned to the LONG BINH Special Zone for an initial briefing on the Fifth Battalion's mission, deployment of other Task Force elements and the enemy and friendly situation. Liaison was established with all advisors of other Task Force elements and the reporting officer visited all surrounding U. S. Command and Support installations to effect close coordination. Vital liaison was established with a U. S. Army "CRIP" (Combined Recon and Intelligence Platoon) unit from the U. S. 199th Light Infantry Brigade which operated in the eastern portion of HO NAI Village. This liaison proved quite valuable once the battle started. The Fifth Battalion joined the LONG BINH Special Zone Task Force with 687 Marines and 2 U. S. Marine Advisors.

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b. The Fifth Battalion conducted local search operation in its assigned area on 16-22 Feb 1969 and commenced work on defensive positions. On 19 Feb 1969 at 2020H a Fifth Battalion outpost sighted three (3) unidentified men with weapons and packs moving east from YT052141. These men were not taken under fire, but the U. S. CRIP Platoon in H0 NAI Village was advised.

c. Search operations were continued in the AO until 221200H when word was received to prepare to move by motor march to LONG THANH District Headquarters under the operational control of the 48th ARVN Regiment, 18th ARVN Division. Search operations were conducted in the AO assigned by the 48th Regiment until 231030H at which time word was received to standby to return by motor march to the operational control of the LONG BINH Special Zone at BIEN HOA. The Fifth Battalion resumed operations in the same AO as previously assigned with elements deployed as shown in enclosure (1), overlay (b).

d. At 240900H, three (3) companies of the 5th Battalion conducted a RIF in an area bounded by YT0010, YT0009, YT 0111, and YT0110. The results of the search were (2) rounds 60mm Mortar, (1) shovel, (1) Box MG ammunition. At 241100H at YT014113 six (6) VCS were detained and turned over to the Vietnamese Military Police. Negative further information was received regarding the six (6) VCS.

e. At 250030H at YT037125 an outpost of the 5th Battalion contacted a VC unit of unknown size with negative results. At 250445H one (1) company of the 5th Battalion contacted an estimated VC Platoon in the vicinity of YT048142. The 3d Company pursued the retreating VC under cover of illumination from two (2) FIRE-FLY's and a USAF Spooky. At 250530H the 2nd Company was inserted into the contact area and joined the pursuit. At 250615H the 1st Company completed the pursuit force and the area of contact was thoroughly searched. In addition at 250640H the 4th Company conducted a RIF in an area bounded by YT0211, YT0210, YT0311, YT0310, YT0309, and YT0410.

Results were:

4 Viet Cong KIA (BC)  
3 Viet Cong POW  
1 60mm Mortar w/sight

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3 AK-47  
 1 M-1 Carbine  
 9 AK-47 magazines w/ammo  
 1 M-1 Carbine magazine w/ammo  
 4 Chicom handgrenades  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  pound TNT  
 Assorted Personal Gear

f. At 251945H in the vicinity of YT038128 four (4) VC were contacted by a 5th Battalion outpost with negative results. See enclosure (1), overlay (c) for defensive posture on 25-26Feb 1969.

g. At 260030H radar at BIEN HOA Air Base reported a sighting of fifty (50) VC in the vicinity of YT040138. One (1) U. S. FIRE-FLY was dispatched and took the enemy force under fire. The first FIRE-FLY expended its ordnance and was relieved on station by another FIRE-FLY which continued the pursuit of the VC force. The VC attempted to escape to the southeast into the streamline, but were generally contained by the FIRE-FLY's. The two (2) FIRE-FLY's claimed a count of (24) VC KBA. This count was not confirmed at the time.

h. At 260215H two (2) companies of the 5th Battalion contacted a VC unit of unknown size in the vicinity of YT046144. Contact continued on a sporadic basis until 260330H when the size of the VC force was reported as one (1) battalion. A further report indicated the two (2) 5th Battalion Companies had actually intercepted a two-pronged attack by the enemy force moving from the east. The two (2) companies had picked-off the southern prong while the northern prong merely glanced off the defensive position and continued west to the area of DONG LACH (YT020133) where they were intercepted by other elements of the LBSZ Task Force. One (1) platoon from the 3d Company (See enclosure (1), overlay (d)) was moved at 260345H to YT046135 to establish blocking position. They immediately made contact with the enemy fleeing south.

i. At 260500H the 3d Company (-) moved out of its defensive position in pursuit of the retreating enemy. The enemy was retreating to the east and the south of HO NAI Village. The 2nd Company maintained a blocking/reserve position at YT045146 and YT043140. The platoon at YT046135

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maintained its position (See enclosure (1), overlay (e)). One (1) USAF Spooky and one (1) FIRE-FLY provided illumination and cover for the pursuit force.

j. At 260600H the 1st Company moved out of the Battalion Command Post (YT046130) and went through H0 NAI Village to a blocking position at YT054134 (See enclosure (1), overlay (e)). Also at 260600H two (2) platoons of the 4th Company which had been in defensive positions at YT032135 and YT 036135 moved down Highway #1 to the Battalion Command Post to provide a reserve force (See enclosure (1), overlay (e)).

k. At 260615H elements of the 4th Company Headquarters which had been inside the POW Compound (YT038128) moved across Highway #1 and established a blocking position at YT037129 (See enclosure (1), overlay (f)) to protect the POW Compound. At 260615H the 5th Battalion stood deployed as shown on enclosure (1), overlay (f).

l. At 260630H the Battalion Executive Officer and the Assistant Advisor moved with the reserve force to the vicinity of YT058134 where contact was made (See enclosure (1), overlay (g)). The VC occupied all the buildings in an area running from YT058133 to YT046133. The Battalion Executive Officer established his Command Post in a two story building at YT057132. The Battalion Commanding Officer and the Senior Advisor remained at the Battalion Command Post (YT046130). As of 260645H the 5th Battalion stood deployed as shown on enclosure (1), overlay (h).

m. At 260645H the VC attempting to flee south penetrated up to the perimeter of the Battalion Command Post, but they were repulsed and forced to move into the eastern end of the H0 NAI Village and into the open fields to the east of the area of initial contact.

n. At 260700H a LHFT was requested to run a strike in the vicinity of YT056136, an old school house which was reported to be a VC Command Post with possibly (1) VC platoon and mortars. The LHFT strike was coordinated by the Assistant Advisor with the U. S. Army CRIP Platoon and the local RF/PF's in defensive positions at YT057137. The target was marked with smoke and then the strike was run, but (2) US and (4) VN were WIA because of failure to take cover at their positions. Although the strike had

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been cleared with the CRIP Platoon Commander and all hands warned, the men persisted in watching the show. All wounded were quickly evacuated by U. S. aircraft. The remainder of the US/VN unit remained in position as a blocking force. In addition to the VC Platoon at the schoolhouse area, one (1) VC Company was reported in the vicinity of YT052133.

o. At 260800H, after the gunship strike was run, the 5th Battalion elements with the Battalion Executive Officer moved into the area and established a blocking position at YT056135 (See enclosure (1), overlay (i)). Contact was sporadic in the vicinity of the gunship strike as the VC appeared to have moved deeper into the village just to the west of the target area. One VC force was centered in a group of three (3) houses just west of the schoolhouse at YT054134. This area was reduced with M-79 and 57RR fire and one of the buildings sustained a tremendous secondary explosion which indicated a large ammunition cache. This secondary explosion and at least two (2) others in the same general area tended to verify the available intelligence that the eastern end of HO NAI Village was a VC supply point established for subsequent attacks on the BIEN HOA Complex.

p. At the same time 5th Battalion elements were working in the village area the 3d Company continued to sweep the field and stream area east of the initial contact. Contact was sporadic and the company systematically reduced any resistance. The 2d Company continued to hold its blocking/reserve position in the vicinity of YT045146.

q. At 260900H sweep operations in the village area continued to the west. At 261000H the 5th Battalion received one (1) platoon from the U. S. 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment consisting of two (2) tanks and four (4) APC's. The Senior Advisor moved out of the Battalion Command Post with the platoon to link-up with the 3rd Company for further sweep operations. The link-up was effected at YT048138 and the joint force swept the stream line from YT046133 to YT052142. See enclosure (1), overlay (j).

r. At 261100H the 1st Company swept east from its position at YT058134 to the 07 N/S grid line. The 4th Company (") swept west from its blocking position at

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YT056136 to the streamline at YT046133. The 4th Company(+) encountered heavy resistance in the village and their progress was slow. The Battalion Executive Officer and the Assistant Advisor maintained their Command Post at YT056136. The Battalion Command Post remained at YT046130. The U. S. CRIP Platoon was relieved and moved further east out of the Vietnamese Marines' area of operation. See enclosure (1), overlay (k).

s. At 261200H the 3d Company completed its sweep of the field area with the 11th ACR Platoon and moved to a link-up with the 4th Company (-) to assist in reducing the resistance in the village area (See enclosure (1), overlay (k)). The 11th ACR Platoon was moved to a reserve position with the 2nd Company. The 2nd Company held its blocking/reserve position minus two (2) platoons which moved at 261230H to secure a blocking position at YT053143 (See enclosure (1), overlay (k)). At 261400H the 2nd Company sent elements to secure the 3rd Company Base Camp at YT046143. At 261600H the 11th ACR Platoon was released and returned to its parent unit. Sweep operations continued until 261700H when contact was broken and all units moved to their night defensive positions.

Results of the Battle on 26 February 1969 Were:

73 Viet Cont KIA (BC)	2 VNMC KIA
18 Viet Cong POW	14 VNMC WIA

(Enemy materiel will be summarized at the end of this report.) Throughout the sweep of the village on 26 Feb 1969 the 5th Battalion operated to the north of Highway #1 and the local RF/PF forces operated to the south.

t. There was negative contact throughout the night of 26-27 Feb 1969.

u. At 270600H the 2nd and 3rd Companies moved to search GS YT0313. At 270800H the 2nd Company had heavy contact with one (1) VC Company in the vicinity of YT033137. Two (2) platoons from the 4th Company moved to YT034132 to establish a blocking position. The 3d Company which was the southern company of the original two (2) company sweep moved rapidly below the point of contact to a blocking position at YT033136. The 2nd Company then pushed the VC into these two blocks and in two (2) hours all resistance ended. See enclosure (1), overlay (1).

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The Results of the Battle on 27 February 1969 Were:

54 Viet Cong KIA (BC) 8VNMC WIA  
 3 Viet Cong POW

v. The 5th Battalion was relieved in place by the 2nd VNMC Battalion at 271630H and the 5th Battalion returned to Saigon and base camp.

12. Final Results for Operational Period (16-27Feb69):

a. Causalities

	<u>VNMC</u>		<u>VC/NVA</u>	
KIA		WIA	KIA	VCC
2		24	131	24
				VCS
				6

b. Weapons Captured

50 Sub-machine guns, Soviet, 7.62MM, AK-47  
 5 B-40 RPG-2  
 4 B-41 RPG-7  
 1 82mm Mortar, ChiCom  
 2 60mm Mortar, ChiCom  
 3 Light Machine Gun, ChiCom, 7.62mm, Type 56  
 5 Carbine, US, .30 Caliber

c. Materiel and Equipment Captured

2 ChiCom Radios  
 1 AA 37mm MG Mount  
 1 82mm Mortar Base Plate  
 1 60 mm Mortar Base Plate  
 2 60mm Mortar Sights  
 1 B-41 Sight  
 42 Rounds, B-40 and B-41  
 3 Cans, MG Ammunition  
 31 Rounds 82mm Mortar  
 67 Rounds 60mm Mortar  
 5200 Rounds AK-47 Ammunition  
 30 AK-47 magazines  
 5 Kilograms Explosives  
 6 Bangalore Torpedoes  
 60 Hand Grenades, ChiCom  
 1 Shovel

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**CONFIDENTIAL****13. Administrative Matters:**

a. Communications - In the early daylight hours of the battle on 26 Feb 1969, a communications problem arose on the U. S. Advisors Tac Net. First the net was jammed, either by the VC or a hot Mike somewhere in the area. This required a change to the alternate frequency in the clear. Both the 5th Battalion's battle and the battle in the Dong Lach area were run on the same tactical net. Because of the minimal information and coordination required by the 5th Battalion once the pattern of battle was established, this situation was not prohibitive. At a post-battle critique the decision was made to utilize the primary net for the first unit to make contact and any other units were to use the alternate frequency. Since no further action arose after the initial battle of 26-27Feb 1969, this plan could not be tested.

**14. Advisor's Analysis:**

a. The Vietnamese Commander of the Fifth Battalion fulfilled his mission perfectly. His deployment of the Marines to their defensive positions on the night of 25-26Feb 1969 (See Enclosure (1) Overlay (c)) placed strength where strength was needed and his reserve in the least vulnerable spot. At the same time the overall deployment of troops provided a compact unit ready for movement as directed by the mission assigned.

b. The reserve company at the Battalion Command Post was in a position to reinforce the POW Compound to the West or the two (2) companies on the main line of resistance to the Northeast.

c. The results of this action proved the quick reaction and rapid mobility of the Fifth Vietnamese Marine Battalion. The battle was closed with only the Marines and weapons available and the totals demonstrate the efficiency of both. In summary, this officer feels the Fifth Battalion met the requirements of the mission assigned in exemplary fashion.

d. One noncombatant problem in the form of civilians and large fires in the Honai Village area did arise. The VN Marines engaged in the built-up areas were very careful to search each house thoroughly and all civilians were moved rapidly and orderly to the rear and out of the contested areas. Despite the heavy fire, great care was taken to ensure the safety of all the villagers. The Long Binh Fire Department was called to control the fires and in a result only minor damage was suffered.

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was called to control the fires and as a result only ten (10) homes in the VN Marines' AO were lost to all causes. The Assistant Advisor was very instrumental in coordinating these various activities.

*Charles S. Bentley*

CHARLES S. BENTLEY

Copy to:  
SA, Long Binh Special Zone

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3480.1  
4 Mar 1969

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on Major HENDERSON's After Action Report dated  
30 January 1969

From: Senior Marine Advisor, Naval Advisory Group, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
To: Commander, U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACJ 343)  
Via: Chief, Naval Advisory Group, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS: MACJ3-32 (K-1))

1. Forwarded.

2. In reference to paragraph 5b(2) of the subject report, several meetings were conducted in order to coordinate the efforts of the Amphibious Task Force with representatives of 2d Brigade, 9th U. S. Infantry Division, 7th ARVN Division, RAG 21/33 and Third Battalion, VNMC, however, IV Corps Headquarters was not represented at any of the meetings. IV Corps Headquarters had issued directives to bring all the elements of the Amphibious Task Force together, but did not assist, coordinate, or supervise in the formation of the Amphibious Task Force. Consequently, this left the 7th ARVN Division to use its own interpretation of the Joint General Staff Instruction. Upon completion of the first two operations, in close coordination with the MRG Alpha, it was obvious that the 7th ARVN Division did not fully understand the spirit of the Joint General Staff Instruction. Neither did IV Corps Headquarters for that matter when IV Corps chopped the Amphibious Task Force from the 7th ARVN Division to the 9th ARVN Division on 6 December 1968, and thereby separated the Amphibious Task Force from the training and combat support most willingly provided by the 2d Brigade, 9th U. S. Infantry Division and CTG 117.1.

3. This unit concurs with the recommendation contained in paragraph 16. Plans should be developed now, with IV Corps, the Vietnamese Navy and the Vietnamese Marine Corps participating, to establish a Joint Amphibious Task Force in the vicinity of DONG TAM. The Vietnamese Marine Corps component to the Joint Amphibious Task Force should be a Marine Brigade with two infantry battalions and an artillery battery, barge mounted. This would allow the Vietnamese Marines to train with and to obtain the experience acquired by the Mobile Riverine Force in nearly two years of riverine warfare.

4. The VNMC Brigade should eventually be increased to four infantry battalions with corresponding combat support and combat service support units as recommended on page 11, reference (e).

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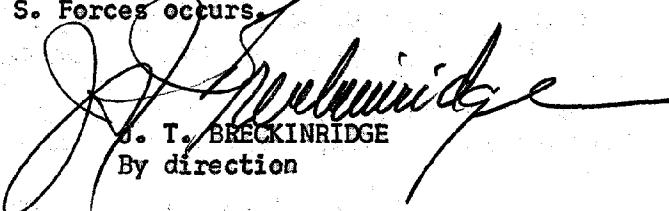
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43-178

5. Slight modification should be made to the command relations contained in the Joint General Staff Instructions based on reference (e) and NWP 21(A).

6. The overall objective of these recommendations is to ensure that the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam have a combat ready trained force capable of conducting riverine operations successfully when and if a phase out of U. S. Forces occurs.



J. T. BRECKINRIDGE  
By direction

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 Naval Advisory Group, Box #9  
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 3480  
 30 Jan 1969

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From: Major David G. HENDERSON 082161/1802, USMC  
 To: Commander, U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (Attn: MACJ 343)  
 Via: (1) Senior Marine Advisor, Naval Advisory Group, MACV  
 (2) Chief, Naval Advisory Group, MACV

Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS: MACJ 3-32) (K-1)

Ref: (a) MACV Directive 335-8  
 (b) After Action Report of Captain Donald E. BONSPER dated 29May68  
 (c) JGS, G-3 Instruction H100-8/TTM/F3/KH of 28Oct68  
 (e) U.S. Army Combat Development Command Riverine Area Combat Operations Vietnam (RACOV) (U) Final Report dtd Aug 1968

Encl: (1) Operation Overlay, 3 December 1968 (2d Bde, 9th U.S. Div  
 FragO 5 to OP Order 84-68)  
 (2) Operation Overlay, 4-5 December 1968 (2d Bde, 9th U.S. Div  
 OP Order 85-68)  
 (3) Operation Overlay, 7-10 December 1968 (9th ARVN Div  
 OP Order 9/37)  
 (4) Operation Overlay, 12-13 December 1968 (2d Bde, 9th U.S. Div  
 OP Order 87-68)  
 (5) Operation Overlay, 14-21 December 1968 (7th ARVN Div FragO)  
 (6) Operation Overlay, 26 December 1968 - 6 January 1969  
 (21st ARVN Div Operation SONG THAN 885)

1. Type of Operation: IV Corps Tactical Zone Amphibious Task Force Operations - Phase I
2. Dates of Operation: 1-31 December 1968; 1-5 January 1969
3. Location: DINH TUONG, KIEN HOA, VINH LONG, VINH BINH, PHONG DINH, KIEN GIANG and DHUONG THIEN Provinces, IV Corps Tactical Zone
4. Control Headquarters: Commander IV Corps/IV Corps Tactical Zone

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5. Reporting Officer: Major David G. HENDERSON, USMC, Senior Advisor, Third Infantry Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps

a. Advisors Participating:

Major Umberto GIANNELLI, USMC Senior Advisor, Third Battalion, VNMC (1-5Dec68)

Major David G. HENDERSON, USMC Senior Advisor, Third Battalion, VNMC (5Dec68-7Jan69)

Captain Kenneth R. FURR, USMC Assistant Advisor, Third Battalion, VNMC (1Dec68-7Jan69)

b. Advisory Effort in Planning and Execution:

(1) In view of the hasty formation of the IV CTZ Amphibious Task Force on 1 December 1968, many problems were encountered in both the planning and execution phase of each of the six operations. Unfortunately for all concerned, many of these problems were never resolved and resulted in undue hardships and pressure on the Battalion Commander, officers and men of the Third Battalion.

(2) The principal problem area during the planning phase centered on the command relationships established by the initiating directive by JGS (reference (c)). Prior to this reporting officers' arrival on 1 December 1968, all of the parties subject to the JGS initiating directive had never gotten together to sit down and go through the directive to see if they understood the spirit of the order as written. As a result all parties had their own interpretation of the directive and pursued it accordingly. During the execution phase, operational control of the Third Battalion was assigned to the 7th ARVN Division, to the 9th ARVN Division, back again to the 7th ARVN Division and finally to the 21st ARVN Division (under VNMC Brigade B). Consequently, there were no opportunities to resolve our difficulties. All attempts by the reporting officer to meet with the 7th ARVN Division advisors to try and work out a satisfactory solution to the command relationship problem and the seizure of assault craft from RAG 21/33 by CG, 7th ARVN Division for another commitment prior to previously planned combined operations with the 2d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division (MRF), met with a "Mexican stand off". Further elaboration of this problem area is included in the execution portion of this report (paragraph 11).

(3) During both phases, the Senior Advisor worked closely with his counterpart assisting him in trying to resolve many of the problems which arose during the reporting period. The flexibility and tactical competence of the Battalion Commander as well as his willing acceptance and utilization of the advice/assistance rendered by the senior advisor was very gratifying.

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6. Task Organization:

CG, IV Corps Tactical Zone (1Dec68-7Jan69)  
 CG, 7th ARVN Division, TIEN GIANG DIA (1-5Dec68; 11-22Dec68)  
 CG, 9th ARVN Division, SA-DEC DIA (6-10Dec68)  
 Brigade B, Vietnamese Marine Corps (23Dec68-7Jan69) OPCON to  
 21st ARVN Division

IV Corps Tactical Zone Amphibious Task Force

LSSL - 126 (ATF CCB)  
 RAG 21/33  
 Third Infantry Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps

7. Supporting Forces:a. Infantry

2d Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division (1-5Dec68; 11-21Dec68)

Artillery

3/34th Artillery Battalion, 9th U.S. Infantry Division (1-5Dec68;  
 11-21Dec68)  
 3d 155 Howitzer Battery, 31st Artillery Battalion, 9th ARVN  
 Division (7-10Dec68)  
 Battery D, Vietnamese Marine Corps (23Dec68-5Jan69)

Air

USAF (O-1E, B-52, F-100, A-37 Attack Aircraft)  
 USA (O-6, UH-1D, CH-47, AH-1 Cobra)  
 USN (UH-1B Seawolves)  
 VNAF (O-1E, A-1 Skyraider)

Naval

CTU 117.1.3 (1-5Dec68; 11-21Dec68)  
 CTU 117.2.4 (23Dec68; 6Jan69)

b. General: Artillery, air, and naval gunfire support was utilized throughout the operational period. Beaches were prepped on only two of the six operations and in both cases the fire support was provided by the LSSL. Fire support provided by the 2d Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division included pre-planned air strikes and on-call artillery.

c. Artillery Support:

(1) Artillery support was highly responsive and accurate in all six of the operations. While working in junction with the 2d Brigade,

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9th U.S. Infantry Division an artillery liaison team and four forward observer teams were provided by 3/34 Artillery Battalion to control and direct artillery fires. In support of the 9th ARVN Division operation, two forward observer teams were provided to direct the fires of the 3d 155 Howitzer Battery, 9th ARVN Division. During the final phase of the deployment, artillery support was provided by Battery D, VNMC, with two forward observer teams assigned.

(2) The battalion, during all operations, planned defensive concentrations and harassing & interdictory fires immediately upon moving into its night defensive positions.

d. Air Support

(1) Attack Aircraft. Fixed-wing aircraft were utilized for pre-planned air strikes only while operating with the 2d Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division. For operations with the 9th ARVN Division and the 21st ARVN Division open immediate air strikes were requested and response time was anywhere from 30 minutes to one hour. Vietnamese Air Force fixed wing proved equally as responsive and delivery of ordnance on target by both U.S. and VNAF attack aircraft was excellent.

(2) Helicopters.

(a) Command and Control. Command and Control helicopter assets were in short supply throughout the reporting period. Request for Command and Control helicopters were not initiated by either the Battalion Commander or the Senior Advisor based on this shortage. A Command and Control helicopter could have been used in two of the operations had the assets been available.

(b) Gunships. Gunships assets were in great demand throughout the period and unfortunately they were also in short supply. Prior to the operation in VINH BINH Province with the 9th ARVN Division, both the Senior Advisor and Assistant Advisor had the opportunity to make a visual reconnaissance of the area with a light fire team from the USN Seawolf Detachment at VINH LONG. In addition twice during the four day operation the Seawolves flew over the Third Battalion area of operation to see if they could render any assistance after they had completed a previously scheduled patrol. During the final phase of the operational period, light helicopter fire teams were made available to Riveron 15, MRG-BRAVO, for operations in support of the 21st ARVN Division. With the exceptions of the above two occasions, light helicopter fire teams were not made available while under the 9th and 21st ARVN Division, although they were requested well in advance.

(3) Air Observer Aircraft. Both U.S. and VNAF O1-E aircraft provided aerial surveillance and forward air control coverage during the majority of the operations. Although available for only short periods of time, they were employed expeditiously and with excellent results.

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e. Naval Support: Naval support was excellent in all respects. The use of the Vietnamese Navy LSSL in conjunction with RAG 21/33 provided a dual capability to the Amphibious Task Force. Although the LSSL was initially assigned to the Amphibious Task Force as the primary fire support ship for the amphibious landings, it also served as a floating command post on operations where only a portion of the battalion (two or three companies) was landed in an area of operation. U.S. Navy MRF boat support and fire support was excellent.

8. Intelligence:

a. Enemy: Enemy forces known to be operating in areas where the Third Battalion conducted operations included the 516th Main Force, 550th Local Force and 506th Main Force Battalions, and various local guerrilla forces and installations.

(1) Reconnaissance in force operations (riverine) were conducted to locate, fix and destroy these forces. Intelligence on the enemy situation was limited and somewhat dated. It was based on agent sightings and reports of suspected enemy unit locations which ran the intelligence credibility spectrum from totally reliable to completely unreliable.

(2) The major enemy activity for the period consisted of sniper fire from tree lines on the approach march, sporadic delaying actions fought from fortified positions on the cross canals and tree lines, and ambushes on the boat column going into and out of the operational areas.

b. Terrain: The area of operations is essentially an agricultural plain only a few meters above sea level consisting of coconut groves, rice fields and extensive waterways. Vegetation, especially along stream courses, is thick with nipa palms, banana trees and other assorted foliage. The numerous stream and waterways networks present obstacles to all overland movement. Many of the cross canals branching off main canals are void of bridges and require the troops to wade or ferry across by sampan thus slowing the momentum along the axis of advance.

c. Weather: The northeast monsoon was in effect for the entire operational period. The northeast monsoon is characterized by decreased cloudiness and little rain. Visibility was generally unrestricted during the period although a front moved in during the final stages of the operating period bringing six days of rain and reduced visibility.

9. Mission: The IV Corps Tactical Zone Amphibious Task Force was given the responsibility of conducting riverine operations in accordance with orders issued by the IV Corps Tactical Zone Commander or the TIEN GIANG DTA Commander to destroy the enemy and extend RVN government control in the area.

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10. Concept of Operations:a. Operational Phase.

(1) Phase I: Coordinate and operate with U.S. Mobile Riverine Force for six months.

(2) Phase II: Coordinate and operate with RVNAF units or operate independently if ordered by IV Corps Tactical Zone Commander or TIEN GIANG Commander.

(3) Conduct independent, joint and combined operations.

b. Operating Area. Initially the Amphibious Task Force was to operate within the territory of the TIEN GIANG DTA. Additionally, during Phase I and continuing phases, the Amphibious Task Force could operate outside the territory of TIEN GIANG DTA if authorized by IV Corps Tactical Zone Commander and outside IV Corps Tactical Zone if authorized by JGS.

11. Execution:

a. General. On 27 November the Third Battalion was chopped from the operational control of the 2d Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division and placed under the operational control of the CG, 7th ARVN Division (TIEN GIANG DTA Commander), as the landing force component of the IV Corps Tactical Zone Amphibious Task Force. From 28 November to 2 December 1968, during the formation of the Amphibious Task Force, the Third Battalion was located in the vicinity of BINH PHU (XS 462434) between MY THO and DONG TAM. During the reporting period the battalion conducted six operations in conjunction with the 2d Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division, the 9th ARVN Division, the 7th ARVN Division and the 21st ARVN Division. A battalion rear area was established initially at the BINH DUC training center near MY THO and subsequently moved to the district compound at RACH SOI when the Amphibious Task Force reverted to the control of the 21st ARVN Division on 23 December 1968. The battalion rear was charged with the responsibility for security of the motor transport assets of the battalion as well as resupply and casualty reporting back to the battalion's base camp at THU DUC. Each operation was followed by a "stand-down" period which was normally 1-2 days. With the exception of one stand-down period all stand-down was accomplished in the field in sparsely populated areas. On 7 January 1969 the Third Battalion was relieved by the Fourth Battalion as the landing force for the Amphibious Task Force and returned to their base camp at THU DUC.

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b. 020001H - 040600H December 1968. The Mobile Riverine Force in coordination and cooperation with the Amphibious Task Force conducted riverine reconnaissance in force operations in MO CAY District, KIEN HOA Province, to locate, fix and destroy the 550th Local Force Battalion and other enemy elements in zone.

(1) On 2 December at 2130H the Third Battalion command post group embarked in the LSSL moored at the RAG 21/33 base at MY THO (XS 499431). The remainder of the battalion was loaded aboard boats of RAG 21/33 at 2200H in the vicinity of the NUOC MAM factory at XS 470426. One hour prior to the embarkation of the battalion at the NUOC MAM factory, the 7th ARVN Division pulled four LCM-6's for support duty on the CHO GAO Canal. This reduction in the boat availability left the 800 man Third Battalion one LCU, two LCM-8 and one LCM-6 landing craft for the operation. As a result of this reduction of boat assets the Third Battalion commander was forced to load two assault companies in the LCU for the nine hour transit to the operational area. A phone call by the Senior Advisor to the 7th ARVN Division Tactical Operations Center prior to the departure from MY THO did not resolve the reduction in boat assets. The transit phase from MY THO to the operational area was without incident.

(2) Commencing at 0715H on 3 December the 1st, 4th and 3rd Companies landed over Red Beaches 1-3 respectively, on the MO CAY side of the SONG HAM LUONG. The Battalion Command Post was located aboard the LSSL and the 2nd Company was held back as a floating reserve to land on order. Prior to the landing the beaches were prepped for 30 minutes by the LSSL utilizing its 40mm and 20mm guns. There was negative contact upon landing and the battalion(-) moved inland a short way and commenced cloverleaf operations. At 1045H a medevac was completed for one Marine wounded in the knee by a punji stake. Five more Marines were wounded by a mine at 1500H in the vicinity of XS 492223. The medevac was completed at 1645H. At 1900H the 1st Company captured two Viet Cong suspects and one Viet Cong at XS 496223. Contact for the entire day was confined to sporadic sniper fire. Night positions were in close proximity to the landing beaches to facilitate an early back-load for the next day's operation. See Enclosure (1).

c. 040630H - 062400H December 1968. The Mobile Riverine Force, in cooperation and coordination with the IV Corps Amphibious Task Force and KIEN HOA Province RF/PF, conducted water-mobile, air-mobile, and foot-mobile operations in GIONG TROM, TRUC GIANG District, KIEN HOA Province to locate, fix and destroy the 516th Main Force Battalion and other enemy elements in zone 4-5 December 1968.

(1) At 0630H the Third Battalion(-) was reembarked over the previous day's beaches and transported to the new operation area. Commencing at 0800H the 1st, 4th, and 2nd Companies landed over Red

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Beaches 1-3 respectively. No beach prep was fired by the LSSL in view of the population density in the vicinity of the beaches. The area of operation proved to be a dry hole and with the exception of sporadic sniper fire no contact was made the entire two days. At 1200H on 5 December, all three companies were extracted by the Mobile Riverine Force boats and were subsequently landed across from the BEN TRE ferry crossing at XS 472293. See Enclosure (2).

(2) At 051500H December, the Battalion Commander and the Senior Advisor were requested to attend a meeting at 7th ARVN Division Headquarters in MY THO. Upon our arrival the G-3, 7th ARVN Division informed the Colonel that the Third Battalion was to be chopped to the 9th ARVN Division for a four day operation commencing at 0800H, 6 December 1968. Two representatives of the 9th ARVN Division (1 ARVN Major and 1 U.S. Captain) commenced a hasty fifteen minute brief on the operation and produced four copies of the frag order. At the end of the briefing, the Senior Marine Advisor called IV Corps G-3 Advisor to appraise him of the situation and requested a postponement of the operation for 24 hours for the following reasons:

- (a) Transit time from BEN TRE to the operational area was in excess of 18 hours.
- (b) The troops were tired after just getting off an operation and needed rest.
- (c) The battalion had to be resupplied.

The Battalion Commander paralleled the request through CG, 7th ARVN Division. The request was approved. Fire support provided by the 9th ARVN Division for the entire operation was limited to two platoons of 155mm guns at two different locations. We were told that gunships and a Command & Control helicopter could not be made available in view of limited assets. Air strikes were limited to open immediate requests only. Upon dissemination of the frag orders it was noted that the task organization erroneously listed the Third Battalion as a Marine Task Force composed of two battalions. The Marine AO was thus configured to accomodate two maneuver battalions. When confronted with the fact that the Amphibious Task Force contained only one VNMC battalion they were still insistant that we land and maneuver within the confines of the same AO by splitting our force on two sides of the SONG CAI SAGH. At this point the Battalion Commander did not care to argue the tactical soundness of this plan, but prior to landing changed the scheme of maneuver to facilitate the deployment of the battalion in this AO.

(3) Upon the completion of this briefing, the Amphibious Task Force representatives returned to the Battalion's location across from BEN TRE and commenced loading for the transit phase to VINH LONG.

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The forward observer teams and liaison officers were sent back to the 2d Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division, while at the same time informing the 2d Brigade of our change in OPCON. At this point it should also be noted that an operation had been planned with the 2d Brigade commencing 8 December. It was envisioned during the formation period with all parties concerned that the Amphibious Task Force would continue to work in close cooperation and coordination with the Mobile Riverine Force, especially 2d Brigade and CTG 117.1 in accordance with reference (c). Although a change in OPCON within the IV Corps Tactical Zone is authorized by the JGS directive for the Amphibious Task Force, it was felt at this point that this change in OPCON was too sudden and the briefing for the upcoming 9th ARVN Division operation totally inadequate.

(4) At 2000H the Amphibious Task Force was underway for VINH LONG for one day of stand down prior to the operation on the 7th of December. During the stay at VINH LONG, the Senior Advisor and the Assistant Advisor were able to make a visual reconnaissance of the operational area with the Seawolf detachment at VINH LONG. The 9th ARVN Division representatives who were supposed to show up at VINH LONG with maps and further information on the operation never materialized. Maps for the battalion were drawn from the TOC at VINH LONG prior to getting underway the night of the 6th.

d. 070645H - 101230H December 1968. Commencing at 0645H on 7 December the LSSL conducted a 45 minute beach prep on the two landing beaches. At 0810H the 1st and 2nd Companies landed over Red Beach 1 vicinity of XS 370131. Due to problems in beaching encountered at Red Beach 2, an alternate beach had to be selected and the 3rd and 4th Companies along with the command post group landed at 0855H in the vicinity of XS 374127. Light contact was encountered most of the morning as the battalion moved in two columns along the SONG CAI SAGH in a southwesterly direction. At 1010H the 3rd Company sustained one wounded from small arms fire and he was medevaced at 1120H. The 1st Company had one Marine wounded at 1210H who died while aboard the medevac helicopter enroute to MY THO at 1300H. Night defensive positions were established at 1600H. There was negative contact during the night. See Enclosure (3).

(1) At 080830H December all companies were on the move again. The 1st Company located and destroyed a VC hospital at 0910H. From 0930-1030 the 1st and 2nd Company were in moderate contact. At 1100H a VNAF air strike was conducted and after checking the area out, four Viet Cong KIA were discovered at XS 375102, 3 M-26 grenades and 2 CHICOM booby traps were captured. At 1415H the 1st and 2nd Companies were again in moderate contact. During the course of the fire fight 5 Marines were wounded and 2 were killed. The Battalion XO was among the 5 wounded. A DUSTOFF request was initiated at 1415 but the DUSTOFF helicopter did not show up until 1630. Prior to landing the DUSTOFF

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pilot informed us he could not evacuate the dead and wounded to our rear at MY THO since he was out of CAN THO. As a result of the Leatherneck Advisors reputation in the Delta with the DUSTOFF pilots, he returned 30 minutes later and evacuated the dead and wounded to MY THO. Night defensive positions were established at 1800H with sporadic sniper fire encountered at 1900H from across the river. An artillery mission was called and the sniper fire ceased. Harrassing and interdiction fires were shot throughout the night. Naval gunfire from the LSSL was utilized for a portion of these night interdiction fires.

(2) On the morning of 9 December the battalion remained in its night defensive positions awaiting resupply from the 9th ARVN Division scheduled for 0830H. When the resupply had not arrived by 1000H, it was decided that the battalion would move out and resupply enroute once the helicopters were in bound. At 1215H a partial resupply was dropped off in the vicinity of checkpoint L70 (see enclosure (3)). When queried as to the arrival time of the remainder of the resupply, it was discovered that the 9th ARVN Division did not have the missing supplies and could not give an ETA for their delivery. No ammunition had been received and only enough rations to feed 500 of the 780 men had been delivered. At 1430H the Senior Advisor to IV Corps, MajGen ECKHARDT arrived at the Battalion Command Post to discuss the operation and the Amphibious Task Force. General ECKHARDT was apprised of the Amphibious Task Force problems to date, as well as the inability of the 9th ARVN Division to resupply the Third Battalion with a complete list of required supplies. Upon his departure he assured the Battalion Commander that the remainder of the resupply would be delivered by nightfall. There was no contact during the day and at 1700H the battalion moved into its night defensive positions.

(3) At 0800H on the 10th, the remainder of the resupply arrived. The 9th ARVN Division commander and his Senior Advisor arrived at 0900H to discuss problem areas of the operation. All were in agreement on the support problem and the insufficient planning time for the operation. After the resupply had been effected, the battalion conducted patrolling actions in the zone prior to the completion of the operation at 1200H. No contact was made. At 1130H the battalion moved out for the beach and reembarkation on boats of the Amphibious Task Force. Embarkation was completed at 1230H and the Amphibious Task Force was underway for VINH LONG to drop off the forward observer teams and refuel the boats. Results during this operation were:

<u>VINh</u>			<u>VC/NVA</u>		
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>VCC</u>	<u>VCS</u>
4	5	0	6	1	0

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Weapons/Material Captured/Destroyed

- 1 VC Hospital
- 5 Grenades, M-26
- 2 Booby-traps, CHICOM

e. 110001H to 132300H December 1968. While enroute to VINH LONG, operational control of the Amphibious Task Force was passed from 9th ARVN Division back to the 7th ARVN Division. From VINH LONG the Amphibious Task Force returned to its operational base across from the BEN TRE ferry crossing.

(1) Planning for operation KIDNEY FLUSH II with the 2d Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division, commenced with a visit to the 7th ARVN Division Headquarters at MY THO at 0900H to obtain the operation order. At 1400H the Senior Advisor and Assistant Advisor caught a helicopter out to the USS BENEWAH for the back-briefing. It was discovered that the area of operation as outlined in the 2d Brigade's operational order differed considerably from the one given to the Third Battalion Commander by the 7th ARVN Division. The difference in the area of operation could not be resolved over the radio so the 7th ARVN Division's Commanding General set up a meeting at the BEN TRE Province Chief's house for 090012H December.

(2) Prior to our departure for the meeting it was discovered that the 7th ARVN Division had pulled all the boats of RAG 21/33 except for the LCU to support one of its operations. Once the problem of the area of operation had been resolved, the Commanding General, 7th ARVN Division was apprised of the lack of boats to support the landing. This took him completely by surprise and he immediately phoned his G-3 to confirm the lack of boats. Upon confirming the lack of boats with the G-3, the Commanding General proceeded to reprimand him for pulling these craft without notifying him. General HOANG then informed Colonel BLAND, Commanding Officer, 2d Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division and LtCol BAO, Commanding Officer, Third Battalion, VNMC, that the boats would be returned immediately. Since the boats would not arrive in time to support the operation it was agreed that the Mobile Riverine Force CTG 117.1 would provide six ATC's to land two of the assault companies.

(3) Commencing at 1200H on 12 December, the Mobile Riverine Force, in cooperation and coordination with the 7th ARVN Division, IV Corps Tactical Zone Amphibious Task Force and KIEN HOA Province RF/PF was to conduct water-mobile, air-mobile and foot-mobile operations in GIONG TRAM, TRUC GIANG, MO CAY Districts, KIEN HOA Province to locate, fix and destroy the 516th Main Force Battalion and other enemy elements in zone 12-17 December. See Enclosure (4).

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(4) Embarkation was completed on 12 December at 1130H and the Amphibious Task Force was underway for the objective area on boats of the Mobile Riverine Force and Amphibious Task Force. At 1150H the Mobile Riverine Force boats commenced a short beach prep. The 2nd and 3rd Companies landed over Red Beaches 1-2 at 1210H and moved inland in a north easterly direction. The reserve company was landed at XS 504276 and stood by for the remainder of the operation. Contact for the day and early evening was limited to sporadic sniper fire with neither side sustaining any casualties.

(5) Action for 13 December was similar to the preceding day and limited again to sporadic sniper fire. A fresh grave was found at 0900H in the vicinity of XS 531281. It was believed that this Viet Cong had been killed by artillery on the afternoon of the preceding day. At 1400H one Marine was wounded by a booby-trap. The medevac was completed at 1500H. At 1600H, Colonel BLAND, Commanding Officer of the 2d Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division terminated the first phase of operation and the 2nd and 3rd Companies were picked-up by Mobile Riverine Force boats at XS 553304 and returned to the vicinity of the BEN TRE ferry site at XS 474292. The remainder of the battalion moved by LCU to the same stand down area.

(6) At 1700H the Battalion Commander received the word to proceed immediately to BEN TRE to confer with General HOANG on the phone. Once the call had been put through to the 7th ARVN Division Headquarters in MY THO, LtCol BAO received a severe reprimand by General HOANG for moving his battalion out of the operational area without permission. LtCol BAO attempted to explain that Colonel BLAND had terminated the first phase of the operation and released him to move his battalion to the stand down area prior to the second phase on 15 December. He also explained that he had relayed this information to the 7th ARVN Division Headquarters via the 10th ARVN Regiment. General HOANG continued with his reprimand saying that Colonel BLAND did not have the authority to release the Third Battalion from the Area of Operation and that only he could give the order to come out of the field. He threatened LtCol BAO with a court martial and confinement if he did not move the battalion back into the same area immediately. LtCol BAO was somehow able to convince General HOANG to delay the move back into the operational area until the following morning since only one LCU was available and the Mobile Riverine Force boats had already been released. General HOANG granted the request for the delay but threatened LtCol BAO with a court martial if the city of BEN TRE was attacked that night.

(7) This confrontation over the phone only served to heighten the already smoldering problem of the awkward command relationships as established in the JGS directive. The 2d Brigade was charged with the responsibility of fire support, additional boats for troop transportation helicopter support, and supplies when required but had no say as to the Battalion's scheme of maneuver or tactical employment within a given area

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of operation. Operational control of the battalion was vested with the 7th ARVN Division and they never failed to exercise their authority. Although operations were planned with 2d Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division, the plan still had to be approved by 7th ARVN Division prior to execution. Operational control was never passed to the 2d Brigade during any of the operations.

(8) When Colonel BLAND learned that LtCol BAO had been severely reprimanded for leaving the area of operation below BEN TRE, he contacted the Senior Advisor to the 7th ARVN Division to explain that he had released LtCol BAO from the area of operation. Colonel BLAND's attempt to intercede as well as the visit by this reporting officer met with negative results. The Senior Advisor informed Colonel BLAND and the reporting officer that this was now a political problem and they would not get involved in it.

f. 141230H - 211000H December 1968. Commencing at 1230H on the 14th, the Third Battalion (-) landed over Red Beach 1 in the vicinity of XS 567206 to perform reconnaissance in force/security operations below the province capital of BEN TRE. The battalion command post remained aboard the LSSL for the first three days of the operation moving ashore to XS 499280 on the morning of the 17th.

(1) The seven day operation was marked by sporadic contact and sniper fire. Friendly casualties were four wounded and two killed all of which were medevaced by the 2d Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division when the 7th ARVN Division was unable to provide DUSTOFF support. The only significant activity for the period was the capture of two Viet Cong suspects on the 16th and the release of an ARVN soldier and his family on the afternoon of the 19th. They had been held prisoner since TET. On the morning of the 21st, the battalion moved back to the vicinity of the BEN TRE ferry crossing to stand down prior to the next operation.

(2) An operation was planned for the 21st and 22nd with the Mobile Riverine Force; however, once again, the operation had to be cancelled when Commanding General, IV Corps passed OPCON of the Amphibious Task Force from the 7th ARVN Division to the 21st ARVN Division at 1200H on the 22nd. The Amphibious Task Force was underway for CAN THO at 1400H on the 22nd arriving at 1100H on the 23rd.

g. 230001H December 1968 - 071045H January 1969. During the period 26 December 1968 - 5 January 1969 the Amphibious Task Force took part in a reconnaissance in force (riverine) operation under the operational control of Vietnamese Marine Brigade B along the SONG CAI LON and CAN GAO Canal. See Enclosure (6).

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(1) At 0330H on the 26th, the transit phase commenced when boats of the Mobile Riverine Force and Amphibious Task Force moved Brigade B and the Second and Third Battalions to the operation area. The Third Battalion spent the remainder of the day providing local security for the boats and artillery fire support base which was established in close proximity to the Brigade Command Post.

(2) At 0730H on the 27th, the 1st, 3rd and 4th Companies moved out on reconnaissance in force operations. The 1st Company ran into an estimated two Viet Cong squads at 1130H. Two Viet Cong were killed by a gunship strike at 1200H. The 1st Company sustained one wounded during the action and he was medevaced at 1330H. At 1340H the 1st Company discovered a Viet Cong hospital complete with 43 boxes of medical supplies and one box of assorted hand grenades and CHICOM mines. The hospital was destroyed and 18 boxes of medical supplies were brought back to the FSB at the end of the operation.

(3) On 28 December, the Third Battalion (-) moved out in a three column reconnaissance in force to locate a suspected Viet Cong prisoner of war camp in the vicinity of WR 002642. The 4th Company was tasked with locating and salvaging a 105mm howitzer belonging to Battery D which had been dropped during its displacement from RACH SOI to the present fire support base. Contact during the day was limited to two small contacts by the 1st Company in the vicinity of the suspected prisoner of war camp. These contacts resulted in eleven Viet Cong suspects and the capturing of two RPD magazines, 2 carbine (U.S.) magazines, 150 rounds of assorted small arms ammunition and one claymore mine. The 3rd Company located and destroyed 12 drums of gasoline. The company then established night defensive positions along the banks of the canal. The 4th Company was able to locate and salvage what was left of the 105mm howitzer and at the same time captured six Viet Cong suspects.

(4) With the exception of the 4th Company, the battalion rested on the 29th of December in the same location. The 4th Company was moved to provide security for the Mobile Riverine Force boats during the transit to and from the refueling point. Right after being dropped off the 4th Company discovered 50 drums (55 gallons) of gasoline and two drums of lube oil in the same vicinity where the Mobile Riverine Force boats had been ambushed the previous day. Thirty-two out of 50 drums found were salvable - the remainder had been riddled with holes by the boats during the ambush. While waiting for the boats to return from the refueling point, two Viet Cong suspects were picked-up and turned over to Brigade B at 1700H.

(5) On 30 December, a combined water-mobile and heliborne operation was conducted by the Brigade with negative contact and negative results.

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(6) On 31 December the Third Battalion (-) moved out in search of a new position for the fire support base. Two companies landed at WR 968740 and one company landed at WR 955700 to recon the area. The 3rd Company remained back to provide security for the present fire support base. At 0900H the boat column was ambushed in the vicinity of WR 955700. The 1st Company landed and found one Viet Cong KIA. By 1115H the 1st Company had detained 19 Viet Cong suspects in the general vicinity of the ambush. The site where the 2nd and 4th Companies had landed was selected as the location for the fire support base. At 1830H, the remainder of the Third Battalion, Brigade Headquarters (-), and the Mobile Riverine Force and Amphibious Task Force boats were underway to the new fire support base. Just prior to embarking the 1st Company boat column was ambushed. This was the first in a series of five ambushes during the next hour. All the ambushes occurred between WR 948678 and 955700 inflicting 23 casualties, eight of which were evacuated upon arrival at the new fire support base. Suppressive fire was delivered by the Mobile Riverine Force boats during each of the ambushes. During one of the ambushes three men from the 1st Company were wounded by fire from the boats prior to being extracted. In view of the length of the boat column (48 boats) and the lack of fire discipline, the Battalion Commander decided not to land any troops in the vicinity of the ambushes. This proved to be a wise decision as the ambushes and suppressive fire continued to a point 2000 meters from the new fire support base.

(7) On 1 January two companies of the Third Battalion commenced a reconnaissance in force operation, sweeping the sites of the previous night's ambush. The 1st Company provided protection for the Brigade Command Post while the 4th Company commenced a sweep to the west of the fire support base. At 1000H the 4th Company surprised a group of Viet Cong holding a political indoctrination class and captured six confirmed Viet Cong and four Viet Cong suspects. Later on at 1130H, the 3rd Company located and destroyed in place 30 drums of gasoline and captured three B-40 rounds, three AK-50 magazines, and two NVA entrenching tools. At 1530H the 2nd and 3rd Companies were picked up at their final objective and commenced the return to the fire support base. On the return the boats were ambushed at WR 955700, and the 2nd and 3rd Companies sustained two killed and 36 wounded. Medical evacuation commenced at 1730H and ended at 2130H as a result of having only one DUSTOFF helicopter available.

(8) On 2 January the Third Battalion (-) stood down in the vicinity of the fire support base. The 1st Company accompanied the Mobile Riverine Force boats to the refueling point to provide security. At 0800H the boat column was ambushed at WR 983764 and the 1st Company sustained two wounded (both slight). Fire from the boats accounted for two Viet Cong killed enroute to their holes. At 2000H the boats returned with the resupply for the Second and Third Battalions.

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(9) Operations for the 3rd of January were cancelled due to a persistant rain storm and low visibility which curtailed helicopter operations.

(10) At 0830H on 4 January, the 2nd and 4th Companies moved north to check out the ambush site along the refueling route. The 1st Company stood by for Eagle Float operations and the 3rd Company provided security for the fire support base. At 1000H the 2nd Company had a moderate contact and sustained three wounded. These wounded were moved by DONG NAI boats to the fire support base and medevaced on arrival. At 1007H the 4th Company surprised the Viet Cong in an ambush position and killed one Viet Cong and apprehended three Viet Cong suspects. At 1355H both the 2nd and 4th Companies were in heavy contact. Brigade B was able to divert three air strikes from another AO to aid the two companies in contact. The 2nd Company sustained six wounded and two killed prior to the arrival of the air strikes which commenced at 1515H and finished at 1600H. After a rather nasty search of the area, only one Viet Cong KIA was found although additional blood trails indicated there could be more Viet Cong wounded in the area. Immediately following the search, the two companies returned to the fire support base at 1700H. The six wounded and two killed were brought back by sampan and medevaced at 1800H. At 2100H the first of two mortar attacks was launched by the Viet Cong. Although there were roughly 25-30 rounds impacting within the area of the fire support base and Third Battalion no casualties were sustained.

(11) The second mortar attack occurred at 0315H on the 5th and killed two Marines and wounded four others severely. An estimated 18-20 rounds fell during this attack. Medical evacuation was completed at 0430H.

(12) At 1300H on the 5th, the Third Battalion and Battery D were underway on the Mobile Riverine Force and Amphibious Task Force boats for the refueling point. The boat column was ambushed in the vicinity of WR 019797 at 1330H resulting in nine wounded, five of which were evacuated while underway at 1445H. The move to the refueling point was completed at 1600H and the artillery was off loaded and on the way to RACH SOI by 1800H.

(13) The battalion and the boats of Riveron 15 and RAG 21/33 were underway at 0400H, 6 January, for VI THANH. The Third Battalion was to be relieved on the following day by the Fourth Battalion and fly to Saigon from the VI THANH airfield. Upon our arrival at VI THANH at 1100H, it was discovered that the VNAF C-119's could not land on the VI THANH airfield as it was to short. The boats which had started for CAN THO at 1130H were called back and returned to reembark us at 1345H. By 1400H all elements were again underway for CAN THO arriving at the BINH THUY bridge at 2000H.

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(14) At 0900H on the 7th, the first elements of the Fourth Battalion arrived at BINH THUY airfield. By 1530H the entire Third Battalion was back in Saigon and enroute to their base camp at THU DUC.

**12. Results:**

<u>VNMC</u>		<u>VC/NVA</u>		
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>VCC</u>	<u>VCS</u>
6	71	7	10	40

Weapons and Material Captured or Destroyed:

- 1 Carbine, CHICOM
- 26 Hand Grenades, Assorted VC
- 1 Anti-Tank Grenade
- 2 Mines, CHICOM
- 88 55 gallon Drums of Gasoline
- 1 Viet Cong Hospital
- 43 Boxes of Medical Supplies

**13. Administrative Matters:**

a. Supply.

(1) With the exception of the resupply problem encountered while OPCON to the 9th ARVN Division, there were no other problems in this area. Coordination and delivery of supplies by the battalion rear was effected with the complete cooperation of the Mobile Riverine Force, Vietnamese RAG 21/33, 7th ARVN Division, 21st ARVN Division and Brigade B for all operations during the reporting period.

(2) For operations in the Delta the battalion carried three days of supplies on its back. In view of the tempo and duration of these operations this proved to be the optimum basic load.

(3) No problems were encountered with compatibility of ammunition as the Third Battalion was equipped with the M-16, M-79 and M-60 which were organic to all the ARVN Divisions under which the battalion served.

b. Communications.

(1) Communications were excellent for the entire operating period. Optimum communications were achieved when the Battalion Command Post was located aboard the LSSL. During operations in KIEN HOA Province, the LSSL was moved continually to maintain communications with the companies and the U.S. forward observer teams as they move inland.

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(2) The only problem area in communications occurred while working with the 9th ARVN Division. The entire operation was run over one frequency with all traffic, administrative and tactical, passed over this net. During periods of heavy contact, it was almost impossible to get through to net control to request assets. Permission had been initially denied to use the Leatherneck push for advisor traffic, but on a couple of occasions it had to be utilized to coordinate air strikes and medevacs once they were in bound. This problem was brought to the attention of the 9th ARVN Division advisory staff but they insisted that overall control for the operation could be maintained only by keeping all units on the same frequency.

c. Transportation. The Third Battalion utilized LCM-6's, LCM-8's, and the LCU of RAG 21/33 as well as boats of the Mobile Riverine Force as described in reference (b). Loading was also accomplished in the same manner as outlined in reference (b).

(1) Motor transport of the 21st ARVN Division was used on one administrative move from CAN THO to RACH SOI on 24 December. Motor march movement was excellent in all respects and the move was accomplished in  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

(2) Organic motor transport of the battalion was utilized to move supplies from the battalion rear to forward resupply points on six different occasions during the operating period. In all instances the movement was well organized and arrived at the prescribed time to effect the resupply.

d. Medical.

(1) Medical evacuation was excellent when working with the Mobile Riverine Force boats or in combined operations with the 2d Brigade 9th U.S. Infantry Division. Time from the request of the DUSTOFF until the actual pick-up was normally 15 minutes to a half an hour.

(2) There were certain medevac problems encountered while working under the operational control of the 9th ARVN Division. Due to the hasty briefing on the operation, the preestablished evacuation points had not been given to the Third Battalion. As a result the medevac helicopters operating out of CAN THO and VINH LONG were reluctant at first to medevac the wounded and dead of the Third Battalion to the battalion rear at MY THO. Due to the excellent reputation enjoyed by the Leatherneck advisors with the DUSTOFF pilots in the Delta, this was worked out while they were in bound and all the wounded and dead from the operation were medevaced to MY THO.

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(3) Medevac response time while operating in support of the 9th ARVN Division was considered excessive. Urgent DUSTOFFs were requested on three occasions and time lapse from request to pick-up averaged from one hour for the first two request to two and one half hours for the final request. The final request was for an urgent medevac on 8 December for the Executive Officer of the battalion along with four other wounded and two dead Marines. The request was initiated at 1415H and periodically checked on by the Senior Advisor every 30 minutes to ascertain the ETA. During one of the periodic checks, this officer was severely chastized over the radio for interrupting what turned out to be radio traffic on an administrative troop movement from VINH LONG to another area within the area of operation. In any event the Executive Officer died of wounds about half an hour after the request went in. The medevac helicopter finally arrived at 1630H and was loaded to near capacity. After a brief conversation with the pilot he agreed to drop his present load off at VINH LONG and come back for our casualties and evacuate them to MY THO. This DUSTOFF was finally accomplished at 1730H.

(4) The JGS directive for the Amphibious Task Force tasked the 7th ARVN Division with providing DUSTOFF support for the Third Battalion while engaged in operations with the Mobile Riverine Force. They could not comply with this portion of the directive due to lack of assets, so it was mutually agreed that the 2d Brigade of the 9th U.S. Infantry Division would provide us with medevac support as required. Had it again not been for the outstanding support provided by the 2d Brigade in this area many of the casualties sustained in combined operations with the Mobile Riverine Force would have died of wounds before they could have been evacuated.

14. Special Equipment and Techniques.

a. DONG NAI Boats (plastic assault boats). The small plastic assault boats, designated DONG NAI boats by the Vietnamese Marines, proved their versatility and usefulness during the final phase of the Amphibious Task Force operations. The DONG NAI boats are organic to the Motor Transport Company of the Division Service Battalion. The DONG NAI boat platoon is capable of being employed in its entirety in a riverine environment or in squads of 15 boats each. One squad was in direct support of Brigade B during the operation on the SONG CAI LON and CAN GAO canals. The DONG NAI's were employed primarily in two distinct roles; one as a medevac vehicle to move the wounded from an operational area where a secure landing zone was not available to a secure area for evacuation and secondly, to ferry troops across the numerous canals along the route of march. During the transit phase to an operational area the DONG NAI's were towed by ATC's or Monitors to save on gasoline. In addition to the two roles previously mentioned DONG NAI's can be utilized for emergency resupply and for transportation of caches from the point of discovery to the rear area.

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b. Eagle Float.

(1) As defined in reference (d) the eagle float is "a series of landings along a waterway conducted in leapfrog fashion. By this method a waterborne reaction force and a sweeping force can be continually maintained as movement continues along the waterway." The eagle float was established along the lines of the eagle flight concept and primarily designed for daylight employment.

(2) During the final phase of the Third Battalion's operations in the Delta, a variation of the eagle float was employed at night in an effort to lure the Viet Cong into ambushing the boats while on the move. Depending on the intensity of the ambush, the eagle float was prepared to land on order in the vicinity of the ambush site.

(3) Even the novice tactician realizes that the night assault is one of the most difficult of tactical maneuvers to execute and requires a high level of training, excellent coordination with supporting arms, and a rehearsal where possible. The night eagle float as employed in the Delta now is an extremely dangerous form of tactical maneuver for a reaction force.

(4) The problems associated with night eagle floats are three-fold. First and foremost is the lack of illumination available to assist the landing force in organizing itself into a tactical formation once ashore. The present basic load for the Marine Artillery battery does not provide for the required number of illumination rounds necessary for continual illumination of the objective area. The monitors of the Mobile Riverine Force carry a limited amount of 105mm illumination rounds but they cannot bring their fires in close enough to illuminate the ambush site.

(5) Secondly coordination between elements of the landing force is extremely difficult during the hours of darkness and especially without lunar illumination or artificial illumination.

(6) Third and perhaps most critical is the lack of terrain familiarization at night. Once ashore the many cross canals, sink holes and thick undergrowth in the vicinity of the main canal canalize the landing force into following the established trail network. These trail networks have been found to be heavily booby trapped and mined in areas where the Viet Cong have operated for long periods of time without fear of government interference.

15. Advisor Analysis:

a. General. In spite of the problems encountered while working with the Amphibious Task Force, the Third Battalion did a commendable job during the reporting period. Had the Amphibious Task Force operated

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the entire period with the Mobile Riverine Force, as outlined in the JGS directive, the results would have been a bit more satisfying to all who had a hand in the Amphibious Task Force formation and operation. The fire support provided by the 2d Brigade of the 9th U.S. Infantry Division as well as the supplemental boat support on two operations were two key factors which kept the 7th ARVN Division from completely scuttling the Amphibious Task Force while under its operational control. For all practical purposes the Amphibious Task Force became defunct on 23 December 1968 when the final chop was made from the 7th ARVN Division to 21st ARVN Division. The LSSL and LCU had to be left in CAN THO due to their inability to navigate the areas we were going into below RACH SOI. After the first tactical lift on the 26th of December, the RAG 21/33 boats were used only to shuttle companies from one side of the canal to the other and ultimately were relegated into a role of hauling artillery pieces or artillery ammunition from one fire support base to another. The RAG boats lack of armament, slow speed, and lack of maneuverability (especially the LCM-8's) were the major cause for this change in mission. This was the status of the Amphibious Task Force on 7 January 1969 when the Third Battalion was relieved by the Fourth Battalion at CAN THO. According to copies of the latest situation reports from Brigade B the status of the Amphibious Task Force has not changed.

b. Civil Affairs/Psychological Warfare. Due to the constant change in operational control, the Third Battalion did not operate in any one area long enough to get involved in a civic affairs or psychological warfare program.

c. Intelligence. Intelligence for the bulk of the operations in the Delta was dated or not available for the particular area of operations the battalion was assigned. Agent reports and sitings form the bulk of the intelligence collecting effort but dissemination and validation are the principal problems. Operations seemed to be executed for the sake of putting troops in a given area on a given date whether intelligence of the area was available or not. Intelligence is one field in which all major commands could use a good deal of improvement.

16. Recommendations:

a. That the IV Corps Tactical Zone Amphibious Task Force be reconstituted upon delivery of the first group of Mobile Riverine Force boats to the Vietnamese Navy.

b. That a joint Amphibious Task Force staff be established at MY THO or DONG TAMB with representatives from the Vietnamese Marine Brigade and the Vietnamese Navy.

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c. That the IV Corps Tactical Zone Amphibious Task Force operate for six months with the 2d Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division in view of the excellent support provided by the Mobile Riverine Force in past operations.

d. That sufficient helicopter support be provided the Vietnamese Marine Brigade to allow one battalion to be air-mobile while the other battalion operates on the boats. The battalions would rotate between air-mobile and waterborne operations at the end of each month.

e. That the duration of employment for the two maneuver battalions and the artillery battery of the Brigade be limited to two months. The rotation of the Brigade Headquarters would be up to the Joint General Staff.

f. That serious thought be given to establishing additional Amphibious Task Force/Mobile Riverine Forces with operational bases at VINH LONG and BINH THUY/CAN THO as more boats are turned over to the Vietnamese Navy.

  
D. G. HENDERSON**CONFIDENTIAL**

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1 Nov 1968FIRST ENDORSEMENT on Major H. T. WARD, Jr. Combat  
Operations After Action Report HTW:fmcg 3480 of 160ct68

From: Senior Marine Advisor  
 To: Commander U. S. Military Assistance Command,  
 Vietnam (Attn: J343)  
 Via: Commander U. S. Naval Forces, Vietnam  
 Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS: MACJ  
 3-32 (K-1))

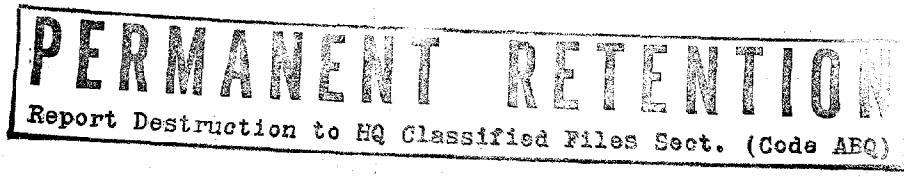
1. (U) Forwarded.

2. (C) With regard to the recommendations contained in paragraph 13a and b of the basic correspondence, more night operations are anticipated in the future along with the eagle flight concept of operations as assets to support these type operations become available.

3. (C) Steps to increase the communications capabilities, as recommended in paragraph 13c, within the operational units have been taken. As of late this problem has come to light as a result of the widely scattered deployments of the battalions and the assignment of more sophisticated combat operations. The communications problem and the need for additional advisors, as recommended in paragraph 13d, correlate to action being taken to increase the number of advisors; particularly at the brigade (task force) level.



L. V. CORBETT

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OFFICE OF THE SENIOR MARINE ADVISOR  
 Naval Advisory Group, Box #9  
 FPO San Francisco 96626

HTW:fmcg  
 3480  
 16 Oct 1968

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From: Major Harold T. WARD, Jr., 077961/0302, U. S. Marine Corps  
 To: Commander U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (Attn: J343)  
 Via: (1) Senior Marine Advisor, Marine Advisory Unit, Naval Advisory  
       Group, MACV  
       (2) Commander U. S. Naval Forces, Vietnam

Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS: MACJ 3-32 (K-1))

Ref: (a) MACV Directive 335-8 dated 1 September 1967

1. Name of Operation: TOAN THANG 119-770 (Vietnamese Airborne Division)

2. Dates of Operation: 101600 - 200820 September 1968

3. Location: KHIEM HANH District (XT 437347), TAY NINH Province,  
 III Corps Tactical Zone

4. Control Headquarters: Airborne Division, ARVN

5. Reporting Officer: Major Harold T. WARD, Jr., USMC

Advisors Participating:

Major H. T. WARD, Jr., USMC

Senior Advisor, Task Force B,  
 VNMC (10-20Sep68)

Major W. P. ESHELMAN, USMC

Senior Advisor, Fourth Battalion,  
 VNMC (10-11Sep68)

Major U. GIANNELLI, USMC

Asst Advisor, Task Force B,  
 VNMC (17-20Sep68)

Captain J. A. WILLIAMS, USMC

Asst Advisor, Task Force B,  
 VNMC (10-12Sep68)

Captain J. L. KUYENDALL, USA

Asst Advisor, Second Battalion,  
 VNMC (14-15Sep68)

Captain J. G. BURKE, USMC  
 (Medevac 18Sep68)

Asst Advisor, Second Battalion,  
 VNMC (17-18Sep68)

GROUP-4

DOWNGRADED AT 3-YEAR INTERVALS  
 DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS

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Captain T. B. BAGLEY, Jr., USMC

Senior Advisor, Third Battalion, VNMC (13-20Sep68)

Captain J. J. SHEEHAN, USMC

Senior Advisor, Second Battalion, VNMC (10-20Sep68)

Captain C. L. KAMMEIER, USMC

Asst Advisor, Task Force B, VNMC (17-18Sep68); Asst Advisor, Third Battalion, VNMC (19-20Sep68)

1stLt C. P. WHITE, USMC  
(Medevac 16Sep68)

Asst Advisor, Second Battalion, VNMC (10-16Sep68)

1stLt W. C. FITE, USMC

Asst Advisor, Fourth Battalion, VNMC (10-11Sep68)

1stLt G. C. BARGERSTOCK, USMC  
(Medevac 16Sep68)

Asst Advisor, Third Battalion, VNMC (13-16Sep68)

CWO J. W. PRATTE, USMC

Asst Advisor, Task Force B, VNMC (12-18Sep68); Asst Advisor, Second Battalion, VNMC (18-20Sep68)

SPC C. J. MOORE (KIA 14Sep68) USA

Asst Advisor, Second Battalion, VNMC (14Sep68)

**6. Task Organization:**

Task Force B, VNMC

Task Force B Headquarters

Second Battalion, VNMC (10-20Sep68)

Third Battalion, VNMC (13-20Sep68)

Fourth Battalion, VNMC (10-11Sep68)

Sixth Battalion, Airborne Division, ARVN (16Sep68)

**7. Supporting Forces:**

Air

VNAF (H-34, AlE)

USAF (O-1E, Attack A/C)

USA (O-1E, UH1D, CH-47)

**8. Mission:** Task Force B OPCON to the ARVN Airborne Division was assigned a TAOR vicinity KHIEM HANH (XT 437347) and was responsible for conducting operations in conjunction with a SIGMA Special Forces Reconnaissance Team. A secondary mission was given to act as a ready reaction force to the ARVN Airborne Division.

**9. Concept of Operation:** The ARVN Airborne Division employed Task Force B as a ready reaction force, throughout the Airborne TAOR, and as a force in support of SIGMA within the Task Force B TAOR.

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10. Intelligence: In addition to several local force and main force battalions believed to be operating within the Airborne TAOR it was suspected that the 33rd NVA Regiment was operating in or near the Task Force B TAOR.

11. Execution:

10 September - Task Force B, composed of the Fourth Infantry Battalion commenced a helicopter move from VT 091023 to XT 436346 (KHIEM HANH). Second Infantry Battalion was detached from independent duty with the 25th Division, ARVN and became OPCON of Task Force B at 1600H. Night positions were: Second Battalion XT 434336 and the Fourth Battalion XT 435356. At this time Task Force B was still OPCON 25th Infantry Division, ARVN.

11 September - All Task Force B units became ready reserve for ARVN Airborne Division who assumed OPCON of Task Force B at 1400H. Task Force B received one battery of 105mm howitzers from the Airborne Division to be in direct support. The Fourth Infantry Battalion detached from Task Force B at 1700H and was helilifted into TAY NINH West as Airborne reserve for large contact in TAY NINH City.

12 September - Task Force B ready reaction force. Negative contact. Most of the day was spent in coordination meetings with the ARVN Airborne Division.

13 September - Task Force B ready reaction force for ARVN Airborne Division. Two companies from the Second Infantry Battalion conducted operations vicinity XT 3830, 4130, 3827, 4128. The Third Infantry Battalion became OPCON of Task Force B, established night positions XT 4632. Two companies of the Second Infantry Battalion remained overnight at XT 411300. Negative contact. Senior Advisor, Second Infantry Battalion directed gunships into Viet Cong positions from a Command and Control Helicopter outside the Second Battalion's TAOR and claimed credit for six Viet Cong killed.

VNMCVC/NVAKIA  
0WIA  
4KIA  
6VCC  
0VCS  
0

14 September - The Second Infantry Battalion conducted eagle flights commencing at 0930. Two airborne advisors were attached to the Second Infantry Battalion in order to furnish each eagle flight with one advisor to control U.S. assets. This requirement was established by the Senior Advisor, ARVN Airborne Division and the Commanding General, ARVN Airborne Division. The first eagle flight landed at

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XT 317407 at 0940H, the second eagle flight landed at XT 344418 at 0950H. Two companies of the Second Infantry Battalion closed from their night positions of the 13th at 1000H and became eagle flight reserve. At 1050H eagle flight one had light contact at XT 331408; shortly after eagle flight two came into contact. Contact increased from light to heavy from an estimated Viet Cong battalion. Task Force B reserve was committed at XT 344413. At 1600H the Airborne Advisor with eagle flight two was killed from a shrapnel wound. Contact remained sporadic throughout the night.

<u>VNMC</u>	<u>US</u>	<u>VC/NVA</u>			
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>VCC</u>	<u>VCS</u>
15	53	1	11	0	0

Ammunition Captured:

22 60mm Mortar Rounds  
Large Quantity of Small Arms Ammunition

Equipment and Materiel Captured and/or Destroyed:

1 Base Camp (XT 344413), Battalion Size  
1200 Meters, Telephone Wire

15 September - The Second Infantry Battalion received emergency resupply by helicopter at 0800H. All killed and wounded were evacuated (including one U.S. Advisor KIA). The Third Infantry Battalion was committed to the contact area to sweep in coordination with the Second Infantry Battalion. Second Infantry Battalion sweeping from night positions to XT 295365, the Third Infantry Battalion was helilifted from their night position to XT 360357 and swept to XT 307357, negative contact. One Vietnamese Marine was killed and one wounded by friendly airstrikes vicinity XT 360357. At 1700H planning began for night attack to commence at 0200H, 16 September 1968.

VNMC

<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>
1	1

16 September - At 0200H the Second Infantry Battalion moved from night position to blocking position XT 359437 and XT 386408. At 0300H the Third Infantry Battalion began a sweep from their night positions (XT 310360) towards the Second Infantry Battalion's blocking positions. At 0300H the Sixth Airborne Battalion, ARVN, now OPCON to Task Force B began a sweep from XT 370330 to the Second Battalion's blocking position. Negative contact. At 1230H Task Force B received word from the

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ARVN Airborne Division that the SIGMA (Reconnaissance Team) had spotted 50 Viet Cong at XT 486382. At 1430H two companies from the Second Infantry Battalion were inserted at XT 486382. At 1530H the two companies from the Second Infantry Battalion were in heavy contact with three battalions from the 33rd NVA Regiment (POW source). At 1555H the Assistant Advisor, Second Infantry Battalion (1stLt C. P. WHITE, USMC) was medevac for heat prostration by the Second Infantry Battalion command and control helicopter. At 1625H the Assistant Advisor, Third Infantry Battalion (1stLt G. C. BARGERSTOCK, USMC) was helilifted into the Second Infantry Battalion's position. 1stLt BARGERSTOCK became disoriented and ran to the NVA positions by mistake, and at approximately 1628H was wounded. The helicopter bringing him into the landing zone was hit, crashed, killing three and wounding one (all U.S. crew members). At 1800H 1stLt BARGERSTOCK was medevaced by the Task Force B command and control helicopter. The Senior Advisor, Task Force B (Major H. T. WARD) remained on the ground and assumed role as Second Battalion Assistant Advisor. Contact remained heavy throughout the night until 1000H the following morning.

<u>VNMC</u>	<u>US</u>	<u>VC/NVA</u>				
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>VCC</u>	<u>VCS</u>
2	6	3	2	53	3	0

Weapons Captured:

- 1 60mm Mortar
- 11 Rifle, Assault, Soviet, 7.62mm, AK-47
- 2 Light Machine Guns
- 1 Anti-tank Grenade Launcher, Soviet, RPG-2 (B-40)
- 2 Rifles, 7.62mm, SKS

Ammunition Captured:

- 6 Boxes, Machine Gun Ammunition
- 75 AK-47 Magazines
- 50 B-40 Rounds
- 32 M-26 Grenades
- 27 Chinese Grenades
- 2000 Rounds, AK-47
- 8 Drums, Machine Gun Ammunition
- 25 57mm Recoilless Rifle Ammunition
- 100 60mm Mortar Rounds
- 200 .50 Caliber Machine Gun Ammunition

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Equipment and Materiel Captured and/or Destroyed:

12 Packs with Uniforms  
 11 Gas Masks  
 1 Chinese Compass  
 Miscellaneous Medical Equipment  
 Miscellaneous Web Gear

17 September - The Second Infantry Battalion swept contact area of the previous nights contact. At 1000H the remainder of the Second Infantry Battalion was helilifted into contact area at XT 485384. At 1500H the Third Infantry Battalion was committed to a sweep operation from XT 510373. Night position for the Third Infantry Battalion was XT 510373 and the Second Infantry Battalion was XT 485384. There was negative contact.

18 September - At 1000H the Second Infantry Battalion moved from XT 485384 to XT 478380 to XT 475390 to XT 466383. At 1200H the Second Infantry Battalion had light contact at XS 466383. At 1432H the Assistant Advisor, Second Infantry Battalion was wounded (Captain J. G. BURKE, USMC), previously inserted into the Second Battalion at 171700H. At 1535H the Assistant Advisor was medevaced by Task Force B command and control helicopter. Task Force B Assistant Advisor (CWO J. W. PRATTE) was inserted as Assistant Advisor, Second Infantry Battalion. Contact lasted until 2235H. The Third Infantry Battalion moved from XT 510373 to XT 478350 with negative contact.

<u>VNMC</u>	<u>US</u>	<u>VC/NVA</u>
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>
3	10	1
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WCC</u>	<u>VCS</u>
6	0	0

Weapons Captured:

1 Rifle, Assault, Soviet, 7.62mm, AK-47  
 1 Anti-tank Grenade Launcher, Soviet, RPG-2 (B-40)

Ammunition Captured:

15 Rounds, 60mm Mortar  
 25 Rounds, B-40  
 300 Rounds, 7.64mm  
 5 Hand Grenades  
 3 Land Mines

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19 September - The Second Infantry Battalion was in light contact throughout the night of 19 September and received an attack from an estimated Viet Cong platoon at XT 466383. The Second Infantry Battalion commenced a sweep towards Task Force B base camp at XT 437347 at 0700H. Four additional Viet Cong bodies were discovered during sweep. At 1100H the Second Infantry Battalion closed at XT 437354 with negative contact. The Second Infantry Battalion was assigned the mission of Task Force B reserve. The Third Infantry Battalion moved from XT 478350 to XT 480363. During their sweep the Third Infantry Battalion received one wounded from sniper fire.

VNMC	VC/NVA
KIA	KIA
WIA	WIA
0	1
4	4
VCC	VCS
0	0

**Weapons Captured:**

2 Light Machine Guns

1 Compass

20 September - At 0800H the Third Infantry Battalion returned to Task Force B base camp with negative results. All task force elements reverted to reserve and standby status.

**12. Advisor Analysis:**

a. **Communications:** Generally from the advisor end of Task Force B, communications were unsatisfactory. The Task Force Advisory Team is equipped only with PRC-25's, as a result task force could not communicate with its operational battalions except when operating from a command and control helicopter above the operational area. During the morning of 17 September when the Second Infantry Battalion was in heavy contact, radio communication was lost for almost one hour at a critical time. It became necessary during most of the operations to utilize an airborne aerial observer for purposes of radio relay, which was cumbersome and far from satisfactory.

b. **Planning and Coordination:** Upon arriving in the operational area on 10 September Task Force B was OPCON to the ARVN 25th Division. Shortly after arriving, efforts were made by the Senior Advisor, Task Force B to coordinate with the advance command post of the ARVN 25th Division. Initial contact with the ARVN 25th Division Senior Advisor revealed that Task Force B was not OPCON to the 25th Division, but in fact OPCON to the ARVN Airborne Division, who was moving into the area. No word was passed to the Vietnamese concerning the change in OPCON. For one day and a half the advisors were reporting to the ARVN Airborne Division and the Vietnamese to the ARVN 25th Division. Once this situation was cleared up, late afternoon on the 11th, planning and coordination with the Airborne Division was considered excellent.

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c. Operations: Two significant tactics, which are worthy of mention, were utilized throughout this operation. They were: the night attack (16 September) and the use of eagle flights. Although the planning for the night attack on the 16th began late, 1700H on the 15th, and had negative results, it was refreshing to see this rarely used tactic utilized.

It is, however, felt by this officer that several mistakes were made in the conduct of this night attack, they are: (1) Planning was begun too late (1700 on the 15th) for an attack planned for 0200 on the 16th. The actual operation order was not received by the three battalions involved until 2300H on the 15th. (2) The objectives were too far apart and not clearly defined. The entire attack covered some 10 grid squares. (3) Two of the three battalions, the Second Infantry Battalion, VNMC and the Sixth Airborne Battalion, had just come off a two day extended operation with heavy enemy contact. It is felt by this officer that units utilized in a night or dawn attack must be rested.

The use of eagle flights was also significant, and resulted in contact both times they were used. Actually each eagle flight, which was composed of 80 Marines, came closer to being a combat assault than a true eagle flight. One combat assault helicopter company consisting of ten UH1D, four gunships, and a command and control helicopter, was assigned to the participating battalion. Coordination and planning was conducted between the assault helicopter unit command, the battalion senior advisor and his Vietnamese counterpart. Working as a closely knitted team, eagle flights were inserted into various landing zones to be extracted if contact was not made. Eagle flights were standing by on the ground in case a rapid reserve force was needed. This tactic is extremely effective if employed on a timely basis, based on good intelligence.

d. Advisory Personnel. This operation pointed out the obvious need for an increase in advisory personnel at task force and battalion level. There were times during this operation, i.e., 17 September when only one advisor was present in the Second and Third Infantry Battalions. These vacancies were filled by staff advisors from the Marine Brigade Headquarters who had little or no experience. The present Table of Organization giving each Vietnamese Marine infantry battalion only two advisors allows no flexibility for sickness, wounded, killed, or rotation of advisor personnel for rest. The same is true of the Marine Task Force Advisory Team, which consists of two officers and an artillery advisor.

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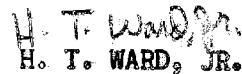
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13. Recommendations:

- a. That more night operations be conducted by Vietnamese units, utilizing proper planning and coordination procedures.
- b. That the eagle flight concept be further developed and utilized in future operations. This technique takes advantage of the capabilities of the airmobile concept and catches the enemy in a position when he is least likely to expect an attack.
- c. That an increase in communications equipment at task force level be made to include: one PRC-46 (vehicle mounted) and one AN/GRC-106 (vehicle mounted).
- d. That the advisory team at task force level be increased to include: Senior Advisor (Major or LtCol), two Assistant Advisors (Captain, Lieutenant) and two operations NCOs. That the infantry battalion advisory team be increased to include two officers and two enlisted. All ARVN, Airborne and Ranger Advisory Teams, already operate with that Table of Organization.

  
H. T. WARD, JR.  
H. T. WARD, JR.**CONFIDENTIAL**  
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13 Nov 1968

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on Captain M. J. MC GOWAN's After Action report of 2 Oct 1968

From: Senior Marine Advisor, Naval Advisory Group, MACV  
 To: Commander, U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (Attn: MACJ 343)  
 Via: Chief, Naval Advisory Group, MACV  
 Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS: MACJ 3-32) (K-1)

1. Forwarded, concurring in the advisors analysis contained in paragraph 15 of the basic report. It is noted that, since the performance of the Fifth Battalion as reported herein, Vietnamese Marine Battalions have assumed an increasing operational role with the MRF. At present one battalion is operating in close coordination and cooperation with the Second Brigade, U. S. Ninth Infantry Division and another with Mobile Riverine Group BRAVO.

2. It is recommended that the Vietnamese Joint General Staff and the Commanding General, IV Corps Tactical Zone be encouraged to continue the present trend of employing the Vietnamese Marine Corps in a Riverine role.

*J. T. Breckinridge*  
 J. T. BRECKINRIDGE  
 Acting

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OFFICE OF THE SENIOR MARINE ADVISOR  
 Naval Advisory Group, Box #9  
 FPO San Francisco 96626

MJMs:fmcg  
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 2 Oct 1968

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From: Captain Michael J. McGOWAN 085382/0302, U. S. Marine Corps  
 To: Commander U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (Attn: MACJ 343)  
 Via: (1) Senior Marine Advisor, Naval Advisory Group, MACV  
 (2) Chief, Naval Advisory Group, MACV  
 Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS: MACJ 3-32) (K-1)  
 Ref: (a) MACV Directive 335-8  
 (b) Map, Vietnam: 1:50,000; Series L7014, Sheets 6028I, 6028II,  
 6028III, 6028IV, 6128IV, 6129II  
 Encl: (1) Overlays (a) through (f)  
 (2) OPORD 62-68 (U), Headquarters, U. S. Mobile Riverine Force  
 (3) FragO 3 to OPORD 62-68 (U), Headquarters, U. S. Mobile Riverine  
 Force  
 (4) FragO 5 to OPORD 62-68 (U), Headquarters, U. S. Mobile Riverine  
 Force

1. Name of Operation: TRUONG CONG TINH. Fifth Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps conduct waterborne/hiborne reconnaissance in force/search operations in close cooperation/coordination with the U. S. Mobile Riverine Force

2. Dates of Operation: 300100H July to 070140H August 1968

3. Location: KIEN LONG, KIEN HUNG, DUC LONG Districts, CHUONG THIEN Province

4. Control Headquarters: U. S. Mobile Riverine Force (TG 117.1)

5. Reporting Officer: Captain Michael J. McGOWAN, USMC

a. Advisors Participating:

Captain M. J. McGOWAN, USMC  
 Captain T. C. TAYLOR, USMC  
 Captain T. B. BAGLEY, Jr. USMC

1stLt W. L. FOX, USMC

Senior Advisor, Fifth Battalion  
 Asst Advisor, Fifth Battalion  
 Liaison Officer, U. S. Mobile  
 Riverine Force  
 Liaison Officer, 2nd Brigade,  
 9th U. S. Infantry Division

b. Advisory Effort in Planning and Execution:

The extent of the advisory effort by the Senior U. S. Advisor was extensive due to the combined nature of the operation. During the planning phase, much advice on such matters as supply and resupply (basic load versus amount and methods of resupply) was offered and accepted

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GROUP-4  
 DOWNGRADED AT 3-YEAR INTERVALS  
 DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS

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by both the Senior U.S. and Senior VNMC Commanders. This aspect of planning required a larger advisory and liaison effort by the Senior Advisor than is usually the case due to the unusual logistic requirements of the Vietnamese Marine Corps in some areas (e.g. 57mm recoilless rifle ammunition, PRC-10 batteries and rice).

Also, during the planning phase the Senior Advisor was able to advise on combat loading of naval assets.

During the execution phase the Senior Advisor, again due to the combined nature of the operation was "in the know" many times before his counterpart and in this way was often able to advise before a decision was made. However, even though the Senior Advisor was often the translator/liaison between U.S. and VNMC forces, all hands were totally aware that the battalion commander was in fact in command and treated him accordingly at all times.

In short, this type of operation really affords the U.S. Advisor the opportunity to completely justify his existence, both as the "handle" on U.S. supporting assets and in his liaison/advisory role.

**6. Task Organization:**

HHC, 2d Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division  
 Platoon - 4/47 Infantry  
 Air Cavalry Troop  
 1 AHC (Spt)  
 2 LHFT's  
 1 Utility Craft

Task Group 117.1

Fifth Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps

4/47th Infantry (-)  
 Det 15th Engineers

3/60th Infantry (-)  
 Det 15th Engineers

Batteries B and D, 1/84th Artillery

**7. Supporting Forces:**

a. Supporting forces included USAF air, USA artillery, LHFT's, U. S. Naval Forces and USA helicopters.

b. Air strikes were both pre-planned and on call. Pre-planned air strikes were well planned and on call air strikes were timely, well executed and effective.

c. USA artillery, although eager to support, was hampered by slow clearance procedures. Toward the end of the operation this had improved considerably, due to command attention by Commanding Officer, Second Brigade 9th U.S. Infantry Division and Commanding Officer, 3/34th Artillery.

d. If LHFT's were not on station already, getting them proved to be quite a problem and on one occasion resulted in a loss of a large number of targets of opportunity (see paragraph 11(c)).

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Again, command attention at the highest level attempted to preclude future occurrences.

e. Support received initially from naval forces (CTU 117.1.3) was outstanding. They truly went out of their way to support the Vietnamese Marines. Anything the Fifth Battalion desired, CTU 117.1.3 executed precisely (see paragraph 11(c)).

Support received from CTU 117.1.4 left much to be desired. Response was slow and untimely.

f. USA helicopters, Command and Communication Ships, in particular, were poorly coordinated. It appeared that communication was complex and requests were often delayed. Again, the command echelon was aware of the problem and attempted to alleviate it.

**8. Intelligence:**

a. See Enclosure (2), Annex A. The area of operation was suspected to be a large supply cache area as well as containing several Viet Cong infantry battalions and one Viet Cong anti-aircraft battalion. The Fifth Battalion captured numerous documents (approximately 226 kilograms) which were immediately turned over to the Second Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division. Any identification of units will have to be solicited from that command.

b. The Fifth Battalion encountered approximately 200 Viet Cong, killed 87 and captured 14.

c. See paragraph 11 and 12, Enclosure (1), Overlay (a) through (f) for further information on terrain, actual number of enemy encountered and types of weapons/equipment captured or destroyed.

d. Paragraph 1 of Enclosures (3) and (4) provides additional intelligence information.

**9. Mission:** The Fifth Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps in close cooperation/coordination with the U.S. Mobile Riverine Force, conducted waterborne/heliborne reconnaissance in force in KIEN HUNG, DUC LONG Districts of CHUONG THIEN Province to locate, fix and destroy enemy forces and local enemy caches in zone.

**10. Concept of Operation:**

a. See Enclosure (2), Annex H for the first phase of the operation.

b. See Enclosure (2) for the second phase of the operation.

c. See Enclosure (3) for the third phase of the operation.

d. For further detail, see paragraph 11 in conjunction with Enclosure (1), (Overlays (a) through (f)).

**11. Execution:**

a. On 28 July 1968, the Commanding Officer of the Fifth Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps and the reporting officer were summoned to a meeting with the Commanding Officer, Second Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division at IV Corps Headquarters at CAN THO. The Fifth Battalion was assigned as one of three airmobile/watermobile battalions whose primary mission was to locate and destroy Viet Cong and to locate enemy caches.

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The two U.S. battalions, 3/60th and 4/47th, were operating with less than 500 men each. The Fifth Battalion brought 780 Marines, 134 of which were Headquarters personnel. All assets for the operation were U.S. and the Fifth Battalion received two Artillery Forward Observer Teams, one Artillery Liaison Officer and one Liaison Officer from Second Brigade, U.S. 9th Infantry Division.

The plan called for each battalion to conduct operations for two days and rest for one day and, further, each battalion was to conduct an equal amount of watermobile/airmobile operations.

b. On 29 July 1968, a briefing was held at 1500H aboard the USS BENEWAH. The Fifth Battalion Commander was introduced to all and was placed on an equal basis with other commanders. The Fifth Battalion's logistical requirements were solidified at this time. Pickup time for the Fifth Battalion was established as 300130H at XS 825057 on the north bank of the CAN THO River just west of the bridge. The Fifth Battalion was to make a waterborne movement to the area of operation and was not to return isolated small arms fire enroute since there were Regional and Popular Forces on both sides of the route of movement. The Fifth Battalion was first in the waterborne column and had artillery support all along the route and helicopter gunship support to VI THANH.

The Fifth Battalion was to land a company on four beaches. Each company was to sweep along one of the banks of the two rivers (see Enclosure (1) (a)).

c. The Fifth Battalion departed CAI RANG at 300230H July 1968. L-Hour was scheduled for 0900H. The Fifth Battalion Commander desired an airstrike on the four beaches followed by an artillery preparation, followed by integral Naval fires before the Marines landed. The time frame was pushed back due to five disabled boats enroute which had to be towed. The requested air strike took place from 0940H to 0955H. Artillery preparation from 1000H to 1015H. Naval fires from 1015H to 1025H. The Marines landed at 1030H.

The Navy destroy two sampans at WR 376695. At 1035H, the Fifth Battalion detonated a booby trap at WR 377700. At 1330H the Fifth Battalion uncovered 200 kilograms of rice and 5 pairs of brown pajamas in a cave at WR 382706. In the immediate area 1000 kilograms of unhusked rice was uncovered. The unhusked rice was burned and the processed rice retained for friendly use. Three Viet Cong were flushed from this location; however, they managed to escape.

At 1500H, the battalion commander and this officer were airborne in a C&C helicopter when the Battalion Commander spotted signs of Viet Cong activity at WR 398703 (see Enclosure (1)(b)).

At approximately the same time, the Third Company, which had been advancing along the northern bank of the northernmost river, established contact with approximately a squad-sized Viet Cong unit. The Artillery Forward Observer Team with the Third Company experienced communication difficulties at this time so the Battalion Commander requested that the remainder of the Navy boats (the boats had been advancing up the two rivers abreast of the companies they had carried) move from the southern to the northern river in order to take the enemy under fire. The northern bank of the river had about 75 yards of napalm, followed by a 300 meter clearing inland, bounded on the north by dense mangrove/jungle.

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The enemy was transporting 5 sampans of weapons and equipment from east to west along a small stream in the napalm and had an estimated company sized escort (approximately 100-150 men). The Third Company advancing to the east made contact with the enemy security force, causing the remainder of the enemy to break across the open area toward the treeline to the north carrying armloads of gear.

By this time the Navy gunboats had moved into position. The Battalion Commander had the helicopter hover for 30 seconds over the largest cluster of enemy in the clearing and smoke was dropped to mark their position. Thus, the Navy was able to identify the target by the location of the helicopter hovering and was able to keep on target for several minutes due to the smoke. As major shifts were required, the hovering/smoke process was repeated and the Navy would fire again.

After the enemy had broken into small units, shifts on fleeing targets of opportunity were effected from the helicopter. The Navy fired their 81mm mortars and their other ordnance. Other ordnance included M-79, .30 caliber and .50 caliber machine guns and 20mm and 40mm HE rounds.

The Navy fired for almost an hour. The reason for this was the slow response of the requested gunships. After assurance from four different sources that helicopter gunships had left their position and would arrive momentarily, the Brigade Commander himself got into the act and was extremely displeased with the slow response. One hour after the initial request, a light helicopter fire team arrived on station and was told to take under fire the tree line from west to east as the enemy force had fled into this dense growth. When their ordnance was expended, a second light helicopter fire team arrived on station and was instructed to fire into the same area from west to east but deeper into the growth to the north.

While this activity was taking place, the Battalion Commander directed the Fourth Company to move via boats across the river and land at the location of the large-size enemy unit (WR 397704).

At approximately 1700H, the second LHFT expended its ordnance and the Third Company advanced from the west to east while the Fourth Company advanced to the north. Two men from the Third Company were wounded and were medevaced.

Fifth Battalion elements assessed the following results as a result of the battle:

47	Viet Cong KIA (BC)
39	Carbines w/bayonets, 7.62mm, SKS, CHICOM Type 56
7	Rifle Stocks
9	Carbines, Soviet, 7.62mm, CHICOM Type 53
5	Mausers, Czech, 7.62mm
7	Carbines, U.S., .30 Caliber
1	Pack Howitzer, 75mm, U.S., 1942
2	Sub-machine Guns, CHICOM, 7.62mm, Type 50
3	Machine Guns, CHICOM, 7.62mm, Type 56
1	Light Machine Gun, Czech, 7.92mm, Type 26
2	Signal Pistols, CHICOM, 26mm
1	Mortar, Soviet, 120mm, Model MP938
3	Binoculars (field glasses)
4	Mortar Sights (120mm)

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50	Kilograms of uniforms
2	Field Telephones, Soviet, CHICOM Model 252B
100	Rounds, 81mm Mortar
220	Hand Grenades, CHICOM, Fragmentation
12,500	Rounds, 7.62 ammunition
200	Kilograms of documents
67	Shovels
45	Kilograms of TNT
275	Rounds, 75mm ammunition
48	Rounds, 82mm Mortar
2	Mines, Claymore (10 Kilograms)
5	Mines, Claymore (5 Kilograms)
2000	Feet, Communication Wire
1	Field Telephone, U.S., EEE
200	Kilograms of assorted tools, to include saws, drills, hammers, axes, screwdrivers, gunners quadrants, etc.
100	Assorted Magazines for Rifles
6	Large green CHICOM Anti-tank Mines
6	Smaller green CHICOM Anti-tank Mines

The Battalion Commander felt that since the Viet Cong had fled to the north, there was no requirement to continue the advance to the east. He therefore changed the scheme of maneuver and planned to advance the next morning in a northerly direction (see enclosure (1)(c)). The battalion set in a night defensive position at WR 397704. At 302100H July a Viet Cong squad probed the night position resulting in one Viet Cong killed and capture of one carbine, Soviet, 7.62mm, CHICOM Type 53.

d. At 310930H July seven Viet Cong bodies were found by advancing Marines at WR 403714 which were killed by the previous day's supporting arms fire. Five more bodies were found at WR 403716 at 1000H also due to the previous day's supporting arms fire.

At 1130H eleven Viet Cong were killed in a fire fight with the First Company at WR 408732. Six Czech Mausers, 7.62mm and 1 Soviet 12.7mm Heavy Machine Gun, CHICOM Type 54 were captured.

At 1300H, two Viet Cong suspects were detained at WR 402718. At 1600H another Viet Cong suspect was detained at WR 406732. At 1800H another Viet Cong suspect was detained at WR 397736. At 1830H 25 kilograms of documents were uncovered at WR 396736. The battalion established a night defensive position at WR 396736.

The Battalion Commander requested permission to operate an extra day out of his assigned area of operation (see enclosure (1)(d)). His request was approved.

e. The battalion jumped off at 010700H August outside the old area of operation. No enemy were encountered as the battalion advanced to WR 432768 and proceeded via boat to a base camp at WR 520816.

f. 2-3 August 1968 - These two days were spent in preparation for Phase III.

g. On 040420H August, the Fifth Battalion proceeded to a pick-up zone in vicinity of WR 2077 and arrived at 0900H. Lift commenced at 1300H and all units landed at 1400H at WR 095705. Three companies advanced and one company remained aboard the boats as reserve (see enclosure (1)(e)).

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At 1430H, one bunker was destroyed at WR 091711. At 1515H three Viet Cong were killed at WR 093712; one Viet Cong was captured and three bunkers were destroyed. Individual weapons captured were:

- 1 Carbine, U.S., .30 Caliber
- 1 Carbine, 7.62mm, CHICOM, SKS, Type 56
- 15 Hand Grenades, CHICOM, Fragmentation
- 1 Kilogram of documents

The Fifth Battalion moved to WR 160810 and established a night position. The reserve company and Headquarters Company landed ashore at 1420H. At 1500H, one Viet Cong suspect was captured at WR 163793.

At 1530H, the Fifth Battalion killed two Viet Cong at WR 096713 and had one Marine killed. Further, the Company with which the Assistant Battalion Advisor was operating came under sporadic to intense small arms sniper fire from the north, west and south. A LHFT was requested and quickly silenced this fire enabling the company to resume its advance with no casualties.

At 1745H, seven Viet Cong were killed at WR 092717 in a bunker complex consisting of 3 large bunkers and 27 small one-two man bunkers. One AN/PRC-9 radio (U.S.) was captured along with some unknown type jammer or booster. An antenna was rigged in a large tree. The S-2 of 2nd Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division believes this complex to be the Viet Cong Region III Headquarters.

At 1800H, three Viet Cong suspects, one man and two women, were detained in a cave at WR 093717.

At 1930H, two Viet Cong were killed at WR 090717 and one Carbine, Soviet, CHICOM, Type 53, 7.62mm was captured.

At 2000H, one Viet Cong was killed at WR 088715 and one Carbine, Soviet, CHICOM Type 53, 7.62mm was captured.

h. On 5 August 1968, the Fifth Battalion continued its advance with three rifle companies at 0700H and advanced to WR 075725. The companies were extracted at 1500H and joined the remainder of the battalion at WR 160810 in a night defensive position.

i. On 060700 August, the Fifth Battalion backloaded aboard boats. The battalion landed at WR 191768 and WR 197765 at 0930H. The Brigade Commander suggested that the Fifth Battalion Commander put one or two companies ashore; however, the Battalion Commander put all four rifle companies ashore (see enclosure (1)(f)).

At 1030H, one Viet Cong was killed and one Carbine, Soviet, 7.62mm, CHICOM Type 53 was captured at WR 187766.

At 1040H, at WR 187766, one Viet Cong hospital was uncovered consisting of four buildings:

- 1 Kitchen - 25 feet by 10 feet
- 1 Stereroom - 25 feet by 10 feet
- 2 Wards - 50 feet by 10 feet

The hospital had approximately a 75 bed capacity. Two hundred kilograms of assorted medicines were captured including many intravenous

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vitamin injections (B and C), anti-malaria pills and battle dressings.

At 1050H, a Viet Cong nurse was captured at WR 187766. At 1145H in the same general vicinity, one sampan was captured with 10 kilograms of medicine. Further, at 1145H, two Viet Cong suspects (one man and one woman) were detained at WR 187767 with a quantity of medicine. Several Viet Cong were observed fleeing to the west. Helicopters were utilized to fire on the Viet Cong force with a negative assessment.

One Viet Cong was captured at WR 197767 at 1200H. The woman captured earlier led the Marines to a building at WR 192767 where a Viet Cong was captured.

The Fifth Battalion occupied blocking positions until 1700H, at which time the battalion was backloaded aboard boats and departed for CAN THO with gunship support to VI THANH.

The lead boats in the column received small arms fire at 2000H at WR 404739. The Navy suppressed the enemy fire with .30 and .50 caliber machine guns.

1. On 070100 August, the rear of the Fifth Battalion column was struck with small arms and recoilless rifle fire at WS 750721. The Navy suppressed the enemy fire with their organic weapons. One boat suffered 2 recoilless rifle hits and one Navy man was wounded.

At 0120H, the rear of the Fifth Battalion column was hit again with small arms and recoilless rifle at WS 815044. Again, fire was suppressed by Navy organic weapons.

At 0140H, the Fifth Battalion arrived at CAI RANG where it established a command post.

**12. Results:**

a. Casualties:

<u>VNMC</u>		<u>VC/NVA</u>		
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>VCC</u>	<u>VCS</u>
1	2	87	14	10

b. Weapons Captured:

- 1 75mm Pack Howitzer, U.S. 1942
- 1 120mm Mortar, Soviet, Model M1938
- 1 Heavy Machine Gun, Soviet, 12.7mm, CHICOM Type 54
- 1 Sub-machine, Soviet, 7.62mm, AK-47, CHICOM Type 56
- 1 Light Machine Gun, Czech, 7.92mm, CHICOM Type 26
- 2 Sub-machine Guns, CHICOM, 7.62mm, Type 50
- 3 Machine Guns, CHICOM, 7.62mm, Type 56
- 40 Carbines w/bayonets, SKS, 7.62mm, CHICOM Type 56
- 13 Carbines, Soviet, 7.62mm, CHICOM Type 53
- 11 Mauser, Czech, 7.62mm
- 8 Carbines, U.S., .30 Caliber
- 2 Pistols, Signal, CHICOM, 26mm

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c. Materiel and Equipment Captured:

4 Rifle Stocks  
 3 Binoculars (field glasses)  
 4 Mortar Sights, 120mm  
 55 Kilograms of uniforms  
 2 Field Telephones, Soviet, CHICOM Model 252B  
 1 AN/GRC-9 Radio, U.S.  
 1 Radio booster or jammer (Unknown)  
 1 Field Telephone, U.S., EEE  
 2000 Feet, Communications Wire  
 12,500 Rounds, 7.62 ammunition  
 226 Kilograms of documents  
 210 Kilograms of medicine  
 200 Kilograms of sacked rice  
 1000 Kilograms of unhusked rice  
 67 Shovels  
 275 Rounds, 75mm Ammunition (Cased)  
 2 Mines, Claymore, 10 kilograms  
 5 Mines, Claymore, 5 kilograms  
 200 Kilograms of assorted tools (to include saws, drills, hammers, axes, screwdrivers, gunners quadrants, etc.)  
 100 Assorted Magazines for rifles  
 6 Anti-tank Mines, CHICOM, Large Green  
 6 Anti-tank Mines, CHICOM, Small Green

d. Materiel and Equipment Destroyed:

100 Rounds, 81mm Mortar (Uncased)  
 245 Hand Grenades, CHICOM, Fragmentation (Uncased)  
 182 Hand Grenades, U.S., M-26, Fragmentation  
 45 Kilograms of TNT  
 48 Rounds, 82mm Mortar (Uncased)

## e. No friendly personnel or equipment were lost to the enemy.

f. The areas of an air strike on 1 August were searched by the Fifth Battalion, VNMC and Third Battalion, 60th Infantry as directed by Enclosure(3) and depicted on Enclosure (1)(e). These strikes appeared to inflict limited, if any, damage upon the enemy. A Bomb Damage Assessment Form was submitted by the reporting officer to the Commanding Officer, Second Brigade, 9th U.S. Infantry Division.

13. Administrative Matters:

a. Supply. The Second Brigade, 9th Infantry Division took on a logistical tail which an entire division would have had difficulty in meeting. The Fifth Battalion, VNMC, carried all requirements for three days of combat so initial resupply was not a problem. All resupply supplies did not arrive in the objective area until after the third day. The Army did work extremely hard to meet the peculiar needs of the Fifth Battalion, VNMC.

b. Treatment, evacuation and hospitalization of two wounded, one dead and one snakebite victim of the Fifth Battalion was excellent.

c. Transportation. The only problem the Fifth Battalion encountered in this regard was the untimely honoring of Command and Communication ships and helicopters to transport prisoners back to Brigade. This was

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due to the complicated communication system.

d. Communications. Communication was extremely complicated due to the existence of a Brigade Forward Command Post and a Brigade Rear Command Post. Often, a SITREP would be submitted to Brigade Forward only to have Brigade Rear later request submission of the same SITREP.

15. Advisor Analysis:

a. This officer highly recommends this type of employment for elements of the VNMC. If not always timely, assets are available and at the disposal of the VNMC commander. The VNMC commander is completely unrestricted within his assigned area of operation and enjoys complete tactical freedom.

b. In conjunction with paragraph 15(a) the VNMC Commander is treated as an equal and given every opportunity to demonstrate what he and his unit are capable of doing.

c. The highly successful performance of the Fifth Battalion, VNMC both in December 1967 and on this operation indicates the effectiveness of this type of employment.

d. The coordination and cooperation between the Second Brigade and the Fifth Battalion was nothing short of outstanding. Aside from problems associated with asset response, the two units operated as an extremely effective team.

e. Civic Action and Psychological Warfare activities appeared to be adequate. The Fifth Battalion witnessed several leaflet drops and aerial broadcasts in its areas of operation.

f. U. S. Navy personnel and the Vietnamese Marines got along famously. From Commanders to lower enlisted, mutual respect and friendship flourished to the point of eating each other's food and conducting informal language classes. It was most gratifying.

e. In summary, this officer again highly recommends future employments of this type for units of the Vietnamese Marine Corps. All involved seem to highly enjoy working together and the results speak for themselves.

*Michael J. McGowan*  
MICHAEL J. McGOWAN

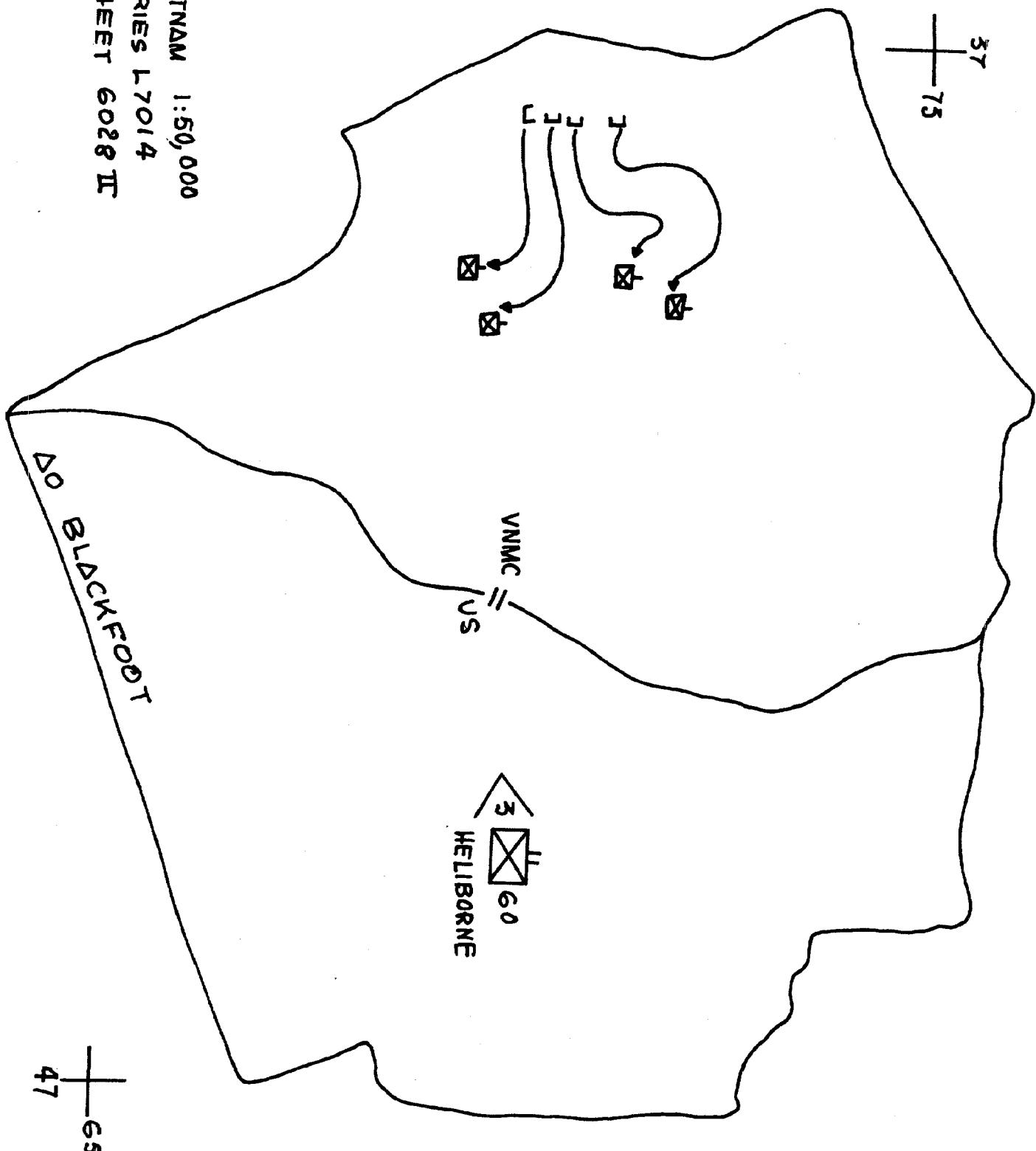
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MAP: VIETNAM 1:50,000

SERIES L7014

SHEET 6028 II



ENCLOSURE (1) (A)

37  
74

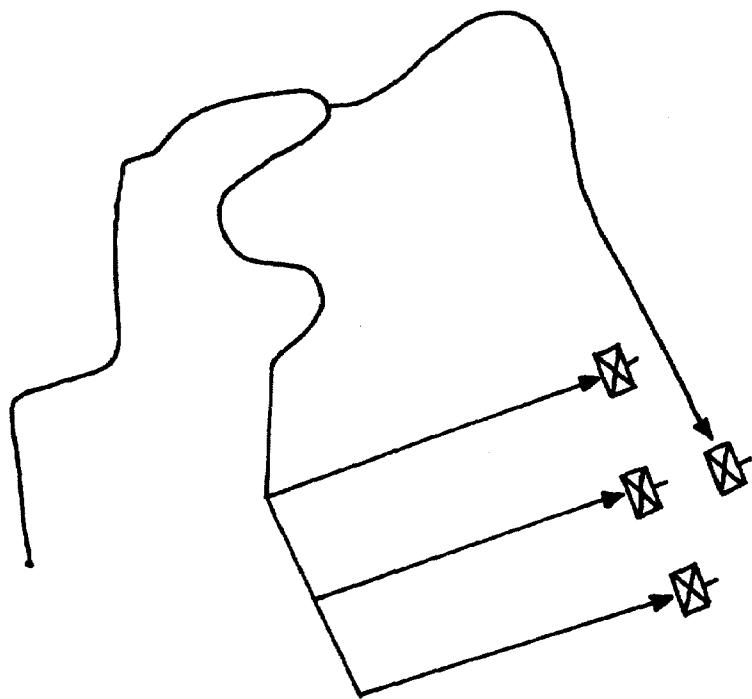
3RD CO. MADE  
CONTACT HERE  
X  
ENEMY SPOTTED  
X HERE  
4TH COMPANY  
LANDED HERE  
NAVY GUNBOAT  
MOVED

MAP: VIETNAM, 1:50,000  
SERIES L7014 SHEET 6028 II

45  
67

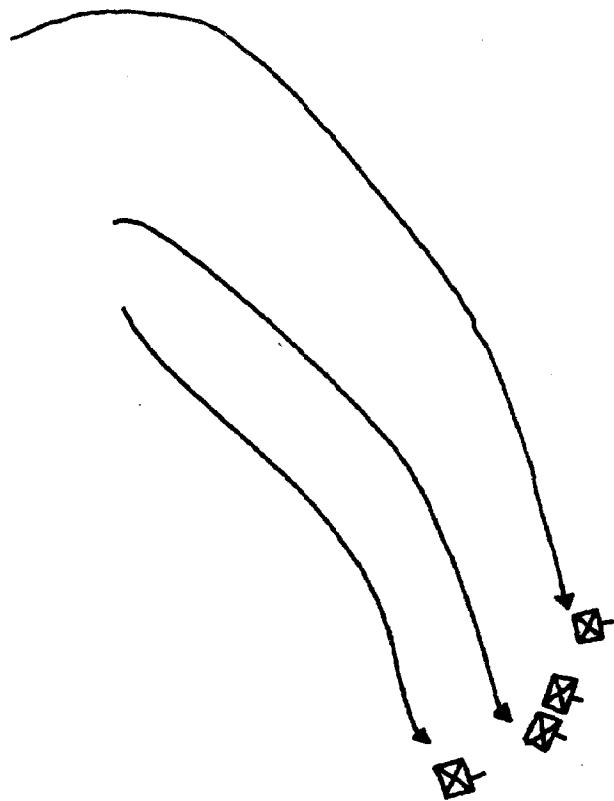
ENCLOSURE (1) (B)

MAP: VIETNAM, 1:50,000  
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SHEET 6028 II



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67

ENCLOSURE (1) (C)

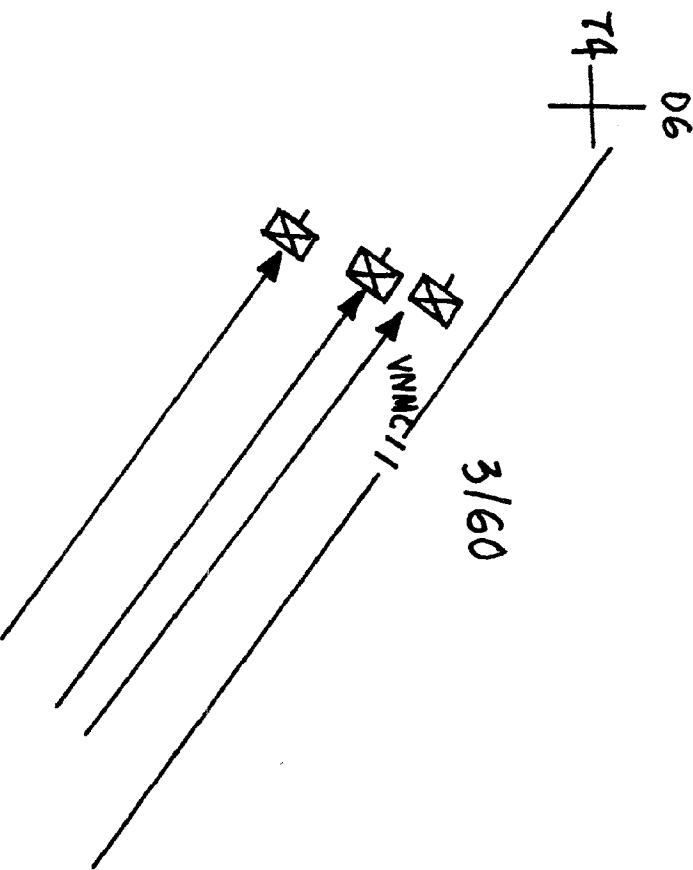
37  
75

MAP : VIETNAM , 1:50,000  
SERIES L7014 , SHEET 6028 II

70  
46

ENCLOSURE (1) (D)

MAP: VIETNAM, 1:50,000  
SERIES L7014 SHEET 6028 III



68  
14

ENCLOSURE (1) (E)

DECLASSIFIED

80  
+ 15  
MIGHT DEFENSE

MAP : VIETNAM 1: 50,000  
SERIES L7014 / SHEET 6028 III

72

ENCLOSURE (1) (F)

DECLASSIFIED

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17 Jun 1968

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on Captain BONSPER's After Action Report dated 29 May 68

From: Senior Marine Advisor, Marine Advisory Unit, Naval Advisory Group, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

To: Commander, U. S. Naval Forces, Vietnam

Subj: Combat Operation After Action Report

1. Forwarded. The contents of both the report and reference (b) will be combined to create a tentative guide to riverine operations for use by the Vietnamese Marine Corps.

2. The contents of paragraph 15.b as related to slow response to intelligence and paragraph 15.d(1) concerning the statistical aspects of this conflict are two areas that have repeatedly cropped up in my short experience in the Republic of Vietnam. Rapid exploitation of intelligence will be a matter of continuous emphasis within the Marine Advisory Unit.

3. I concur whole heartedly with recommendation 16.a and feel that the future of the Vietnamese Marine Corps, in good measure, lies in its ability to operate in a riverine environment. To date, two Vietnamese Marine Infantry Battalions have acquired this experience. The remaining four should rotate as rapidly as possible to the Mobile Riverine Force thereby giving this experience to all. The final objective of course, is to marry the Vietnamese Marine Corps with the Vietnamese Navy in this type of operation.

4. Personal conversations with several officers having experience in mobile riverine operations indicate that Captain BONSPER's recommendations as contained in paragraphs 16.f and 16.g are quite valid. Their adoption would greatly enhance the tactical capabilities of the Mobile Riverine Force and, it appears that the availability of an airmobile force is absolutely necessary to meaningful riverine operations.

J. T. BRECKINRIDGE  
Acting

Distribution: "A"

NAVFORV (2)

NAVFORV Historian (Code 03)

Each Participating Advisor

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OFFICE OF THE SENIOR MARINE ADVISOR  
 Naval Advisory Group, Box #9  
 FPO San Francisco 96626

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 29 May 1968

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From: Captain Donald E. BONSPER, 091908/0302, USMC  
 To: Commander, U. S. Naval Forces, Vietnam  
 Via: Senior Marine Advisor, Marine Advisory Unit,  
 Naval Advisory Group, MACV  
 Subj: Combat Operation After Action Report  
 Ref: (a) SMA Memo of 16 May 1967  
 (b) After Action Report of Major P. L. CARLSON dtd 12Feb68

Encl: (1) Operation Overlay, 20 April (OP order 37-68)  
 (2) Operation Overlay, 21 April (OP order 38-68)  
 (3) Operation Overlay, 23-24 April (OP order 39-68)  
 (4) Operation Overlay, 27 April (OP order 41-68)  
 (5) Operation Overlay, 28-29 April (Frag OP order 41-68)  
 (6) Operation Overlay, 2-4 May (OP order 42-68)  
 (7) Operation Overlay, 7 May (OP order 43-68)  
 (8) Operation Overlay, 8 May (Frag OP order 43-68)

- 1. Name of Operation: TRUONG CONG DINH
- 2. Date of Operation: 17 April through 9 May 1968
- 3. Location: DINH TUONG, KIEN HOA, and VINH LONG Province, IV Corps  
Tactical Zone
- 4. Control Headquarters: Mobile Riverine Force TF117/2nd Bde, 9th Inf  
Div, VNMC
- 5. Reporting Officer: Captain Donald E. BONSPER, USMC, Senior Advisor,  
Second Infantry Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps

Advisors Participating:

Captain Donald E. BONSPER, USMC

Senior Advisor, Second  
Battalion, VNMC

1stLt Richard P. PERRY, USMC

Liaison Officer

1stLt Carlton P. WHITE, USMC

Assistant Advisor, Second  
Battalion, VNMC

GROUP-4  
 DOWNGRADED AT 3-YEAR INTERVALS  
 DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS

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34806. Task Organization:TF 117

TF 117.1

TF 117.2

2nd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division

3-47 Infantry

4-47 Infantry

Second Infantry Battalion, Vietnamese Marine CorpsTF Six Gun

3-34th Artillery

7. Supporting Forces:a. Artillery

3-34th Artillery Battalion

AirUSAF (O-1E)(B-52 and P-37 and attack aircraft)  
U. S. Army (UH-1D)(H-23)Naval

Mobile Riverine Force

b. General: This report concurs with reference (b) with the following noted exceptions.c. Artillery Support.

(1) Artillery support was always timely and accurate. The confidence of the Battalion Commander increased to where he maneuvered his battalion within one hundred meters of friendly artillery. Second Battalion did not experience short rounds during the deployment thus helping to cement the confidence of the battalion in artillery support.

(2) The battalion planned its night defensive fires immediately upon establishing its night position. Harrassing and interdiction fire

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requests were submitted along with defensive concentrations. The battalion commander preferred not to fire the defensive concentration with smoke unless he was unsure of his position. Usually the battalion commander and the senior advisor were required to attend a briefing each afternoon while operating. Therefore while airborne enroute to the meeting, the battalion commander was able to accurately fix his position thus eliminating this need to fire the smoke rounds. The senior advisor concurred with this decision.

d. Air Support.

(1) Attack Aircraft. Fixed wing aircraft were always available for beach preps and also on call in the event of contact. Since the assets in IV Corps Tactical Zone are very scarce, air asset requests must be submitted by 1100 the day before they are needed. As a result, we frequently had aircraft come on station but we had no tactical requirement. The result was a waste of ordnance.

(2) Helicopters.

(a) Command and Control Ships. The total command and control assets included one UH-1D and two H-23 helicopters. The UH-1D was the Brigade Command and Control Ship while one H-23 went to the Navy until the boat to shore movement was completed. We were able to obtain a command and control ship upon request but there were three battalion commanders and only a maximum of two helicopters. On a number of occasions the brigade commander sacrificed his command and control ship so that the battalion commander could go airborne to evaluate the situation and conduct a visual reconnaissance.

(b) Gunships. With the shortage of air assets we seldom had gunships during our riverine movements. The need for such is discussed later.

(c) Airmobile Assets. Once again the present shortage of air assets did not allow us to utilize airmobile assets. Second Battalion had a company of helicopters in support on only one operation. This also will be discussed later.

(d) Air Observer Aircraft. Both O-1E and UH-1D aircraft were available for aerial observation. Both were used for artillery and air strike adjustment. Both proved very satisfactory.

e. Naval Support. Naval support was outstanding in all aspects. The battalion was provided with two assault support patrol boats, twelve armored troop carriers, one command and communications boat,

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one flame boat (zippo) and one monitor for all operations. A general description of each boat type follows.

(1) ASPB (Assault Patrol Boat). A small low slung patrol boat with a dual .50 caliber machine gun mount forward and either two .30 caliber machine guns or two honeywell M-79 grenade launchers aft. There is a 20mm mount on top of the wheel house. Top speed is 12 to 16 knots. This craft rides point for the column formation. It recons by fire both banks ahead of the formation and also sweeps for mines and wires along the banks of the waterways. We had two such boats in our River Division.

(2) Monitor. Similar to the ASPB but much larger. Armament consists of a 40mm gun mount forward with a CS (riot control agent) launcher mounted on top. Between the 40mm mount and amidship, an 81mm mortar is mounted in a modified well deck. Aft, the boat has one 20mm mount and two .50 caliber mounts.

(3) Zippo. A modified monitor with two flame throwers forward in place of the 40mm mount. The flame time is 160 seconds and the range is 250 meters. This is the most potent anti-ambush weapon in the formation.

(4) ATC (Armored Troop Carrier). A modified LCM-6 with four .30 caliber machine guns and two .50 caliber machine guns in the well deck. This is the troop carrier and handled fifty men with no problem. The armor makes this boat invulnerable to all small arms and 57mm recoilless rifle fire. However this boat, as all others are completely vulnerable to B-40 (RPG-2) and B-41 (RPG-7) rockets. We had twelve such boats with each group of three called a section. Each section was responsible for the movement of one infantry company.

(5) CCB (Command and Control Boat). Also a modified monitor, with living spaces in place of the mortarpit. It is used as a control boat. By virtue of its mission it contains an assortment of radios and antennas and thus is generally utilized as a relay station.

8. Intelligence: Reference (b) contains an extensive description of the intelligence situation. During our deployment conditions were basically the same. Initially the terrain was drier but with the advent of the monsoons the area became water-covered at all hours. The increase in rain also resulted in an increase in fog and cloud cover and a decrease in visibility.

9. Mission: Mobile Riverine Force, in cooperation and coordination with Second Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps, conducted riverine recon-in-force operations to locate, fix and destroy Main Force and Local Force Viet

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Cong battalions in DINH TUONG, KIEN HOA, and VINH LONG Provinces.

10. Concept of Operation: The Second Infantry Battalion was assigned to work in close cooperation and coordination with the Mobile Riverine Force. All operations were initiated with a riverine movement and subsequent beach assault. Generally two maneuver battalions were committed with one battalion held in a ready reaction status. The Second Battalion was always one of the maneuver battalions. After the initial landings, future movements were dictated by the situation and recent intelligence. Operations were normally of two days duration with assigned boats providing all transportation.

11. Execution:

a. General. On 17 April 1968 the Second Battalion was detached from Task Force B, a two battalion Vietnamese Marine task force. At 170715 April 1968 the battalion moved by motor convoy from CAN THO to DONG TAM, arriving at 171600 April 1968. The battalion was met by representatives of the DONG TAM Base and also the staff of the Second Infantry Brigade, 9th Infantry Division. A living area was established with the battalion command post located at XS 429429. During the following deployment the battalion conducted seven operations. Each operation was followed by a "stand-down" period in which the battalion dried out and prepared for the subsequent operations. The living area was not a base or rear area as it was outside of the DONG TAM Base. As a result this necessitated the removal of all equipment from the area each time the battalion deployed. Consequently a small rear area was established within the DONG TAM Base. This area was used for vehicle storage and also housed a small contingent of men used to fulfill rear echelon requirements. A beach area was established near the living area to be used for both onloading and offloading. The proximity of this loading point facilitated movement and coordination. On 9 May 1968 we were detached from the Mobile Riverine Force with orders to return to SAIGON.

b. 171600-192400 April. The battalion arrived at the DONG TAM Base and immediately commenced preparing for its deployment. A living area was established and initial liaison was effected. On 18 April Brigadier General KNOWLTON, Assistant Division Commander, United States, 9th Infantry Division, welcomed the Second Battalion to the Mobile Riverine Force. Following his address, the battalion conducted a mock operation in grid XS 3840. The purpose of the operation was to acquaint the battalion with the boats and also allow them to observe the fire support capability of the boat division. The training was very successful and all hands seemed anxious for the first operation. One man was lightly wounded from a pungi stake while training. On 19 April the battalion

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prepared for its first operation on 20 April. During this period four Marines were WIA. One from the pungi stake as noted above and three from booby traps in the living area.

c. 200500-201500 April. The Mobile Riverine Force conducted a two battalion riverine operation in northern HAM LONG District, northern KIEN HOA Province to find, fix and destroy local Viet Cong units. At 0735, the Second Battalion landed at RED BEACHES 1 and 2. The battalion swept south initially, then west and finally northwest to the point of extraction. At 1000 the lead elements made contact with an estimated Viet Cong squad in vicinity, XS454402. Negative results. At 1230 the battalion found one bangalore torpedo, two hundred meters of communications electrical wire, nine 82mm mortar rounds and one German made .50 caliber tripod at XS449395. A case of iced beer was also captured and immediately consumed. The mortar rounds were destroyed. At 1400 the battalion backloaded vicinity XS443408 and returned to base area. See enclosure (1).

d. 210300-211530 April. The Mobile Riverine Force conducted a two battalion riverine operation in northern VINH LONG Province to find and destroy Viet Cong units in the area and also to thoroughly question the civilian population. Detainees were encouraged. At 0835 two companies were landed at Red beach 1 and two companies at Red beach 2. All companies proceed southeast initially. At 1100 a frag order was received sending the two southern companies five hundred meters to the south and then back to the west to extract at XS097395. The northern companies continued southeast to XS 097395, then moved north and extracted vicinity XS 092414. All units back loaded at 1400. A bouncing betty mine was struck by a boat at the southern beach. Negative casualties and negative damage to the boat resulted. A total of twenty-one suspects were detained. Two suspects were later evaluated as Viet Cong. After backloaded the battalion moved to XS 039361 and established a night position. See Enclosure (2).

e. 230530-241400 April. The Mobile Riverine Force conducted riverine reconnaissance in force operations in GIAO DUC District, DINH TUONG Province to locate, fix and destroy elements of the Viet Cong 502 Main Force Battalion and other enemy in zone. See enclosure (3).

The battalion loaded at 230330 and proceeded to RED BEACHES 1 and 2. These companies were landed at 0810 with negative contact. At 0825 the reserve company was landed and the battalion commenced sweeping north on both sides of the waterway. Since the ground troops were occupying and sweeping both banks of the river, our boats remained with the battalion to support by fire if needed.

The troops and boats proceeded north with negative contact. At WS939413 the boats were stopped by a destroyed bridge. The troops continued while the boats waited for the tide to rise. While waiting, preparations were made to completely destroy the bridge thus making it passable at all tides.

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At 0950 contact was made with an estimated Viet Cong company in vicinity WS943415. Artillery was immediately called in and the troops continued to advance. The battalion was receiving light to moderate small arms, automatic weapons and B-40 fire.

Contact slackened after considerable artillery fire. However as the troops attempted to move forward they started taking heavy fire from the treeline WS948414. At this point the battalion commander maneuvered the two northern companies to cross the RACH AP TUAT at WS945417 and assault the enemy from the flank. This maneuver was executed quickly and one platoon crossed before the enemy was aware of the maneuver. However the Viet Cong soon opened fire on crossing elements thus isolating one platoon. This platoon found itself facing an entrenched enemy. The platoon commander was seriously wounded by a machine gun position. The remainder of the platoon pushed on, overrunning the position. From the pressure exerted by this platoon the enemy was forced to fight a withdrawing action. Soon the remainder of the two companies commenced crossing the river.

At 1300 the battalion commander went airborne in a UH-1D. While airborne extensive artillery and two fixed wing airstrikes were called in. The two southern companies were still unable to move because of heavy fire from the aforementioned treeline. At 1430 our command and control ship was forced to refuel. While one hundred feet airborne an engine stopped and the helicopter executed a somewhat exciting landing near VINH LONG. This necessitated a delay as we had to wait for another helicopter.

In the battalion commander's absence the battalion S-3 moved with the Zippo and Monitor across the destroyed bridge and in the vicinity of WS944416. Using the boats to provide fire support, the lead units tried to move forward. The two boats took heavy automatic weapons fire. One boat received a B-40 hit resulting in four United States Navy WIA.

At 1600 the Battalion Commander returned to the Area of Operation. Interrogated civilians revealed that a 300 man Viet Cong unit was in the treeline. The artillery continued. The battalion commander used the Monitor once again to go to the front in order to survey the situation. We directed 81mm mortar fire from the boats into the treeline. The troops pushed forward again. We suffered fifteen WIA in a ten minute period.

During this period of contact the two U. S. battalions were maneuvering to completely encircle the enemy. The 3-47 battalion closed the southern avenues of withdrawal and the 4-47 battalion moved in from the east and northeast. The 4-47 reported light contact.

Our northern companies saw Viet Cong fleeing across an open rice paddy in the direction of the U. S. forces. Gunships were requested and controlled

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by the U.S. and airborne assessment revealed ten Viet Cong killed. The artillery airborne observer also observed fifteen to twenty bodies from the 3000 rounds called in during the day.

Contact continued until approximately 2100. We requested an emergency ammunition resupply at 1800. At 2100 the last fixed wing air-strike was completed. The planes had received machine gun fire on passes. At 2145H we received two helicopter sorties with our resupply. The boats were forced to return to the VINH LONG river and fire support base at 1700 because of the falling tide. Two companies were located at WS 947417 and two companies at WS 940417 during the night. Results for the day were fifteen Viet Cong killed and four weapons captured.

At 210330 three Viet Cong in a sampan attempted to pass an outpost at WS 938417. They were taken under fire with two Viet Cong killed. At 0730 the battalion swept the battle area finding only 600 rounds of M-60 ammunition. Civilians said that the Viet Cong had suffered heavy casualties and had withdrawn to the north.

At 1100 the battalion commenced moving to the backloading point. At 1245H the boats arrived just south of the destroyed bridge. At 1246H flank elements received small arms and automatic weapons fire vicinity WS 940415. The platoon immediately assaulted the estimated Viet Cong squad and killed three Viet Cong and captured one weapon. The battalion backloaded and then returned to base area XS 429429. Results of the operation were as follows:

<u>VNMC</u>		<u>VC/NVA</u>		
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>VCC</u>	<u>VCS</u>
3	40	20	0	0

Weapons Captured:

- 1 BAR, U.S.
- 2 Assault Rifle, Soviet, AK-47
- 1 Carbine, Soviet, 7.62mm, SKS w/bayonet
- 1 Carbine, U.S., M-2

Equipment Captured/Destroyed:

- 4 Magazines, U. S. Carbine
- 600 Rounds, U.S. 7.62mm Ammunition

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f. 270330-291300 April: The Mobile Riverine Force conducted riverine reconnaissance in force operations in the CAI BE and CAI LAY Districts, central DINH TUONG Province, to locate, fix and destroy elements of the Viet Cong 514th Main Force Battalion and CAI LAY.

At 0330, 27 April the Second Battalion loaded and commenced movement to "SNOOPY's NOSE". At 0755 three companies landed on RED BEACHES 2-4. There was negative contact. The reserve company was landed and the battalion swept north along the east bank of the canal. The boats stayed with the battalion, reconnoitering the west bank by fire. The battalion swept north to XS 195455 with negative contact. A night position was established with two companies on either side of the canal and with our boats providing flank and water security. See enclosure (4).

At 0700, 28 April the battalion backloaded from night position and proceeded to vicinity RED BEACHES 5 and 6. See enclosure (5). At 1040 the battalion landed slightly east of designated beaches. The battalion swept north and then west to arrive at night position XS 315431. Three Marines were lightly wounded by a friendly M-79 while proceeding to the beach area. Two suspects were detained vicinity XS 315451.

After landing the landing force, our boats returned to the MY THO River. When enroute the boats ambushed vicinity XS 329413 and received small arms, automatic weapons, B-40 rocket, and 75mm recoilless rifle fire. Four boats were hit resulting in eleven United States Navy wounded. The boats returned fire and the Zippo thoroughly burned the area. Negative enemy assessment.

As a point of interest, all three boat divisions were ambushed on this day. Two divisions were empty and one division had troops aboard.

At 0800, 29 April the battalion continued to sweep west for an additional one thousand meters. The battalion then swept southeast to vicinity XS 314420. At this point extraction was completed by 1400. The battalion then returned to base area at XS 429429. There was negative contact during the day. One Marine was wounded from a pungi stake and required DUSTOFF at 0940.

g. 020100-04110 May 1968: Mobile Riverine Force conducted riverine reconnaissance in force operations in GIONG TROM District, KIEM HOA Province, to locate, fix and destroy the Viet Cong 516th and 560th Local Force Battalions and other enemy elements in zone.

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At 0800 the battalion landed at XS 594254 in lieu of prescribed beaches due to U.S. naval error. Thus the troops swept south to vicinity RED BEACH 2 and then northwest. See enclosure (6).

Progress was very slow because of terrain. Negative enemy resistance was encountered. Night position XS 563254.

At 0800, 3 May the battalion continued north and then northeast to extract at XS 570271. At 1130 one rear guard platoon had a light contact resulting in one Viet Cong killed and two suspects detained. A company sized base camp was discovered and destroyed at XS 576260. The battalion extracted at 1300 and moved to XS 484299 for night location.

At 0615, 4 May the battalion loaded and returned to DONG TAM area. All units returned to DONG TAM because of situation in SAIGON and MY THO. The Second Battalion arrived base area at 1100. Night location XS 429429.

h. 070030 - 091300 May - Mobile Riverine Force conducted riverine reconnaissance in force operations in GIAO DUC District, DINH TUONG Province to locate, fix and destroy rear service elements MR II Headquarters, 502nd PMB and local guerrillas.

At 0030 on 7 May the battalion loaded and moved to its area of operations, landing one company on each of RED BEACHES 2 and 3. The battalion then conducted an eagle float to vicinity Checkpoint #82. The entire battalion was backloaded at Checkpoint #82 and then landed at Checkpoint #28. With two companies on each side of the stream the battalion swept to vicinity Objective #76. At this point the battalion was extracted. See enclosure (7).

While conducting the eagle float the battalion uncovered and destroyed an aid station at XS 918434. Assorted medical supplies, eleven grenades, ten AK-47 magazines (full), two packs, and two mosquito nets were captured. At XS 937404 two Viet Cong were captured with one Chinese 7.62mm bolt action rifle.

At 1500 the battalion was extracted and moved to night location XS 040340. One Marine was wounded (Non-hostile action) and medevaced to VINH LONG. Later that night he died.

At 080230 the battalion received word to load immediately. At 0330 the battalion was underway for an area of operation south of MY THO. Overlays were distributed while enroute.

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On 7 May elements of the 7th Infantry Division, ARVN, had been badly defeated North of BEN TRE. The Mobile Riverine Force was ordered to proceed to the area generally known as "the crossroads", to locate, fix and destroy elements of the Viet Cong 516th Main Force Battalion.

At 0925 the battalion landed at RED BEACHES 1 and 2 and swept to the Northwest. There were fresh signs of enemy activity but negative contact. At 1500 the battalion made visual contact with 7th Infantry Division, ARVN, elements moving from the South. The ARVN unit held until the Second Battalion moved into the area of the previous day's contact. The ARVN unit then physically linked with the Marines and thirty-five 7th Infantry Division soldiers MIA were found and extracted by truck. All bodies were KIA. At 1900 an outpost received sniper fire resulting in one Marine wounded. The wounded Marine was medevaced to USS COLLETON by helicopter. Night location was XS 537353. See enclosure (8).

At 090030 the battalion received word it was to return to SAIGON immediately. Therefore at 0700 the battalion retraced it's steps of 8 May, and backloaded at 1000. The battalion arrived DONG TAM base area 1300 and commenced making preparations for return to SAIGON. At 1730 Vietnamese trucks arrived and battalion moved to XS 464438 for the night. This effected detachment from the Mobile Riverine Force.

12. Results:

a. Casualties.

VNMC		VC/NVA		
KIA	WIA	KIA	VCC	VCS
4	49	21	7	21

(1 NHA) (4 NHA)

b. Weapons Captured:

- 1 BAR, U.S., .30 Caliber
- 2 Assault Rifle, Soviet, 7.62mm, AK-47
- 1 Rifle, CHICOM, Bolt Action, 7.62mm
- 1 Carbine, U.S., .30 Caliber, M-2
- 1 Carbine, Soviet, 7.62mm, SKS w/bayonet

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3480c. Equipment Captured/Destroyed:

11	Hand Grenades
9	82mm Mortar Rounds
1	Bangalore Torpedo
200	Electrical Wire (Meters)
1	Tripod, German, .50 Caliber Machine Gun
10	Magazines, AK-47 (Full)
4	Magazines, U.S., Carbine (Full)
2	Packs
2	Mosquito
600	M-60 Ammunition
1	Aid Station
1	Company Base Camp

13. Administrative Matters:a. Supply.

(1) Reference (b) should be reviewed to note the variations in supply.

(2) The Second Battalion was to receive its entire supply from the MY THO Area Logistics Command. Since the 7th Infantry Division, ARVN, is now armed with the M-16 rifles and M-60 machine guns there were no problems. Sandbags were requested from the DONG TAM Base immediately upon arrival. However they were not provided until 6 May, thus they were never utilized.

(3) The battalion had 12 Armor Troop Carrier boats and each of these carried a considerable amount of M-79, M-16 and M-60 ammunition. As a result the battalion placed its entire ammunition resupply on the LST. In case of emergency the battalion could use the ammunition from the boats. If the boats were not available then helicopters could bring in a resupply from the LST. During the deployment only one ammunition resupply was required and this was provided by the LST.

(4) The battalion had to maintain a resupply capability in two distinct areas; rear camp and the LST. A fifteen man unit was placed on the LST to control all resupply. Also a fifteen man detachment was left at the rear area to control resupply from MY THO ALC. Resupply was effected very well. The battalion usually carried two days of food on its back. Thus air resupply was only needed on two occasions. On 29 April a two day resupply was requested and

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provided. On 8 May the Mobile Riverine Force could not meet the resupply requirement. The request had been submitted on 6 May yet due to lack of proper staff functioning, the S-4 could not get the food to the field.

(5) The battalion carried 81mm mortars and ammunition, and claymores at all times. There was no need to request a night kit. It is felt that our request for night kits would have only made an unsatisfactory situation worse. The battalion placed a very small logistical burden on the Mobile Riverine Force, but it appeared to be more than they could handle.

(6) Gas masks were requested and delivered from SAIGON. We had the gas masks for the last operation only. The boats desire to be able to use gas at any time but especially when caught in an ambush. There is no desire on the part of the Mobile Riverine Force to use gas in an air drop, but only from the boats. As a result, the gas masks were carried while in transit and if not needed were left on the boats while walking.

(7) The Marines proved themselves extremely capable of conducting Delta operations. Even though they carried everything on their back, they had no problem covering assigned ground and completing assigned missions.

b. Communications.

(1) Communications was excellent on paper. However, in practice it was unsatisfactory. Because of heavy vegetation radio signals were often considerably curtailed. Long antennas were next to impossible with the undergrowth.

(2) The positioning of the CCB is the most import factor concerning good communications. It must be positioned so as to have good contact with the field unit. Too often the boats were instructed to return to the fire support base only to find that they had no communications with the field unit.

(3) Each ATC carried extra AN/PRC-25 radios. This proved very helpful for the advisors as we had one radio go completely bad after a short swim. The boats were happy to provide a new radio until the deficient one could be repaired or replaced.

(4) The battalion was assigned four forward observer teams, one artillery liaison team and one command liaison team (total of

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six officers, six enlisted) during its deployment with the Mobile Riverine Force. These men provided the battalion with direct channels for obtaining support. However, they were faced with the same difficulties in the area of communications.

c. Transportation. The Second Battalion was assigned River Assault Division (RAD) for its deployment. This consisted of:

12 Armor Troop Carrier (Two with helicopter decks.) (ATC)  
1 Command and Control Boat (CCB)  
1 Monitor  
1 Landing Craft Monitor (Flame) (LCM (F))  
1 Assault Support Patrol Boat (ASPB)

(1) One division was adequate for the battalion. Thirteen ATC's would be ideal. The battalion placed 600 men in the field thus each ATC carried 50 Marines. One company occupied a section of three boats. The H&S Company would move with the reserve company while the headquarters group moved on the CCB. All companies remained intact with the exception of H&S Company. However, this was not a tactical necessity.

(2) For loading, a system was devised so as to facilitate the proper company loading on the proper section (3 ATC) of boats. The boats were fitted with lights for darkness and flags for daylight. Each section had one color and the companies always loaded on the same color. The colors amber, blue, green and red corresponded to Companies 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. H&S Company moved as designated by the Battalion Commander. When backloading, companies would pop smoke corresponding to their section color. No difficulties were encountered in the areas of loading and backloading.

d. Medical.

(1) During the contact of 23 April medical evacuation was outstanding. Both boats and helicopters were utilized. We were told upon arrival, that our casualties would be treated by U.S. sources yet many men were sent to MY THO. It seems the medical facility was not informed of the agreement.

(2) On three occasions medical evacuation was totally unsatisfactory.

(a) On 7 May, 1700 an urgent DUSTOFF was requested from the USS COLLETON eight kilometers away. The helicopter was not

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in use. After extensive radio communications, the DUSTOFF was completed at 1800. No satisfactory explanation was forthcoming.

(b) At 2000, 7 May, an urgent DUSTOFF was again requested. After unnecessary delay, I was finally informed that the helicopter had radio trouble and could not go airborne. As a result I was forced to use an ambulance from the VINH LONG airfield.

(c) At 1900, 8 May, while waiting for our resupply the battalion had a DUSTOFF requirement. I had been told the resupply helicopter was preparing to go airborne, so I made arrangements to use the resupply helicopter for DUSTOFF to the USS COLLETON. Fifteen minutes later I was told the resupply helicopter hadn't even arrived. I therefore submitted an urgent request as the wounded Marine was losing considerable blood. Again the response was unsatisfactory and DUSTOFF was not completed until 2015.

e. Base Access. Upon arrival in DONG TAM, we were confronted with the problem of vehicle access to DONG TAM Base. There were a few incidents where vehicles were refused entry and exit. In one instance the Battalion Command was held at the gate, while trying to exit DONG TAM for 45 minutes, with no explanation. The problem was eventually solved by clearing the numbers of all the battalion vehicles with the MP's.

#### 14. Special Equipment and Techniques.

a. Command and Control Helicopter (C&C). Reference (b) covers this subject well. As previously stated a shortage of air assets did not permit us to enjoy the luxury of a Command and Control Helicopter except for short periods. Ideally each battalion should have a Command and Control Helicopter at his disposal at all times. The merits of this are enumerated in reference (b).

b. Inflatable Rafts. The battalion always carries small inflatable rafts when deployed in the Delta. These were especially helpful while operating with the Mobile Riverine Force. The rafts are used primarily for river and canal crossings. The rafts provide transportation for non-swimmers and also allow important equipment to remain dry.

c. Tactics. It is felt that the entire riverine movement should be explained as well as certain tactics.

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(1) Schedule of Events. A riverine movement started with the movement of the water-borne artillery. The artillery was moved, set and ready to fire one hour before scheduled landings. The maneuver battalions would follow the artillery by 1-2 hours, to be followed by the Mobile Riverine Base (MRB # USS BENEWAH) and associated ships. At all times, movement was timely by all elements. There were no incidents of unnecessary delay.

(2) Boat Formation. The boats proceed in a column with the two ASBP boats acting as a dual point. They move close to the banks, when on small streams, and sweep for mines. At the same time they reconnoiter the banks by fire. The LCM (F) boat follows the point boats and is primarily a counter-ambush weapon. Two sections are followed by the CCB, which is in turn followed by the remaining two sections of troop carriers and the Monitor.

(3) Boat Disposition. If the battalion proceeds up a navigable stream and provides security on both banks, then the boats will accompany the battalion. They can then be used for fire support and also to cross water obstacles. At night the boats can be used for flank security. If the battalion leaves a main waterway, or if the stream becomes unnavigable, then the boats will return to the vicinity of the fire support base.

(4) Ambush Technique. In case of an ambush the division commander and battalion commander must decide if the ambush is large enough to land the landing force. If the boats are at their assigned beaches this is no problem. However, if the Area of Operation is still three or four kilometers distant then a decision must be made. If the troops are landed, then they must be landed on both sides of the waterway. Sections must move together to preserve unit integrity. The distance between boats is generally 1-2 boat lengths so there is no problem in altering sections. The main consideration is whether to land or run the ambush. If by landing another mission is jeopardized then the ambush will have to be run. Regardless of what decision is made it must be made quickly. If the decision is made to land, then the troops must clear the boats immediately.

(5) Variations in Procedure. Our operations were varied both in pattern and duration. The Viet Cong have shown a tendency to permit the boats to pass without taking them under fire. As a result the Mobile Riverine Force moved to a beach and swept back in the direction they had just come from. Time on operation was varied from 1-3 days. However, since routes of insertion and extraction are so limited, there is never a period of safety. The boats, are at the mercy of the enemy and only a rapid reaction to any situation can

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"turn the tide".

(6) Need for Gunships. Gunships have a place of unlimited value in riverine operations. While navigating a small stream, the boats can only observe a maximum of twenty-five meters into the waterway treelines. The Viet Cong could be entering or leaving the treeline at will. Viet Cong in the open is the ideal target for a gunship. The gunship can provide this necessary flank security while at the same time fly visual reconnaissance to the front. In case of an ambush the gunships can provide suppressive and blocking fires as needed. A riverine movement must have airborne observation at the very minimum.

(7) Beach Preps. The Mobile Riverine Force preps beaches as though it expects to land on a heavily defended beach every time. Since the number of available beaches is unlimited, a beach preparation eliminates all other areas and informs the enemy exactly what beach will be used. Not only are the beaches prepped, but first there is an airstrike at approximately H-30, to be followed by artillery until H-5. Thus the enemy knows where and at what time the landing will take place. It is felt that what small element of surprise the Mobile Riverine Force does possess, is lost by this procedure. Any variation in beach preps would be advisable.

(8) Eagle Float. On 7 May the battalion executed a maneuver called an Eagle Float. This calls for a portion of the landing force to remain on the boats and a portion to go ashore. The battalion commander decides likely areas of enemy caches or activity. He then lands part of his force to check out the area. The remainder of the force is landed at another point along the stream while the initial force backloads. This "leap frog" process is continued until a contact is made or the area is thoroughly searched. The Eagle Float tactic allows the battalion to investigate any suspicious areas, avoid large water obstacles, and to cover more area in a shorter time. The Vietnamese are especially suited for this tactic as it involves a thorough search of each area.

#### 15. Advisor Analysis.

a. General. The Second Battalion did a commendable job and further reinforced the opinion that the Vietnamese Marine Corps should have a battalion working with the Mobile Riverine Force.

b. Intelligence. The Mobile Riverine Force is acting on old, out-dated intelligence. As a result the Viet Cong are not to be found. During our deployment, the Mobile Riverine Force seemed to prefer to

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return to areas of past battles rather than develop timely intelligence in any area. Also the Mobile Riverine Force must react to the whims of too many senior commanders. By subjugating the Mobile Riverine Force to many commanders, the striking potential is lost. The Mobile Riverine Force would do much better to develop and exploit the enemy situation without so much external assistance.

c. Deployment Formation. The Second Battalion continued to operate on its dual axis concept thus limiting its effectiveness. It is felt that the battalion should commence operating as individual companies. Our contribution to the Mobile Riverine Force was noteworthy, yet with greater dispersion we could contribute even more.

d. Tactics.

(1) The Mobile Riverine Force is overly concerned with statistics. Units are placed in the field, just to have units in the field. It would be better to wait until the current intelligence situation indicated a good chance of contact. I am sure more kills would be forthcoming, and a better ratio between effort expended and results obtained. Spending 80% of your days in the field proves nothing if you are never there jointly with the Viet Cong.

(2) During our deployment, air assets were at a premium. To have successful riverine operations, at least one airmobile company must be available. The boats are necessary because they can move six hundred men simultaneously. Two divisions can move two battalions. This is the strike or fixing force. The airmobile company can be used to move the reserve battalion to exploit the contact. There is no limit to tactical flexibility if the airmobile assets are available to complement the riverine assets.

(3) The Viet Cong are restricted to the treelines in the Delta. Streams and canals provide routes of movement by sampan, but usually only at night. Thus if a unit can effectively search and control the treelines, it can force the the Viet Cong into continuous movement. Once the enemy is located and fixed in a treeline, the problem is to isolate him. He must be completely encircled in order to effectively combat and later assess the results. The enemy is a master of withdrawal and of breaking contact. Many an entrapped enemy has completely disappeared during the hours of darkness. These tactics must be considered in Delta operations. The Viet Cong aren't in the rice paddies so it is best to stay out of them. If you must cross a rice paddy all treelines facing the paddy should be prepped.

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## e. Duration of Deployment.

(1) The Second Battalion was forced to ride the boats both to and from the Area of Operation. The army units would move to their ships immediately upon completion of an operation. Showers, rest and hot food were waiting for them. The Marines would have to wait as much as six hours before they could enjoy a similar environment. But even back at the base area, the battalion was forced to be tactically alert. Outposts were sent out and positions were prepared. Viet Cong activity existed near our base area thus there wasn't a true opportunity to relax. Ponchos provided protection from the rains. On the other hand, the Army could completely relax and prepare for the next operation while on the ship. This is in no way a criticism, but rather an attempt to explain why a shorter deployment is recommended.

(2) Because the troops are not allowed to completely relax this shorter deployment is encouraged. The Second Battalion became skilled in riverine operations very fast. It is felt five days is sufficient for "snapping in".

(3) Knowledge of the terrain is of course important. However, the Delta is unique by its continuity. Rice paddies, streams, and treelines form the terrain. Extended periods of deployment are not necessary to gain knowledge of the terrain.

(4) With the above in mind, a thirty day deployment is recommended. At the end of thirty days the troops approach the limit of their endurance. Loading in the middle of the night and spending extensive periods on the boats slowly takes its toll. When the entire Vietnamese Marine Corps has rotated through an Mobile Riverine Force deployment all battalions will be able to contribute thirty days of maximum efficiency and then can be replaced by another battalion. The results would prove the soundness of the decision.

## f. Mobile Riverine Force - Second Battalion Relationship.

(1) The relationship between the Second Battalion and all elements of the Mobile Riverine Force was outstanding. The battalion was treated as an integral part of the Mobile Riverine Force and the battalion commander was held on a par with organic battalion commanders.

(2) Problems were encountered in areas of resupply and personnel. Repeated dealings with the Second Brigade staff yielded unsatisfactory results. The solution was explained by the Second Brigade Commander. He said, "You go to the staff once. If they don't respond, you come to

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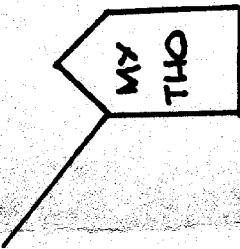
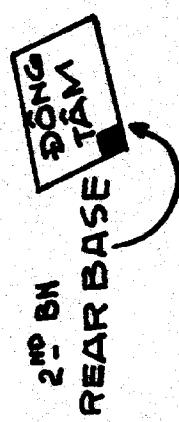
me. It should be a commander to commander relationship".

16 Recommendations.

- a. That the Vietnamese Marine Corps deploy at least one battalion with the Mobile Riverine Force at all times.
- b. That the battalion concentrate its resupply on the LST and uses assets of boats in cases of emergency.
- c. That the battalion carry a maximum supply of three days. Two days would be the minimum.
- d. That the battalion carry inflatable rafts and air mattresses on IV Corps Tactical Zone deployments.
- e. That gunships be available for riverine movements on small streams.
- f. That a Command and Control Helicopter be placed at the disposal of the battalion commander and that he be encouraged to use it.
- g. That an air mobile company be available to provide the Mobile Riverine Force unlimited flexibility.
- h. That the battalion be encouraged to operate in company size units.
- i. That the Mobile Riverine Force deployment be of a thirty day duration.

  
D. E. BONSPER

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OPERATION TRUONG CONG DINH (OP ORDER 37-68)

REFERENCE :

MY THO, VIETNAM SHEET 6229 T  
 SERIES : L7014  
 SCALE : 1:50,000

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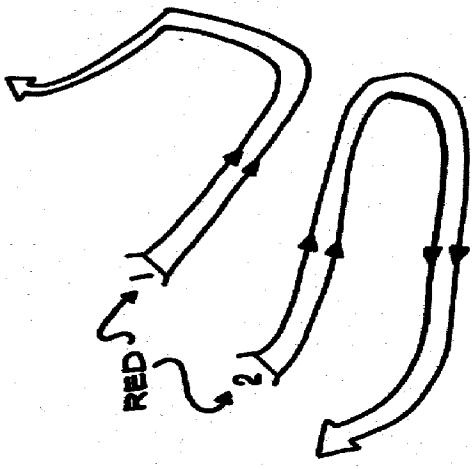
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OPERATION TRUONG CONG DINH (OPORD 38-68)

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BASE AREA

REFERENCE : Q129 I  
OPERATION : SA DEC, VIETNAM SHEET Q129 I  
KHIEM ICH (CAI LAY), VIETNAM SHEET 6229 IV  
SERIES : L7014  
SCALE : 1:50,000

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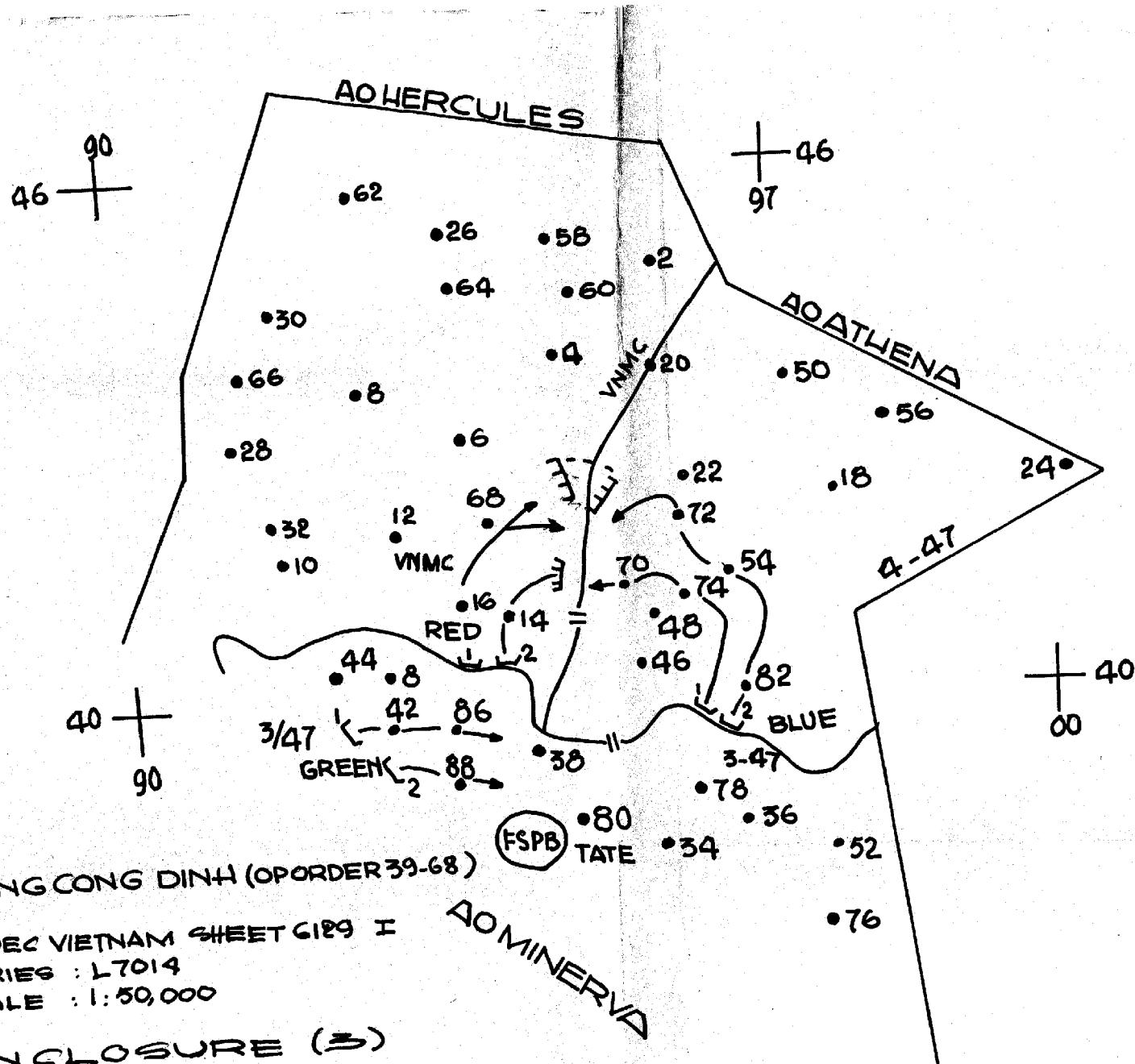
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17 Apr - 9 May 68  
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# OPERATION TRUONG CONG DINH (OPORDER 39-68)

## REFERENCE:

SADEC VIETNAM SHEET G189 I  
SERIES : L7014  
SCALE : 1:50,000

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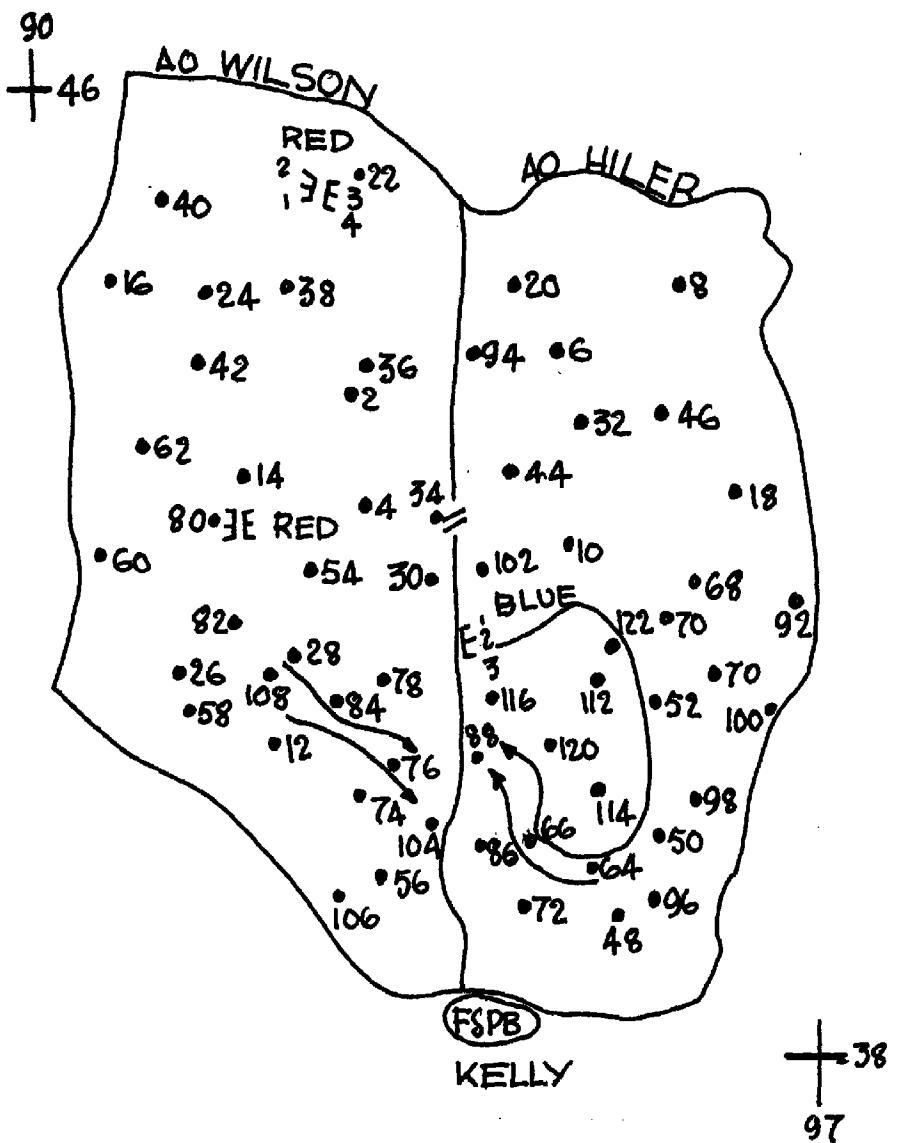
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OPERATION : TRUONG CONG DINH (OP ORDER 43-68)  
REFERENCE :

KHIEM ICH (CAILAY) VIETNAM SHEET 6229 III

SERIES : L7014

SCALE : 1:50,000

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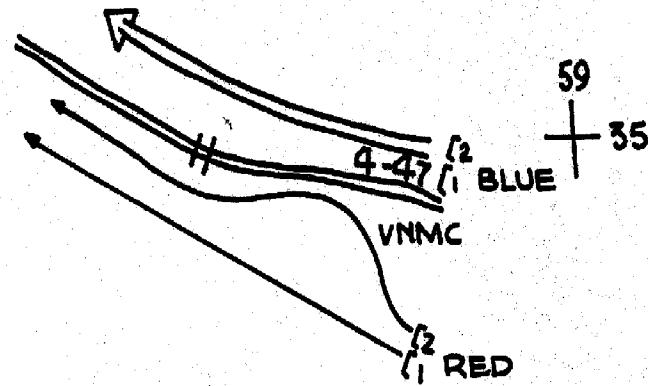
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SMA, MACV a/a rpt  
17 Apr - 9 May 68  
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ENCLOSURE (7)

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**OPERATION TRUONG CONG DINH (FRAG OP ORDER 43-68)**  
**REFERENCE :**

MYTHO VIETNAM, 6229 I  
SERIES: L7014  
SCALE : 1:50,000

**ENCLOSURE (8)**

SMA, MACV a/a Ret  
17 Apr - 9 May 68

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ENCLOSURE (8)

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12 Aug 1968

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on Major BUDD's After Action Report dated 25 Jul 1968

From: Senior Marine Advisor, Marine Advisory Unit, Naval Advisory Group, MACV  
 To: Commander U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
 Via: Chief, Naval Advisory Group, U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS MACJ 3-32)

1. Forwarded concurring in the recommendations contained in paragraph 17.

2. Comments related to some specific recommendations are:

a. With respect to recommendation 17a, Major BUDD feels the need of a "study" for the purpose of determining feasibility of designating a single commander - - in an emergency situation. It seems a pathetic commentary that there might be a need to study something which, for years, has been a recognized principle of war - unity of command. Yet, after all, perhaps this is a valid recommendation since, even today, six months after the Battle for HUE, this principle appears violated even among United States forces.

b. Tactics and techniques for fighting in built-up areas (recommendation 17b) are being stressed in a revised syllabus for the Vietnamese Marine Corps NCO Course and will be incorporated in a Company Officer's Refresher Course presently under development.

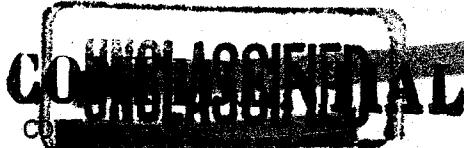
c. Recommendation 17d advocates that RVNAF directives, affecting employment of Vietnamese forces with other allied forces, be made known to the latter. This may not be entirely possible. However, when a conflicting RVNAF policy directive is brought to the attention of a senior allied commander, such must be respected by that commander without criticism.

(1) In paragraph 12 of the basic report, Major BUDD, in discussing the events of 9 February 1968 states: "Task Force X-Ray (USMC) desired immediate deployment of Task Force A (VNMC), but this was declined by the Task Force Commander pending the arrival of the remainder of the Task Force.". At that time only one battalion of the task force had closed the objective area.

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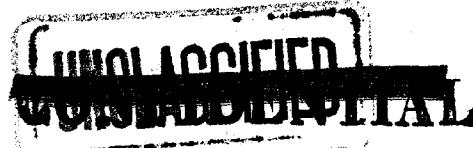
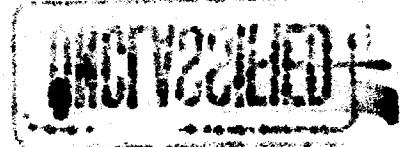


(2) In paragraph 16d, Major BUDD states that there was some initial criticism of the Vietnamese Marine Corps for not having committed the one battalion that had arrived.

(3) The Task Force Commander, at the time, was acting under written instructions promulgated by the Vietnamese Joint General Staff which prohibited piecemeal elements of his force. This directive, JGS SOP Operations No. 150/TTM/P3, dated 2-3-66, is still effective.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. V. CORBETT".

L. V. CORBETT



OFFICE OF THE SENIOR MARINE ADVISOR  
Naval Advisory Group, Box #9  
FPO San Francisco 96626

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TCB:ldl  
3480  
25 Jul 1968

From: Major Talman C. BUDD, II, 057146/0302, U. S. Marine Corps  
To: Commander U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam  
Via: (1) Senior Marine Advisor, Naval Advisory Group, MACV  
(2) Chief, Naval Advisory Group, MACV

Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS MACJ 3-32)

Ref: (a) MACV Directive 335-8 dated 1 September 1967

Encl: (1) Operation Overlay, HUE Citadel, MAP Vietnam 1:12,500  
Series L909  
(2) Recap of data about enemy units which participated in  
the battle for HUE CITY

1. Name of Operation. HUE CITY (SONG THAN 739-68).
2. Dates of Operation. 081700 February - 252400 February 1968
3. Location. HUE Citadel, THUA THIEN Province, Republic of Vietnam
4. Control Headquarters. 1st Division, ARVN
5. Reporting Officer. Major Talman C. BUDD, II, USMC

Advisors Participating.

Colonel R. L. MICHAEL, Jr., USMC

Senior Advisor, VNMC  
Staff Visit (15-27Feb68)

Major T. C. BUDD, II, USMC

Senior Advisor, Task  
Force A, VNMC (8-21Feb68)

Major P. ESHELMAN, USMC

Senior Advisor, Fourth  
Battalion, VNMC (8-25Feb68)

Major P. L. CARLSON, USMC

Senior Advisor, Fifth Bat-  
talion, VNMC (8-21Feb68)

Captain R. D. RAY, USMC

Asst Advisor, Task Force A  
VNMC (8-21Feb68); Senior  
Advisor Task Force A, VNMC  
(22-25Feb68)

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Captain D. B. FRYREAR, USMC

Senior Advisor, Fifth  
Battalion, VNMC (22-25Feb68)  
Asst Advisor, Task Force A,  
VNMC (8-25Feb68)  
Asst Advisor, Fifth Bat-  
talion, VNMC (8-25Feb68)

Captain T. B. BAGLEY, Jr., USMC

Captain J. T. SOMERVILLE, USMCR

6. Advisory Effort.

a. Planning Phase. Planning for the HUE CITY deployment was accomplished initially by the Joint General Staff and Vietnamese Marine Corps Brigade Headquarters in SAIGON and, later, in HUE by VNMC Task Force A in coordination with both U. S. 1st Marine Division Task Force X-Ray and 1st Division, ARVN. The advisory effort in the initial planning phase, following the decision to deploy Vietnamese Marine Task Force A, was limited to coordination with U. S. Air Force to obtain necessary aircraft to execute the deployment and to assist in attaining protective vests from U. S. Army. Operational planning, upon arrival at HUE-PHU BAI, consisted of two aspects: first, moving the Task Force to HUE Citadel and second, tactical employment of the Task Force. In the first instance virtually all planning was conducted by advisors with the U. S. 1st Marine Division Task Force X-Ray, but was governed entirely by guidance provided by the Commander, Vietnamese Marine Task Force A. Planning for the tactical employment of the Task Force in HUE CITY was accomplished almost entirely by Vietnamese Task Force Commander and the 1st Division, ARVN. Advisory effort consisted primarily of aiding in the planning for use of U. S. air and artillery assets and of offering comments on plans developed by the Vietnamese. Some advice was accepted, if it was within the framework of the Vietnamese concept.

b. Execution Phase. Advisory effort during the execution phase consisted primarily of recommendations for utilization of supporting arms assets and efforts to instill the degree of aggressiveness characteristic of U. S. Marine units. Advice was accepted when it was consistent with the Vietnamese concept or other preferred alternatives were not possible.

7. Task Organization.

Task Force A, Vietnamese Marine Corps

1st Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps

4th Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps

2nd Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps

Battery B, Artillery Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps

Tank Platoon(-), 1st Division, ARVN

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8. Supporting Forces:

a. Battery C, Vietnamese Airborne Task Force: This 105mm howitzer battery was employed in direct support of the Marine Task Force on 14 and 15 February before Battery B of the Vietnamese Marine Corps arrived at HUE. They responded in a timely fashion and their fires were effective.

b. One platoon of USMC 8" artillery and one battery of USMC 155mm howitzers were employed in a general support, reinforcing role during the operation. Both units were very responsive to requests for fire forwarded from U. S. Marine FO's with two of the three Vietnamese Marine battalions. Because of the confined operating area within the Vietnamese Marine sector of the Citadel, the more accurate 8" howitzer was more frequently called upon for support. This weapon was the only artillery which was effective against the enemy entrenchments and fortifications on the Citadel wall.

c. Only one helicopter light fire team was available from I Corps. This element (ALLEYCAT) was effective against lightly fortified emplacements and against houses which the enemy chose to defend. It was ineffective against the entrenchments and positions on the Citadel wall except to suppress enemy fire. The tactical and support requirement for gunships greatly exceeded the assets available; this coupled with poor flying weather (based on conservative minimum ceiling and visibility requirements) generally made gunships unresponsive to immediate tactical requirements. When available for use by the Vietnamese Marine Task Force they performed in outstanding fashion.

d. Several U. S. Army aerial observers in L-19 aircraft (CAT KILLER) supported the Vietnamese Marine Task Force. These aircraft frequently were airborne when helicopter gunships were not available. They performed the very valuable function of aerial reconnaissance in addition to effectively adjusting artillery fire missions. They were quite responsive and extremely willing to perform any reasonably appropriate mission.

e. Several U. S. Air Force airborne forward air controllers (TRAIL) supported the Vietnamese Marine Task Force. While their availability was limited primarily by weather, they were effective in controlling U. S. Air Force fixed wing aircraft strikes in the Vietnamese Marine Corps sector. However, there appeared to be excessive delay (40-60 minutes) in orienting aircraft. This resulted in delays for the ground maneuver elements. Most missions were pre-planned, but frequently were cancelled because weather precluded their being flown. Usually missions were developed when it became known that the aircraft were available.

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f. On several occasions VNAF fixed wing aircraft were utilized in support of the Vietnamese Marine Task Force. Using A1 type aircraft the Vietnamese pilots were quite effective in their ordnance delivery. However, frequently the coordination between VNAF and U. S. agencies was either deficient or lacking resulting in some confusion in supporting arms coordination. This confusion was resolved by deferring to VNAF aircraft.

g. Two ARVN landing craft (1 LCU and 1 LCM-6/8) and one U. S. Navy LCM moved the Vietnamese Marine Task Force from HUE LCU ramp (coordinates YD 771223) to the northeast corner of HUE Citadel (coordinates YD 756250). On 13 February there were four landing craft scheduled to move the 1st and 5th Battalions into HUE. However, one of these was not functioning due to maintenance problems and the other had not yet completed a previous mission. The two which arrived were late and there was some concern that the move might not be completed since the landing craft were supposed to depart for DA NANG. The ARVN boats did remain to complete the move of the battalions with the help of the U. S. Navy craft obtained. The move of the Fourth Battalion on the 16th went without incident, except that the boats were late in arriving to commence the move.

9. Intelligence. Information about the enemy was very sketchy and vague.

a. Enemy Situation. When Task Force A arrived in the HUE - PHU BAI area U. S. sources indicated that the 4th Regiment composed of the 802nd, 804th (with only two companies) and the K4B Battalions and an unidentified Regiment were operating south of the PERFUME River. The 6th Regiment, composed of the 800th, 806th, and the 810th Battalions was operating north of the PERFUME River. The G-2 of the 1st ARVN Division related that the 6th regiment, with three battalions, had attacked HUE from the west; the 4th Regiment attacked from the east; one battalion was positioned northwest to block friendly forces attempting to reinforce; in addition a regiment was being held in reserve five-ten kilometers northwest of HUE. On 11 February the southeastern half of the Citadel was in enemy hands. Estimated enemy strength within the Citadel varied from two-three companies to two-three battalions. It was reported that there were three-four man teams at each intersection armed with machine guns and B-40 rocket launchers. The population of HUE was reported to be loyal to the GVN with the exception of a few university students who, allegedly, were cooperating with the enemy. Likely avenues for enemy reinforcements were considered to be from the northwest, southwest and the east in that order. Subsequently information concerning three regiments, elements of two other regiments and several apparently independent or semi-independent maneuver, support, or specialty units was developed.

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A total of 16 battalions were finally identified as having taken part in the battle for HUE. See enclosure (2) for unit identifications and related information.

Enemy forces utilized storage areas outside the western Citadel wall and thus were able to effect resupply of food and ammunition at will, interrupted only by artillery interdiction fires. Enemy units commenced withdrawal from HUE on the afternoon of 24 February; resistance after that date was slight and designed only to delay pursuit of withdrawing forces.

b. Terrain and Weather. HUE, the ancient capital of Vietnam, lies approximately 20 kilometers from the South China Sea on the coastal plain between QUANG TRI and DA NANG in THUA THIEN Province. HUE CITY is thought of as two elements: the Citadel which lies on the north bank of the SONG HAN (PERFUME River) and the portion of HUE CITY which lies on the south bank of the PERFUME River.

The Citadel is a walled city within a city, approximately six square kilometers. Within the Citadel are located the Imperial Palace in the south center portion, the 1st Division, ARVN, CP and military hospital in the northeast corner, the HUE CITY airstrip in the northwestern sections and small business and private homes are scattered throughout the remainder of the city. Streets are narrow and many are unpaved; buildings are crowded together; there are numerous lakes and gardens and there is considerable tropical vegetation, especially large hedgerows. The wall which surrounds the Citadel is 15-20 feet wide with a 6 foot parapet. Surrounding the wall is a moat varying in width from 20-30 feet. Passage into and out of the city is through numerous bridges and gates through the wall. There were houses and shacks along much of the top of the wall. The wall and structures offered considerable cover and concealment to the enemy especially where the enemy had reinforced or fortified the natural environment. The abundance of vegetation offered the enemy the advantage of concealment. Intersections and elaborate entrenchments protected by the liberal use of barbed wire on the wall and elsewhere in the city presented formidable obstacles to attacking friendly units. By controlling the wall and area surrounding the Citadel particularly in the northwest and southeastern sides of the city, the enemy was able to resupply and reinforce his troops at will and to the limit of his logistic capability. It was not until about 20 February that reinforcing friendly units commenced to seal-off the eastern approaches to the Citadel and about 23 February when the western approaches were sealed off.

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10. Mission. Task Force A attacks to clear or destroy enemy forces in zone in the Citadel of HUE CITY.

11. Concept of Operations. Task Force A attacks to the southwest 140900 February with the First Battalion on the left to secure objective 1, Fifth Battalion attacks on the right to secure Objectives 2 and 4. (See enclosure (1)). Task Force executes a left turning movement and attacks to the southwest, on order, to secure objectives in zone. Initially Battery C, Vietnamese Airborne Task Force in direct support until relieved by Battery B, Artillery Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps; one platoon 8", USMC, artillery and one battery of USMC 155mm howitzers in GSR. One platoon (-) of ARVN M41 tanks in direct support of the Fifth Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps.

12. Execution.

9 February - Task Force Headquarters and the First Infantry Battalion departed SAIGON on 091000H, and arrived at PHU BAI in I Corps Tactical Zone on 091500H and came under the operational control of the First Infantry Division, ARVN. The Task Force established liaison with USMC Task Force X-Ray. Task Force X-Ray desired immediate deployment of Task Force A, but this was declined by the VNMC Task Force Commander pending the arrival of the remainder of the task force.

10 February - The rear elements of Task Force A arrived at PHU BAI on 102100H.

11 February - On 110900H, the Task Force Headquarters and the First Battalion commenced a helilift to HUE at YD 753243. Helilift operations ceased at 111100H due to bad weather leaving Task Force Headquarters and one company of the First Battalion in HUE; the remainder of the First Battalion was at PHU BAI. On 111330H, USMC Task Force X-Ray requested that the remainder of the First Battalion move to HUE by truck or be helilifted to a landing zone north of HUE to then move south by LCM. The VNMC Task Force Commander declined as he did not feel that either route was sufficiently secured.

12 February - The VNMC Task Force Commander requested that the Task Force Headquarters be returned to PHU BAI to coordinate the arrival of the Fifth Infantry Battalion; the Headquarters returned to PHU BAI on 121300H. One company of the First Battalion remained in HUE. The Fifth Battalion arrived at PHU BAI on 122400H.

13 February - The infantry battalions fired the M-60 machine gun for familiarization. On 131100H, Task Force Headquarters and the First Battalion moved by vehicle to the LCM ramp at YD 771223. The First Battalion moved by LCM to HUE.

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14 February - The First and Fifth Battalions moved to the line of departure at 140900H. The Fifth Battalion was engaged heavily between 140930H and 141200H. All fighting was of a house-to-house nature. The First Battalion became engaged at YD 746223 on 141215H. The First Battalion failed in all attempts to seize the school at YD 749223 between 141330H - 141600H. The Fourth Battalion and Battery B, VNMC arrived at PHU BAI. The Task Force suffered nine killed and 24 wounded this date while killing ten Viet Cong and capturing six. One machine gun, two rifles and a radio were captured by the Task Force.

15 February - The First Battalion elements received mortar and small arms fire at 150245H followed by an enemy probe at 150600H at YD 748225. Between 150900H and 151130H, the First Battalion seized their objective at YD 748223 and the school house. The Fifth Battalion attacked their objective at YD 746224 and maintained heavy contact east of their objective. The Task Force had eight killed and 26 wounded and killed 39 Viet Cong. A 60mm mortar, three machine guns and 19 individual weapons were captured.

16 February - On 160600H a heavy mortar attack was made on the First Battalion followed by a ground attack. The attack broke off at 160700H. The Fourth Battalion began moving into HUE. Between 161000H and 161600H, the First Battalion attacked their objective at YD 757771 but failed to seize it; meanwhile, the Fifth Battalion attacked and seized their objective at YD 743222. The fighting throughout the day was heavy with very strong resistance from the enemy. Eight Marines were killed and 41 were wounded. 31 Viet Cong were killed; one machine gun and five individual weapons were captured.

At 161400H, the First and Fifth Battalions used a chemical agent, CS, in preparation for an assault. On 161730H, the Fifth Battalion received approximately eight rounds of estimated 82mm mortar fire in their positions. These eight rounds contained a chemical agent filler similar to CS. However, the battalion promptly masked and no difficulties were encountered.

17 February - The First Battalion came under mortar and small arms attack at 170300H and 170430H. At 171000H, the Fifth Battalion assaulted their objective at YD 743222 and seized the objective at 171100H. The First Battalion attacked its objective at YD 752221 without success. Six Marines were killed and 67 were wounded. 54 Viet Cong were killed. 14 individual weapons and three crew-served weapons were captured.

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18 February - The Fifth Battalion was under a mortar and small arms attack from 180020H to 180530H. The First Battalion was engaged in sporadic fighting from 180700H to 181100H. The enemy was in very well prepared defensive positions. No air support was available due to adverse weather conditions. Artillery was not considered capable of the pinpoint accuracy required. A chemical agent, CS, was employed with limited effects since the enemy was equipped with protective masks. At 181200H, the First Battalion had two platoons caught in a heavy cross fire which required a hasty retreat. Nine Marines were left behind and presumed dead. (Their bodies were recovered on 20 February.) One Marine was captured in the vicinity of YD 743222 while emplacing trip flares. Four Marines were killed and 14 wounded. 21 Viet Cong were killed and one suspect was detained. Two crew-served weapons and seven individual weapons were captured. First Lieutenant L. S. MacFARLANE, USMC, was wounded in action and returned to duty.

19 February - The Fifth Battalion was subjected to a mortar and ground attack from 190300H to 190645H. At 191130H, elements of the Fifth Battalion assaulted an objective at YD 746219 to provide security for a relief in place by the Fourth Battalion. The relief was effected at 191700H. 14 Marines were killed and 47 were wounded. 47 Viet Cong were killed. Ten individual weapons were captured.

20 February - The Fourth Battalion recovered two VNMC bodies, two wounded Marines and two M-16 rifles at YD 743223. The First Battalion later recovered five VNMC bodies and two M-16 rifles. These Marines and weapons were lost on 18 February. Contact continued throughout the day. Three Marines were killed and 21 were wounded. 47 Viet Cong were killed. One crew-served weapon and six individual weapons were captured.

21 February - Clear and destroy operations continued. One Marine was killed and 12 wounded by a USMC 155mm howitzer round. Twenty-two Viet Cong were killed. Three Marines were killed and 29 were wounded. Five individual weapons were captured.

22 February - All task force elements were under heavy rocket (122mm), mortar and ground attack throughout the day. The Third Infantry Regiment, ARVN, on the VNMC left flank was simultaneously attacked. The Task Force Command post was relocated at the First Infantry Division, ARVN, Command Post. Five Marines were killed and 15 wounded. 41 Viet Cong were killed and 19 individual weapons were captured.

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23 February - All task force elements were in moderate-to-heavy contact throughout the day. No advances were made throughout the day. Nine Marines were killed and 41 were wounded. 48 Viet Cong were killed. Three crew-served weapons and three individual weapons were captured.

24 February - Elements of the task force received sporadic mortar and small arms fire from 240300H to 240500H. The Fifth Battalion attacked and secured the west wall of the city at 241245H. The Fourth Battalion attacked and secured their portion of the south wall. The First Battalion secured all assigned objectives. At 241830, the Fourth Battalion secured an objective at YD 748217. The bodies of 178 dead Viet Cong were discovered after a thorough search of the battle area. The Marines suffered 15 wounded. Captured were: 14 crew-served and 23 individual weapons.

25 February - The Fourth Battalion assaulted and seized the southwest corner of the Citadel from 250200H to 250500H. The First and Fourth Battalions conducted sweeping operations throughout the day. Small pockets of resistance were met and overcome. The Marines had nine killed and ten wounded. The Viet Cong had 69 killed and 13 captured. Enemy weapons captured were: ten crew-served and 56 individual.

13. Results.

a. Casualties.

VNMC			VC/NVA			US
KIA	WIA	MIA	KIA	VCC	VCS	WIA
88	350	1	608	13	8	1

Kill ratio - 6.9 enemy: 1 friendly

b. Equipment.

(1) NVA/VC Weapons Captured.

(a) Crew-served weapons:

- 9 Rocket Launcher, Soviet, RPG-2 (B-40)
- 1 Heavy Machine Gun, CHICOM, 7.62mm, Type 57
- 4 Heavy Machine Gun, CHICOM, 127mm, Type 54
- 19 Light Machine Gun, CHICOM, 7.62mm, Type 56
- 1 Light Machine Gun, U. S. 7.62mm, M-60
- 3 Light Machine Gun, U. S. .30 Caliber, M1919A1
- 2 Mortars, U. S. 60mm
- 39 Total

**UNCLASSIFIED**(b) Individual Weapons:

68 Rifle, Assault, Soviet, 7.62mm, AK-47  
 5 Sub-machine Gun, CHICOM, 7.62mm, K-50  
 1 Sub-machine Gun, Danish, M-51  
 49 Carbine, Semi-automatic, Soviet, 7.62mm, SKS  
 3 Carbine, CHICOM, 7.62mm, Type 56  
 17 Pistols, CHICOM, 7.62mm, Type 54  
 1 Gun, Flare, CHICOM  
 1 Pistol, French, 7.65mm  
 1 BAR, U.S., .30 Caliber  
 6 Rifle, U.S., 5.56mm, M16E1  
 2 Sub-machine Gun, U.S., .45 Caliber, M3A1  
 17 Rifle, U.S., .30 Caliber, M-1  
 32 Carbine, U.S., .30 Caliber, M-1  
 2 Pistol, Semi-automatic, .45 Caliber, M1911  
 205

(2) NVA/VC Material Captured/Destroyed:

125 Rockets, CHICOM, RPG-2 (B-40)  
 8 Boosters, Rocket, CHICOM, RPG-2 (B-40)  
 52 Hand Grenades, U.S., M-26  
 158 Hand Grenades, CHICOM, assorted  
 16 Projectiles, Mortar, CHICOM, 82mm  
 140 Projectiles, Mortar, U.S., 82mm  
 4 Projectiles, U.S., 40mm, M-79  
 1 Kilograms of TNT  
 6 Satchel Charges  
 15,800 Rounds, Assorted Small Arms Ammunition  
 100 Magazines, assorted types  
 1 Tripod, Machine Gun  
 1 Sighting Device, Mortar, M26  
 1 Gas Mask, Soviet  
 1 Radio, U.S., AN/PRC-6  
 2 Field Telephone, U.S., EE-8  
 1 Generator, Radio, U.S., AN/GRC-9  
 Assorted Medical Supplies  
 Assorted Uniforms and Web Gear

(3) VNMC Weapons and Equipment Destroyed by enemy action:

2 Machine Gun, U.S., 7.62mm, M-60  
 1 Rifle, U.S., 5.56mm, M16E1  
 2 Mortar, U.S., 60mm  
 1 Launcher, Grenade, U.S., 40mm, M-79  
 1 Radio, U.S., AN/PRC-25

Areas where airstrikes were conducted were searched by ground forces.

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**UNCLASSIFIED****14. Administrative Matters:**

a. Supply. Deficiencies in Vietnamese planning created a last minute requirement for armored vests and gas masks which apparently could not be entirely satisfied prior to the deployment of the Vietnamese Marine Task Force to HUE. Upon arrival in HUE the 1st Division, ARVN, became responsible for logistic support of the Vietnamese Marine Task Force. Certain items were already in critical supply, particularly 105mm howitzer ammunition and M-79 ammunition. Resupply of these and other items were dependent in part on the availability of landing craft to bring supplies to the Citadel either from DA NANG or from the LCU ramp on the south shore of the PERFUME River. In order to utilize the landing craft, gunships had to be available to cover their movement. Poor weather and severe limitations on the availability of gunships frequently precluded this required cover and resulted in delay of needed resupply items. On at least one occasion at the HUE LCU ramp, there was no apparent determination being made as to which items were most urgently needed in the Citadel; items were loaded which most readily coincided with the landing crafts configuration. It appears that ARVN logistical effort is relatively inflexible without detailed planning. This situation was not enhanced by having only an E-7 as the Senior G-4 Advisor present in the Citadel during the battle.

b. Treatment of Casualties, Evacuation and Hospitalization. Casualties were evacuated on foot or by litter bearers to battalion aid stations. From these locations wounded and dead were evacuated by jeep ambulance or truck to the HUE Vietnamese military hospital in the northeast corner of the Citadel. Of the 350 wounded who were evacuated to the hospital only 21 subsequently died. Although the hospital's capacity and capability was overtaxed, medical personnel did an outstanding job of caring for their patients. More seriously wounded patients were evacuated by helicopter or LCU to the ARVN hospital in DA NANG.

c. Transportation. USAF C-130's moved the Vietnamese Marine Task Force to HUE-PHU BAI. Task Force Headquarters and the First Battalion, VNMC were moved on 9 and 10 February. The Fifth Battalion, VNMC was moved to HUE-PHU BAI on 12 February. The Fourth Battalion, VNMC and Battery B, VNMC were moved to HUE-PHU BAI by C-130 on 15 February and were committed 2 days after the First and Fifth Battalions. A more expeditious movement of the Task Force, particularly the Fifth Battalion would have permitted the commitment of the Task Force to the HUE battle at least two days earlier and at a time when their combat power was urgently needed.

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Helicopter transportation was quite limited and available assets were severely hampered by conservative weather minimums. When helicopters were available and weather was sufficiently good the support provided was excellent.

U.S. Marine truck transportation assets were very limited; however, every effort was made by USMC Task Force X-Ray to provide the transportation required to move the Vietnamese Marine Task Force from PHU BAI to HUE on a timely basis, when helicopter transportation was either unavailable or grounded due to poor weather.

e. Communications. There were no significant problems with communications. The PRC-25 radio was effective in the HUE operation.

15. Special Equipment and Techniques: None

16. Advisor Analysis:

a. Command and Control. There was no single commander of forces employed in HUE. Republic of Vietnamese forces were commanded by the Commanding General, 1st ARVN Division, who employed forces available to him to drive enemy forces from the city. United States forces were employed somewhat belatedly and on a piecemeal basis on a coordination and cooperation arrangement with the Commanding General, 1st ARVN Division. The effects of this lack of a single commander were apparent in three areas: First, there was no commander to develop an overall plan to recapture HUE who had sufficient assets available to him to accomplish the task expeditiously and in a tactical sound manner. Secondly, fire support coordination was accomplished on a strictly cooperative basis with all elements competing for available fire support assets. The element which was most persistent and vocal usually obtained the assets. Further, there was at best only an adhoc effort to coordinate the use of various supporting arms. Only the voluntary cooperation of various units prevented tragic consequences. These adhoc efforts hampered planning for use of supporting arms in conjunction with ground maneuver. Thirdly, the lack of a single commander precluded effective procurement and allocation of logistical support. Each element supported itself and frequently competing for use of available facilities and means of logistical support.

b. Tactics. There was little or no effort made to cordon and seal the Citadel prior to attempting to drive the enemy from the area. Consequently, the enemy was able to resupply his forces, evacuate dead and wounded, and send in replacements during virtually the entire battle to recapture the city. When forces were deployed around the Citadel enemy resistance collapsed rather quickly.

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c. Psychological Warfare. There was little or no use made of psychological warfare techniques to control civilians and thus prevent their being exploited by the enemy and to encourage the enemy to CHIEU HOI or surrender.

d. VNMC Employment. There was some criticism initially of the Vietnamese Marine Corps, because the one battalion was not immediately employed upon its arrival in PHU BAI. The Republic of Vietnam Joint General Staff directives, however, precludes the piecemeal commitment of elements of a Vietnamese Marine Task Force. Thus, the Vietnamese Marine Task Force Commander was acting properly under proper orders withholding the commitment of his forces until at least the second battalion of his three battalion task force arrived in PHU BAI.

e. Direct Fire Weapons. The VNMC at present does not have sufficient organic direct fire weapons of sufficient caliber to effectively fight in built-up areas. When 106mm Recoilless Rifles were made available to the Vietnamese Marine Task Force in HUE, they were utilized effectively and contributed materially to clearing the city.

f. Use of smoke and CS. The value of these two agents was not fully appreciated and consequently they were not used effectively during the HUE battle at least by Vietnamese Marine elements. CS was used in HUE on 16 February, but effects were not immediately exploited. This gave the enemy time to mask and react. Smoke could have been used to screen friendly forward and lateral maneuver.

17. Recommendations:

a. That a study be conducted to determine the feasibility of designating a single commander of local RVNAF and Free World Forces in a emergency tactical situation.

b. That the tactics and techniques for fighting in built-up areas be stressed as an integral part of basic training (officer-enlisted) for RVNAF and unit training of both RVNAF and Free World Forces.

c. That the techniques of psychological warfare be refined and tailored for application in built-up areas to enhance civilian control and enemy defection or surrender.

d. That advisors and Free World Forces be apprised of RVNAF directives which affect employment of RVNAF forces.

e. That a study be conducted to determine the optimum number and type of larger caliber direct fire weapons required to give VNMC

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units an adequate capability to support operations in built-up areas.

f. That RVNAF and Free World Forces be encouraged to utilize CS and smoke when fighting in built-up areas.



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REF ID: A65126  
**UNCLASSIFIED**REF ID: A65127  
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**UNCLASSIFIED****RECAP OF DATA ABOUT ENEMY UNITS WHICH PARTICIPATED IN HUE CITY BATTLE**

1. 6th NVA Regiment. Command Post at YD 693242 near LA CHU Village which was staging area for units operating in and around HUE; withdrew to base area YD 6617 in HUONG THA Mountains.
  - a. 800th Battalion. Operated in the Emperial Palace and the southeast part of the Citadel vicinity of YD 754218.
  - b. 802nd Battalion. Operated in vicinity YD 748218, responsible for covering the northwest routes in HUE City. Battalion operated with the C115 Local Force Company.
  - c. 806th Battalion. Operated in vicinity of YD 734227.
2. 4th NVA Regiment. Command Post at YD 8321; later withdrew to PHU LOC Mountains base area vicinity YD 8031.
  - a. 804th Battalion. Located east of HUE near YD 7723 with C117th Local Force Company.
  - b. 4B Battalion. Operated south of PHU CAM Canal with defensive positions vicinity YD 7620, YD 7621, YD 7622 supported by the C119th Local Force Company.
  - c. 4/9 or AKA 1/4 Battalion. Operated in HUE from 31 January to 2 February; then moved to PHU LOC to interdic Highway #1.
3. 90th NVA Regiment, 324B Division. Departed KHE SANH 27 December 1967 with the 7th Battalion (estimated strength 400), the 8th Battalion (estimated strength 500) and the 9th Battalion (strength unknown) for the QUANG TRI Mountain area. On 13 February the regiment was ordered to HUE with the mission of recapturing the city. It operated in the southwest corner of the Citadel vicinity YD 7521; 7th Battalion operated vicinity of YD 740225.
4. 29th NVA Regiment, 325C Division. The 7th and 8th Battalions of this regiment operated vicinity of YD 6924 LA CHU Village (staging area for units operating in HUE).
5. 24th NVA Regiment, 304th Division. The 7th and 8th Battalions were identified; nothing further is known.
6. 416th Battalion. This unit entered HUE about 15 February and operated in vicinity of YD 764224.
7. 810th Battalion. Operated north of HUE in vicinity of QUANG DIEN District.

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CONT

8. 12th Sapper Battalion. Identified in the vicinity of HUE; nothing further known.

9. C18th Local Force Company. A transportation unit with attachments to the infantry battalions operating in the area.

10. C114th Local Force Company. Operated near YD 7525 with mission of harassing river traffic.

11. C115th Local Force Company. A logistical unit which supported the 802nd Battalion, 6th NVA Regiment in vicinity of YD 748218 (see paragraph 1b).

12. C116th Local Force Company. Operated along Highway #1 near YD 802203 with mission of harassing highway traffic.

13. C117th Local Force Company. Operated with 804th Battalion, 4th NVA Regiment east of HUE. This unit move to YD 766235 about 15 February. (See paragraph 2a)

14. C119th Local Force Company. Supported the K4B Battalion south of HUE (see paragraph 2b).

15. H-1 (HUE City) Sapper Unit. Identified at YD 7506.

16. Unidentified Rocket Battalion. This 122mm rocket battalion conducted several attacks on HUE; its location was never determined.

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SMA, MACV A/A Report (filed 8 Nov 67)  
SONG THAN 711-67/SONG THAN 38-68

8 Nov 67 - 6 Feb 68

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# AFTER ACTION REPORT

## OPERATION

### TRAN - HUNG - DAO

3 FEBRUARY - 11 MARCH 1968



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MARINE ADVISORY UNIT  
NAVAL ADVISORY GROUP  
327 202

MACV

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13 Jun 1968

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FIRST ENDORSEMENT on Captain SHANE's After Action Report dated 7Jun68

From: Senior Marine Advisor, Marine Advisory Unit, Naval Advisory Group, MACV  
To: Commander, U. S. Naval Forces, Vietnam

Subj: After Action Report

1. Forwarded concurring with the entire report. Continued advisory effort will be given all recommendations. All Vietnamese Marine Corps advisors will be afforded the opportunity to study this report.
2. The information contained in paragraphs 6 through 9, although not specifically related to Vietnamese Marine Corps actions in Operation TRAN HUNG DAO, is provided as a matter of general background for those readers not familiar with the Operation.
3. With respect to paragraph 14.d, an 81mm Mortar Course was recently established at the Vietnamese Marine Corps Training Center, THU DUC. The initial results of this course have been heartening and some advisors have reported more and better use of this particular supporting arm.

  
J. T. BRECKINRIDGE  
Acting

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OFFICE OF THE SENIOR MARINE ADVISOR  
 Naval Advisory Group, Box #9  
 FPO San Francisco 96626

HJS:fmcg  
 3480  
 7 June 1968

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From: Captain Harry J. SHANE, 085116/0302, USMC, Marine Advisory Unit,  
 Naval Advisory Group, MACV  
 To: Commander U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (Attn: J343)  
 Via: (1) Senior Marine Advisor, Marine Advisory Unit, Naval Advisory  
 Group, MACV  
 (2) Commander Naval Forces, Vietnam

Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS MACJ 3-32 (K-1))

Ref: (a) MACV Directive 335-8 dated 1 September 1967

Encl: (1) Operation Overlay

1. Name of Operation: TRAN HUNG DAO

Note: Operation TRAN HUNG DAO, as noted below, commenced on 3 February 1968 as a result of the Communist TET Offensive in the SAIGON area. However to fully realize the overall participation by Vietnamese Marine Corps units, the time period for this report will begin on 30 January 1968.

2. Dates of Operation: 030001 February to 110600 March 1968

3. Location: III Corps Tactical Zone, GIA DINH Province; TAN BINH, THU DUC, GO VAP Districts.

4. Control Headquarters. Capital Military District Headquarters

5. Reporting Officer. Captain Harry J. SHANE, USMC

Advisors Participating:

Colonel R. L. MICHAEL, JR., USMC

Senior Marine Advisor  
 (30Jan-3Mar68)

LtCol G. W. RODNEY, USMC

Asst Senior Marine Advisor  
 (30Jan-3Mar68)

GROUP-4  
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 DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS

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LtCol R. H. KANSIER, USMC	Operations Advisor (30Jan-3Mar68)
Major W. E. MCKINSTRY, USMC	Senior Advisor, Task Force B, VNMC (30Jan-3Mar68)
Major T. C. BUDD II, USMC	Senior Advisor, Task Force A, VNMC (6-9Feb68)
Major E. H. BOYCE, USMC	Asst Advisor, Task Force B (14-29Feb68)
Major J. A. RINDFLEISCH, USMC	Senior Advisor, Second Battalion, VNMC (20Feb-11Mar68)
Major W. P. ESHELMAN, USMC	Senior Advisor, Fourth Battalion, VNMC (31Jan-13Feb68)
Major P. L. CARLSON, USMC	Senior Advisor, Fifth Battalion, VNMC (6-11Feb68)
Major H. T. WARD, USMC	Senior Advisor, Third Battalion, VNMC (30Jan-11Mar68)
Major P. E. GARDNER, USMC	Senior Advisor, Sixth Battalion, VNMC (2Feb-11Mar68)
Captain R. D. RAY, USMC	Senior Advisor, First Battalion, VNMC (2-6Feb68); Asst Advisor, Task Force A, VNMC (7-9Feb68)
Captain R. "V" COFFEL, USMC	Asst Advisor, Task Force B, VNMC (30Jan-12Feb68); Artillery Advisor (13Feb-11Mar68)
Captain J. I. SIMPSON, USMC	Asst Advisor, Task Force B, VNMC (19Feb-6Mar68); Senior Advisor, First Battalion, VNMC (30Jan-2Feb68)
Captain H. J. SHANE, USMC	Senior Advisor, Second Battalion, VNMC (2-12Feb68); Asst Advisor, Third Battalion, VNMC (19-20Feb68)
Captain D. E. BONSPER, USMC	Asst Advisor, Second Battalion, VNMC (5Feb-11Mar68)
Captain J. A. WILLIAMS, USMC	Asst Advisor, Third Battalion, VNMC (30Jan-11Mar68)

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Captain J. J. HAINSWORTH, USMC  
 Captain T. B. BAGLEY, Jr., USMC  
 Captain J. T. SOMERVILLE, USMCR  
 1stLt L. GARCIA, USMC  
 1stLt L. S. MacFARLANE, USMC  
 GySgt A. MOBLEY, Jr., USMC  
 HMC W. L. ORR, Jr., USN

Asst Advisor, Fourth Battalion, VNMC (1-5Feb68)  
 Asst Advisor, Fourth Battalion, VNMC (2-8Feb68)  
 Asst Advisor, Fifth Battalion, VNMC (6-11Feb68)  
 Asst Advisor, Second Battalion, VNMC (2-4Feb68);  
 Asst Advisor, Task Force B, VNMC (5-6Feb68); Asst Advisor, First Battalion, VNMC (7-8Feb68)  
 Asst Advisor, First Battalion, VNMC (31Jan-8Feb68)  
 Asst Advisor, Second Battalion, VNMC (30Jan-4Feb68)  
 Asst Advisor, Task Force B, VNMC (2-18Feb68)

#### 6. Task Organization:

Capital Military District Headquarters

Vietnamese Marine Corps

Task Force A Headquarters  
 Task Force B Headquarters  
 First Infantry Battalion  
 Second Infantry Battalion  
 Third Infantry Battalion  
 Fourth Infantry Battalion  
 Fifth Infantry Battalion  
 Sixth Infantry Battalion  
 Battery A,B,C - Artillery Battalion

Vietnamese Ranger Battalions

30th Ranger Battalion  
 33rd Ranger Battalion  
 35th Ranger Battalion  
 38th Ranger Battalion  
 41st Ranger Battalion

Vietnamese Airborne Battalions

1st Airborne Battalion  
 2nd Airborne Battalion

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3rd Airborne Battalion  
 5th Airborne Battalion  
 6th Airborne Battalion  
 7th Airborne Battalion  
 8th Airborne Battalion  
 9th Airborne Battalion  
 11th Airborne Battalion

United States Artillery

B Battery, 2/13 THU DUC  
 A Battery, 7/8 BIEN HOA  
 C Battery, 7/8 BIEN HOA

1st Platoon, Aviation Company (RAZORBACK)

7. Mission: The mission of Operation TRAN HUNG DAO was to secure SAIGON, protect key installations and to force all enemy into the SAIGON periphery for destruction by United States forces.

8. Concept of Operation. The concept was for United States forces to form a protective ring around SAIGON, while ARVN forces eliminated pockets of enemy resistance within the city and conducted cordon and search operations in conjunction with the National Police. Areas of responsibility were assigned with Vietnamese Airborne units encompassing TAN SON NHUT Airfield; Vietnamese Airborne and Ranger units responsible for key precincts within SAIGON; the Fifth Vietnamese Ranger Group responsible for the southwestern portion of the city and the area immediately south of TAN SON NHUT (PHU THO HOA); Vietnamese Marine Battalions were responsible for the GIA DINH City area and the GO VAP Ordnance Depot area.

9. Intelligence. Prior to the TET Offensive on 31 January 1968, the enemy threat to the Capital Military District (CMD) consisted of elements of six Viet Cong Local Force Battalions operating mainly from base areas outside of the Capital Military District. The total enemy strength within the Capital Military District was estimated at 800, which consisted of local guerrillas and the infrastructure.

Although enemy initiated incidents increased slightly during January, the contacts were limited to squad size ambushes and occasional platoon size harrassing attacks on friendly defensive positions.

Taking advantage of the TET Truce, the enemy infiltrated large quantities of troops and equipment into the Capital Military District during the period 29-31 January and launched a surprise attack, an estimated

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eighteen battalions against SAIGON and key installations in the Capital Military District on 310300H January 1968.

The TET truce was cancelled by the Government of Vietnam and Free World Military Forces on 30 January as the result of increased Communist offensive actions throughout Vietnam. A one hundred percent alert order was disseminated by the Capital Military District on 302200H January, as the result of information furnished by captive Viet Cong troops. However, at this time it was assumed that any enemy attack would be within the previously assessed capabilities of the normal enemy elements operating in the area.

The following enemy units are known to have participated in the attack on SAIGON.

Unit - 2nd Local Force Battalion, 165A Regiment

Strength - 400

Weapons - B-40, Heavy Machine Guns, Light Machine Guns, AK-47

Confirmed losses - 100

Prisoners - 5

Infiltration Route and Mission - 281800H departed TRUNG AN Village (XT 640205) moving to and across BINH MY (XT 820065) at 290500H. Rested one day. On 291800H moved to XT 825012 then to gate #4 of Joint General Staff Headquarters where the attack was launched at 310300H.

VNMC Involvement - Possible Second Infantry Battalion at the Vietnamese language school near (400 meters) Joint General Staff Headquarters.

Unit - 101st NVA Regiment

Strength - 1,600

Weapons - Well armed

Confirmed losses - 600

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Infiltration Route and Mission - Infiltrated from TAY NINH Province vicinity XT 5650. Unit has been confirmed by contact with the United States 25th Division. The unit later had the mission to attack TAN SON NHUT ammunition dump and operate in GO VAP area.

VNMC Involvement - Possibly contacted the Third Infantry Battalion on 18 February at XS 867907.

Unit - 1st Main Force Battalion

Strength - 350

Weapons - 81mm and 60mm Mortars, Heavy Machine Guns, Light Machine Guns, AK-47

Infiltration Route and Mission - Unit departed HO BO Woods 271900H January moving across to (XT 530150) TRANG BANG to BAO CONG (XT 550112) to CU CHI (XT 587032) to MY HANH Village (XT 640026), crossing CAU AN HA River (XT 677093) to VINH LOC (XS 744965) to BINH HUNG HOA Village. By 302000H it was at XS 786945 preparing to attack TAN SON NHUT from the west. One company assigned to attack Joint General Staff. At 310300H the unit opened fire.

Unit - 271st Viet Cong Regiment (3 Battalions)

Strength - 1,350 (2 Battalions in GIA DINH area)

Weapons - Well armed

Confirmed losses - estimated in excess of 800 KIA

Infiltration Route and Mission - Operated in the HOC MON, GO VAP area attacking District Headquarters and Police Stations.

Unit - 4th Local Force Battalion, 165A Regiment

Strength - 400

Weapons - 75mm Recoilless Rifle, B-40s, AK-47

Confirmed losses - 137

Prisoners - 3

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Infiltration Route and Mission - On 281800H January the unit departed TAM AN Village (XS 100200) moving to XS 030965. On 300500H January arrived at RUOT NGUA Canal (XS 950970); they then moved and concentrated at AN PHU Village on 312400H January. This unit had orders to proceed and attack Newport Bridge (XS 890939). At 010400H February the unit opened fire, however they failed to seize the bridge and suffered 93 KIA.

Unit - K/8 Engineer Battalion

Strength - 100 GIA DINH area

Weapons - TNT, Claymores, Individual weapons

Confirmed losses - Unknown

Prisoners - 1

Infiltration Route and Mission - Unit infiltrated from PHU HOA District, BINH DUONG Province. Mission of unit was to establish blocking forces. Limited information at this time.

Unit - 273 VC Regiment, 4 Battalions

Strength - 1,450 (3 Battalions in GIA DINH area)

Weapons - Well armed

Confirmed losses - Estimated in excess of 900 KIA

Infiltration Route and Mission - Unit attacked THU DUC District and LONG BINH areas. Unit primarily in contact with United States 1st Division.

Unit - 58th Mortar Battalion, AKA D20B, 69th Regiment Main Force

Strength - 420

Weapons - 81mm and 60mm Mortars, 75mm Recoilless Rifles

Confirmed losses - Unknown

Infiltration Route and Mission - At this time information is limited but unit has been confirmed by higher headquarters. Took part in support of ground attack of TAN SON NHUT.

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Unit - 56th Anti-Aircraft Battalion, 69th Regiment Main Force

Strength - 450

Weapons - Heavy Machine Guns, Light Machine Guns (.50 and .30 Caliber)

Confirmed losses - Unknown

Infiltration Route and Mission - At this time information is limited, but unit has been confirmed. Reported operated near TAN SON NHUT.

Unit - C10 Sapper Battalion

Strength - 400

Weapons - Individual

Confirmed losses - One report of 140 KIA, actual figures estimated to be higher.

Infiltration Route and Mission - C10 also known as AKA F100, consists of A units, B units and J units. These units divide into approximately 16 sections. Section strengths vary depending upon mission from 8 to 40 men. C10 units participated in attacks on SAIGON such as U.S. Embassy, Independence Palace, BOQ's and BEQ's in the SAIGON area. Members of unit dressed in civilian attire.

Unit - 2nd Independent Battalion

Strength - 360

Weapons - Well armed

Confirmed losses - Excess of 200 KIA

Infiltration Route and Mission - Battalion is from CAN DUC, LONG AN Province. Unit infiltrated in the CHOLON area attacking NGUYEN VAN TO Police Station. Limited information on this unit.

Unit - 16th Local Force Battalion (Bl6)

Strength - 400

Weapons - Well armed

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Confirmed losses - On 31 January sustained 260 KIA.

Prisoners - 26

Infiltration Route and Mission - Newly formed unit from TAY NINH Province, consisting of mostly of NVA fillers. Moved recently to CU CHI and then to SAIGON. Their mission was to attack TAN SON NHUT.

Unit - 5th Local Force Battalion, 165A Regiment

Strength - 350

Weapons - Individual and Light Machine Guns

Confirmed losses - 125

Prisoners - Unknown

Infiltration Route and Mission - The battalion moved from KIEP PHUOC (XS 880750) into the 7th and 8th SAIGON Precincts (CHOLON). The unit attacked precinct police headquarters and made small running harassment raids throughout CHOLON.

Unit - 267th Main Force Battalion

Strength - Over 500

Weapons - AK-47, B-40, 82mm and 60mm Mortar, Light Machine Gun, Heavy Machine Gun

Confirmed losses - in excess of 150 KIA

Infiltration Route and Mission - The battalion departed from XUAN KHANG (XS 496990) in the afternoon of 29 January. Passed through National Route #10 (XT 545004) arriving at MY HANH (XT 620023) and on to VINATEXCO area (XS 790950). 267th Battalion coordinated with the 269th Battalion to launch attacks on TAN SON NHUT.

Unit - 269th Main Force Battalion

Strength - 400

Weapons - Well armed

Confirmed losses - Estimated in excess of 100 KIA

Prisoners - Unknown

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Infiltration Route and Mission - Unit paralleled the same route as 267th but attacked the southern edge of TAN SON NHUT. The unit was given orders that there would be no withdrawal.

Unit - 7th Local Force Battalion, 165A Regiment

Strength - 250 (elements of the battalion in GIA DINH.)

Weapons - Individual

Infiltration Route and Mission - Limited information is available on this unit. Unit elements have been confirmed by higher headquarters, but mission and extent of participation is unknown.

Unit - 6th Local Force Battalion, 165A Regiment

Strength - 400

Weapons - AK-47, B-40, Light Machine Guns, Heavy Machine Guns

Confirmed losses - Approximately 140 KIA (figure from PW information)

Infiltration Route and Mission - Viet Cong started from TRAM BA VU Forest (XS 620822) at 291900H, moving across XINH SANG Canal to TAN NHUT Hamlet #1 (XS 690850). Rested there one day. On 300600H January moved across Hamlet #2 and #3 TAN KIEN Village (XS 740846). On 310700H January crossed through BINH TRI DONG area (XS 760898). Moving from PHU THO to PHU THO HOA (XS 790903) at 312400 attacked the racetrack. During contact 1 February in CHOLON unit suffered heavy casualties with the Battalion Commander killed, Battalion Executive Officer captured and 3 company commanders killed. One assigned mission was the CHI HOA Prison (XS 829915) though it was never executed.

Unit - 3d Local Force Battalion, 165A Regiment

Strength - 330

Weapons - Heavy Machine Guns, Light Machine Guns and Individual

Confirmed losses - Estimated 150 KIA

Infiltration Route and Mission - On 301600H January departed DI AN, moving to TAN BINH KIEP BINH (XT 900005). At 302400H reached target (SAIGON Radio Station). At 310300H they opened fire on SAIGON Radio Station. At 310400H unit withdrew and hid in people's houses near CAU SAT Bridge. Statement of PW, only 1 platoon participated in attack. Rest of battalion stayed at PHAN THANH GIAN Bridge as blocking force.

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## a. Vietnamese Marine Corps unit locations on 30 January 1968.

Task Force A Headquarters	II Corps Tactical Zone
Fifth Infantry Battalion	
Sixth Infantry Battalion	
Battery C	
Task Force B Headquarters	IV Corps Tactical Zone
First Infantry Battalion	
Second Infantry Battalion	
Battery B	
Third Infantry Battalion	Capital Military District
Fourth Infantry Battalion	VUNG TAU
Battery A	SAIGON/THU DUC area

## b. Chronology of Events.

Task Force A, VNMC.

31 January - Task Force A was composed of the Fifth and Sixth Infantry Battalions and Battery C, Vietnamese Marine Corps Artillery Battalion. The task force was operating in the BONG SON area of the II Corps Tactical Zone.

2 February - The Sixth Battalion was detached from Task Force A and commenced an airlift to SAIGON at 020930H; the airlift was completed at 021930 at TAN SON NHUT airfield. The Sixth Battalion was assigned the mission as the Capital Military District (CMD) reserve under the operational control of the Capital Military District.

6 February - Task Force Headquarters, the Fifth Battalion and Battery C were airlifted to SAIGON on 061830H. The Fifth Battalion came under the operational control of Capital Military District, while Task Force Headquarters returned to the control of the Vietnamese Marine Corps Headquarters.

9 February - Task Force A and the First Infantry Battalion departed the SAIGON area for operations in I Corps Tactical Zone.

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31 January - Task Force B was composed of the First and Second Infantry Battalions and Battery B, Vietnamese Marine Corps Artillery Battalion. The task force was located at CAI LAY in IV Corps Tactical Zone. The task force, minus Battery B, was helilifted to SAIGON; the airlift was completed to 011930H. The task force occupied night positions at XS 8394 under the operational control of the Joint General Staff of the Republic of Vietnam.

1-2 February - The Second Battalion was detached from Task Force B and assigned under control of the Joint General Staff, Republic of Vietnam on 010800H. The Fourth Battalion was assigned to Task Force B. The First and Fourth Battalions, in column, with the Fourth Battalion in the lead, attacked to the northwest in the vicinity of XS 8497 on 011115H. On 011315H, the Fourth Battalion had heavy contact in the vicinity of XS 840984. On 011700H, the First Battalion passed through the lines of the Fourth Battalion and continued the attack. On 011815H, the First Battalion had heavy contact at XS 837985. Night positions were as follows: Task Force B XS 854966, First Battalion XS 835983 and Fourth Battalion XS 840987. On 020205H, the Viet Cong counterattacked the positions of the First and Fourth Battalions. Heavy contact lasted until 021130H. In this engagement, the task force suffered twelve Marines killed and seventy-three Marines wounded. Six Viet Cong were captured and 202 were killed. Nine crew served and one hundred individual weapons were captured. Three USMC advisors were wounded. (Major W. P. ESHELMAN, Captain J. I. SIMPSON, Captain J. J. HAINSWORTH.)

3 February - At 030930H, the First Battalion commenced an attack to the northwest in the vicinity of XS 836985 encountering heavy resistance. The Fourth Battalion conducted search and destroy operations throughout the day in the vicinity of XS 840984. Night positions of all units remained the same as those of 2 February. At 032000H, the Viet Cong attacked the positions of the Fourth Battalion from the north. The Viet Cong broke contact at 032130H. Contact was light and sporadic the rest of the night. This engagement resulted in five Marines killed and fourteen Marines wounded. Twenty-six Viet Cong were killed; two were captured; two crew served and twenty-four individual weapons were captured.

4 February - The First Battalion conducted search and clear operations in the vicinity of XS 856966 at which time one Marine was wounded. Night positions were as follows:

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Task Force Headquarters	- XS 857944
First Battalion	- XS 856954
Fourth Battalion	- XS 869968

The Third Battalion came under the operational control of Task Force B on 041430H, and established positions at the VNMG Amphibious Support Base.

5 February - The First Battalion conducted search and clear operations at XS 8595 - XS 8596. A light contact was established at XS 857963 on 052230H. Two enemy were killed and fifty-three suspects were detained. Two weapons were captured. The Fourth Battalion conducted similar operations at XS 8697 and detained thirteen suspects.

6 February - The First Battalion conducted search and clear operations at XS 8495 and XS 8595; the Fourth Battalion operated at XS 8696. A total of fifty-one suspects were detained. The Third Battalion moved to the operational control of the Capital Military District.

7 February - The First Battalion operated at XS 8495 and XS 8595, with no enemy contact. The Fourth Battalion operated at XS 8695 and suffered one Marine wounded; one Viet Cong killed and one captured; also, a B-40 rocket launcher and assorted CHICOM demolitions equipment was captured.

8 February - The battalions continued search and clear operations and detained fifty suspects.

9 February - The First Battalion left the operational control of Task Force B and joined Task Force A. The Sixth Battalion joined Task Force B on 090700H. The Fourth Battalion detained eight suspects. The Sixth Battalion established night positions at XS 856954.

10 February - The Fifth Battalion joined Task Force B on 101200H and remained in the vicinity of Task Force Headquarters. The Fourth Battalion operated at XS 8996 - XS 8697 and detained five suspects. The Sixth Battalion operated at XS 8495 and XS 8595 and detained thirteen suspects and captured one Viet Cong.

11 February - The Task Force was composed, now, of a Task Force Headquarters, the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Battalions operating in an assigned area of operations in the northeastern portion of SAIGON in Operation TRAN HUNG DAO.

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12 February - The Fifth Battalion was moved to the operational control of Task Force A and was airlifted to HUE - PHU BAI in I Corps Tactical Zone. The Fourth Battalion conducted search and clear operations at XS 8596, 8696 and 8697; the Sixth Battalion operated at XS 8595 and 8695. Task Force Headquarters detained 4 suspects; Fourth Battalion detained 6 suspects; and Sixth Battalion detained 1 suspect.

13 February - The battalions continued to operate in their respective areas. The Sixth Battalion detained 173 suspects.

14 February - On 140600H, the Fourth Battalion was moved to the operational control of Task Force A, and was airlifted to HUE - PHU BAI in I Corps Tactical Zone. The Third Battalion joined Task Force B on 141100H and were established at XS 869968. The Sixth Battalion detained 8 suspects.

15 February - The Sixth Battalion moved to XS 857946; 1 Viet Cong was captured and 69 suspects were detained throughout the day. The Third Battalion detained 30 suspects.

16 February - The Third Battalion operated in the vicinity of XS 8697. The Sixth Battalion operated in the area of XS 8594 - 8595 - 8694 - 8596 and detained 104 suspects.

17 February - The Third Battalion operated in the vicinity of XS 8696 - XS 8697 and detained 8 suspects. The Sixth Battalion operated in the vicinity of XS 8594 - XS 8595 - XS 8596 and detained 30 suspects.

18 February - The Second Battalion returned to the operational control of Task Force B. From 18-24 February the Second and Sixth Battalions had no enemy contact, but detained 345 suspects.

On 180100H, a company of the Third Battalion defending the eastern approach to the bridge at XS 875974 was attacked by an estimated enemy battalion. A light fire team of U.S. helicopter gunships was used in support of the bridge from 180300H to 180313H. At this time, an additional infantry company of the Third Battalion was dispatched to reinforce the eastern bridge defenses. Two VN tanks were positioned at the western end of the bridge. Fighting was sporadic until 180550H. Four flights of gunships were used between 180345H to 180550H.

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At 180550H, the enemy force launched a heavy ground attack, of battalion size, from the northwest at XS 867967. One infantry company of the Sixth Battalion, VNMC was attached at 180700H and established blocking positions to the west at XS 861967. Nine flights of gunships and a U.S. airstrike were used between 180608H and 181153H. The battalion conducted a sweep of the battle area. Documents found indicated that the attack had been made by elements of the K-1 Battalion, DONG NGAI Regiment and the Second Battalion of the Fifth NVA Regiment.

The Third Battalion suffered 14 Marines killed and 32 wounded in this action. Enemy dead totaled 142 and 3 Viet Cong were captured. Further, 13 crew served and 16 individual weapons were captured.

19 February - On 190130H, the Third Battalion came under a mortar and B-40 attack at XS 875970. A flareship and helicopter gunships were requested. On 190150H, a second mortar and B-40 attack was made at XS 865968. Helicopter gunships were used in support from 190215H to 190300H. The attack at XS 865968 was broken off at 190315H. The attack at XS 875970 continued sporadically until 190430H. Elements of the Third Battalion conducted a sweep at XS 867968 at 190900H and encountered an estimated enemy platoon. Simultaneously, the Battalion Command Post at XS 867964 came under attack. Contact continued light to moderate until 192030H. A U.S. helicopter gunship fire team was utilized from 191950H to 192030H. A VNAF airstrike (two ALE's) was used at XS 866966 at 192100H. The battalion had five Marines killed and 12 wounded while accounting for 10 Viet Cong killed. One crew served weapon and three individual weapons were seized.

20 February - The Third Battalion conducted a through search of the previous day's battle field and found 55 Viet Cong dead and five individual weapons.

21 February - The Third Battalion conducted a search and destroy operation in the vicinity of XS 865975 which resulted in three dead Viet Cong, one Viet Cong captured and one rifle captured.

22-24 February - The Third Battalion conducted a sweep operation with no enemy contact. Eight Viet Cong bodies were found at XS 865975 and seven suspects were detained. One mortar was discovered.

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25 February - On 250315H, a bridge at XS 882956 in the Second Battalion area of operations was partially destroyed by demolitions. All elements of the task force continued small unit patrolling. No enemy contact was made; 63 suspects were detained.

26 February - Small unit patrols continued with no enemy contact; 19 suspects were detained.

27 February - The Second Battalion conducted a three company search and destroy operation on an island, center of mass XS 8996. One enemy sniper was killed. The bodies of eleven Viet Cong killed by artillery and airstrikes and several weapons were found. All other task force elements continued patrolling. Twenty-six suspects were detained.

28 February - On 280315H, the bridge at XS 897940 received mortar fire. Damage was negligible. Patrolling continued with fourteen suspects detained.

29 February - Patrolling continued with twenty-eight suspects detained.

1-3 March - Local patrols were conducted in the assigned area of operations. Light contact was made with the enemy which resulted in one Viet Cong killed and 39 suspects detained.

4 March - Local patrolling by small units was conducted in the assigned area of operation. Light contact was made with the enemy which resulted in 5 Viet Cong killed and 84 suspects detained. One element of Task Force B discovered a Viet Cong cache in the vicinity of XS 903976. A second element fired on an estimated Viet Cong platoon in the vicinity of XS 925946 resulting in a negative enemy assessment and one Vietnamese Marine wounded.

5 March - Local patrolling by small units continued in the area of operation with no enemy contact. One hundred and twenty-five suspects were detained.

6 March - Local patrolling by small units continued. Three Viet Cong bodies and two B-40 rocket launchers were found destroyed by artillery at XS 864973. Ten suspects detained.

7-9 March - Local patrolling by small units continued with no enemy contact. Thirteen suspects were detained.

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10 March - Elements of the task force continued small unit search and police operations in the northeastern quadrant of SAIGON.

11 March - One Marine of the Sixth Battalion was wounded as a result of a brief encounter with an estimated enemy squad on 112020H at XS 877971. New Battalion command post locations were as follows:

Second Battalion - XS 950930  
Third Battalion - XS 871968  
Sixth Battalion - XS 918933

Operation TRAN HUNG DAO was concluded this date.

Second Infantry Battalion, VNMC.

31 January - As an element of Task Force B, VNMC, the Second Battalion was airlifted from CAI LAY to SAIGON; the move was completed on 311830H.

1 February - From 010800H to 011000H, the battalion was under the operational control of the 8th Airborne Battalion, ARVN. The battalion was given the mission of seizing and securing the Vietnamese Language School approximately 400 meters from the Joint General Staff Headquarters. After securing the compound, the battalion discovered one United States and two Vietnamese civilians with their hands tied behind their backs and shot. At 011100H, the battalion was placed under operational control of the Capital Military District and proceeded to a hotel in the rear of the President Hotel in SAIGON. While securing this area the battalion received heavy B-40 and automatic weapons fire. This area was secured at 011400H. The battalion then moved to XS 835902 at 011500H. Five houses in this area were set ablaze by the fighting and one house had thirty secondary explosions. While clearing this area the battalion received approximately 250 B-40 rounds. This area was secured at 011730H. Night positions of the battalion were at XS 842897. Material results for 1 February were: eight Vietnamese Marines wounded; twenty-two Viet Cong killed; captured three B-40 rocket launchers, two K-50 rifles and one pistol, P-38, and destroyed three rounds of B-40 ammunition.

2 February - At 021030H, the battalion proceeded to the Fifth District Headquarters at XS 846897 to operate in an area of operations bounded by XS 831900 - XS 837900 - XS 830905 - XS 835905.

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While conducting clearing operations in this area the battalion received in excess of 250 rounds of B-40 fire as well as heavy small arms and automatic weapon fire. Night positions were located at XS 847897 for the battalion headquarters and the First and Second Companies, at XS 797865 for the alternate battalion headquarters and the Third Company; the Fourth Company was located at XS 827876. At 02000H, the battalion alternate headquarters received six rounds of mortar fire with negative casualties. Material results for 2 February were: one Vietnamese Marine killed and eight wounded; eight Viet Cong killed and five captured and the capture of one Smith and Weston .30 caliber pistol and two K-50 rifles.

3 February - The battalion was assigned an area of operations on KHANH HOI Island with the center of mass at 8689. The battalion formed on line from XS 850889 to XS 879890 and swept the island with negative contact. The battalion command post was located at XS 865885.

4 February - The battalion moved from KHANH HOI Island to an area of operations in the eastern suburbs of SAIGON. The Battalion Command Post and the Third Company were located at XS 875942, First Company at XS 864929 and XS 863918, Second Company at XS 883956 and the Fourth Company at XS 876947. Small arms fire was sporadic but with no casualties.

5 February - Small unit operations were conducted within the assigned area with no enemy contact.

6 February - Five tanks and two APC's of the First Troop, 5th Cavalry, 18th Infantry Division, ARVN were attached to the battalion. Additionally, the Second Company of the Sixth Battalion was attached and provided bridge security at XS 882956. Two 75mm howitzers of the Vietnamese Artillery Battalion were located at XS 887940. There was no enemy contact.

7 February - The battalion conducted small unit operations capturing one Viet Cong and detaining two hundred and thirty suspects.

8 February - A two company operation was conducted in an area, center of mass XS 895955, bounded by water on the north, east and west and Highway 314 to the south. One Viet Cong was killed at XS 875945.

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9-10 February - Small unit operations were conducted with no enemy contact.

11 February - A three company operation was conducted on an island, center of mass XS 9096. The western portion of the island was blocked by one company and the Battalion Command Post. Two companies conducted an amphibious landing by Vietnamese Navy assault craft on the southern end of the island and swept north. The operation took place from 110700H to 111700H. One Marine was killed and 3 were wounded. Eight insurgents were killed and 4 weapons were seized.

12-13 February - Search and clear operations were conducted within the assigned area with no enemy contact.

14 February - A battalion operation was conducted on an island, center of mass XS 9096. Two companies landed by Vietnamese Navy craft at XS 910975 and swept south. Another company was landed at XS 904957 and swept east. Two Viet Cong were killed and 2 captured. One weapon was captured. The operation was from 140800H to 141630H.

15 February - On 150915H, one company conducted a sweep with XS 905935 as the center of mass. The operation ceased at 151200H.

16-17 February - Normal operations were conducted within the assigned area of operations resulting in 135 suspects being detained.

18 February - On 180800H, the Second Battalion joined Task Force B.

Materiel results of the Second Battalion from 010001H to 180800H are as follows:

<u>VNMC</u>		<u>VC/NVA</u>		
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>VCC</u>	<u>VCS</u>
2	19	41	8	365

Weapons Captured:

- 3 Rocker Launcher, Soviet, RPG-2 (B-40)
- 1 Rifle, U.S., .30 Caliber, M-1
- 6 Sub-machine Gun, Soviet, 7.62mm, K-50
- 2 Carbine, U.S., .30 Caliber, M-1
- 1 Pistol, German, 9mm, P-38
- 1 Pistol, U.S., .38 Caliber, S&W

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3480Third Infantry Battalion, VNMC.

31 January - The Third Battalion, reinforced with two 75mm howitzers of Battery A, Vietnamese Marine Corps Artillery Battalion, was assigned an area of operations in western GIA DINH Province, TAN BINH District. On 310615, elements of the battalion received small arms fire from an unknown size enemy unit at XS 705935 resulting in the death of one Marine.

1 February - Small unit operations were conducted. An observation post of the Second Company exchanged small arms fire with an unknown size enemy unit at 010800H at XS 728935 with negative results.

2 February - At 020210H, the battalion command post received twenty-seven rounds of 82mm mortar fire resulting in six Marines wounded.

3 February - At 030001H, the battalion command post received an estimated 100 rounds of 82mm mortar fire resulting in one Marine wounded. A flare helicopter and gunships were utilized to prevent a Popular Force outpost from being overrun with a negative assessment, however, many blood trails were observed.

4 February - The battalion left the operational control of the Capital Military District on 041430H and came under control of Task Force B, VNMC. The battalion was located at the Amphibious Support Base, VNMC in SAIGON.

5 February - The battalion conducted operations in the vicinity of XS 860960 which resulted in the detention of seventy-five suspects.

6 February - The battalion reverted to Capital Military District's operational control on 061330H and moved to XS 845914 to conduct operations with the National Police. There was no enemy contact.

Thus far, during the reporting period, the Third Battalion base camp at XT 920004, near THU DUC, had sustained several Viet Cong attacks. Two Marines were killed and five Marines were wounded. Twenty Viet Cong were killed and six weapons were captured.

7 February - A two company sweep at XS 834914 resulted in the capture of four Viet Cong. Another two company operation at XS 833906 resulted in nineteen suspects detained and three Viet Cong captured. The Third Battalion base camp captured one RPG-2 rocket launcher and killed one Viet Cong.

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8 February - Searches were conducted by the First Company at XS 836909 and by the Third Company at XS 841928. A total of twenty-two suspects were detained and three weapons captured.

9 February - Fifteen suspects were detained.

10 February - The Fourth Company contacted a small enemy unit at XS 817898. One Marine was killed and one wounded. One Viet Cong was killed and one captured. One weapon was captured.

11 February - The battalion conducted a two company operation at XS 815896 resulting in 6 Viet Cong killed, 5 Viet Cong captured and 24 suspects detained. Four weapons were seized. There were no friendly casualties.

12 February - The battalion conducted a two company operation at XS 816896 resulting in 2 Viet Cong killed, 1 Viet Cong captured and 4 suspects detained. One pistol was captured.

13 February - The battalion conducted a two company operation at XS 825895 resulting in one Marine wounded, six Viet Cong killed and eight weapons captured.

14 February - The Third Battalion moved to the operational control of Task Force B at 140000H.

Materiel results of the Third Battalion from 310001H January to 140000H February are as follows:

<u>VMMC</u>		<u>VC/NVA</u>		
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>VCC</u>	<u>VCS</u>
4	14	36	14	159

Weapons Captured:

- 1 Rocket Launcher, Soviet, RPG-2 (B-40)
- 9 Rifle, Assault, Soviet, 7.62mm, AK-47
- 2 BAR, U.S., .30 Caliber
- 4 Sub-machine Gun, CHICOM, 7.62mm, K-50
- 3 Sub-machine Gun, U.S., .45 Caliber, Thompson
- 2 Pistol, U.S., .45 Caliber
- 2 Pistol, CHICOM, 9mm
- 1 Pistol, Unknown

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3480Fifth Infantry Battalion, VNMC.

6 February - The battalion returned to SAIGON on 061830H from II Corps Tactical Zone and moved to the Capital Military District (CMD) Headquarters in a reserve status under Capital Military District operational control. Two companies moved to the Second Police Precinct for operations.

7 February - Battalion headquarters and two companies were committed in the Fifth Police Precinct. Positions were:

Battalion Command Post	- XS 821887
First Company	- XS 819887
Second Company	- XS 869889
Third Company	- XS 857900
Fourth Company	- XS 877891

8 February - On 080730H, the Fourth Company killed four Viet Cong at 821895 and captured three weapons and an assortment of equipment. On 081000H, the Fourth Company killed one Viet Cong and captured one Viet Cong at XS 871894. The First and Third Companies established blocking positions from XS 836897 to XS 835902 - XS 833901. Two Marines were wounded on 081630H. The blocking positions were established on 081800H. Three Viet Cong were captured and seven suspects were detained. On 082320H, one Viet Cong was killed and one Viet Cong was captured at XS 835898.

9 February - The First and Third Companies swept westward from their blocking positions. One captive was taken at XS 821895 and one enemy was killed at XS 834901. Thirty-two suspects were detained; an additional seventy suspects were detained later at a checkpoint at XS 832901. Contact with an estimated enemy platoon was made at XS 819900 on 092230H. Thirteen enemy were killed and nine weapons and assorted equipment were captured.

10 February - Operations were continued in the area of contact resulting in two enemy killed, four enemy captured and two weapons captured. The First Company captured three Viet Cong and detained three suspects at XS 831899. The Third Company detained four suspects at XS 833897. The Fifth Battalion came under the operational control of Task Force B, VNMC on 101200H.

Materiel results of the Fifth Battalion from 061830H to 101200H February are as follows:

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VNMC	VC/NVA			
KIA 0	WIA 2	KIA 22	VCC 13	VCS 116

Weapons Captured:

12 Rifle, Assault, Soviet, 7.62mm, AK-47  
1. Pistol, CHICOM, 7.62mm, Type 54

Sixth Infantry Battalion, VNMC.

1 February - The battalion was assigned to Task Force A, VNMC in II Corps Tactical Zone.

2 February - Upon completion of an airlift from II Corps Tactical Zone to SAIGON on 021930H, the battalion was assigned as a reserve element of Operation TRAN HUNG DAO and remained at the Capital Military District (CMD) Headquarters under the operational control of the Capital Military District.

3 February - On 031000H, the battalion proceeded to the town of THU DUC, XS 9299, by motor convoy. The battalion dismounted at XS 943996 and maneuvered west to the center of the city by 031330H. One company continued to move north to the base camp of the Second Battalion, reaching there at 031500H. Light resistance was met at XT 916003 resulting in two Viet Cong killed and three captured. One company met heavy resistance from 031500H to 031920H in the vicinity of XT 921007. The company established night defensive positions in the base camp of the Third Battalion, VNMC at XT 922007. Thirteen Marines were wounded and eighteen Viet Cong were killed in this encounter.

4 February - The battalion operated in and around THU DUC throughout the day resulting in six Viet Cong killed and the capture of ten weapons.

5 February - Three separate company size operations were conducted to the north and west of THU DUC with no contact. On 052300H, three rounds of 82mm mortar were fired at the bridge at XS 904985 with negative casualties. The Second Company was attached to the Second Battalion.

6 February - A battalion size operation was conducted from THU DUC to the vicinity of XT 9003. The base camps of the First and

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Sixth Infantry Battalions and the new VNMC Training Center are located in this area. The Viet Cong partially dismantled the bridge at XT 907014, but it was quickly repaired. The operation was concluded on 061200H. No contact with the enemy was made. One weapon was found.

7 February - A three company operation was conducted to the north and northwest of THU DUC from 070700H to 071130H with no enemy contact. A small enemy supply cache was discovered at XT 925017.

8 February - A battalion size operation was conducted in GO VAP District. Two companies boarded an LCU of the Vietnamese Navy at the SAIGON Navy Yard and were transported to and conducted an amphibious assault at XS 909953 on 080845H. Meanwhile, an additional two companies and the Battalion Headquarters established blocking positions at XS 891964. The companies having landed by LCU, began a northern push operating on separate axis. Contact was established with an estimated enemy platoon on 080900H at XS 912956. A U.S. light fire team was utilized in close support. Fourteen Viet Cong were killed; one female insurgent captured; five Marines were wounded and evacuated. On 181300H, a light contact was made at XS 913967 resulting in two Viet Cong killed and one captured. Twenty-six suspects were detained and a total of seven weapons were captured.

9 February - The battalion came under the operational control of Task Force B, VNMC on 090700H.

Materiel results of the Sixth Battalion from 021930H to 090700H February are as follows:

VNMC		VC/NVA		
KIA	WIA	KIA	VCC	VCS
0	5	42	5	26

Weapons Captured:

- 1 Rocker Launcher, Soviet, RPG-2 (B-40)
- 3 Light Machine Gun, CHICOM, 7.62mm, Type 56
- 10 Rifle, Assault, Soviet, 7.62mm, AK-47
- 2 Carbine, U.S., .30 Caliber, M-1
- 1 Carbine, Soviet, 7.62mm, SKS
- 1 Pistol, U.S., .45 Caliber

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## 11. Materiel results of Operation TRAN HUNG DAO by the Vietnamese Marine Corps.

<u>VNMC</u>	<u>US</u>	<u>VC/NVA</u>
<u>KIA</u> 49	<u>WIA</u> 227	<u>WIA</u> 3%
		<u>KIA</u> 709
		<u>VCC</u> 54
		<u>VCS</u> 2,087

\* Major W. P. ESHELMAN, USMC  
 Captain J. I. SIMPSON, USMC  
 Captain J. J. HAINSWORTH, USMC

Weapons Captured:

1 Mortar, Soviet, 82mm  
 1 Mortar, U.S., 60mm  
 18 Rocket Launchers, Soviet, RPG-2 (B-40)  
 7 Rocket Launchers, Soviet, RPG-7 (B-41)  
 2 Heavy Machine Gun, U.S., .50 Caliber  
 5 Light Machine Gun, U.S., .30 Caliber, M1919A4  
 10 Light Machine Gun, CHICOM, 7.62mm, Type 56  
 4 Grenade Launcher, U.S., 40mm, M-79  
 2 Rifle, U.S., 7.62mm, M-14  
 16 Rifle, U.S., .30 Caliber, M-1  
 86 Rifle, Assault, Soviet, 7.62mm, AK-47  
 8 BAR, U.S., .30 Caliber  
 1 Sub-machine Gun, U.S., .45 Caliber, M-3  
 15 Sub-machine Gun, U.S., .45 Caliber, Thompson  
 20 Sub-machine Gun, Soviet, 7.62mm, K-50  
 75 Carbine, U.S., .30 Caliber, M-1  
 2 Carbine, Soviet, 7.62mm, SKS  
 2 Shotgun, 12 Gauge  
 4 Pistol, U.S., .45 Caliber  
 5 Pistol, CHICOM, 7.62mm, Type 54  
 1 Pistol, German, 9mm, P-38  
 1 Pistol, U.S., .38 Caliber, S&W

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44 Crew Served Weapons Captured  
241 Individual Weapons Captured

12. Administrative Matters:

a. Transportation of casualties. The overall evacuation system was adequate. However, there were instances when established procedures extended the evacuation time required for critical cases. The requirement for the initial medevac request to be sent to VNAF and only after a denial by VNAF may a U.S. medevac be called for, is an established policy. The time interval involved, and the seeming inflexibility of the policy could prove to be fatal in emergency cases.

13. Advisor Analysis.

General. On 30 January the Vietnamese Marine combat units were deployed in II, III and IV Corps Tactical Zones. The flexibility of the Vietnamese Marine Corps was tested and subsequently proved itself by their ability to react quickly and effectively to movement orders. The units were hastily moved from a riverine or a jungle combat atmosphere to combat in a built up, heavily populated area. This extreme change in combat environment was affected with a minimum loss of friendly troops, while inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. Further, the rapidity with which units reacted to redeployment orders, within the SAIGON area, throughout the critical period, and their ability to carry out their missions on a par with Free World Military Forces has encouraged all advisors.

Tactics.

a. Combat in built up areas. The primary tactic used was of the "hammer and anvil" variety. A blocking force would be established, and an assault element would attempt to force the enemy into the waiting blocking force. This method proved itself to be highly acceptable, simple and easy to control. Normally, the blocking force would be established in the early evening, with the sweep scheduled for the next morning. It was determined that this practice had a secondary effect by disrupting the enemy's lines of communication throughout the night. A weakness of the Vietnamese Marine Corps

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units was noted however. The search technique employed were less than desireable. Only on rare occasions were buildings thoroughly and methodically searched.

b. Chemical Agents. Chemical riot control agents were not utilized. The primary reason being that the Vietnamese Marine Corps battalions were not equipped with field protective masks and that only CS grenades, in limited quantities were on hand.

c. Organic Supporting Arms. The mortars, recoilless rifles, and for purposes of this report, the M-72 LAAW were not used to any extent within the built up areas in SAIGON. Orders were received during the initial stages of the operation limiting the use of weapons larger than the M-79 in heavily populated areas. In the suburban areas of SAIGON, organic supporting arms were rarely, if ever, used. The reliance was strictly on "gunships". The mortars were set in generally at night to provide illumination with no pre-planned final protective or harassing and interdiction fires.

14. Recommendations.

a. Air evacuation of Vietnamese casualties. A policy should be established whereby once a medevac is requested in a serious case i.e., loss of life is imminent, the first available air transport is dispatched regardless of national source.

b. Search techniques in built up areas. I do not wish to detract from simplicity in combat operations, however, the formation of a battalion in two single files moving up a city street is in violation of all principles of march security and detracts drastically from any attempt to search out pockets of enemy activity. My recommendation was at the time and remains now, to use the battalion reserve element (normally a company) to provide simultaneously, both flank security and an area search.

c. Use of Chemical Agents. It is recommended that the use of riot control agents be emphasized and encouraged at all levels i.e. commander's conferences, NCO School and unit training. In modern warfare, the delivery systems of riot control agents are imaginative and numerous. The use of these agents in offensive combat is limited primarily by the preparedness of the unit by having field protective masks available and the commanders initiative and ingenuity.

d. Use of organic supporting arms. A review of this subject by way of Marine advisors comments over the last half decade shows

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this topic to be the "old dog... beaten to death". It is my opinion that the Vietnamese commanders will never set up, lay in, refer, and fire his mortars as long as he has the energetic U.S. Marine advisor to call in the cure-all - THE GUNSHIP. Hence, a combination of two items to enhance the use of organic supporting arms is recommended; first, reluctance or outright refusal on the part of the advisor to request armed helicopters unless the situation demands it; secondly, increased emphasis in training of organic supporting arms.

  
H. J. SHANE**DISTRIBUTION:**

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A/A Rpt

9-12 Jan; 22-24 Jan;  
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