

DECLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

1ST 8" HOW (SP)

CONTROL # **0289-68**

1st 8" Howitzer Battery (SP)

3d Marine Division, FMF

FPO San Francisco 96502

3D MAR DIV SEC FILE
BT#520568
5750
2 Sept 1968

(Unclassified upon removal of enclosure (1))

From: Commanding Officer

To: Commanding General, 3d Marine Division, FMF

Subj: Command Chronology for the period 1 August 1968 to 31 August 1968

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.2A
(b) FMFPacO 5750.8

Encl: ✓(1) 1st 8" Howitzer Battery (SP) Command Chronology
✓(2) Explanation of Method used To Engage Enemy Helicopters

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b), enclosures (1) and (2) are submitted.

P. L. Townsend
P.L. TOWNSEND

Copy to:
CO, 12th Marines

Downgraded at 3 year intervals,
declassified after 12 years.
DOD Dir 5200.10

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 1 OF 10
COPY 1 OF 15

DOWNGRADED AT 3-YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

1ST-8" HOW BTRY

CMD CHRON

POC 1968

DECLASSIFIED

Enclosure (/)

CONFIDENTIAL

1st 8" Howitzer Battery (SP)
3d Marine Division, INF
APO San Francisco 96602

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY
1 August 1968 to 31 August 1968

INDEX

PART I - ORGANIZATIONAL DATA
PART II - NARRATIVE SUMMARY
PART III - SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS
PART IV - SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 2 OF 10

Enclosure (/)

DOWNGRADED AT 3-YEAR INTERVAL -
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

PART I

Enclosure (/)

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA1. DESIGNATION

1st B' Howitzer Battery (SB)

COMMANDER

Major F.L. GARD
 0776230/0802/0130
 1 Aug 1968 - 15 Aug 1968

Capt. P.L. THOMSTED
 087362/0409
 16 Aug 1968 - 31 Aug 1968

2. LOCATION"A" Platoon

1 Aug-7 Aug 1968 - Two 8" Howitzers (M110) at C-1, RVN
 8 Aug-31 Aug 1968 - Two 8" Howitzers (M110) at A-3, RVN

"B" Platoon

1 Aug-15 Aug 1968 - Two 8" Howitzers (M110) at Rockpile, RVN
 16 Aug-25 Aug 1968 - Two 8" Howitzers (M110) at C-5, RVN
 26 Aug-31 Aug 1968 - Two 8" Howitzers (M110) at Rockpile, RVN

"C" Platoon

1 Aug-3 Aug 1968 - Two 8" Howitzers (M110) at C-2, RVN
 4 Aug-5 Aug 1968 - Two 8" Howitzers (M110) at A-4, RVN
 6 Aug-7 Aug 1968 - Two 8" Howitzers (M110) at C-2, RVN
 8 Aug-31 Aug 1968 - Two 8" Howitzers (M110) at A-4, RVN

3. STAFF OFFICERS

NOT APPLICABLE

4. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

USMC
 OFF 8
 ENL 183

USMC
 OFF 8
 ENL 183

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 2 OF 10

Enclosure (/)

DOWNGRADED AT 3-YEAR INTERVAL -
 DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
 DOD DIR 5200.10

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PART II

Enclosure (/)

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

During the month of August "B" Platoon has been under the OPCON of 4th Bn., 12th Marines. Their primary mission, from both the Rockpile and C-2 has been to support infantry operations.

"C" Platoon was under the OPCON of the 108th Artillery Group (U.S. Army) on 4 and 5 August. On 8 August, both "A" and "C" came under the OPCON of the 108th Artillery Group. Their primary mission has been the destruction of enemy artillery weapons. In the month of August, this unit has been accredited with 19 enemy guns destroyed and an additional 25 enemy guns damaged.

"C" Platoon, firing from A-4 (Con Thien), also engaged probable helicopters on several occasions. Three times they fired at targets described by F.O.'s as "helicopters on the deck". All three times the F.O. reported seeing secondary explosions and resultant fires. On another occasion, "C" Platoon engaged helicopters in flight using the method described in enclosure (2).

During the month of August, the howitzers of this command fired 237 observed missions and 344 unobserved missions, expending 5738 rounds of M106 (HE) and 26 rounds of M404 (HE).

Also included in this report is the informal after action report on Operation Thor which this unit took part in during the month of July. Operation Thor was the largest operation by supporting arms in this war. It combined massive air power (both F-52 and TacAir Sorties) with the firepower of 4 8" Howitzers, 4 175MM Gun Batteries, and 4 155MM Howitzer Batteries. The report was not available at the end of last month.

PART III

SEQUENTIAL LISTING of SIGNIFICANT EVENTSA. COMBAT MISSION ASSIGNED

GENERAL SUPPORT OF THE THIRD MARINE DIVISION

B. SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONS CONDUCTED

1. Operation Kentucky
2. Operation Highrise
3. Operation Saline II
4. Operation Lancaster II
5. Operation Lancaster July
6. Operation Scotland East
7. Operation Highrise Thor

C. CASUALTIES INFLICTED ON THE ENEMY

1. 11 Confirmed KIA's
2. 37 Probable KIA's
3. 19 Artillery Guns Destroyed
4. 25 Artillery Guns Damaged
5. 4 Helicopters Destroyed (Probable)
6. 1 Helicopter Damaged (Probable)

Enclosure (/)

DOWNGRADED AT 3- YEAR INTERVIEW
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 10 YEARS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Enclosure (/)

PART III (cont)

7. 2 Fighting Holes Destroyed
8. 42 Bunkers Destroyed
9. 6 Bunkers Damaged
10. 7 Structures Destroyed
11. 1 Structure Damaged
12. 105 Meters of Trenchline Destroyed
13. 1 Bridge Damaged
14. 92 Secondary Explosions
15. 14 Secondary Fires
16. 1 O.P. Tower Damaged
17. 1 Truck Destroyed
18. 1 Radio Antenna Destroyed
19. 1 Ammo Dump Destroyed (Burned for 2½ hours)
20. 1 Sampan w/supplies Destroyed

D. CASUALTIES SUSTAINED
Two (2) WIA

E. NEW TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED
See Enclosure (2)

F. COMMAND RELATIONS
N/A

G. EQUIPMENT

The 8" Howitzers (M110) continue to function satisfactorily. The obtaining of replacement parts is an ever-increasing problem. As a result, a weapon may sometimes be "down" for several days for lack of a minor part. The Motor Transport Dsodline rate is increasing slightly, also due to a lack of replacement parts. We have yet to receive any of the new M151 jeeps.

H. LOGISTICS

We are able to resupply all our positions with no major difficulties except as noted in G. above.

I. CIVIC ACTION

The MEDCAP program for the village outside C-1, which this unit was instrumental in starting, has been taken over almost completely by a U.S. Army unit (C-1-40th Artillery Battery) at C-1. The corpsman assigned to "A" Platoon does make the trip from A-3 to C-1 at least once a week to assist the U.S. Army medic.

J. ADMINISTRATION
No problems

K. PERSONNEL

The Battery has joined 20 and dropped 20 enlisted men, resulting in a personnel operating percentage of 84. The Battery has joined 3 and dropped 2 officers, resulting in an operating percentage of 82.

Enclosure (/)

DOWNGRADED AT 3-YEAR INTERVAL
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Enclosure (/)

L. INTELLIGENCE
No CommentM. COMMUNICATIONS

Communications have been more difficult to maintain due to increased distances between platoons. We are attempting to alleviate this by mounting the RC-292's on telephone poles.

N. WEATHER

Generally hot, windy, and clear with occasional thunderstorms.

O. FIRE SUPPORT
N/AP. AIR SUPPORT
N/AQ. ACTIVATIONS/ DEACTIVATIONS/ REDESIGNATIONS
None

PART IV

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. After-Action Report on Operation Thor (Enclosure 1)
2. Explanation of System Used to Attack Helicopters in Flight (Enclosure 2)

UNCLASSIFIED

Enclosure (/)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL~~Enclosure (7)~~INFORMAL AFTER ACTION REPORT ON OPERATION THUR

1. Statistical Summary

- (1) Observed missions - 42
Rounds fired on observed missions - 887 HE, 42 Firecracker
- (2) Unobserved missions - 201
Rounds fired on unobserved missions - 1507 HE, 14 Firecracker
- (3) Total rounds fired - 2394 HE, 55 Firecracker
- (4) Observed missions with negative surveillance (including "100 X 100" with no report of damage) - 20
- (5) Reported damage inflicted by 22 observed missions.
 - (a) Buildings destroyed - 65
 - (b) Buildings damaged - 7
 - (c) Bunkers damaged - 9
 - (d) Bunkers destroyed - 6
 - (e) Secondary explosions - 12
 - (f) Secondary fires - 20
 - (g) Fuel dumps - 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
 - (h) Artillery pieces - 2
 - (i) Artillery pieces - 1 (probable)
 - (j) Meters of trenchline - 55
 - (k) Fighting holes - 6
 - (l) Pack animals - 3
 - (m) KIA (confirmed) - 3
 - (n) KIA (probable) - 2

UNCLASSIFIEDPAGE 7 OF 10

Enclosure (/)

DOWNGRADED AT 3-YEAR INTERVAL
 DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
 DOD 5200.10

CONFIDENTIAL

Enclosure (/)

CONFIDENTIAL

2. Chronology of Significant Events

(1) On 2 July 1968, this unit moved into position at A-3. The convoy experienced some initial operational confusion since it was formed of elements coming from four different locations (C-1, C-2, C-3, and Dong Ha). The guns were in position, laid, and ready to fire by 1500.

(2) On 5 July 1968, from 0855 to 1200, this unit fired a mission on a "fortified ville". Total rounds expended was 116 with a surveillance of 15 buildings destroyed, 1 fuel dump destroyed (two units were firing on it, this unit received half credit), 2 large secondaries, and 2 secondary fires.

(3) On 5 July 1968, from 2000 to 2020, this unit fired at a suspected Regimental CP. This unit was given a box 1000 meters by 550 meters upon which to fire. The box was divided laterally into 4 boxes 250 x 550. Each gun was given 2 deflections and 3 quadrants and directed to fire 3 rounds at each of its deflection-quadrant settings. Total expenditure was 72 rounds. The mission was officially observed but several secondary fires could be seen from A-3.

(4) On 6 July 1968, this unit engaged a "fortified ville and storage area". Total rounds expended was 156. Total surveillance was 23 buildings destroyed, 1 building damaged, 3 secondary explosions, 4 secondary fires, and 1 fuel dump destroyed.

(5) On 8 July 1968, this unit retrograded from A-3 back to its previous positions. This convoy experienced no difficulties.

3. Lessons Learned

(1) No new lessons were learned as this was a virtual "by the book" artillery operation.

4. Innovations

(1) No innovations were deemed necessary.

5. Problems Encountered

(1) Invariably this unit would experience extreme difficulties both transmitting and receiving on the AN/PRC-25's immediately before, during, and up to 15-30 minutes after B-52 strikes were held over the DMZ. The Communications Chief of this unit, after checking all other possibilities, theorized that possibly ECM gear on the B-52's was causing the difficulties.

(2) Numerous problems with maintenance of the weapons were encountered. These apparently stemmed from lack of exercise given the guns during their long stays in static positions.

(3) Due to hasty occupation of the position and the heavy load placed on the engineers prior to the operation, our gun positions were not satisfactory. The projectile and the propellant pits on the guns were only partially covered. The supplementary powder and projectile pits were not covered. If we had been subjected to any accurate incoming, we could have lost a large percentage of our ammunition.

PAGE 6 OF 10

DOWNGRADED AT 3-YEAR INTERVAL
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

Enclosure (/)

CONFIDENTIAL

Enclosure (/)

CONFIDENTIAL

6. Commanders Comments

(1) During Operation Thor this Battery was under operational control of the 1st Battalion, 83rd Artillery, USA. The 1st of the 83rd retained tactical fire direction control while this Battery retained tactical fire direction. A Battery Liaison NCO was provided 1st of the 83rd. This system worked extremely satisfactorily during the entire operation as reporting systems and procedures peculiar to this Battery were explained to the 1st Battalion by the Liaison NCO. Thus changing procedures of one unit to meet the needs of the other was not required. Recommend that this system be used in future operations with the U.S. Army.

(2) Operation Thor, during a five day period, provided this Battery with observed targets in quantities not normally obtained in a month of normal operations. In lieu of this, it was considered successful. Recommend that future operations of this nature be conducted.

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 9 OF 10

DOWNGRADED AT 3-YEAR INTERVAL
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

Enclosure (/)

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Enclosure (2)

EXPLANATION OF METHOD USED TO ENGAGE ENEMY HELICOPTERS

On the night of 9 Aug 1968 between 2030 and 2230, "B" Platoon, in conjunction with a highly sophisticated radar system located at Con Thien engaged enemy helicopters. While the radar system employed was a classified system, it is felt that this same method could be used in conjunction with the Q-10 radar.

The preparations necessary are these:

- 1) Determine (based on past sightings) the area in which the helicopters are most likely to appear.
- 2) On a map, place an OF fan with the vertex at the Battery (if the two are co-located this will simplify the tracking on the map).
- 3) Decide on a range at which the probable errors are at a minimum for Fuse Time M564.
- 4) Draw an arc on the OF fan at the range selected.
- 5) Pick a series of points along the arc, spaced 200 mils apart.
- 6) Compute the firing data for the guns at the chosen range with a particular altitude for each of the points. (This unit used 5 points, A, B, C, D, E and an altitude of 350 meters).

The sequence of actual firing is as follows:

- 1) The round is loaded. Since the range for all points is the same, the time setting is not going to change. (The objective will be to hit the helicopter as it crosses the arc).
- 2) The tube is elevated to the quadrant necessary for the pre-determined HOB. (If the helicopter is at an altitude other than the one the data is computed for, the change in QE will only be a couple of mils).
- 3) The tube is laid on the middle deflection for maximum flexibility.
- 4) As radar begins to track an enemy helicopter, it should first announce the altitude of the craft. The FDC can (using the mil relation) determine the change to the QE and announce same to the guns.
- 5) As soon as radar can predict the flight pattern of the helicopter, they should announce how many mils left or right of one of the pre-determined points, it will cross the arc. (For Example "Stand by.....Altitude 250... 50 mils left of D...."). The target deflection is then sent to the guns.
- 6) The command to fire will depend upon the speed of the radar team. If they can determine the speed of the target and compute the amount of time it will take to reach the arc, they can, knowing the time of flight, time the command to fire. Lacking this accuracy, the guns should be put on a "Fire as soon as possible" basis.

Using this method, "C" Platoon of 1st 8" Howitzer Battery scored one damaged helicopter (the radar determined one round exploded 40 meters from the target) and one possibly destroyed helicopter (immediately after the rounds exploded, a bright light was seen burning directly below them on the deck.)

PAGE 10 OF 10

DOWNGRADED AT 3-YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

UNCLASSIFIED

Enclosure (2)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~