

HEADQUARTERS
 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines
 1st Marine Division (Rein) FMF
 FPO San Francisco, California 96602

3/CBW/plb
 3121
 11 June 1967

From: Commanding Officer, Third Battalion, Fifth Marines
 To: Commanding General, First Marine Division
 Via: Commanding Officer, Fifth Marines

Subj: Combat After Action Report

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Ref: (a) Division Order 3480.1
 (b) 5th Marines Frag Order 28-67
 (c) 5th Marines Frag Order 32-67

Encl: (1) Operation Overlay No 1 for 26 May 1967
 (2) Operation Overlay No 2 for 30 May 1967
 (3) Command Group Route of March

1. Code Name. Operation UNION II.
2. Dates of Operation. 260600H May 1967 to 051700H June 1967.
3. Location. Quang Tin Province, Republic of Vietnam.
4. Command Headquarters. (See Task Organization.)
5. Task Organization.

3rd Bn (-) (Rein), 5th Mar

LtCol D. E. ESSLINGER

Maj L. E. JOHNSON

Maj B. R. CUMMINS

LtCol C. B. WEBSTER

H&S Co (-)
 Det, Co K, 3rd Bn, 5th Mar (Bn Security Plat)
 Det, Btry F, 2nd Bn, 11th Mar (LnTm)
 Det, 1st SP Bn (HST)
 Det, 1st Eng Bn
 Det, Hq Co, 5th Mar (Scout-Sniper Tm)

Capt H. C. STACKPOLE Jr
 2/Lt K. W. MOORE

Co I (Rein)

Co I
 Det, H&S Co
 Det, Med Plat
 Det, 81mm Plat (FO Tm)
 Det, Comm Plat (FAC Tm)
 Det, Intelligence Sect (Scouts & Interpreter)

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ENCLOSURE

ENCLOSURE (1)

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Det, Btry F, 2nd Bn, 11th Mar (FO Tm)
 Det, 1st SP Bn (HST)
 Det, 1st Eng Bn
 Det, Hq Co, 5th Marines (Scout-Sniper Tm)

Co L (Rein)

Co L
 Det, H&S Co
 Det, Med Plat
 Det, 81mm Plat (FO Tm)
 Det, Comm Plat (FAC Tm)
 Det, Intelligence Sect (Scouts & Interpreter)
 Det, Btry F, 2nd Bn, 11th Mar (FO Tm)
 Det, 1st SP Bn (HST)
 Det, 1st Eng Bn
 Det, Hq Co, 5th Marines (Scout-Sniper Tm)

Capt H. D. PETTENGILL
 2/Lt A. CURTIS
 Capt P. H. GOTTLIEB

Co M (Rein)

Capt J. R. McELROY

Co M
 Det, H&S Co
 Det, Med Plat
 Det, 81mm Plat (FO Tm)
 Det, Comm Plat (FAC Tm)
 Det, Intelligence Sect (Scouts & Interpreter)
 Det, Btry F, 2nd Bn, 11th Marines (FO Tm)
 Det, 1st SP Bn (HST)
 Det, 1st Eng Bn, 11th Mar (FO Tm)
 Det, Hq Co, 5th Marines (Scout-Sniper Tm)

3rd Plat (-) Co B, 1st Eng Bn (Scout-Sniper Tm)

2/Lt C. D. VENUTO

2nd Plat (-) Co B, 1st SP Bn (HST)

1/Lt R. H. BAXTER

2/Lt R. G. WILMES

Bn Reserve

Co K (-) (Rein)
 Det, H&S Co
 Det, Med Plat
 Det, 81mm Plat (FO Tm)
 Det, Intelligence Sect (Scouts)

Capt J. R. TENNEY

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Det, Btry F, 2nd Bn, 11th Marines (FO Tm)
Det, 1st SP Bn, (HST)
Det, 1st Engr Bn

6. Supporting Forces

a. Artillery

(1) From 26 May through 5 June 1967, during Operation UNION II, the Third Battalion, Fifth Marines was provided artillery support by the Second Battalion, Eleventh Marines. In direct support of the Battalion was one 105mm Howitzer Battery, Foxtrot Battery, consisting of four howitzers. Foxtrot Battery was used as a mobile support force, making three battery displacements and one platoon displacement in support of Operation UNION II.

(2) In General Support of the Battalion was one 4 gun battery of 155mm howitzers, one 4 gun battery of 105mm howitzers, and one composite battery consisting of four 155mm howitzers and four 105mm howitzer.

(3) By effectively displacing the mobile battery at ~~critical~~ times, artillery support was available to the Third Battalion, Fifth Marines during all phases of the operation.

(4) Extensive artillery preparation fires were employed during the entire operation. The timeliness of these fires proved to be most effective in supporting the Battalion's scheme of maneuver.

(5) Harrassing and interdicting fires were planned and fired each night during the course of Operation UNION II. Placing these fires close to our position together with timely firing deprived the enemy of the knowledge of our exact position as a pattern of fire was not established.

(6) Live fire missions were provided by the artillery forward observers during critical phases of the operation. Timely and effective fire was delivered on each occasion. In one situation, artillery covering fire enabled "M" Company to successfully withdraw from an open area in which they were receiving fire. After the Company had made it's withdrawal a heavy volume of artillery fire was adjusted on the enemy position. A sweep of the area followed the artillery fires and revealed that the enemy had fled the area after taking heavy casualties. Villagers in the area attested to the fact that many enemy troops had been wounded. A captured prisoner also told of the devastating effect of the artillery fire. He said he was separated from his unit as the enemy ran in all directions to escape the incoming artillery.

(7) By effectively displacing the mobile battery at ~~critical~~ times, artillery support was available to the Third Battalion, Fifth Marines during all phases of the operation.

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(7) It is the personal opinion of the FSC that the enemy used the noise of our incoming artillery to cover the firing of their mortars. There were several instances when immediately after an artillery mission was fired friendly units received incoming mortars. When the battlefield was relatively quiet the enemy mortars could be heard firing thus giving friendly troops a chance to take cover.

b. Air Support

(1) Operation UNION II took place inclusively from 26 May to 5 June. There were no periods during the operation where weather was a deterrent to the utilization of close air support.

(2) A total of 21 fixed wing strikes were run in support of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, 15 of which occurred the first and second days of the operation. In addition to fixed wing, Marine and Army armed helicopters and Air Force armed C-47 aircraft lended support. On several occasions during critical periods excessive delays occurred in obtaining air support which decreased the overall effectiveness of the air strike.

(3) All fixed wing air strikes were controlled by a Tactical Air Controller (Airborne). There were no occasions when air strikes could have been controlled as effectively from the ground as they were from the air.

(4) The AN/PRC-25 is a sturdy and reliable radio and served as the primary means of communication. The AN/PRC-41 units in the field were beset by minor mechanical problems which caused the reliability of this radio unit to be questionable. (5) One of the major problems during the operation was the heavy volume of traffic on the 5th Marines air frequency (TACP local). With three Battalions in the same area and all wanting maximum air support on one frequency cannot handle the traffic.

(6) With the exception of one USMC WIA by an Air Force armed C-47, all ordnance was accurately put on target with excellent coverage. On 2 June strikes were called within 75 meters of friendly lines with excellent results.

7. Intelligence

(1) The following enemy units were encountered during the operation. The enemy forces that were expected to be encountered on Operation UNION II were the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 3rd NVA Regiment located in the BT 0736 area and the 2nd Battalion, 3rd NVA Regiment in the BT 1131 area. Elements of the 21st NVA Regiment located in the BT 1030 area and elements of the GK-30 Communications Battalion which supports the 2nd NVA Division, were also expected to be encountered.

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b. Contact was made on the first day of the operation when encountered by elements of the 3rd NVA Regiment; heavy fire was received immediately upon landing at the helicopter landing zone at BT 0729. The enemy appeared to be deployed in an L shaped battle position around our landing zone. The enemy used small arms, automatic weapons, and 82mm mortars. Approximately twenty 82mm mortar rounds were dropped on the Battalion Command Post. Under the cover of darkness the enemy withdrew. A sweep of the area revealed several enemy graves which were dug straight down six feet with an opening of approximately 12 x 12 inches. Thus, the individual was shoved feet first into the hole with about 3 to 6 inches of dirt on top of his head. Extensive camouflage and well-dug entrenchments were used by the enemy. During the next two days, only sporadic sniper fire was received.

c. On Phase II (301030H-051700H) the battalion was lifted into the BT 1020 area and proceeded on the operation for the next two days receiving only sporadic sniper fire. On 2 June the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines encountered elements of the 2nd NVA Division. Heavy fire was received throughout the afternoon and into the early hours of the next morning. Again, under the cover of darkness the enemy withdrew. On 3 June the Battalion moved in and occupied the area from which the enemy had been dug-in the day before. A sweep of the area revealed the enemy's 75 recoilless rifle position from which they fired six rounds the previous day. This was the first time this Battalion had encountered a 75mm recoilless rifle. Also, indications of three 82mm mortar positions were evident. Enemy gear that was recovered revealed that the enemy probably had fresh troops that had been brought into the area recently. Again, indications pointed toward the enemy's use of extensive camouflage and well-dug-in emplacements. During both phases of the operation the enemy was heard on the Battalion tactical control net. The enemy was heard using the words "Don't shoot, Marines", when the Marines were closing with the enemy. Numerous documents and a crude map were captured. The map showed the deployment of their troops and the possible avenues of approach. Fifteen Viet Cong suspects were captured, among them was one NVA corpsman who stated he was from the 108th NVA Battalion. The NVA units were armed with assorted Chicom small arms, machine guns, automatic rifles, 60mm mortars, and 82mm mortars, and a 75mm recoilless rifle.

d. The area in which the Battalion operated in the first phase in the vicinity of BT 0729 and going west, was mostly rice paddies, hedgerows and tree lines which concealed entrenchments that afforded protection from air strikes and artillery fire. The second phase started when the Battalion was heli-lifted into a valley at BT 1122 which was surrounded by mountainous terrain. The mountains were covered with either high and thick elephant grass, or dense forests with thick undergrowth. After passing over the mountains, the Battalion moved again through rice paddy and hedgerow terrain.

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e. The reactions of the civilians to civic action and psychological warfare efforts were satisfactory. Civic action efforts varied from individual corpsmen helping with medical aid to the handing out of soap, candy, etc. to the villagers as the Marines passed through. Through these efforts there were incidents of the people volunteering information of local VC forces in the area. Psychological warfare was effected by the evacuation of ~~some~~ civilians from VC areas.

8. Mission. During the conduct of Operation UNION II, the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines was assigned the mission of conducting coordinated search and destroy operations within the assigned areas of operation to capture or destroy enemy forces and supplies located therein.

9. Concept of Operations

a. In conjunction with ARVN Forces and the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, conducted search and destroy operations. Priority of fires were initially to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines. (See Operation Overlay, Part I).

b. At L-hour (261000H), D-day (26 May) land in LZ Eagle (BT 073296) and secure the LZ. On order, continue the attack to secure Objective No 22 (BT 100310).

c. At approximately L+3 (301030H), land in LZ Robin (BT 100210) in trace of 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. On order, be prepared to follow in trace of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. Be prepared to continue the attack to secure Objective B (BT 161248). Be prepared to revert to Regimental Reserve.

d. As Regimental Reserve, on order land in LZ Cardinal (BT 129277) and secure the LZ. Continue the attack and establish blocking position vicinity Objective C (BT 138275-BT 137288).

10. Execution

a. 24 May 1967

(1) At 241600H the Commanding Officer of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines received the initial plans and operation overlay for Operation UNION II.

b. 25 May 1967

(1) At 252000H the Commanding Officer of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines received Frag Order 28-67, enemy situation overlay and operation overlay for Operation UNION II.

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(1) At 260945H Company L was heli-lifted from the Tam Ky LZ (BT 291233) to LZ Eagle (BT 073296). Upon landing Company L came under moderately heavy sniper fire from the north which wounded one officer and five enlisted Marines.

(2) At 261015H the Command Group left the Tam Ky LZ for LZ Eagle. Heavy sniper fire was received when the Command Group landed. No friendly casualties were taken.

(3) At 261100H Company M landed in LZ Eagle.

(4) At 261130H Company L (BT 072300) assaulted a tree line to the north in an attempt to reach Objective No. 2 (BT 083306). The entrenched enemy (BT 070304) countered with intense small arms fire, numerous rifle grenades and mortars. Two 81mm mortar missions, an artillery mission and two air strikes were called in with good coverage of the target area. Results were 8 USMC KIA, 13 USMC WIA including the Commanding Officer of Company L, 5 VC KIA (confirmed), 14 VC KIA (probable) and 2 VCS captured.

(5) At 261135H a CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter was shot down in LZ Eagle (BT 073296).

(6) At 261200H Company I landed in LZ Eagle, completing the heli-lift.

(7) At 261330H it was learned through the interrogation of the local populous that there is a reinforced company of approximately 200 men in the vicinity of BT 080300.

(8) At 261400H Company M (BT 073301) swept a village in support of Company L when they encountered the enemy (BT 078305) with automatic weapons, rifle grenades and mortars. A platoon from Company I was sent to reinforce Company M. Two 81mm mortar missions and two very effective air strikes were called in. Results were 9 USMC KIA, 20 USMC WIA, 5 VC KIA (confirmed) and 12 VC KIA (probable).

(9) At 261500H Company L (BT 072300) spotted an estimated 15 VC run into a treeline where a heavy volume of fire had just been received. Fired 20 rds of 81mm mortars and called in one air strike with excellent coverage of target. Results were 72 USMC WIA and 11 VC KIA (probable). BT 070304 accounted with intense small arms fire, numerous rifle grenades and mortars. Two 81mm mortar missions, an artillery (10) At 261600H Company I (BT 071300) platoon which was sent to reinforce Company M returned and Company I attacked south and east to come up on the southern flank of the enemy relieving the KIA pressure on Company L so that they could retrieve their casualties

(11) At 261135H CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter was shot down in LZ Eagle (BT 073296).

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from the open rice paddies. Company L encountered and suppressed the enemy at BT 082301.

(11) At 261700H Company L began pulling back to the Battalion Command Group's position leaving one platoon to provide security for the casualties until darkness fell when the casualties could be brought back to the LZ under cover of darkness.

(12) At 261730H the Command Group (BT 071300) and the downed helicopter received 10 rds incoming 82mm mortars from an unknown enemy position. Results were 2 USMC WIA including the Battalion Operations Officer.

(13) At 261800H the downed helicopter was repaired and flown out.

(14) At 261830H the Command Group again received approximately 10 rds incoming 82mm mortars resulting in the death of the Battalion Communications Officer and the wounding of the Battalion Commanding Officer.

(15) At 262000H LtCol D. E. ESSLINGER was med-evac'd and Maj L. E. JOHNSON was flown in to assume command.

(16) At nightfall the units were located as follows:

- (a) Command Group - BT 073298
- (b) Company I - BT 071298
- (c) Company L - BT 073298
- (d) Company M - BT 070305

(17) The following is a Narrative Summary of Combat Action for 26 May 1967.

- (a) 0945 - Company L landed in LZ Eagle and received moderate sniper fire.
- (b) 1030 - Command Group landed in LZ Eagle and the sniper fire increased.
- (c) 1115 - Company M landed in LZ Eagle. Company L left to attack and seize Objective No. 2 (BT 083301) when they ran into heavy enemy fire from BT 073303.
- (d) 1230 - Company M was sent to BT 070304 to reinforce Company L.
- (e) 1630 - Company I was sent south and east to come up on the southern flank of the enemy when they encountered heavy enemy fire from BT 082301. Company I overwhelmed the enemy and set up a night perimeter.
- (f) 1700 - Company M received incoming mortars, evacuated their casualties and set up a night perimeter.

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(g) 1700 - Company L pulled back to the Command Group's position leaving a platoon to provide security for the remaining casualties until they can be extracted after dark.

(h) 1830 - Command Group received incoming mortars wounding the Commanding Officer.

(i) The results for the day were 38 USMC KIA, 62 USMC WIA, 118 VC KIA (confirmed), 153 VC KIA (probable), 2 VCS captured, and 1 Chicom AK-47 rifle captured.

(18) Between 262030H-262359H Company M received Vietnamese transmissions over their company tactical net. The interpreter listened and recorded the following information: unit call signs were T-6, T-4, Txai Nguyen 33, zo Cong II, Nguyen Hai, Ming An, Tang An, Tang Nguyen, 113 and 12; messages were:

(a) 113 attack 5/3, 12 and over 5/3.

(b) T-6 or T-4 over, one unit reported it didn't have enough men to carry wounded.

(c) One officer was wounded.

(d) Two platoons pull back to reorganize

(e) Nguyen Hai to T-6, too many dead bodies in the field. Not enough men to pick up bodies, over, (Return), must pick up bodies.

(f) Ming An To Nguyen Hai. Make sure you pick up bodies.

(g) Tang An called Ming An and told him that if he didn't kill a Commanding Officer Ming An would be punished.

(h) Someone told Ming An to go out and get weapons so they (the weapons) may be used for an attack tonight.

(i) Note - all other call signs were used for radio checks. Also, between the hours of 2030 and 2230 they made frequent radio checks; that may have indicated unit movement.

d. 27 May 1967

(1) At 270500H Command Group moved the casualties and two platoons of Company L from the CP LZ (BT 073298) to a more secure LZ at BT 075297.

(2) At 270700H Major B. R. CUMMINS arrived to assume command.

(3) At 270800H the ALO spotted VC at the base of a hill at BT 065283 and called in 2 air strikes resulting in 15 VC KIA (confirmed) and 25 VC KIA (probable).

(4) At 270845H an OE Aircraft in support of 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines spotted numerous VC in a treeline (BT 078310).

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Five air strikes were called in resulting in 23 VC KIA (probable).

(5) At 271030H the Command Group moved from its present location (BT 073298) to join Company L at BT 075297 after all the excess and damaged equipment was evaced.

(6) At 271040H Command Group and Company L (BT 075297) moved out to secure Objective Y (BT 075303). Company I (BT 071298) moved out to secure Objective X (BT 083307).

(7) At 271200H Company I (BT 301089) swept village from which fire was received last night. Killed one VC male who ran when Marines approached. Local people stated that 40-50 VC had been in the village yesterday and that they had gone north last night. Results were 1 VC KIA (confirmed), 1 VC pack and 2 chicom grenades.

(8) At 271245H Company I and Company M reached Objectives X (BT 083307) and Z (BT 069306) respectively and were searching and clearing them thoroughly.

(9) At 271445H Company L (BT 072308) captured a VCS male and sent him out on a med-evac helicopter.

(10) At 271515H Company M (BT 072306) swept through area of yesterday's encounter finding four USMC bodies. Two had previously been reported as KIAs and the other two had been reported as WIAs. Also, twelve M-16s were found. All bodies and gear were evaced.

(11) At 271525H Company M linked up with Company L and the Command Group at BT 081303. Company M was moved through this position to secure the area at BT 075315.

(12) At 271730H LtCol C. B. WEBSTER arrived and assumed command.

(13) At 271800H Company L (BT 073309) searched area and found documents, canteen cover and a U. S. Cal 45 pistol serial No 13581. All were heli-lifted out.

(14) At 271830H Company L (BT 075301) found three bodies in shallow graves which appeared to be one or two days old. Results were 3 VC KIA (confirmed).

(15) At 272055H all units moved into and set up for the night in the following positions.

- (a) Command Group and Company M - BT 082325
- (b) Company I - BT 081321 to BT 083323
- (c) Company L - BT 083323 to BT 086325

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(1) At 280600H all units attacked along axis of advance to seize Objective No. 44 (BT 102347) with Company L guiding on the river, Company I guiding on the road and Company M in the rear as battalion reserve with command group.

(2) At 281200H all units had consolidated Objective No. 44 in the following positions to set up blocking positions for 1st Battalion, 5th Marines:

- (a) Command Group - BT 107347
- (b) Company I - BT 106346
- (c) Company L - BT 103344
- (d) Company M - BT 104346

(3) At 281215H Company I (BT 102344) searched their portion of Objective No. 44 finding one Chi-Com grenade and an NVA pack. Both items were destroyed in place.

(4) At 281700H a VN girl was med-evac'd with shrapnel wounds.

(5) At nightfall all units are located as in (2) above.

f. 29 May 1967

(1) At 290600H all units moved out in the attack to conduct search and destroy operations toward Objective No. 55 (BT 083355) and then on to Que Son. The units moved out in a battalion column with Company L leading followed by Company I, the Command Group and Company M protecting the Battalion rear. All units were using strong flankers.

(2) At 290700H the first element of Company L crossed the river.

(3) At 290830H the last element of Company M crossed the river.

(4) At 291100H the Battalion arrived at the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines position near Que Son.

(5) At 291200H all units were set in their night positions as follows:

- (a) Command Group - BT 023346
- (b) Company I - BT 022346
- (c) Company L - BT 024348
- (d) Company M - BT 025345

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g. 30 May 1967

(1) At 300945H the first element lifted off from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines' LZ (BT 129343) to the alternate LZ Bluejay (BT 113218) in trace of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines.

(2) At 301115H the last element landed in LZ Bluejay. No enemy contact.

(3) At 301125H Company L moved out to seize Objective No 3 (BT 118217).

(4) At 301300 all units moved out to seize the following Objectives:

- (a) Company L - Objective No 5 (BT 129226)
- (b) Company M - Objective No 6 (BT 129230)
- (c) Company I - Objective No 7 (BT 125230)

Very light sniper fire was encountered enroute to these Objectives.

(5) At 301400H Company L's S-2 scout learned from the local people that 30-50 VC carrying small arms and one mortar tube moved from the area of LZ Bluejay to vicinity BT 135289 on 29 May 1967.

(6) At 301530H Company M spotted 15 VC and called in 9 rds of artillery on them. The area was searched out with negative results.

(7) At 301730H all units have reached their assigned objectives and are again on the move to seize the following Objectives:

(1) At 300215H the first element lifted off from the 1st Battalion, 5th (a) Company M - Objective No 8 (BT 141238) Bluejay (BT 129233) (b) Company L - Objective No 9 (BT 138239) (c) Company I - Objective No 10 (BT 137237)

(2) At 301115H the last element landed in LZ Bluejay. No enemy contact (8) At 301800H Company L (BT 127230 to BT 132230) received 150 rds of small arms fire from BT 128232 and BT 131231. Company L returned a heavy volume of small arms fire and 50 rds M-79 and continued to move.

(9) At 301910H Company M (BT 137237) received 50 rds sniper fire as they moved up a narrow trail. A heavy volume of small arms fire was returned which suppressed the enemy's fire. Company M then started back up the trail and received 45 rds of automatic fire. This was also suppressed by a heavy volume of small arms fire in return. Company M then returned to consolidate with the rest of the Battalion for the night.

Very light sniper fire was encountered enroute to these objectives.

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(5) At 301400H Company L's S-2 scout learned from the local people that 30-50 VC carrying small arms and one mortar tube moved from the area of LZ Bluejay to vicinity BT 135289 on 29 May 1967.

(6) At 301530H Company M spotted 15 VC and called in 9 rds of artillery on them. The area was searched out with negative results.

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(10) At 301930H all units arrived at their night positions as follows:

- (a) Command Group and Company L - BT 135232
- (b) Company I - BT 135231
- (c) Company M - BT 134233

h. 31 May 1967

(1) At 310500H Company I moved out to seize Objective D (BT 140233).

(2) At 310610H Company M moved out to join Company I on Objective D.

(3) At 310745H Command Group and Company L moved out for Objective D in trace of Company M.

(4) At 311100H Objective D was secured and all units moved out in column through the thick vegetation for the resupply point (BT 153230).

(5) At 311300H all units arrived at resupply position and are patrolling immediate area.

(6) At 311400H the resupply helicopter received 8 sniper rds and Company I returned 50 rds small arms fire and called in an 81mm mortar mission and an artillery mission with good target coverage. Results were undetermined.

(7) At 311600H Colonel HOUGHTON made a short visit. Orders were to remain for the night.

(8) At nightfall units were located as follows:

- (a) Command Group - BT 152230
- (b) Company I - BT 155229
- (c) Company L - BT 153230
- (d) Company M - BT 148232

All units were employing LPs and ambushes in their respective areas.

i. 1 June 1967

(1) 010800H all units left last nights position in a battalion column with flankers on either side to follow in trace of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines as the Regimental Reserves to Objective E (BT 165290).

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The order of march was Company I, Command Group, Company L and Company M.

(2) At 01100H the 81mm mortar platoon corpsman was wounded by a sniper while crossing an open rice paddy at BT 162245.

(3) At 011245H Company M (BT 165242) received 8 rds sniper fire from BT 162245 wounding 1 Marine. Returned 25 rds small arms fire and continued to move.

(4) At 011700H all units arrived at BT 168238 just south of Objective E (BT 165290) to await further orders.

(5) At 011730H the Commanding Officer received orders to attack and seize Objective I (BT 135283). All units moved out in the attack.

(6) At 011900H Company I received 60-70 rds of automatic fire from 7 VC at ET 135284. 300 rds small arms fire were returned, two VC fell and were dragged off. An artillery mission was called in on the enemy area with excellent target coverage. Results were 5 VC KIA (probable).

(7) At 012100H all units arrived at Objective I (BT 135283) and set in at the following locations:

- (a) Command Group - BT 136287
- (b) Company I - BT 136287
- (c) Company L - BT 137286
- (d) Company M - BT 137287

11 June 1967 The order of march was Company I, Command Group, Company L and Company M.

(1) At 020700H all units moved out in the attack to seize the southern portion of Objective F at BT 096304. Enroute to Objective F Company I would seize Battalion Objective No 1 (BT 125298) and Objective No 3 (BT 122304) and Company M would seize Battalion Objective No 2 (BT 130300) and No 4 (BT 112303). The formation was two up and one back, with Company M on the right, Company I on the left and Company L in the rear. The CP group was in the middle.

(2) At 020830H Company M secured Battalion Objective No 2 finding the village devastated by previous bombings. There was not a building standing. At 1730H the Commanding Officer received orders to attack and seize Objective I (BT 135283). All units moved out in the attack.

(3) At 020845H Company M (BT 130302) flushed 3 VC carrying weapons. (One VC was wearing a khaki uniform.) The VC were taken under fire with small arms and M-79s. One VC fell and was dragged into the bushes. Results were 1 VC KIA (probable). Another VC was taken prisoner. The attack was conducted with excellent target coverage.

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(4) At 021045H all units moved out in the attack to seize the southern portion of Objective F at BT 096304.

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(4) At 020930H Company I (BT 120302) prepared the enemy positions (BT 120304) with 20 minutes of artillery and one air strike. After the prep Company I assaulted the enemy position. The enemy, estimated at 100 men, returned a heavy volume of small arms fire from the north and west holding up Company I short of their objective. Company M then swept toward the enemy position from the east and Company I moved up to join Company M. Results were 2 USMC KIA, 5 USMC WIA, including the Commanding Officer of Company I, 22 VC KIA (confirmed) and 45 KIA (probable).

(5) At 021250H a med-evac helicopter landed to pick up Company I's casualties and received a direct hit from a 75mm Recoiless Rifle round resulting in 1 USMC KIA and 1 USMC WIA.

(6) At 021330H the Chieu Hoi stated that the enemy will draw back into the village complex located in the vicinity of BT 107317.

(7) At 021700H Company I and Company M started toward Objective F again but were stopped short by enemy mortars and heavy small arms fire. Called in one air strike and numerous artillery missions. Results were 2 USMC KIA, 8 USMC WIA, 31 VC KIA (confirmed) and 41 VC KIA (probable).

(8) At 021730H ten refugees were heli-lifted out.

(9) At 021900H Company M received 3 rds of incoming 75mm recoilless rifle fire which inflicted no damage. An air strike was called in with excellent target coverage. Pilot believes he scored a direct hit on the 75mm recoilless rifle. Results were 5 VC KIA (probable) and 1 75mm recoilless rifle possibly destroyed.

(10) At 021930H Company M started attacking toward Objective F when they encountered the enemy dug in along a 600 meter front running east and west from BT 112303. The enemy had at least six automatic weapons and at least one 82mm mortar. Called in 3 artillery missions but the artillery did not silence the automatic weapons. Company M drew back to allow more artillery to prep the enemy position. Results were 6 USMC KIA, 8 USMC WIA, 22 VC KIA (confirmed) and 25 VC KIA (probable), lost one M-60 MG and captured one chicom LMG.

(11) At 022300H the units were in the following locations:

- (a) Command Group and Company L - BT 120302
- (b) Company I and Company M - BT 114304

(12) The following are total casualties for the day of 2 June 1967.

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- (a) USMC KIA - 12
- (b) USMC WIA - 40
- (c) VC KIA (confirmed) - 75
- (d) VC KIA (probable) - 117

k. 3 June 1967

(1) At 030230H the Command Group and Company L received 20 rds of enemy 82mm mortars resulting in 1 USMC KIA and 2 USMC WIA.

(2) At 030400H Company M and Company I moved out to attack and seize Objective No 4 (BT 112303), the enemy position.

(3) At 030530H the Command Group moved out to join Company M and Company I at Objective No 4.

(4) At 030730H all units had consolidated on Objective No 4. The area was then thoroughly searched out.

(5) At 031300H Company L found two shallow graves within their perimeter containing the bodies of 2 NVA troops. Results were 2 VC KIA (confirmed).

~~3121~~ (6) At 031305H Company K found one wounded NVA in a tunnel. Every effort was made to extract him, but he was armed with grenades and refused to come out. He was subsequently killed. Captured a cartridge belt, 3 chicom grenades, and five AK-47 magazines. Results were 1 VC KIA (confirmed).

(6) USMC KIA - 12

(7) At 031720H Company M found freshly used battle dressings covered with blood at BT 09299. All hamlets within a 500 meter radius of BT 105295 were deserted and had been for some time. The hamlet immediately south of BT 105295 has been completely destroyed by air and artillery.

(8) At 031750H Company I (BT 114304 to BT 107304) found many caves on and near the river banks. All were checked out with negative results. Also, many heavy blood spots were found in the area where the artillery hit the heaviest yesterday (BT 111302). One NVA was spotted and wearing a helmet and carrying a weapon (BT 112305). He successfully ran and hid before the Marines could take him under fire.

(9) At 032030H the Command Group moved out to join Company M and Company I. At 032215H Company L's LP attempted to enter the perimeter (BT 111304) without using the proper procedure and one Marine was wounded by the perimeter watch. All units had consolidated on Objective No 4. The area was then thoroughly searched out.

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(10) At 032304 Company I found two shallow graves containing the bodies of 2 NVA troops. Results were 2 VC KIA (confirmed).

(11) At 032330H Company K found two shallow graves containing the bodies of 2 NVA troops. Results were 2 VC KIA (confirmed).

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- (10) At nightfall the units were located as follows:
- Command Group - BT 111304
 - Company I - BT 112302
 - Company L - BT 113303
 - Company M - BT 110303

i. 4 June 1967

- At 040700H all companies left with two platoons each to conduct search and destroy operations in the following areas:
 - Company L - Area #1, vicinity of BT 102302
 - Company I - Area #2, vicinity of BT 096294
 - Company M - Area #3, vicinity of BT 088294
- At 040730H Company M (BT 110302) found a body buried wearing green utilities and NVA cartridge belt. Results were 1 VC KIA (confirmed).
- At 041230H Company K (BT 090293) caught two VC in a hole after they ran when the Marines approached. Results were 2 VC captured.
- At 041300H Company I (BT 112302) searched a village complex near their position and captured 10 VCS. All were forwarded to ITT.
- At 041705H a Company M patrol escorted a VC detainee who had been sent out to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines from the 5th Marines with the information that he knew where a VC leader lived and the location of a VC hospital at BT 112310. The patrol did not find the VC leader and the hospital turned out to be a very small hut that was capable of housing only a very few people. The only evidence of VC presence were several large blood spots just outside the hamlet where the alleged hospital was.
- At 041800H all units left for Objective J (BT 076326)
- At 041930H all units arrived at Objective J.

- At nightfall the units were located as follows:
 - Command Group and Company L - BT 074323
 - Company I - BT 076324
 - Company M - BT 074324

j. 5 June 1967

- At 050600H all units left to attack and secure Objective G (BT 045345).
- At 051000H all units arrived at Objective G.
- At 051300H the first elements were heli-lifted to the ISA at Tam Ky.
- At 051700H Operation UNION II was secured.

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11. Resultsa. Enemy

(1) The following is an assessment of VC personnel casualties inflicted by the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines:

- (a) VC KIA (confirmed) - 227
- (b) VC KIA (probable) - 379
- (c) VCC - 1
- (d) VCS - 14
- (e) Refugees taken out of VC controlled areas - 22.

(2) The following is a compilation of enemy equipment and material captured or destroyed by the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines:

- (a) AK-47 rifles - 2
- (b) Chicom LMG - 1
- (c) NVA packs with gear (destroyed and evac'ed) - 12
- (d) Chicom grenades destroyed - 8
- (e) Documents (destroyed and evac'ed) - 25 lbs
- (f) Medical Supplies (destroyed and evac'ed) - 15 lbs
- (g) Rice destroyed - 2700 lbs

~~SECRET~~b. Friendly

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11 June 1967 (1) Casualties sustained by the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines were as follows:

11. Results

- (a) Killed in Action - 50

a. Enemy

1. Gunshot - 38

(1) The following is a compilation of VC personnel casualties inflicted by the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines:

- (b) Died of wounds - 1
- (a) VC KIA (confirmed) - 227
- (b) VC KIA (probable) - 379
- (c) VCC - 1
- (c) Wounded in Action - 130
- (c) Refugees taken out of VC controlled areas - 22.

1. Gunshot - 69

(2) The following is a compilation of enemy equipment and material captured by the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines:

- (a) AK-47 rifles - 2
- (b) Chicom LMG - 1
- (c) NVA packs with gear (destroyed and evac'ed) - 12
- (d) Chicom grenades destroyed
- (e) Documents (destroyed and evac'ed) - 25 lbs
- (f) Medical Supplies (destroyed and evac'ed) - 15 lbs
- (g) Rice destroyed - 2700 lbs

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(2) The following is a list of weapons and equipment lost or destroyed by the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines:

- (a) 1 M-60 MG lost
- (b) 1 M-79 destroyed and evac'ed

12. Administration

a. Resupply

(1) Resupply was accomplished from the Logistical Support Area (LSA) at Tam Ky.

(2) Normal resupply of all classes of supply was accomplished every other day. Emergency resupply was accomplished when requested.

(3) Availability of helicopters was a controlling factor but overall support was excellent.

(4) The HST net was used as a logistical, administrative, and helicopter control net. The use of HST has improved considerably over the last operation. HST controlled the supporting helicopters very effectively and with a minimum of confusion with one exception. When the helicopters came into the zone a large group of people would rush out to help unload the supplies. This situation presents a lucrative target for the enemy. Commanders quickly corrected this when they were informed of the situation.

b. Maintenance

(1) Maintenance of equipment was accomplished through the LSA. Replacement of defective equipment took place in the field. No problems were encountered with maintenance.

c. Treatment of casualties, evacuation and hospitalization

(1) Evacuation of personnel was accomplished smoothly and usually in a minimum of time. Again, availability of helicopters was a big factor.

(2) Commanders must allow their trained corpsmen to ascertain the casualties' condition and determine what priority of med-evac they need. There were instances where an emergency med-evac was called for casualties that needed only a priority med-evac. Also the location and nature of the wound must be sent into the HST when requesting a med-evac helicopter as this also determines the priority of the med-evac. This is especially important to emergency med-evac's.

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(3) Wounded were removed expeditiously from the battlefield and excellent care was received throughout the evacuation chain.

d. Transportation

(1) Replacements and special supplies were transported by truck to the ISA. All resupply and replacements were delivered to the field by helicopter from the ISA.

(2) HST handled all the transportation into and out of the LZ in the field. Normally, everything worked very smoothly. On occasion some people would appear in the LZ as a helicopter was landing desiring to be heli-lifted out without informing the IST prior to this time. At times these individuals would not be heli-lifted due to previously planned loads. After a few incidents this was corrected.

e. Communications

(1) The AN/PIC-25 FM radio provided the primary means of communications during Operation UNION II. Some difficulty was noted in communicating from areas masked from the Regimental CP by foothills, but the problem was generally solved by erecting a high RC-292 antenna or establishing an airbornerelay station for short periods.

(2) No interference between frequencies was noted, however on several occasions the enemy forces were encountered on our frequencies. It should be pointed out that the enemy is capable of imitative deception and general harrassment on our circuits.

(3) The Battalion operated from a mobile command post during Operation UNION II. Two RC-292s were carried and used when necessary. The CP communication group was large in order to carry the extra RC-292s and radios. This also provided a readily available pool of replacements when casualties among radio operators occurred.

(4) Some difficulty was encountered with the accessories for the AN/PIC-25. The whip and tire antennas and their bases and handsets were in short supply. The AN/PIC-10 accessories were adequate substitutes when used with the proper adapters. It is suggested that supplies of the adapters be made up and made available so that the substitute equipment may be used.

f. Medical Evaluation

(1) Killed in Action	- 50
(2) Wounded in Action	- 130
(3) Non-evac injuries	- 11
191 Total (evac)	

(4) Wounded in Action	35 Total (non-evac)
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(20)

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(5) Died of wounds	-1
(6) Non-combat deaths	-0
(7) Combat injuries-non wound	-0
(8) Non-combat injuries (Total)	-11
(a) Heat exhaustion	-9
(b) Possible Malaria	-1
(c) Battle shock	-1

13. Special Equipment and Techniques

None

14. Commander's Analysis

Operation Union II was designed to find, fix and destroy elements of the 2nd NVA Regiment located somewhere west of Thang Binh close to grid square BT 0930. This was a mission accomplished more quickly than anticipated. Contact with NVA units was made immediately upon landing on D-day; heavy losses were inflicted upon the enemy on D-day and subsequently on 2 June. The maneuver of Battalion elements was made smoothly and supporting arms were normally quick to assist when needed. On operations of this type where "search and destroy" takes on major importances it is often expedient to move very slowly; this gives small units the time required to thoroughly seek out the enemy in caves and tunnels. While slow movement is not always feasible in a pursuit or emergency support movement there are many instances where a more prolonged stay in certain hamlets could most certainly have uncovered more enemy prisoners as well as weapons and equipment. The NVA units are well disciplined and equipped but morale appears to be at a low level and their logistic support is very limited. Their greatest combat advantage is in their superbly prepared fortified hamlet positions from which they fight tenaciously but must break contact after 4 or 5 hours of sustained combat because of their limited support. This advantage can be materially reduced by judicious use of preparatory fires and/or reconnaissance by fire. A definite tactical pattern seems to be developing from recent operations against the well dug-in NVA units.

None (1) Contact is generally initiated by the enemy who is in a stationary concealed position from which he can observe approaching friendly forces.

Oper (2) Heavy fire is exchanged by U.S. and NVA units. Elements of the 2nd NVA Regiment located somewhere west of Thang Binh close to (3) U.S. forces hold positions from 200 to 500 meters from enemy lines and call in concentrated air and artillery missions while continuing small arms fire; heavy losses were inflicted upon the enemy on D-day and subsequently on 2 June. The maneuver of Battalion elements was made smoothly and supporting arms were normally quick to assist when needed. On operations of this type where "search and destroy" takes on major importances it is often expedient to move very slowly; this gives small units the time required to thoroughly seek out the enemy in caves and tunnels. While slow movement is not always feasible in a pursuit or emergency support movement there are

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(4) U.S. forces maneuver to assault and overrun enemy positions and enemy withdraws in an orderly manner when possible delaying U.S. forces with accurate sniper teams and some mortar fire.

(5) Battered enemy remnants escape under cover of darkness unless large U.S. forces are present to cut off escape routes.

Generally speaking, the NVA forces fight very well but are taking very heavy losses from recent encounters with Marine units—specifically 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines.

15. Recommendations

(1) That company corpsmen always be allowed to make the final assessment as to the priority of a med-evac.

(2) Due to the fact that the enemy uses the noise of our artillery to cover the sound of his mortar firing it is recommended that Marines stay under cover as much as possible during an artillery mission and shortly thereafter as a precaution.

(3) That radio discipline over air control nets be stressed and re-stressed to alleviate the volume of extraneous conversation during critical combat periods.

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