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

3/LOG/dab
5750
31 March 1968

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, 1st Marine Division (Rein)
Via: Commanding Officer, 5th Marines

Subj: Command Chronology for period 010001H to 312400H March 1968

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.2A
(b) FMF PacO 5750.8
(c) DivO 5750.2B

Encl: (1) Command Chronology Report

1. In accordance with the provisions of references (a), (b) and (c), the Command Chronology for the month of March 1968 is hereby submitted.

R. C. Wise
R. C. WISE
By direction

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

Command Chronology
010001H to 312400H March 1968

Index

Part I - Organizational Data
Part II - Narrative Data
Part III - Sequential Listings of Significant Events

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ENCLOSURE (1)

UNCLASSIFIED

Mar 1968

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PART I
ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

<u>1. Designation</u>	<u>Commander</u>	<u>Period Covered</u>
3rd Battalion, 5th Marines	LtCol W. K. ROCKEY	to 27 Mar 68
	LtCol D. N. REXROAD	from 28 Mar 68

SUBORDINATE UNITS

H&S Co	Capt R. J. MARNELL	
Co I	Capt H. KOLAKOWSKI Jr.	
Co K	1stLt F. W. SMITH	
Co L	Capt J. D. NIOTIS	
Co M	Capt J. E. MITCHELL	to 11 Mar 68
	Capt F. D. PACELO	from 12 Mar 68

2. Location. Thau Thien Province, RVN

3. Staff Officers

XO	Major R. C. WISE	
S-1	WO J. S. BISESI	
S-2	WO J. W. BEVIER	
S-3	Capt G. W. BOWERS	
S-4	1stLt G. C. BACON	
S-5	Capt J. A. FERNANDEZ	to 18 Mar 68
	2ndLt W. H. DODSON	from 19 Mar 68

4. Average Monthly Strength

USMC		USN	
<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>
34	1082	2	55

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DECLASSIFIED

Mar 1968

PART II
NARRATIVE SUMMARY

1. There currently exists a need in the Command for two 0302 Captains, four 0302 Lts., an 0202 Captain, an 0402 Captain, and one 3502 Lt. There also exist a need for 1 MSgt, 1 GySgt, and 10 SSgt 0369. The major shortage exists in Staff NCO leadership in the 03 field. This shortage is made more evident by the fact that the Battalion has only 58% of its M/L strength in Staff NCO's, 0369.
2. Battalion Intelligence efforts were primarily directed toward enemy activity in the Battalion's new TAOR South of the Phu Bai Combat Base. During the month the enemy moved in small groups, with little emphasis on offensive action until the last few days of the month. Numerous booby traps and command detonated mines were encountered during the month, and mining incidents along highway #1 increased a great deal toward the end of the month.
3. The Battalion started and completed several one and two Company Operations within the new TAOR. Intensive patrolling of Highway #1 and the surrounding hills was continued in an effort to keep Highway #1 open for convoy travel. Operation HOUSTON, which commenced on 26 February 1968, continued throughout the month of March.
4. The Battalion held no Indoctrination School of its own. All new personnel attended a regimental Indoctrination School. Special schools were conducted by the Battalion during the month, to encompass FO/FAC procedures, Communication Field Expedients, and instruction in the use of the AN/PPS-6 Radar set.

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PART III

SEQUENTIAL LISTINGS OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS1. Topicsa. Personnel and Administration

(1) The Battalion began the month of March with an on board strength of 35 Marine Officers, 1098 Marine Enlisted, 2 Navy Officers, and 53 Navy Enlisted. The current on board strength is 34 Marine Officers, 1074 Marine Enlisted, 2 Navy Officers, and 57 Navy Enlisted.

(2) The current effective strength of the Battalion is 29 Marine Officers, and 903 Marine Enlisted.

(3) Forty-one Marine Enlisted plus 4 Marine Officers are scheduled for rotation during April 1968 as shown below:

<u>MOS</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
0141	1
0239	1
0311	20
0331	2
0341	3
0351	7
0369	1
2531	2
2533	1
2542	2
3371	1
2502	1 Capt
7652	1 Capt
0302	1 Lt
7561	1 Capt

(4) Critical MOS shortages are shown below:

<u>MOS</u>	<u>ML</u>	<u>OH</u>	<u>SHORTAGE</u>
0302	33	27	1 Major, 1 Capt, 4 Lt
0202	1	0	1 Captain
0402	1	0	1 Captain
0130	2	1	1 Lt
3502	1	0	1 Lt
0141	20	12	2 Sgt, 6 LCpl
0331	110	82	8 Sgt, 20 Cpl
0369	34	22	1 MGSgt, 1 GySgt, 10 SSgt
0441	2	1	1 GySgt
2549	1	0	1 SSgt
2591	1	0	1 MGSgt
2811	1	0	1 Cpl

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2867	1	0	1 SSgt
3041	8	3	1 GySgt, 1 Sgt, 1 Cpl, 2 PFC
3381	1	0	1 GySgt

(5) Casualties

KIA	18
DOW	1
WIAE	79
WIANE	16
NON HOSTILE	21
MIA	0

b. Intelligence(1) Personnel

(a) During the month of March the Battalion Intelligence Section lost one Scout Trainee, LCpl 0311 and joined one GySgt 0239.

(b) The two Scout Dog teams, previously withdrawn by III MAF, have been reassigned to the Battalion. Due to the physical stamina of the dogs and the terrain that they are working in, their usefulness to this Battalion has been lessened. The two MP's assigned to this Battalion have been withdrawn by Division. The Battalion's remaining attachments include one ITT Team, four Scout/Sniper Teams and one IT Sgt (0251). The Battalion has utilized the services of an Armed Propaganda Team and also an Armed Broadcasting Team. The results of the use of these two teams has been excellent and the Battalion intends to make use of their services in the future.

(2) Collection. The main collection efforts for March were:

- (a) Map corrections
- (b) Trails and water points
- (c) Enemy Order of Battle
- (d) Enemy infrastructure

(3) Enemy Activity

(a) Synopsis. There has been little enemy activity in the Battalion TAOR during March. The enemy's main effort was aimed at the collection of foodstuffs. The enemy moved only in small units and cells and avoided contact. In the southern portion of our TAOR there have been reports of a high rate of malaria in the enemy ranks. Adding to his loss of men also is the Chu Hoi program and the nightly H&I fires. The enemy still is able to maintain a force able to operate and conduct abductions along with terrorism and propaganda activities.

ENCLOSURE (1)

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In the northern sector of our TAOR the enemy is reported to have two platoons of mixed NVA/VC troops. Combined with these units are the local force guerillas giving the enemy the capability of fielding a company-sized force. Only elements of this force have been sighted which would tend to negate the threat of this unit combining to act as an entity. The enemy has used the M-26 grenade to a great extent for booby traps. The M-16 mine along with the Bouncing Betty type mine have also been encountered during sweeping operations. It has been reported that the enemy uses these mines as a delaying tactic in order to give him a chance to move out of the path of the sweep force. Normally the enemy comes out of the mountains at night to collect rice and information and moves back to the protection of the hills during the daylight hours. This pattern has been broken on several occasions when the Battalion has apprehended VC in the local markets during the daylight hours.

(b) The enemy activities during March have indicated the following capabilities:

1 Continued harrassing actions to include:

- a Sniping
- b Small scale attacks and ambushes
- c Use of mines and booby traps
- d Propaganda
- e Terrorism

2 Attack of selected friendly installations with 60mm/81mm mortars and rockets.

(4) Vietnamese Attachments

(a) Interpreters. The Battalion transferred two ARVN interpreters to Division and also joined five additional ARVN interpreters during March. An effort has been made to insure that each of the rifle companies and the Alpha Command Group has a qualified ARVN interpreter.

(b) Kit Carson Scouts. The Battalion has three Kit Carsons working with the companies.

(5) Enemy Losses. The enemy suffered the following casualties as a result of 3rd Bn, 5th Marines actions during March 1968:

KIA: 3
 POW: 8
 DET: 20
 Chieu Hoi: 13

(6) Weather

- (a) Rainfall: 2"
- (b) Temperature:
 - 1 Avg. high 80
 - 2 Avg. low 65

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- (c) Light:
 1 Avg. Sunrise: 0656
 2 Avg. Sunset: 1959

(d) Winds: Avg. 10 Kts.

(7) Terrain. The TAOR changed several times during March. It is now bounded by the following:

(a) From ZD1904 to AU8504, southeast along the coast (including the Bai Chuoi Peninsula) to AT944884, west to AT900885, northwest to AT865955, north across the Dam Lap An Bay to the shore at AT800975, north along the shoreline to AT840968, west to ZC198968, north to ZC185995, northeast to ZD193020 and northwest to ZD1904.

(b) The TAOR has three important terrain features. They are the Hai Van Pass with center mass at AT937915, the Lang Co bridge at AT886957 and the Phu Gia Pass located at AU833000.

(c) The main bridges are the Thua Luu bridge (#11) located at ZD198001 and the Lang Co bridge (#12) located at AT886957.

(d) The only river in the TAOR is the Song Bu which is located at ZD1902.

(e) The hills that are located in the TAOR are given below at center Mass. From east to west.

<u>Hill (in meters)</u>	<u>Location</u>
356	AT965935
130	AT957888
724	AT944920
534	AT940932
1192	AT915911
943	AT901927
334	AU842013
150	AU830037
900	AT811966
88	AU808017

(See AMS Series L7014, Sheets 6541 I, 6541 II, 6541 III and 6641 IV)

(8) Captured Equipment. The following are the totals of weapons and equipment captured by the Battalion during March 1968:

(a) Weapons

2 45 cal. submachine guns

1 M-16

1 M-1 Carbine

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(b) Equipment

12 82mm. Mortar rds
4 75mm RR rds
30 60mm. Mortar rds
2 B-40 rds
400 7.62 rds
800 5.56 rds
3 Containers of explosives
1 Block of TNT
4 Fuses
13 M-26 grenades
1 Box mine
1 Bouncing Betty
1 M-16 mine
2 Claymore mines

(c) 782 Gear 15 Lbs(d) Documents 2 LbsE. Training

(1) Training included lectures, demonstrations, and/or application in the following subjects:

- (a) Weapons Safety
- (b) Radio Procedures
- (c) Spot Reports
- (d) FO & FAC Procedures
- (e) Med Evac Procedures

ENCLOSURE (1)
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(f) Fan Firing of all individual and crew served weapons.

(g) AN/PPs-6

(h) Field Communications Expedients

(2) Five indoctrination schools were conducted by 5th Marines. Classes on FO/PAC Procedures, and on care, cleaning, maintenance and safety of the M-16A1 rifle are included in the school syllabus.

(3) Personnel attended the following schools:

(a) SNCO Leadership School	3
(b) Officer Leadership School	1
(c) NCO Leadership School	2
(d) Basic Organic Supply Accounting	1
(e) Vietnamese Language	5
(f) Motor Vehicle Maintenance	3
(g) Infantry Weapons Repair	1

d. Operations

- (1) 010001H March Operation HOUSTON continues.
- (2) 2 March Company L terminated Operation HUE CITY.
- (3) At 081630H Company L chop to parent unit.
- (4) At 121530H assume OPCON Alpha 1/5.
- (5) At 181400H Chop Co M to 1/5.
- (6) At 191000H Chop Company A 1/5 to parent unit.
- (7) At 231000H Company M chop from 1/5 to parent unit.
- (8) At 312400H March Operation HOUSTON continues.

e. Artillery Support

(1) Battery F, 2nd Bn, 11th Marines was in direct support of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines during the month of March. Battery L, 4th Battalion, 11th Marines and Battery B, 4th Battalion, 11th Marines were in general support.

(2) A total of 4,626 high explosive, 169 WP, 92 Illumination, 21 HC smoke rounds were fired in support of 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines. Of the high explosive rounds 4,314 were fired with fuse quick, 191 with fuze VT, 118 with fuze time, and 3 with fuze delay.

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f. Air Support(1) Tactical Fixed Wing Support: 20 airstrikes

- (a) 18 TACA controlled
- (b) 2 FAC controlled

(2) Helicopter Support

- (a) 30 Medevacs, including 10 emergencies.
- (b) 7 Visual reconnaissance flights.
- (c) 16 Resupplies to troops in the field.
- (d) 2 HUAY Gunship airstrikes.

(3) Other Fixed Wing Support: 20 Air Observer missions.

(4) Personnel. There are two ALO/FAC officers assigned to this Battalion. Sufficient trained personnel were available to provide radio teams at Company and Battalion level.

g. Communications

(1) Operation HOUSTON has been supported primarily by the use of the AN/PRC-25 with H.F. backups. Radio Relay utilizing AN/MRC-62 at Regiment and Battalion level has provided 50% telephone availability between forward and rear areas.

(2) The ruggedness of the terrain has resulted in accessories, handsets and antennas, being broken at an increased rate. Antennas having been a critical item and are now even more so.

(3) Continued success utilizing two enlisted FAC members attached to each Company as communication supervisors for the Company has enabled the Battalion to complete the scheduled quarterly second echelon maintenance check of all communications equipment.

(4) Constant reconciliation with Battalion Supply has resulted in outstanding support from supply channels; however, a minimum lead time of 120 days must be anticipated and parts requisitioned on anticipated need at least one full quarter ahead of time. Usage data has been established in these areas.

(5) The Electronics-Maintenance Support received from FLSG-A has been outstanding.

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h. Logistics

(1) General. The overall logistics status of the Battalion is satisfactory. However, deadlined vehicles are becoming an increasing problem due to the unavailability of parts.

(2) Supply. On 1 March, Battalion Supply began its move to the Phu Bai area. This was effected by the use of helicopters. All of the Battalion assets were assigned a priority with the combat essential equipment taking precedence in the order of movement.

(a) Due to limited assets initially in the Phu Bai area, it was necessary to requisition assets already held by the Battalion in Danang to satisfy the immediate requirements.

(b) By 21 March, Battalion Supply completed its move by convoy and is now in the process of reorganizing and inventoring. The operating levels and requisition objectives are being maintained on the majority of items; all others are on requisition.

(c) The Battalion Supply Chief rotated to CONUS 1 March with no replacement assigned as of this date. Currently, the Battalion has a Corporal performing the duties of Supply Chief.

(d) Battalion Supply is utilizing the facilities at FLSG-A for the requisition and maintenance of supplies and equipment.

(e) Prior to leaving the Danang area Battalion Supply effected the transfer of five small aluminum boats, one barge, assault, and one 35 HP Mercury outboard motor to the 2nd Battalion, 27th Marines. At the present time there is large quantities of gear requisitioned by Battalion Supply, staged at FLC, Danang, awaiting transportation to Phu Bai.

(f) During the month, two 106 Recoilless Rifles were Code H and placed on requisition.

(3) Motor Transport. Since the 1st of February 1968 Motor Transport has been without an officer. A lack of school trained 3516's, and greater field usage has caused a higher deadline rate.

(a) Priority 02 and NORS requisitions have failed to alleviate the existing parts problems.

(b) Third Motor Transport Battalion held a two day school on maintenance which was attended by three Marines from this Battalion.

(c) The Battalion assigned extra men to the Motor Transport Section allowing each M422A1 and M37 an assigned driver. This has proven to be very effective for the vehicle. The assigned driver takes more pride in his vehicle and performs much better 1st echelon maintenance.

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1. Civic Action

(1) General. During March, the S-5 of this battalion was involved in shifting TAORS and most S-5 activities were handled by the Regiment.

(2) Medcaps. There was no formal Medcap program in progress, however this battalion treated approximately 100 Vietnamese during operations in the field. In addition 30 lbs of soap were given out to the local villagers.

(3) PsyOps. During March Psyops were carried out by using this Battalion's interpreters to speak to the local populace and tell them of the Chieu Hoi program.

2. Chronology of Events

- a. 1-31 March participated in Operation HOUSTON.
- b. 12 March Capt F. D. PACELLO relieved Capt J. E. MITCHELL as Commanding Officer Company M.
- c. 19 March 2ndLt W. H. DODSON relieved Capt J. A. FERNANDEZ as S-5 Officer.
- d. 28 March LtCol D. N. REXROAD relieved LtCol W. K. ROCKEY as Commanding Officer.

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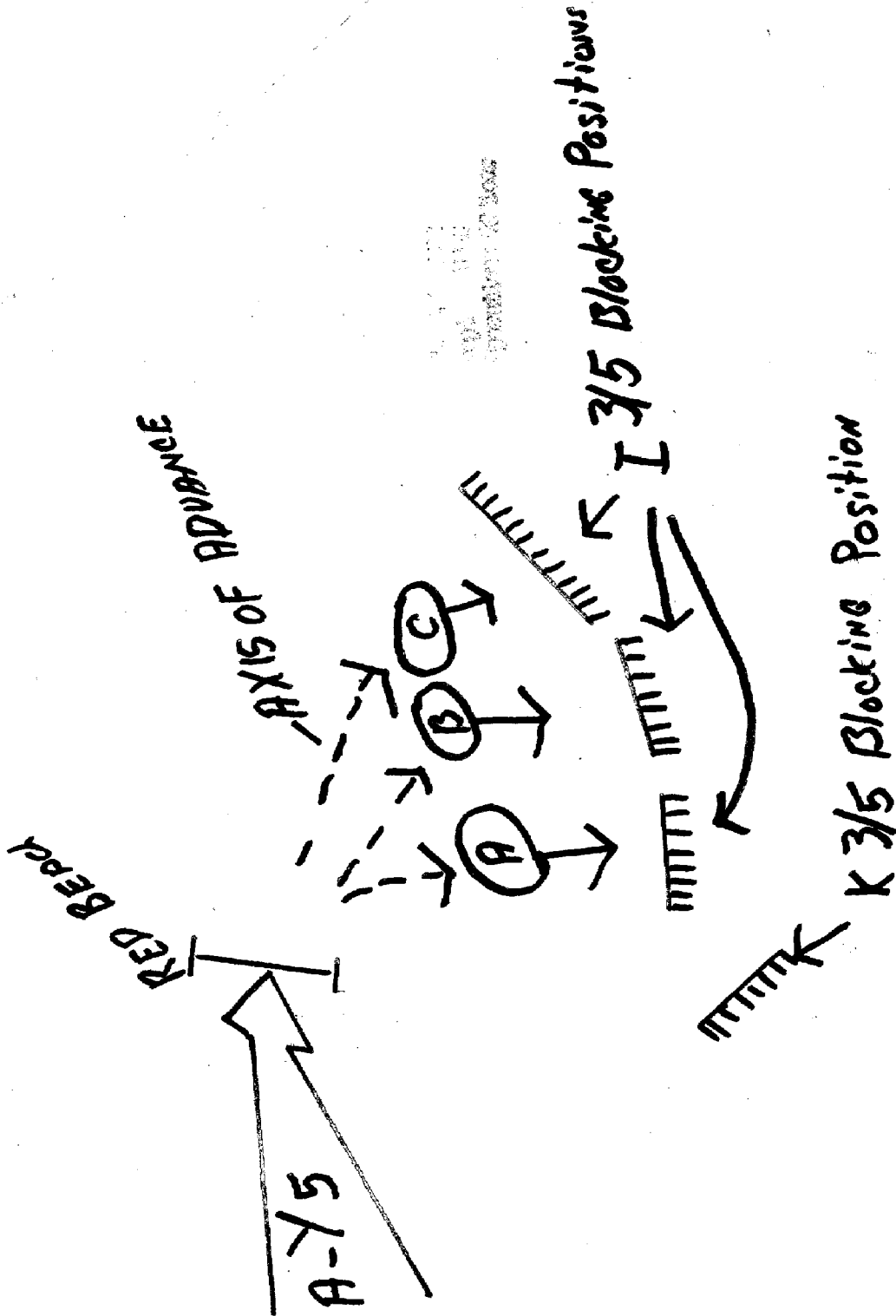
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3rd Battalion, 5th Marines
Imo, Tuluu Province
141600Z March 1969

$$m_{3N} + m_{5NA} + m_{4N} + m_{5N} + m_{9W} + m_{8N} + m_{7N} + m_{6W} + m_{10N}$$

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3121
1 August 1966

thirty minutes. FM radio communication could not be established between the helicopters and the artillery battery and the mission was not accomplished. A third request for aerial observation or artillery fires for registration was denied.

(b) Observations

1 Shipboard HF facilities were poor and communications between Tactical Air Control Party and Tactical Air Control Center were difficult.

2 Tactical Air Control Center was slow to approve and forward the first mission. The hour delay from request to on station gave enemy elements time to escape and conceal themselves.

3 Radio communications were marginal. Tactical Air Control Party had one AN/PRC-25 radio, one AN/PRC-41 radio, and one AN/PRC-47 radio. Both Forward Air Control Teams had one AN/PRC-25 radio and one AN/PRC-41 radio each. Requests for air support were made by Forward Air Control Teams to Tactical Air Control Party on the AN/PRC-25 radio. Tactical Air Control Party relayed the requests to Tactical Air Control Center via HF on the AN/PRC-47 radio.

4 By relaying requests from the Forward Air Control Teams, the Tactical Air Control Party retained control over requests and the Forward Air Control Teams gained greater mobility by not carrying the heavy and cumbersome AN/PRC-47 radio.

5 The Tactical Air Control Party local frequency was 42.35 megacycles. This AN/PRC-25 radio frequency is considered unsatisfactory for units which frequently communicate with aircraft. Aircraft FM equipment tunes only to tenth of megacycles.

(c) Recommendations. When terrain permits and when unit dispositions are within the range capabilities of the AN/PRC-25 radio, Forward Air Control Teams should operate with the AN/PRC-25 radio and the AN/PRC-41 radio (for ground to fixed wing air communications) and should not carry the AN/PRC-47 radio.

(2) Operation HASTINGS

(a) Helicopter support was generally good. Some difficulty was experienced in obtaining helicopter support during the initial phase-in period, but this resolved itself as the operation progressed.

(b) Fixed wing support for the most part was excellent. A few missions were cancelled because communications with aircraft could not be established. Many of the communications difficulties resulted from failure

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3121

1 August 1966

to advise the Air Liaison Officer of estimated times on station and of call signs. Lack of coordination was also a problem during utilization of flare ships for night illumination. Air/ground communication was most reliable on FM bands, using Tactical Air Control (Airborne) and ground AN/PRC-25 radios. Control of air strikes was much more effective from the air than it was from the ground.

8. Commander's Analysis.

a. Operation DECKHOUSE II resulted in no significant contact with the enemy and terminated too quickly to allow planned civic action efforts to be accomplished. Operation HASTINGS introduced Battalion Landing Team 3/5 for the first time to jungle combat against well-equipped, well-trained North Vietnamese Army units. It was also the first time that Battalion Landing Team 3/5 fought in rugged, densely vegetated, mountainous, jungle terrain. The combat environment experienced in Operation HASTINGS was a sharp contrast to the Viet Cong and the less rugged terrain that had been encountered in earlier operations. Lessons learned on previous operations did not fully apply to this more difficult environment; tactical decisions and small unit tactics reflected this fact.

b. Operation HASTINGS was characterized by sharp, violent contact with an enemy who fought from prepared, well camouflaged, mutually supporting, heavily fortified entrenchments; an enemy who was capable of delivering a heavy volume of fire from an excellent inventory of semi-automatic weapons and automatic weapons ranging in caliber from 12.7 to 7.62mm; an enemy supported by 82mm mortars and 57mm recoilless rifles.

c. Under these conditions it was extremely important to make maximum use of supporting artillery and air. Prep fires against suspected enemy positions and dangerous avenues of movement is practically a tactical necessity. The tactical decision of the Company and Platoon Commander to aggressively press to the attack when in close and violent contact with the enemy or to fall back slightly in order to effectively use supporting arms is critical. Such encounters develop rapidly and very often the unit commander has no alternative but to overrun an enemy position without the delay inherent in calling for supporting arms. Whenever the situation permitted, however, the delay paid large dividends in the form of fewer casualties.

d. The steep slopes that characterized the operating area very often made it difficult for artillery to deliver effective fires against enemy positions located in narrow draws or on the slopes of the high ground within the draws. Under these conditions air on station, preferably with a Tactical Air Controller (Airborne) to control the strike, becomes the most desirable form of support and, in some instances, the only form of support that can be used by maneuvering units. The dense vegetation often makes it impossible for a Forward Air Controller to effectively control an air strike and, more important, not every company can be provided with a

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