

HEADQUARTERS

3rd Battalion, 7th Marines
1st Marine Division (Rein) FMF
FPO, San Francisco 96602

3:RFW:hws
5750
6 Apr 1966

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, 1st Marine Division (Rein) FMF
Via: Commanding Officer, 7th Marines

Subj: Command Chronology; month of March 1966

Ref: (a) DivO 5750.1

Encl: (1) 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines Command Chronology with Attachments

1. In accordance with reference (a), the command chronology for the month of March 1966 is submitted with attachments.

C. H. Bodley
C. H. BODLEY

3rd Bn. 7th Mar. Log No

106-66 Copy # 188

ser: 016-66

UNCLASSIFIED

79224
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

UNCLASSIFIED

3RD BATTALION, 7TH MARINES COMMAND CHRONOLOGY WITH ATTACHMENTS

A. ORGANIZATIONAL DATA:

1. Designation and location of reporting unit: 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division (Rein) FMF, Chu Lai, Republic of Vietnam
2. Period covered: 1-31 March 1966
3.

Commanding Officer	LtCol C. H. BODIEY
Executive Officer	Maj H. G. BALOGH
S-1 Adjutant	1stLt J. J. COVERT
S-2 Officer	Capt W. M. CLAPP
S-3 Officer	Maj R. A. CLARK
S-4 Officer	Capt H. E. F. VONCAMP
Communications Officer	Capt E. T. FITZGERALD
Supply Officer	1stLt F. J. LAMURA (1-28 Mar)
	GySgt L. A. WEST (28-31 Mar)
Motor Transport Officer	1stLt D. J. MCKIBBAN (1-28 Mar)
	GySgt R. J. LABOUE (28-31 Mar)
Bn Surgeon	Lt (MC) M. G. ASHKAR
Bn Chaplain	Lt (ChC) E. W. EPPS
H&S Company Commander	1stLt D. H. HARPER (1-28 Mar)
	Capt E. T. FITZGERALD (28-31 Mar)
"I" Company Commander	Capt J. E. CLEMENTS
"K" Company Commander	Capt D. E. THOMAS (1-11 Mar)
	1stLt W. M. LINGENFELTER (11-31 Mar)
"L" Company Commander	1stLt E. W. HUMAN, Jr.
"M" Company Commander	Capt T. V. DRAUDE
4. Average Strength:

USMC: 29 Officers	869 Enlisted
USN: 3 Officers	49 Enlisted

During the month of March 162 USMC enlisted and 1 USN enlisted were joined to the Battalion. In addition, 190 USMC enlisted, 5 USMC officers and 2 USN enlisted personnel were dropped during the month as a result of casualties, rotation, and EAS.

B. SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS:

4 March - At 040800H 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines assumed the MCR responsibility and operational control of the rear elements of 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines while 2/7 was engaged in Operation "UTAH". 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines was relieved of this responsibility by 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines at 080800H.

Operation "BIG CHARLIE" (See Appendix (A))

At 040810H Company M, while participating in Operation "BIG CHARLIE" captured 30 male and 20 female VCS at coordinates BS 591936. As a result of interrogation 28 VCS were evacuated to 3rd ITT. Each of the 28 VCS was found to be either a VC laborer or a member of a VC organization, i.e. farmer's organization, youth group leader, etc.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

11-14Mar - Operation "C&H" (See Appendices (D) and (E))

This operation was a joint USMC/Vietnamese (ARVN, Political Action Teams, Popular Forces) operation with a two-fold mission. First, was that of providing security for approximately 2,000 farmers in the BINH SON District so that they could harvest their sugar cane without being harassed by the Viet Cong; and secondly, for these farmers to cut the heavy vegetation abounding Route #1 within a specified area to reduce the numerous ambush sites that the VC use to snipe at USMC and RVN traffic utilizing this route.

The major accomplishments of this operation were: (1) That the mission as described above was successfully completed; (2) That mutual understanding and teamwork was developed between the USMC and the legally constituted government of Vietnam; and (3) That the operation resulted in the capture of 11 VCC and 61 VCS.

Realizing that a large group of people would be gathered for this operation, a planned PsyWar program was developed and administered. The program consisted of daily lectures by the Political Action Teams; movies, describing current agricultural methods and techniques, and entertainers providing a medley of Vietnamese National songs.

At 110900H 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines civil affairs team participated in Operation "C&H". The civil affairs team entered the CHAU TU hamlet complexes located in grid squares BS 5894, BS 5893, and BS 5892 and administered medical aid to 62 villagers.

17 March - Operation "GROUND HOG" (See Appendix (B)) was reduced to a one day operation due to other Regimental commitments. At 170600H the Battalion (-) began the operation. Two companies were moved overland under cover of darkness and established blocking positions to the north of TAN PHUOC (2), BS 545895. During the day only light sniper fire was encountered. One of the major accomplishments of this operation was the successful crossing of the TRA BONG River from the south by rubber boats (LCR) in order to conduct a sweep into the blocking forces. At 170800H the civil affairs corpsman administered medical aid to 12 villagers in the TAN PHUOC (2) complex.

20-26Mar - Operation "TEXAS" (See Appendices (C) and (F)) was a relief and pursuit type operation designed to provide immediate assistance to an RF Outpost that had been overrun by an estimated Main Force Battalion. The operation was considered to be a success in that control of the outpost was re-established to the RF, and that this organization searched out, fixed, and severely damaged the fighting capabilities of a Main Force and a North Vietnamese Battalion. In addition, a heavily fortified and tunneled hamlet complex was discovered that was utilized by one and possibly two Main Force Viet Cong Battalion(s). This hamlet complex was occupied by this unit and all positions, barriers, tunnels, and caves were destroyed prior to this Battalion's departure.

At 210800H the civil affairs team, operating in VINH TUY (4) (BS 458841), administered medical aid to 60 villagers.

UNCLASSIFIED

ENCLOSURE (1)

UNCLASSIFIED

At 251100H the villagers of the PHUOC LOC complex (BS 561766) were gathered together. Medical aid was administered to 291 villagers with four Vietnamese medically evacuated to QUANG NGAI by helicopter. The District Chief from SON TINH spoke to the villagers resulting in one hundred refugees accompanying the District Chief to SON TINH District Headquarters. Also on 25 March large quantities of rice were discovered and subsequently evacuated by five hundred refugee workers obtained from SON TINH District. Approximately 7,500 kilos of rice were evacuated to SON TINH District for further distribution to the refugees.

28 March - At 281700H 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines assumed the MLR responsibility and operational control of the rear elements of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines while that Battalion was engaged in Operation "INDIANA". 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines was relieved of this responsibility by 1st Battalion, 7th Marines at 301530H.

During the month of March 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines civil affairs teams treated over 1,700 villagers. These villagers received over 7,700 treatments. Almost daily visits by civil affairs teams have been made to TRI BINH (1) (BS 555987), TRI BINH (4) (BS 561978), and TRI BINH (3) (BS 569971) during March with emphasis placed on medical aid, sports, and English classes. Ten other villages outside of the Battalion TAOR have been visited by Battalion civil affairs teams during March with emphasis placed on medical aid, psywar, and screening of villagers for refugees.

C. DOCUMENTS:

1. ✓ Frag Order 3-66 (Appendix (A))
 ✓ Frag Order 4-66 (Appendix (B))
 ✓ Frag Order 5-66 (Appendix (C))
 ✓ Concept of Operation (Operation "C&H") (Appendix (D))
2. ✓ After Action Report, Operation "C&H" (Appendix (E))
 ✓ After Action Report, Operation "TEXAS" (Appendix (F))
3. ✓ Battalion Position Overlay #1 (Appendix (G))
 ✓ Battalion Position Overlay #2 (Appendix (H))
 ✓ Battalion Position Overlay #3 (Appendix (I))
 ✓ Battalion Position Overlay #4 (Appendix (J))

ENCLOSURE (1)

UNCLASSIFIED

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

3rd Battalion, 7th Marines
CHU LAI, RVN
021300H March 1966

Frag Order 3-66

Ref: (a) DivOperO 343-65

Time Zone: H

1. SITUATIONa. Enemy Forces. See current Intelligence ISUM's.b. Friendly Forces

- 1) 1st Bn, 7th Mar
- 2) 2nd Bn, 7th Mar
- 3) Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Mar Arty Gru
- 4) 3rd Plat, Co B, 1st Tk Bn

c. Attachments

- 1) Det 3rd Plat, Co C, 3rd Engr Bn
- 2) Det Bn CA Tm
- 3) FO Tm, Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Mar
- 4) Det Scout Tm, Bn S-2
- 5) Det Bn PAT
- 6) Bn Sniper Tm
- 7) Det Nat Police, BINH SON Dist
- 8) Det Bn Interpreter Tm
- 9) Scout Dog Tm, I Corps
- 10) ITT, 3rd MarDiv

2. MISSION. On D-day at H-hour 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines (-)(Rein) will conduct a search and destroy operation in the CHAU TU, PHU LE, and PHUOC AN hamlet complexes located in the central section of the BINH SON District (See Annex A (Operation Overlay)).

3. EXECUTION

a. Concept of Operation. On D-2 move into assigned sectors arriving in position prior to first light on D-1 in order to establish lia-

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

(Appendix (A))

tening posts/observation posts during daylight hours (See Annex A (Operation Overlay)). After the hours of darkness move into assigned ambush sites and remain there throughout the night of D-1 and D-day. On D-day a third company will be transported by vehicle south on Route #1 to a dismount point and then sweep overland in a westerly direction through the blocking positions.

b. Company K

- 1) Depart OP #39 at 031200H and establish an assembly area vicinity coordinates BS 545935.
- 2) At approximately 032000H depart assembly area and establish listening posts/outposts within assigned sector. On the night of D-1 move from listening posts/outposts into designated ambush sites and remain throughout the night of D-1 and D-day.
- 3) Be prepared to move to OP #39 for transportation to the Battalion CP on order.

c. Company L

- 1) Depart OP #39 at 032100H and establish listening posts/outposts throughout the daylight hours of D-1. On the night of D-1 move into designated ambush sites and remain throughout D-day.
- 2) Be prepared to move to OP #39 for transportation to the Battalion CP on order.

d. Company M (Rein)

- 1) Depart the Battalion CP by vehicle at 050545H and arrive at dismount points vicinity coordinates BS 585950 and BS 590939.
- 2) At 050615H conduct a search and destroy operation in a westerly direction as indicated by Annex A (Operation Overlay).

e. Battalion Command Group Alpha. Depart the Battalion CP by vehicle at 050545H and move with Company M.

f. Coordinating Instructions

- 1) D-day - 1 March 1966
- 2) H-hour - 0615H
- 3) Rules of engagement - See reference (a)
- 4) Time of retraction - Approximately 051600H
- 5) Unclassified code name for the operation will be "BIG CHARLIE"
- 6) Extreme supervision will be exercised to insure that USMC personnel do not destroy, ransack, throw about personal belongings or commit any act that would bring discredit upon the U.S. Government. All searches will be conducted in the presence of the rightful owner and all items considered to be of intelligence value will be evacuated with the rightful owner.

3) Resupply. None anticipated; by helicopter if required.

b. Evacuation and Hospitalization

1) Evacuation. Serious to "B" Med via helicopter, non-serious to BAS by appropriate transportation, Vietnamese to QUANG NGAI via helicopter.

2) Hospitalization. As determined by Medical Officer to whom evacuated.

c. Transportation

1) To Objective Area departure point

a) Company K to TRI BINH (5) by truck-Depart Bn CP 031100H

b) Company L to TRI BINH (5) by truck-Depart Bn CP 031800H

c) Cmd Gru and Co M by truck-Depart Bn CP 040545H

2) From Objective Area by truck upon order.

d. Administration. In accordance with SOP, normal reporting.

e. Miscellaneous

1) Uniform and Equipment. Utilities, flak jackets, normal arms and equipment for one day.

2) All units maintain rear CP.

3) No untreated local water to be consumed.

4) All personnel will wear identification tags.

5. COMMAND AND COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS

a. Radio

1) Battalion Tactical Net will be on D-225.

2) Radio operators with AN/PRC-25's will be attached to each company.

3) Attach TACP together with associated equipment to ALO.

4) The main Battalion CP will suffix their call sign with the word "rear" upon departure of the command group.

b. Visual Signals. In accordance with Pyrotechnic SOP.

o. Coordinating Instructions

- 1) The checkle and authentication will be in accordance with the current SOI.

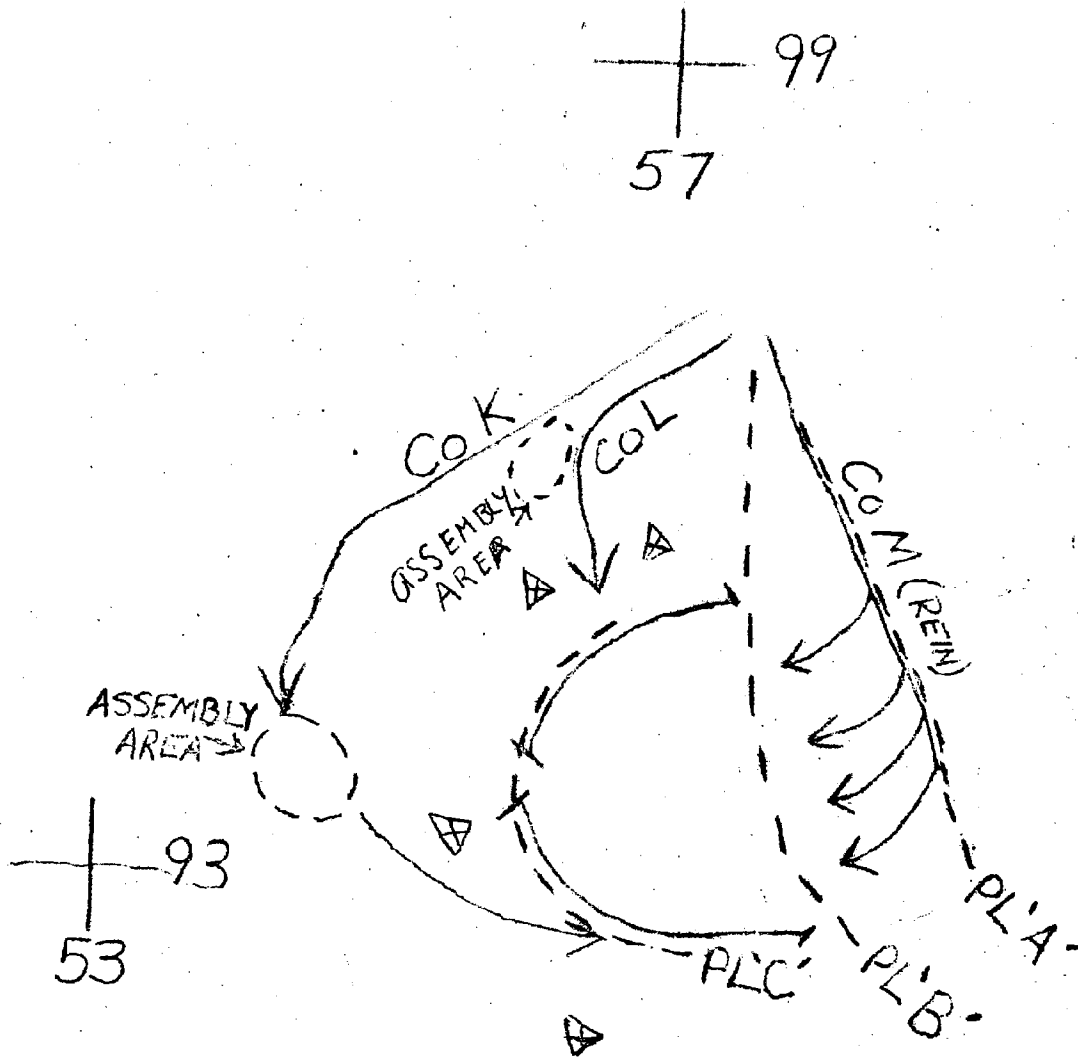
C. H. Bodley

C. H. BODLEY
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding

ANNEX

A -- Operation Overlay

3rd Battalion, 7th Marines Operation Overlay
Period: 031200H to 041600H March 1966
MAP: L701, 1:50,000, Sheet 6756 IV



ANNEX A

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

3rd Battalion, 7th Marines
CHU LAI, RVN
151200H March 1966

Frag Order 4-66

Ref: (a) DivOperO 343-65

Time Zone: H

1. SITUATIONa. Enemy Forces. See current ISUM's.b. Friendly Forces

- 1) 1st Bn, 7th Mar
- 2) 2nd Bn, 7th Mar
- 3) Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Mar Arty Gru
- 4) 3rd Plat, Co B, 1st Tk Bn
- 5) 3rd Plat, Co C, 1st Anti-Tank Bn

c. Attachments

- 1) Det 3rd Plat, Co C, 3rd Engr Bn
- 2) Det Bn CA Tm
- 3) FO Tm, Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Mar
- 4) Det Scout Tm, Bn S-2
- 5) Det Bn PAT
- 6) Bn Sniper Tm
- 7) Det Natl Police, BINH SON Dist
- 8) Det Bn Interpreter Tm
- 9) Scout Dog Tm, I Corps
- 10) Sec 81mm Mort Plat
- 11) Det 3rd ITT
- 12) Det ISO, 7th Mar

2. MISSION. 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines (-)(Rein) will conduct a search and destroy operation of the TAN PHUOC (1) and (2) village complex located in the central section of the BINH SON District (See Operation Overlay).

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

(Appendix (B))

3. EXECUTION

a. Concept of Operation. During the hours of darkness on D-2 two companies will move overland from vicinity of OP #39 to vicinity of grid square BS 5493 and BS 5392 and establish assembly area/OP's. On D-1 these two companies will remain concealed in position utilizing this period to conduct a thorough visual reconnaissance of the objective area. On the night of D-1 these two companies will move to and establish blocking positions vicinity coordinates BS 527896 to BS 543903 by 0400H on D-day (See Operation Overlay). On D-day at L-hour a third company (rein), one 81mm mortar section, and the Battalion Command Group will land by helicopter in Landing Zone ALPHA and search and destroy to the west into the blocking positions. The last four aircraft of the first wave of helicopters will feint a troop landing at Landing Zone BRAVO prior to landing in Landing Zone ALPHA. Six aircraft of the second wave will feint a troop landing at Landing Zone CHARLIE, after landing in Landing Zone ALPHA, in an attempt to deceive the enemy into believing that the escape routes to the north and south have been sealed off. On D-day at 1700H the search element will be retracted from a landing zone to be designated for return to Landing Zone ROBIN. Prior to the search element being retracted the two blocking companies, the 81mm mortar section, and the Battalion Command Group will move into and encircle the village complex in grid squares BS 5389 and BS 5489. Said two units will remain in this location collecting intelligence and conducting a thorough search of the area until retraction by helicopter at 1500H on D+2 (See Operation Overlay).

b. Company M

- 1) Depart vicinity OP #39 at 1500H on D-2 and establish an assembly area vicinity grid square BS 5391.
- 2) Remain concealed in assembly area on D-1 utilizing this period to conduct a visual reconnaissance of the objective area.
- 3) Depart assembly area at 2200H on D-1 to arrive in blocking positions vicinity coordinates BS 527896 to BS 533901 by 0400H on D-day.
- 4) Be prepared on order to move into the village complex in grid square BS 5389 and conduct clearing activities as directed, commencing the afternoon of D-day.
- 5) Be prepared to retract by helicopter on D+2.

c. Company I

- 1) Depart vicinity OP #39 at 1700H on D-2 and establish an assembly area vicinity grid square BS 5492.
- 2) Remain concealed in assembly area on D-1 utilizing this period to conduct a visual reconnaissance of the objective area.
- 3) Depart assembly area at 2200H on D-1 to arrive in blocking positions vicinity coordinates BS 534902 to BS 540903 by 0400H on D-day.

4) Be prepared on order to move into the village complex in grid square B 489 and conduct clearing activities as directed, commencing the afternoon of D-day.

5) Be prepared to retract by helicopter on D+2.

d. Company K (Rein)

1) Commence helilift from Landing Zone ROBIN to Landing Zone ALPHA at 0630H on D-day.

2) Upon completion of helilift into Landing Zone ALPHA conduct a sweep (search and destroy) to the west as indicated by the operation overlay.

3) Upon completion of the search and when directed, be prepared to retract by helicopter to Landing Zone ROBIN to resume your position on the MLR.

e. 81mm Mortar Section

1) Commence helilift from Landing Zone ROBIN to Landing Zone ALPHA at 0630H on D-day.

2) Initially lay guns on azimuth of 4800 mils.

3) Be prepared to displace on order.

4) Be prepared to provide support until D+2.

f. Command Group Alpha

1) Commence helilift from Landing Zone ROBIN to Landing Zone ALPHA at 0630H on D-day.

2) Initial CP location to be vicinity coordinates BS 539896.

g. Coordinating Instructions

1) D-day - 17 March 1966

2) L-hour - 0645H

3) Rules of engagement - See reference (a)

4) Landing Zone ALPHA - BS 550898

5) Landing Zone BRAVO - BS 533887

6) Landing Zone CHARLIE - BS 545905

7) Unclassified code name of operation - "GROUND HOG"

8) Close supervision will be exercised to insure that USMC personnel do not destroy, ransack, throw about personal belongings or commit any act that would bring discredit upon the U.S. Government. All searches will be conducted in the presence of the rightful owner and all items considered to be of intelligence value will be evacuated with the rightful owner.

9) Restric Targets

- a) There will be no indiscriminate firing into populated areas without the express consent of the Battalion Commander.
- b) The burning of buildings and huts will not be permitted without the express consent of the Battalion Commander.
- c) Every effort will be made to preserve intact religious, cultural, medical, public, and private installations from damage, fire and destruction by any individual, weapon, or supporting arms.

10) Reporting Instructions

- a) Time of departure from Battalion CP and upon arrival at objective area.
- b) All enemy sightings, contacts, and discovery of caches.
 - 1. Use SPOTREP format.
- c) All cave discoveries.
 - 1. Use CAVES format.
- d) Position reports.
 - 1. Use thrust lines
 - #1 - BS 540950
 - #2 - BS 540920
 - #3 - BS 540900
- e) Hourly radio checks are required.
- f) Scout Dog Teams assigned to Companies I and M will be heli-lifted into the objective area with Company K but will be turned over to Companies I and M upon request.
- g) Engineer Teams assigned to Companies I and M will be heli-lifted into the objective area with Company K and then turned over to Companies I and M upon request.

4. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICSa. Supply1) General

- a) Supply Sources. Internal Battalion
- b) Prescribed Loads

Class I - H&S (3 MCI)
 CoK (1 MCI)
 CosM&I (6 MCI)
 Class II - Combat Essential
 Class V - Basic Allowance

c) Control and Distribution

1. Request supplies to Battalion CP Group via Rapid Request format.
2. Unit distribution by helicopter.
3. Routine resupply requests 12 hours in advance. Emergency requests at any time.

3) Supplies and Equipment Available

- a) Prescribed loads.
- b) Battalion assets.

- 3) Resupply. Resupply for Companies I and M during day of 17th for remainder of operation. Resupply for H&S on the 18th.

b. Evacuation and Hospitalization

- 1) Evacuation. All medical evacuations to "B" Med via helicopter. All Vietnamese evacuations to QUANG NGAI. Requests via Battalion Command Group.
- 2) Hospitalization. As determined by Medical Officer to whom evacuated.

c. Transportation

- 1) 15 March - Companies I and M by truck. Pick-up at front line position approximately 1200H to NUC MONH Market via Battalion CP.
- 2) 16 March - One platoon of Company K to Battalion CP, relieved by platoon of H&S, by truck. Battalion Motor Transport Officer station one truck at Company L's CP, two trucks at Company K's CP, and two trucks at Battalion CP, to spend night.
- 3) 17 March - Companies K and L utilize trucks at their CP's to transport one platoon of Company K and remainder of Company K to Landing Zone ROBIN to arrive prior to 170600H. Second platoon of H&S to Company K's lines by 0600H. At 0630H helilift of Company K (Rein) with one platoon of Company L and H&S Company (-) to objective area commences.
- 4) On evening of 17 March, on order, Company K (Rein) retracts, via helicopter to Landing Zone ROBIN. Platoon of Company L by truck to Company L's CP. One platoon of Company K, by truck to Company K's CP.
- 5) 18 March - Battalion Motor Transport Officer provide transportation to return remainder of Company K to Company K's lines and H&S Company to Battalion CP.

- 6) 19 March - Retraction of H&S Company (-) Company I, and Company M, from objective area to Landing Zone ROBIN by helicopter.

d. Administration. In accordance with SOP. Normal reporting.

e. Miscellaneous

- 1) Uniform and Equipment. Utilities, flak jackets, helmet, normal arms and equipment.
- 2) All units maintain rear CP.
- 3) No untreated local water will be consumed.
- 4) All personnel will wear identification tags.

5. COMMAND AND COMMUNICATIONS ELECTRONICS

a. Radio

- 1) Battalion Tactical Net will be on frequency D-225.
- 2) The secondary Battalion Tactical Net will be on frequency D-222.
- 3) The call sign of the rear CP will be Skeptic Rear.
- 4) Companies will use their normal call signs.
- 5) Be prepared to activate a station on the Regimental Tactical Net #1 on frequency D-1 at both Skeptic CP's.
- 6) The 81mm mortar conduct of fire net will be on D-333.

b. Wire. Limited wire will be available within the forward CP.

c. Coordinating Instructions

- 1) The SOI will be used for all shackle and authentication.
- 2) Pyrotechnic signals will be in accordance with the Battalion SOP.
- 3) The Battalion CP will initially be located at coordinates BS 550940.

CH Bodley

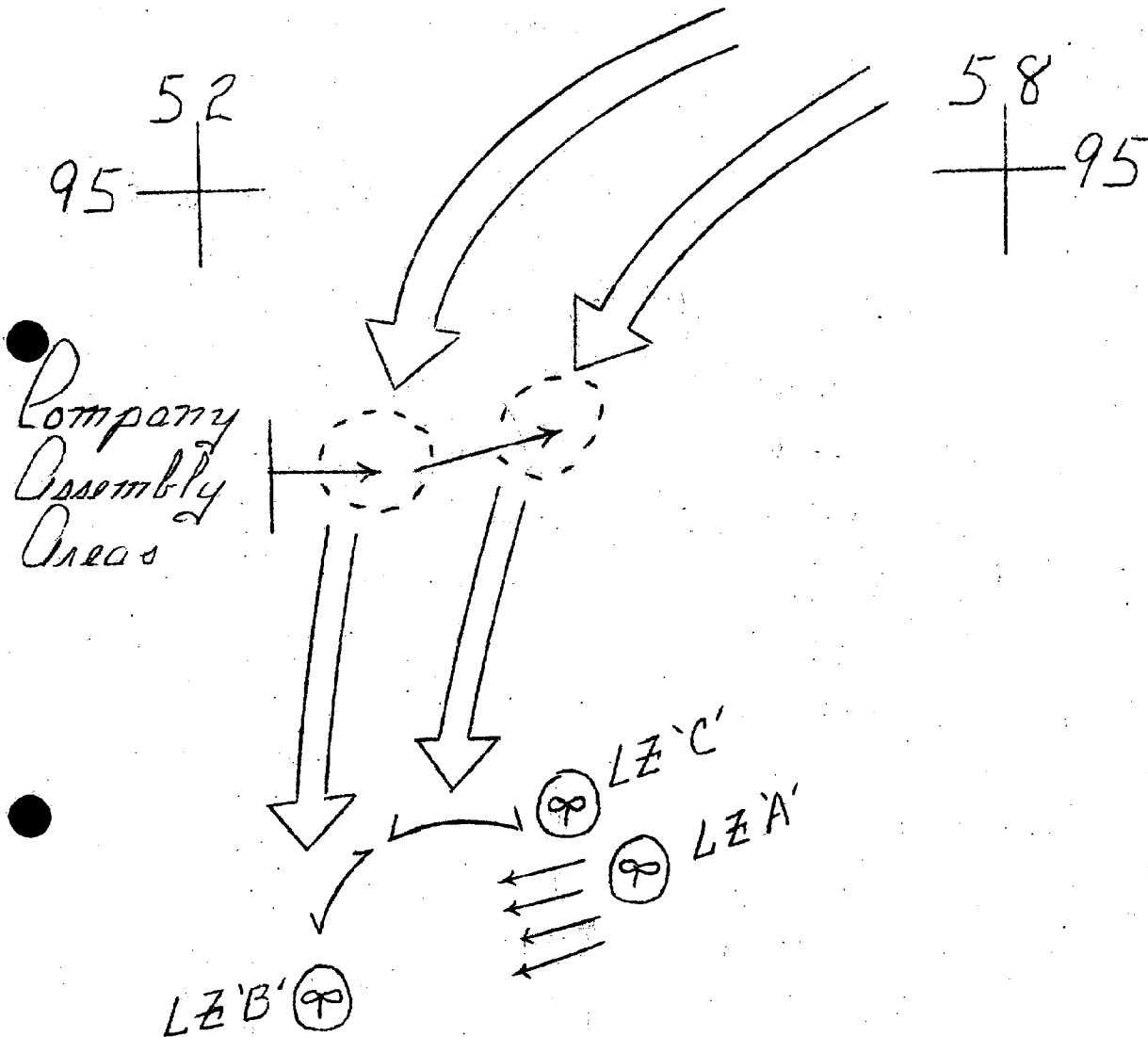
C. H. BODLEY

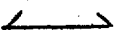


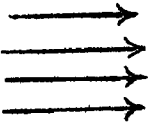
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding

DISTRIBUTION: "Special"

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

3rd Battalion, 7th Marines Operation Overlay
 Period: 151600H to 191700H March 1966
 MAP: L701, 1:50,000, Sheet 6756 III



-  Blocking Position
-  Landing Zone
-  Company Assembly Areas
-  Search & Destroy Force

UNCLASSIFIED

3rd Battalion, 7th Marines
CHU LAI, RVN
200800H March 1966

Frag Order 5-66

Ref: (a) DivOperO 343-65

Time Zone: H

1. SITUATIONa. Enemy Forces. See current ISUM's.b. Friendly Forces

- 1) 1st Bn, 7th Mar
- 2) 2nd Bn, 7th Mar
- 3) 11th Mar Arty Gru
- 4) 2nd Bn, 4th Mar
- 5) MAG-36
- 6) MAG-16
- 7) 5th Airborne Bn (ARVN)
- 8) 1st Bn, 7th Mar Regt (ARVN)

c. Attachments

- 1) 3rd Plat, Co C, 1st Engr Bn
- 2) FO Tm, Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Mar
- 3) Det Natl Police, BINH SON Dist
- 4) ISO Tm, 7th Mar Regt
- 5) HST, 1st SP Bn

2. MISSION. 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines (Rein) in conjunction with the 5th Airborne Battalion, ARVN will conduct a heliborne landing into Landing Zone QUAIL and then sweep to the east and southeast conducting a search and destroy operation of the NHAN HOA hamlet complex/AN HOA hill complex located in the southwest section of the BINH SON District.

a. Concept of Operation. One company provide convoy escort for the 7th Marine Regiment/11th Marine Artillery Group. Three companies, two sections of 81mm mortars and the Battalion Command Group will be helilifted

3rd Bn. 7th Mar. Log No
10466 Copy #2292
Ser: 0015-66

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

UNCLASSIFIED
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
(Appendix C)

UNCLASSIFIED

from Landing Zone ROBIN to Landing Zone QUAIL vicinity coordinate BS 431867. Upon landing the Battalion will commence a search and destroy operation in conjunction with the 5th Airborne Battalion, ARVN to the east and southeast to seek out and destroy all enemy forces within the objective area.

b. Company M

- 1) Depart 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines at 200330H by vehicle with 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines Artillery Group/7th Marines Command Group.
- 2) Provide convoy escort for the above organization.
- 3) Provide security for the Artillery Group at their firing positions.
- 4) Provide Regimental Reserve.
- 5) Be prepared to deploy overland or by air to the objective area.

c. Company L

- 1) Commence helilift from Landing Zone ROBIN to Landing Zone QUAIL at 201025H.
- 2) Provide security for Landing Zone QUAIL.
- 3) On order be prepared to secure the high ground at vicinity coordinates BS 442864 and search and destroy the hamlet complex at coordinates BS 446861.
- 4) On order be prepared to conduct further search and destroy operations to the east and southeast.

d. Company K

- 1) Commence helilift from Landing Zone ROBIN to Landing Zone QUAIL at 201025H.
- 2) On order conduct a search and destroy operation on the hamlet complexes vicinity coordinates BS 435069 and BS 443869.
- 3) Be prepared to conduct further operations to the east in conjunction with the 5th ARVN Airborne Battalion.

e. Command Group "A"

- 1) Commence helilift from Landing Zone ROBIN to Landing Zone QUAIL at 201030H.
- 2) Establish Battalion (Fwd) CP vicinity coordinates BS 436865.

f. 81mm Mort Plat.

- 1) Provide two sections to be helilifted from Landing Zone ROBIN to Landing Zone QUAIL at 201030H.

UNCLASSIFIED

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

- 2) Establish firing position vicinity coordinates BS 435865.
- 3) Initially lay guns on azimuth of 1600 mils.
- 4) Be prepared to provide HE, WP, and illumination.

g. Company I

- 1) Commence helilift from Landing Zone ROBIN to Landing Zone QUAIL at 201045H.
- 2) Move to an assembly area vicinity coordinates BS 430867.
- 3) Be prepared to conduct a search and destroy operation to the east and southeast on order.

h. Command Group "B"

- 1) Commence helilift from Landing Zone ROBIN to Landing Zone QUAIL at 201045H.
- 2) Establish a "B" CP vicinity coordinates BS 434864.

i. 3rd Plat, Co C, 1st Engr Bn

- 1) Attach one engineer section to Companies I, K, and L.
- 2) Attach remainder of platoon to Command Group "B".
- 3) On order be prepared to attach one section of engineers to Company M.

j. Coordinating Instructions

- 1) D-day - 20 March 1966
- 2) L-hour - 1045H
- 3) Helicopters will arrive at Landing Zone ROBIN at 201015H.
- 4) Helicopter Load: 1st 16 helos; 6 man teams 7 or 8 man teams thereafter
- 5) Landing Zone QUAIL - BS 431867
- 6) Unclassified code name of operation - "TEXAS"
- 7) Rules of engagement - See reference (a)

8) Reporting Instructions

- a) All enemy sightings, contacts, and discovery of caches.
 1. Use SPOTREP format.
 2. Use CAVES format.

UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

3. Use SITREP format.

b) Position Reports

1. Thrust Lines

- #1 - BS 440870
- #2 - BS 450860
- #3 - BS 460870
- #4 - BS 470860

9) Hourly radio checks are required.

10) A Fire Coordination Line is established along trail from BS 430871 to BS 490880.

4. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICSa. Supply1) Generala) Sources of Supply

- 1. Prior to departure - Internal
- 2. In objective area - Regimental LSA

b) Prescribed Loads

- Class I - Company M - 6 meals MIC w/fuel
- Bn (-) - 4 meals MIC w/ fuel
- Class II - Combat essential four days
- Individual medical outfit plus three days
- 2 bottles water purification tablets per man
- Salt tablets and malaria pills
- Class V - Basic allowance

2) Supplies and Equipment Available

- a) Prescribed loads.
- b) LSA assets to include Class I, limited II and V.

3) Control and Distribution

- a) S-4 with Battalion Commander
- b) Regiment coordinating
- c) Unit distribution via helicopter

4) Resupply

- a) Earliest resupply anticipated D+1.
- b) Utilize Rapid Request format.

CONFIDENTIAL

c) Routine request - 4 hours lead time

d) Emergency request - So state

5) Evacuation of Material

a) Utilize Rapid Request format.

b) Utilize tags to identify unit.

c) Categorize as captured, for repair, excess.

d) Captured weapons to Regiment (BINH SON).

6) Evacuation of Vietnamese (Non-casualty). All categories to Regiment (BINH SON).b. Evacuation and Hospitalization1) Evacuation

a) USMC personnel to "D" Med by helicopter.

b) Vietnamese (all) to QUANG NGAI by helicopter.

2) Hospitalization. As directed by Medical Officer to whom evacuated.c. Transportation

1) Company M - Nine trucks arrive Battalion CP 0330, be prepared to join Artillery convoy at 0430 for trip to objective area.

2) Bn MTO - 13 trucks arrive 0630, pick up Companies I, K, and L from positions and return to Battalion CP prior to 0730.

3) Companies I, K, and L - To objective area by helicopter from Landing Zone ROBIN.

4) All units retract upon order.

d. Food Service

1) Main Mess feed Company M at 0300.

2) Main Mess feed Companies I, K, and L upon arrival at CP, be prepared to feed lunch if weather delays operation.

3) Line messhalls feed 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines relieving units.

e. Administration

1) Routine by SOP.

2) Report casualties via Regiment.

: CONFIDENTIAL

- 3) S-1 and S-4 locate personnel at "B" Med by 1100.

f. Miscellaneous

- 1) All units maintain rear CP.
- 2) Uniform and Equipment - Flak jacket, utilities, helmet, normal arms and equipment, identification tags.
- 3) No raw local water will be consumed.
- 4) All personnel place tag with name, rank, serial number, and organization in pack.
- 5) Salt tablets will be utilized.

5. COMMAND AND COMMUNICATIONS-ELECTRONICS

a. Radio

- 1) The following nets will be activated:
 - a) Battalion Tac Net 45.2 (D-222)
 - b) Regimental Command #1 57.0
 - c) Regimental Command #2 2116 (D-1)
 - d) DAO 40.7 (W197)
 - e) Regimental Tactical Net 39.3 (D-184)(P)
44.4 (D-219)(S)
 - f) 2nd Bn, 4th Mar Tac Net 45.8 (D-230)
 - g) ARVN Advisor 42.8(P), 41.4(S)
 1. Call sign of advisors: RED HAT FIVE
 2. Call sign of ARVN CP: LYRICAL YANKEE
 - h) Bird dog aircraft 44.5 (D-220)
 - i) HD #4 396.5 (W557)(Pink)
 - j) TAR #2 4631(P) 5270(S)
 - k) Convoy control 36.9 (D-173)
 1. Net control station: TANNIC ACID
- 2) Activate convoy control at 0400.
- 3) Activate all other stations at 0430 except air nets.

CONFIDENTIAL

- 4) The rear CP will use "Skeptic Rear" as their call sign.
 - 5) All other frequencies and call signs remain the same.
- b. Wire. Switchboard and telephone service will be installed within the Battalion CP.
- c. Message Center
- 1) Local shackle and authentication will be employed within the 7th Marines.
 - 2) KAC-60 and KAC-138 will be employed on all communications external to the 7th Marines.
- d. Coordinating Instructions
- 1) Resupply aircraft will activate on Company Tac Net of company being resupplied. When the Battalion CP is to be resupplied the aircraft will activate on the Battalion Tac Net.
 - 2) Logistics and administrative traffic to Regiment will be passed over Regimental Command #1.
 - 3) Bring three batteries per radio except for BA-386.
 - 4) Limited repair facilities will be available within the Battalion CP.



C. H. BODLEY

Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps
Commanding

DISTRIBUTION: "Special"

CONFIDENTIAL

(c)





CONCEPT OF OPERATION

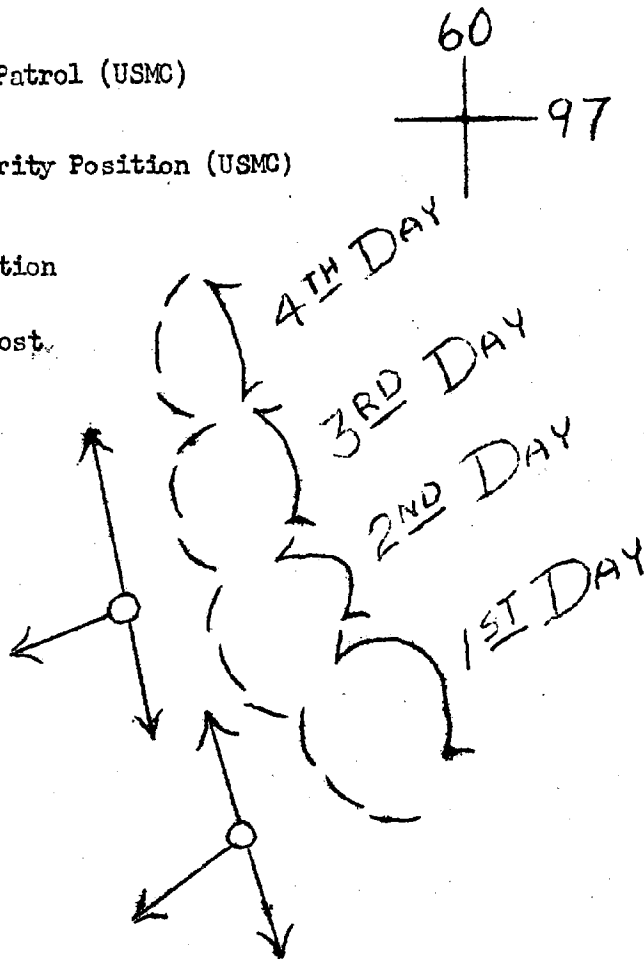
(OPERATION C&H) Commencing H-Day, 3rd Bn, 7th Marines will provide two companies, one section of 81mm mortars, and a B1 Command Group on a joint USMC/ARVN-PAT-PF security type operation designed to insure the farmers of the Binh Son District protection from the VC while harvesting their sugar cane and cutting down the heavy vegetation abounding route #1 that affords the VC numerous hiding and ambush sites.

As indicated by the operation overlay, one company, in conjunction with PAT/PF personnel, will establish a perimeter around the harvesters while the other company will be utilized for fan patrolling, outposting and ambushes.

It is anticipated that this operation will be conducted during the period of 11-14 March 1966.

(Appendix (D))

-  One Company Fan Patrol (USMC)
-  One Company Security Position (USMC)
-  PF Security Position
-  S-2 Scouts' Outpost



91

54

HEADQUARTERS

3rd Battalion, 7th Marines
1st Marine Division (Rein) FMF
FPO, San Francisco 96602

UNCLASSIFIED

3:RHS:hws
3480
7 Apr 1966

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, 1st Marine Division (Rein) FMF
Via: Commanding Officer, 7th Marines

Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report

Ref: (a) MAP: TRA BONG and MY LAI, L701, 1:50,000, Sheets 6756 I and IV

1. Operation "C&H" provided security for sugar cane harvesters.

2. 110800H to 141700H March 1966.

3. QUANG NGAI Province, BINH SON District, BINH THANH Village

4. Lieutenant Colonel C. H. BODLEY

5. Task Organization

3rd Bn, 7th Mar
Det 3rd Plat, Co C, 1st Engr Bn
Det Scout Dogs, I Corps
Det Natl Police, BINH SON Dist
3rd Plat, Co B, 1st Tk Bn
3rd Plat, Co C, 1st AT Bn
Det ISO, 7th Mar
PF/PAT Plat, BINH SON Dist
Det ARVN Intel, 2nd Inf Div, QUANG NGAI
Det ARVN PsyWar Tm, 2nd Inf Div, QUANG NGAI

6. Supporting Forces

a. Air (Chronological utilization). Throughout the operation the response times for med-evacs were minimal. At 110815H an emergency med-evac request for four ARVN personnel was requested. The mission was completed at 110845H. On two more occasions that day, emergency med-evacs were requested. The response time for each was only 26 minutes.

At 120830H two UH1E's attacked a trenchline at BS 582923 with M-60 machineguns and rockets, resulting in two VC KIA and possibly two more. The pilots delivered one wounded VC with weapon and cartridge belt to the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines CP. At 121305H two UH-1E's and two A-4E's attacked troops at coordinates BS 575932 with 20mm guns and rockets. The area was completely neutralized. On two occasions during the same day med-evac helicopters were requested. The average response time was 28 minutes.

(Appendix (E))

On 13 March the only air activity was med-evacs. On four separate occasions emergency med-evacs were requested with an average response time of 28 minutes.

b. Artillery

1) The FSCC (Fwd) was established about 110800H at BS 592934. The 11th Marines Artillery Group and one section of 81mm Mortar Platoon, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines provided fire support.

2) At 122100H the 11th Marine Artillery Group commenced firing H&I fires in the Battalion area of operations. 1st Battalion, 7th Marines cleared and fired H&I fires on targets provided by BINH SON District Intelligence.

3) At 120910H an artillery fire mission was called on a VC platoon in the open at coordinates BS 584923. At 120915H another mission was fired at coordinates BS 573923 at a VC assembly area. At 121120H in the vicinity of BS 570940 a recon by fire was called. At 121400H Rosemont (AO) observed five VC running with rifles and called a fire mission coordinates BS 568921. The AO lost the target in a cane field and was unable to make a surveillance. H&I fires commenced at 122100H in the operation area.

4) During the night of 13 March considerable activity took place in the northern sector of the area of operation. A VC squad was reported to be assembling around coordinates BS 569946 by BINH SON District Headquarters. At 132000H a zone coverage type fire mission was called in that vicinity. At 132150H artillery illumination was fired at coordinates BS 574965 on suspected enemy movement. At 132205H the section of 81mm mortars fired illumination at suspected VC movement at vicinity BS 574965. At 132210H Razorback patrol spotted ten to twelve men moving in the northern sector of the operation area. Searchlights from tanks were utilized to detect the VC and an 81mm mission called at coordinates BS 574953. This proved to be a very effective method of fire utilizing the searchlight, the forward observer was able to observe the target continually and adjust the rounds accordingly. At 1322 illumination was fired at coordinates BS 577953 at suspected VC movement by the mortar section.

5) At 140920H the 81mm mortars fired illumination in support of an ambush patrol vicinity coordinates BS 577898. Three VC gun emplacements were discovered at BS 555911 by Rosemont (AO). At 040600H an unobserved fire mission was called to preclude the VC from setting up mortars. At 140830H another artillery mission was called at BS 573923 at a known VC mortar position. No movement was detected and no mortar fire received from this area. At 141600H two VC were spotted and an artillery mission was called in the vicinity BS 557992. The enemy escaped into cane fields. A search of the area was conducted with negative results.

6) At 191730H the FSCC (Fwd) secured from the operation and returned to the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines CP.

7) All missions from supporting arms were accurate and delivered quickly. The section of the 81mm Mortar Platoon did a particularly fine job of shooting and illustrated their role as a quick response weapon. The

ligence section of BINH SON District provided the FDC with several targets which were fired as observed missions or H&I's both in 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines area of operations and in the area controlled by the 1st Battalion, Marines. During Operation "C&H" a total of nine artillery and four 81mm mortar fire missions were cleared by the FSCC. No confirmed enemy casualties were attributed to artillery or mortars but in many instances evidence of wounded enemy personnel was found during sweeps of the target areas.

7. Intelligence

a. Estimate of VC Strength, Disposition, and Location prior to D-day

1) This Battalion had the advantage in this operation of operating in an area in which many patrols of platoon and company size had previously been conducted. Further, one Battalion and one Regimental sized operation had already been conducted in the same vicinity. Familiarity with the area was extremely valuable, but the intelligence gained from these operations proved even more valuable. The T-19 Local Force Company was known to be the major VC force in the area, with a headquarters in the vicinity of BS 5392 and elements operating as far east as National Route #1, south to the TRA BONG River, and north to the TRI BINH Hamlets (vicinity BS 5697). The objective area for the operation was the easternmost portion of the T-19 Company's area of operation. Recent heavy patrolling in the northern portion of the objective area just prior to the operation disclosed that the VC were expanding their influence in the area considerably. Two large company patrols in the PHU LE-PHUOC AN-CHAU TU area netted a total of over 100 VC and VCS, most of whom were or were suspected of being members of various VC political and economic groups. They told a consistent story of recent increases in all types of VC activity, including the establishment of hamlet guerrilla squads in each of the hamlets within the area, sharp increases in the amount of fortifications that the VC were preparing with forced labor, and an increase in the amount of propagandizing conducted by VC cadres.

2) For several months prior to the operation, BINH SON District intelligence sources had reported various unidentified VC platoon and company sized units in the area just west of the railway near the objective area before the commencement of the operation, one platoon was reported in the PHU LE-PHUOC AN area (vicinity BS 5694) and another in the TIEN DAO-PHUOC THUAN area (vicinity BS 5782). The existence of these units was considered highly probable, due to friendly patrol contacts with well armed units of near platoon size.

3) The operation was primarily designed to provide security to the cane cutters removing sugar cane from the area adjacent to National Route #1 rather than to make contact with major VC forces. However, it was anticipated that the local force guerrillas would join with the hamlet guerrillas in an effort to curtail as much of the work as possible. This estimate proved to be essentially correct.

b. VC Strength and Activity during Operation

1) The BINH SON District Chief, Captain LONG, organized a force of better than 2,000 workers from several villages around BINH SON District to

effect the cane cutting. Predictably enough, the word got out to VC forces that a major cane cutting project was underway. Since two reinforced Marine rifle companies, plus sizable Popular Force and PAT forces were used to provide security, there was little that the VC could do to stop the cane cutting by direct attack. They were forced to utilize harassing sniper fire to distract Marine security elements and to mine and booby trap to terrorize the cane cutters themselves. The latter tactic was employed with fair success.

2) Just after the operation began at 0750 on D-day, the BINH SON District Chief, Captain LONG, was proceeding west on a secondary road approximately 100 meters west of Route #1 (vicinity BS 591935). Driving in a 3/4 ton truck with a driver and two other men, he detonated an anti-vehicular mine. The actual type and size of the device could not be determined, but it was estimated to be at least 60 pounds of concentrated explosives. It blew the vehicle 15 feet from the point of impact, completely wrecking it, and produced a crater four feet deep and five feet in diameter. All four riders in the vehicle were wounded, two very seriously. The wounding of the District Chief had an understandably detrimental effect on the cane cutters' willingness to continue with the operation. They attempted to depart the area and were only stopped by BINH SON officials with great difficulty. Province Headquarters at QUANG NGA provided a replacement the same day and stability was re-established with his arrival.

3) Throughout the operation, the VC made extensive use of booby traps to harass workers and security forces. A total of 12 anti-personnel booby traps were encountered, five of which were unintentionally detonated, producing four Marine wounded, one Popular Force wounded and one dead, and six civilian wounded and one dead. The six civilian wounded and one dead were as a result of the detonating of one H-26 booby trap on D+3. This incident occurred when a tight group of cane cutters detonated the device while working; it produced a panic among remaining workers that was brought under control only with considerable effort on the part of BINH SON officials.

4) The only direct contact made with the VC during the course of the operation were three incidents of light but fairly accurate sniper fire, plus one incident of fairly heavy VC automatic weapons fire. All four of the contacts were made while friendly elements were moving in or around the western periphery of the objective area to provide a security screen for cane cutters behind or to the east of them. An AO working with the Battalion on the 12th noticed three VC in a trench (vicinity BS 582923) and attacked with rockets and machineguns. Two VC were killed and another wounded. The wounded VC was captured, along with two weapons, when the aircraft landed at the scene. It is estimated that no more than two VC platoons were in or near the objective area during the course of the operation.

c. VC Units Identified

1) No organized regular VC units were identified during the operation although several local guerrilla units were at least partially identified. A VC platoon leader, or perhaps more properly, a low-level organizer of several hamlet guerrilla squads, was captured on D+1. In the course of interrogation by attached BINH SON National Police he stated that he knew of two Local Force companies operating to the west and southwest of the objective area. These

were allegedly called the "Cong Ty" Company and the "Dinh Chinn" Company. The area of operations of the Cong Ty Company was described and matches very closely the known operating area of the T-19 Company, suggesting strongly that the two units are in fact the same. He also stated that the Dinh Chinn Company operated in the TAN PHUOC area. This area had been the source of several unconfirmed reports of company sized units. The report of the Dinh Chinn Company only tends to confirm these reports.

d. Intelligence Gained

1) A total of 11 VCC and 61 VCS were captured on this operation. The most significant VCC were the VC soldier captured by the helicopter crew and the "platoon leader", both previously mentioned, and a VC tax collector. From these three there was gathered several dozen names of other VC personalities plus limited data in their methods of operation. Eight other captives were also classified as VCC due to admitted membership in various VC political and economic associations. Sixty-one VCS were returned to IIT during the operation for suspected membership in VC associations or other VC affiliations.

2) VC population control in this area is surprisingly strong for an area so close to areas under government control. Hamlets, with the exception of those right on National Route #1 are entered regularly by the VC for taxing, propagandizing, and forced labor purposes. The people in this area seem well under the control of the VC cadres operating in their midst.

3) There is an extensive VC fortification program being conducted particularly in the westernmost portion of the objective area. The effort seems to be presently confined to trenches, foxholes, and man-traps. In the PHU LE hamlets, deep well-constructed, trenches completely surround each of the three hamlets. They are from four to five feet deep and two to three feet in circumference. Foxholes of a depth of three to five feet and two to three feet in diameter abound along all trails in this area. At least 80 man-trap pits six to seven feet deep and three to four feet square, filled with sharpened bamboo spears and wood with straw matting camouflaged with dirt, stretch from BS 585937 to BS 579938. A majority of these workings appear new and are obviously engineered for military defensive purposes.

4) Possibly the most significant intelligence gained during the operation came in the form of names of VC cadre, guerrillas, and sympathizers. 100 such names were acquired in the course of interrogations and were added to the unit's blacklist for use by patrols in the area.

e. Terrain

1) Critical Terrain. The entirety of the objective area is flat farmland spotted with typical Vietnamese hamlets. The hamlets themselves can be considered critical terrain, as well as a raised railway embankment that is the western boundary of the objective area.

2) Observation and Fields of Fire. Observation and fields of fire from the raised portions of the western railway embankment and both east and west from Route #1 are good. The central portion of the area provides poor observation and fields of fire due to hamlets and some dense fields.

3) Cover and Concealment. Good cover and concealment are provided by trenches in the PHU LE hamlets. Good cover and excellent concealment are provided by the hamlets and their natural vegetation.

4) Obstacles. Natural obstacles were the hedgerows, water-filled paddies, and remaining canefields. Man-made obstacles are the bamboo and wire fences which surround portions of every hamlet in the area.

5) Avenues of Approach. National Route #1 is the best avenue of approach into the area from both north and south. This fair quality hard surface road will accommodate all standard U.S. tracked and wheeled vehicles.

c. Weather. Weather during this operation was generally excellent. No precipitation was encountered. There were usually clear skies, and on those occasions when clouds were present, they were from 2000 feet to 3000 feet and broken, presenting no impediment to infantry or air operations. The temperature ranged from the low 70's at night to the mid-90's at mid-day. Humidity averaged 80%.

8. Mission. 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines provide security for sugar cane harvesters in the central section of the BINH SON District, QUANG NGAI Province.

9. Concept of Operation. On the afternoon of D-1 two companies departed vicinity coordinates BS 575969. One company established a blocking position vicinity coordinates BS 575925 to BS 583916. The second company swept overland from vicinity coordinates BS 594930 through the blocking position. From D-day until the completion of the operation on D+2 two companies plus three platoons of PAT's, a PF Platoon, and a light section of Ontos, provided security for the harvest by establishing a perimeter around the cutters, running fan patrols and sweeping the cane areas prior to the harvesters entering the area.

10. Execution

a. Planning. The siege of Viet Cong sabotage, terror and harassment along National Highway #1 necessitated a requirement for a joint effort to deny the VC of this refuge area. The Viet Cong have been using this dense vegetated area as a sanctuary to harass and snipe at all traffic and Marine patrols moving along or near National Highway #1. The farmers in the area were eager to harvest their sugar cane crop but the VC by means of threats and acts of violence prevented them from accomplishing this because it would deny the VC the use of this area for harboring sites and ambush positions. A joint conference was held on 5 March with the District Chief of BINH SON to develop a plan whereby the entire area between the TRA BONG River, the railroad tracks National Highway #1 and the southern base of OP #39 within 3rd Battalion 7th Marines TAOR would be sectioned into five distinct areas. All sugar cane fields within the total area were to be cut within a five day period. It was anticipated that at least one section could be completed each day utilizing some 2,000 harvesters. The District Chief assumed the responsibility for recruiting, organizing and billeting the harvesters. He also agreed to provide three platoons of PAT's and a platoon of PF's. He further agreed to assign intelligence and psychological warfare specialists as well as National Police to the Command Group. It was decided that a Marine Liaison Officer, inter-

preter and radio operator from this Command would be attached to the PAT's to provide liaison and coordinate activities between the Marine and Vietnamese units. In addition, this Command agreed to provide two rifle companies, a section of 81mm mortars, and a Command Group for security and coordination of the operation. The concept of operations was developed by 8 March and the plan was executed on 10 March (D-1).

D-1, 10 March 1966. On the afternoon of D-1, Companies K and L conducted a hammer and anvil type operation within grid square BS 5892 in the northwest portion of BS 5992 and the southeast portion of BS 5893. Enroute to the objective area Company K received sniper fire at coordinates BS 568940, BS 570935, BS 573937, BS 573935 and BS 574924 resulting in one friendly WIA/med-evac. Company K called in four artillery missions and returned small arms fire. A search of the area failed to reveal evidence of VC casualties.

c. D-day, 11 March 1966. At 0700 Companies L and K commenced sweeping the area designated to be harvested the first day (See Operation Overlay). The sweep ended at 0900 with negative contacts. At 0730 Command Group "A" reinforced with one platoon from H&S Company arrived in the objective area and established a CP vicinity coordinates BS 590934. At 0750 a truck (Personnel Carrier) containing the District Chief of BINH SON detonated a mine vicinity coordinates BS 591935 resulting in four WIA/med-evacs (District Chief and 3 ARVN). At 0734 the Skeptic (Fwd) CP received a light volume of sniper fire from vicinity coordinates BS 587935. PF/PAT personnel returned fire and swept the area with negative results. At 0900 Company K, vicinity coordinates BS 592928, sustained one WIA/med-evac resulting from a booby trap at 1005. Company K received sniper fire from vicinity coordinates BS 587925 resulting in one friendly WIA/med-evac. Elements of Company K returned fire and swept the area but failed to find evidence of any VC casualties. At 1040 a Company L CP observed and took under fire four VC with weapons and two VC without weapons vicinity coordinates BS 589925. The VC broke contact and departed from the area. At 1525 Company K received sniper fire from BS 587922 resulting in one friendly WIA/med-evac. Elements of Company K returned fire and swept the area but the sniper fled into the jungle growth and disappeared. Approximately one and a half hours later elements of Company K captured one VC in the vicinity of where the sniper fire came from. The VCS had a shrapnel wound in his chest. At 1915 an interrogation of a VCS revealed the possibility of a VC platoon located at BS 568928. An artillery mission was fired on the coordinates but a search of the area at daylight failed to produce evidence of VC casualties. A total of 18 VCS were captured on D-day, all of whom were locally interrogated, tagged, and sent to 3rd ITC for further processing. By the end of the first day, the harvesting force totaled approximately 1500 personnel. No VC activity was reported on the night of D-day or the early morning hours of D+1.

c. D+1, 12 March 1966. At 0820 a UH1E observed and took under fire by 3 VC with weapons in a trench at BS 582923 resulting in two VC KIA and one VC WIA. The VC WIA was captured by the UH1E personnel and returned to the 3rd CP. At 0830 the UH1E spotted eight VC at BS 582923, took them under fire and reported killing two VC. At 1235 elements of Company L were taken under fire by automatic weapons from BS 576940 resulting in one friendly WIA/med-evac. Company L returned fire and called in an air strike on the fleeing VC. A search of the area failed to produce evidence of VC casualties. At 1215 a

composite unit composed of one platoon of Company I and one platoon of Company M departed the Skeptic (Rear) CP by helicopter and established blocking positions vicinity coordinates BS 558937 to BS 561943. Company L swept from BS 560940 through the blocking positions but did not make any contacts during the sweep. At 1305 an air strike was called on 15 to 20 VC at BS 575932. Coverage was excellent. No bodies were found by Company L when the area was searched but three large blood stains were located. At 1945 a BINH SON National Policeman stepped in a punji trap at BS 584926 and had to be evacuated by air. No other activity was reported on the night of D+1 or the early morning hours of D+2. By the end of D+1 the harvesting force had grown to 2,050. At this point the area harvested was estimated to be one half a day short of the planned harvesting schedule.

d. D+2, 13 March 1966. At 0915 Company K captured one VCS hiding in a cane field at BS 581946. The VCS was questioned, tagged, and turned over to 3rd ITT for processing. At 0930 an AO reported to Regimental S-2 upon landing that he observed 35 to 40 people digging gun positions being guarded by six to seven uniformed VC at BS 550913. An AO was requested to observe the area - all personnel had left the area - an artillery mission was fired with good coverage on the area. At approximately 1045 one of the harvesters detonated a booby trap in the cane field. This panicked the harvesters and they refused to return to the cane fields. At 1235 one Marine from H&S Company was WIA/med-evac when a booby trap detonated as he passed through a gate. 1400 Company K sustained two WIA/med-evacs when a mine detector tripped a booby trap at BS 588944. At 1510 one PF was killed when he tripped a booby trap at BS 586944. No other activity was reported during the night of D+2 and the early morning hours of D+3.

e. D+3, 14 March 1966. At 1000 elements of Company L observed three VCS at BS 527927. When told to halt the VCS fled and were then taken under fire. One of the VCS was shot in the leg and the other two were captured. The one WIA was med-evac and the other two VCS were turned over to the National Police for questioning and later transferred to 3rd ITT. At 1545 the Scout Dog handlers spotted and challenged two VCS at BS 565937. The VCS fled and were taken under fire. A search of the area failed to reveal evidence of any casualties. Operation "C&H" ended at 1730 and by 2030 all elements of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines had returned to the Battalion CP.

11. Results

a. <u>Friendly U.S.</u>	<u>Friendly VN</u>
1) KIA: 1	3 (PF-2, Civ-1)
2) WIA: 7	8 (PF-4, Civ-4)
3) MIA: None	None
4) KBA: None	None
5) Equipment/Material Losses: None	1 PC Truck

b. Enemy

- 1) KIA: Unknown
- 2) DOW: 1
- 3) WIA: Unknown
- 4) MIA: Unknown
- 5) KBA: 10 (2 possible)
- 6) WBA: 1
- 7) Captured VCC: 11
- 8) Captured VCS: 60
- 9) Captured Equipment: 1 U.S. Rifle, Cal .30, M1
1 U.S. M1 carbine
1 U.S. cartridge belt, M1
1 VC gas mask

12. Administrative Matters

a. During Operation "C&H" the Battalion experienced no logistical problems. Resupply was accomplished without the use of air. Trucks delivered the resupply to the Battalion (Fwd) CP on the 12th, 13th, and 14th. Further distribution to Company K on the 12th was made by use of the harvesters enroute to the cane fields. Distribution was otherwise made by elements of the companies coming into the Battalion (Fwd) CP and carrying the supplies out to their respective company positions.

b. The detachment of Company C, 1st Engineer Battalion was particularly helpful to the Battalion CP group. When moving to the second CP site, engineers who were utilizing the AN/PRC-153 mine detector overlooked a booby trap when attempting to check out a heavily barb wired gate. The detector proved to be inadequate for this type of booby trap detection. Engineers blew several booby traps in the vicinity of the second CP site.

c. Retraction was made by trucks commencing at 141730. The retraction was completed by 142000.

13. Special Equipment/Techniques

a. Two scout dog teams were utilized. Their effectiveness was again demonstrated when on numerous occasions the dogs alerted their handlers of indigenous personnel were approaching or hiding in the vicinity of Marine personnel. Another advantage of employing the scout dog is that captured ^{Yes} have shown a definite fear and respect of the animal and therefore are less apt to attempt an escape while the dogs are present.

b. The employment of AO's periodically on this operation added greatly in the calling and observing of artillery missions. The AO's in addition provided accurate and rapid observation that would otherwise not have been available due to the thick vegetation and rolling terrain in the objective area.

14. Commander's Analysis. Several problems arose in the course of the operation that, unresolved could have materially hampered the success.

a. The anticipated capacity and ~~efficiency~~ of the Vietnamese cutters ~~were~~ over-estimated by District Headquarters. The work schedule from necessity ~~had~~ to be revised and the cutter teams reorganized.

b. During the early morning hours on the first day of the operation, while organizing the workers, the District Chief was severely wounded along with three other Vietnamese military men when their 3/4 ton vehicle detonated a mine. This had an adverse effect upon the harvesters. Through the efforts of the Assistant District Chief and the Marines in the area the villagers were encouraged to continue with the harvest.

c. By mid-day of the first day only about 1,000 harvesters had arrived prepared to work. By late afternoon, however, as a result of the efforts of psychological warfare team, approximately 2,050 men, women, and children were harvesting cane and cutting all other vegetation between the National Highway and the railroad.

d. About mid-morning on the third day of harvesting a booby trap was detonated in the cane field by one of the harvesters killing one and seriously wounding four others. Further investigation revealed additional booby traps in adjacent cane fields. The presence of the booby traps panicked the harvesters into refusing to return to the cane fields. As an interim measure the District Chief persuaded the villagers to remain in the area and continue to cut all other standing vegetation around the hamlets. This in itself was a psychological victory for the government and a defeat for the Viet Cong.

e. An attempt was made to burn a test plot of sugar cane. One Popular Force man was killed and another injured when the fire detonated a booby trap. It became evident that the area would have to be cleared of all booby traps rapidly and the cutters given renewed confidence or the operation would terminate on an unsuccessful note. A platoon of tanks was quickly diverted to the area. The tanks moved through the fields rolling the cane down with the tracks and crushing or detonating the booby traps. This proved to be a very safe and effective method of clearing large areas within a short period of time and the cutters were able to salvage the cane.

f. Because of the close coordination and cooperation between the ARVN the USMC units, any problems that arose were resolved rapidly on the spot. The harmonious climate generated by this joint effort is expected to carry over into other areas of mutual interest.

CH Bodley
C. H. BODLEY

HEADQUARTERS

3rd Battalion, 7th Marines
3rd Marine Division (Rein) FMF
FPO, San Francisco 96602

UNCLASSIFIED

3:RHS:hws

3480

31 Mar 1966

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, 7th Marines
Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report
Ref: (a) Frag Order 5-66
Encl: (1) Intelligence Interrogation Report

UNCLASSIFIED

1. Operation "TEXAS"
2. 200930H to 251600H March 1966
3. QUANG NGAI, TRA BONG, BINH SON
4. Lieutenant Colonel C. H. BODLEY

3rd Bn. 7th Mar. Log No

102-66 Copy #46897

Ser: 014-66

5. Task Organization
3rd Bn, 7th Mar
3rd Plat, Co C, 1st Engr Bn
FO Tms, Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Mar
Det Natl Police, BINH SON Dist
ISO Tm, 7th Mar
HST, 1st SP Bn

DECLASSIFIED
DOD DIR 5200.10DECLASSIFIED
DOD DIR 5200.10

6. Supporting Forces

- a. Air (Chronological utilization)

201040 - 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines began its lift from Landing Zone ROBIN to the objective area for Operation "TEXAS". The lift was completed at 201150.

201430 - ALO submitted priority helicopter request for transfer of two platoons of Company I and one section of 81mm mortars to Hill 141. The helicopters arrived at 201600 and completed the transfer at 201645.

211540 - Company I requested med-evac for one U.S. for leg wounds. Med-evac was completed at 211605.

211625 - Company I requested emergency med-evac for five U.S. casualties. The med-evac was partially completed at 211650. The helicopters returned at 211730 but were unable to land because the landing zone was not secure. At 211915 two helicopters landed at Company I and completed the med-evac. Med-evac aircraft returned the following morning and lifted out three additional KIA's.

211730 - Skeptic L-14 submitted a request for CAS. The CAS aircraft arrived at 211915. Due to the darkness and bad communication between CAS aircraft and FAC, the CAS mission was cancelled.

220840 - ALO submitted priority request for Company I. Aircraft arrived on station at 220920. Under control of Skeptic L-14, [redacted] neutralize a machinegun position. [redacted] 5200.10

(Appendix (F))

DECLASSIFIED

220805 - ALO submitted routine helicopter request to evacuate 13 VCS to Task Force Delta Interrogation Center. Mission was completed at 221020.

220840 - ALO submitted request for two routine med-evacs. Med-evac was completed at 220900.

221005 - ALO submitted med-evac request for one heat casualty and one WIA. Med-evac was completed at 221035.

221015 - ALO submitted routine helicopter request for evacuation of captured equipment, MCI and grenades. Mission was completed at 221100.

221313 - ALO submitted routine med-evac request for one WIA. Med-evac completed at 221415.

221330 - ALO submitted priority med-evac request for two WIA. Med-evac completed at 221415.

221630 - Companies I and K were helilifted from coordinates BS 517832 to landing zone at coordinates BS 567774. The Battalion CP and Company L were helilifted from coordinates BS 495838 to landing zone at coordinates BS 567774. The lift was completed at approximately 221745.

221830 - ALO requested CAS with a TAC(A), because FAC could not observe or control. Mission was cancelled because there were no TAC(A)'s available.

222330 - ALO submitted TAR request for TPQ-10 missions. Aircraft commenced TPQ bombing of PHUOC LOC village at 230015. Bombing ceased at 230200.

230715 - Close air support aircraft commenced bombing and strafing attack on trench line running east and west in northern section of enemy village. Air strikes continued until approximately 231030. Close air support aircraft provided excellent suppressive fire in order for Company L to receive med-evac aircraft.

231045 - ALO submitted helicopter request to transfer two Marines to BINH SON and communication equipment to LSA. Mission completed at 231140.

231410 - Company M requested priority med-evac for two Marines, heat casualties. Med-evac was completed at 231445.

231515 - Company M requested routine med-evac for four Marines with heat prostration. Med-evac was completed at 231540.

231620 - ALO submitted emergency med-evac request for one Marine with heat stroke. Med-evac completed at 231700.

231628 - ALO submitted priority helicopter request to resupply Companies K and M. Resupply mission was completed at 231700.

240900 - ALO submitted helicopter request for transfer of personnel to Landing Zone ROBIN. Mission completed at 240950.

241500 - Company M submitted priority med-evac request for one Marine with suspected appendicitis. Med-evac completed at 241525.

250630 - Gunboats arrived on station to spot/observe for Company I in the sweep to the east just north of the river.

250800 - ALO submitted routine helicopter request for transfer of troops and logistics. Mission completed at 250845.

250815 - ALO submitted priority helicopter request for exchange of communication equipment. Mission completed at 250915.

250900 - ALO submitted routine helicopter request for transfer of two U.S. for Alligator C22 (ARVN). Mission was completed at 251500.

251100 - ALO submitted routine med-evac for two Vietnamese. Med-evac completed at 241450.

251155 - ALO submitted priority helicopter request for retraction of 615 troops at 251400. Helicopter arrived at 241458 and lift back to Landing Zone ROBIN was completed by 251705.

Comments: On two occasions during Operation "TEXAS" urgently required close air support missions were cancelled. In one instance the CAS aircraft

(F)

UNCLASSIFIED

arrived at dusk and were unable to accomplish their mission due to darkness. When it is evident that CAS aircraft will be operating during the hours of darkness, provisions must be made to configure with flares.

In a second instance, there was no FAC available, but CAS was required. CAS aircraft and a TAC(A) were requested. Because of the non-availability of a TAC(A) the mission request was cancelled after CAS aircraft arrived on station.

Numerous helicopter missions were flown in support of this Battalion during Operation "TEXAS", and in all but supply runs the reaction times were minimal. This efficient support aided greatly in the overall mission accomplishment.

b. Fire Support

1) Fire support was provided by Battery I, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines; Battery H, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines; Batteries K and M, 4th Battalion, 11th Marines; and two sections of the 81mm Mortar Platoon, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines.

2) Chronological Summary of Events

a) On 20 March the FSCC landed with the Battalion CP Group to commence operations in the area adjacent to the AN HOA Outpost, vicinity coordinates BS 469854. One 81mm mortar mission was fired in support of Company L.

b) Ten artillery fire missions and five 81mm mortar missions were fired on 21 March. These were in support of units receiving heavy automatic weapons fire from VC emplacements in the THACH AN NOI and PHUONG BINH village complexes in the vicinity of grid squares BS 5089 to BS 5183.

c) On 22 March seven artillery missions and three 81mm mortar fire missions were fired in support of the Battalion as the area around PHUONG DINH was swept. During this period, communications with FDC was unreliable. The conduct of fire net was useless during periods of heavy fighting by Companies K and L (Reference para 12.d, Communications). The AO's on the conduct of fire net refused to yield to priority missions and continued shooting at scattered groups of VC while Marines remained under heavy fire. Three missions called by FO's during the crucial time could not be fired.

3) In late afternoon on 22 March the Battalion was helilifted to clear the PHUOC LOC village, vicinity grid square BS 5676. Fifteen artillery missions were fired along with five 81mm mortar missions to reduce heavy enemy resistance. Many of these missions were fired repeatedly throughout the evening.

e) On 23 March, seventeen artillery missions and three 81mm mortar missions were fired. Artillery and air were used to prepare the PHUOC LOC village prior to sweeping. Throughout the day artillery was used to cover the sweeping forces. Communications again proved to be a problem as the AN/PRC-9 with the RC-292 proved to be inadequate in range to communicate with the firing batteries. The FSCC's repeated requests for airborne relay were not fulfilled.

f) During the night of 23 March and pre-dawn hours of 24 March, nine artillery missions were fired on likely VC exfiltration routes, especially along the SONG TRA KHUO River.

UNCLASSIFIED

g) On 25 March the FSCC retracted with the Battalion Commander and returned to the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines CP.

3) Comments and Recommendations

a) Fire support was generally outstanding. Fifty-four artillery missions with a total of 3,500 rounds were fired in support of this Battalion. The 81mm mortar platoon fired twelve missions and 110 rounds.

b) As stated previously, artillery communications proved to be a problem during the operation. As a direct result of these problems the following recommendations are submitted:

1' Each infantry battalion be assigned a single conduct of fire net to allow immediate communications between FO's, FSCC, and the FDC.

2' Aerial observers be provided a completely separate circuit, possibly the Artillery Battalion FDC Net. They should not be allowed to dominate or override a conduct of fire net.

3' At least one AN/PRC-25 should be provided to the Artillery Liaison and FDC. In fast moving, complex and widely separated engagements, the AN/PRC-9 has neither the range nor stability to provide adequate communications. If the Infantry Battalion has shown a need and received the AN/PRC-25, how do the FO's and FSCC have any less need?

4' More accurate and detailed planning must be made between the Battalion and Regimental FSCC. During the initial stages of the operation the units supporting and their frequencies were unknown to this FSCC. No information was received from the higher echelons concerning Fire Caps, type of control of the FDC, or this Battalion's direct support battery.

UNCLASSIFIED

7. INTELLIGENCE.

a. Anticipated VC Strength, Location and Disposition.

1) Operation Texas was an operation conducted in reaction to an attack on a prepared and established Regional Forces outpost by a major VC unit. Since the operation did not actually begin until one day after the VC attack, it was a relief operation as well as a pursuit of VC forces in an effort to fix and destroy them, consistent with COMUSMACV policy. Beyond question, the operation was a significant success.

2) An Hoa outpost, in the extreme western end of Binh Son District is positioned on a 141 meter high hill mass overlooking the Tra Bong River 1800 meters to the north and the Vinh Tuy hamlet complex to the southwest. The outpost was manned by the 936th Regional Forces Company, and was surrounded by multiple barbed wire entanglements and heavy concentration of anti-personnel mines. At about 0100 on the 18th of March, radio contact with the outpost was lost by Province Headquarters at Quang Ngai. Early the following day, a 15-man ambush patrol which had been sent out from the outpost the previous night received heavy small arms fire from An Hoa when they attempted to return to the outpost. An AO surveyed the situation later that morning and observed 25-30 bodies within the perimeter. Clearly, the outpost had been taken. When the 2nd Division ARVN attempted to re-occupy the outpost with a heliborne two-company force, the helos came under intense .50 caliber AA fire from a series of positions around the base of the An Hoa hill mass. The LZ that was used was just 200 meters from the outpost on the ridge (vic BS 472861) and would only accommodate two helos at one time. About 30 troops succeeded in getting on the deck, but were extracted with considerable difficulty when they came under heavy automatic fire from the outpost. It was now certain that the outpost had not only been taken, but that a large enemy force with an AA capability was in the area.

3) Prior to the entry of U.S. MARINES and ARVN forces into the objective area on D-Day (20Mar), it was estimated that the attacking force at An Hoa was composed of elements of the 36th NVA Regt. This Regt was reportedly composed of elements of the 11th, 22nd and 33rd battalions, last located at BS 515850, BS 580844 and BS 550796 respectively. The regimental CP was reported near BS 545820 along with elements of the 195th AA Bn, armed with .50 caliber AA MG's.

4) The rapidity with which the operation was organized and mounted did not permit the publishing of the customary operation plan with intelligence annex, reflecting the formalized thinking on the enemy situation. However, it was estimated that the VC force in the area would withdraw rapidly once sizeable friendly forces were introduced. The most likely route of withdrawal was considered to be southwest into Vinh Tuy initially, and to the south and southeast if further pursued. This estimate proved essentially correct. It was also believed that the 36th Regt, if they were, in fact, the attackers of An Hoa, would withdraw with great speed to avoid further costly losses such as they incurred when faced with major troop units on the recently completed Operation "Utah".

UNCLASSIFIED

b. Adequacy and Source of Pre-D-Day Intelligence.

1) Intelligence provided to this unit prior to D-Day was not fully adequate to the normal needs of an infantry battalion. It consisted of a description of what had already transpired in the An Hoa outpost area, plus a reiteration of the most recent OOB data on the 36th Regt. AA gun positions from which fire was delivered on the helos carrying the relief force.

2) While it is perfectly true that adequate intelligence was not provided, post operation discussions with the Intelligence Staff of the Task Force indicate that the attack on the An Hoa outpost had come as a considerable surprise to all concerned and that there were no prior indications to suggest that something was brewing. It is significant to note that the unit believed to be in the objective area, the 36th NVA Regt., was not the enemy force encountered.

3) Photography of the objective area requested; however, no photographs were provided this unit at any stage of the operation.

c. VC Strength and Disposition Encountered.

1) During the course of this operation, significant VC forces were engaged by elements of this battalion. Almost without exception, enemy elements proved to be well-equipped, well-trained, well-disciplined troops who were perfectly willing to give battle if confronted. In all cases, their combat effectiveness must be considered as very high.

2) On D+1 (21Mar), Co's "K" & "L" while sweeping in an easterly direction in the vic of Thach An Noi (BS 5084), made contact with an estimated two VC companies in prepared positions (defensive). The VC element was dispersed from BS 503847 to BS 506846. The movement of friendlies towards the area was harassed by intermittent small arms fire before solid contact was made. Once contact was made, the enemy placed a heavy volume of machinegun and small arms fire on friendly maneuver elements. The enemy fire was very accurate, of heavy volume, and at close range (50 meters). The unit involved was conclusively established as the 65th Bn, 5th VC Regiment.

3) On D+2 (22Mar), Co's "K" & "L", after helilifting into a new operating area were approaching the hamlet complex of Phuoc Loc. The two companies were abreast and its lead elements were crossing open fields leading south when they came under intense mortar, automatic weapon, AA machinegun, M-79 and small arms fire. The fire was intense and was apparently under excellent control as it all began almost simultaneously. The VC force delivered their fire from extensive prepared positions (described elsewhere in this report). Further, the enemy fire was so intense that considerable difficulty was encountered in getting helicopters into a secure zone to MEDEVAC the wounded. This enemy force was a heavily reinforced groupment of two VC battalions, possibly the 60th and 21st Bn's, although their exact designation could not be confirmed.

d. VC Units Identified.

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

1) As has been previously stated, major VC forces were contacted during the course of this operation. Only one of these units was positively identified although indications of several other were noted.

2) On D+2 (22Mar), Company "I", while sweeping the area in which "K" & "L" companies had received heavy fire on the previous day (vic BS 507844) captured a 15 year old VC soldier found hiding in a shallow bomb shelter. The man had shrapnel wounds in both knees and admitted to being a VC. Due to his serious wounds he was rapidly evacuated to "B" Med where he was interrogated by IIT personnel. He stated that he had been forced to join the 65th Bn of the 5th Regiment in Quang Nam Province in January of this year. He was armed with an M-1 rifle which he said was hidden two miles to the north. He further stated that his unit had made a 7 day march through the mountains from Quang Nam to Quang Ngai, arriving there on the 20th of March. He was wounded by artillery shrapnel on the 21st of March and hid in the bomb shelter until the time of his capture. Interrogation of this man revealed detailed data on the strength, armament and organization of his unit, as well as some data on the other Bn's of the 5th VC Regt. (See Encl (1) to this report/ 3d IIT rpt #056-CL on captive 286-3-CL).

3) On D+4 (24Mar), "I" Company captured a Local Force guerilla in the vic of Phuoc Loc hamlet (vic BS 565765) who voluntarily led the unit to his hidden weapon, a French MAS-36 rifle. This man stated that the 60th Bn of the 5th VC Regt had been in the western portion of Phuoc Loc hamlet on the 22nd when hit by "K" Co. and that they had withdrawn west towards Bia Gia. He further stated that the 70th Bn of the 5th Regt was, or had been, across the Tra Khuc River to the south. This information cannot be given great credibility due to the fact that the 60th and 70th Bn's are known to be subordinate units of the 1st, not 5th Regt. The 70th Bn was also believed to be in Quang Tin Province on 22 March.

4) On the 24th of March, this battalion moved into the very large Phuoc Loc hamlet complex to screen villagers, search for VC casualties and destroy fortifications. Due to the large number of villagers to be seen, additional intelligence personnel from Quang Ngai were requested and received. An ARVN Intelligence Officer and his assistant were delivered to the scene and proved to be of great assistance in acquiring and analyzing information from hamlet inhabitants. One of the pieces of information acquired was the fact that a second Bn, the 21st VC Bn, had been the unit occupying and defending the eastern portion of the Phuoc Loc hamlet complex. This report is also somewhat inconsistent with the reliably-reported location of the 21st Bn near Thach Tu in southern Quang Ngai Province.

5) A diary type notebook was found with other personal documents in a pack hidden in a cave in eastern Phuoc Loc complex on 24 March. The document belonged to a member of a 57mm Recoilless Rifle crew who wrote of fighting in the Van Truong (Operation STARLIGHT) and Bia Gia battles. His unit, of undetermined size, was designated "364". The battles in which he had participated would tend to indicate membership in the 1st VC Regt. This, however cannot be confirmed.

UNCLASSIFIED

e. Significant Intelligence Gained.

1) VC Tactics - The enemy elements engaged by this battalion performed in such a fashion as to reflect a high degree of professionalism. They exhibited excellent fire control, camouflage discipline, marksmanship, mortar and machinegun gunnery, tactical movement and willingness to engage. Beyond doubt, they were professional infantrymen fighting purely infantry engagements as opposed to so-called "guerilla" warfare. The salient features of their tactics are summarized below.

a) Use of Snipers. In two of the three major engagements made by this battalion the enemy used snipers to advantage. Near THACH AN NOI on the 21st of March, both Companies "K" & "L" reported receiving moderate to heavy sniper fire from their flanks and rear while they were engaged with the major VC force to their front. A rifleman from "K" Co. crawled to a position within 40 meters of a VC sniper armed with a rifle of unknown type but equipped with a telescopic sight, and killed him. The body and weapon could not be recovered. Both Companies "K" & "L" state that an unknown but fairly large percentage of enemy snipers used thickly foliated trees as firing positions. The VC snipers were again used with good effect on the 22nd and again from trees. The entire battalion landed via helicopter in a landing zone on the northeastern side of Hill 23 (BS 565775). Shortly thereafter, Companies "K" & "L" crossed this heavily vegetated hill and began their movement towards the Phuoc Loc complex. Just after they had crossed the hill and just before they became heavily engaged to their front, an estimated 10-12 snipers opened fire on the last elements of the companies proceeding southwest and the stationary battalion CP to the northeast. The result was a partial and temporary disruption of operations in the CP when two maneuver elements became engaged heavily. It is clear that sniper fire from the VC was carefully coordinated with all other offensive activities of the unit; it was extremely effective.

b) Defensive Fires and Fire Control. The VC force occupying Phuoc Loc prepared an organized, coordinated defense along the northern edge of the hamlet with considerable skill. Their commanders fully understood the principles of mutual support, grazing fire, interlocking fire, and fire control and applied them well. Their fire commenced almost simultaneously over a 1400-1800 meter front on Companies "K" & "L" indicating a pre-arranged system of signals (Villagers later reported telephones in the hands of the VC, and small lengths of communication wire were later found-phones may have been used in the control of defensive fires). Debriefing of the participants in this fight indicates that the VC coordinated 81mm and 60mm mortars, AA machineguns, light machineguns, M-79's, 57mm Recoilless Rifles and small arms in such a fashion as to cover the entire area to their front. Furthermore, the coverage was flexible and was readily shifted to lucrative targets of opportunity presented by friendly troops in their efforts to extricate casualties. The principle of enfilade fire was also used well as was evidenced by an incident in the battle noted by Company "K". Just prior to receiving the heavy fire from the Phuoc Loc hamlet area, the right flank platoon of Company "K" was sweeping south towards the hamlet. They crossed a straight shallow trench approximately 50 meters in length. The trench ran on an oblique from the edge of the hamlet to the east. When mortar fire began to

UNCLASSIFIED

fall on them, friendly troops took cover in this ditch. As soon as they did, a .50 caliber machinegun opened fire, shooting straight down the long axis of the trench. Five friendly casualties resulted in a matter of seconds. Only immediate reaction by friendly supporting arms prevented many more casualties.

c) VC Diversionary Attacks. The incident in which VC snipers fire on the CP while other elements of the battalion were heavily engaged has already been described. This constitutes one type of diversionary attack. On the 21st, when Companies "K" & "I" were engaged near Thach An Noi (BS505845), the enemy placed moderately heavy sniper fire on the Battalion CP at BS 496839. Simultaneously, rounds of 81mm mortar fire were received in the vic of our 81mm mortar position located adjacent to the CP. The suspected mortar and sniper position was to the southwest at coordinates BS 495834. It is significant to note that the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, located farther to the southwest, received fire at the same time and from the same area, and was also engaged with enemy forces. This suggests the possibility that the enemy may have been trying to get the two organizations firing at one another, an effort in which they were not successful. Still another incident involving the diversionary/harassing type of attack occurred at 0400 on the 23rd when Company I, acting as security around the Bn CP received approximately 20-30 rounds of 60 mm mortar fire. The fire came from an estimated two positions whose crews exhibited a high degree of gunnery proficiency. They traversed and searched over a 240 meter line in the Company I area. They were silenced by counter-battery fire.

d) VC Evacuation Tactics. VC forces are well known for the great emphasis they place on the rapid evacuation of their dead and wounded. In the battle around Phuoc Loc on the 22nd of March, heavy casualties were inflicted. On the 23rd and 24th, not a single body or wounded VC or villager was found. A detailed interrogation of the local hamlet inhabitants revealed the means by which the VC forces evacuated their dead and wounded. Prior to the first engagement with our forces on the afternoon of the 22nd, the VC gathered up 30 young men from the hamlet and impressed them into service as body bearers. This was at approximately 1400 in the afternoon, nearly four hours prior to the beginning of the battle. At about 1700-1800, the procedure was repeated when an additional 50 persons were drafted. Again at about 1900, 30 more people were taken to carry dead and wounded. The VC obviously intended to engage our forces, anticipated casualties, and made preparations for their evacuation. The fact that they had to come back twice for more bearers, using older and less sturdy persons including women each time, tends to indicate that their casualties were heavier than originally anticipated. The bearers were used to carry the VC dead and wounded, wrapped in each casualty's hammock, to the Song Tra Khuc where they were ferried across in waiting boats. The male hamlet inhabitants used as bearers had not returned to the Phuoc Loc area by the time of our departure on the 25th. This partially precludes more eyewitness account of the number of VC dead, the locations of their graves, and the area to which wounded were evacuated. The main VC elements withdrew sometime during the night of the 22nd-23rd, part of the force crossing the Song Tra Khuc to the south and another element moving west towards Bia Gia. *One woman bearer indicated upon questioning that she had made three evacuations in the course of the night.

UNCLASSIFIED

2) VC Engineering Effort. A considerable VC engineering effort was noticed as a result of Operation Texas. The full extent of this effort was discovered when the battalion moved into the area of Phuoc Loc hamlet (BS 5676, 5576, 5577) where an extensive system of caves, tunnels, and particularly defensive trenches and other fortification was uncovered.

a) In the Phuoc Loc complex, approximately 300 small foxholes were noticed. These holes measured 2'x3' feet in diameter and were from 3'-4' deep. Some were covered partially with a layer of bamboo section about 4" in diameter on top of which dirt and sod had been placed. About 40% of the holes were sited along all major trails and lanes and were positioned in such a way as to be mutually supporting to a unit conducting a withdrawal or advance under fire. Approximately 130 of these holes were destroyed with explosives.

b) An estimated 5000-5500 meters of trench were encountered in and around Phuoc Loc complex. A deep fighting trench, zig-zagged for blast protection, completely surrounds the hamlet. This trench system had adjoining heavy and light weapons position with overhead cover, in addition to fighting position for individual rifleman. A number of lateral trenches lead off of the main defensive trench throughout the hamlet. A smaller circular system of trenches surrounds what was estimated to be a CP area near BS 563/766, with lateral trenches leading out to the main fighting trench. Trenches in this area are from 2'-8' feet deep and are 2' x 3' wide. Destruction of the system could not be accomplished with explosives and would require heavy engineering equipment.

c) Two very extensive tunnel systems were found in Phuoc Loc. The first began near BS 565769 and ran for approximately 650 meters in generally northwesterly direction. It was from 8'-10' underground, varied from 3'-5' high and 3'-7' wide, and had multiple small entrances. The second began near BS 562768 and ran about 200 meters in a westerly direction. The dimensions were the same as the first. Both contained many small rooms showing signs of recent occupancy in the form of dishes, sleeping gear, and some toilet articles. Portions of both systems ran quite close to the perimeter fighting trench. In places there was only a foot or so of earth between the trench and tunnel, so that a trapped defender in the trench could break through the wall and escape through the tunnel. Both of these systems were destroyed with explosives.

d) Relatively small, cave-like shelters were found under nearly 50 buildings in the center of the complex. Though there was some variance in dimensions, there were generally 5' underground and varied from 5'-15' square. Sleeping gear, mats and dishes were found in most of these. About 15-20 were destroyed.

3) VC Casualties.

a) During the course of this operation and its three major engagements with enemy forces, heavy casualties were inflicted on the VC.

Some of the VC KIA's could not be confirmed until detailed debriefing of participants, who were evacuated, was conducted. Other information on VC casualties was derived from careful interrogation of hamlet inhabitants in Phuoc Loc. The total count of VC KIA's was 72 with an additional 155 possible.

b) In the area of the firefight around Thach An Noi (vic BS 499852) three VC KIA's were found, along with their weapons and equipment. They were killed by small arms fire.

c) Interrogation of villagers in Phuoc Loc began on the 23rd and continued until the battalion retracted by helo on the 25th. Special assistance was received in the form of an ARVN Intelligence Officer from Quang Ngai. At least 300 villagers were seen in an attempt to determine the location and number of VC dead and wounded, as well as all available information on the VC forces. Considerable difficulty was encountered in getting accurate information from these people, as most of them understandably took to the family bomb shelter when the fight began. However, on the 23rd, "K" company interrogated, via attached National Policeman, a middle-aged couple in the extreme eastern end of the Phuoc Loc hamlet who stated that they had counted 30-32 dead being carried past their home about 2400 on the 22nd. There were also some 100 VC or more wounded, some carried and some walking. Again on the morning of the 24th, "K" Company interviewed a 56 year old farmer who stated he had seen another 31 VC dead carried by his position along with many wounded. He was interviewed near his home in the north central portion of the hamlet and stated he saw the incident around 0400 on the 23rd. This would indicate that there were some 60 VC dead and an undetermined number of wounded. Late on the 24th, H&S Co picked up a 40 year old male near the Bn CP who was the local rice merchant and wealthy landowner. He was determined to be free of VC connection by National Police and ARVN Intelligence and told of seeing 60 VC dead carried by his home near the highway. He was quite positive of his figures and also stated there were 100 VC wounded. Many other reports of VC dead and wounded were received during the course of the 2-day screening, but most of the numbers involved would not be accepted as they were derived by the interrogators after repeated questions of "how many" and repeated replies of "too many". Some people volunteered figures of as many as 500 VC killed and wounded. It became obvious that the entire hamlet was awed by the enormity of the air and artillery bombardment and by the scope of the VC casualties. 60 was retained as the figure of confirmed kills in the action, with another 125 considered possible due to the magnitude of the bombardment and the villagers' reports.

f. Terrain.

Critical Terrain.

1) Hill #23, (vic BS5677) is the most critical terrain in the objective area. The hamlet complex of Phuoc Loc (BS 5576, 5676, 5577) may also be considered critical terrain due to the existing defensive position to be found there

UNCLASSIFIED

2) Observation and Fields of Fire. Observation from Hill #23 is good in all directions, although heavy vegetation towards the top of the hill would require the use of trees as observation platforms. On the lower slopes, visibility is also good. In the flat areas to the west, north and east of Hill #23, visibility is broken up by small clusters of houses, cane fields and hedgerows. The area between Hill 23 and Phuoc Loc is open and provides good observation and fields of fire.

3) Cover and Concealment. Cover is excellent in the Phuoc Loc area due to the extensive trench system remaining there. Fair cover is provided by large rocks and heavy vegetation on the upper reaches of Hill 23. Concealment is excellent due to the trenches and fighting holes in Phuoc Loc. Excellent concealment is also afforded by heavy vegetation on Hill 23. There are numerous positions of good concealment in a 1000 to 1500 meter radius of Hill 23, due to small canefields, clusters of houses and hedgerows.

4) Obstacles. Natural obstacles were the hedgerows and water-filled rice paddies which tend to hamper, rather than halt, foot movement. Man-made obstacles are the bamboo and wire fences integrated into the defensive perimeter around Phuoc Loc.

5) Avenues of Approach. There are no really good avenues of approach into the Hill 23 or Phuoc Loc areas, which are the two places of critical terrain in the area. The best avenue of approach onto Hill 23 is from the southwestern side.

g. Weather.

1) Weather during the course of this operation was generally excellent. There were usually clear skies and on those occasions when clouds were present, they were from 2000-3000 feet and broken and presented no problem in the area of infantry or air operations. The temperature ranged from the low 70's at night to the mid 90's at mid-day. The humidity produced over 20 heat casualties, most of them recent arrivals in Vietnam.

UNCLASSIFIED

8. Mission. 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines (Rein) in conjunction with the 5th Airborne Battalion, ARVN conduct a heliborne landing into Landing Zone QUAIL, BS 434867, sweep to the east and southeast conducting a search and destroy operation of the BINH HOA Hamlet complex/AN HOA hill complex located in the vicinity of BS 435869 and BS 474964.

9. Concept of Operations. One company provide convoy escort for the 7th Marines/11th Marine Artillery Group. Three companies, two sections of 81mm mortars and the Battalion Command Group will be helilifted from Landing Zone ROBIN to Landing Zone QUAIL vicinity coordinates BS 434867. Upon landing the Battalion will commence a search and destroy operation in conjunction with the 5th Airborne Battalion, ARVN toward the east and southeast to search out and destroy all enemy forces within the objective area.

10. Execution

a. Planning. On 19 March 1966 an ARVN outpost located vicinity coordinates BS 474964 was overrun by an estimated VC Battalion. At 191800H 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines was put on a six hour alert. At approximately 192230H a planning conference was held at the ADC Headquarters by the Task Force Delta staff. By 200130H detail planning by the Battalion staff was underway and Frag Order 5-66 was published by 200500H. At 200930H this Battalion commenced the helilift into the objective area.

b. D-day, 20 March 1966. At 200430H Company M departed 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines area and provided convoy escort for 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines and the 7th Marine Regimental Headquarters Group. At 200930H 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines (-)(Rein) commenced a helilift to Landing Zone QUAIL vicinity coordinates BS 434867. By 201130H all elements had arrived in Landing Zone QUAIL. No enemy contact was made during the lift or in the landing zone. Upon landing the zone was secured by Company L. Company K landed second and moved to vicinity coordinates BS 435869 to sweep the village complex in that area. Company K apprehended three VCC and seven VCS in the hamlet of NHON HOA (1). BS 447869. Company L apprehended two VCS at coordinates BS 446861. The Command Group established a CP vicinity coordinates BS 432866. Company I after landing moved to and established an assembly area vicinity coordinates BS 430867. At 201600H Company I (-) and one section of 81mm mortars were helilifted to the AN HOA hill complex vicinity coordinates BS 474864. While lifting out of Landing Zone QUAIL a small volume of small arms fire was received. Company I moved from the AN HOA Landing Zone to the Outpost where they found 31 Vietnamese Regional Force soldiers KIA and no survivors. They also retrieved four U.S. carbines, one M-1 rifle, one BAR, one 60mm mortar, 42,200 rounds of .30 caliber ammunition, 84 fragmentation grenades, 62 rounds of 60mm mortar ammunition, 650 rounds of .45 caliber ammunition, 184 rounds of carbine ammunition and 9,000 rounds of .30 caliber linked ammunition.

A reconnaissance of the outpost indicated that the heaviest fighting occurred on the southern perimeter. Protective wire was cut in three places on the northern edge of the perimeter. It appeared as though the VC initially attacked the outpost from the south, possibly as a feint resulting in a concentration of RF defending in this area while the VC penetrated the northern sector with little opposition. There were 15 slain defenders in

(F)

UNCLASSIFIED

the trench line on the southern edge, eight in the center and northern edge and seven were found outside the perimeter. There were no VC on the hill. An exceptionally large amount of expended cartridges were located in the vicinity of the slain RF indicating that they had defended the outpost in a valiant manner.

At 201715H the remaining elements of the Battalion moved by foot from the vicinity of Landing Zone QUAIL southeast to vicinity coordinates BS 461842 arriving at 202000H. No contact was reported during the movement. The Battalion CP was established at BS 461842.

At 201900H an attached HST man detonated an anti-personnel mine and was killed.

Company I (-)(Rein) remained at the AN HOA Outpost throughout the night and did not encounter any enemy contact.

Company K established night time positions vicinity coordinates BS 458843. Company L established night time positions vicinity coordinates BS 458841. No contact was reported by either company.

c. D+1, 21 March 1966. At first light Companies L, K and part of H&S conducted a detailed sweep of the area where they had spent the night since it was dark when they moved into position. An inspection of the area revealed a number of shelters and caves, two loaded Thompson machinegun magazines and a few women and children. These villagers were interrogated and provided limited intelligence regarding VC activities. Two caves were destroyed in VINH TUY (1) and (2) and three VCS were apprehended.

At 210950H the Battalion (-) commenced a sweep from their night time positions in an easterly direction arriving in the vicinity of coordinates BS 495839 by 211400H. The Battalion CP was established at BS 495839. At BS 494847 Company L located a 2,000 pound cache of rice along with VC documents and a number of unidentified small arms casings.

At 211500H Company L in conjunction with Company K commenced a search and destroy operation southeast toward THACH AN NOI (1) vicinity coordinates BS 505845.

At 211515H the left flank of Company L came under intense small arms fire from an estimated ten to fifteen VC at BS 503847. Fire was returned and the area exploited. Four VC KIA and two carbines were recovered. When Company L continued their advance to the east they were again taken under fire with a very heavy volume of machinegun, automatic weapons, and small arms fire at BS 505847. The VC force estimated to be a company was well dispersed and deeply entrenched. Fighting was as close as 30 to 50 meters and lasted until 211830H when the VC broke contact and fled north. One of the Company L officers who was wounded and evacuated to "B" Med stated that his platoon was responsible for killing at least five VC and possibly another 15. The VC element had attempted to flank his platoon and was caught in an open field where they were subjected to intense small arms, machinegun and M-79 fire. Five were seen to fall and not move. Fifteen others fled to a small cane field where they had no covered route of withdrawal. The field was struck with mortars, machineguns, M-79, and small arms. Due to extremely

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

heavy fire from another area, this location could not be searched. All elements of Company L were engaged as was Company K adjacent to them. An artillery mission was requested but delayed about one and one half hours because of communication difficulties. These difficulties are discussed in paragraph 12.d. A close air support mission was also requested but did not arrive until darkness had set in and therefore had to be cancelled. During the same engagement Company K moved to coordinates BS 509835 to provide support for Company L. They too came under intense automatic weapons/small arms fire. Company K attempted to call in artillery and air support but encountered the same communication difficulties as Company L. Company K reported positively killing one VC and possibly killing eleven more and wounding at least two. Company L suffered 17 WIA and five KIA. Company K suffered eight WIA and one KIA. All friendly WIA and KIA were evacuated at 211900H except for three KIA from Company L who could not be evacuated until first light on the 22nd. Company L established night time positions at BS 503940. Company K established night time positions at BS 503836. No contact was reported during the night.

At 210915H Company I (-)(Rein) departed AN HOA Outpost on foot and proceeded southeast to vicinity coordinates BS 488843 in order to rejoin the Battalion.

At 211650H Company I established defensive positions vicinity coordinates BS 495838 and remain as Battalion reserve. At 211830H the Battalion CP was taken under fire by approximately 30 VC from coordinates BS 495833. Simultaneously the VC from the same area took 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines CP under fire (located about 1,000 meters south of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines CP). Both Company I and the CP Group returned fire. Company I reported possibly killing four VC. The area was not searched by 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine units because the area from which the fire originated was in 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines sector and 2/4 was hitting it with artillery. The area was later searched by elements of 2/4 and it was reported that several bodies were extracted from that hamlet.

d. D+2, 22 March 1966. At 220800H a Company L patrol was dispatched to the area where they had received the intense fire the previous night. The patrol located one VC KIA and various items of enemy military equipment: six BAR magazines, one submachinegun, several hundred rounds of .30 caliber ammunition, five hand grenades, five helmets, packs and several uniforms. The patrol also located an area where approximately ten bodies had been dragged toward the north. A further search of the area failed to locate the bodies.

At 221200H Company L swept north to the hamlet complex located at BS 504849. At BS 501851 Company L spotted ten to fifteen VC in khaki uniforms crossing a rice paddy. An artillery mission was called. A search of the area failed to reveal any evidence of VC casualties.

At 221030H Companies I and K commenced a sweep from BS 503837 to Phase Line RED vicinity coordinates BS 521837. At 221245H the rear elements of Company K and Company I were taken under fire. Both companies returned fire. Company K killed two VC but were unable to locate their weapons. Company K suffered one WIA and two heat casualties.

At 221615H Companies I and K were helilifted from BS 519836 to BS

UNCLASSIFIED

566775. At 221700H Company L and the remainder of the Battalion was heli-lifted to BS 565775. By 221745H all elements of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines had arrived in the new objective area vicinity Hill 23, BS 565775. At 221815 Companies L and K commenced a sweep from the north toward the hamlet complex of PHUOC LOC, BS 560766. Company I was held in reserve/blocking position at BS 557778. The Battalion CP was located at BS 565775.

At 221830H the trailing elements of Company L including their engineer attachments along with the Battalion CP were taken under sniper fire by an estimated VC force of ten to twelve. The snipers were located in the upper branches of trees in the vicinity of the CP. Engineer personnel attached to Company L killed four of the snipers. Personnel from the Battalion CP continued to return fire as well. Simultaneously Companies L and K were taken under intense fire from an estimated battalion size force that was well entrenched in bunkers and fortified positions that extended 800 to 1,000 meters along the northern edge of PHUOC LOC (1). Among the weapons used by the enemy during this encounter were .30 and .50 caliber machineguns, 57mm recoilless rifles, M-79, 60mm and 82mm mortars, various automatic weapons and small arms. Company K suffered six WIA and two KIA. Company L suffered 25 WIA and five KIA. Companies K and L returned fire and called in numerous artillery missions. The artillery response was rapid and accurate. During and after the fire fight nearly 2,000 rounds of 155mm ammunition were delivered in the PHUOC LOC hamlet and adjacent areas. Several fixed wing airstrikes with 250 pound bombs, rockets, and 20mm cannon were run. Due to the combined efforts of infantry, air and artillery 60 VC were killed and another 125 possibly killed, 98 wounded and 85 possibly wounded.

e. D+3, 23 March 1966. An attempt was made to secure a landing zone to evacuate the wounded. Because of continuous small arms, sniper fire it was 230330H before a helicopter could be brought into to evacuate the casualties from Company K. The walking wounded from Company L moved to the Battalion CP during the night for evacuation by helicopter.

At 230410H Company I and the Battalion DP received approximately 40 rounds of 82mm and 60mm mortar fire. Artillery and counter-mortar fire was immediately returned on the suspected enemy position with excellent results. Company I suffered 25 WIA as a result of three bursts of mortar fire, 15 WIA required medical evacuation. All but one were walking wounded. By 230730H all friendly KIA and WIA had been evacuated.

At 231015H Company M was detached as the Task Force Reserve and heli-lifted into the objective area. Company L was helilifted to the vicinity of the artillery group and assumed the mission as Task Force Reserve/Artillery Group Security. The helilift was completed at 231230H.

At 231230H Companies M and K commenced a sweep from the Battalion CP to the PHUOC LOC hamlet complex. While moving into position to commence the sweep both elements were delayed by heat casualties (newly joined replacements) that required medical evacuation plus a requirement to provide a security element for a downed helicopter. At 231330H Company I was dispatched to BS 563772 so as to establish a blocking position for Companies K and M. Companies K and M entered the hamlet from the east and swept to Phase Line #1 vicinity coordinates BS 563766 and by 231845H established night time positions vicinity coordinates BS 566766. At 231700H Company I commenced sweeping east toward Phase Line #2 vicinity coordinates BS 557767. Company I

UNCLASSIFIED

established night time positions at BS 558767. No activity was reported during the night.

f. D+4, 24 March 1966. At 240700H Companies I, K, and M continued in their search mission.

At 240800H the Battalion CP displaced to BS 562765. The remaining hours of D+4 were spent conducting a thorough search of the hamlet complex of PHUOC LOC (1) and PHUOC LOC (3). The entire hamlet complex was composed of numerous fighting holes, gun emplacements, trench lines, caves, tunnel and punji traps. The Battalion was scheduled to be retracted by motor convoy at 241500H but due to the extensive network of enemy fortifications and tunnels that had to be destroyed, retraction was delayed for 24 hours. Company C (-), 1st Engineer Battalion was helilifted to PHUOC LOC to assist in the destruction of enemy emplacements.

In order to maximize on the additional time available in PHUOC LOC hamlet a request for additional ARVN intelligence personnel and interpreters was submitted. Within two hours two ARVN intelligence specialists from 2nd Infantry Division Headquarters, QUANG NGAI and two interpreters arrived. Their services were used very effectively in processing civilians, VCC, VCS, and intelligence documents. On the night of 24 March Companies I, K, and M along with the Battalion Command Group spent the night in the PHUOC LOC hamlet complex. No enemy contacts were reported that night.

g. D+5, 25 March 1966. At 250630H Company I commenced a sweep of PHUOC LOC (2) and (3) from west to east. Company M provided a blocking force on the north and east sides of the hamlet complex. No enemy contact was reported. At 250800H Company C (-), 1st Engineer Battalion commenced destruction of the enemy emplacements. At 251000H approximately 500 Vietnamese refugees from SON TINH District, QUANG NGAI arrived to evacuate several caches of VC rice located in PHUOC LOC. The only means available to transport the rice to SON TINH District was by bicycle and individual baskets hand carried. Total rice evacuated in the time available amounted to seven and a half tons, approximately one-third of the caches uncovered.

During the remainder of the day intelligence specialists processed several hundred villagers while Marine civil affairs teams rendered medical aid and other assistance to the civilian populace. One hundred families decided to move to the SON TINH refugee village. At 251500H the Battalion commenced retraction by helicopter to 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines CP (Landing Zone ROBIN). By 251705H all Battalion elements were retracted.

11. Results

a. Friendly

- 1) KIA - 15
- 2) WIA - 100 (77 evac, 23 non-evac)
- 3) MIA - None
- 4) KBA - None

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~b. Enemy

- 1) KIA (Confirmed) - 72*
- 2) KIA (Possible) - 155*
- 3) WIA - 100
- 4) WIA (Possible) - 100
- 5) MIA - Unknown
- 6) KB Air/Arty/Mortars - Confirmed- 40* Included in
Possible-115* figures above
- 7) Captured VCC - 10
- 8) Captured VCS - 39
- 9) Equipment/Material Loss - 6 hand grenades, 1 AK-47 rifle, 2 U.S. carbines, 1 ChiCom carbine, 1 M16-36, 1 M-1 Garand, 2 rounds 60mm mortar, 6 helmets, 3 cartridge belts, 4 canteens, 8 magazines, 10 uniforms, 1 wire cutter, 1 mortar night light, 7 packs, 3 hammocks, 5 ponchos, 3 U.S. mess gears, 1 U.S. field jacket, 1 air mattress, 1 stretcher, 1 mosquito net, penicillin, band-aids, medical supplies
- 10) Rice Evacuated - 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ tons

12. Administrative Matters

a. Supply. Resupply was accomplished by radio request and helicopter flown unit distribution. This operation emphasized the need for and the advantages of good logistical planning. The Battalion received supplies on a daily basis commencing on D+1. Several points that should be considered in future planning are the use of a Rapid Request format for resupply messages, this would shorten the length of radio messages and enhance clarity; the publication of an ammunition list establishing a standard pack for use in communication requests. The unit distribution system should be designed to accommodate the resupply of companies as opposed to Battalions; a follow-up confirmation system that would inform the requisitioner that his request was to be honored and on time, this would allow for adjustments when too many units desire resupply at the same time; and finally provision should be made for the logistical support of units, satelited upon the Battalion by direction of higher headquarters, so as to insure their continued support. Logistical planning should be bilateral and recorded for easy reference.

b. Medical. Medical support throughout the operation was satisfactory. The high casualty rate among corpsmen (2 KIA and 3 WIA) was offset by manipulation of corpsmen between the CP group and the companies. No wounded Marine suffered due to lack of treatment. Evacuation was by helicopter and went smoothly even during peak casualty periods. A HST was attached to each company and the CP group. This made for efficient landing zone operation while casualty sorting was accomplished by unit corpsmen. The failure on the part of the rifle companies to carry stretchers proved to be a weakness.

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

Stretchers are owned but not generally carried by the companies, their bulk makes them unpopular.

c. Transportation. The five troop lifts by helicopter during the operation as well as the truck transport on the first day went well. Adequate vehicles were available in each case.

d. Communications. Communications during this operation were marginal. The artillery conduct of fire net was overloaded. There were two infantry battalions, the artillery battalion, and air observers all on the same net. In one instance there were eleven stations on the net with three of them attempting to conduct fire missions. It took this Battalion one and one half hours to fire one fire mission. This problem was corrected on D+1. Another problem area encountered was the mutual interference of the VHF radio circuits. This Battalion's Tactical net and the Regimental Command #1 net interfered with each other as did the artillery conduct of fire net and the Regimental Tactical net. This situation caused both delay and confusion. Better frequency assignment, consideration of the relative strengths of the AN/PRC-10 and AN/PRC-25 radios and proper dispersal of equipment within CP sites should be examined to overcome this problem. Tactical movement without consideration of radio capabilities also caused difficulties. On several occasions communications became unsatisfactory because of the distance and terrain between the Battalion and the Task Force. The establishment of an aerial relay station would solve this problem. Radio procedures with air observers was another area that suffered from poor control. The air observer would not always check in with the Battalion when in the Battalion's zone of action. At other times the AO would utilize a net other than the DAO net, would check in with the Battalion and then shift frequency before a mission could be assigned, or interfere by overriding the less powerful ground radios with his airborne set. In all of these examples the solution is the same - establish control and strict procedures. Lengthy messages of the pre-planned variety clutter up the radio net. Such reports as the situation reports, intelligence summaries, and routine personnel and supply traffic should and could best be handled by courier. There should be several preplanned pickups daily. Report cutoff times and submission times should be planned in conjunction with these runs. Radio reports should be limited to the short format types.

13. Special Equipment and Techniques

a. PsyWar leaflets were distributed by means of air drop from an L-19 aircraft. The coverage in the objective area was excellent and it was noticed that many villagers had the leaflets in their possession.

b. An L-19 aircraft with attached loudspeaker was utilized to broadcast PsyWar propaganda. Effect and coverage was excellent.

c. An ARVN intelligence officer was attached to the Battalion and used in the interrogation of VCS. His presence and overall knowledge of Vietnamese customs and the tactical situation aided greatly in separating intelligence from the bulk of information generated.

UNCLASSIFIED

14. Commander's Analysis

a. Enemy Engaged. The enemy engaged exhibited a professionalism not heretofore found in units with which this Battalion has had a confrontation. Further, their weapons and tactics added credence to the theory that this was more than a local force unit. Close attention to the VC tactics utilized, as explained in paragraph 7, is suggested.

b. The Entrenched Enemy. The Vietcong employed a combination of close-in frontal fires from well camouflaged trench and cave networks coordinated with snipers from the rear to engage our attacking forces. The close-in fires somewhat negate the use of indirect fire support unless a withdrawal is made. The commander who is fully committed is left only with the choice of assault or withdrawal. The use of scouting elements to the front while in the attack helps to prevent surprise, forces the VC to commit himself, and gives the commander an opportunity to maneuver his forces to fix and to destroy.

c. Late Afternoon Tactical Moves. Attacking forces are at a distinct disadvantage when moving to contact in the late afternoon. The enemy force has observation, familiarity with the terrain, opportunity of decision as to engagement or withdrawal, and assured advantages of darkness. In order to fully exploit the capabilities and advantages inherent in a Battalion and its supporting arms and to limit the mobility of the enemy, tactical moves, be they by helicopter or by foot, should be made as early in the day as possible.

d. Field Medical Treatment. In the planning for hospitalization and evacuation, consideration must be given to circumstances which may limit or prevent helicopter medical evacuation. Casualties have exhibited a tolerance for the traumas of their wounds. In most cases individuals hold up well to periods of eight to ten hours, awaiting medical evacuation, without excessive hazard to their chances of survival and aggravation of the injury. A medical officer in the area is considered highly desirable.

C. H. BODLEY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

PTIVE # 286-3-CL

OPERATION TEXAS
INTERROGATION REPORT

Date and Time of Capture: 221100H March 66 Date: 22 March 66
 Vic: BS 507844 RPT#056-CLTime113C
 Capturee by: I-3-7 ITT UNIT: Sub Team1
 Circumstances "Hiding in bomb shelter." Lang Used: VIET/ENG
 Map Used: VIETNAM
 1/50,000
 Sheet 6756IV Ser.
 L701

Part I

1. RANK: PVT. NAME: NGUYEN NI SER. No. N/A
 UNIT 5th Squad, 2nd Platoon, 2nd Co, 65th Bn, 5th Regt.
 4th Div
 ASSESSMENT FAIR LOW UNKNOWN
 Intelligence Experience Reliability
 CATEGORY A (B) C D
 DOCUMENTS None
 Of Intelligence Interest
 EQUIPMENT None
 Of Intelligence Interest

Age: 15
 Present Address: XUAN PHUOC(H), THIEN PHUOC(V)
 DUY XUYEN(D), QUANG NAM (P)
 Parents: Father: NGUYEN HAU, 70
 Mother: NGUYEN THI HAU, 65
 Occupation: Carpenter
 Religion: Buddhist
 Education: 4 Years
 Social Class: Poor
 Dialect: Central
 Marital Status: Single
 Date Joined Revolution: January 66
 Position in Revolution: Soldier
 Relatives Working for VC: None
 Relatives Working for RVN: NGUYEN SO, uncle, police in HOI
 AN
 Weapons: M-1 and 2 grenades (turned over
 to captors-not forwarded)
 Assessment: See Interrogator's comment

INFORMATION OBTAINED

Captive states he was forced to join the 65th Bn, a QUANG
 NAM province main force unit in January from his hamlet of
 XUAN PHUOC, THIEN PHUOC(V).

Page 1 of 3

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ENCLOSURE (1) To Intel Portion

(F)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ UNCLASSIFIED
(Captive # 280-3-CL Continued)

The captive was in a house with 10 other men from the 65th Bn. When the house was hit by a bomb or artillery on 21 March 66. The other 10 VC died in the attack and captive escaped to an underground family type shelter having been wounded in both knees with shrapnel.

The Americans sweep the area on 22 March finding the captive. He was evacuated to "B" Med for treatment.

The 65th Bn. is well trained. The unit received 1 month training in QUANGNAM (P) prior to their journey to QUANG NGAI (P). The men were instructed in the use of their individual weapons, but held no live firing exercises. Captive was armed with an M-1 Rifle and 2 Grenades.

The 4th Division has a training area near AN TRANG Mountain in QUANGNAM (P) which is located about 15 kilometers east of the LAOTIAN Border and about 20 kilometers southwest of DANANG City. The Division moves about every 2 months approx. 7 to 10 kilometers for security.

Members of the 65th Bn. wear black and grey uniforms. There are approx. 20 North Vietnamese in this Battalion who fill positions as political cadreman, platoon leaders, squad leaders and common soldiers.

The 65th Bn left QUANG NAM Province about 13 March 66 and walked over the mountain trail for 7 days, arriving in QUANG NGAI (P) on the evening of 20 March 66. The Bn. remained overnight in an unknown Hamlet resting. On 21 March 66 the Americans held an airstrike and fired artillery into the hamlet with effect.

1. STRENGTH: The 65th Bn consists of approx. 400 men. The 2nd Company consists of approx. 130 men. The 2nd platoon consists of approx. 30 men. The 5th squad consists of 11 men.
2. ORGANIZATION: Captives Unit, 65th Bn is subordinate to the 5th Regt. 4th Division. There are 3 Bns. in the 5th Regt., the 65th, 66th and 67th Bns. Each Bn is comprised of 3 platoons, 1st, 2nd and 3rd. Each platoon is comprised of 3 squads. The 2nd platoon contain squads 4, 5, and 6.
3. DISPOSITION: Present time unknown. As of 21 March the 65th Bn was located in Vic BS507844. After air and artillery attack the 65th Bn dispersed to unknown location.
4. WEAPONS: The 65th Bn is equipped with the following weapons:
 3x60mm Mortars with 10 rounds 20xK-50 SMGs (squad leader)
 3x HMG (NVN) 2x grenades each man
 9xBAR (1 each platoon)
 300xM-1 rifles (50 rounds each)
 10xcarbines (platoon and company cadres)
5. MISSION:

a. Unit: Unknown

Encl (1) To Intel Portion

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
(Captive #286-3-CL Continued)

b. Captives- to fight

6. OTHER ENEMY FORCES: NONE

7. A. SUPPLY: Carried ~~rice~~ sacks and packs from QUANG NAM (P). No provisions received enroute.

B. LOSSES 10 KIA's on 21 March 66 from bomb or artillery in house where captive was hiding (vic BS 507844)

C. REPLACEMENTS: Unknown

8. PERSONALITIES:

NAME	RANK	ORG.	DUTIES	CHARACTERISTICS	
TRAN TIEN	50	CAPT	65th BN	C.O.	CARBINE/SVN
TRAN MOT	40	UNK	2nd Co.	C.O.	CARBINE/SVN
SAU	30	UNK	2nd Plt.	Plt Ldr	K-50/SVN

9. MORALE: The morale of the 65th Bn is low as the men are afraid of dying. One man deserted the Bn on 14 March 66.

a. TACTICS: Unknown

b. OBSTACLES: Unknown

INTERROGATORS COMMENT: Captive appears cooperative, sincere and fairly intelligent. Captive interrogated after initial treatment at "B" Med. He seemed receptive to interrogation but was weak from loss of blood and no food for 2 days. The fragmentation still remains in his legs. Captive not interrogated thoroughly on QUANG NAM Province because of the difficulty due to his pain and shock.

DISPOSITION:

VC SOLDIER TO "C" MED DANANG FOR FURTHER MEDICAL TREATMENT AND INTERROGATION.

DISTRIBUTION:

G-2, III MAF	1	LY TIN	1
COMUSMACV J-2 (100)	1	ITT, DANANG	1
G-2, 3d MarDiv	1	7th CIT	1
G-2, I Corps	1	FSCC, 1st MarDiv	1
ADC CHULAI	1	Combined Intelligence	
S-2, 1st Marines	4	Center Vietnam	1
S-2, 7th Marines	10	ITT File	1
QUANG NGAI	1		28
TAM KY	1		
BINH SON	1		