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HEADQUARTERS  
3rd Battalion, 7th Marines  
1st Marine Division (Rein) FME  
APO, San Francisco, California 96602

DLD:gad  
5750  
2 August 1966

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding Officer, 7th Marines  
Subj: Command Chronology; month of July 1966  
Ref: (a) DivO 5750.2A

Encl: (1) 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines Command Chronology with Annexes A & B.

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

*B. B. DEWITT*  
B. B. DEWITT

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## 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 July to 31 July 1966

3. Commanding Officer	LtCol B. B. DEWITT
Executive Officer	Maj C. R. VORGANG
S-1 Adjutant	Sgt H. C. ALDERIN 1 - 22 July 1966
	2ndLt R. J. PASUAL 23 - 31 July 1966
S-2 Officer	SSgt C. G. PUTNAM 1 - 9 July 1966
	Capt L. E. JOHNSON 10 - 31 July 1966
S-3 Officer	Maj D. L. DIAMOND
S-4 Officer	Capt H. E. F. VONCARP
Communications Officer	Capt H. C. SCHRODER
Supply Officer	2ndLt G. H. KEMPER
MTO	SSgt S. B. JOHNS
Bn Surgeon	Lt(MC) A. L. MANALE
Bn Chaplain	Lt(CHC) W. W. EPPS
H&S CO	Capt P. R. GOTTLIEB 1 - 26 July 1966
	2ndLt W. E. KELLER 27 - 31 July 1966
"I" Company	Capt W. M. CLAPP
"K" Company	Capt M. J. QUINN
"L" Company	1stLt L. J. CEMMER
"M" Company	Capt T. V. DRAUDE

4. Average Strength USMC 29 Officers 905 Enlisted USN 2 Officers 48 Enlisted

The total number of personnel on hand within 3/7 as of 31 July 1966 is 1015. The total effective strength on 31 July 1966 is 960.

During the month of July 138 new personnel were joined to this unit, while 44 were dropped from the rolls.

A total of 28 have rotated, 44 personnel were WIA, 8 KIA, 7 non-battle injuries and two non-battle deaths.

This Battalion is in category C-2 on 30 June 1966.

B. SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

011435H a Company I squad ambush located at BS 521924 was approached by an unknown number of VC. The ambush fired 50 rounds of small arms killing two VC. Four unarmed VC fled northwest into the hamlet of Binh Yen (2). The VC KIAs were believed to be an FO team. They were dressed in light gray uniforms. The 2d platoon of Company I, the parent unit of the ambush squad swept Binh Yen (2), BS 521926, and apprehended 4 VCS who were released after interrogation.

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Captured equipment from the VC KIA included one ChiCom K-44 carbine, 3 ChiCom grenades, one M-26 grenade, one cartridge belt, assorted military equipment and one pair of 6X30 binocular USMC 8401.

030925H a Company I reinforced squad on a combat patrol at BS 547940, received small arms fire and either four rifle grenades or 60mm mortar rounds, causing one WIA, from an estimated squad of VC located at BS 574939. The patrol returned fire with M-79s, small arms, and called in 7 - 106RR rounds. Another squad reinforced with an artillery FO was dispatched, linked up and a search of the area was conducted with negative results.

032210H a Company I platoon (-) patrol at BS 508942 killed two armed VC who walked into the point of the patrol. The VC were wearing black. One M-1 carbine, one K-44 carbine, one cartridge belt and one bandolier of ammunition was captured. At 2330H, the Company I platoon (-) at BS 502947, while enroute to its night position, received a heavy volume of fire from an unknown number of VC at BS 502946 resulting in one friendly WIA (med evac). The patrol returned fire but was unable to determine VC casualties because of terrain difficulties. The patrol retracted to its patrol base. The WIA Marine died at 1st Med Battalion. A search of the area at first light revealed two separate blood trails heading east.

On 6 - 7 July 1966, Companies M, L and the Battalion Command Group A, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines with PF/NP forces provided by Binh Son District Headquarters, Quang Ngai Province commenced an operation in the Chau Tu (1) hamlet, BS 588936. This hamlet was selected as the objective area because of substantial VC activity which has involved ambush and mine incidents on national highway #1 as well as repeated VC contacts with Marine patrols. The operation involved the concept of encircling the objective area to prevent VC exfiltrations and the utilization of PF/NP forces in conjunction with Marines in the conduct of the search. In the early morning hours of 6 July, Company M (-) moved to a designated LD, BS 573933, prior to dawn. Concurrently, Company L moved overland and arrived in the objective area prior to dawn. H-hour was designated for 0630H. At this time, Company M crossed the LD and moved to assume their assigned positions. Company L moved into position and one platoon from Company M with the Battalion Command Group A moved by motor vehicle into the objective area. During the course of the operation, contact with the enemy consisted of sporadic sniper incidents, sightings and a moderate size probe of the night defensive positions.

061515H a Company I platoon at BS 534947 received one grenade thrown by a VC, resulting in one friendly WIA. A reaction force searched the area and shot and killed 1 VC fleeing from the scene. An additional 3 VCS were detained for interrogation and were later released.

062330H a Company I squad ambush at BS 508940 received 1 incoming grenade resulting in 2 friendly WIA. The Marines fired approximately 50 rounds of small arms 7.62 into the area the grenade was thought to have come from. The wounded Marines were evacuated and the squad was retracted to Company I Command Post.

071130H Company M at BS 573923 sustained 4 friendly WIA and 2 friendly KIA when a 60mm mortar round booby trap was detonated. A med evac was called for and the injured personnel were evacuated to the 1st Medical Battalion.

081400H a Company I security element apprehended two female VCS at their home in the hamlet at BS 534947. Information concerning their location was obtained from the PFs. The older VCS admitted informing her son of everyday

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movements of the friendly security unit and that her son threw the grenade into the Company I squad ambush on 6 July at 2330H. Her son fled south. The other woman admitted being a VC scout. The VCS were forwarded to ITT.

090930H a member of a Company L squad size recon/combat patrol detonated a booby trap at BS 571944 resulting in one friendly WIA (med evac). The booby trap was made of pottery.

091000H a Company I squad acting as escorts for a PF platoon at BS 525939 reported that the PF platoon flushed one VCC at BS 522939. The PFs shot and killed the VC. An M-1 carbine was captured.

091035H Company M at BS 570917 received 30 rounds of semi automatic and automatic weapons fire from BS 570919 resulting in one friendly WIA, who later died of wounds. As the med evac helicopter was descending it received rounds through the engine transmission and fuel cells. The pilot was wounded. The helicopter was unable to fly out. Company M returned fire with 4 - 60mm mortar rounds, 2 - 106RR rounds, 6 - 50 cal spotting rounds, machine guns and small arms fire then swept the area with negative results. Company M provided security for the helicopter and reswept the area after prep fires by an HU-1E gunship.

100755H Company M at BS 578925 detonated a booby trap causing one friendly WIA with minor wounds. The WIA was an attached combat engineer.

On 10 July 1966, a Company L platoon (-) patrol at BS 567944 tripped a booby trap resulting in one friendly minor WIA.

On 11 July 1966 from 0745H to 0945H, Company M at BS 587950 to BS 582928 received continuous sniper fire, causing one friendly WIA, from BS 592930 to BS 581927 to BS 585928. Three ChiCom Zulu 10 grenades were located, two at BS 583929 and one at BS 582928 along the road. Company M returned fire and deployed to flush out the sniper and remove the mine. At 1345H, a Company M squad at BS 573921 received fire from four semi automatic weapons at BS 575916 causing two friendly WIA. The squad returned fire and swept the hamlet.

120140H a Company L squad at BS 574963 received one grenade resulting in one friendly WIA, minor wound. The squad returned small arms fire with negative results.

121215H a Company M platoon at BS 573923 received sniper fire from BS 575916. The platoon called in 7 - 106RR rounds at the suspected VC positions and destroyed two huts. A secondary explosion occurred in one hut and the other hut burned with occasional cracking indicating either bamboo or steel rods ammunition stored in the hut.

On 13 - 15 July 1966 a search and destroy operation was conducted through the Phuoc Thuan and Tan Phuoc hamlet complexes in GS 5791, 5691, 5591, and 5590 in order to relieve the pressure of VC activity throughout the area while Company M established a combat base on Tien Dao hill, GS 5792. Company L conducted a sweep through the hamlets to the west while the platoon from Company I established blocking positions. Company L encountered sporadic sniper and harassing fire and completed their sweep on 14 July establishing night defensive positions in the Tan Phuoc hamlet at BS 555908. Commencing at 150200H Company M came under heavy attack from a VC force estimated at battalion strength. It was a coordinated attack utilizing 60mm mortars and 57mm fire as the prelude to the VC assaulting elements. The enemy mortar fire was adjusted over the combat base from south to north. A slight penetration of the 1st Platoon was made. Company M conducted a counterattack and reestablished the perimeter. As a result of this attack, Company B, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines became OPCON to 3d Battalion, 7th Marines and was helilifted

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south of the Tra Bong river at 150745H to conduct a sweep to the east. Company I conducted a sweep to the east, north of the Tra Bong river and the platoon from Company I joined Company M on Tien Dao hill to reinforce their defensive position. There were 27 VC KIA and weapons found throughout the battle area. Company M sustained 5 KIA, 1 DOW and 19 WIA. Annex A and B contain the FragO 12 July 1966 and the after action report 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines which covers the concept and execution of the operation. At 151600H the operation concluded.

152145H a Company M LP at BS 576923 observed four VC at BS 577922 moving toward the combat base. The LP fired 2 - 3.5 rounds. It is believed that 3 VC were hit. A search of the area by a Company M squad produced 3 articles of bloody clothing.

180115H Company M at BS 573923 received 10 rounds of small arms sniper fire from BS 571922 and BS 579927 and one M-79 round from BS 575927. Movement was detected by the SID device and an LP at BS 577921. Company M called for 32 - 155mm illumination and 30 rounds 81mm illumination. Company M returned fire with 4 M-79 rounds, 20 M-60, 2 - 106 and 10 - 50 cal rounds. A search at first light revealed bloody sandals indicating at least one VC WIA.

181210H the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines CP at BT 533023 was closed down and operational control was assumed by 3/7 Bravo Command Group. At 1600H, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines CP at BS 565957 assumed command and became the new permanent Cp.

192015H a Company M mightly mite traveling north on highway #1, at BS 585950, hit a mine turning the vehicle sideways. At the same time automatic weapons opened up on the vehicle from BS 586999 resulting in one friendly WIA. The driver got the vehicle started again when the VC opened up from BS 586950 and BS 584950 with small arms carbines and fired approximately 100 rounds as the vehicle sped through the attempted ambush. Company L platoon on CP #33, BS 570966, fired 4 - 106RR rounds into the ambush site.

192245H, a squad from Company M with PAT attachments received sniper fire from BS 579924 resulting in 3 PAT VIAs. An LP located at BS 575926 spotted 6 - 7 VC on the trail. The Marines opened fire and pulled back to the perimeter. Tanks fired a 30 cal AG into the area.

200815H a squad element from Company M received 30 rounds of automatic weapons fire from BS 561920 resulting in one friendly WIA who died of wounds at 0825H. The squad returned 50 rounds of M-14 and swept the area with negative results.

211940H, a Company M squad observed 4 VC moving north along the RR tracks at BS 585927. The VC fired 10 rounds at Phu Le (3) hamlet, BS 583928. The Marine squad and PAT element opened fire expending approximately 100 rounds of small arms, 3 - 106RR and 5 - 81 mortar rounds. Two Vietnamese children were wounded. The PAT personnel handled the VIAs.

221310H, a squad from Company M observed 2 VC at BS 582913. VCs started running. The squad fired 5 rounds of M-14 resulting in 1 confirmed VC KIA.

222230H Company I received 4 incoming 60mm mortar rounds from BS 537937. Company I returned 6 - 81mm rounds at a suspected enemy mortar position at BS 541953. A battery one from Battery I was fired on an observed VC mortar position at BS 537937. The results are unknown.

271015H a squad patrol from Company M contacted two figures at BS 561921. They were ordered to halt, however, both ran. Marines fired 15 rounds of M-14 and wounded one male slightly.

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272100H a Company M squad at BS 531929 received a grenade from BS 531929 in the vicinity of railroad tracks resulting in two WIA non med evac. The PATS opened up with automatic weapons, 10 to 15 rounds. Two rounds 81mm illumination were fired with negative results.

272200H Company I detected VC movement outside their perimeter and fired 4 rounds of 3.5 and 6 rounds of M-79. A squad patrol checked the area and fixed the VC position at BS 537943 and fired 40 rounds of small arms. It is believed there were positive results of at least 1 probable VC WIA who was observed being shot and falling.

280915H a platoon patrol from Company I sweeping Tay Phuoc (2) at BS 497948. flushed 2 VC from the hamlet and also 2 male VCS of military age from a bomb shelter in a house. The 2 VC had no ID cards and ran from the patrol. One VC was killed and the other escaped. The two VCS were sent to ITT. Two straight razors were found in the seams of the VCS trousers. 1000 piastres, one military poncho and a VC battle dressing were also captured.

302000H Company L-2 departed Company I combat base to commence Operation "MARLBORO".

311920H Company L-2 at BS 480919 apprehended one VCS who fled from approaching patrol. Suspect admits being VC administration chief. At 311945H Company L-2 at same position had 4 VC attempt to enter position by utilizing a herd of cows as cover. The platoon fired 20 rounds of 7.62 stampeding herd and VC. Two VC believed hit.

At 312030H Company L-2 received heavy volume of automatic weapons fire and approximately five rounds of 60mm mortars at BS 481917. At 312130H med evac helicopter was downed at this position by automatic weapons fire. The platoon pulled in all night time activities and set in tight perimeter around position. The first attack came in from SW direction when VC ran into squad ambush on their way to position. Squad engaged enemy with maximum fire and returned to perimeter on order. The first attack was repelled after 2500 rounds expended. The second attack came from SE direction using automatic weapons including 50 cal machine gun. At all times enemy movement was in 360° around position.

The third attack came from SE and northern direction with hand grenades, 60mm mortars and automatic weapons. Fire received in heavy volume.

The fourth attack came from SW, S and E directions. Fourth attack also repelled. Close air support aircraft, artillery, flare ships and gunships were used to support Company L-2.

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Opn Overlay to Frag 0.12 July 1966

Annex A to Enclosure (1)

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Annex A to Enclosure (1)

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HEADQUARTERS  
3rd Battalion, 7th Marines  
1st Marine Division (Rein) FMT  
APO, San Francisco, California 96602

3A/DLD/gad  
3480  
12 July 1966

Annex A to Enclosure 1

3/7 Frag 0 12 July 1966  
Ref: (a) 3/7 OpnO 3-66

1. SITUATION

- a. Enemy - Current Issums
- b. Friendly
  - (1) AO requested to be on station 130600 - 131000
  - (2) Two Scout Dog Tms DS Co L
  - (3) Sect AT DS Co M
  - (4) PAT Plt occupying Phu Le (3)
  - (5) Sect Tanks occupying OP 90 GS
  - (6) Psychological Warfare Tm DS Co L
  - (7) Engr Demo Tm DS Co L

- 2. MISSION. To search & clear the PHUOC THUAN area to cover Co M's establishment of a combat base on TIEN DAO hill.

3. EXECUTION

- a. Concept. One Co (+) moving on a westerly axis search & clear PHUOC THUAN complex while one plat (+) establishes ambush & blocking posn at western end of complex.
- b. Co I (+) Provide one plat reinf to establish ambush at 132100 vic 546907, at daylight remain as blocking force until operation completed. Remainder of Co retain mission of ref (a).
- c. Co K (+) Ref (a)
- d. Co L (+) At 130630 move from assem area by vehicle to Phase Line (PL) 2, detruck and move along route of advance to PL 4. Commence search & clear operations with in zone of action. With assistance of VN forces gather occupants into a central area. Search all habitations for VC, tunnels, and wpn caches. Destroy tunnels after searching for intelligence matter. CS, WP, & concussion grenades authorized in tunnel systems. Be cautious of booby traps within tunnels.
- e. Co M (+)  
Attached: 4th Sect 81 Plat  
Continue establishing combat base on Tien Dao Hill. Prior to Co I's arrival at PL 2 clear road & surrounding area from Tien Dao hill to PL 2 and cover Co L's move to PL 3. Be prep to spt Co L flank & rear by fire. Priority of 81 fire to Co L.


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Annex A to Enclosure (1)




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- f. 81 Plat (-) GS vico OP 39.
  - g. H&S (-) Provide one sqd (+) for security of Co L new C.P. site and one sqd (+) for security of OP 39. Sect 106 Plat with each sqd.
  - h. Coord Instr
    - (1) Ref (a)
    - (2) Priority of fires to Co L
    - (3) Length of opn - approx 3 days
    - (4) Opn overlay attached
    - (5) Report all crossings of PL
    - (6) Do not pass FPA (Furthest Point of ADV) w/o auth.
    - (7) No firing into or out of Co L ZOA w/o positive ID of enemy personnel and coordination with effected units.
    - (8) Report ASAP any use of CS agents.
4. Admin & Log - S-4 verbal instructions.
5. Cmd & Comm
- a. Ref (a)
  - b. Bn Cmd Grp A CP initially at OP 39.
  - c. Co I Plat call sign L-2, gd Bn Tac & COF.
  - d. OP 90, L-Eyeball Tk Gd Bn Tac, FO Tm Gd COF.

  
 B. B. DEWITT  
 Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps  
 Commanding

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 Annex A to Enclosure (1)

Annex B to Enclosure (1)

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

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding Officer, 7th Marines  
Subj: Combat After Action Report

Ref: (a) 3/7 FragO 12 July 1966

1. Search and Destroy Operation

2. 130630H - 151600H

3. Quang Ngai Province, Binh Son District

4. 3d Battalion, 7th Marines - LCol E. B. DEWITT

Company M - Capt T. V. DRAUDE

Company L - 1st Lt L. J. CULMER

Company I (-) - Capt W. H. CLAPP

Company E, 2/7 - Capt H. L. SEAY

5. Task Organization

3d Battalion, 7th Marines

Battalion Command Group A & B

Company L (Rein)

Artillery FO 3/11

FAC

Sect 106 Platoon

Company M (Rein)

81mm Mortar Section

Arty FO 3/11

Company I (-)

Arty FO 3/11

Company E, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines

Arty FO 3/11

Sect AT, Company C, 1st AT Battalion

Sect Tanks, Company B, 1st Tank Battalion

Engr Demolition Team, Company G, 1st Engineer Battalion

PF Platoon, Binh Son District Hdqrs, Quang Ngai Province

Annex B to Enclosure (1)

## 6. Supporting Forces

a. Section AF were planned for direct support of the operation and were located with Co M, (BS 573923). They were fired in direct support of Co M during the VC attack on 15 July 1966. They proved effective in countering VC 57RR fire and by supplying additional firepower with the 30 cal MG.

b. A Section of Tanks were planned for direct support of the operation from OP 90 at (BS 541929). The OP provided excellent observation throughout the objective area, however, no identifiable targets were sighted.

c. Engineer demolition team, 1st Engineer Battalion were planned for direct support to be used in destroying tunnel complexes, mines and booby traps. They were used in conjunction with Company L's sweep. The team was very effective in destroying VC fighting holes, tunnels and booby traps.

d. Battery I, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines was planned for direct support. Batteries I, G and M were actually fired in direct support. During the operation a total of 304 artillery rounds were fired during the conduct of 7 fire missions.

Air Action. The entire scope of air action from 13 July through 15 July included activities as follows:

- a. Two (2) emergency med evacs.
- b. One (1) priority med evac.
- c. Three (3) routine med evacs.
- d. One (1) flareship in support of Co M for spotting retreating VC forces.
- e. Two (2) gunships working with the above mentioned flareship.
- f. Two (2) A4 and two F4 aircraft for close air support and LZ prep with two (2) UH-1Es, one as a TAC(A) and one as escort for TAC (A).
- g. Eleven (11) UH-34s for the insertion of Company B at coordinates BS 561892. All requests were submitted to Landshark A via Crepe Myrtle 14 through the TAR Net. Over all effectiveness of air was excellent with excellent response and prompt execution of each request. Good air to ground coordination and communication was maintained during each mission.

7. Intelligence. VC strength, location, disposition and situation was anticipated in the objective area prior to the operation.

The initial operation was based on current intelligence summaries of enemy activities that have occurred within our TAOR, with specific attention to the southeastern and southern section since Co M began occupying Tien Dao Hill, (BS 572923) on 8 July 1966. Co M had received sniper and small arms fire daily, since arriving in the area. There have been many booby traps emplaced on the hill and along the main trail leading to Tien Dao.

VC Strength and Situation. Enemy activity consisted of continuous sniper and harassing fire throughout the course of the operation. On the morning of 15 July, an estimated VC battalion conducted a major attack on Co M. Numerous fighting holes and small caves were discovered in the objective area. The type of weapons encountered were 60mm mortars, 57RR, 30 cal MGs, MLs, BAR, Carbines, Thompson Sub-Machine Guns, M-26 and HK grenades, and 2-10 booby traps.

Intelligence Gained. A VC force of approximately battalion strength crossed the Song Tra Bong and conducted a major assault against Co M from the south. There are strong indications that sapper units were attached. VC KIAs were carrying an average of 5 grenades each along with bangalore torpedo type demolitions. One VC KIA had 3 - 60mm mortars without increments, and was found inside Co M's perimeter. The clothing on the bodies were wet and many of the grenades failed to ignite because they were wet. Twenty VC KIAs were located on Tien Dao Hill, six were located in Phuoc Thuan (1) BS 575915 and one was found on the Song Tra Bong, (BS 571911). One of the VC was a female. The VC were dressed in uniforms of green and blue. The VC were large in stature and well fed. Three of the VC were identified by Binh Son District Headquarters as coming from the 1/7 TAOR and one from Phu Le (1), (BS 575938). There were many bloodstains leading to the Song Tra Bong from the battle area indicating VC WIA's and their direction of movement. Captured documents revealed up to date intelligence on Co M's positions and a well planned order of attack. The documents revealed elements of both the 38th and 48th battalions along with local guerrillas took part in the attack. Binh Son District Headquarters reported that there were elements of the 131st VC Battalion involved.

#### TERRAIN

Critical Terrain. The critical terrain consists of Tien Dao hill and the hamlets surrounding it.

Observation and Fields of Fire. Tien Dao Hill offers 360° observation and provides good fields of fire. However, any movement or action on the hill can easily be observed by the VC.

Cover and Concealment. Good cover and concealment for both friendly and enemy forces is prevalent throughout our entire TAOR. Most of the hamlets have trenches, bomb shelters and fighting holes. The hedgerows and thick brush, throughout and surrounding the hamlets, provide excellent concealment.

Obstacles. Natural obstacles consist mainly of hedgerows, thick vegetation, cane fields and water filled rice paddies. Man-made obstacles consist of barbed wire and bamboo fences which tend to channelize movement.

Avenues of Approach. There are many trails leading to and from the objective area; however, they are either through rice paddies which provide no concealment of movement or, they are flanked on each side by cane fields and provide excellent ambush sites for the VC. The Song Tra Bong valley provides an excellent avenue of approach from east to west, especially during darkness and provides excellent maneuverability for the VC.

Weather. The weather was excellent during the operation. It was hot and humid during the day however, no heat casualties resulted. Visibility was unlimited. There was very little cloud cover, presenting no problem to air operations. There was no precipitation during the period.

8. Mission. The 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines conducted a search and destroy operation in the Phuoc Thuan hamlet complex in GS 5791, 5691, 5591, and 5590 in order to cover Co M's establishment of a combat base on Tien Dao Hill.

9. Concept of Operations. Co L and one platoon from Co I, 3d Bn, 7th Marines with a Vietnamese PF platoon conducted a search and destroy operation in support of Co M's establishment of a combat base at Tien Dao Hill. At 130630H, Co L moved by mortar vehicle to BS 593933, detrucked and moved in a SW direction to BS 576916. Co L commenced a search and destroy mission to the west through the Phuoc Thuan hamlet complex. With the assistance of the PF platoon, Co L searched all habitations for VC, tunnels and weapons caches. One platoon (Rein) from Co I established an ambush at 132100H in vicinity of BS 546907 and remained in position at daylight to act as a blocking force for Co L. Co M was prepared to support Co L by fire with all organic and attached weapons from their position on Tien Dao Hill. Battalion Command Post was established at OP#39, BS 573965.

10. Execution. On 12 July 1966, plans for the operation were formalized and a Frag O was issued. As a result of a major attack from an estimated VC battalion on Co M, (BS 573923) on the morning of 15 July, Co E (Rein), 2d Battalion, 7th Marines and a PF platoon were added to the task organization and became OPCON to 3d Battalion, 7th Marines at 150715H.

D-Day 13 July 1966. At 130630H, the operation commenced with Co L departing by motor vehicle from BS 566960. Co L received sporadic sniper fire as they approached Phuoc Thuan (1), BS 577916, returned fire, swept the hamlet and completed an encirclement at 130830H. Popular Forces were requested and conducted a search of the hamlet with negative results concluding at 131140H. A sweep to the river was conducted by the 2d Platoon and PFs with negative results. Co L received 40 rounds of small arms fire from BS 567913 which wounded one Marine. A med evac was completed at 1723H after the LZ was prepped with HULLs and fixed wing aircraft because of intensive sniper fire. Co L continued their mission and utilized the engineer team to destroy VC fighting holes, caves, and booby traps. Co L set in its night defensive positions, BS 575915, at 131850H. At 132045H the 2d platoon (Rein), Co I departed their combat base at BS 537947 for their assigned ambush and blocking positions.

D+1 - 14 July 1966. Co I established two ambushes, (BS 541918, BS 592915) and a blocking position (BS 592915) at 140010H. At 140545H, the ambushes retracted and the platoon blocking position was consolidated.

Co L continued on their mission at 140645H. A squad from Co I detected 9 VCS moving toward their position (BS 546908) and apprehended 3 of them when they attempted to flee at 140745H. At 140810H, Co L had two Marines wounded by booby traps made from ChiCom grenades (BS 567917). They were med evacuated. Co L continued on its mission receiving sporadic sniper fire and sustained another Marine wounded from a booby trap, (BS 567917). At 140945H, Co I squad sighted 6 VC (BS 546908) and killed one when they attempted to flee. They apprehended one VCS at BS 539919. Co L received sporadic sniper fire as they continued on their mission to the west. The company arrived in Phuoc Thuan (2), (BS 564918) at 141350H and began a detailed search in conjunction with the Popular Forces. The engineer team accompanying Co L continued to destroy VC fighting holes and caves as the company continued west. Co L night defensive positions were established in Tan Phuoc (4), (BS 557913) at 141700H.

D+2 - 15 July 1966. At 150200H, an estimated VC force of battalion strength made a coordinated attack on Co M utilizing a heavy concentration of 60mm mortar fire and 57RR fire in support of their attack. The attack began with a

60mm mortar barrage on the SE portion of the company position. The enemy mortars were adjusted and walked north across the company position as the VC assaulted in the wake of the mortar fire. The VC opened fire with a heavy volume of small arms, automatic and semi automatic weapons fire, and 57RR fire as they assaulted the 1st Platoon in the SE portion of Co M's perimeter.

Eight to ten VC made a slight penetration into the defense and hand to hand combat ensued. A counter-attack was launched by Co M utilizing 81mm and 60mm mortars along with 106RR fire. At 150230H, Co M called for an artillery fire mission. At 150251H, Zone Fire commenced from batteries I, G and M to suppress the enemy mortar fire. The artillery fire had a very satisfactory effect on target. The VC were driven from the perimeter and the defensive positions were reestablished. The VC also conducted a probe on the Company position from the west possibly as a diversion for the main attack. At 150300H, a med evac was requested by Co M and arrived on station at 0320H. A cease fire was called for by higher headquarters. The helicopter remained on station and under control of the battalion ALO. An appeal was made for additional artillery in order to interdict VC movement from the battle area and secure the LZ for the med evac. At 150340H, a fire mission was approved and fired. At 150345H, a cease fire was called for and the med evac helicopter landed to pick up friendly WIs. At 150410H, helicopters were again on station and picked up the remaining wounded at 0420H. At 150430H, the area was clear of aircraft and artillery missions were resumed. The friendly casualties comprised 5 KIA, 1 DOW and 15 WI. There were 20 VC KIA left on the hill. The VC began their retraction from the battle area and broke contact at approximately 0330H. The VC were equipped with at least 2-30 cal. MGs, BAR, numerous small arms and a 57RR.

Co L began its movement into the battle area at 150500H and set up blocking positions at BS 567915. Co L received sporadic sniper fire as they commenced a sweep to the east at 150645H. In its sweep to the east, Co L discovered 6 VC KIA, documents and weapons, (BS 575915). At 150745H, Co E, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines landed by helicopter, (BS 561892) and commenced a sweep to the east toward national Highway #1. One VC was taken under fire when discovered swimming the Song Tra Bong and one VC KIA was found, (BS 573909). Co I evacuated 4 VCs from BS 569912 to the 3rd Battalion, CP rear and joined Co M, (BS 574923) at 151515H, in order to reinforce their defensive position. Co L continued to sweep to the east without contact and was retracted by motor vehicle at 151600H, (BS 593936). At 151600H, Co E completed their sweep to BS 604915 and was retracted by motor vehicle to 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines CP. At 151600H, the operation concluded.

#### 11. Results.

##### Friendly

- a. KIA - 5
- b. DOW - 1
- c. WI - 19
- d. MIA - None

##### Enemy

- a. KIA - 27 Confirmed
- b. KIA - 18 Probable
- c. WI - Unknown
- d. KB Air/Arty/Mortars - 18 KIA probable - included above

Captured

- a. VCC - None
- b. VCS - 4

Equipment/Material Loss

- 7 - M1 Rifles
- 6 - Carbines
- 1 - BAR
- 2 - Thompson SMG
- 2 - Tripod Mounts .30 cal MG
- 3 - Bangalore Torpedoes (VC homemade type)
- 3 - M-79 Rounds
- 3 - 60mm Mortar Rounds Without Increments
- 13 - M-26 Hand Grenades
- 1 - MK 2 Grenade
- 32 - VC Fragmentation Grenades
- 1 - VC Potato Masher Grenade
- 1 - Z-10 Booby Trap
- 2 - Rifle Grenades (FRENCH STRID)
- 1 - Shell Casing, 57mm plus a Cannister.

All areas where air strikes were conducted were searched by ground forces.

12. Administrative Matters

There are no significant events to report. Resupply and medical evacuation was provided the companies via helicopter. There were no problems encountered.

13. Special Equipment and Techniques. None14. Commanders Analysis.

a. This operation was designed to relieve the pressure of VC activity throughout the area in which Co M has been establishing a combat base.

b. The importance of this area to the VC and the obvious impact the Marines are making by their presence was dramatized by the bold attempt of the VC to overrun Co M's position on the morning of 15 July. This attack was characterized by the following:

(1) Detailed Planning. Documents recovered from VC bodies included a detailed sketch of M Company position, (Tien Dao Hill) and the surrounding area. Site reconnaissance and road construction operations in the Tien Dao area during the two week period prior to the attack made it fairly obvious that a Marine unit would occupy Tien Dao Hill.

(2) Timing. The attack was timed to take maximum advantage of M Company's defensive posture and the lack of visibility.

M Company had not completed its defensive positions at the time of the attack and two of the company's squads were removed from the defensive position providing security along the road leading from Route #1 to Tien Dao Hill. There was no moon on the night of the attack.

(3) Coordination. The attack was well coordinated. 60mm mortar fire was used to cover both the assault and withdrawal of the infantry units. 57mm recoilless fire seemed to be directed at the Ontos on the position.

(4) Withdrawal. Many bodies were left on or near the company position and the withdrawal coincided with the lifting of friendly artillery fires so that helicopter evacuation of casualties could take place. The attack was not pressed during the critical evacuation period. It is believed this was caused not only by the fact that the attack had become fragmented and disorganized but by a realization by the VC that the evacuation would be followed immediately by the resumption of artillery fires on their routes of withdrawal.

(5) Inspirational leadership, individual heroism and the effective use of all ground supporting arms were the foundation of the successful defense by Company M.

(6) Pursuit by artillery fire was effective. However, the enemy had exfiltrated beyond the point to which E Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines was helilifted to establish a blocking position approximately 4½ hours after the commencement of the VC withdrawal. This action points up the problem of moving forces at night to block the escape or pursue a retreating enemy. Unless friendly forces are thoroughly familiar with the terrain or vehicular movement is possible, it is believed that blocking/pursuit action during hours of darkness should be by supporting arms fire, followed by illumination and aerial observation to keep track of the enemy until daylight. A pre alerted ground element can then be employed much more effectively. The movement of the reaction force also emphasizes the importance of accurately estimating the speed and direction of the enemy withdrawal.



B. B. DEWITT

Annex B to Enclosure (1)