

9

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9th Mar. Regt.

Control No. 016-67

Copy No. 1 of 10

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

3/200/dlj  
5750  
1 Jan 1967

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S & C FILES  
HEADQUARTERS  
1ST MARINE DIVISION, FMF

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding Officer, 9th Marines  
Subj: Command Chronology; month of December 1966  
Ref: (a) DivO 5750.21  
Encl: (1) 3rd Bn, 7th Marines Command Chronology w/Appendix A

**67 0115**  
Copy 7 of 9 copies

1. In accordance with reference (a) the Command Chronology for the month of December, 1966 is herewith submitted.

*R. J. O'Leary*  
R. J. O'LEARY

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3rd Bn - 7th Mar

Dec 1966

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS,  
DOD DIB 5200.10

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Command Chronology, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, December 19661. Organization Data.

- a. Location: Dai Loo, RVN
- b. Period Covered: 1-31 December 1966
- c. Commanding Officer, Staff and Chief Subordinates:

Commanding Officer  
Executive Officer  
Adjutant

Personnel Officer

S-2

S-3

S-4

MTV

Supply Officer  
Bn Surgeon

Bn Chaplain

ComO

Civil Affairs O

M&S Co

"I" Co

"A" Co

"L" Co

"M" Co

LTCOL R.J. O'LEARY

MAJ F.G. BALDERSTON

2dLt R.J. PASCUAL 1-19 Dec 1966

2dLt W.E. KELLER, Jr. 20-31 Dec 1966

2dLt K.J. WILKERSON

CAPT L.J. CELMER

MAJ F.V. WHITE, Jr.

CAPT R.M. CLARK 1-15 Dec 1966

CAPT A.L. ORR 16-31 Dec 1966

2dLt J.M. WILSON

2dLt B.C. RATHBUN

Lt R.F. MCCOULEY USN (MC)

Lt J.M. MCCURRAN USN (MC) 16-31 Dec 66

Lt L.L. GLOVER USNR 1-17 Dec 1966

Lt (jg) D.W. PEDERSEN 18-31 Dec 1966

CAPT G. W. ROSS

1stLt E.A. MILLER

CAPT J.W. HENRY

CAPT W.M. CLAPP, Jr. 1-18 Dec 1966

CAPT R.M. CLARK 19-31 Dec 1966

CAPT D.D. JORDAN

CAPT T. BOYD

CAPT A.W. JOHNSON

2. Commander's Narrative of Significant Events.

a. Operation MISSISSIPPI was still in progress as the month opened, continuing until all 3/7 units closed their combat bases at 0915, 5 December. (See Combat After-Action Report, Opn MISSISSIPPI.)

b. Within the TOR, intensive patrolling was continued by all units, as was the interdiction of traffic on the SONG VU GIA by use of artillery fire controlled and adjusted by observers on Hill 65. As intelligence information became clearer and the battalion's personnel became increasingly familiar with their areas, patrols and ambushes gained increasing contact, and M&I fires became better attuned to the intelligence and tactical pictures.

c. Of particular significance were:

(1) During the period 1-2 December Co I netted 7 VC MI in two separate ambush actions.

(2) On 4 December smoke, apparently from small camp fires, was observed at 878576. Artillery fire mission netted four secondary explosions.

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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(3) On 9 December, a vehicle returning to the Company L CP came upon a VC platoon setting up positions at 943664. The two marines in the vehicle opened fire, hitting at least three VC; VC return of fire was ineffective. The vehicle drove through the VC as supporting fire from nearby units caused the VC to break contact. Sweeping units failed to regain contact.

(4) On 11 Dec 66, Company A became OFCOM 3rd Bn, 9th Marines at 11001, for participation in Operation STALLING; the company returned to OFCOM of this battalion on 15 Dec 66.

(5) A Co I(-) action of 17 December took place west of Hill 65. This paragraph will consist of a narrative of events by the prospective (now actual) C.O. of India Co. who was present; by a summary of S-3 Journal entries and reports, and by a third paragraph of other information.

a. India Co(-) moved out from Hill 65 at 170730. The first platoon led, followed by the CP group and 2nd platoon. Movement was uneventful until 0900, when the point of the first platoon began receiving sporadic sniper fire from the front and flanks. During the period of sniper fire, the first platoon destroyed three barricades approximately 200 meters apart. The first was a bamboo entanglement, which was removed by hand. The second was more firmly constructed and was destroyed by 3.5 fire, resulting in a possible secondary explosion. The third and final barricade was wood reinforced with barbed wire. M-79 rounds fired at this barricade produced a large secondary explosion. These barricades were located at approximately 834560, 832559, and 828557. Shortly after passing the third barricade, the 1st platoon swung left through a tree line and began establishing a blocking position running in a half moon (convex to EW) from 826553 to 828555. As soon as the first platoon had gotten into position, the second platoon and the command group continued moving to the west on the road. At about this time, both the 1st and 2nd platoon were hit by a heavy volume of small arms fire. Initially, it was thought that all the fire was coming from the west and north, however, individuals in the first platoon reported receiving fire from the east as well and in retrospect it appears that at least a few were pinched to the east on the point at 830555. Heaviest resistance continued to be concentrated from the west, however, and the 2nd platoon moved down the road under covering fire from its M-79's and M-60's. The enemy broke contact at this point and sniper fire became sporadic once again. (This can probably be attributed to the fact that the 2nd platoon used 2 M-79's in the lead element - keeping up a continuous recon by fire as the move continued). The scheme of maneuver envisioned the 2nd platoon turning off the road to the south in the vicinity of 818549 and sweeping back eastward toward the blocking first platoon. Prior to the enemy breaking contact, the 1st platoon reported receiving 1 KIA, and a routine medic was called. The fire received was estimated by the 2nd platoon commander to have come from 12 to 14 of the enemy. One was seen to fall on the right flank and not get back up, but the situation did not allow the movement of a unit out to the flank to check for the body.

The second platoon and the CP group continued moving west along the trail to a point about 816548, when a tremendous volume of fire was received from the north, south, and west. The fire seemed to consist of scattered sniper fire from the flanks, (north and south) and massed automatic and semi-automatic fire from the west. This fire continued at a heavy volume for about 10 to 15 minutes, resulting in one friendly KIA and three friendly WIA's. 60mm mortar fire and M-79

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fire began to suppress the enemy fire then ammunition became critical for both weapons. The enemy was seen in numbers to the west and several were seen to be hit. Estimates of the number of enemy in this area were from 40 to 75. As the enemy fire slackened, elements of the 2nd platoon began movement to get into the enemy left flank. The enemy is engaged at about this time, possibly picking off and crossing the river to the south. The situation now had the 1st platoon still awaiting a medevac about 1500 meters to the rear, and 2nd platoon with 4 casualties and a critical shortage of M-79, 3.5 inch mortar and M-60 ammunition. One of the M-60's with the 2nd platoon had also broken down. The decision was made to forget the sweep back toward the 1st platoon, but to bring them up with the second. This could not be accomplished until the medevac was complete. A HC was requested at the same time the 2nd platoon's medevacs were called in. The action took place shortly after noon, and the medevac and resupply showed up at about 4:00. Both platoon's casualties were flown out, ammunition brought in by the medevac helicopter was distributed, and the HC was finally located. He had been looking for the company several miles to the NW. The first platoon was told to move out of the blocking position and move west to rejoin the 2nd. The 2nd platoon and GI group began to move west once again and continued to a point in the vicinity of 811545. No further contact was made; forty to fifty mortar rounds expended in the direction of the enemy withdrawal may have accounted for this lack of contact. Company "E" returned to their CO with negative contact enroute.

D. Summary of spot reports, journal entries, etc.

170940-India to 3/7. 1st platoon had been receiving sporadic sniper fire from north, west, and south. Have blown 3 gates & 1 barricade. Continuing.

171150-I to 3/7. Heavy fire, 1 MI.

171210-I to 3/7. Request HC, 2nd platoon also taking heavy fire, 1 MI.

171215-3/7 to K. Small activities. On immediate alert for possible display.

3/7 to I. Can you use Sparrow hawk or Ball Eagle?

I to 3/7. No suitable zone; we have control of situation. Sparrowhawk too small to be of much use. Recommend negative at this time.

171230-3/7 to I. What is situation? What are plans?

I to 3/7. Fire slackened. I'm going after them, but have to get casualties out.

171247-I to 3/7.- ammo resupply request, 50 rds 60mm; 3 cases M-79; 3 boxes 3.5 inch; 1 M-60 machine gun; 1500 rds 7.62; 2 cases 7.62 ball; 2 boxes .5 cal.

171315-I to 3/7. All activities back. Ready to go.

171315-3/7 to I. Keep pressure on.

I to 3/7. If I can get these casualties out I'm going to go in after them, whether I get ammo or not.

3/7 to I. Reinforcements required?

I to 3/7. Negative.

171330-171415: Several transmissions (verbal) which establish unit location, casualties at both locations, fact that enemy were either waiting or had disengaged.

171430-I to 3/7. Casualties out, ammo distributed, 1st platoon moving to join us, going in. HC on scene.

171500-I to 3/7. Negative contact. Returning

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c. While this action was going on, Co K was fully ready and waiting to go; Company L, which had cooperated with 1/26 in activities along the common boundary was enroute to Bn CP. had C.O. Co I requested or recommended any reinforcements or reaction unit, adequate forces were poised. Suitable LZ's were too far removed from the scene of contact in the opinion of C.O., Co I.

(6) Late in the afternoon of 19 December an AC observed approximately sixty (60) boats on the bong VU GI, from 800543, to 810544. Several of the boats were quite large and had been camouflaged extensively. Observed artillery fire destroyed eleven boats, heavily damaged nine more, left four structures burning and resulted in a secondary explosions.

On the same day, a ford site was developed at 867572, which would permit the westward movement of tracked vehicles from hill 65.

(7) At 201945h an estimated 20 VC engaged a squad from CAC 31 at 958698, firing from the south side of a trail as the squad was moving on their night patrol route. After an exchange of heavy small arms fire, the VC broke contact. A reaction unit consisting of a reinforced squad and a section of tanks was dispatched to the area by Co L, but contact was not regained. This action was one of the increased contacts being experienced in the northeast sector of the TACR by Company L.

(8) Operation "BIG PANTHER", a coordinated two-company search and destroy operation, was conducted by 3rd Bn, 7th Marines on 21-22 December.

At 0700, Co "I" platoon departed Hill 65, headed rapidly westward on Route 14, followed at 0800 by the remainder of Co "I", with a light section of tanks.

Co "I" proceeded westward with negative contact.

Co "I" landed in LZ BLACK, vic 198555 at 0923h, reporting negative contact. All units were landed by 0951h.

(AC had been requested, appeared briefly on station, then departed.)

Sporadic sniper fire was received throughout the day as several booby-trapped grenades and artillery duds were discovered and detonated. Individuals and small groups of VC were observed, on occasion, at long range; fire was called in, but results in most instances could not be evaluated by search due to time and distance involved.

Company "I" recorded 4 VC KIA (Confirmed) and 1 VC KIA (Prob) at 211615h when a sweep unit flushed 5 VC into a block at 1806556. A brief fire fight followed, in which the only VC met a confirmed KIA successfully broke contact, leaving equipment and a heavy blood trail behind.

At 1745h, Co "I" discovered a large group of people hiding in a pagoda, of whom 27 claimed to be Cao Dai priests. After initial interview, their true identity was suspect. The District Chief, Dai Loc District was contacted; he requested the monks be held for further interview. No friction resulted from this and when weather prevented district officials from arriving at the Co "I" CP in the morning of 22 Dec, the priests were released. (5 later chose to accompany the Marines eastward when they left the area). Occasional bursts of small arms fire occurred through the night, but no significant contact developed.

Throughout 22 Dec individual VC were encountered, and numerous caves and tunnels destroyed.

At 1100h, Co "I" captured one Main Force VC who surrendered himself as a civilian. This man had been a cell leader of the VC unit which had engaged Co "I" on 17 Dec in the same area, and in which, he states, 4 VC were KIA, 3 NV KIA, and 8 VC were KIA. His interrogation in Co "I" CP confirmed the presence of NV and Main Force units operating with guerrilla units, and further confirmed

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that 10 PVA had been with his 60 man company on 17 Dec.

The operation concluded at 221745h with all units returning to their positions.

Totals for the Operation:

<u>US</u>	<u>VC</u>
KIA: 0	KIA: 6 (Conf)
WIA: 8	5 (prob)
NB: 0	VCS: 5
	VCC: 1

(9) On the night of 22 Dec, the refugee hamlet of A-14 (3) 926608, received small arms fire from the east and northeast. Company A units were immediately dispatched, receiving no fire while enroute. VC broke contact, which was not regained.

(10) A stand-down from offensive operations was in effect during the period 240700-260700 December. No enemy contacts occurred during the period. Boat traffic across the BONG VU GIA was markedly increased, and included supplies and armed personnel.

(11) On 28 December, A-14 (3) again received small arms fire; this time, however, 3 VC were killed by USMC and PF return fire.

3. Detailed Description of Significant Events:

a. Personnel

Average Strength	USMC	USM
	32 Officers	3 Officers
	1125 Enlisted	56 Enlisted

The total number of personnel on hand within 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines as of 31 December 1966 was 1282. The total effective strength on 31 December 1966 was 1243. During the month of December 199 new personnel were joined to this unit, while 81 were dropped from the rolls. A total of 28 have rotated, 27 were WIA, 2 KIA, and 7 non-battle casualties of which 4 had returned to duty by 31 December 1966.

b. Administration. No insurmountable problem encountered.

c. Intelligence.

(1) Mine and Booby-traps- During the period 15-21 December a transition from anti-vehicular to anti-personnel mining occurred in the TAOR. There were no instances of anti-vehicular mines being detonated or detected after 21 December however, anti-personnel booby-traps tripled during this period. Flooding restricted movement within the TAOR, thus making a mining advantageous in view of the canalization of units by the water obstacles.

(2) Unit composition - on 17 December 1966 an element of India Company established contact with a unit of the 414-B LF Company at AT 821555. During the contact it was noted that several of the enemy were wearing green uniforms and steel helmets. On 21 and 22 December 1966 a two-Company operation in the same area apprehended a cell leader from the contact on the 17th. This individual stated both initially and after extensive interrogation that there

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were 20 RV. in his Company who were not acting as advisors but were fighting along with the other guerrillas.

(3) Enemy Strength - This same captive also stated that the Q-14 was now called a unit and had a strength of 270 men. An interrogation report from a captive taken west of our TLOC also indicated that the Q-14 had been upgraded and/or reinforced though he held their strength at two companies. The figures given by the first source probably includes units of the K-20 Battalion which operate with the Q-14 on occasion.

(4) Interdiction - Captive interrogation revealed the fact that the Q-14 has taken 10 KIA and 20 VLA from artillery being fired at boat traffic. He enumerated crossing points which almost identical with those obtained from a captive taken by the THUNG BUC CIGC operation.

(5) Enemy Morale - Interrogation of all captives revealed that morale was low in all units due to poor food supply, medical facilities, and the constant threat of artillery and air. The VC have been forced to impress men into their ranks rather than maintain their strength with volunteers; the VC are forced to guard their own men to prevent them from rallying, particularly during Marine Operations in close proximity to their positions.

d. Training. Formal training included training of 10 Scout-Snipers at 9th Marines Scout-Sniper School and training of both battalion and company communications personnel by the Ln Communications section. Training requirements for January were formulated and promulgated.

e. Special Operations.

(1) Operation MISSISSIPPI concluded during this period.

(2) Company and platoon-size sweeps were frequent, as were small unit patrols.

f. Command and Control. 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines was OICOM 9th Marines and ADCOM 1st Marine Division. Lieutenant Colonel R.J. O'LEARY was in command throughout the month.

g. Close Combat. The action engaged in by Company I on 17 December (described in paragraph 2c(5)) constituted the most significant close combat.

h. Fire Support. Battery C, 1st Ln, 11th Marines continues to provide direct support in outstanding fashion. 1025 observed rounds were fired resulting in 19 boats sunk, 18 damaged, 10 KIA (Confirmed) and 20 KIA (Probable).

i. Logistics. The remainder of the Battalion's supplies and equipment were trucked to the CP at Dai Loc. Class I, III and V dumps were stocked with 5 DOD; company messes were established at each combat base. Shortage of individual equipment continued. Heavy rains and severe road conditions placed a severe burden on motor transport equipment (e.g. 80 brake shoes on Mighty - Lite vehicles required replacement.)

j. Air Defense. None.

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k. Combat Close Air Support. None, except for missions in support of Opns HISSISSIPE and SIG KAMMER, previously described.

l. Communications - Electronics. No insurmountable difficulties.

m. Civil Affairs/Civic Action.

(1) During Operation HISSISSIPE 1900 refugees were escorted out of Antenna Valley. This was a combined effort between 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines and 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines.

(2) Two Mit Carson Scouts were obtained and were put in direct support of Lima Company. They have been doing an outstanding job and the Commanding Officer of Lima has been more than satisfied with their performance. They have been used on Patrols, Civil Affairs functions, PSY Warfare functions and the interrogation and screening of Villagers.

(3) From 21 December 1966 to 22 December 1966, a two-Company operation took place in the area along North side of the Song Vu Gia River. As a result of the operation, 120 refugees left that area in two main increments. The first left on 22 December 1966, and the second on 24 December 1966. All refugees were processed through DAI LOC District Headquarters, and are either staying with friends in neighboring hamlets, or were placed in various refugee camps temporarily.

(4) On 24 December 1966, materials arrived for a public shower for the hamlet of Duyen Son (4) (943663). Lima Company personnel are supervising the project.

(5) Work started 15 December 1966 in the hamlet of Toy Lon, HIEU BUC District, (946699). The following projects are underway and are being supervised by the 29th Civil Affairs Company:

- (a) Methane generator for Dispensary
- (b) 3 (three) public showers
- (c) 3 (three) public heads
- (1) Well and pump

(6) MedCap totals for the month of December.

<u>ADULT</u>	<u>WOMEN</u>	<u>CHILDREN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
884	1,241	2,243	4,368

(7) MedVac totals for the month of December.

<u>ADULT</u>	<u>CHILDREN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
4	10	14

n. ABC/Special Warfare. None

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

3/FVW/lwk  
3480  
8 Dec 66

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding Officer, 9th Marines  
Subj: Combat Operation After-Action Report, Operation MISSISSIPPI

Ref: (a) DivO 3480.1  
(b) 9th Marines Operation Plan 125-66

3rd Bn. 7th Mar. Log No

350-66 Copy # 112FSJ

Series 050-66

1. Code Name. Operation MISSISSIPPI
2. Dates of Operation. 291100H Nov to 050915H Dec 66
3. Location. DUC DUC District, QUANG NAM Province, RVN
4. Control or Command Headquarters. Third Battalion, Seventh Marines; Ninth Marines.

5. Task Organization.

3rd Bn (-)(Rein) 7th Marines  
HqCo (-)(Rein)

LTCOL O'LEARY

Det, HST, 3rd SP Bn  
Det, 3rd Eng Bn  
Det, Scout Dog Platoon  
Det, HqBn  
Det, ITT  
Co. M. 3rd Bn, 7th Marines  
Co. E. 2nd Bn, 1st Marines  
Co. L. 3rd Bn, 9th Marines

CAPT JOHNSON  
CAPT PRATT  
CAPT NAVADEL

6. Supporting Forces.

a. Artillery. Battery F, 2nd Battalion, 12 Marines D/S 9th Marines, priority of fires to 3rd Bn, 7th Marines. Battery E, 2nd Bn, 11th Marines, D/S 9th Marines. H&I and Illumination missions fired effectively. No on-call or close defensive fire missions were fired.

b. Air. 1st MAW provided air support, including pre-planned troop and logistic heli-lifts, helicopter escort, and aerial observation aircraft. Performance was timely and effective. (See comment regarding adequacy of number of aircraft provided in par 12d and 14d). Pre D-Day reconnaissance and pre-H-hour lift of command group personnel from DAI LOC to AN HOA aided in successful accomplishment of assigned missions.

7. Intelligence.

a. Estimate of VC strength, location, disposition and situation anticipated in the objective area of operations, to include currency and, within classification limits, sources of intelligence.

(1) Reports of enemy in the objective area indicated that a Local Force Battalion, reinforced by an estimated 150-200 guerrillas, operates in and around Antenna Valley. In addition, two Local Force Battalions and

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APPENDIX A TO ENCLOSURE

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were alleged to be operating in the QUE SON area. South of the objective area, but able to reinforce existing enemy, there was believed to be a battalion-sized element of the 3rd North Vietnamese Regiment; a new element, the T-87 Battalion, and elements of the T-89 (AKA 402nd) Battalion. Friendly reconnaissance elements have observed increased enemy movement in and around the objective area.

(2) It was anticipated that the enemy would probably be dispersed throughout the objective area, mixed with the civilian population. It was expected that hamlets would be extensively fortified and that prepared harboring sights would exist in the surrounding mountains.

(3) It was felt that the enemy would adopt one of the following courses of action: defend one of the several hamlets and call on reinforcements in an effort to inflict heavy casualties on friendly forces; or withdraw to the mountains Northeast and South of Antenna Valley.

b. VC strength and situation actually encountered as the operation was conducted. Contact throughout the operation consisted of isolated sniper incidents. No major force was encountered. Information from captives, ralliers and natives of the area indicated Local Force units withdrew to the South, and that the last Main Force Unit seen in the area passed through on approximately 20 November. Local Force strength in Antenna Valley is placed at approximately 100 men, with Main Force and NVA activity of a transient nature only.

c. VC units identified and any other significant intelligence gained.

(1) There were no unit identifications obtained in the field. Interrogation reports of captives taken during this operation had not been forwarded to this command at the time of this report's submission. The absence of the existing opposition indicates possible prior knowledge of our operations or a well conceived and executed plan of withdrawal. Information obtained indicates that the initial estimate of enemy strength was greater than existing forces.

d. Terrain.

(1) Critical terrain. Hill 170 (AT 888382), which dominates western approaches to Antenna Valley. Hill 144 (AT 908352) which overlooks the primary withdrawal route to the South and Hill 90 (AT 935365) which covers the pass and road to the East.

(2) Obstacles.

(a) Extensive flooding throughout the area restricted units to foot traffic and all resupply was accomplished by air throughout the operation. Rain and low cloud cover prevented resupply on two occasions. There is a wash-out of the road at AT 906382 and the bridge at AT 897387 is only 2 feet wide at the most. Flooding conditions persist in varying degrees throughout the rainy season as does flight restriction.

(b) Anti-helicopter stakes approximately fifteen (15) feet high, with barbed wire connecting the tops, were encountered in AF BON (4) and (2) (AT 8936 and AT 9036) and on Hill 170 from AT 883385 to AT 893382. Metal anti-helicopter stakes were noted in AF HAI (1) (AT 914367) and were four (4) to six (6) feet high without barbed wire.

(3) Cover and Concealment.

(a) Excellent concealment is provided in all hamlets and stream beds by heavy bamboo growth. All flat ground in Antenna Valley is cultivated, the principle crop being rice. Paddy dikes provide limited cover in all these areas. All hamlets through which we operated were extensively fortified with trench systems both around and through the hamlets. Fighting holes are located within the hamlets and along trails connecting hamlets. Both shelter-type defensive caves/tunnels and bunkered fighting positions were located to cover principle trails, critical terrain features and avenues of approach. Several

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bunkers were disguised as burial mounds and were integrated into the edge of a graveyard so that apertures covered trails. The entire AP BON/AP HAI area was fortified as expected.

(4) Observation and Fields of Fire.

(a) Observation of the objective area was excellent. There were hills surrounding the area on all sides which afford observation of the whole valley and approaches thereto. Fields of fire were excellent due to the extensive paddy system. Dead space occurred only when stream beds or runoffs had caused extensive erosion. The defense was favored by these conditions.

(5) Avenue of approach.

(a) Primary avenues of approach and egress generally follow trails and streams to the South and North. The valley mouth to the West and pass to the East are primary routes in and out of the valley. Interrogation and observations indicate the two minor valleys at AT 860380 and AT 870380, and the trails at AT 886354, 903352, 915355, and 908326 were used by the VC in their withdrawal from the objective area.

(6) Special Factors.

(a) Special attention was paid to the selection of possible landing zones in the objectives area. Most of the low ground in the valley is plowed and flooded and cannot be used for landing zones during the rainy season. The abandoned airstrip at AT 879397 and the area south of the river, AT 880386, is suitable when not flooded and can accommodate up to six (6), CH-46 helicopters. When above water the road is suitable but is extremely vulnerable to ground fire. Small one or two helicopter landing zones exist in most hamlets on elevated ground and uncultivated paddies, but of these require the removal of anti-helicopter stakes and can be used only for resupply and evacuation after an area is secured. Vegetation on the high ground such as Hills 170 (AT 888382), 146 (883367), 144 (908352) and 90 (935366) is grass and low scrub which will not prohibit the landing of helicopters. One to four CH-46's can be landed in all these areas.

(7) Weather. Rain and heavy cloud cover persisted in the operation area throughout all but a very few hours of the operation, significantly affecting both ground and air movement. Aerial resupply was rendered impossible on two occasions.

8. Mission. 3rd Bn(-)(Rein) 7th Marines lands on order in designated LZ, attacks east through "Antenna Valley" to limit of advance to locate and capture or destroy enemy forces, supplies, equipment and documents located therein. Be prepared to conduct tactical withdrawal from objective area by foot or helicopter.

9. Concept of Operation. On order, on D-Day, execute helicopter assault into LZ BLUE, vicinity AT 880396. First company landed will secure LZ; second company will move out immediately to establish positions on Hill 170 (AT 887382); command group, together with third company, established CP/perimeter in AP BA(4), (AT 880394). Upon completion of landing, assault company establish positions south-east of AP BA (4), on high ground vicinity AT 884389. Continue subsequent attack eastward on order.

10. Execution.

(a) Pre-D-Day. 3rd Bn, 7th Marines was assigned the mission and forces (previously assigned to 3rd Bn, 9th Marines) for participation in Operation MISSISSIPPI by Ref (b). A briefing by Commanding Officer, 9th Marines, and key staff members on 28 November, and a subsequent helicopter-borne reconnaissance of the objective area, preceded a full briefing of the Battalion staff at 1930, 28 November.

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APPENDIX A TO ENCLOSURE (1)

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(b) D-Day, 29 Nov 1966

(1) A pre-h-hour lift of the Commanding Officer and key operating staff members to AN HOA, permitted a personal briefing of the Commanding Officers of Co. L, 3rd Bn, 9th Marines and Co. E, 2nd Bn, 1st Marines. Company M and the remainder of the command group was to be lifted from D I LOC into LZ BLUE.

(2) First elements of L/3/9 touched down at approximately 291500H in LZ BLUE, reporting negative enemy contact; one Marine received a gunshot wound in the leg while in a helicopter approaching the LZ. Company L secured the LZ and outposted both the river bank to north and west, and high ground to the south. Company E/2/1 was the second unit into the zone, and immediately moved out to establish positions on Hill 170. The Battalion command group and Company M completed the lift at 291645H. The CP and night positions were established as follows: E/2/1 - Hill 170 (AT 887382)

L/3/9 - AT 887389

M/3/7 - AT 880393

CP - AT 880393

(3) The hamlets occupied were virtually deserted, though possessing many signs of recent occupation. Many so-called family bunkers were found, as well as miscellaneous items of medicine, clothing, some documents and BA-30-type batteries.

(4) Negative enemy contact was reported through the night.

(c) D+1, 30 Nov 1966.

(1) With E/2/1 remaining in position, observation over the entire valley was maintained. The one section of 81mm mortars landed with the battalion was displaced to Co. E's position, thus adding the capability of direct-lay fire support.

(2) The battalion moved out at 0750H with Co. L/3/9 in the lead, followed by command group and Co. M. Company L was to sweep AP HAI (5), AT 901379, and the large built up area to the southeast. Company M was to sweep AP BON (4), AT 900365, and the AP BON (2)/AP HAI (2) area, AT 905363. The command group would join Company M upon securing of the last-named complex. At 0800, 9th Marines directed that the Fire Coordination Line between 3/7 and 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines operating to the east, was established at the 92 N/S grid line.

(3) At 301100H in AP HAI (5), Company L encountered three (3) ralliers bearing safe-conduct passes. One of the three was later confirmed to be a former VC guerilla, the others as supporters. As Co. M moved through their assigned area without incident, Co. L encountered a brief flurry of small arms fire as they moved southeast from AP HAI (5). Prompt return of fire silenced the enemy, whose numbers remained unknown. All units continued assigned missions establishing night positions as follows: E/2/1 - Hill 170

L/3/9 - AT 904365

M/3/7 - AT 904365

CP - AT 904365

Negative contact was reported through the night.

(d) D+2, 1 Dec 1966. Extensive search and destroy operations were conducted in the area between 91 and 92 grid lines south of the main east-west road as Co. M blocked to the west and south and Co. L swept generally south and eastward from their night positions. Very light contact consisting of sporadic harassing fire was encountered; cave/tunnel complexes were uncovered in GS 9137, as were extensive anti-helo stakes. Upon completion of the operations, a battalion perimeter was established vic AT 904376. Co. E remained on Hill 170.

(e) D+3, 2 Dec 1966. As search and destroy operations commenced at 0730, Co. L began encountering people returning to the hamlets in the area. Many of the people requested to be allowed to evacuate the area, claiming to have been

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enlarged by the Viet Cong. Initial estimates of the number of people who would leave if allowed approximated 300. C.O., 9th Marines provided information to the effect that 2nd Bn, 5th Marines had encountered a similar situation. The Vietnamese government provided a PF unit as escort, and the refugees began heading westward along the main road at approximately 1500H. Co. M escorted refugees to the main road from the south, where they met the westbound column from the 2/5 area. The head of the column received small arms fire just west of Grid Line 88, and the refugees started to turn back. On orders of C.O., 9th Marines, Co. M(-) with two platoons was dispatched to escort the column now totaling in excess of 1900 persons- to KHOUNG TRUNG (AT 855397), where they stopped for the night. All the refugees except for a very few stragglers, had arrived by 2130K. The battalion perimeter was manned by Co. L, H&SCo.(-) and one platoon of Co. H. Co. E remained on Hill 170. Negative contact was reported.

(f) D+4, 3 Dec 1966.

(1) Co. M, remaining with the refugees, reported a slow movement southward of a large number of the people to a village they called G. T. N, AT 830393, (shown on the map as KHOUNG THUONG (1)). GV forces finally arrived at Co. M's position at approximately 1500H and relieved Co. M of responsibility for security of the refugees. Co. M returned to the battalion perimeter at 1800H.

(2) Co. L conducted thorough patrol activity along trace of AT 896360, 885355, 885365, 895373, 895380. Documents, ammunition, money, medicines, and clothes-but no VC-were found.

(3) Battalion positions continued as before.

(g) D+5, 4 Dec 1966.

(1) Weather permitting, the battalion was to lift from LZ BLUE commencing at 1300. Prior to that time Co. L was to resweep AREA I (5) destroying bunkers found on earlier sweeps. Co. M would generally trace their route to the site of their positions on the night of D-Day. Co. E would displace on order to secure the LZ. The command group was to move with Co. L.

(2) All proceeded as planned: at 1000 Co. E moved out; L, M, and H&S commenced their move by 0800H. By 1230H all units re-occupied their D-Day night positions. When weather prevented extraction, Co. E was returned to Hill 170; Co. M, L and H&S established night positions vic AT 874395. Negative enemy contact was reported.

(h) D+6, 5 Dec 1966.

(1) At 0700 the extraction lift commenced with Co. L the first unit out followed by Co. M and the command group. (Co. E was to remain on Hill 170 and become OPCON 2nd Bn, 5th Marines). Co. E was chopped OPCON 2/5 at 0855 as the last units cleared the LZ; all units had returned to their combat bases by 0915H.

## 11. Results.

### a. Personnel.

#### (1) Friendly losses

- (a) MIA - 2
- (b) KIA - 0
- (c) Non-battle-ll

#### (2) Enemy losses.

- (a) VC KIA (Prob) - 3
- (b) VC MIA (Conf) - 1
- (c) VCS - 7
- (d) VCC - 4

\*Note: VC KIA (Prob) were from ground fire

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(5)

APPENDIX A TO ENCLOSURE (U)

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- b. ~~(S)~~ Equipment/Material Captured.  
 1 radio, civilian type, with (2) SW bands  
 1 carbine mockup  
 4 fuzes for 60mm mortar  
 Propaganda documents
- c. ~~(S)~~ Equipment/Material Destroyed.  
 10 BA-30's  
 15 Ampules, antibiotic  
 10 Bandages  
 Minor quantities of assorted medical supplies
- d. ~~(S)~~ Fortifications/Obstacles Destroyed.  
 50 anti-helicopter stakes located AT 890382 and AT 898364  
 2 caves, 25x4x3 feet at AT 902378.

12. Administration matters. Administrative planning appeared to have been generally adequate.

(a) Supply. The administrative order was a verbal frag order and proved adequate. CO., 3/7 directed 3 MCI, 2 canteens, 2 ponchos/man, 2 spare pairs socks, and toilet gear as prescribed load. Prescribed load and equipment were adequate. Resupply was accomplished by helicopter in all cases. Prevailing weather conditions throughout the operation made resupply an "as possible" rather than an "as needed" function. The USA was initially unprepared to handle requests for items other than Class I and V.

(b) Maintenance. None

(c) Treatment of casualties. Med-evac was timely and effective.

(d) Transportation. Transportation into and out of the objective area was by helicopter. An adequate number of vehicles were available for the move into the area. Eight helicopters (CH-46's) were used for extraction. This number dwindled to three before the lift was completed, and over two hours were required to complete the movement of 400 troops. This is excessive in view of the fact that the personnel in this zone were exposed to sniper fire during the last hour of the lift.

(e) Communications. No problems encountered.

(f) Medical evaluation. Despite extremely wet weather, immersion foot remained a threat rather than a problem with only one evacuee reported. Close attention at all levels of command was stressed and was evident.

13. Special Equipment and Techniques.

a. Scout dogs were used during sweeps of village areas. While no notable successes were claimed, the dogs were helpful in searching out tunnel/cave complexes.

14. Commander's Analysis.

a. The ability of the battalion to function well is a tribute to the units, commanders and staffs involved. Company M had arrived from Operation RIO BRAVO only twelve hours before Operation MISSISSIPPI; Companies L and E had never operated under 3rd Bn, 7th Marines, and had only the briefest of contact before the operation commenced. Training, morale and a high degree of professionalism were evident throughout.

b. The support of relatively large units during monsoon weather must be thorough and flexible. Resupply of clothing, particularly boots and socks, and weapons maintenance materials must be available.

(6)

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c. Problems were encountered during tactical troop lifts. During the extraction lift it is necessary to provide LZ security, tactical dispersion of lifting units and formation of heli-teams consistent with tactical requirements, while minimizing time in the zone for the helicopters. In order to facilitate accomplishment of these ends, HST teams, FAC teams, TACP and unit commanders all carefully plan the movement. During the extraction of Companies L, M, and the command group, the zone was secured and in recognition of the difficulty of troops crossing the muddy paddies, landing spots selected for the helicopters which would place them near the troop locations. Security of the zone could thus be assured until the very last minute, the troop units phased out of the zone, and tactical control maintained. In practice the helicopters ignored the spots, landed close together in places apparently of their own choosing, and caused a bunching of heliteams in one small area. Tactical control was rendered virtually impossible; HST personnel attempting to direct helicopters were frequently ignored. A well-timed mortar and automatic weapons attack on the landing zone would have taken an extremely heavy toll.

d. The extraction lift of less than 400 personnel took almost two hours due to an inadequate number of helicopters being provided. Eight CH-46 helicopters started the lift; three completed it. A rapid extraction is essential to minimize the effect of enemy reaction.

15. Recommendations.

a. That preliminary planning stress the necessity of landing zone procedures on the part of both ground and air personnel. Proper tactical troop lifts can be accomplished only by thorough planning and execution; air support must be responsive to the ground unit commander's requirements.

b. That LSA support be adequate to meet all foreseeable contingencies including weather, lengthened duration and equipment repair. It must also be flexible and able to respond to changes in troop dispositions on short notice.

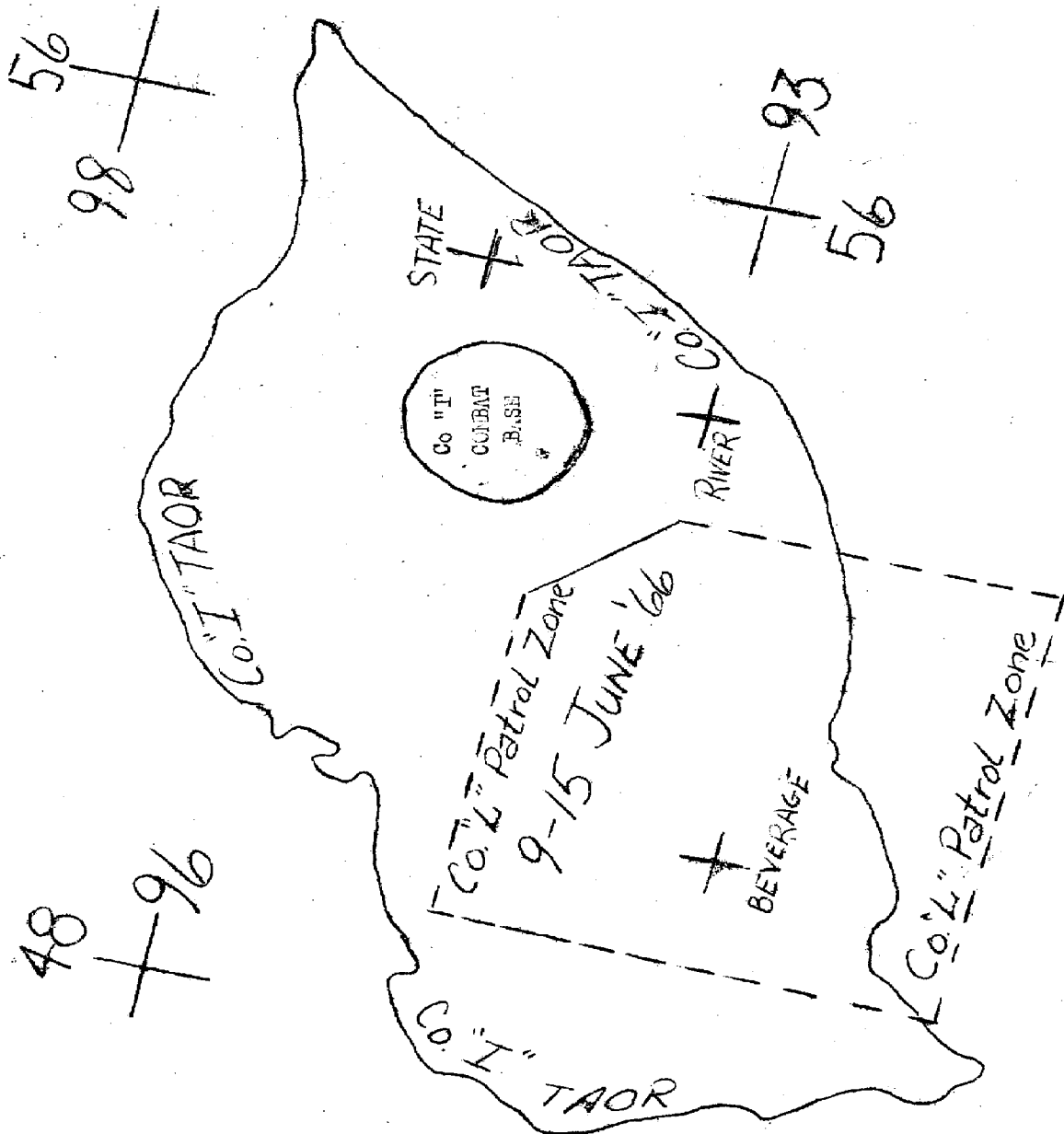
*R. J. O'Leary*  
R. J. O'LEARY

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APPENDIX A TO ENCLOSURE (1)

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Operation Overlay to Operation "CLEAN SWEEP"  
MAP, L701, 1:50,000, Sheets 6757 III, 6756 IV  
Time Zone: H



*James A. Clark*

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

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