

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

3/EDP/rob:dlj
5750
02 June 1967

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

Subj: Command Chronology; month of May 1967

Ref: (a) Marine Corps Order 5750.2a

Encl: (1) Overlay indicating unit positions as of 312400H May 1967
(2) Revised Task Organization of 3rd Bn (Rein), 7th Marines, DAI LOC District.
(3) A/RPT (Op. W. L. T. J.)

1. In accordance with reference (a), the Command Chronology for the month of May is submitted. A Commander's Narrative of Significant Events is included.

J. D. Counselman
J. D. COUNSELMAN

3rd Bn. 7th Mar. Log No

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7th Mar S&C Log Nr.

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3rd Bn / 7th MAR - CMD CHRON

MAY 1967

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Command Chronology, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines May 1967

1. Organizational Data

- a. Location: DAI LOC, RVN
- b. Period Covered: 1-31 May 1967
- c. Commanding Officer, Staff and Chief subordinates:

Commanding Officer
Executive Officer

Adjutant
Personnel Officer
S-2
S-3
ALO
S-4
Supply O
MFO
Bn Surgeon
CommO

Civil Affairs O (S-5)
H&S Co
I Co
K Co
L Co
M Co

LTCOL J.S. COUNSELMAN
MAJ B. JORDAN (1 May-20 May)
MAJ G.H. TURLEY (20-31 May)
2ndLt W.E. KELLER, Jr.
2ndLt K.J. WILKERSON
2ndLt E. JL POLASEK
MAJ G.H. TURLEY
CAPT J.A. HALSTEAD
1stLt C.S. SIM
1stLt E.C. RATHBUN
1stLt J.A. WILSON
Lt F.E. WONG (MC) USNR
GySgt J.F. CHOATE (1-6 May)
CAPT C.W. ROSS (7-31 May)
1stLt J.B. FLYNN
2ndLt D.R. RICHARDS
CAPT R.M. CLARK
CAPT G.W. JONES
CAPT J.M. PIATT
CAPT C.W. ROSS (1-6 May)
CAPT J.B. HICKS Jr (7-31 May)

- d. Attachments: Enclosure (2) lists all attachments and all units assigned in Direct Support of the battalion.

- e. Average Monthly Strength During Period:

USMC
32 Officers
1035 Enlisted

USN
3 Officers
49 Enlisted

Sequential Listing of Significant Events, especially as they relate to:

a. Personnel. The total number of personnel on hand within 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines as of 31 May was 1098. The total effective strength on 31 May was 1053. During the month of May 123 new personnel were joined to this organization; 167 were dropped from the rolls; 53 personnel rotated; 18 personnel were wounded in action; 5 personnel were killed in action. Non-battle casualties evacuated totaled 51, 21 of which have since returned to duty by 31 May 1967.

b. Administration. No unusual or significant problem areas were encountered.

c. Intelligence

Information obtained through district agents and higher headquarters continued to indicate the presence within the TAOR of Main Force/NVA units whose mission was to attack friendly targets that offer possibilities of penetration, such as isolated outposts, CAC units, and refugee villages. Developments during the reporting period tended to confirm such a mission. Units received nightly harassing fire, and on one such occasion on 0155H, CAC 2-2 (AT 865574) was assaulted by an estimated 120 well disciplined troops wearing green uniforms and carrying Chinese assault weapons. Later in the month, on 310130H VC equipped with M-14 rifles, terrorized a refugee outlet at AT 944694.

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Enemy contact for the month during daylight hours was very light; light to moderate sniper fire characterized the hours of darkness. There was no noticeable increase in the number of anti personnel and anti vehicular mines during the reporting period. For the most part, anti personnel mines are concentrated in the "Rocket Belt" particularly in the DUONG KAM (3) and BO BAN (1) hamlet complex, GS AT 9568, and further south in the DONG PHU (3) hamlet, GS AT 9562. There were 8 anti-vehicular mines detonated during the month, 5 on Route 14 west of DAI LOC and 3 on Route 5 north in GS 9569.

Secondary explosions from artillery and 90mm rounds were numerous in the foothills and draws along the south bank of the SONG VU GIA across from the Hill 52 (ZC 215553) combat base. It was on the basis of these explosions and frequent enemy sightings in addition to intelligence reports emanating from the THUONG DUC CIDG Camp the Operation WEBSTER was conducted. Unfortunately these indications of VC activity could not be timely exploited because of the unavailability of rotary and fixed wing support which was diverted elsewhere. The result was only light contact with the enemy.

The VC apparently realize that the eastern boundary of the battalion TAOR is the SONG YEN and that the river is not passable to troops. Sniper activity from the adjoining TAOR ceased to be a problem, however, with the implementation of coordinated activities with adjacent units and the positioning of units so as to saturate the area.

Saturation patrolling has been significantly effective in suppressing VC activity in the "Rocket Belt" in the northeast portion of the TAOR. Co K from positions on Hill 10 (AT 923694) and Co I, 3/1, from positions on Hill 41 (AT 934663) each constantly conduct two three-day platoon size patrols in the "Rocket Belt". A total of 3,066 small unit activities were completed in that area, 2,294 of which were at night.

A significant intelligence discovery was made on 7 May when a Co K Bald Eagle located a VC harboring site occupied by 5 VC. After driving the VC away, a search of the area at AT 814637 uncovered 20 houses, with caves and rice caches, 50 pigs and chickens, bundles of black clothing, rolls of black cloth with Chinese markings, and camouflage uniforms.

d. During May, formal training consisted of:

- (1) Orientation and indoctrination lectures to newly assigned personnel.
- (2) One officer being sent to Registered Publications School.
- (3) Assignment of 40 personnel to Land Mine Warfare School, 2 personnel to Field Wire School, and 2 personnel to Vietnamese Language School. A revision of the curriculum for replacements was effected 26 May. The scope of the lectures have been expanded and new lectures by the Comm O and FSOC Officer have been instituted.

e. Special Operations.

Operation WEBSTER, a search and destroy in DAI LOC, DUC DUC, and THUONG DUC Districts, commenced on 160715. Very light contact characterized the operation which terminated on 181200H. Intelligence gained from this operation enabled the battalion to redistribute its forces to provide the necessary personnel for increased patrolling and small unit operations elsewhere in the TAOR.

f. Command and Control. The 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines was under operational and administrative control of the 7th Marines during the entire month. Co I, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines came under operational control of 3rdBn, 7thMar at 061400H. Co M was under operational control of 1stBn, 7th Mar from 191400H to 241530H.

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h. Fire Support(1) Artillery

Battery I, 3rdBn, 11thMar from positions on Hill 65 (AT 883578) continued to provide Direct Support to this battalion during the month of May. Battery "K", 4th Bn, 11th Marines remained in General Support of the battalion from positions on Hill 65 except during Operation WEBSTER (16May-18May) when it assumed a Direct Support role.

Sixty two adjust fire missions were fired during the month: they resulted in 12 VC KIA (Prob) and extensive structural damage to the fortified hamlets in the vicinity of Hill 52, (ZC 215552). In addition forty-seven unobserved fire missions were conducted on the basis of selected intelligence reports.

In order to provide better long range observation of suspected VC movement in the mountainous areas in the southern and western portions of the Battalion's TAOR, white phosphorous rounds were utilized in an incendiary role with excellent results. Fires, started by such missions, burned away brush and exposed concealed infiltration and ex-filtration routes. In one instance it enabled Co I to fire 9 H.E. missions in one three day period on suspected VC troop movements.

H&I fires were again used extensively by this organization during the month of May. An average of 35 targets were engaged nightly, the majority of these being in the "Rocket Belt".

(2) Armor

Two platoon of tanks from Co B, 1st Tank Bn, delivered timely and accurate direct fire on targets of opportunity throughout the reporting period in their direct support role. Utilized as troop carriers from positions on Hill 52, Hill 65 and Hill 41, they provided field commanders with instant reaction forces. On search and destroy missions, they cleared avenues of advance in areas suspected of being booby trapped. On one occasion a cannister round fired into a hedgerow caused four secondary explosions.

Four ONTOS from Co "C", 1st Anti-Tank Bn, provided direct fire capability from positions on the hill mass vic AT 934633 and from 3102-1 vic 928608. The ONTOS, however, were not utilized in their mobile capacity in accord with requests from higher headquarters.

i. Logistics. The MUMMS system was instituted in Battalion Supply during the reporting period. The reconciliation resulted in the resubmission of 800 requisitions, but no significant problems were encountered in effecting the changeover. The Battalion has ample stocks of Class I, III, IV, and V items; minor shortages do exist in Class II materials. The company combat base on Hill 52 received priority on Class IV materials to aid in the improvement of positions.

Vehicular maintenance problems encountered early in the month were alleviated to some extent by the return of three of the Gen M-274's (Mules) sent to 3rd FSR. Procedural discrepancies in 1st and 2nd echelon maintenance were rectified with the aid of the FMFPac Assistance team. The logistical support capability of the battalion was temporarily hindered when two of the eight M-54 cargo trucks assigned to this organization were deployed elsewhere. On 28 May the two trucks were re-assigned to this command, thus eliminating the difficulty.

The problem of providing the continuous power necessary to maintain refrigeration of perishable foodstuffs was solved with the acquisition of a 30 KW generator.

Resupply of the company combat base on Hill 52 (AT 788553) is presently effected by helicopter and by LVT. However, a Road Survey team from the 7th Engineer Bn has investigated the possibility of opening Route 14 between Hill 65 and Hill 52 as an MSR. Results were positive and construction is planned for June.

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The movement of heavy vehicles across the SONG AI NGHIA, always a problem in the past because of the 15 ton weight limit on the DAI LOC Bridge, has been greatly facilitated by the opening of a new bridge with a weight limit of 60 tons at AT 914588.

J. Air Defense. None

K. Combat Air Support.

The 1st MAW continued to provide air support to the battalion throughout this reporting period. Fixed-wing support was minimal with 16 missions requested and 7 actually completed due to lack of TACAs. Targets included objective area preps for Operation WEBSTER and suspected VC concentrations. Radar Controlled Aerial Bombing (TPQ-10s) were used extensively by the battalion with 518 missions being requested to strike suspected VC troop concentrations and to interdict VC supply/infiltration routes.

Rotary-wing support was used primarily for resupply of the Hill 52 (ZC 215553) combat base. A total of 132, 750 pounds of supplies were moved to that position. Timely medical evacuation missions were conducted for 125 persons, including 40 Vietnamese civilians. In addition, 9 troop lifts were accomplished moving 981 troops.

L. Civil Affairs/Civic Action

The Civil Affairs program continued to progress during the reporting period. The MED CAP program internally and externally treated 4650 persons, an increase of 1600 over the month of April. In addition 40 Vietnamese were med-evaced to the DANANG civilian hospital. Refugee resettlement still remained a problem; however, 19 families were moved into refugee villages.

The LOC MY village complex successfully conducted elections on 26 May. Security was provided by Co I and no VC interference occurred.

M. Nuclear, Biological, Chemical, or other Special Types of Warfare. None.

3. Commander's Narrative of Significant Events.

(1) On 031010H, a scout-sniper team attached to Co I at AT 838552 spotted 1 VC with a weapon approximately 600 meters away at AT 837547. One round of 7.62mm was fired and the VC fell into the SONG VU GIA: the area could not be searched because of the river barrier, but the body was observed not to move. 1 VC KIA (C).

(2) On 040955H May, a Co M Sparrow Hawk, was helilifted to AT 855693 to conduct a search and destroy operation where elephants carrying heavy equipment were reported. Signs of recent elephant passage were found but no contact with the VC could be made. Co M returned at 041800H.

(3) On 042015H tanks deployed at Co L's combat base at AT 787553 fired upon and destroyed a house located at AT 791554 after 2 VC were observed through the infra red scope to enter the house. Two (2) VC KIA (P) were recorded when a search of the area on 050745H found drag marks and numerous footprints.

(4) On 051010H May, a tank maneuvering in the vicinity of Co L's combat base on Hill 52 struck a mine at ZC 214551 causing 3 USMC KIA. The tank was moderately damaged.

(5) Co K was inserted by helicopter at AT 837649 as a Bald Eagle on 251930H to exploit a reported finding by a reconnaissance unit of a large rice cache and VC activity.

(6) On 061015H May, 9 USMC riding on tanks returning to the Co M-3

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combat base at AT 923695 were wounded when a command detonated 82mm exploded in a tree. Two (2) VC were seen running from the area and were killed by small arms fire. A search of the area where the VC bodies fell produced comm wire leading to the site of the explosion.

(7) An artillery mission called in by a Co L combat patrol at AT 787553 on 061245 May killed 2 VC (P) when 1 round was observed to fall among 8 VC with weapons at ZC 197547. A search of the area could not be conducted because of a water barrier, the SONG VU GIA.

(8) On 061200H May a new boundary change was effected between 1st Marines and 7th Marines TAOR to include the "Rocket Belt". On 061400H 3rd Bn, 7th Marines received OPCON of Co I, 3rd Bn, 1st Marines, which assumed positions on Hill 41, at AT 935663.

(9) On 071700H a Co K Bald Eagle came upon 5 VC in green uniforms with weapons. The VC were taken under fire, but fled into the dense brush and jungle. A search of the area at AT 814637 found what apparently was a VC training area. The complex consisted of twenty houses with 15 ft caves nearby; pigs and chickens numbered about 100; clothing, including camouflaged utilities, anti-american propaganda and a handwritten journal was also uncovered.

(10) On 071845H an AO working with Co L spotted 6 VC with weapons flee into a cave at AT 802537. Six VC KIA (P) were recorded when 10 rounds of 90mm from tanks located on Co L's combat base had direct hits on the cave and sealed it.

(11) KC Scouts working with Co L at AT 799558 apprehended a VC on 080630H. A M-26 grenade discarded by the VC was found.

(12) Co K continuing their Bald Eagle search and destroy at AT 815631 on 080900H, uncovered a large rice cache in what appeared to be a VC staging area. Three huts were found along with bundles of black clothing and 250 rolls of black cloth, bearing Chinese markings.

(13) On 081250H, Co K Bald Eagle with a reconnaissance unit from 1st Recon Bn acting as point came under heavy automatic weapons fire from an estimated 6 VC at AT 814631. A platoon from Co K assaulted the VC positions but the VC fled and no further contact could be made. The reconnaissance unit suffered 2 KIA and 3 WIA, Co K, 1 WIA.

(14) A Med-Evac helicopter on 081335H sent to remove the reconnaissance unit casualties at AT 812631 lost power and crashed reinjuring the medevacs and two crewmen. The helicopter was destroyed.

(15) On 091615H a Co L squad combat patrol fired 7 rounds at 2 VC fleeing into the brush at AT 802545. A search of the area revealed a house with a blackboard showing the DANANG air base and the defense of the DANANG area. Pictures of planes and helicopters were sketched on the walls, along with a detailed drawing of a B.A.R.

(16) Three VC KIA (P) were recorded when an ambush was sprung by CAC-34 on a squad of VC on 092300H at AT 928704. Before the area could be searched the VC dragged the bodies away under cover of small arms fire and grenades which killed one USMC and wounded 2 others.

(17) An attempt to damage or destroy the DAI LOC Bridge at AT 913577 was effectively thwarted on 092345H. Five VC hanging onto the sides of a 10 foot boat carrying unknown equipment were taken under heavy S/A and automatic weapons fire from positions on either side of the bridge and on the center of the bridge. The boat was destroyed and sunk; the bodies of the 5 VC were observed to float downstream and could not be found.

(18) On 120730H a Co L squad reconnaissance patrol at AT 806544 directed a 81mm barrage on 4 VC with weapons on the south bank of the SONG VU GIA at AT 814542. All 4 VC appeared to have been hit but a search of the area could not be conducted because of the river barrier.

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(19) At AT 806544 a Co L squad reconnaissance patrol observed 2 VC dressed in khaki and black uniforms without weapons moving along a trail at AT 808540. Long range automatic weapons fire accounted for 1 VC KIA (P), the other fled into the brush. The VU GIA river again prevented a search.

(20) A squad reconnaissance patrol from Co L at AT 805544 observed 9 VC in khaki uniforms with weapons gathering at AT 817547 on 121845H. Calling for an 81mm fire for effect, the patrol observed 1 round impact near 5 of the VC. One VC KIA (C) was confirmed through field glasses and 4 others were apparently wounded.

(21) Two VC KIA (P) were recorded when an Co L squad successfully ambushed a small group of VC at ZC 206555 on 122330H. A search of the area was delayed when the ambush received incoming grenades. A later search revealed no bodies.

(22) Two VC KIA (P) resulted at AT 813541 when an 81mm round landed upon 2 VC with weapons fleeing. The fire mission was called in by a Co L reconnaissance patrol on 130915H at AT 806544.

(23) On 131450H Co I, 3rdBn, 1st Marines, OPCON to 3rdBn, 7th Marines conducting a search and destroy operation in the "Rocket Belt" along the SONG YEN at AT 959684 located 5 empty rocket launchers in a hole in the river.

(24) On 140155H CAC-22 at AT 865574 was assaulted from the northeast, northwest, and southeast by 3 groups of 40 Main Force/NVA. Another group of 6 attacked a bridge on the eastern portion of the of the perimeter but were driven off. Penetrations of the perimeter were made in the northwest and northeast sector under cover of 30 rounds of 60mm mortar fire, 15 rounds of 2.75 rocket fire, numerous grenades and heavy rifle and automatic weapons fire. The VC were driven off by grenades, S/A, and A/W fire. Forty rounds of 105 HE, 30 rds of 60mm, and 30 rds of 81mm illumination were fired on likely avenues of retreat. Two USMC and 4 PFs were killed; 3 USMC and 4 PFs were wounded. Numerous blood trails, bandages and grenades were found by a Co L reaction force searching the area. The VC were observed to carry off at least 10 bodies.

(25) On 140240H the Co L combat base on Hill 52 at AT 787553 received 150 rounds of S/A and A/W fire and 8 rounds of 81mm HE from VC at AT 79254. Twenty rounds of 81mm and 10 rounds of 60mm counter mortar fire were directed on the suspected target. There were no casualties.

(26) A Co L OP at AT 787554 on 141030H called 6 rds of 155mm on 3 VC displaying unknown equipment at ZC 187534. An adjusting round scored a direct hit and 3 VC KIA (P) were recorded. A search was prevented by the river barrier.

(27) At 160630H Co L observed 5 VC at AT 815543. One KIA (P) resulted when a scout-sniper fired two rounds 7.62mm.

(28) On 160715H Operation WEBSTER, a battalion(-)(Rein) operation commenced. Co L and Co K were tactically deployed by LVTs of the 1st Amtrac Bn across the SONG VU GIA at ZC 197554 and ZC 212543 to conduct search and destroy operations thru the TAM HIEP and the NGOC KINH hamlet complexes in Grid Squares ZC 2054, ZC 1954, and ZC 1955.

(29) At ZC 195555 on 161100H Co L on Operation WEBSTER engaged 4 VC with weapons at close range. A search of the area resulted in 1 VC KIA (C) and 3 VC KIA (P). 1 USMC was killed.

(30) A Co L screening patrol on the north bank of the SONG VU GIA fired upon 2 VC at AT 813543. The VC were attempting to flee Operation WEBSTER forces conducting search and destroy operations in the draws, foothills and villages along the south bank of the SONG VU GIA. A search of the area confirmed 1 VC KIA.

(31) Operation WEBSTER terminated at 181200H.

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HEADQUARTERS
7th Marines
1st Marine Division (Rein)
FPO San Francisco, California

SECTION	ACT	INFO	INITIAL
ACTING S G-3			mm
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Asst Opns O 3480			
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Asst Opns/Plns O			
WEBSTER			
INO 26 ARVN			
INO 26 BDE ROCS			

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, 1st Mar Div (Rein)
Subj: Combat After-Action Report, Operation WEBSTER
Ref: (a) 1st Mar Div O 3480.1
Encl: (1) CO 3rd Bn, 7th Mar ltr 3/EDP/dlj of 3480 dtd 23 May 1967

1. In accordance with Reference (a) the Combat After-Action Report for Operation WEBSTER, as contained in Enclosure (1), is forwarded. This Headquarters concurs with the recommendation of the Commanding Officer, 3rd Bn, 7th Mar in that additional operations should be conducted in the area west of DAI LOC and south of the SONG VU GIA.

2. It is noted that Operation WEBSTER was modified from its original plan and conducted on a lesser scale with fewer forces than planned. While no significant enemy contact was gained, the operation did provide hard evaluation of recent intelligence produced on the area contingent to a new combat base. Reliable information was also gained relative to suitable crossing sites and fording places on the SONG VU GIA; this information will prove valuable in the planning of future operations in this area.

C. C. CROSSFIELD

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

3/EDP/alj
3480
23 May 1967

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, 7th Marines

Subj: Combat After-Action Report, Operation WEBSTER

Ref: (a) DivO 3480.1

7thMar S&C Log Nr.

0374-67 Copy # 4046

1. Code Name. Operation WEBSTER
2. Dates of Operation. 160715H to 181200H May 1967
3. Location. DAI LOC, DUC DUC, and THUONG DUC Districts, QUANG NAM Province, RVN.
4. Control or Command Headquarters. Third Battalion, Seventh Marines
5. Task Organization. Third Battalion, Seventh Marines

H&S Co(-)

Command Group Alpha

Co L(Rein)

CAPT PIATT

Tm, Co C, 1st Engr Bn
Tm, Scout Sniper Plt, 7th Marines
H&S Tm, 1st Shore Party Bn
FO Tm, Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Mar
FAC Tm, 3rd Bn, 7th Marines

3rd Bn. 7th Mar. Log No

732-67 Copy # 4047

SEP 13-67

Co K(Rein)

CAPT JONES

Tm, Co C, 1st Engr Bn
Tm, Scout Sniper Plt, 7th Marines
H&S Tm, 1st Shore Party Bn
FO Tm, Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Mar

6. Supporting Forces.

a. 1st MAW provided air support, which included one period of troop cover by UH-1H gunships, missions by aerial observation aircraft, and nine fixed-wing attack missions. The aerial observers were efficient and effective both in visual observation and TACA capacities. During the first day, fixed wing preparatory strikes were plagued by duds; during the remaining one and one-half days they were hampered by delays and mission diversions. The strikes which were conducted, however, were effective and provided excellent target coverage. Rotary-wing logistic support and troop lifts were planned for the initial concept of operations, but were cancelled due to a lack of aircraft availability. There was negative bomb damage assessment in several instances, though air was credited with structural damage to fortified hamlet areas and at least 4 VC KIA (P).

b. Armor. From positions on Hill 52, ZC 215553, a light section of tanks of 1st Plt, Co B, 1st Tank Bn, provided direct fire support capability for maneuvering elements on and across the SONG VU GIA. 1st Bt(-), Co A, 3rd Amph Bn played an important role in the concept of operations. The LVT's provided field commanders with rapid overland and waterborne movement to and from the objective area, in addition to serving as resupply carriers. River reconnaissance patrols were also conducted in coordination with search and destroy operations of ground forces. Some difficulties, however, were encountered with mud banks and sandbars while searching for suitable river crossing areas.

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c. Artillery Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Marines and Btry K, 4th Bn, 11th Marines on Hill 65 vic AT 884578 provided the D/S artillery fires. Twenty observed fire missions effectively provided preparatory fires for battalion and company objectives. Extensive H&I fires were plotted on suspected VC supply routes as well as on possible mortar sites. No on-call or close defensive fire missions were utilized. Communications and reaction time on missions was facilitated by the displacement of a forward FSCG to a position on Hill 52.

7. Intelligence.

a. Anticipated VC Strength, Location, and Disposition in Objective Area.

(1) It was anticipated that up to one company of Local Force VC (Reinforced with Main Force) would be located in the objective area. Frequent intelligence gathered by THUONG DUC CIDG Camp placed two-to-five enemy platoons in the NGOC KINH hamlet complex.

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

(1) The concept to Operation WEBSTER was based on the intelligence reports from THUONG DUC CIDG Camp in addition to continuous indications from small arms fire from the objective area, flashlights and movement at night, TPQ-10s and H&I fires which produced secondary explosions.

c. VC Strength and Disposition Encountered.

(1) During the operation there were no encounters with Main Force VC and only three incidents involving local VC snipers.

d. VC Units Identified.

(1) None

(2) Documents captured were not Local Force or a Main Force nature. They pertained to tax collection and lists of villagers in the objective area who were paying taxes to the local Viet Cong infrastructure.

(3) Interrogations of villagers did not reveal any unit designation. In one case, however, villagers stated that in the hamlet of MINH TAN (1) AT 825542 there were 3 VC in the hamlet on the morning of the 18 May, they were reportedly wearing sandals, black pajamas, and rain hats, each with a red star and yellow background, and who were armed with M-16 rifles.

e. Significant Intelligence Gained.

(1) The hamlets in the objective area were literally deserted and there was no indication of indigenous personnel attempting to work the farmland. Most of the fruits such as bananas, melons had been stripped of the hamlet areas.

(2) There were no new fortifications encountered. Fortifications consisted mainly of fighting holes and trench systems. Previous bombings have destroyed most of the houses and bomb shelters and there were no indications that the fighting holes and trench systems had been recently used. In one case, however, a trench that extended from AT 813542 to approx AT 817542 showed continuous use, there was little or no vegetation growing in it. Fighting holes were prevalent along each and every trail and were spaced from five to six feet apart.

(3) There were only two or three old bunkers encountered which were destroyed. Five to six small caves were discovered in the vicinity of the stream and trail junction at AT 802538. One cave was discovered at AT 805538 that indicated signs of recent occupation.

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(4) It is felt that the VC are using mountain streams in the objective area as harboring sites. Exploitation and verification of this, however, could not be accomplished due to the amount of terrain to be covered in a short period of time with limited forces. The trails at the base of the hills were not well used indicating that the VC are not utilizing trails due to almost continuous observation from OPs and that they are probably using stream beds and foliage as their primary means of travel.

(5) One captured document gave the name of a VC informant employed in the DaNANG area. This information has been passed to proper authority for action.

f. Terrain.

(1) Critical Terrain. Hill 52 (Co L Combat Base) and hills south of the objective area were considered key terrain. Without an outpost or observation post established in the hills of south of the river, the Viet Cong apparently have freedom of movement and can observe all friendly operations and movement conducted in this area. The hills of the objective area in the vic GS AT 8053-8153-8253-8252 were also considered key terrain. These hills, though they do not provide good concealment, should be considered as a potential site for the establishment of a new combat base.

(2) Observation & Fields of Fire (See para 1). The hamlet complexes offer excellent observation and fields of fire for VC units. It is impossible to navigate the SONG VU GIA and adjacent open rice fields to enter their hamlet area without being detected during daylight hours.

(3) Cover and Concealment. The hamlets and hill areas south of the objective offer excellent cover and concealment. VC can move forces throughout the vegetated areas with little danger of being observed.

(4) Obstacles. Natural obstacles were the SONG VU GIA and natural hedgerows. Man-made obstacles were barbed wire, bamboo fences, and punji pits which tended to channelize movement into each hamlet.

(5) Avenues of Approach. There were no main avenues of approach to the objective area. There were, however, two established crossing points on the SONG VU GIA for LVTs at ZC 205553 and from AT 828548-AT 830551. Mud on the soft banks and a strong four or five knot current carried the Amtracs offcourse and onto sandbars. The LVT's crossing of the SONG VU GIA in GS AT 8254 proved to be excellent and should be exploited by armor in any future operation on the southern river bank.

(6) The heavily vegetated foothills and draws vic GS 7953, GS 8053, and GS 8153 offer the VC good covered and concealed supply and infiltration routes.

e. Weather.

(1) There was no inclement weather during the operation. The high temperatures, however, did result in eight heat exhaustion BB casualties.

8. MISSION.

The original mission was as follows.

3rd Bn(-)(Rein), 7th Marines conducts search and destroy operations of hamlets along south side of SONG VU GIA, southwest of Hill 52. It was enlarged to include a reconnaissance-in-force of the draws and foothills southeast of Hill 52 along the south bank of the SONG VU GIA, and a recon for river crossings in the vicinity of the objective area.

9. Concept of Operations. 3rd Bn(-)(Rein), 7th Marines executes riverine assault aboard LVTs to the hamlet complexes southwest of Hill 52, along south bank of SONG VU GIA. Co K lands at ZC 212543 and conducts search and destroy operations westward through Objectives BRAVO, NGOC KINH (1), vic ZC 204543. Co L lands at ZC 197554 and conducts search and destroy operations westward through objective DELTA, TA HIEP, vic ZC 195550. Co K and Co L move on order to conduct parallel search and destroy operations westward thru Objective ALPHA, NGOC KINH (2), vic ZC 198542, and Objective CHARLIE, the hamlet complex, vic ZC 190544. On order companies retrace axis of

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advance conducting river and land reconnaissance of areas in GS ZC 2153, AT 7953, 8053, and 8153. Co L displaces by LVT to company combat base on Hill 52; Co K displaces by LVT to Hill 65.

NOTE: The original concept of operations involved the use of helicopter assault to block VC escape routes. Due to the inavailability of rotary-wing support, however, a modification utilizing LVTs was ordered. The operations was planned on or about 1 May 1967.

10. EXECUTION.

a. D-Day, 16 May 1967. Co K and the Alpha Command Group departed the Bn CP at 160715H by truck to Hill 65 where they boarded LVTs and displaced to Hill 52. Security for the LVTs was provided by tanks, one of which struck a mine at AT 815549; no casualties were sustained and the tank was towed back to Hill 65. After artillery preparation fires were conducted, Co K executed a crossing by LVTs of the SONG VU GIA south of Hill 52 and landed at ZC 212543 at 161030H. Parallel search and destroy operations were conducted. Objective DELTA the hamlet complex centered at ZC 195550, and Objective BRAVO, the hamlet complex centered at ZC 190544, was searched by Co L late on the afternoon of the 16 May. Co K established control over objective BRAVO at 161600H. The battalion(-) established night defensive positions in the LAP THUAN hamlet complex at ZC 185538 after linking up at 161700H with THUONG DUC CIDG blocking forces at ZC 183549. Co K had negative enemy contact during the day. One detainee, however, was apprehended when an M-26 grenade was found in his home. Co L had light contact, with VC snipers. Brief firefights at close range resulted in 1 VC KIA (C) and 3 VC KIA (P) and 1 USMC KIA. Blood trails and one body were found when the area was searched at ZC 194551. Three Vietnamese were detained when they were apprehended carrying wet, muddy bloodstained clothing. CIDG forces reported that they had uncovered a large rice cache and small hand grenade factory at ZC 186532.

b. D-1, 17 May 1967. Co L retraced its axis of advance of 16 May through objectives CHARLIE and DELTA. Co K retraced its axis of advance of 16 May through objectives ALPHA and BRAVO. Co K also conducted reconnaissance-in-force patrols in the foothills and draws along the south bank of the SONG VU GIA east of the N-S Grid Line 79. Co L moved thru Co K at 171200H and conducted security patrols in the MINH TAN (1) hamlet, vic AT 825542 with negative contact. The units consolidated night defensive positions on the hill mass at AT 810538. The only contact occurred when a Co L patrol on the north bank of the river took 2 VC under fire at long range. A search of the area at AT 813543 produced 1 VC KIA (C). Co K uncovered a large cave that showed signs of recent occupation at AT 805538. The cave, which was 40 feet deep, 6 feet long, and 3 feet wide, was destroyed. There was no enemy contact at night.

c. D-2, 18 May 1967. Co L at 181030H executed a crossing of the SONG VU GIA by LVT to Hill 52. Co K with the Alpha Command Group conducted river reconnaissance and security patrols. Contact was made by Co K at AT 824541 on 180950H with three VC carrying packs and rifles. The VC immediately broke contact and fled east. A search of the area produced 1 detainee who upon interrogation, admitted to warning the 3 VC that the USMC were approaching. A search of the detainee's house uncovered medical supplies and a VC tax collection record. Co K displaced to the north banks of the SONG VU GIA by LVT at 181200H. At 181600H CIDG forces searching the Operation WEBSTER objective areas found 5 graves at ZC 186543. Air and artillery were reported by a local refugee to have accounted for the killing of the five VC. Operation WEBSTER terminated at 181200H.

11. Results.

a. Personnel

(1) Friendly Losses

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(a) KIA-1

(b) WIA-0

(c) NBC-8

(2) Enemy Losses

(a) KIA (C)-7

(b) KIA (P)-3

(c) Detainees-5

b. Fortifications and Equipment Destroyed.

(1) CIDG forces destroyed 3 recently occupied caves in the hamlet at ZC 186532 on 161700H and also destroyed ~~what~~ what appeared to be a small tool and forging work, apparently used to make hand grenades and detonating devices.

(2) Co K found 1 M-26 hand grenade on a detainee at ZC 198543 on 171240H.

(3) Co K found and destroyed a 40 X 6 X 3 cave at AT 805538 on 17-1400H.

(4) Co K searched a detainee's house at AT 823541 on 180905H uncovering VC medical equipment including pills, battle dressings, and a plasma bottle. A letter describing the amount of rice paid to the VC was also found.

12. Administration Matters. Administrative planning was ~~thorough~~ and detailed.

a. Supply. All resupply during the operation was by LVT. Prior to the operation water and rations were stockpiled at Hill 52, and were drawn as needed. Troops carried a prescribed load of 3 MCIs, two canteens of water and a BA of ammunition.

b. Maintenance. No significance problem areas were encountered with tracked vehicles.

c. Treatment of Casualties. Med evac for the USMC KIA and the 8 heat casualties was adequate.

d. Transportation

Co K and the Alpha Command Group were trucked to Hill 65 at 160715H. Special roadsweeps by Co C, 1st Engr and Co K, 1st Engr enabled the MSRs to be opened early for the movement. Ten (10) LVTs were utilized to move Co K and the Alpha Command Group overland to Hill 52. The LVTs were then deployed to cross the SONG VU GIA. Retraction was also by LVTs to Hill 65 and then by truck for the return of Co K and the Alpha Command Group to the respective combat bases.

e. Communications. A radio relay was established on Hill 65 and no serious problems were encountered.

f. Medical Evaluation. See 12 c.

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

a. The original concept of operation for Operation WEBSTER was for a two company vertical envelopment to the western periphery of the objective area.

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Helicopter insertions at this position would have enabled the maneuvering forces to utilize the natural obstacle of the SONG VU GIA to its full advantage by cordoning off any enemy forces. This concept had to be modified when sufficient helicopters were not available for an expeditious troop lift. Amphibious tractors, each carrying approximately 25 troops, did provide a reasonably fast movement across the river, but once ashore troop movement through the heavy undergrowth and destroyed hamlets was quite slow.

b. In late April, a new Company Combat Base was established at Hill 52 (AT 788553), a hill mass strategically located in the north side of the SONG VU GIA. Since the establishment of this forward operating base; the unit had continually reported sightings to its northwest, west and southwest. These daily reports indicated a substantial amount of movement was being accomplished by guerilla/hard core insurgent forces. On the night of 14 April, Co I positions on Hill 52 received 82mm mortar fire and several hundred rounds of small arms fire. This VC activity indicated offensive action was necessary to effectively evaluate the immediate potential VC threat to Co I's position. This operation, although not one of any military significance did achieve two accomplishments.

(1) The extensive intelligence available in this area, was found to be over rated, since little or no recent activity was noted in the objective area. The knowledge gained from this operation i.e., the lack of an immediate threat to Hill 52, allowed the battalion to completely realign its established combat bases and operational forces to better support the SOR.

(2) The SONG VU GIA was found to fordable for amphibious vehicles in several places and crossable to tanks in at least one position. This latter crossing capability could, and should, play a major role in any future operations scheduled in the GORDON/INDEPENDENCE areas.

c. Since the objective area was almost completely deserted no comment has to be made as to actions taken with non-combatants.

15. Recommendations.

a. That amphibious tractors and tanks be included in any future operations planned for the GORDON/INDEPENDENCE areas on the south side of the SONG VU GIA.

b. That continuous short duration operation be conducted in the INDEPENDENCE/GORDON area. This offensive action will proportionately reduce VC movement and any immediate threat to the DAI LOC Sub-Sector.

J. D. Counselman
J. D. COUNSELMAN

Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps
Commanding

Task Organization of 3rd Bn (Rein), 7th Marines

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Base: Hotel

Task Organization, 7th Marines

H&S Co(-)
 4th Sect, 81mm Mort Plt, H&S Co
 2nd Bn, 7th Marines
 Det, 3rd Bn, 11th Marines (ARTY Ln)
 Det, 3rd Bn, 11th Marines (NGF Ln)
 Det, Hq Bn
 Det, 9th IFT, FMF
 Det, 7th CTF, FMF
 Det, CivAffs Unit (AA)
 Sqd, MP Co
 Det, MASS 3
 Det, 7th Comm Bn (RR Tm)
 Det, Scout Sniper Plt, 7th Marines
 Ctr Plt (Rein), Co D, 1st Med Bn
 Co C(-), 1st SP Bn
 2nd Plt(-), C Co, 1st Engr Bn
 LSA, FLSG-BRAVO
 3rd Plt, B Co, 1st Antitank Bn

LT RICHARDS

I (REIN)

1st Tm
 Det, HST, C Co, 1st SP Bn
 1st Tm, Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Marines
 1st Tm, 81mm Mort Plt, H&S Co
 1st Tm, 2nd Plt, C Co, 1st Engr Bn
 1st Sect, 81mm Mort Plt, H&S Co
 1st Sect, 106mm Plt, H&S Co
 1st Hq Btry, 3rd Bn, 11th Marines (NGF Spot Tm)

CAPT CLARK

II (REIN)

1st Tm
 Det, HST, Co C, 1st SP Bn
 1st Tm, 81mm Mort Plt, H&S Co
 1st Tm, Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Marines
 1st Tm, 2nd Plt, C Co, 1st Engr Bn
 1st Hq Btry, 3rd Bn, 11th Marines
 1st Spot Tm)

LT JONES

III (Rein)

1st Tm
 Det, HST, C Co, 1st SP Bn
 1st Tm, 81mm Mort Plt, H&S Co
 1st Tm, Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Marines
 1st Tm, 2nd Plt, C Co, 1st Engr Bn
 1st Hq Btry, 3rd Bn, 11th Marines
 1st Spot Tm)
 1st Sect, 3rd Plt, B Co, 1st Antitank Bn

CAPT PLATT

IV (Rein)

1st Tm
 Det, HST, C Co, 1st SP Bn
 1st Tm, 81mm Mort Plt, H&S Co
 1st Tm, Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Marines
 1st Tm, 2nd Plt, C Co, 1st Engr Bn

CAPT ROSS

II, 2nd Bn, 7th Marines

1st Tm, HST, C Co, 1st SP Bn
 1st Tm, 81mm Mort Plt, H&S 2/7
 1st Tm, Btry H, 3rd Bn, 11th Marines
 1st Tm, 2nd Plt, C Co, 1st Engr Bn

CAPT WILSON

Btry I, 3rd Bn, 11th Marines

Btry I
 Plt, Btry K, 4th Bn, 11th Marines
 Plt, Whiskey Btry, 3rd Bn, 11th Marines

CAPT MORGAN

Enclosure (2)

