

SECRET**AFTER ACTION
LANCASTER TROUSDALE
LANCASTER TROUSDALE
NORTH**00589-68
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30 MARCH 1968	SEC FILE
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**27 AUGUST -
8 OCTOBER 1968**

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1 Mar Regt.
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HEADQUARTERS
9th Marines
3d Marine Division (Rein), FMF
FPO San Francisco, 96602

3/JBK:jef

3100

26 Oct 68

SER: 003032-68

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, Third Marine Division (Rein), FMF
Via: Commanding General, Task Force Hotel
Subj: Combat After Action Report
Ref: (a) Maps: Vietnam 1:50,000 AMS Series L7014, Sheets 6342 I, II, III, and IV.
(b) CG, 3d Mar Div Concept of Operation Msg 141322 Aug 68.
(c) CG, Task Force Hotel Warning Order Msg 140151Z Aug 68.
(d) CG, Task Force Hotel Operation Order 9-68.
(e) CG, Task Force Hotel Operation Order 12-68.
(f) CG, Task Force Hotel Operation Order 13-68.
(g) 9th Mar Frag 0 77-68.
(h) 9th Mar Frag 0 78-68.
(i) 9th Mar Frag 0 79-68.
(j) 9th Mar Frag 0 80-68.
(k) 9th Mar Frag 0 81-68.
(l) 9th Mar Frag 0 82-68.
(m) 9th Mar Frag 0 83-68.
(n) 9th Mar Frag 0 84-68.
(o) 9th Mar Frag 0 85-68.

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- (p) 9th Mar Frag 0 86-68.
- (q) 9th Mar Frag 0 87-68.
- (r) 9th Mar Frag 0 88-68.
- (s) 9th Mar Frag 0 89-68.
- (t) 9th Mar Frag 0 90-68.
- (u) 9th Mar Frag 0 91-68.
- (v) 9th Mar Frag 0 92-68.
- (w) 9th Mar Frag 0 93-68.
- (x) 9th Mar Frag 0 94-68.
- (y) 9th Mar Frag 0 95-68.
- (z) 9th Mar Frag 0 96-68.
- (aa) 9th Mar Frag 0 97-68.
- (bb) 9th Mar Frag 0 98-68.
- (cc) 9th Mar Frag 0 99-68.
- (dd) 9th Mar Frag 0 100-68.
- (ee) 9th Mar Frag 0 101-68.
- (ff) 9th Mar Frag 0 102-68.
- (gg) 9th Mar Frag 0 103-68.
- (hh) 9th Mar Frag 0 104-68.
- (ii) 9th Mar Frag 0 105-68.
- (jj) 9th Mar Frag 0 106-68.
- (kk) 9th Mar Frag 0 107-68.
- (ll) 9th Mar Frag 0 108-68.

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Encl: ✓(1) 9th Marines TROUSDALE NORTH: Boundary effective 181500H Aug 68 overlay, Annex A (Operation Overlay) to Frag Order 92-68; ~~✓~~9th Marines A² effective 312400H, Aug 68 Overlay; ~~✓~~9th Marines A² effective 312400H, Sep 68 Overlay; and Annex A to Frag O. 101-68.

1. Code Name. Operation LANCASTER TROUSDALE/TROUSDALE NORTH.
2. Date of Operation. 271005H Aug to 080945H Oct 68.
3. Location. Northwestern QUANG TRI Province and within the southern boundary of the DMZ.
4. Task Organization.

9th Marines (Rein)	Col BARROW
1st Bn, 9th Mar	LtCol COLLETON (27 Aug-28 Sep)
2nd Bn, 9th Mar	Maj DINNEGER (29-30 Sep 68)
3d Bn, 9th Mar	LtCol SMITH (1-8 Oct 68)
Co A, 1st Plt, 3d MT Bn	LtCol KNIGHT (27 Aug-15 Sep)
2nd Bn, 26th Mar	Maj SISLEY (16 Sep-8 Oct 68)
1st Bn, 4th Mar	LtCol LAMONTAGNE
2nd Bn, 3d Mar	Capt FLOOD
2nd Bn, 12th Mar	LtCol SPARKS
Co C, 3d Engr Bn	LtCol GALBRAITH
	LtCol DAVIS (27 Aug-22 Sep)
	LtCol CHEN (23 Sep)
	LtCol SCOPPA
	Lt RICE (27 Aug-20 Sep)
	Capt MILLS (21 Sep-8 Oct)

5. Supporting Forces.

- a. Direct Support and General Support Units.

- (1) 12th Marines - General Support
 - (a) See artillery (paragraph 5B)
- (2) 2nd Bn, 12th Marines - Direct Support
 - (a) See artillery (paragraph 5B)
- (3) Co C, 3d Engineer Battalion - Direct Support.
 - (a) Company "C", 3d Engineer Battalion provided close combat support for the 9th Marines Regt (Rein) during Operation LANCASTER TROUSDALE and LANCASTER TROUSDALE NORTH.

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Support consisted of construction of fire support bases, landing zones, destruction of enemy bunker complexes, disposal of enemy ordnance and various other engineer tasks. During the operation it is estimated that over 26,095 lbs of explosives were utilized. This operation also introduced the use of helicopter transportable tractors (Case 450 model) for the construction of fire support bases.

(4) 3d Motor Transport Battalion - General Support.

(a) First Platoon, Company A, Third Motor Transport Battalion is in direct support of the 9th Marines. This Platoon provided vehicles for tactical and administrative troop movements, resupply and "household" commitments as required. Additional vehicles on a "as required" basis were provided by Third Marine Division Motor Transport Battalion. Support has been satisfactory.

b. Artillery and Fire Support Coordination.

(1) Artillery Support.

(a) Artillery support during Operation LANCASTER TROUSDALE/LANCASTER TROUSDALE NORTH was provided by 2nd Bn, 12th Marines (Rein) which was in Direct Support of the 9th Marines (Rein). General Support and reinforcing fires were provided by the 12th Marines. Centralized tactical and technical fire direction was employed throughout the operation. Computation of firing data was primarily manual due to failure of the FADAC generator. Over 90% of all fires were high angle due to the mountainous terrain and jungle canopy.

(b) A total of 61,135 rounds of artillery ammunition were expended as follows:

105	54,920
107	2,284
155	3,707
8"	224

(c) Artillery preparations and adjust fire missions were delivered in support of infantry operations. Other fires included an active program of harassing fires, mortar suppression, artillery suppression, and flak suppression programs. Additionally an Arc Light back-up preparation was planned and fired.

(d) Direct Support artillery was positioned at FSB LE JEUNE, FSB BLACK, FSB SANDY, FSB BIRD, FSB WINCHESTER, and THON SON LAM. General Support and Reinforcing artillery was positioned at FSB WINCHESTER, FSB BIRD, FSB PETE and

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THON SON LAM. Position areas were selected to enable all firing units to fire into the DMZ in support of the 9th Marines.

(e) The 2nd Bn, 12th Marines (Rein) at one time included five 105mm Howitzer Batteries and two 155mm Howitzer Batteries, all positioned on FSBs and all dependent upon helicopter support. Reinforcing fires were provided by a platoon of 8" Howitzer and a platoon of 155 Guns. 2nd Bn, 12th Marines Headquarters was located near the 9th Marines Headquarters, initially at VCB and subsequently at FSB WINCHESTER

(2) Fire Support Coordination.

(a) Fire Support Coordination Centers were maintained at each infantry battalion. Clearance of fires and control of integrated air and artillery missions was accomplished at the 9th Marines FSCC. When practical, control was passed to lower levels using "At my Command" method of control. Sav-a-planes information was passed to TF HOTEL. Blanket Sav-a-planes were obtained to enable artillery units positioned at FSB BIRD, FSB PETE, and THON SON LAM to fire through 3d Marines airspace into the 9th Marines AO with minimum delay. Fire Support Coordination was complicated by the number of units supported and by the scheme of maneuver. Up to six infantry battalions were employed at one time and convergence of forces dictated that some missions be fired that were "Danger Close" to elements of two infantry battalions at one time. Although span of control was strained with six maneuver elements, it was considered more effective from an FSC viewpoint to maintain control by one regimental headquarters thereby facilitating the clearance of fires within a reasonable time frame, than to place two regimental headquarters under a Task Force which inherently results in long delays.

(e) Air Support.

(1) Fixed Wing Support.

(a) Attack air contributed significantly to the success of the operation. Most noteworthy was the excellent to outstanding response by "scramble air". "Scramble air" was utilized extensively to cover those targets not hit because pre-planned air assets were not available in sufficient quantity. Attack air was used in the preparation of five landing zones and against numerous ground targets. AO coverage and tactical air control were excellent. TPQ coverage was considered less than adequate. During the period of 17 Sep to 8 Oct 68, a total of 243 TPQ strikes were requested and only 105 targets struck.

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There were four TPQ drops within this same period, which were off target and landed within close proximity (500 meters) of friendlies. Other Fixed Wing Support consisted of Arc Light drops, flare ship support and C-117 "Spooky" missions.

(b) A total of 299 close air support missions were flown. BDA is listed as follows:

- 13 KBA (confirmed)
- 13 KBA (probable)
- 1 Truck and revetment destroyed
- 107 Bunkers destroyed
- 15 Bunkers damaged
- 30 meters of trench line destroyed
- 12 Structures destroyed
- 2 A/W positions destroyed
- 2 Rocket positions destroyed
- 7 Fighting holes destroyed
- 35 Secondary explosions
- 9 Secondary fires

(c) A total of 159 TPQ missions were flown during the period of 27 Aug- 8 Oct 68, expending 330 tons of ordnance. One extremely large secondary was observed on the only reported BDA.

(d) Tactical air observers flew 266 missions, flying 400 hours in support.

(e) C-130 and C-117 flare ships flew 22 support missions.

(f) C-117 "Spooky" gunships flew 9 support missions resulting in one secondary explosion.

(g) 14 Arc Light missions were flown.

(2) Helicopter Support.

(a) Tactical and logistical helicopter support was outstanding. Other helicopter support consisted of Medevac missions, EH-1E gunships in an attack role and limited C & C support. Helicopter utilization is shown below.

524	CH-46
61	CH-53
12	CH-47
5	CH-54
77	UH-34
286	UH-1E

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(b) A total of 6,210 troops, 9 artillery batteries and attendant logistical supplies were lifted during this operation.

(c) A total of 136 Medevac missions were flown evacuating 894 personnel. 20 of these missions were flown at night evacuating 67 personnel.

(d) UH-1E gunships flew 16 attack missions resulting in two secondary explosions.

(3) Recommendations.

(a) That C&C aircraft be more readily available to the requesting ground commander. This requirement is indispensable where units are widely separated.

(b) That more pre-planned flights of attack air be allotted on an operation of this magnitude.

(c) That a diligent effort be maintained to eliminate human and mechanical errors in the execution of TPQ missions.

6. Intelligence.

a. Estimate of enemy situation prior to operations.

(1) Intelligence indicated that the 320th NVA Division had recovered from its severe losses of Spring 1968 and had moved from North Vietnam to the Central DMZ area. Its command and control elements, division headquarters, probably remained North of the BEN HAI River while infantry battalions of the 64th Regiment operated to the South and in the vicinity of the 9th Marines AO. Additionally, elements of the 52nd Regiment were known to be operating in the projected AO, while the 48th Regiment was unlocated and probably in a reinforcing position in the DMZ. Noteworthy is that the area of operations, long unpenetrated by Allied Forces, was thought to contain large caches of ammunition and supplies propositioned for a monsoon offensive.

b. Enemy Units Identified during the operation.

(1) Captured documents indicated that elements of the following units had been or were operating in the NUI TIA PONG and NUI BA LAM areas: the 308th, 320th, 325th and the 325th NVA Divisions. Of those the 320th Division was confirmed.

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The others probably had been in and through the area in the past and had merely left evidence of their passage. POWs captured displayed a uniform lack of knowledge of their unit; however, interrogation and other related sources proved conclusively the presence of the 320th Division. It now appears that the operation itself interrupted the process of relief of the 52nd Regiment by the 48th Regiment.

c. Intelligence Sources.

(1) Intelligence sources prior to and during the operation were APD, SLAR and IR; target lists from PIU, intelligence reports, POW interrogations and document translations from the 3d Mtn Div.

d. Contacts.

(1) Contacts during the operation were numerous and characterized chiefly by brief, intense engagements with enemy rearguard elements as friendly units moved along the razor backed ridgelines. Usually, the contact took place in areas where enemy supply caches were later discovered, and took the form of command detonated DH-10 mines followed by small arms, A/W/RMS fire and mortar fire. The enemy broke contact when the massive weight of supporting arms was brought to bear, suffering heavy casualties in each contact.

e. Terrain and Weather.

(1) The terrain is characterized by densely jungled, sharply contoured mountains. Double and triple canopy is prevalent throughout the area of operations. The monsoon and rain, totaling up to 25 inches during one 4 day period, hampered to some extent friendly operations. Low cloud cover and high mountain peaks combined to make resupply difficult at times.

7. Mission.

a. LANCASTER TROUSDALE. At L-Hour on D-Day, 9th Marines conducts a battalion heliborne assault in the LANCASTER II AO to seek out and destroy the enemy, his supply caches and infiltration facilities while concurrently evaluating the effectiveness of the Arc Light strikes.

b. LANCASTER TROUSDALE NORTH. At L-Hour on D-Day, 9th Marines conducts a two battalion heliborne assault south of the BEN HAI River supported by a one battalion ground attack north from the CAM LO River, to seek out and destroy the enemy, his supply caches and infiltration routes while concurrently

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evaluating the effectiveness of the Arc Light strikes; two presently committed infantry battalions continue clearing operations in the southern and western portion of the 9th Marines AO in order to find fix, destroy or capture the enemy and his supplies.

8. Concept of Operations. In Operation LANCASTER TROUSDALE, two battalions conduct a heliborne assault into the NUI TIA PONG and NUI BA LAO areas northwest of THON SON LAM. Emphasis is placed on extensive search and destroy operations both in the high and low ground. Subsequent to the initial landings, a third battalion is inserted further north, in the area of operations, to exploit that sector.

With the expanding of LANCASTER TROUSDALE to LANCASTER TROUSDALE NORTH, two battalions conduct a heliborne assault into the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), just south of the BEN HAI River and immediately attack south. A total of 6 battalions are involved and the 4 remaining work extensively in assigned AO's just below the DMZ.

Heavy artillery prep fires are scheduled in and around the proposed landing zones in the DMZ as well as six Arc Lights. One hour after the final Arc Light, the first flight of helicopters will touch down with the initial wave of troops. Maximum attention is placed on use of supporting arms in conjunction with ground contact, finding and fixing the enemy, his lines of communications, munitions and supply caches, evaluation of Arc Lights, and construction of landing zones and fire support bases (FSB).

With the enlarged scope of the operation and the large number of battalions plus supporting units involved, the 9th Marines Command Post will displace to a forward location to enhance control and communications.

9. Execution.

22 August 9th Marines Operation Order 9-68 promulgated the operation. Originally scheduled to start 25 Aug, commenced 27 Aug.

27 August At 0810H, 9th Marines assumed OPCON of 2/9. At 1005H, Operation LANCASTER TROUSDALE commenced as G/2/9 was helilifted into LZ MARS. Helilift completed at 1105H. At 1132H, H/2/9 helilift into LZ LEO completed. No contact. At 1300H, 9th Marines assumed OPCON M, I/3/9. At 1345H, E/2/9 helilift into LZ ARIES vicinity XD 915546 received heavy ground fire. 1 CH-46 shot down in LZ ARIES. Two other CH-46's received battle damage.

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27 Aug No casualties. At 1420H, remainder of 2/9 helilift completed into LZ LEO. At 1435H, E/2/9 in LZ ARIES, while using UH-1E gunships in an attempt to suppress enemy fire received a pod of rockets in their perimeter from a gunship. Results 2 USMC KIA and 2 USMC WIAE. At 1547H, 1/9 helilift into LZ MOON and EARTH commenced. At 1729H, 1/9 helilift completed with no contact.

28 Aug At 1500H, K/3/9 was chopped OPCON 3/9.

29 Aug At 0915H, Bravo Command Group and E, H/2/9 commenced helilift from LZ LEO to LZ KRYPTON. Completed at 1045H. At 1200H, I/3/9 chopped OPCON TF HOTEL.

31 Aug At 1055H, flying crane delivering bulldozer at FSB SANDY, vic XD 910564, failed to locate dozer correctly on LZ. Dozer rolled down side of mountain approximately 75 meters. The dozer is inoperable at this time, and requires major repairs. At 1105H, F/2/9, vic XD 895538, made contact with unknown size enemy force. Following massive artillery and air preps the enemy position was assaulted. Resulting in 1 USMC KIA, 16 USMC WIAE, 1 USMC WIAE, 20 NVA KIA, 6 IWC and 3 CSWC.

01 Sep At 0700H, H/2/9 squad patrol, made contact with approximately 10 NVA vic XD 923552. They returned S/A fire and adjusted 81mm mortars. Results as follows: 1 USMC KIA, 6 USMC WIAE, 1 USMC WIAE and 5 NVA KIA. At 1630H, G/2/9, vic XD 857538, point elements received 1 chicom grenade and saw 1 NVA. They returned S/A fire and called in 81mm mortars. Results: 3 USMC WIAE.

02 Sep At 1730H, E/2/9 vic XD 910564 received 21 82mm rounds. Results: 23 USMC WIAE. At 1800H, M/3/9 chopped OPCON to TF HOTEL who passed OPCON to CG, 3d Mar Div. At 1930H, TF HOTEL assumed OPCON of K/3/9 from CG, 3d Mar Div and passed OPCON to 4th Mar same DTG.

03 Sep At 0745H, H/2/9 patrol vic XD 924549 engaged 3 NVA with S/A. Results 1 NVA KIA. At 1800H chopped OPCON A/1/9 to TF HOTEL. At 1800H, assumed OPCON K/3/9 from TF HOTEL.

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05 Sep At 1245H, G/2/9 vicinity XD 879537 while checking out a trail found 2 NVA KIA approximately 3 to 4 days old.

06 Sep At 1730H, assumed OPCON M/3/9 from TF HOTEL.

07 Sep 2/9 established new LZ's, vicinity XD 909537 designated LZ NEPTUNE and vicinity XD 886537, designated LZ URANUS. At 1100H, G/2/9 vicinity XD 882537 while searching and destroying bunkers, a marine tripped a booby trap resulting in 2 USMC WI

08 Sep C/1/9(-), helilift from LZ LEJEUNE to LZ PLUTO, was completed at 1000H and at same DTG C/1/9 chopped OPCON to 2/9. At 1310H, H/2/9, vicinity XD 912562, received 10 rounds 122mm rockets and 20 82mm mortar rounds. The rounds impacted within the lines causing 9 USMC WIAE. An AO on station observed one enemy position and controlled fixed wing and artillery.

09 Sep At 0945H, G/2/9 patrol, vicinity XD 873537, tripped one command detonated mine and received sniper fire. Results: 2 USMC WIAE. At 0950H, helilift of 3/9 to LZ WINCHESTER commenced and was completed at 1155H. At 1000H, assumed OPCON of A/1/9 from TF HOTEL. At 1100H, L/3/9, vicinity XD 904588, received S/A fire and RPG's. They returned S/A fire. Results: 2 NVA KIA. At 1130H, E/2/9 patrol, vicinity XD 885572, tripped a command detonated mine and received S/A fire. The patrol returned S/A fire and adjusted artillery on the enemy position. Results: 1 USMC KIA, 3 USMC WIAE AND 9 NVA KIA. At 1419H, K/3/9 vicinity XD 897597, was fired upon by an Army gunship. The fire appeared to come from the right door gun. The gunship did not check in on 3/9's air net. Results: 3 NBC WIAE. At 1500H, K/3/9, vicinity XD 904588 received S/A fire from vicinity XD 892588. They returned S/A fire. At 1945H, K/3/9, reported contact broken. During contact they received several 60mm mortar rounds impacting within their position. Counter mortar fire accounted for one enemy mortar destroyed and crew killed. Results of contact: 3 USMC KIA, 19 USMC WIAE, and 23 NVA KIA.

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11 Sep At 0930H, E/2/9, vicinity XD 880579 made contact with undetermined size NVA element well dug in. The enemy initiated the contact with command detonated claymores and small arms fire. AO on station observed one A/W position and well used trail system. 2/9 called artillery and ran fixed wing strikes. Results: 2 USMC WIAE from claymores. CP/5/1/9 helilift to VCB completed at 1300H. A/1/9 chopped OPCON to 1/9 at 1200H. M/3/9 vicinity XD 817588, while searching bunkers, found 1 NVA KIA. At 1800H, F/2/9 vicinity XD 853544, found 1 human hand apparently amputated recently. At 1830H, C/1/9, vicinity XD 897954, found grave with 1 NVA KIA.

12 Sep At 1000H, chopped OPCON 1/9(-), to TF HOTEL. At 1030H, helilift of E/2/9 from LZ KRYPTON to LZ NEPTUNE and LZ URANUS was started and completed at 1205H. At 1300H, F/2/9 patrol, vicinity XD 852549, observed 2 NVA running down trail vicinity XD 850550 and took under S/A fire. Shortly after, a mine was tripped by friendly troops. Results: 1 USMC KIA and 1 USMC WIAE. At 1330H, L/3/9, patrol vicinity XD 892586, was hit by a command detonated mine followed by S/A fire from an estimated NVA squad well dug in with machine gun. L/3/9 returned fire with S/A and artillery. Results: 2 USMC KIA, 6 USMC WIAE and 2 NVA KIA.

13 Sep At 1200H, F/2/9, vicinity XD 850550, encountered an NVA squad in 3 bunkers and received A/W and S/A fire. They returned fire and called in artillery on enemy escape routes. Contact results: 1 USMC KIA, 3 WIAE. At 1800H, I/3/9, vicinity XD 886587, walked into a command detonated mine causing 1 USMC WIAE. As they commenced to move again, they received another command detonated mine resulting in 2 USMC WIAE.

14 Sep At 1315H, 1/9 chopped OPCON to 9th marines and prepared to conduct operations within new AO. 2 platoons of 1/9 remained with 3d Marines to provide security for 8 inch guns and will be chopped back to 9th Marines at 1600H.

15 Sep At 0710H, helilift of H/2/9(-) from LZ KRYPTON to FSB BLACK was started. Completed at 0735H. At 0735H, helilift of D/1/9 from FSB BLACK to VCB was started and completed at 1820H.

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16 Sep At 0800H, 2/26 chopped OPCON to 9th Marines.
 At 0900H, 1/4 chopped OPCON to 9th Marines.
 At 1230H, M/3/9, vicinity XD 874575, observed 5 NVA in open. Fired artillery mission resulting in 3 NVA KIA. At 1320H, L/3/9, vicinity XD 882585, point elements received one command detonated claymore resulting in 2 USMC WIAE. At 1330H, L/3/9, vicinity XD 882585, received S/A fire from bunker complex and returned fire. Results: 4 NVA KIA. The 9th Marines CP was helilifted to LZ WINCHESTER at 1400H. At 1520H E/2/26 vicinity XD 901610 received a total of 158 rounds of 82mm mortar incoming from XD 906617, XD 897620, XD 906623 and XD 882617, resulting in 23 USMC KIA, 93 WIAE and 11 WIAME. At 1600H, L/3/9, vicinity XD 882585, found 40 bunkers and 27 NVA KIA.

17 Sep At 0955H, 1/9 was helilifted into their assigned AO. At 1000H, while helilifting 1/9 elements into vicinity XD 908675, the choppers received ground fire. AO ran fixed wing on suspected enemy position with good target coverage. At 1017H, 1/4 lead elements were helilifted into their assigned AO. At 1115H, 2/26, vicinity XD 902610, received 13 rounds 82mm from northeast. Results: 1 USMC WIAE. At 1155, 1/9, vicinity 916686, providing security for downed CH-46, received 1 round unknown type artillery dud from the north. At 1209H, 1/9 vicinity XD 907675, observed 25 NVA in the vicinity of XD 913683. They initiated S/A fire and an artillery mission. Results: 25 NVA KIA. At 1330H, a UH-1E helicopter bound for LZ WINCHESTER from VGB, hit a tree and crashed approximately 200 meters south of LZ WINCHESTER. Casualties included BrigGen CHIP, LtCol KNIGHT, the aide and 3 crew members. At 1338, B/1/9, vicinity XD 908655, observed enemy movement. They called for artillery resulting in 4 NVA KIA. At 1410H, 1/9 vicinity XD 909684, observed 3 NVA in open. A sniper took under fire resulting in 1 NVA KIA. At 1410H, A/1/9, vicinity 913683 observed 6-8 NVA in open and took them under fire plus initiated an artillery mission resulting in 2 NVA KIA. At 1450H, 2/26, vicinity XD 901601, received 57 rounds 82mm from GS 9062. Results: 3 USMC WIAE. At 1500H, 1/9 vicinity XD 908690, observed an unknown number of NVA north of the BEN HAI River. Called for and received 6 flights of fixed wing. Results: 1 secondary explosion and 25 NVA KIA.

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17 Sep At 1900H, C/1/9, vicinity XD 912673, received 1 82mm round, Resulting in 3 USMC KIA. At 1900H, 2/26, vicinity XD 901611, received 46 rounds 82mm mortars. Results 1 USMC KIA, 11 USMC WIAE. At 1915H 1/9 vicinity XD 918687, took 15 rounds unknown cal. Results: 5 USMC WIAE. At 1916H, H/2/26, vicinity XD 902614, was probed by an estimated NVA squad. Engaged the enemy with S/A. Results: 1 USMC KIA and 13 USMC WIAE.

18 Sep At 0900H, 1/4, vicinity XD 948672, made S/A contact with 2 different groups of NVA (2 NVA in each group) Results: 1 NVA POW. At 1530H, 9th Mar assumed OPCON of 2/3. At 1615H, I/3/9, vicinity XD 949566, received 3 rounds 60mm, 3 command detonated claymores, and MG fire. Results: 3 USMC KIA, 3 USMC WIAE.

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19 Sep At 0817H, CP/1/9, XD 916668, took 1 round friendly 8" artillery resulting in 1 USMC NBC. At 0915H, G/2/3, vic XD 925626, point element made contact with unknown size NVA unit. Results: 5 NVA KIA. At 1700H, 1/9 vic XD 919693 and XD 922678, received about 20 rounds 82mm mortar fire. They countered with artillery and fixed wing on XD 922678. Results: 11 USMC WIAE, 1 Scout dog WIA, 10 NVA KIA. At 1800H, C/1/4, vic XD 938665 received 1 CHIEU HOI. At 1945H, F/2/26, vic XD 904635, received 3 rounds suspected friendly artillery. Results: 1 USMC NBC KIA and 3 USMC NBC WIAE. At 192100H to 200600H, B/1/4 detected strong enemy movement on their lines and received 23 chicom grenades, 7 RPG rounds and numerous S/A fire. They returned fire with S/A, mortars and artillery. Results: 3 USMC WIAE and 1 USMC WIANE.

20 Sep At 0900H, F/2/26, vic XD 903637, observed 10 NVA walking near the perimeter. F Co fired at the enemy and received fire in return. Results 2 NVA KIA. At 1220H, E,H,CP/2/3, vic XD 938268, received A/W fire and M-79 fire from vic XD 939629. Results: 7 USMC WIAE and 1 USMC WIANE. F/2/26 was helilifted from LZ COMMANCE to VCB at 1300H. At 1420H, F/2/3, vic XD 925626 killed 6 NVA and captured 1 NVA. At 1500H, G/2/9, vic XD 880527, found 42 graves. Results: 42 NVA KIA. At 1630H, F/2/3, vic XD 926626, found 11 NVA KIA from supporting arms, on trail. At 2015H, E,H,F/2/3, vic XD 938627, XD 925626 received probes on 30% of their lines. The unit also received 30 60mm mortar rounds. Results: 15 USMC WIAE.

21 Sep At 0900H, helilift of 2/9(-), to VCB commenced and was completed at 1200H. At 1200H, 2/9 chopped OPCON to TF HOTEL. At 1500H, D/1/9, vic XD 903660, found 4 additional mass graves containing a total of 96 NVA bodies. At 1600H, D/1/9, found one mass grave with 21 NVA KIA vic XD 902659. At 1600H, E/2/3 vic XD 922622, encountered S/A and heavy A/W fire. Results: 1 WIAE. At 1700H, G/2/26, lead elements, vic XD 893638, came under enemy MG and RPG fire. They immediately returned fire. Results: 1 NVA KIA, 1 USMC WIAE and 4 USMC WIANE.

22 Sep At 1220H, I/3/9 patrol vic XD 878595, observed 2 NVA in the open, and opened fire resulting in 2 NVA KIA. At 1415H, E/2/26, vic XD 891636, found a battalion size base camp vic XD 890636. At 1700H, L/3/9, vic XD 862591, after an artillery prep, searched area finding 17 NVA KIA.

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23 Sep At 0930H, 3/9 squad patrol, vic XD 862591, initiated contact with an estimated NVA squad, and received approximately 40 rounds 60mm mortar from vic XD 852593. Results: 3 USMC WIAE. At 1130H, K/3/9, vic XD 887603, after artillery prep, found parts of bodies for 6 NVA KIA. At 1300H, 1/4, vic XD 957676, observed 1 NVA pop up and opened fire with S/A for 1 NVA KIA. At 1500H, L/3/9, vic XD 862592, searched area of intense artillery prep and found 8 NVA KIA. At 2400H, 2/9 will be chopped OPCON to 9th Marines. At 2400H, 1/4 and 2/3 will be chopped OPCON to 3d Marines.

24 Sep At 1550H, H/2/9(-), vic XD 926547, received fire from unknown size NVA unit and returned fire. Results: 10 USMC WIAE, 3 NVA KIA and 3 USMC KIA.

25 Sep At 1800H, D/1/9, vic XD 890652, found 2 graves with 24 bodies in each. Results: 18 NVA KIA. CP, E/2/9 were helilifted from VCB to FSB SANDY. I/3/9 was in sporadic contact at 1800H. The contact developed resulting in 16 NVA KIA, 2 USMC KIA and 9 USMC WIAE.

26 Sep At 0645H, I/3/9, vic XD 856592, received 20 rounds 60mm mortars from the northwest causing 3 USMC WIAE. At 0815H, helilift of F/2/9, from VCB to LZ FOX, commenced and was completed at 0930H. At 0930H, I/3/9 vic XD 855591, received 8 105mm artillery short rounds fired by F/2/12. Results: 7 NBC KIA and 11 NBC WIAE and 1 NBCNE. At 1030H, B/1/9, vic XD 917644, captured 1 NVA. At 1240H, helilift of G/2/9 was started and completed at 1441H. At 1845H, I/3/9, vic XD 854592, found one 5 day old grave for a total of 24 NVA KIA.

27 Sep At 1120H, I/3/9, vic XD 955593, tripped a booby trapped DH-10 mine. Results: 6 USMC WIAE. At 1145H, D/1/9, vic XD 883654, engaged squad size enemy element. The exchange of S/A fire resulted in 1 USMC KIA, 10 USMC WIAE and 1 NVA POW. At 1300H, B/1/9, vic XD 910640, observed 2 NVA running down a trail and took them under fire resulting in 2 NVA KIA. B/1/9 then observed 10 more NVA and fired 81mm mortar mission plus artillery for 2 more NVA KIA. At 1300H, CP/1/9, vic XD 912642, received probe from an unknown size NVA element, resulting in 6 USMC WIAE. At 1540H, D/1/9, vic XD 892654, received S/A and A/W fire and returned fire with organic weapons and fired an artillery mission resulting in 8 NVA KIA. At 1600H, I/3/9, element vic XD 851595, found 9 NVA bodies in 3 graves. At 1800H, H/2/9, vic XD 925546, found 1 NVA body.

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28 Sep At 1139H, D/1/9, XD 891652, captured 1 NVA POW. At 1145H, I/3/9 patrol, vic XD 851593, following contact found 18 NVA KIA. Friendly casualties: 1 USMC WIAE and 8 WIAME. At 1500H, D/1/9, vic XD 888642 was taken under fire with A/W and S/A. They returned fire with M-60, M-26 and S/A for 2 NVA KIA. At 1630H, I/3/9, vic XD 852593, found 9 well constructed bunkers, 2 with blood on them and 1 with 3 NVA KIA.

29 Sep CP, F, G, H/2/9 helilifted to VCB at 0830H. At 0940H, 1/9's commanding officer was NBCE with the XO taking command of the battalion. At 1900H, A/1/9, vic XD 912612, made contact with unknown size NVA unit resulting in 3 USMC KIA and 6 USMC WIAE.

30 Sep At 1715H, A/1/9, vic XD 903636, found 1 NVA KIA.

01 Oct At 0700H, 3/9 helilift to VCB with K/3/9 moving into FSB WINCHESTER (FSBW) for security for artillery battery. Chopped FSBW security to 9th Mar at 0900H. At 0900H, commenced helilift of 2/26. Chopped 2/26 to 3d Mar at 1100H. At 0945H, 9th Mar B Command Group was lifted from FSBW to VCB. At 1200H, 9th Mar assumed OPCON of 2/9. C/1/9 vic XD 880640 received approximately 25 82mm mortar rounds. Called artillery mission on XD 865642. Results: 1 USMC WIAME. At 1415H, assumed OPCON 3/4(-). At 1500H, A/1/9 vic XD 903637 observed 3-4 NVA running to SW. Called artillery mission. Results: 6 NVA KIA.

02 Oct At 1900H, A/1/9 received approximately 25 82mm mortar rounds from XD 911642 and heard movement vic XD 901638. Returned fire with 81mm mortars and artillery. Results: 6 USMC NBCE, 1 WIAME.

03 Oct At 0800H, A/1/9 helilifted from their present position to Battalion Objective 2, completed at 0920H.

04 Oct At 0930H, 1/9 vic XD 877642 found 5 bunkers and 1 82mm mortar pit with 20 82mm mortar rounds already destroyed by artillery fire.

05 Oct A/1/9 arrived at Regt Objective B at 1300H with negative enemy resistance. One plane LZ completed at that position by 1800H and named CATALINA. CP with 1/9(-) helilift from landing zone ARK vic XD 883638 to LZ BEAVER vic XD 862648. Completed 1725H.

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06 Oct At 1500H, A/1/9 vic XD 850646 found trail running east to west not recently used, 1 head (defecator), 1 bottle white pills, (500) with EHP on pills. At 1630H, D/1/9 lifted from present position to LCUA Valloy. Lift completed at 1745H.

07 Oct At 0920H, 1/9 vic XD 687662 reported a helicopter taking S/A fire. They countered with 81mm mortars and artillery. At 1100H, 2/3(-) began lift into 1/9's position and 1/9 began the return lift to VCB.

08 Oct At 0715H, G/2/3, helilifted into 1/9 and B,C/1/9 commenced lift into VCB. The lift was completed at 0945H. At same DTG 2/3 was chopped to 3d Mar. At 1100H, A/1/9, departed VCB for THON SON LAM. They arrived at 1500H and chopped to 3d Marines.

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10. Results.a. Friendly Losses.

65 USMC KIA
378 USMC WIAE
45 USMC WIAME

b. Enemy Losses.(1) Personnel.

(a) 701 NVA KIA
(b) 5 NVA POW

(2) Weapons.

(a) 529 IWC
(b) 27 CSWC

(3) Equipment/munitions/structures captured/destroyed.

(a) 3,204 bunkers
(b) 21,538 mortar rounds
(c) 3,936 RPG rounds
(d) 1,310 RR rounds
(e) 4,876 mines
(f) 12,917 grenades
(g) 1,429,838 small arms rounds
(h) 407 rockets
(i) 25,053 explosive (lbs)

(4) Foodstuffs captured/destroyed.

(a) 65,235 lbs rice
(b) 11,811 lbs salt

(5) Medical supplies.

(a) 500 penicillin, bottles
(b) 150 streptomycin, bottles
(c) 242 vitamin, vials
(d) 110 novacine, ampulos
(e) 170 morphine, vials
(f) 144 atropino sulphato, vials
(g) 2 chloromycetin, bottles
(h) 9 other, bottles
(i) 305,000 guaze bandages

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(6) Miscellaneous.

- (a) 217 utilities, sets
- (b) 201 sweat shirts
- (c) 301 bolts
- (d) 400 leather rifle slings
- (e) 238 holmots
- (f) 155 packs
- (g) 41 blankets
- (h) 63 gas masks

11. Administrative matters.a. Communications.

(1) General. The 9th Marines Regimental Communications Platoon actively supported the regimental headquarters during Operation LANCASTER TROUSDALE and LANCASTER TROUSDALE NORTH. FM radio and wire/radio relay systems were extensively utilized throughout the operations. During this period the 9th Marines Communications Platoon supported a forward CP at FSB WINCHESTER, a rear at VANDEGRIFT COMBAT BASE (VCB), and a rear at DONG HA COMBAT BASE.

(2) Communications Center. During the latter part of August and throughout September and the first week of October, the 9th Marines Communications Platoon continued to maintain a communications center at VCB. Task Force HOTEL continued to guard for the 9th Marines on the teletype circuit from 3d Mar Div. 9th Marines provided for supplemental administrative message traffic as TF HOTEL received only tactical traffic. Due to the establishment of a forward CP at FSB WINCHESTER, it was necessary to extend the courier service from DONG HA to accommodate FSB WINCHESTER.

An exclusion area was constructed in the COC, at VCB, on 22 September 1968. A secure teletype circuit was established between 9th Marines COC at VCB and the 3d Mar Div COC at DONG HA, utilizing a channel on the AN/TRC-97. Most downtime on the teletype circuit has been due to a deficiency in the KW-7.

Total message traffic during the operational period amounted to two thousand seven hundred and ten (2,710) incoming messages and two hundred and fifty-two (252) outgoing messages.

(3) Wire. During the period of late August through the end of September, the 9th Marines Communications Platoon continued to maintain an SB-86 switchboard at DONG HA COMBAT BASE and two SB-22 switchboards at VCB. Trunk lines have been in constant use to TF HOTEL, 1st Bn, 9th Marines and 3d Engineer Bn.

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A five pair cable of WD-1/TT wire was installed from 9th Marines position at VCB to SIGNAL Hill. Two pair of these lines are used for radio relay which permits communications between 9th Marines at VCB and 3d Marines at Camp CARROLL via THON SON LAM.

On 16 September the 9th Marines Regimental Headquarters displaced forward to FSB WINCHESTER. Upon arrival at FSB WINCHESTER an SB-22 switchboard was installed along with several locals and hot lines. This wire system was then linked up to the radio relay installation at FSB WINCHESTER, thus forming an integrated wire/radio relay system.

Upon displacement back to VCB, all existing wire lines at FSB WINCHESTER were removed and destroyed by the wire personnel. Upon arrival at VCB a completely new set of wire lines were installed in order to accommodate increased demands.

(4) Radio. FM radio communications during the operational period proved to be highly efficient and extremely reliable. From 27 Aug 68 to 16 September 68 the regiment used the FM radios at VCB to control the battalions in the field.

On 15 September 68 an advance party was sent to FSB WINCHESTER (FSBW) to establish a forward CP. Two tactical nets and one TACP net were activated by the advance party to insure that communications would be continuous throughout the command post displacement. On 16 September 68 the CO's group and XO's group arrived. To further facilitate the control of six (6) OPCON battalions, an additional tactical net was established. This additional net gave the commanding officer three (3) tactical nets with two (2) battalions on each net. In addition, three (3) DY-38's and AN/PRC-77's were always available, enabling the Regimental Commander to talk in cipher with his battalion commanders.

The radio section operated under field combat conditions. All radios were waterproofed and dug in to protect them from adverse weather and possible attack from enemy mortars and artillery.

On 1 October the CP at FSBW displaced to VCB. Communications (FM radio) remained continuous throughout the displacement. An austere command group was then readied for a night helilift into the DELTA-5 (MAI LOC) area for cordon and search operations. Communications for this lift was FM radio. Communications were continuous and reliability was excellent.

On 5 October frequencies and call signs were changed. Several problems were encountered during the frequency change. The major problem area was frequency override.

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(5) Radio Relay. Radio relay communications remained satisfactory throughout the operations. Several test shots were made between Camp CARROLL, DONG HA, and QUANG TRI. These shots proved to be highly satisfactory. During the first week of September a relay shot was established from SIGNAL HILL to the 9th Marines CP at VCB. This circuit was unique in the tactical communications business as we remoted our regimental tactical radio nets off of the AN/TRC-27's. This was accomplished by running wire lines from the remote unit in the COC to the AN/TRC-27 which was located next to the COC. The radio signal was then picked up by the RC-292 on SIGNAL HILL and relayed over one parabolic reflector to the reflecting antenna next to the COC.

On 15 September a relay team was dispatched to FSBW with the advance party to establish a radio relay shot (AN/TRC-27) between FSBW and THON SON LAM. Once installed, the 9th Marines were then allocated two channels on the MRC-62 relay shot to 3d Marines at Camp CARROLL. To effect this shot a strap over was accomplished between the AN/TRC-27 at THON SON LAM and the AN/MRC-62. This enabled 9th Marines at FSBW to contact 3d Marines switchboard. Eventually a relay shot was established which gave us a direct line into TF HOTEL.

On 1 October 68, the regimental CP displaced to VCB. At this time the radio relay shot from FSBW to THON SON LAM was discontinued and the relay team was sent back to VCB. The AN/TRC-27 shot between THON SON LAM and VCB, SIGNAL HILL, is still intact along with the AN/TRC-27 shot from SIGNAL HILL to the communications bunker.

b. Supply.

(1) Discussion.

(a) The administrative plan was considered adequate for the operation. In compliance with a TF HOTEL directive, a Regimental S-4 representative and S-4 representatives from the OPCON Battalions were located at the VCB LOC. The success in the control and supervision of resupply accomplished during this operation was a direct result of the liaison established at this control point. During the early part of the operation, resupply was severely curtailed by the untimely arrival of typhoon ELAINE.

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The high winds and accompanying rains caused the cancellation of all resupply. As the operation progressed, Long Range Patrol Rations were used to assist battalions over subsequent periods of bad weather.

(b) All resupply during this operation was accomplished by air.

(c) No significant maintenance problems were encountered.

(d) Transportation was provided to the Regiment by 1st Plt, A Co, 3d MT Battalion.

(e) Casualties were first treated by attached Naval personnel. Evacuation from the field was to D Co, 3d Medical Battalion, QUANG TRI, and from there to higher headquarters.

(f) Organic medical facilities within Headquarters Company at the forward CP was adequate for handling daily routine sick call.

(g) Extensive use was made of helicopter transportable bulldozers in the creation of Fire Support Bases (FSB) LEJEUNE, BLACK, SANDY and WINCHESTER. The use of these tractors enabled these FSBs to be built more quickly and efficiently than by hand.

12. Special Equipment and Techniques.

The operation introduced the effective and successful use of the Case 450 helicopter transportable tractor. The tractor was invaluable for rapid construction of FSBs. In addition, communications innovations as noted above served to improve operations considerably.

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13. Commanders Analysis.

The LANCASTER II TROUSDALE and TROUSDALE NORTH operation was one of the most successful operations of its kind in the war to date. The 9th Marine Regiment (Roin) conducted sustained operations in what was previously considered an impenetrable sanctuary in the dense jungle covered mountains of northwest QUANG TRI Province and the western DMZ area. Combat forces were inserted, and sustained at heights above 3500 feet, by helicopter. The enemy was constantly engaged and dealt an overwhelming defeat both in the loss of personnel and supplies, as evidenced by the results shown throughout this report. It is estimated that the 320th NVA Division, specifically the 48th and 52nd Regiments, has been reduced to combat ineffectiveness.

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