

3d MARDIV S&C FILE
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HEADQUARTERS
1st Battalion, 9th Marines
3d Marine Division, (Rein), FMF
FPO San Francisco, 96602

3/1004/1r1
005750
10 October 1968

~~SECRET~~

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code 4037)

Via: (1) Commanding General, 3d Marine Division (Rein), FMF
(2) Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force
(3) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Pacific

Subj: Command Chronology for period 1-30 September 1968

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.2A
(b) FMFPACO 5750.8
(c) DivO 5750.1A

Encl: 1st Battalion, 9th Marines Command Chronology

1. In accordance with the provisions of reference (a), (b) and (c), enclosure (1) is submitted herewith.

2. The security classification of this document is downgraded at three (3)-year intervals and declassified after twelve (12) years.

George W. Smith
GEORGE W. SMITH

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DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

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1st Bn/9th MAR

CMD CHRON

SEP 1968

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COMMAND CHRONOLOGY
1-30 September 1968

*See attached
the 2nd
5 Mar 69*

PART I.	ORGANIZATIONAL DATA
PART II.	NARRATIVE SUMMARY
PART III.	SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS
PART IV.	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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At 0500 on 19 September, one explosive device was thrown into Company B's line. M-26 grenades were thrown in return. At 0817 the Battalion CP at XD 918667 received one 155mm artillery round from a friendly battery. One Marine was wounded. Throughout the day patrols from the Battalion found old bunkers and huts. There was no sign of recent activity, nor was equipment or ordnance found. At 1700 the Battalion CP at XD 919693 received two 82mm mortar rounds. Air was employed on grid XD 922678 and two 82mm mortar tubes and one bunker were destroyed. Ten NVA KIA's were confirmed.

At 0640, on 20 September, the Fire Support Coordinator obtained a sound sighting of a suspected enemy tracked vehicle. Two flights of air support were run but results were undetermined. Patrols continued throughout the day but discovered nothing of significance.

At 1030 on 21 September, air strikes were run on XD 904663. One large secondary explosion was observed and two fighting holes and several bunkers were destroyed. At 1345 heavy bunker complexes were found at XD 901656 and XD 905659 by Company C and Company D, respectively. Deliberate searches of each area were conducted with good results. Company C found 350 bunkers and storage areas. Fighting holes were near each bunker. Communication wires connected the bunkers, fighting holes, and storage sites. 3000 pounds of rice and 300 lbs of rock salt were found in the storage sites. About 200 helmets and 100 packs were found, but many of these were unserviceable. A few documents were found and forwarded to intelligence personnel. Leading to the bunker complex was a trail to the top of a nearby hill. Steps had been cut into the trail and a bamboo banister ran alongside. At the top of the hill was a bunker with good observation of the surrounding area. Company D found a mass grave at XD 903660 which contained twenty-four bodies. The bodies appeared to be 4-5 days old. Another grave was found nearby containing 96 more bodies. Also a small bunker complex containing a command post, a mess bunker, and 15 small living bunkers was located. Tables and chairs had been constructed on the top of the bunkers with camouflaged roofing above. Well worn trails connected all the positions. In discarded pack along one of the trails were found a personal letter, an ID card, and other documents, all of which was forwarded via intelligence channels. Total enemy KIA confirmed were 120.

At 0930 on 22 September, a patrol from Company B found a bunker complex at XD 910656. The bunkers measured approximately seven feet by 5 feet by 6 feet. Each had a patio with a thatched roof, tables and chairs. There were ten small kitchens with cooking materials left inside them. There appeared to have been a neat and orderly withdrawal as there was little gear left behind. A few of the bunkers had been destroyed. Also significant was the absence of fighting positions in the surrounding area. The following gear was found: one S&S (serial #295513), five M-47 magazines, 200 M-47 rounds, one bandolier, one grenade, three cans of rifle oil, three cooking pots, one water can, nine packs, three entrenching tools, one canteen and cover, one compass, four pair of boots, five mounds of salt, three machetes, 15 punches, 14 utility shirts, 13 utility trousers, three sweat shirts, five pair of socks, several undershirts and shorts, three covers, two belts, assorted medical gear, ten dollars of NVA currency, two gas masks, and personal toilet articles. At 1600 Company C at XD 901656 found 75 more bunkers. They were empty of gear.

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At 1700 on 23 September, Company B found a bunker complex at XD 910656. It consisted of approximately 100 covered bunkers, 50 open fighting holes, 15 living bunkers, and one storage bunker. A well developed trail system ran throughout the area. The storage area contained only three one hundred lb bags of rice. The entire area was well camouflaged from aerial observation. The area had been thoroughly policed prior to its evacuation. At 1700 Company B reported finding 50 grass huts and several bunkers at XD 912654. Fifteen hundred pounds of rice and assorted clothing had been left in the area.

At 0945 on 24 September, Company A found 13 one-man bunkers at XD 911653. They appeared to be 3-4 weeks old. At 1045 Company B found a thirty bunker complex at XD 911652, 250 pounds of rice, one helmet, one gas mask and thirty 7.62mm rifle rounds were found in the area. Several tables and chairs were also found. Near the area was an observation post in a tree. The words, "Ta Dan Lon Tri" were written on the tree. A scout dog alerted the patrol but the area was checked with negative results. At 1200 a patrol from Company A at XD 916654 found a series of bunkers containing medical supplies, mess facilities and assorted equipment. A total of 350 pounds of rice was found. At 1600 elements of Company A found four bunkers at XD 916654. In these were found ten pounds of salt, 250 pounds of rice, six cans of water, and a small medical kit. At 1800 on 24 September Company D found 2 graves at XD 916643 containing an estimated 24 bodies each. At the head of one grave was written "KHUYNH VAN TUONG-9/9".

At 1100 on 25 September Company C at XD 887645 found an ammunition storage area 20 meters off a well used trail. The following ordnance was discovered: 616 60mm mortar rounds, 397 82mm mortar rounds, 233 RPG-2 rounds, 218 RPG-7 rounds, 39 88mm rocket rounds, 147 anti-tank mines, 1000 12.7mm rounds, and 266,000 7.62mm rounds, 1800 lbs of rice was stored nearby. At 1330 the same day, Company D, while destroying an ammunition cache at XD 887645, was taken under fire by enemy troops hidden in nearby bushes. The unit returned fire and called in artillery support. The company exploited the contact resulting in 7 NVA KIA confirmed. At 1430 Company B at XD 911645, found fifty bunkers, sixty .50 caliber machinegun positions and three mortar pits. One thousand rounds of 12.7mm ammunition, two pair of boots were found in the area.

At 0900 on 26 September Company B discovered seven shallow graves, each containing one body, at XD 916641. They appeared to be 7-10 days old. At 0930 the same unit found a bunker complex at XD 917694. The bunkers were built in an "A" frame measuring 3 feet by 4 feet by 6 feet. A kitchen was also found. Fighting holes surrounded the bunkers and trails connected the positions. Four grenades, 300 7.62mm machine gun rounds and twenty new gas masks were found. At 1030 elements of Company B captured a wounded NVA while searching the bunker complex. The prisoner had been wounded only slightly, but the nature of his wound had prevented him from walking. He was hiding among trees and was without food, water, weapon, equipment or clothing. He made no attempt to escape and was returned to the S-2 for questioning and evacuation. At 1100 on 26 September a patrol from Company A at XD 911645 found sixty bunkers, thirty fighting holes, two 82mm mortar mounds, 100 pounds of rice, four M-47 magazines, 100 rounds of 7.62mm rounds, and medical supplies made in FRANCE,

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HUNGARY, and CZECHOSLOVAKIA. Written over one bunker were the words "DAT UKIRNG NGH DAY CAM YAO". At 1400 Company C found an "L" shaped bunker (5 feet by 6 feet by 3 feet) at XD 913644 with 50 boxes of 150 caliber machinegun ammunition in it. At 1530 a patrol from Company B found 4 82mm mortar fuses at XD 908642.

At 1115 on 27 September Company B found four graves at XD 916641. Each grave contained one body and appeared to be about 7-10 days old. The following gear was found near the grave: two grenades, and 100 small arms rounds, 280 12.7mm rounds, three NVA baits, one canteen, and one gas mask. At 1135 a patrol from Company D spotted one enemy moving towards their position at XD 891652. A marine fired at the NVA soldier, wounding him in the hip. He was then taken prisoner and evacuated. At 1145 a patrol from Company D made contact with a platoon-size force at XD 88654. The enemy employed automatic weapons, grenades and small arms. The patrol returned fire with their organic weapons. Two reinforced squads were sent to assist and their arrival enabled the unit to assault the enemy positions. The enemy withdrew and the patrol pursued by fire. One USMC KIA and four USMC WIA resulted. At 1230 Company A found 2250 .50 caliber rounds at XD 914646. At 1300 Company B found a bunker complex running south at XD 910640. One NVA was seen running to the southwest of the complex. Two explosions were heard and two NVA were observed running from the area. Both were killed by small arms. They wore utilities and helmets. One AK-47 rifle was captured. Approximately ten NVA were then sighted moving from the area where the first NVA had been seen. The Marines fired upon them, wounding four. At 1315 a heavy automatic weapon fired on a helicopter from XD 905635. Air, artillery and 81mm mortars were fired on that area with unknown results. At 1330 on 27 September Company B while on patrol at XD 910640, heard movement in the bushes and observed two NVA moving toward their position. One Marine fired his .45 caliber pistol at both. The closest NVA fell at the Marine's feet still alive and trying to shoot his AK-47 rifle. The Marine took the NVA's rifle from him and killed both enemy soldiers with it. At 1330 elements of Company B received small arms and 60mm mortars at XD 911641. They returned small arms fire and requested 81mm mortars and artillery for support. The patrol intercepted six NVA and killed two and wounded four. At 1440 a helicopter was hit with automatic weapons fire from an unknown location. At 1500, Company B, while moving south on a well used trail at XD 888642, was taken under fire by one automatic weapon and small arms. They returned fire with organic weapons and confirmed two NVA WIA. At 1540 Company B received small arms at XD 882654. They returned fire but results were unknown. At 1540 Company D made contact with an estimated squad of NVA at XD 883654. Contact was broken and no casualties resulted.

At 0930 on 28 September, Company D found one partially destroyed SKS rifle at XD 895639. At 1040 one enemy was observed at XD 901635, and artillery fired with undetained results. At 1330, Company B found numerous bunkers and "A" frame huts at XD 908640. Also found were five grenades, one RPG-2 round, eating utensils, a gas mask, a wallet and ID

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card, and six blocks of demolitions. At 1500 an aerial observer controlled fixed wing support in the destruction of five bunkers at XD 9026 20. At 1700 Company A found an ordnance storage area at XD 9185A6 containing fifty 82mm mortar rounds, 100 .50 caliber rounds, and twenty directional mines. At 1800 Company A at XD 908640 found two bodies, six grenades, four AK-47 rifle magazines, one canteen and cover, one bottle of insect repellent, two bottle dressings and one piece of currency.

At 1140 on 29 September Company B received fifteen rounds of small arms fire at XD 892654, small arms and 60mm mortar fire were returned with unknown results. At 1230 a patrol from Company B observed a squad size unit of NV moving toward their position at XD 904637. They were on line and appeared to be looking for something. The enemy scattered when fired upon. At 1530 a Marine from Company A observed a bush moving 20 meters from his position down a steep incline. When he approached the area the bush continued to move so he fired one round at it. A search of the area revealed footprints only. At 1900 an observation post from Company A, at XD 811642, made contact with an unknown size enemy force. The OP was reinforced shortly thereafter and came under a large volume of small arms fire and RPG rounds. One Marine was wounded as the enemy attacked from both the east and west flank. The contact was estimated to be a platoon size unit. Marines held their position and returned fire. Artillery and mortar fire were employed and the action subsided after thirty minutes. Marine casualties were two USMC KIA and seven USMC WIA. Company A confirmed one NV KIA. Throughout the night the perimeter received sporadic fire and grenades. Marines returned the fire in kind. Interdiction fires were utilized extensively and a flare ship was on station throughout the night.

At 1030 30 September Company A saw enemy troops withdrawing from the area. No further contact was made that day.

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F. COMMAND RELATIONS: From 1-30 September 1968, the 1st Battalion 9th Marines was under operational control of the 9th Marines.

G. EQUIPMENT:

(1) ORGANIZATIONAL DATA (MOTOR TRANSPORT)

- (a) Location: QUANG TRI, VANDEBRIET COMBAT BASE
- (b) Period covered: 1-30 September 1968
- (c) Officers and Staff: 1st Lt J.T. CLARK MTO, CYSCT M.T., IRVINE MT CHIEF.
- (d) Average Monthly Strength:

Off

Enl

1

23

(2) General concept of operation:

- (a) Organic motor transport was primarily engaged in resupply and administrative runs.

(3) SIGNIFICANT EVENTS: None

H. LOGISTICS. During the month of September 1st Battalion 9th Marines spent most of its time in the field. Weather hampered resupply. For a period of three days inclement weather forced the helicopters to be grounded. Long range patrol rations (LRPR) were issued to the battalion to preclude shortages in the absence of helicopter support. Issue of the LRPR proved effective as they are light, compact, and when used prudently, can provide three meals sustenance per ration. The terrain which 1/9 worked also caused logistical problems. A sixty foot canopy of trees covered most of 1/9's AO, making resupply by helicopter difficult. External lifts needed 60 foot slings in most cases.

Plastic six gallon water bags were utilized for most resupply, but in several instances they had to be dropped to the ground in external slings, causing breakage of many of the bags. When water cans were used it was found that extraction of the cans was difficult due to restrictions imposed by the 60 foot canopy.

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I. CIVIL ACTION: During the month of September 35 bars of soap, 14 toothbrushes, and paste, band-aids, methiclate, 66 childrens shirts, 44 pairs of pants, 4 pair of shoes, and 60 pounds of adult clothes were taken to Father CO of CAM LO Refugee Village. Thirty pounds of candy were received from the United States and taken to the childrens ward of the QUANG TRI CITY HOSPITAL. Hand bills and posters have been displayed in the Battalion areas in QUANG TRI, concerning the Memorial Childrens Hospital. A tour was also conducted of the temporary hospital at Dong Ha. 20 volunteers from 1st Battalion 9th Marines participated in this program of advertisement.

J. ADMINISTRATION. Nothing significant to report

K. PERSONNEL The following personnel were transferred from this command:

<u>USMC</u>		<u>USN</u>	
<u>Off</u>	<u>Enl</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>Enl</u>
4	91	0	0

The following personnel were joined by this command:

<u>USMC</u>		<u>USN</u>	
<u>Off</u>	<u>Enl</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>Enl</u>
7	197	0	2

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L. INTELLIGENCE: During the month of September 1st Battalion 9th Marines, participated in operations near the Demilitarized Zone. Their forces in the Battalion area of operation consisted primarily of one division (the 320th) and the 812th Regiment. Supporting the above infantry units were the 164th Artillery Regiment, and the 54th Artillery Regiment.

Captured documents revealed the 320th Division as moving back into the DMZ to be replaced by 304th Division. It was thought that majority of enemy units had made a systematic orderly withdrawal to the northwest as friendly units moved into the area. The finding of mass graves (They killed by air and artillery) showed perhaps an enemy unit of two or more battalions or of regimental size in the 1/9 MO. Contacts made were with smaller units, squad to platoon size, and were probably rear guard or recon elements covering the withdrawal of larger main forces or guarding the numerous supply caches found in the area. Hostile indirect fire was light and sporadic consisting solely of 60mm to 82mm mortars.

From 1 - 11 Sept, 1/9 operating in the vicinity of the ROCKPILE (T'ON SON LAM) 21 bunkers along with 10 trenches and various discarded equipment. Also 18 82mm mortar rounds were found. There was no significant enemy contact during this period.

From 12 - 14 Sept, the Battalion was located at CAMP CARROLL and the surrounding area. There was no significant enemy contact during this time, 30 - 40 82mm mortar rounds were found.

From 17 - 30 September the battalion took part in an Operation Lancaster Trousdale North, northwest of VANDEGRIFT COMBAT BASE. During the operation there were numerous sightings and contacts and many discoveries of enemy fortifications, munitions and mass graves. The following bunkers and munitions were found: 1397 bunkers, 2x82mm mortar tubes (destroyed), 3 SKS's, 4 AK-47's, 1 unk own caliber weapon, 45x82mm mortar rounds, 619x 60mm mortar rounds, 2x107mm rocket, 39x82mm mortar rounds, 19x122 rockets, 116x107mm recoilless rounds, 23xPG-2 rounds, 213xPG-7 rounds, 266,350 W 47 rounds, 758x12.7 rounds, 300x7.62mm rounds, 7,450 lbs rice, 215 lbs salt, and numerous documents, equipment and medical supplies. Two prisoners of war were captured.

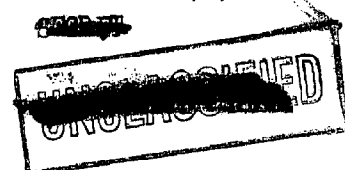
M. WEATHER: Temperatures ranged from the high 70's to the low 100's. Winds ranged from 5 to 25 knots and precipitation was occasionally heavy due to two typhoons off the coast.

N. COMMUNICATIONS:

Communications were good during the month of September with no remarkable occurrences. However, while testing and evaluating the KY-38 cipher unit it was noted that during periods of heavy rain, the equipment failed to work properly. The assumption was made that moisture adversely affected the equipment; this was noted on the required weekly report.

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C. ARTILLERY: During the month of September, artillery provided support for two major operations, Lancaster Trousdale and Lancaster North. These operations were in effect from 1 September to 16 September and 17 September to 30 September respectively.

On the first operation, artillery played a minor role as no physical contact was experienced by ground units of 1st Battalion 9th Marines. Prior to and immediately after insertion of the battalion, artillery initiated and maintained preparation fires on surrounding prominent terrain features. Subsequent fire missions were sent in primarily by the company forward observers and were defensive in nature.

On the following operation, Lancaster Trousdale North, 1st Battalion 9th Marines was inserted into Landing Zone Pacific located at co-ordinates XD 907676. This insertion was also supported by preparation and supporting artillery fires and was completed by 1200 on 17 September. At 1209 of the same day, an artillery fire mission was sent in by Company A's forward observer, resulting in 25 MW KIA confirmed. At 1340, Company B's forward observer sighted 4 enemy troops moving from west to east towards the San Hai River. A fire mission was initiated resulting in 4 MW KIA confirmed. At 1340, Company B's forward observer completed a fire mission resulting in 4 MW KIA confirmed. At 1410, Company A's forward observer also completed a fire mission which resulted in 2 MW KIA confirmed.

At 1700, on 19 September artillery fired in conjunction with close air support resulting in a total of 10 MW KIA confirmed.

At 1330 on 25 September, Company D's forward observer completed a fire mission resulting in 7 MW KIA confirmed.

The 1st confirmed MW KIA (1) resulting from artillery occurred at 1900 on 19 September.

During the course of Operation Lancaster Trousdale North, high angle fire was found most effective due to the large hill masses and high tree canopy present.

B. AIR: Air activities on Operation Lancaster Trousdale continued into the month of September. On 3 September the battalion CP moved to LZ Black by helicopter. 4 September through 7 September saw no air activities as a tropical storm grounded all aircraft. Normal resupply and air activities continued late into the afternoon on 7 September when the storm broke. On 11 September the CP was helilifted back from LZ Black to LZ ASE. The battalion then moved, by truck, into camp Campbell on 12 September.

Air operations resumed when 1st Battalion 9th Marines was helilifted to commence operation Lancaster Trousdale North on 17 September. Air strikes, gun ships, and flareships were employed throughout the operation. TFB missions were employed each night and aerial observers supported during daylight hours. 1st Battalion 9th Marines averaged 2 airstrikes each day and 6 TFB missions nightly from commencement of the operation. On 28 September air strikes silenced an active mortar position at XD 897665 and destroyed 5 bunkers in the same area. On 30 September, under marginal weather conditions, an army HH-1H (Coachman 11) picked up two emergency medevacs. About 15 minutes later an HH-36A HH-46 (Swift 5-2) flew into the same to pick up 4 priority medevacs. The zone was classified as "hot" and both helicopters were unescorted during their pickups.

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