

69-124

HEADQUARTERS

3d Battalion, 12th Marines
 3d Marine Division (Rein), FMF
 FPO San Francisco 96602

3ADB/rpm

3100

15 August 1969
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From: Commanding Officer
 To: Commanding General, 3d Marine Division
 Via: Commanding Officer, 12th Marine Regiment

Subj: Combat Operations After Action Report

Ref: (a) DivO 3100.1D

Encl: ✓(1) Table of Missions Fired and Ammunition Expended

1. Code Name. Herkimer Mountain
2. Dates of Operation. 090001H May 1969 to 161800H July 1969.
3. Location. The area of operations encompassed the area bounded by the DMZ on the north, the 40 grid line on the south, the 77 grid line on the west and the 05 grid line on the east.
4. Task Organization.

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Commander</u>
3d Battalion, 12th Marines	LtCol. R. E. Gibson 9 May 69 to 16 July 69
HQ Battery, 3/12	1stLt D. A. Vetter 9 May 69 to 25 May 69 1stLt R. W. Dunlap 26 May 69 to 16 July 69
"G" Battery, 3/12	Capt. K. C. Kalbfleisch 9 May 69 to 18 June 69 Capt. R. A. List 19 June 69 to 16 July 69
"H" Battery, 3/12	1stLt W. J. Walchli 9 May 69 to 9 June Capt. J. N. Ely 10 June 69 to 16 July 69

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 intervals; declassified
 after 12 years

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"I" Battery, 3/12

1stLt T. A. Smith
 8 May 69 to 29 May 69
 Capt. L. R. Krolak
 30 May 69 to 16 July 69

1st Prov. 155 How Battery

1stLt J. G. Ferrari
 8 May 69 to 9 June 69
 Capt. R. J. Conlter
 10 June 69 to 16 July 69

Mortar Battery, 3/12

1stLt B. C. Wilson
 8 May 69 to 25 May 69
 1st Lt E. M. Campbell
 26 May 69 to 16 July 69

5. Supporting Forces.

2nd Prov. 155 How Battery

1stLt R. C. Hoopes

"A" Battery, 1/12

Capt. H. E. Loftin

"B" Battery, 1/12

1stLt J. J. Marshall

3rd Prov. 155 How Battery, 2/12

Capt. T. B. Hutchison

"D" Battery, 2/12

1stLt G. E. Hodge

"E" Battery, 2/12

Capt. H. C. Barnum Jr.

"F" Battery, 2/12

Capt. C. F. Norton

"C" Battery, 6/33 USA

Capt. H. R. Morgan

"K" Battery, 4/12

Capt. W. D. Walker

6. Intelligence.

a. May: The 4th Marines supported by 3d Battalion, 12th Marines and teams from 3d Reconnaissance Battalion made contacts with the following enemy units throughout the month: 3d Battalion, 36th Regiment, 308th Division in the area northeast of Fire Support Base Fuller; 88th Regiment, 308th Division at grid XD989623; 5th Regiment, 304th Division and the 246th Regiment near grid XD966667. Vandegrift Combat Base was subjected to frequent 82mm mortar attacks from the south-southwest and 107mm and 122mm rocket attacks from the west.

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b. June: Enemy elements encountered during June consisted mainly of groups from the 57th Regiment, 304th NVA Division to the north along the DMZ. The beginning of the NVA "Summer Offensive" predicted in May did not materialize. There were 6 rocket attacks on Vandegrift Combat Base by elements of the 84th Artillery Rocket Regiment. Vandegrift Combat Base took a total of 66 rockets. Of this total, 46 were 107mm and 20 were 122mm. The rockets were fired from the west-northwest of the base. The attacks took place in the morning usually commencing somewhere between 0730 and 0930. Volleys were spaced about 15 minutes apart and each volley consisted of from 4 to 6 rockets. The fire support bases enjoyed a period of comparative calm while ground units were involved in scattered small unit contacts.

c. July: Sporadic rocket attacks on Vandegrift Combat Base continued during the first week of July and then discontinued. Vandegrift Combat Base was fired on with 82mm mortars but all rounds impacted outside the lines. Recon teams sighted small units of NVA and observed them moving in a north-western direction.

During the operation the weather remained clear with steadily rising temperatures and little rain. As a result, observation improved and the enemy was restricted to moving in small groups. The terrain was mountainous with heavy canopy.

7. Mission. To provide direct support artillery to the 4th Marine Regiment.

8. Concept of Operation. Continue assigned mission by positioning artillery batteries on Fire Support Bases Neville, Russell, Cates, Hill 691 and Sandy to support the 4th Marines in search and clear operations in Herkimer Mountain AO. Fire Support Base Neville was closed and Sandy was established. Both positions were occupied by "G", 3/12.

9. Execution. At the commencement of Herkimer Mountain the 3d Battalion, 12th Marines was displaced in the following locations: Headquarters Battery was at Vandegrift Combat Base, "G" Battery was at Neville. "H" Battery was at Russell, "I" Battery was at Vandegrift Combat Base, "W" Battery was at Quang Tri Combat Base and 1st Prov. 155 How Battery was at Cates.

8 May
2400H - Operation Herkimer Mountain began and Operation Purple Martin ended.

9 May
1502H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 169 rounds of shell HE on fifteen NVA in the open at grid XD941684.. The surveillance was 3 NVA

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KIA confirmed. The mission was observed by an AO from the 3d Marine Division.

10 May

0600H - 3d Battalion, 12th Marines was relieved of operational control of the 3d Provisional 155mm Howitzer Battery.

0726H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 144 rounds of shell HE at 10 NVA in the open on grid XD853625. A sweep of the area revealed blood and bandages on the trails.

1300H - Battery "H", 3/12 personnel returned to Fire Support Base Russell and Battery "I", 3/12 personnel left for Cua Viet.

12 May

0800H - 3d Battalion, 12th Marines assumed operational control of Battery "E", 2nd Battalion, 12th Marines at Vandegrift Combat Base.

0925H - Vandegrift Combat Base received 7 rounds of 107mm rockets. A total of 248 rounds of shell HE were fired to suppress the rockets, at grids XD915418, 925513, 962513 and 925503.

13 May

1141H - Vandegrift Combat Base received 15 rounds of 107mm rockets. A total of 253 rounds of 155mm and 105mm shell HE was fired in rocket suppression fire. The grids fired were XD939516, 925493, 935506, 916507 and 908529.

1200H - 3d Battalion, 12th Marines assumed operational control of the 1st Provisional 155 Howitzer Battery located at Fire Support Base Cates, grid XD927436.

14 May

1300H - 3d Battalion, 12th Marines assumed operational control of Mortar Battery, 2/12 located at Vandegrift Combat Base.

1805H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 24 rounds of shell HE on a suspected enemy base camp at grid XD823566. The result was 1 secondary explosion. The mission was fired in support of the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines.

15 May

1300H - Battery "I", 3/12 returned from Cua Viet and occupied their new position at Vandegrift Combat Base.

16 May

0930H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 107 rounds of shell HE on NVA in the open at grid XD944613. The mission was in support of recon team American Beauty. The surveillance was 3 NVA KIA confirmed.

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17 May

1632H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 124 rounds of shell HE on an active rocket site at grid XD989600.

18 May

0700H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 142 rounds of shell HE on active mortars at grid XD875635. The mission was conducted by an AO from the 3d Marine Division. The surveillance was 1 NVA KIA and one mortar pit destroyed.

19 May

1930H - Battery "I", 3/12 along with Battery "W", 2/12 fired a total of 258 rounds of shell HE in mortar suppression fire on grids YD005440, 015440, 005456, XD995455 and 962423.

20 May

1135H - 1st Provisional 155mm Howitzer Battery, 3/12 fired 48 rounds of shell HE on grid XD846419. The nature of target was NVA in the open. The mission was fired in support of a recon team and there was no surveillance.

21 May

0800H - 3d Battalion, 12th Marines was relieved of operational control of Battery "C", 6/33 USA.

2222H - Battery "I", 3/12 fired 60 rounds of HE at moving lights in grid XD056414. The target was observed by Battery "I" personnel. The mission resulted in four secondary explosions.

22 May

0558H - Battery "I", 3/12 and "W", 2/12 expended 158 rounds of shell in counter mortar fire. The impact grids were XD999452, YD006440, and 020440. The mortars were silenced.

0800H - 3d Battalion, 12th Marines was relieved of operational control of Battery "W", 2/12.

23 May

1600H - 3d Battalion, 12th Marines assumed operational control of Battery "D", 2/12 located at the Rockpile. grid XD985542.

1624H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 24 rounds of shell HE at an active .50 caliber machine gun position at grid XD827644. The mission was fired in support of 1st Battalion, 4th Marines. The position was silenced.

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1920H - Battery "D", 2/12 and Battery "I", 3/12 expended a total of 286 rounds of shell HE on grid XD998453. The nature of target was mortars which were firing on Vandegrift Combat Base. The mortars were silenced.

25 May

1026H - Vandegrift Combat Base began taking rockets. A total of 569 rounds of shell HE (105mm and 155mm) were fired in rocket suppression fire. The grids covered were XD921493, 929483, 904497 and 934495.

1158H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 90 rounds of shell HE on grid XD928622. The nature of target was active mortars. The mission was fired in support of recon team Lucky Punch. Seven secondary explosions were observed.

26 May

0850H - Vandegrift Combat Base began taking rockets. A total of 306 rounds of shell HE (105mm and 155mm) were expended on grids XD954495 and 985430 in rocket suppression fire.

0818H - Battery "G", 3/12 fired a total of 103 rounds of shell HE on five NVA in the open at grid XD771539. The mission was fired in support of recon team Frost Berg. The surveillance was two NVA KIA confirmed.

1100H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 104 rounds of shell HE in support of the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines. The nature of target was small arms fire. The surveillance was 2 NVA KIA confirmed.

1215H - Battery "D", 2/12 displaced from Elliot Combat Base to LZ Shepherd.

29 May

0650H - 1st Provisional 155mm Howitzer Battery, 3/12 expended 18 rounds of shell HE on grid XD942476. The nature of target was NVA in the open. The mission was fired in support of the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines. The surveillance was 1 NVA KIA.

30 May

0600H - 3d Battalion, 12th Marines observed a 24 hour cease fire as directed by higher authority.

1132H - 1st Provisional 155mm Howitzer Battery fired 21 rounds of shell HE on grid XD841418. The nature of target was enemy contact. The mission was fired in support of 3d Battalion, 9th Marines. The

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only surveillance was enemy contact broken.

31 May

1152H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 126 rounds of shell HE on grid XD882540. The nature of target was a suspected .50 caliber position. The mission was observed by a Division A0. The surveillance was 3 NVA KIA confirmed.

1300H on 1 May a change of command ceremony was held at the forward command post of the 3d Battalion, 12th Marines. Major R. E. Gibson relieved Lieutenant Colonel E. E. Foxworth Jr as battalion commander.

1 June

1847H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 46 rounds of shell HE on grid XD965594. The nature of target was 3 NVA in the open. Battery "K", 4/12 fired 44 rounds of shell HE on the same grid. The surveillance was 4 probable KIA's.

8 June

1645H - Battery "G", 3/12 fired 18 rounds of shell HE on grid XD838665. The nature of target was a recon team in contact. Surveillance was 1 confirmed NVA KIA.

9 June

2315H - 1st Provisional 155mm Howitzer Battery, 3/12 along with Battery "I", 3/12 fired a total of 250 rounds of shell HE on grid XD987411. The nature of target was a column of enemy troops. Six additional batteries also fired this grid. Total surveillance for all artillery on this target was 28 confirmed NVA KIA's.

10 June

0634H - Battery "G", 3/12 fired 30 rounds of shell HE on grid XD836479. The nature of target was fresh trails. The surveillance was 1 confirmed NVA KIA.

11 June

1201H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 12 rounds of shell HE on grid XD864615. The nature of target was 6 NVA. There was negative surveillance.

2400H - 3d Battalion, 12th Marines was relieved of operational control of the 1st Provisional 155mm Howitzer Battery, 3/12 and Battery "I", 3/12 to the 5th Artillery of the 4th Regiment USA Artillery.

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12 June

1628H - 1st 8" Howitzer Battery, 12th Marines fired 33 rounds of shell HE on grid XD898644. The nature of target was 30 to 40 bunkers! Surveillance was 2 confirmed NVA KIA's, 12 bunkers destroyed and 50 meters of trench line destroyed.

13 June

2045H - Battery "K", 4/12 fired 46 rounds of shell HE on grid XD956557. The nature of target was 5 NVA. Surveillance was 2 secondary explosions and 1 fire. The mission was fired in support of the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines.

14 June

0830H - 3d Battalion, 12th Marines assumed operational control of Battery "W", 2/12 at Vandegrift Combat Base.

1208H - Battery "G", 3/12 fired 76 rounds of shell HE on grid XD900645. Nature of target was bunkers/.50 caliber position. Surveillance was 4 bunkers and 1 mortar destroyed.

15 June

1635H - Battery "H", 3/12 along with Battery "K", 4/12 fired a total of 238 rounds of shell HE on grid XD933661. Nature of target was NVA firing at A0. Surveillance was 1 confirmed NVA KIA, 6 bunkers destroyed and one secondary explosion.

16 June

1300H - Battery "G", 3/12 fired 331 rounds of shell HE on grid XD878588. The nature of target was enemy contact. The infantry swept the area and found 6 107mm rockets and several helmets and packs covered with blood.

17 June

1346H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 36 rounds of shell HE on grid XD838641. The nature of target was an active mortar. Surveillance was mortar silenced.

18 June

1200H - 3d Battalion, 12th Marines lost operational control of Battery "W", 2/12.

1246H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 66 rounds of shell HE on grid XD975656. The nature of target was 5 NVA. An infantry unit went into the area and found 2 NVA KIA's and 5 enemy packs.

19 June

0008H - Battery "I", 3/12 fired 164 rounds of shell illumination on grid XD978558. The nature of target was a recon team in contact. Battery "H", 3/12 fired 37 rounds of shell HE on grid XD979564 for the recon team. Enemy contact was broken. The results of the artillery firing are unknown in that the recon team was extracted.

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21 June

1259H - Battery "G", 3/12 fired 49 rounds of shell HE on grid XD886572. The nature of target was an enemy escape route. Surveillance was 2 confirmed NVA KIA. The mission was fired in support of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines.

22 June

1000H - Battery "I", 3/12 displaced to Hill 691 from Vandegrift Combat Base.

23 June

1000H - 3d Battalion, 12th Marines assumed operational control of Battery "E", 2/12 at Vandegrift Combat Base.

1504H - Battery "E", 2/12 fired 88 rounds of shell HE on grid XD933476. The nature of target was NVA sighting. Surveillance was 6 large secondary explosions.

26 June

1559H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 30 rounds of shell HE on grid XD940653. The nature of target was bunkers, camouflaged weapons and trails. Surveillance was 4 bunkers destroyed and 1 automatic weapon position destroyed.

28 June

1114H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 62 rounds of shell HE on grid XD935660. The nature of target was an active mortar. Surveillance 1 very large secondary explosion and numerous small explosions.

1 July

0930H - Battery "K", 4/12 fired 10 rounds of shell HE on grid XD941638. The nature of target was a prep fire. The surveillance was 1 confirmed NVA KIA.

1340H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 78 rounds of shell HE on grid XD874659. The nature of target was fresh trails/bunkers. The surveillance was 2 secondary explosions and 2 bunkers destroyed.

2 July

0551H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 60 rounds of shell HE on grid XD924627. The nature of target was a prep fire and the surveillance was 1 secondary explosion.

0902H - Battery "K", 4/12 fired 8 rounds of shell HE on grid XD826638. The nature of target was a bunker complex. The surveillance was 1 secondary explosion and 1 bunker destroyed.

1920H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 93 rounds of shell HE on grid XD947648. The nature of target was a .50 caliber position, bunkers and trails. The surveillance was 5 secondary explosions.

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2204H - Battery "G", 3/12 fired 97 rounds of shell HE on grid YD011514. The nature of target was recon team Oak Tree in contact. Negative surveillance was given.

3 July

0001H - Operation Arlington Canyon began.

1645H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 78 rounds of shell HE and 36 rounds of Improved Conventional Munitions on active mortars at grid XD932654. The surveillance was mortars silenced. The mission was fired in support of 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines.

4 July

1740H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 70 rounds of shell HE on grid XD865625. The nature of target was 15 NVA. Negative surveillance was given. The mission was fired in support of 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines.

5 July

1208H - Platoon "A" of the 1st 8" Battery fired 20 rounds of shell HE on grid XD896675. The nature of target was enemy bunkers. The surveillance was 3 bunkers destroyed. The mission was fired in the DMZ and was observed by an AO.

6 July

0724H - Battery "H", 3/12 and Battery "K", 4/12 fired 398 rounds of shell HE on grid XD920616. The nature of target was active small arms fire. There was negative surveillance given. The mission was fired in support of 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines.

7 July

1102H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 146 rounds of shell HE on active mortars at grid XD930649. The surveillance was mortars silenced. The mission was fired in support of 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines.

8 July

0830H - Battery "K", 4/12 fired 12 rounds of shell HE on grid XD932654. The nature of target was a .50 caliber position and heavy trail activity. The surveillance was 2 large secondary explosions.

1609H - Platoon "A" of the 1st 8" Battery fired 24 rounds of shell HE on grid XD893630. The nature of target was bunkers and fighting holes. The surveillance was 9 bunkers destroyed and 1 secondary explosion.

10 July

1140H - Battery "G", 3/12 displaced from Vandegrift Combat Base to FSB Sandy.

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1403 - Battery "X", 4/12 Battery "I", 3/12 and the 1st Provisional 155mm Battery, 3/12 fired a total of 413 rounds of shell HE on grid XD908472. The nature of target was NVA surrounding the recon team Oak Tree. The mission was adjusted by an AO and the surveillance was 3 NVA KIA confirmed.

11 July

1121H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 50 rounds of shell HE on grid XD840540. The nature of target was a suspected enemy infiltration route. The surveillance was 7 secondary explosions.

1340H - Battery "I", 3/12 fired 78 rounds of shell HE on grid XD887512. The nature of target was active small arms fire. The surveillance was small arms fire ceased.

12 July

1556H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 18 rounds of shell HE on bunkers at grid XD897646. The surveillance was 1 bunker destroyed. This mission was fired into the DMZ.

1725H - Battery "I", 3/12 fired 48 rounds of shell HE on a bunker complex at grid XD896485. The surveillance was 2 bunkers destroyed.

13 July

0730H - Battery "I", 3/12, Platoon "C" of the 5th 175mm Gun Battery, and the 1st 155mm Provisional Battery, 3/12 fired a total of 413 rounds of shell mixed on moving light on the Khe Sanh Air-strip at grid XD853418. The surveillance was 15 small fires, 5 large fires and 10 secondary explosions.

15 July

2144H - 1st 155mm Provisional Battery fired 60 rounds of shell HE on grid XD854417. The nature of target was moving lights on the Khe Sanh Airstrip. The surveillance was 4 secondary explosions.

16 July

1707H - Battery "H", 3/12 fired 126 rounds of shell HE on NVA in the open at grid XD886538. The surveillance was excellent coverage of target. The mission was fired in support of 3d Battalion, 4th Marines.

1600H - Operation Herkimer Mountain terminated and Operation Georgia Tar began.

10. Results.

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a. Friendly losses:

	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
KIA	0	0	0
WIA	1	0	0
MIA	0	0	0

b. Enemy losses (directly attributed to artillery):

	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>
KIA	16	9	4
TOTAL	29		

II. Administrative Matters.

a. Supply. Throughout this operation Headquarters, 3/12 was split between Quang Tri and Vandegrift Combat Base with the Battalion rear providing supplies and administrative support for the Command Group and the batteries. Class I and IV supplies were supplied by the 4th Marines to all fire support bases. Class V supplies were provided by Vandegrift LSA and partially from Quang Tri LSA. The remaining supplies were provided through the Battalion's organic supply system.

b. Maintenance. Third and fourth echelon maintenance was provided by FLSG "B". The direct exchange system was a factor in decreasing "downdown" time of equipment. Optical equipment continued to fog because of their age and weather conditions but this was not a large problem. Contact teams were used to help minimize time loss. The motor transport maintenance showed continued improvement during the operation. The deadline rate steadily declined although the Battalion was still hampered by direct exchange parts.

c. Treatment of Casualties. Casualties were treated promptly and efficiently. Minor injuries were treated by unit corpsmen. Those requiring evacuation received outstanding service, performed primarily by HMM-161 and HMM-262. The normal flow for casualties from a fire support base was:

- (1) Helilift to "C" Med VCB.
- (2) Helilift to 3d Med Bn QTCD.

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- (3) Helilift to on station hospital ship.
- (4) Further evacuation (if required) by helilift to USNH NAS Da Nang or 22nd CSF Da Nang.

d. Transportation. Personnel and supplies were moved primarily by convoy between Quang Tri and Vandegrift Combat Base with occasional helilifts directly from Quang Tri to fire support bases. The fire bases were resupplied exclusively by helilift throughout the operation. Adverse weather frequently limited resupply operations, but due to those short periods the battalion was able to maintain a satisfactory level of supply at all times. Critical items were obtained through the "walkthrough" requisitioning program at Battalion Supply.

e. Communication and Electronics. The major effort during the operation was maintaining all fire direction and conduct of fire nets required by the battalion FDC. Fire direction nets were maintained between FDC and all fire support bases. Conduct of fire nets were maintained with all supported units in the field and appropriate FSCC's. All nets were VHF/FM. Directional antennas or elevated ground plane antennas were used, dependent on the specific requirements of each circuit. Regimental FSCC circuits were maintained by double remoting FDC radios. Command traffic was passed from and to all units by radio through the Vandegrift/Quang Tri Command Net.

f. Inspections. On 23 May the battalion was inspected by the CG FMF PAC inspection team. The inspection team could find no area that was unsatisfactory. Communication and Electronics equipment in the battalion was also inspected by the team from FMF PAC. The results of the inspection were satisfactory.

12. Commanders Analysis. The 3d Battalion, 12th Marines displaced batteries as required to support infantry operations. The Fire Support Base Concept continued to prove its value by permitting maximum flexibility in providing artillery support. This concept allowed the positioning of batteries so that maximum use of firing capabilities could be obtained and also provide mutual support between fire support bases. Operation Herkimer Mountain was not marked by significant events that deserve special consideration but rather was characterized with a decrease in contact type actions. As the operation came to a close, fewer and fewer enemy sightings were made with periods in excess of twenty-four hours of virtually no enemy activity noted.

13. Recommendation. Something which is not an actual part of the operation but did come into light was the misuse of artillery by recon. There were several instances when a team used fire support elimination rather than coordination. I recommend that the teams be properly instructed on the capabilities and employment of artillery. Also during the operation, units were being subjected to mortar attacks and permanent positions such as Vandegrift Combat Base were being attacked with rockets. Units in the field should

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develop their own counter mortar plan even if they stay in a position for a brief period. Permanent positions should not over use their counter mortar and rocket plans. For preventive measures new grids should be worked up and fired. If an established plan is fired too often then the grids become ineffective.


H. H. DAIR

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OPERATION HERKIMER MOUNTAIN

TABLE OF MISSIONS FIRED AND ROUNDS EXPENDED

	MISSIONS FIRED	ROUNDS EXPENDED
May 1969	4355	14902
June 1969	4345	40488
July 1969	2388	29043
	<u>11,088</u>	<u>114,433</u>

ENCLOSURE (1)
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