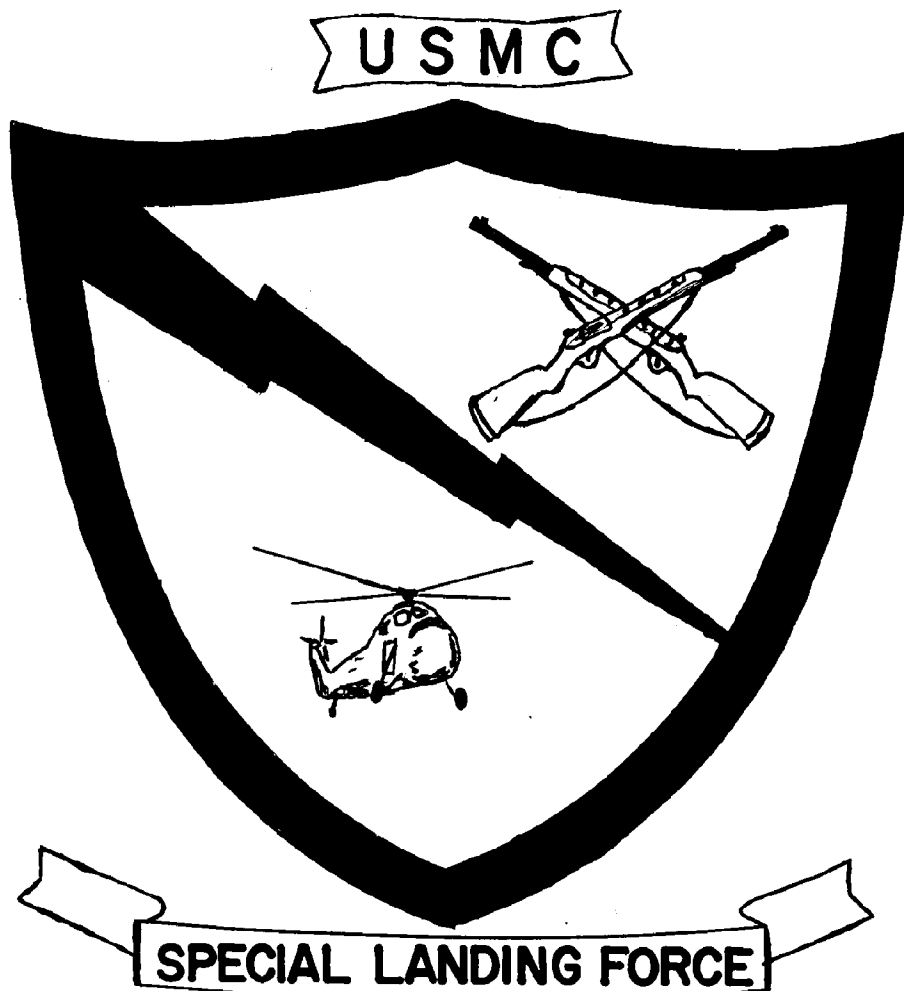


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AFTER ACTION REPORT OPERATIONS DECK HOUSE IV AND PRAIRIE



CTG 79.5 303288

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HEADQUARTERS
Special Landing Force
USS Valley Force (LPH-8)
FPO San Francisco 96601

3/BSM/lpp
Ser: 0018-66
30 Sep 1966

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From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, SEVENTH Fleet
Subj: Combat After Action Reports, Operations DECKHOUSE IV and PRAIRIE
Encl: (1) Units Daily Movement Overlay Operations DECKHOUSE IV and PRAIRIE
(2) BLT 1/26 After Action Report, DECKHOUSE IV and PRAIRIE
(3) HMM 363 After Action Report, DECKHOUSE IV and PRAIRIE
(4) Results of Operations DECKHOUSE IV and PRAIRIE

1. The subject report is submitted herewith. The SLF basic report is covered in two parts, Part I - After Action Report Operation DECKHOUSE IV, Part II - After Action Report, Operation PRAIRIE.

2. Enclosures (1) through (4) amplify this report.

PART I COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT DECKHOUSE IV

Map Reference: AMS 7014, 1:50,000 Sheet 6442 IV. AMS 18020, 1:25,000, Sheet 6442 IV.

1. Operation DECKHOUSE IV was a unilateral amphibious operation combining surfaceborne and heliborne assault forces and conducted in accordance with NWP-22(A).

2. This operation was conducted in the area of GIO LINH, Quang Tri Province, I CTZ, RVN (Vic YD 3073). The operation commenced on 15 September 1966 at 0700H with the landing of the surface assault forces on Blue Beach (YD 303747) and helo lifted assault forces in LZ Sparrow (YD 195695) approximately seven miles inland. The operation terminated at 161200H when the SLF CHOPPED to CG III MAF for employment in Operation PRAIRIE under OPCON 3rd Marine Division.

3. Task Organization.

Special Landing Force (Landing Force)

Col H. D. WORTMAN

HMM 363

Col J. D. MCGOUGH

BLT 1/26

LtCol A. A. MONTI

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4. Intelligence.

a. Terrain: The objective area includes part of the Central Vietnam lowlands. Originating in the foot hills of the Annam Mountains, terminates at the coastline in a wide belt of massive dunes and low sandy shores continuous except where interrupted by the mouths of rivers and lagoons. A narrow transitional zone of rounded hill parallels the coastline 15 to 20 miles inland and separates the lowlands from the Annam Mountains. Trafficability is fair to poor throughout the area. During heavy rains cross-country movement is extremely difficult on the Coastal Plain. The land is devoted to wetland rice paddies throughout the plain and beginning about 8 miles inland are scattered stands of woodland and brush. Highway 1 runs north-south about 10 miles inland. Highway 9 commences at Dong Ha (YD 239608) and runs west. The Song Hieu Giang and Song Thach Ham Rivers, which originate in the Annam Mountains, are the major tributaries which meet and form the Cau Viet River at YD 267625. The Cau Viet River from this point runs to the sea. LCM's can navigate the Cau Viet to where it joins the Thach Hau and from there to Quang Tri, only LCP's can navigate. A stream parallels the beach approximately 4.2 miles inland. Highways 1 and 9 cross numerous bridges of various structures throughout the area. The dune belt which extends inland 4.2 miles consists mostly of sandy ridges up to 20 feet in height with patches of dryland crops. Avenues of approach are unrestricted on the coastal plain.

b. Beach Study. Blue Beach (YD 299749) is a straight beach extending in a northwest-southeast direction, and is 1.5 miles long. The beach averages one hundred feet in width. Composition is soft sand, firm when wet. Beach gradient of the foreshore is 1:12. Nearshore approach to the beach is partially restricted by submerged sand bar located 225 yards offshore and paralleling beach. Clearance over sand bar center is 6 to 10 feet at low tide. Nearshore gradient is 1:30.

c. Enemy Situation.

(1) General. The exact current location and disposition of the NVA forces in and around the DMZ cannot be determined at this time. However, there are indications of elements of these forces currently operating as far south as route 7. Since the withdrawal of the 324 B Div at the end of Operation HASTINGS, reconnaissance and air crews have reported extensive supply activity in the DMZ area, including dispersed supply points, road traffic and movement of material by sea. There has been over 130 secondary explosions reported resulting from air strikes in or north of the DMZ.

d. Order of Battle. There has been no recent significant activities in the AOA, although this area is suspected to be a highly used infiltration area and probably many caches may be uncovered. Most recent and accepted OOB for the Quang Tri area include but is not limited to the following:

324 B Div

DMZ

Vic YD 030720

90th Regt

Vic YD 050650

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803rd Regt

Vic YD 990600

808th Bn

Vic YD 370570

The 341st NVA Div is dispersed into rural and forrested areas in or north of the DMZ. This unit is the southernmost NVA Div in North Vietnam. The most recent area of operation for the 341st Div is an area in the vicinity of Vinh Linh north of the DMZ.

e. Enemy Contact. Substantial contact was made with elements of the 324th B Div. On D-Day Div Recon encountered an estimated company size unit vicinity coordinates YD 173635. Enemy was dressed in black and khaki uniforms. Contact was broken after four hours, when supporting fire forced the enemy to withdraw. Late afternoon on D plus 1, Company B enroute to Objective 5 (YD 152718), received small arms fire from an estimated 30-40 enemy coordinates YD 153716. Enemy broke contact after 50 minutes due to supporting fires. At approximately the same time, Company D received small arms fire from estimated 12-20 enemy coordinates YD 153732. Artillery called and contact was broken. Company D and helicopters then received fire from village coordinates YD 153735. S/A fire caused one helicopter to land in the company area. Air strike called and fire ceased. Company A, during early morning on D plus 2, was attacked by an estimated company size unit vicinity coordinates YD 180645. The enemy, wearing helmets and grass camouflage uniforms, retreated under supporting arms fire. Probes of friendly positions, harrassing small arms and mortar fire was experienced throughout DECKHOUSE IV.

5. Mission. As directed by COMSEVENTHFLT message 140626Z (Initiating Directive) the mission of the Landing Force was to conduct a search and destroy amphibious operation against VC/NVA forces in AOA in Quang Tri Province and/or operations as agreed upon with CG, III MAF in conjunction with Operation PRAIRIE.

6. Concept of Operation. Operation DECKHOUSE IV was a unilateral amphibious operation conducted by the ARG/SLF. The operation was planned as a seven to ten day search and destroy operation. The concept provided for the SLF to conduct waterborne and heliborne assault landings to conduct search and destroy operations; to seize Landing Force Objectives; to establish blocking positions south of the DMZ and to conduct a tactical withdrawal. The concept was characterized by mobility, maximum utilization of supporting fires, surprise and shock action. Fire support was provided by the organic artillery of the BLT; NGF consisting of one DD, one 8 inch cruiser, one 6 inch cruiser, and one LSMR; and CAS from the 1st MAF. The SLF was to be prepared to CHOP to CG, III MAF or his designated subordinate commander for employment in Operation PRAIRIE.

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7. Execution. Operation DECKHOUSE IV was executed in accordance with CTG 79.5 Operation Order 328-66 supplemented with a Frag Order published for the Gio Linh area. (See enclosure (3) and (4) After Action Reports of BLT 1/26 and HMM 363 for details of this execution.).

8. Results. See enclosure (5).

9. Commander's Analysis. This analysis is limited to those matters at the Special Landing Force level. BLT and squadron level matters are discussed in their respective reports, enclosure (3) and (4).

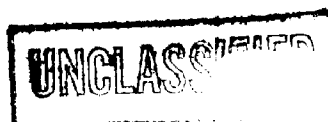
a. Planning.

(1) The planning phase for Operation DECKHOUSE IV continued over an unusually long period due to the programmed build-up envisioned by 3rd MarDiv in the Quang Tri area. The additional time available to the SLF permitted the liaison group to provide daily SitReps to the CATF and ultimately to publish a warning order to the BLT and HMM which assisted materially in preparation of their operation orders for DECKHOUSE IV.

(2) Planning was initiated on receipt of CG III MAF message 022354Z Sep68 which requested the use of the ARG/SLF for the period 15-26 September. CTG 79.5 accompanied by staff representatives and TG 76.5 representatives departed for Danang on 5 September and effected liaison with CG, III MAF, CG, 3rd Marine Division, CG, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, CO, 4th Marine Regiment and the Gio Linh District Advisors during the period 5-10 September.

(3) During the initial liaison the following planning steps were accomplished:

- (a) Aerial reconnaissance of the tentative AOA.
- (b) Procurement of maps, area analysis and enemy order of battle.
- (c) Communication frequencies assigned and coordinated.
- (d) Arrangements made for disposition of captured VC/NVA and VCS.
- (e) Coordination on casualty evacuation.
- (f) Details of air support provided by 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.
- (g) Establishment of command relationships as provided for by NWP 22(A).
- (h) Provisions for emergency reaction force between the SLF and the 4th Marines.



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- (1) Provisions for logistic support by 3rd MarDiv, if required.
- (4) Plans were made for establishing liaison with the following commands:
 - (a) 3rd Marine Division.
 - (b) 4th Marines.
 - (c) District Headquarters, Gio Linh.

b. Intelligence. Prior to DECKHOUSE IV, arrangements were made for maps, area studies, aerial photography SPAR and RED HAZE reports and ARVN liaison personnel for use as interpreters.

(1) Intelligence material provided by III MAF was accurate and included area studies, SPAR reports, aerial photography and ORDER of BATTLE. Enemy activity and RED HAZE overlays were provided by CICV.

(2) As previous intelligence had indicated, units of the 324th B Div were operating south of the DMZ. The enemy units in contact, being of company size, appeared to be in a training status and/or to control the local population.

c. Command Relationships. Operation DECKHOUSE IV was a unilateral amphibious operation with command relationships in accordance with NWP-22 (A).

d. Supporting Arms.

(1) Due to the deep inland objectives and strong enemy positions consisting of trenches and bunkers, NGF support was an essential supporting arm. However, initial ranges for NGF were between 20,000 and 22,000 meters which precluded maximum utilization of the DD. The USS Saint Paul (CA 73) and the USS Oklahoma City (CLF 5) with their greater range provided the Landing Force with exceptionally accurate and timely fires.

(2) Close Air Support was provided by 1stMAW. Strike air was scheduled on condition four and no problems were encountered.

(3) Fire Support Coordination was adequate during DECKHOUSE IV. Initially there were delays by the BMT AirLnO in relaying information on artillery and naval gunfire missions to support helicopters. This was rectified by the Fire Support Coordinator. The FSCC must be responsive to changes in available supporting arms in order to achieve timely and effective utilization. For example, in one instance both artillery and naval gunfire continued firing on one target although CAS, requested for this target, had reported for the mission with a limited station time. On the spot correction and closer supervision corrected this difficulty by D plus one.

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e. Logistics. During the planning phase of DECKHOUSE IV arrangements were made with 3rd Marine Division for logistical support, if required. Logistics support for Operation DECKHOUSE IV was provided solely from the assets of SLF. All supplies were delivered directly to units ashore by helo from ARG shipping. Logistic support to the BLT ashore was adequate and responsive to requirements.

f. Communications.

(1) Communications nets were activated at H-1 on D-Day with no delay. After the BLT arrived ashore it encountered problems with the AN/PRC-47 and was not able to maintain this radio set on Landing Force Tactical Net #2. Throughout D-Day atmospheric interference was encountered on all VHF/FM and HF/SSB frequencies. Advance propagation information predicted strong atmospheric interference during the month of September. Atmospheric interference decreased significantly after D-Day except for certain periods during the day, especially in the early morning hours.

(2) Communications between the ARG, CG, III MAF, CG, 3rd Mar-Div and 4th Marines, via the secure on-line circuit was intermittent to nonexistent and an unreliable means of providing a rapid exchange of information. This was the second operation in which the LPH could not maintain communications via a secure on-line circuit with the units ashore even though the units ashore were able to maintain reliable communication among themselves.

(3) Radio relay was established early on D plus one. This circuit consisted of a radio relay set AN/MRC-62 ashore and a radio relay set AN/GRC-10 aboard the LPH. The relay remained operative throughout the operation and facilitated rapid and reliable communications between the SLF Headquarters and the BLT. Closer coordination of VHF/FM frequencies prior to the operation eliminated the interference on the radio relay circuit that had been encountered on previous operations.

(4) It was planned to maintain communications between the SLF Headquarters and the BLT ashore over Landing Force Tactical Nets #1 and 2 and BLT Tactical Net #1.

(a) Landing Force Tactical Net #1 (VHF/FM) utilized a shipboard receiver-transmitter 524/VRC and a radio set AN/PRC-25 ashore.

(b) Landing Force Tactical Net #2 (HF/SSB) planned for a radio set VRC-32 aboard ship and a radio set AN/PRC-47 ashore. Due to equipment problems ashore and maximum employment of remaining AN/

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(8) CG, III MAF 180352Z SEP66 - Directed CG, 3rdMarDiv to pass OPCON of HMM 363 to CG, 1st MAW and be prepared to reconstitute SLF on order. Directed CG, 1st MAW assume OPCON HMM 363, be prepared to pass OPCON to SLF on order.

(9) CG, 3rd MarDiv 181027Z SEP66 - Directed HMM 363 report OPCON 1st MAW. Directed 4th Marines to be prepared to reconstitute SLF for withdrawal operation on order.

(10) CG, First MAW 181043Z SEP66 - Directed MAG-16 assume OPCON HMM 363 effective 181200H. Be prepared to pass OPCON direct to CTG 79.5 on order.

(11) CG, First MAW 240328Z SEP66 - Directed MAG-16 to chop HMM 363 to CTG 79.5 effective 241200H.

(12) CG, 3rd MarDiv 241516Z SEP66 - BLT 1/26 chopped to CTG 79.5 241200H. Directed CTG 79.5 to report to OPCON CTG 76.5 effective 250700H SEP.

(13) CTG 76.5 241140Z SEP66 - Assumed OPCON of SLF effective 250700H and reconstituted AOA for withdrawal.

2. The SLF commenced participation in Operation PRAIRIE on 18 September. By this time the SLF had penetrated to the western limit of the AOA and two companies were in contact with NVA units at YD 151719 and YD 145732. BLT 1/26, under OPCON of 4th Marines, conducted search and destroy operations west and southwest of this area maintaining continuous contact with elements of the 324th B NVA Division. On 24 September, 1966, the SLF was reconstituted and began to reposition for withdrawal. The SLF was CHOPPED to CATF at 250700 September and the Landing Force commenced tactical withdrawal. By 251600H withdrawal was completed and SLF embarked aboard ARG shipping.

3. Task Organization. The task organization of the Special Landing Force was radically changed from that of DECKHOUSE IV. The SLF ground element (BLT 1/26) reported to the in-country ground commander and the air element (HMM 363) reported to the in-country air commander. The SLF staff was not utilized during Operation PRAIRIE.

4. Intelligence.

a. There were no significant changes to intelligence from DECKHOUSE IV. The hedge rows throughout the area were used extensively by the enemy to conceal trenches and fighting positions. The pattern used was "L" shaped to provide flanking fire in either direction. The area being comparatively flat and open made this system very effective due to the large number of hedge rows.

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b. Enemy Contact. Contact was maintained with elements of the 324th B Division. Enemy activity was characterized by heavy mortar and automatic weapons fire, in addition to the use of 57mm anti-tank weapons. The NVA prisoner captured on 23 September, 1966, upon final interrogation, was determined to be a member of the 4th Battalion, 812th Regiment. In an area bounded by coordinates YD 120710 to YD 120740 and YD 150710 to YD 150740 an extensive trench, bunker and tunnel system was encountered. These positions were used to a great extent by the enemy in delaying and harassing friendly units. Heavy supporting fire forced the enemy to flee these positions north into the DMZ.

5. Mission. The mission assigned BLT 1/26 was to continue search and destroy operations within the assigned area of operations. HMM-363 was assigned the mission of providing helicopter support to all elements engaged in Operation PRAIRIE.

6. Concept of Operations. The concept of operations provided for BLT 1/26 to continue search and destroy operations south of the DMZ utilizing maximum supporting fires. Fire support was provided by the 105mm Howitzer Battery and the 107mm Howtar Battery of BLT 1/26; CAS by the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing; and NGF support by one 8" cruiser and one destroyer. Helicopter support for all battalions committed to Operation PRAIRIE was provided by MAG-16.

7. Execution. See enclosures (1) through (4).

8. Results. See enclosure (5).

9. Commander's Analysis. This analysis is limited to those matters at the Special Landing Force level as it pertains to Operation PRAIRIE. BLT and squadron level matters are discussed in their respective reports, enclosures (3) and (4).

a. Planning.

(1) Prior to and during Operation DECKHOUSE IV, close liaison, joint briefings and coordination were effected with III MAF, 3rd Marine Division and 4th Marine Regiment in anticipation of OPCON shift to CG, 3rd MarDiv or CO, 4th Marines Regiment and subsequent employment of the SLF further west in support of Operation PRAIRIE. On 18 September 1966 OPCON of the BLT and HMM was passed to 4th Marines Regiment and MAG-16 and it was indicated, at that time, that BLT 1/26 would remain in their general area of operations (NW portion of AOA) south of the DMZ rather than move west to a new TOAR. The 4th Marine Regiment was to continue operations approximately 10 miles SW of BLT 1/26

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(2) A Special Landing Force liaison officer was assigned to the 4th Marine Regiment. In addition, the SLF maintained close liaison and conducted daily staff visits with the 4th Marine Regiment in an effort to keep 76.5/79.5 apprised of the situation ashore and to insure continued utilization of ARG assets. Communications remained essentially as during DECKHOUSE IV with the exceptions that the BLT was instructed to submit requests for CAS, additional artillery support, and resupply through the 4th Marines. The mission of the BLT and its AO did not change significantly subsequent to the passage of operational control.

b. Intelligence. Previous intelligence had indicated an unidentified NVA Regiment operating in the vicinity coordinates YD 045705. Based on the interrogation of the NVA prisoner captured 23 September, 1966, it is believed that this Regiment is the 812th NVA Regiment. Enemy units operating in and around the DMZ cannot be specifically located as they continue to move unobstructed throughout the DMZ area and send units into RVN to guard and maintain LOC's and infiltration routes.

c. Command Relationships. The SLF operated under the OPCON of the 3rd Marine Division after CHOP to CG, III MAF. At 0700H on 25 September 1966 OPCON of the SLF was passed to CTG 76.5 for withdrawal and command relationships were then in accordance with NWP 22 (A)/LFM-01.

d. Logistics.

(1) Initial liaison with the 4th Marines established in-country logistics support during Operation PRAIRIE, as the primary means of resupply of the BLT. Landing Force Class V was available if required and on 23 September 600 rounds of HE 105mm howitzer ammunition was transported from the USS Vancouver to Dong Ha by LCM.

(2) Casualty evacuation of BLT 1/26 personnel was coordinated through the 4th Marines facilities at Dong Ha. Casualty reporting for SLF units was accomplished by the SLF CRCC. Liaison was established at Dong Ha in order to assist in expediting reports of casualties to the SLF CRCC located aboard the LPH. In addition, liaison visits were made to Dong Ha, "A" Med at Phu Bai and the USS Repose in order to insure current and complete accounting of all casualties. In so far as possible all SLF casualties were evacuated directly to the LPH for sorting, determination of need for further evacuation and institution of resuscitation measures, as necessary.

f. Communications. See Part I para 9.f.

-g. Tactical Air Observation. During Operation PRAIRIE TAO was provided by the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and maintained in condition IV.

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h. Psychological Warfare. No psychological warfare operations were conducted during SLF participation in Operation PRAIRIE.

i. Civic Action. One civic action visit was made during Operation PRAIRIE in coordination with the Chief of Gio Linh District.

(1) A team composed of SLF Staff and medical/dental personnel from the USS Iwo Jima and BLT 1/26 visited the hamlet of Gio Linh (YD 232722) on 23 September 1966. Approximately 183 patients were treated and 64 infected teeth extracted. Soap, clothing and other medical supplies were distributed.

(2) Medical and dental supplies were furnished from SLF assets. All actions were well received.



H. D. WORTMAN

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HEADQUARTERS
Special Landing Force
USS HENRICO (APA-45)
FPO San Francisco 96601

3/HDW/dlm
Ser: 0023-66
17 Nov 1966

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From: Commander, Special Landing Force
To: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Seventh Fleet
Subj: Change #1 to Commander Special Landing Force (CTG 79.5) After
Action Reports, Operations DECKHOUSE IV and PRAIRIE
Ref: (a) Commander Special Landing Force (CTG 79.5) After Action
Reports, Operations DECKHOUSE IV and PRAIRIE
Encl: (1) New pages 5 and 6 to reference (a)
(2) New pages 3 and 4 to enclosure (2) of reference (a)
1. Make the following page change to reference (a).
(a) Destroy pages 5 and 6 without report and insert new pages
5 and 6 (enclosure (1)).
(b) Destroy pages 3 and 4 of enclosure (2) to reference (a)
without report and insert new pages 3 and 4 (enclosure (2)).
2. This letter is downgraded to unclassified upon removal of enclo-
sure (1).


H. D. WORTMAN
Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps
Commanding

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HEADQUARTERS
Battalion Landing Team 1-26
a/o WFO, San Francisco, California 95602

SFA: 003B269
3/PDR/dac
26 September 1966

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, Special Landing Force (CTG 79.5)
Subj: Combat After Action Report for Operation DECKHOUSE IV/PRAIRIE

Ref: (a) CTG 79.5 Operation Plan 328-67
(b) BLT 1-26 Operation Order 328-67
(c) Maps: AMS L7014 - 6342 I (1:50,000) CAM-LO
AMS L7014 - 6442 IV (1:50,000) QUANG TRI

Encl: (1) Report of Operation DECKHOUSE IV/PRAIRIE
Tab (a) Operation Overlay for Operation DECKHOUSE IV
Tab (b) Operation Overlay for Operation PRAIRIE

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following report is submitted. For all grid coordinates refer to reference (c).
2. Operation DECKHOUSE IV was an amphibious operation utilizing surface and helicopterborne assault forces. Operation PRAIRIE was a continuation of operations ashore in conjunction with the 4th Marine Regiment (Rein).
3. D-day for this operation was 15 September 1966. DECKHOUSE IV terminated at 1200H 18 September 1966 when BLT 1-26 chopped OpCon from TG 79.5 to the 4th Marines to participate in Operation PRAIRIE. Operation PRAIRIE terminated for BLT 1-26 at 1200H 24 September 1966 when BLT 1-26 chopped OpCon to TG 79.5. The tactical amphibious withdrawal was completed at 1500H 25 September 1966.
4. The target area for Operation DECKHOUSE IV/PRAIRIE was the northeastern portion of GI. LINH District of QUANG TRI Province, I Corps Area. The terrain of the coastal region is flat and relatively open while to the west small rolling hills and heavy vegetation predominate.
5. The BLT 1-26 Command Post displaced ashore, by helicopter, to YD 197694 at 1015H. At 1414H on 18 September 1966, the Command Post displaced to YD 142689. The Command Post remained at this location until the termination of the operation.

6. Administrative Matters

a. Logistics

(1) Helicopter Support

- (a) Effects of troop lifts upon resupply.

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Enclosure (5)

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1 D-day. During the first day of DECKHOUSE IV troop lifts by helicopter were heavy. Three companies and the 107mm Howitzer Battery were moved from ship to shore. One company was lifted a second time later in the day. Additional helicopters were employed for 2½ hours in extracting the Recon Platoon under heavy enemy fire. The heavy use of helicopters delayed resupply and for some units resupply was not completed. The movement of one company the second time was caused by the entrapment of the Recon Platoon.

2 Operation after D-day. After D-day, resupply by helicopter was satisfactory overall.

(b) Problems created by the lack of helicopters.

1 On D+3 operation control of BLT 1-26 was passed to CO 4th Marines. Control of the helicopter squadron was passed to CO MAC 16. Logistical support affected immediately. Helicopter availability was drastically reduced. Uncertainty of helicopter availability caused stockpiling in some units. Tactical movements were affected by the lack of timeliness of helicopters; i.e., units were tied to their water cans and departures toward objectives were frequently delayed. Helicopters were generally not available to resupply units after 1700 unless on an emergency basis. Urgent and frequent calls were made to insure availability of helicopters for the purposes of resupply. At least one company each day was not resupplied, primarily because of darkness. It must be pointed out that resupply problems were compounded by continuous air strikes, naval gunfire, and artillery missions. Whenever helicopters were available, they were frequently diverted or returned without resupply being completed. A portion of the helicopter problem was simply a matter of adjusting to the policy and use of helicopters locally employed. For all practical purposes, it appeared that missions were allocated equally among battalions without recognizing the fact that helicopter requirements for the BLT were greater. Emergency med-evacs never were considered as a problem.

2 Shore Party operations. On D+3, Shore Party established a logistics support area at DONG HA and worked in conjunction with the 4th Marines LSA Complex. Thereafter, all classes of supply were obtained from the DONG HA complex.

b. Personnel and Administration

(1) The S-1/Adjutant established a Battalion Administrative Center aboard the LPH on D-1. The Administrative Center consisted of the Asst S-1/Adjutant, two S-1 clerks, each Company Administrative Chief and a UD/SRB clerk from each company (except Btry A, 1-13, Ad Chief only). These administrative personnel remained on the rolls of their respective companies/batteries. The Administrative Center functioned and operated as if the Battalion was on "Battalion Administration" as the Asst S-1/Adjutant (OinC, Admin Center) has "By direction" authority to sign UDs, SRBs and routine matters pertaining to all companies. Appropriate personnel records were moved to the LPH with the Admin Personnel. The Admin Center was dissolved after withdrawal.

(2) The S-1/Adjutant and the remainder of the administrative personnel

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deployed with the Battalion Command Post and operated in the field in accordance with the USMC Staff Manual.

(3) References, Manuals, Orders, etc.

(a) Central files and orders and directives were maintained in the Admin Center.

(b) Field elements operated with an absolute minimum. Laminated waterproof charts were utilized to keep an accurate up-to-date personnel daily summary of all participating units/detachments. A copy of the Operation Order and pertinent personnel and casualty reporting directives were the only references taken forward or needed. The S/1 Adjuta section "desk" consisted of a hand made waterproof box size approximately 18" x 24" x 12" in which was carried the necessary admin supplies and directives, i.e. memo pads, personnel rosters, notebooks, message books, casualty reporting cards, pens and pencils. A portable typewriter was not carried nor absolutely needed.

c. Casualty Reporting

(1) Casualty reporting was in accordance with CMC, FMF-PAC, 9thMAB and BLT directives in 3040 series. The casualty reporting center was established aboard the LPH and consisted of SLF/BLT Admin and Medical personnel. As the BLT SRBs were maintained in the Admin Center this enabled the casualty reporting center to obtain individual service records immediately as needed.

(2) 782 gear and personnel effects of casualties were inventoried and safeguarded by Logistic and Administrative personnel on the LPH respectively.

d. Evacuation. Evacuation of casualties was accomplished by helicopters. Med-Evac requests were handled and coordinated by the S-4 in the field and the TacLog aboard the LPH while OpCon to SLF. When the BLT chopped to the 4th Marines, Med-Evac requests were coordinated by the Battalion Air Liaison Officer with the 4th Marines Air Officer.

e. Captives. After completion of initial interrogation all captives were delivered to Headquarters, 4th Marines.

f. Civic Action. Civic action was coordinated by the SLF Commander and his Staff. BLT Medical and Dental personnel donated their services to the nearby village of GIA LINH.

g. Miscellaneous

(1) There were no disciplinary problems or incidents.

(2) There were no replacements from sources outside the BLT.

(3) The BLT Chaplains visited and held religious services in the field.

(4) Mail was delivered in the field.

(5) Guard mail was delivered and picked up by helicopter.

7. Supporting Arms (GENERAL)

a. FSCC

(1) BLT 1-26 was supported by a 105mm Howitzer Battery, a 107mm Mortar Battery, the USS ST PAUL and USS HULL, and by close air support from 1st Marine Air Wing. It is believed that all phases of supporting arms were excellent.

(2) If it is necessary for the BLT to chop to regimental control at some later date then all wheeled radio gear would probably have to be available. Even though communications was not a great problem, this was due mainly to the improved characteristics of PRC-25 and to our nearness to Regimental CP.

(3) Helicopter operations within the AOA was still the greatest problem with fire support coordination. Helo ~~flight restrictions~~ ~~are~~ a start in the right direction but it did not have a fast enough reaction time. The simplest thing to do on the Battalion level is to have all low flying aircraft check in with the Battalion ALO. He could then relay any late missions that had come up since he was briefed.

b. Artillery

(1) The only problem, except for helicopters, occurred after the BLT had chopped to 4th Regiment. It was necessary to fire barrage data. It took the Battery three days to be built up to its basic allowance of ammunition. For the first two days it was necessary to restrict firing of night defensive fire due to low state of ammo.

c. Naval Gunfire Support

(1) Naval gunfire support played an important role in the operation, accounting for a significant number of enemy dead and wounded. The indirect fire support, however, seemed to be much better and more accurate from ships who have had previous time on the line. It is imperative that ships be well trained in gunnery operations and exercises before reporting for duty as a direct support ship where they may be called on to provide close support for troops ashore. The USS ST PAUL (CA-73) provided excellent support, her 8" guns being called in as close as 200 yards to friendly lines during the one enemy assault. The enthusiasm and spirit, coupled with good shooting, of the Naval ships, was a significant factor in the success of the operation and once again upheld the highest traditions of the Navy-Marine Corps Team.

SECRET-NOFORNd. Air

(1) Communications was considered good, especially with the MRC-62 in operation. Communications between the ALC and FAC's was sporadic at times due mainly to the shortage of BB-451 batteries.

(2) Close air support was outstanding and quite effective. However, 99% of the air was controlled by the TAC(A), debilitating the true value of a FAC with a rifle company. It is believed the FAC could be more effective if he were put in a UH-1E to control from the air since obviously this is the method being employed. In this way not only would the battalion always have a TAC(A) (the battalion's own FACs) available, but the TAC(A) would know and understand the battalion's scheme of maneuver. From two operations it is concluded that this is the better method of employing the battalion's FACs than the present method of being attached to the rifle companies. The battalion would also have coverage for all the rifle companies instead of just two. It must be borne in mind that normally the BLT will have a TAC(A) supporting the battalion and therefore the FACs should be employed in this manner.

8. Commander's Analysis

a. Operation DECKHOUSE IV/Operation PRAIRIE proved to be a highly successful operation for imparting sound combat experience to all officers and men of BLT 1-26 although it was an essentially different type of operation than that encountered during DECKHOUSE III PHASE I and PHASE II/Operation TOLEDO. The BLT was opposed by NVA regular troops that fought using conventional tactics. There was little attempt on the part of the enemy to evade our forces. They had prepared positions and waited for the BLT forces to come within range. Fire support was outstanding once all units were ashore and prepared to fire.

b. The transition from COMSEVENTHFLT operational control to operational control of III MAF was accomplished smoothly and expeditiously. Operational control was exercised directly by 4th Marines. Radio nets were established with 4th Marines and a Force Recon element occupying an OP in the BLT Area of Operations.

c. Although civic action was not extensive the units of the BLT in close proximity to villages offered their assistance and in several cases medical attention was given. When the BLT withdrew from the area excess rations were given to the local villagers.

d. During DECKHOUSE III PHASE I and PHASE II/Operation TOLEDO HMM-363 furnished 2 direct support helicopters and 2 Med Evac helicopters which were under the direct control of the BLT Commander. During DECKHOUSE IV/Operation PRAIRIE HMM-363 chopper to III MAF for OpCon. As a result the above procedure was not followed resulting in delay of logistics support. It is highly recommended that wherever possible direct support helicopters be assigned to the BLT in order to perform their mission.

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26 September 1966

REPORT OF DECKH USE IV/PRAIRIE

1. Task Organization

BLT 1-26

LtCol MONTI

H&S Co (-)
Det, Btry A, 1st Bn, 13th Mar (Ln Tm)
Det, Hq Btry, 1st Bn, 13th Mar (NGF Ln Tm)
Det, Hq Co (-), 26th Mar

Radio Relay Tm
Det, Postal Unit
Det, Hq Bn, 5th Mar Div (Photo)
Det, Disbursing

Det, Comm Spt Co (-), 9th Comm Bn
Logistic Support Group

Det, Command Sect
Det, MT Sect
Det, Supply Sect
Det, Maint Sect

1st Plt, Co A (-) (Rein), 5th MT Bn
Det, Co A (-) (Rein), 5th Med Bn

Det, Collecting Plt
Clearing Sect
Det, 15th Dental Co, FMF

Co A (Rein)

Capt VELASQUEZ

Co A
Det, H&S Co, 1-26

Det, Med Plt
1st FC Tm, 81mm Mortar Plt
1st FAC Tm

1st FC Tm, Btry A (Rein), 1st Bn, 13th Mar
Det, 1st Plt (Rein), Co A, 5th SF Bn
Det, Hq Btry, 1st Bn, 13th Mar (NGF Spot Tm)
1st Sqd (-), 1st Plt (Rein), Co A, 5th Engr Bn

Co B (Rein)

Capt SIMPSON

Co B

ENCLOSURE (1)
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Det, H&S Co, 1-26

Det, Med Plt
2nd FC Tm, 81mm Mortar Plt2nd FC Tm, Btry A (Rein), 1st Bn, 13th Mar
Det, 1st Plt (Rein), Co A, 5th SF Bn
2nd Sqd, 1st Plt (Rein), Co A, 5th Engr BnCo D (Rein)

Capt WEIDNER

Co D
Det, H&S Co, 1-26Det, Med Plt
4th FC Tm, 81mm Mortar Plt
2nd FAC Tm4th FC Tm, Btry A (Rein), 1st Bn, 13th Mar
3rd Sqd, 1st Plt (Rein), Co A, 5th Engr Bn
Det, 1st Plt (Rein), Co A, 5th SF Bn
Det, Hq Btry, 1st Bn, 13th Mar (NGF Spot Tm)Btry A (-) (Rein), 1st Bn, 13th Mar

Capt BAILY

Btry A (-)
Det, Hq Btry, 1st Bn, 13th Mar107mm Mortar Btry (-) (Rein), 2nd Bn, 12th Mar

Capt MERRITT

107mm Mortar Btry
Det, Mess Sec, Serv Plt, Hq Btry, 2nd Bn, 12th Mar
Det, 1st Plt (Rein), Co A, 5th SF Bn1st Plt, Co A (-) (Rein), 5th AmTrac Bn

1stLt DIRELLO

1st Plt (Rein), Co A (-) (Rein), 5th AT Bn

1stLt DEBILIO

1st Plt
Det, Co Hq, Co A (-)(Rein)1st Plt (Rein), Co A (-) (Rein), 5th Engr Bn

2ndLt DEAR

1st Plt (-)
Det, Co Hq, Co A (-) (Rein)81mm Mortar Plt (-) (Rein)

1stLt MOONEY

106mm Recoiless Rifle Plt (Rein)

1stLt TERRILL

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106RR Plt
 Flame Sec
 Det, Med Flt, H&S Co, 1-26

1st Flt, Co A (-) (Rein), 5th Tk Bn

1stLt LARKIN

1st Flt, 3rd Force Recon Co, FMF

Capt JORDAN

1st Flt, Co A, 5th Recon Bn

1stLt SPAINHOUR

1st Flt (Rein), Co A (-) (Rein), 5th SF Bn

Capt ANDERSON

1st Flt
 Det, Beachmaster Unit-1

BLT Reserve

Co C (Rein)

Co C
 Det, H&S Co, 1-26

Det, Med Flt
 3rd FC Tm, 81mm Mortar Plt

3rd FC Tm, Btry A (Rein), 1st Bn, 13th Mar
 1st Sqd (-), 1st Flt (Rein), Co A, 5th Engr Bn
 Det, 1st Flt (Rein), Co A, 5th SF Bn

2. Intelligence

a. Terrains: The objective area includes part of the Central Vietnam lowlands. The Central Vietnam lowlands, a zone of low, poorly drained terrain, originating in the foot hills of the Annam Mountains, terminates at the coastline in a wide belt of massive dunes and low sandy shores continuous except where interrupted by the mouths of rivers and lagoons. A narrow transitional zone of founded hills parallels the coastline 15 to 20 miles inland and separates the lowlands from the Annam Mountains. Trafficability is fair to poor throughout the area. During heavy rains cross-country movement is extremely difficult on the Coastal Plain. The land is devoted to wetland rice paddies throughout the plain and beginning about 8 miles inland are scattered stands of woodland and brush. Highway 1 runs north-south about 10 miles inland. Highway 9 commences at Dong Ha (YD 239608) and runs west. The Song Hieu Giang and Song Thach Ham Rivers, which originate in the Annam Mountains, are the major tributaries which meet and form the Cau Viet River at YD 267625. The Cau Viet River from this point runs to the sea. LCM's may navigate the Cau Viet to where it joins the Thach Hau, however from there to Quang Tri, only LCF's may navigate. A stream parallels the beach approximately 4.2 miles inland. Highways 1 and 9 cross numerous bridges of various structures through-

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out the area. The dune belt which extends inland 2.4 miles consists mostly of sandy ridges up to 20 feet in height with patches of dryland crops. Avenues of approach are unrestricted on the coastal plain.

b. Beach Study. Blue Beach (YD 299749) is a straight beach extending in a northwest-southeast direction, and is 1.5 miles long. The beach averages one hundred feet in width. Composition is soft sand, firm where wet. Beach gradient of the foreshore is 1:12. Nearshore approach to the beach is partially restricted by submerged sand bars located 225 yards offshore and paralleling beach. Clearance over sand bar centers is 6 to 10 feet at low tide. Nearshore gradient is 1:30.

c. Enemy Situation.

(1) General. The exact current location and disposition of the NVA forces in and around the DMZ cannot be determined at this time. However, there are indications of elements of these forces currently operating as far south as route 9. Since the withdrawal of the 324B Div at the end of Operation HASTINGS, reconnaissance and air crews have reported extensive supply activity in the DMZ area, including dispersed supply points, road traffic and movement of material by sea. There has been over 130 secondary explosions reported resulting from air strikes in or north of the DMZ.

d. Order of Battle. There have been no recent significant activities in the AOA, although this area is suspected to be a highly used infiltration area and probably many caches may be uncovered. Most recent and accepted OOB for the QUANG TRI area includes but is not limited to the following:

324B Div	DMZ Vic YD 030720
90th Regt	Vic YD 050650
803rd Regt	Vic YD 990600
808th Regt	Vic YD 370570

The 341st NVA Div is dispersed into rural and forested areas in or north of the DMZ. This unit is the southernmost NVA Div in North Vietnam. The most recent area of operation for the 341st Div is an area in the vicinity of Vinh Linh north of the DMZ.

3. Mission. As defined in CTG 79.5 Frag Order #1 (111544Z Sept66) to reference (a).

"Conduct waterborne amphibious assault over Beach BLUE and helicopterborne assault into selected landing zones to conduct search and destroy operations and screen northern approaches to AOA in support of Operation PRAIRIE."

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a. See Tab A to enclosure (1) for Landing Force and BLT Objectives.

4. Concept of Operations

a. At L-hour Company A was to land over Beach BLUE by LVT to attack and seize Landing Force Objective 1. Battery A was to land in trace and establish an initial firing position in the vicinity of Beach BLUE. At H-hour Company B was to be helilifted to LZ SPARROW and to attack in assigned zone to seize LF Objective 2. Company B was to be helilifted to LZ WREN and attack in assigned zone to seize LF Objectives 4 and 3. BLT 1-26 CF, Company C and the 107mm Mortar Battery were to land in LZ SPARROW. Upon seizure of LF Objectives the units were to conduct search and destroy operations in the ACA.

5. Execution

a. D-day - 15 September 1966

(1) Company A landed by LVT-5 over Beach BLUE at 0730H (H-hour), followed by Wave 2 which was composed of Shore Party Platoon (-), Beachmaster Unit (-), and a Recon Party Battery A, 13th Marines. No enemy contact was made during the landing. Company A attacked to the southeast and secured Objective 1 at 0910H. Battery A was landed over Beach BLUE at 0800H and established initial firing positions at YD 300744.

(2) Company B was helilifted to Landing Zone SPARROW at 0730H (L-hour). At 0850H Company B was helilifted to Landing Zone WREN. No contact was made in either Landing Zone. At 1015H the Command Group landed in Landing Zone SPARROW followed by 107mm Mortar Battery at 1020H. At 1110H a simultaneous helilift of H&S Company from the USS IWO JIMA (LPH-2) and Company C from the USS VANCOUVER (LPD-2) commenced. At 1230H the amphibious assault was complete.

(3) At 0850H Company B commenced attack to seize Objective 4. Company B commenced attack to seize Objective 2 at 1320H. At 1300H the Division Recon Platoon, under OpCon SLF made contact with an estimated NVA Company and requested assistance from the BLT. Close air support and artillery were provided. The engagement resulted in 9 NVA KIA confirmed and 30 NVA KIA probable. At 1320H Company A made contact with 3 VC at YD 300737. The VC broke contact and fled to the south. Two cement bunkers were discovered at YD 300737. At 1530H Shore Party Platoon received 10 VC suspects from a Coast Guard vessel. At 1330H Battery A commenced helilifting to Landing Zone EAGLE to establish a new firing position. At 1554H Company B secured Objective 2. At 1300H the Anti-Tank Platoon was moved up the river by boat to DONG HA, moved from DONG HA across country, and arrived at Landing Zone EAGLE. At 1730H Company B secured Objective 4.

(4) At 1750H Beach BLUE was closed, and Shore Party Platoon and Beachmaster Unit returned to the USS THOMASTON (LSO-28). The amphibian Tractor Platoon returned to the USS VANCOUVER (LPD-2).

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(5) As of 2000H units were located as follows:

BLT 1-26	YD 197694
Company A	YD 213662
Company B	YD 167715
Company C	YD 197694
Company D	YD 185735
Battery A	YD 213662
107mm Mortar Battery	YD 191697
AT Platoon	YD 213662

(6) No contact was made during the night.

b. D+1 - 16 September 1966

(1) At 0500H Company D received 4 rounds of mortar and 21 rounds of small arms fire from the southeast. Fire was returned and contact was broken.

(2) Companies A, B and D began moving shortly after first light. At 1015H Company D secured Objective 3. Control of naval gunfire and artillery was passed ashore at 1100H. At 1119H Company B received scattered small arms fire from 3 snipers in village located at YD 160714. During the search of the village 5 VCS were captured in addition to propaganda material.

(3) At 1530H 2 booby traps exploded in the Company D position at YD 170730 inflicting 3 WIA. Nine booby traps were destroyed in place. At 1600H coordination of air passed ashore. At 1650H Company B received scattered small arms fire from YD 153716. At 1711H Company B came under heavy small arms fire from the front and both flanks at YD 153716. Company B was in contact with an estimated NVA company and sustained 2 KIA and 9 WIA. Artillery and close air supported Company B. The contact was broken at 1740H and resulted in 7 NVA KIA (body count), 4 KIA (possible) and 12 WIA (possible). Company B secured Objective 5 at 1745H. At 1720H mortar rounds were received by Company D from YD 165738. Naval gunfire destroyed 3 mortars and 14 NVA KIA (all confirmed). At 1755H Company A uncovered foxholes for about 80 personnel at YD 173653. Packs and clothing were scattered about the area.

(4) At 2000H units were located as follows:

BLT 1-26	YD 197694
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Company A	YD 171649
Company B	YD 151719
Company C	YD 197694
Company D	YD 168732
Battery A	YD 213662
107mm Mortar Battery	YD 197694
AT Platoon	YD 213662

(5) At 2210H an estimated 15 VC probed Battery A inflicting 1 WIA. At 2303H Company D received 2 rounds of mortar fire. 107mm Mortar Battery fired counterbattery with good effect. At 2305H the BLT 1-26 CF received 2 grenades and automatic weapons fire from south of the CF. At 2340H the BLT 1-26 CF received 1 60mm Mortar round from south of the CF. Company C used 60mm mortar counterbattery with good effect.

c. D-2 - 17 September 1966

(1) At 0018H Battery A, 13th Marines had four grenades thrown into their perimeter, inflicting one WIA.

(2) At 0341H, Company A was attacked by an estimated company-size NVA unit with heavy small arms and Mortar fire from both flanks of the perimeter. The contact was broken at 0353H (Company A sustained 1 KIA and 12 WIA). Artillery and naval gunfire supported Company A. At first light the company moved out to continue its mission and investigate the results of the previous action. At 0615H the company discovered 11 NVA KIA's (Est 20 KIA, 30 WIA) and captured the following items at YD 173652:

- 4 Automatic weapons
- 20 Magazines
- 300 Rounds of assorted small arms ammunition
- 6 AT mines
- 98 grenades
- 4 AT Rocket Launchers with 12 rounds
- Miscellaneous packboards, web equipment and clothing

(3) At 0740H the Force Recon Platoon was inserted at YD 282748 to conduct surveillance of the beach area. As Company A continued sweeping through the area in the vicinity of YD 173652 1 VCC wearing a khaki uniform and rubber boots was captured. At 0845H 4 carbines, 2 rocket rounds and numerous fresh blood stains were discovered. Indications were that the NVA's were hastily retreating to the north. At 0925H Company A found the body of the Recon Platoon MIA under a bush. His wounds had been bandaged by the NVA's but he had died from loss of blood. At 1000H a platoon from Company C was helilifted to establish a blocking position at YD 168675 in

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support of Company A. At 1310H Company A discovered 30 to 40 freshly dug emplacements, 1 booby trap kit, 100 rounds of small arms ammunition, 1 home-made gas mask, and miscellaneous engineer tools at YD 151669.

(4) At 1345H Company D entered a village located at YD 156737. The search of the village uncovered miscellaneous propaganda items, punji stakes, and a few trenches. There were no males present in the village. At 1515H Company D was hit by heavy small arms and automatic weapons from both sides of the road at YD 146730. After calling artillery fires Company D advanced and again came under heavy fire at 1535H. Artillery was again utilized. At 1545H Company D again began receiving fire.

(5) At 1545H a patrol from Company B received fire at YD 146711. The patrol returned fire and the VC fled. The patrol found several bags of rice and large amounts of fresh blood in the area. The action resulted in 5 VC WIA confirmed. The Company C Platoon blocking force returned at 1554H.

(5) At 1633H a Med Evac helicopter was shot down by small arms fire. Emergency repairs were made and the helicopter was able to fly out although Company D was still under fire. Air strikes were run and at 1800H Company D had broken contact.

(7) At 2000H units were in the following positions:

BLT 1-26	YD 197694
Company A	YD 163667
Company B	YD 151719
Company C	YD 197694
Company D	YD 152734
Battery A	YD 213662
107mm Mortar Battery	YD 191697
AT Platoon	YD 213662

(8) At 2005H two groups of white lights and one red light were observed. One group was located 700 meters east of the BLT CP and the second group was 1500 meters to the west. The lights were evaluated as VC night sighting devices for mortars. 81mm mortars were fired on both targets. The lights were either destroyed or extinguished. At 2020H a Company A ambush reported 6 VC moving at YD 166671. 60mm mortars were employed. An estimated 1 VC KIA, 1 VC WIA probable were the results. There was no further activity during D+2.

ENCLOSURE (1)
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(1) Company D received mortar fire at 0040H. Artillery fired counter battery and the mortars were silenced. Company A was probed at 0315H with one hand grenade. Company B received 3 rounds of 57mm recoilless rifle and 20 rounds of 82mm mortar at 0630H. Air was called with good effect and the fire ceased.

(2) At 0700H Company A began advancing to Objective 6 and Company D attacked to seize Objective 7. At 0845H the LVT Platoon, less vehicles, was helilifted to LZ EAGLE. The Tank Platoon personnel were returned to the USS THOMASTON (LSD-28). The Tank Platoon, with vehicles, was embarked aboard LCM-8's for movement to DONG HA.

(3) At 0945H Company D made heavy contact. They received automatic weapons fire from both sides and the front at YD 146730. The lead platoon suffered one KIA and one WIA when they passed through a boobytrapped gate. One large bunker was located on the road in the center of the village. Extremely heavy fire forced Company D to withdraw. Naval gunfire and artillery were called in to cover the withdrawal. Contact was broken.

(4) At 1000H Company A secured Objective 6. The BLT chopped OpCon to the Third MAF at 1200H. This terminated Operation DECKHOUSE IV and initiated Operation BRAHME for the BLT. The BLT was assigned the mission of conducting search and destroy operations in assigned THOR. (See Tab B) At 1455H Company D again came under heavy fire from the village located at YD 146730. Supporting arms were employed and at 1534H the company began withdrawing to the Company B position located at Objective 5. The Company D engagement during the day resulted in 35 NVA KIA (confirmed), 45 KIA (probable). Total equipment captured or destroyed included 4 AK-47 Rifles, 7 S&S Carbines, 50 stick grenades, 500 rounds of ammunition, and 11 magazines. At 1616H Battery A displaced to a new firing position at YD 167682. At 1800H the Tank and Shore Party Platoons were established at DONG HA. At 1820H Company D reached Objective 5 and linked up with Company B.

(5) At 2000H units were located as follows:

BLT 1-26	YD 197694
Company A	YD 153669
Company B	YD 152719
Company C	YD 197694
Company D	YD 152716
Battery A	YD 168682
107mm Mortar Battery	YD 191697
Tank Platoon	DONG HA

ENCLOSURE (1)
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(6) There was no further contact during 0+3.

e. D+4 - 19 September 1966

(1) No contact was made during the night. Company A began advancing to YD 142687. At 0845H a platoon from Company C was helilifted to DUNG HA to join with the Tank Platoon. As Company D advanced toward the village (YD 147717) at 0907H they came under small arms and automatic weapons fire. At 0912H Company D was heavily engaged. Four NVA were surprised and killed in a hut. The NVA's wore green uniforms, helmets, and belt buckles with red stars. Three burp guns were captured.

(2) At 0907H the Tank Platoon reinforced with 2 flame tanks from Company C, 3rd Tank Battalion and a platoon from Company C left DUNG HA en route to YD 142689. Company D pulled back from the village located at YD 147717 under heavy fire. Supporting arms saturated the area. At 1027H Company D attacked again and once again ran into heavy fire. An air strike at YD 147716 produced secondary explosions. At 1101H Company D again entered the village and found many trenches and tunnels. The company began destroying the tunnels with demolitions. At 1300H Company D received small arms fire. At 1327H the company came under heavy automatic weapons fire, and again pulled back to Objective 5. Air and naval gunfire were employed. At least 35 NVA's covered with napalm were seen running from the trenches.

(3) At 1414H the BLT CP, Company C and the 107mm Mortar Battery displaced by helicopter to YD 142689. Company D again moved toward the village conducting reconnaissance by fire at 1420H. Company D continued to advance against light opposition until 1658H. When they came under heavy automatic weapons fire from both flanks. The company was pinned down. Supporting arms were employed but each time artillery fire lifted, the NVA's resumed fire. At 1708H Company D received automatic weapons fire at YD 152716. Fire was returned and artillery fire was called. The contact was broken at 1710H.

(4) As a Company A ambush party departed the BLT CP at 1910H, they made contact with three VC. The VC threw a grenade and fled. At 1915H, while moving toward hill 109 (YD 125711) the Tank Platoon (Rein) and a platoon from Company C received automatic weapons fire and one 57mm recoilless rifle round at YD 136707. Fire was returned, including 20 rounds of 90mm cannister. The NVA withdrew under the cover of darkness after receiving 15 KIA (probable) and 6 WIA (probable). At 1920H Company D broke contact. There were 53 NVA KIA (confirmed), 43 NVA KIA (probable), 2 carbines, 1 light machinegun, and 1 submachinegun destroyed during the day.

(5) At 2000H units were located as follows:

BLT 1-26	YD 142689
Company A	YD 142689

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Company B	YD 152719
Company C	YD 125710
Company D	YD 152719
Battery A	YD 168682
107mm Mortar Battery	YD 140688
Tank Platoon	YD 136789
3rd Platoon Co C	YD 136789
AT Platoon	YD 168682

(6) At 2135H Battery A observed 15 VC moving but no contact was made. There was no further contact during the night of D+4.

f. D+5 - 20 September 1966

(1) At 0214H Company D received sniper fire from YD 152726. The company returned fire and called 81mm mortar fire. Contact was broken. At 1100H Company C and Tank Platoon attacked toward Objective A. At 1540H a tank hit an AT mine at YD 135720 and 3 NVA were seen at YD 135721. Four more AT mines and 2 field expedient AP mines were found in the vicinity. At 1845H Company B received 5 mortar rounds in the vicinity of YD 152717. Artillery provided counterbattery fire and the mortars were silenced.

(2) At 2000H units were located as follows:

BLT 1-26	YD 142689
Company A	YD 142689
Company B	YD 152719
Company C	YD 135712
Company D	YD 149712
Battery A	YD 168682
107mm Mortar Battery	YD 140688
Tank Platoon	YD 135712
Anti-Tank Platoon	YD 135712

(3) There was no contact during the night of D+5.

SECRET-NOFORNg. D+6 - 21 September 1966

(1) Company C received 25 rounds of mortar fire at 0515H. At 0745H Company C attacked to seize Objective A. At 0815H one AT rocket hit a tank and small arms fire was received at the front of Company C. Fire was returned and resulted in two NVA KIA's (confirmed), 2 rocket launchers captured, 5 grenades, and 30 rounds of Russian 7.62mm ammunition. At 0850H more NVA's opened fire from the company's right flank at YD 137717. Flame tanks were employed and 30 NVA were killed by body count. At 0920H two tanks were hit by AT rockets fired by a four man rocket team. The damage was minor and one tank fired cannister at 75 yards. The four NVA's were disintegrated. Resistance stiffened as the company began receiving heavy fire from trenches to the front. Company C pulled back 50 yards, called air strikes and resumed the attack. At 1020H heavy contact was made at YD 139717 when AT rockets and automatic weapons fire was received from trenches. At 1130H Company C broke contact.

(2) Company D maneuvered to the right of Company C, and Company B joined the right flank of Company D while supporting arms fired on Objective A. At 1533H Companies B, C and D, supported by tanks attacked to seize Objective A. At 1645H Objective A was secured when the NVA force broke contact and fled north. There were 16 NVA KIA's (confirmed) and 89 NVA KIA's (probable).

(3) At 2000H units were located as follows:

BLT 1-26	YD 142689
Company A	YD 142689
Company B	YD 142724
Company C	YD 138710
Company D	YD 149718
Battery A	YD 168682
107mm Mortar Battery	YD 140688
Tank Platoon	YD 138720
Anti-Tank Platoon	YD 168682

(4) There was no contact during the night of D+6.

h. D+7 - 22 September 1966

(1) At 0307H Companies C and D received approximately 45 rounds of mortar fire. Naval gunfire silenced the mortars. At 0550H Companies C and D again received mortar fire. Company B observed 8 VC moving toward

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the company perimeter at 0630H. At 0645H the VC were fired on by small arms, M-79's, and naval gunfire. There were 2 KIA's (confirmed) and 3 KIA's (probable).

(2) At 0930H Company C discovered an unoccupied trench and bunker complex running from YD 127124 to YD 120719. At 0945H two LVT's arrived at DUNG HA after moving up river from the USS VANCOUVER (LHA-2). A column of four tanks from Company C, 3rd Tank Battalion, the two LVT's and a platoon from Company A departed DUNG HA at 1230H to link up with Company C. At 1030H Company B received scattered small arms fire from YD 145740. At 1146H Company B received scattered small arms fire from the front. At 1242H Company C made contact with a rocket team at YD 124720 and killed one NVA (confirmed). A rocket launcher, 3 rockets, 2 automatic weapons, 3 grenades, 1 light machinegun barrel and 1 can of Russian 7.62mm linked ammunition were captured. At 1400H Company C made further contact at YD 124720 and killed 2 NVAs (confirmed). At 1402H a tank in the column from DUNG HA hit a mine at YD 136676. At 1530H Company B uncovered 17 bodies, an extensive trench network, bunkers reinforced with concrete and many spider holes at YD 140730. At 1635H Company C came under machinegun fire at YD 117719. The company attacked and killed 5 NVA (confirmed) and 2 (probable). At 1400H a patrol from Battery A visited a nearby Catholic Orphanage and donated 30 cans of C-Rations. At 1657H Company B sighted 12 VC at YD 135733 and called in artillery fire.

(3) At 2000H units were located as follows:

BLT 1-26	YD 142689
Company A	YD 142689
Company B	YD 133772
Company C	YD 118719
Company D	YD 118719
Battery A	YD 168682
107mm Mortar Battery	YD 140688
Tank Platoon	YD 118719
AT Platoon	YD 168682
Platoon (-) Company C,	YD 173671
3rd Tank Battalion	

(4) At 2317H Company B observed what appeared to be mortar aiming lights outside their perimeter. Artillery fire was called and the lights were extinguished. There was no further contact during B+7.

SECRET-NOFORNi. D+8 - 23 September 1966

(1) As Company B continued search and destroy operations they made contact at 0830H at YD 135735. An aid station was found and evidence that a NVA Platoon was in the area. The Company gave chase and at YD 121733 they discovered a tunnel complex. One tunnel was 12 feet by 45 feet and contained five cases of medical supplies. Local women stated that two NVA Platoons had just passed through the area and were accompanied by Chinese advisers. Company B pursued but could not make contact. At 0935H Company C came under AT rocket and automatic weapons fire from YD 115719. One tank detonated an air mine. When the company attacked the NVA's fled. At 0945H 30 NVA were observed at YD 111727 and naval gunfire was called. Twenty NVA were killed. At 1730H as Company B entered a village located at YD 120725 they received a heavy volume of mortar and automatic weapon fire. The NVA broke contact and fled at 1750H. One NVA was captured and evacuated to the 4th Marines Cr. At 1950H the Company B perimeter was probed. The NVA broke contact and fled. One VCS was captured.

(2) At 2000H units were located as follows:

BLT 1-26	YD 142689
Company A	YD 142689
Company B	YD 120724
Company C	YD 109697
Company D	YD 115708
Battery A	YD 118682
107mm Mortar Battery	YD 140688
Tank Platoon (Rein)	YD 109697
AT Platoon	YD 168682

(3) There was no further contact during the night of D+8.

j. D+9 - 24 September 1966

(1) The amphibious withdrawal commenced at 0700H. Companies B and D were helilifted to the USS IWO JIM (LST-2) along with designated supplies. At 1200H the BLT chopped OpCon from 4th Marines to TG 79.5 (SLF). As the Tank Platoon (Rein) with elements of Company C were enroute to BONG HA at 1500H the column was hit from the rear by AT rockets and automatic weapons at YD 135633. The tanks and infantry deployed and returned fire and an airstrike was delivered. The action resulted in 7 KIA (confirmed) and 20 KIA (probable). The column proceeded on to BONG HA.

(2) At 2000H units were located as follows:

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BLT 1-26	YD 142689
Company A	YD 142689
Company B	LFH-2
Company C	DONG HA
Company D	LFH-2
Battery A	YD 168682
107mm Mortar Battery	YD 140688
Tank Platoon (Rein)	DONG HA
AT Platoon	YD 168682

(3) There was no contact during the night of D+9.

k. D+10 - 25 September 1966

(1) At first light the withdrawal continued. Company C and the Tank Platoon (Rein), Battery A and the AT Platoon returned to their respective ships by landing craft from DONG HA. Company A, the 107mm Mortar Battery and H&S Company were helilifted to the amphibious shipping from LZ BLUEBIRD.

The operation terminated at 251500H September 1966.

6. Results

a. Enemy

(1) The following is the assessment of NVA and VC personnel casualties inflicted by Battalion Landing Team 1-26:

(a) KIA (BODY COUNT)	254
(b) KIA (PROBABLE)	313
(c) WIA (CONFIRMED)	14
(d) NVA Captives	1
(e) VCS	13
(f) VCC	3

(2) The following is a compilation of enemy equipment and material captured or destroyed by Battalion Landing Team 1-26:

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(a) 7.62 Sub machinegun AK-47 Chicom Type 56	24
(b) 7.62 Carbine SKS Chicom Type 56	15
(c) 7.62 LMG RPD Chicom Type 56	2
(d) AT Rkt Launchers RPG-2	9
(e) Stick Type Grenades	153
(f) Magazines assorted	31
(g) S/A Ammo Assorted	4900 Rds
(h) 40mm AT Ammo	22 Rds
(i) Home made Gas Mask	2
(j) Medical Supplies Assorted	10 Lbs
(k) Documents	15 Lbs
(l) U.S. Frag Grenades	13
(m) Penicillin	2 Cases
(n) Backboards and Ponches	30
(o) Bunkers	70
(p) Trenchlines and tunnels	1200 Meters

b. Friendly

(1) Casualties sustained by Battalion Landing Team 1-26 are summarized below:

(a) KIA - 34
<u>1</u> Gunshot - 28
<u>2</u> Shrapnel - 6
(b) Died of Wounds - 2
<u>1</u> Gunshot - 2
(c) WIA - 167
<u>1</u> Gunshot - 66

ENCLOSURE (1)
SECRET-NOFORN

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2 Shrapnel - 101

(d) Non-Battle Casualties - 75

1 Malaria - 10

2 Heat - 19

3 Sprains - 17

4 Miscellaneous - 29

ENCLOSURE (1)
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MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 363
Marine Aircraft Group 15 (Rein)
9th Marine Amphibious Brigade
FPO, San Francisco, 96602

3:WHG:fe
3480
26 September 1966

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commander, Special Landing Force
Subj: After Exercise Report, Operation Deckhouse IV and Operation Prairie;
submission of

Ref: (a) Annex U to CTG 79.5 Op Plan 328.67
(b) Maps: AMS L7014 6342 I, (1:50,000) CAM LO
AMS L7014 6342 II, (1:50,000) THON DOC KINH
AMS L7014 6442 I, (1:50,000) THON NGO XA DONG
AMS L7014 6442 III, (1:50,000) BA LONG
AMS L7014 6442 IV, (1:50,000) QUANG TRI

Encl: (1) Chronology of Significant Events
(2) Statistical Summary

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) and (2) are submitted.

J. D. Mc Gough
J. D. MC GOUGH

Enclosure (3)

DECLASSIFIED

CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS15 September:

Operation Deckhouse IV began this date when one aircraft launched from the LPH-2 at 0635H to provide SAR for the pending assault, troop lift.

Sixteen squadron aircraft began launching from the LPH-2 at 0650H with the first assault elements of Glimmer Bravo. These elements were lifted into the initial strike zone at coordinates YD 173627, code named LZ Wren. When Glimmer Bravo had been lifted ashore, Glimmer Delta was then lifted from the LPH-2 into the second strike zone at coordinates YD 198695, code named LZ Sparrow. Upon completion of these lifts, Glimmer Charlie was lifted from the U.S.S. Vancouver into LZ Sparrow. Deadlock aircraft of VMO-2 provided escort for the strikes and no enemy fire was encountered. The sixteen squadron aircraft then continued to lift troops and external cargo into the two zones for the remainder of the morning.

The lead aircraft of the lift and his wingman were diverted at 1300H to coordinates YD 170653 for an emergency recon retraction. On final approach into the zone the lead aircraft encountered intense enemy automatic weapons and small arms fire. The lead aircraft sustained three hits before waving off. One hit damaged the engine oil cooler which necessitated an emergency landing at Dong Ha. During this action, the aircraft's crew chief was slightly wounded. The aircraft remained down at Dong Ha for the remainder of the day for battle damage.

Four additional aircraft then diverted to YD 170653 to retract the pinned down recon team. All four aircraft encountered intense enemy automatic weapons and small arms fire entering the zone and were forced to wave off. During this time, the aircraft gunner of the number two aircraft was seriously wounded by the enemy ground fire. This aircraft then diverted immediately to the ship with its med evac. Approaching the LPH-2, control difficulties were experienced by the aircraft, and after a safe, but eventful landing, it was learned the aircraft's servos had been extensively damaged by the enemy fire.

The other three aircraft in the flight flew to Dong Ha to assess their battle damage which was determined to be minor at the time, although, closer inspection aboard the LPH-2 revealed that the number three aircraft had almost had its tail rotor cable completely severed by the fire.

Condole and Deadlock aircraft were then called into the retraction area for an air strike. Five additional squadron aircraft then went in under the air cover and effected the retraction without further incident. One U.S. KIA, 6 U.S. WIA and twelve remaining troops of the recon unit were returned to the LPH-2.

Twelve aircraft launched from the LPH-2 at 1630H to lift Glimmer Alfa and Battery Alfa from Landing Zone Dove (YD 302728) and Blue Beach (YD 310735) into LZ Eagle (YD 215665). Two aircraft were diverted during the lift to Blue Beach. There they picked up 5 VC POW's and transported them to LZ Sparrow.

Upon completion of the troop lift, four aircraft continued to lift 105 ammo from Blue Beach to LZ Eagle. Prior to completing this lift, two of the aircraft were diverted to LZ Sparrow where they picked up 1 U.S. WIA and returned him to the LPH-2.

Two aircraft launched at 1940H to transport an emergency resupply of ammo and water to LZ Sparrow. Three U.S. med evacs were then returned to the LPH-2 from LZ Sparrow without incident.

16 September:

The majority of the flights this date were resupply and med evac missions in support of BLT 1/26. Throughout the morning squadron aircraft lifted supplies of water, rations and ammo from the LPH-2 and the U.S.S. Vancouver into LZ Eagle, LZ Sparrow, Glimmer Bravo at YD 165712, and Glimmer Delta at YD 187742. Two aircraft, after dropping cargo at LZ Sparrow, returned to the ship and picked up CTG 76.5. The flight then proceeded to the U.S.S. Oklahoma City where they picked up ComSeventhFleet and transported him to the Glimmer CP at LZ Sparrow. On the return trip an aerial recon of LZ Eagle was made. The two aircraft then returned ComSeventhFleet to the U.S.S. Oklahoma City and then returned to the LPH-2.

Six U.S. med evacs were picked up during the morning from the various zones and returned to the LPH-2. No enemy fire was encountered.

Water and rations resupply continued throughout the afternoon by squadron aircraft in support of BLT 1/26. Two resupply aircraft were diverted to Glimmer Alfa's position at coordinates YD 184645 where they picked up one U.S. WIA and returned him to the LPH-2. Four other aircraft on resupply missions were diverted to YD 170730 (Objective 3), where they performed a routine extraction of a twenty-two man U.S. Marine recon team and returned them to LZ Sparrow.

Other squadron aircraft resupplied elements of 1/26 at coordinates YD 173734 and YD 198694. Two of the aircraft made three trips from Dong Ha to LZ Eagle transporting external loads of mo-gas. The two aircraft then returned to the ship and were launched again immediately on an emergency ammo resupply to Glimmer Bravo, located at coordinates YD 161719. Both aircraft encountered enemy small arms fire approaching the zone and while in the zone, however, no hits were received. The aircraft then picked up 9 U.S. WIA and 2 U.S. KIA from the zone and returned them to the ship.

Six aircraft launched from the LPH-2 at 1850H and made night emergency resupplies of ammo, rations and water to Glimmer Delta at YD 170730, Glimmer Bravo at YD 161719 and other elements of 1/26 at coordinates YD 198694 and coordinates YD 173734. No enemy fire was encountered during the evening's activities.

17 September:

Two, condition three, med evac aircraft were dispatched to the U.S.S. Vancouver on the night of the 16th to provide fast reaction time for med evacs

while the U.S.S. Iwo Jima went out to sea for replenishment. At 0545H, 17 September, they began the day's activities by launching from the LPH-2 to coordinates YD 173670 to pick-up 11 U.S. WIA and 1 U.S. KIA. The med evacs were returned to the LPH-2 without incident.

Two additional aircraft launched from the LPH-2 to pick-up 21 U.S. WIA and 1 U.S. KIA from Glimmer Alfa's position at coordinates YD 172648. Two trips were required to complete the evacuation to the LPH-2, and no enemy fire was encountered.

Two aircraft, assigned as Battalion direct support for the morning, launched from the LPH-2 to LZ Sparrow (YD 198694). From Sparrow they were sent to Bravo Company (YD 152717) with an ammo resupply. They then returned to LZ Sparrow to pick-up 2 U.S. sick and evacuated them to the ship.

Four aircraft launched at 0650H to LZ Sparrow and lifted personnel and equipment of the 81MM mortar platoon to Objective 5 at coordinates YD 152718. Two trips were required to complete the lift, and the aircraft then began resupply missions of water, rations and externals from LZ Sparrow to LZ Eagle and to Glimmer Alfa at coordinates YD 175650. Resupplies were then lifted from the LPH-2 to Glimmer Alfa, and there were no incidents.

Two aircraft departed the LPH-2 to LZ Sparrow and picked up a 12 man recon team for an insertion at LZ Dove (YD 280750). No enemy fire was encountered during the flight.

Five aircraft departed the LPH-2 at 0920H to transport a 64 man reaction force from LZ Sparrow to YD 163679. The lift was completed in two trips without incident.

Seven squadron aircraft flew resupply missions in support of 1/26 throughout the morning from the LPH-2 and the LPD-2 to LZ Sparrow and LZ Eagle. No enemy fire was encountered.

Two squadron aircraft returning from an admin run to Da Nang were diverted to Delta Company at coordinates YD 150733 to pick-up five med evacs. The aircraft encountered intense enemy automatic weapons fire approaching the zone. The enemy fire damaged the number two aircraft's engine oil pump forcing it to make an emergency landing in the zone. Delta Company immediately provided security for the downed aircraft and arrangements were made with the LPH-2 to fly in necessary parts and a maintenance crew to repair the aircraft. The maintenance crew was flown into the zone and temporary repairs were made by the crew while the zone was under sporadic, enemy, small arms fire. Enemy mortars began bracketing the zone as the crew completed the temporary repairs. The bird then lifted from the zone without further damage and landed at LZ Eagle where it remained for the night.

Seven squadron aircraft continued resupply missions in conjunction with other missions throughout the afternoon in support of 1st Bn., 26th Marines.

Two of the aircraft went to LZ Sparrow where they picked up 2 med evacs

and 5 VC prisoners. The med evacs were returned to the LPH-2 and the prisoners were then transported to Lai An.

Two resupply aircraft were launched from LZ Sparrow later in the afternoon to Glimmer Delta at coordinates YD 153734 on an emergency resupply mission. Both aircraft encountered enemy fire approaching the zone and the lead aircraft sustained two hits resulting in minor damage. There were no injuries to crews and suppressing fire was not used.

Three aircraft launched from the LPH-2 to YD 285763, extracted a 17 man recon team and transported them to LZ Sparrow without incident. The aircraft then returned to the ship where they refueled and were joined by two additional aircraft for an ammo resupply mission into coordinates YD 151733. All of the aircraft encountered enemy small arms fire entering the zone, but there were no hits or injuries and suppressing fire was not used. The same five aircraft then launched from LZ Sparrow to coordinates YD 171683 and made an emergency retraction of 72 troops. The troops were retracted back to LZ Sparrow in two trips without incident.

Three of the above aircraft then launched to Dong Ha and lifted the SLF Party to LZ Sparrow. They then returned to the ship with 1 U.S. WIA from LZ Sparrow.

Two aircraft launched at 2045H to Da Nang with one U.S. WIA in critical condition. The aircraft returned to the LPH-2 at 2245H without incident.

18 September: HMM-363 reported as directed for OpCon to the First MAW at 1220H on this date, thus terminating Operation Deckhouse IV and entering Operation Prairie.

Four aircraft proceeded to the U.S.S. Vancouver at 0645H to lift an AmTrac platoon to LZ Eagle. Enroute to the LPD-2, two of the aircraft were diverted to Glimmer Bravo at coordinates YD 152717, where they picked up 11 U.S. WIA and returned them to the LPH-2. The remaining two aircraft completed the troop lift in two trips. They then joined two additional resupply aircraft and transported water, rations, fresh fruit to LZ Sparrow. No enemy fire was encountered.

Two aircraft launched from the LPH-2 to Glimmer Delta's position at coordinates YD 152733. Seven U.S. WIA were picked up and evacuated to the LPH-2 without incident.

Two additional aircraft transported 8 U.S. KIA from the U.S.S. Iwo Jima to the city of Hue at 1158H.

Two aircraft on resupply missions in support of 1/26 were diverted to Glimmer Delta at coordinates YD 152733 where they picked up 6 U.S. WIA and evacuated them to the LPH-2. No enemy fire was encountered.

Two additional aircraft on resupply missions in support of 1/26 encountered enemy small arms fire departing the zone at coordinates YD 132668. No hits were received and suppressing fire was not used.

Squadron aircraft flew resupply missions consisting of ammo, water and rations throughout the afternoon and into the evening in support of 1/26. No additional enemy fire incidents were reported.

Two aircraft launched at 2210H on an emergency blood transfer. Blood donated from personnel of the U.S.S. St. Paul was picked up and transported to the U.S.S. Repose. Medical supplies needed aboard the LPH-2 were then picked up and returned to the ship.

19 September:

Twelve aircraft launched from the LPH-2 at 0630H for Dong Ha where they were on standby for the remainder of the day as direct support for Operation Prairie.

Most missions flown during the day were resupply missions in support of 1/26, 1/4 and 2/7.

Four aircraft retracted 58 troops from LZ Sparrow to Dong Ha in two trips. No enemy fire was encountered.

Two resupply aircraft were diverted to coordinates YD 962598 where they picked up 2 U.S. WIA and returned them to Delta Med. Two additional resupply aircraft worked steadily throughout the morning and early afternoon transporting resupplies to the 2/7 CP at YD 962605 and to the 1/4 CP at YD 975567. No enemy fire was encountered.

Seven aircraft proceeded from Dong Ha to Glimmer Alfa's position at 1335H and transported troops and externals to a new position at coordinates YD 142688. The lift was completed by 1720H without incident.

Two aircraft on resupply missions were diverted to the 1st Bn., 4th Marines at YD 142688 where 1 U.S. WIA was picked up and evacuated to Dong Ha without incident.

Two night med evac standby aircraft on standby at Dong Ha were launched at 1630H to coordinates YD 136709 to pick-up one critical U.S. WIA. One Deadlock gunship accompanied the launch and upon arrival at the pick-up coordinates they found the friendly unit engaged in a heavy fire fight with the enemy. The aircraft then orbited the zone until it was secured by ground forces, picked up the WIA, and evacuated him to Delta Med. The same two aircraft then proceeded to coordinates YD 140720 where they picked up 12 U.S. WIA and returned them to Delta Med.

Two additional standby aircraft were launched, along with a Deadlock escort, at 2025H from Dong Ha to coordinates XD 978564 to pick-up 6 U.S. WIA. This zone was also under heavy enemy fire and the aircraft again set up an orbit. The ground forces reported one of the WIA to be in very critical condition. The lead aircraft then proceeded into the zone to pick-up the med evac and received no hits in the process. The aircraft then proceeded for Delta Med

while the number two aircraft continued orbiting with the Deadlock gunship. When fuel became more of a problem to the aircraft than enemy fire, the aircraft landed and picked up the remaining med evacs without incident. The med evacs were then returned to Delta Med.

20 September:

Most flights on this date were med evac and resupply missions in support of 1/4, 2/7 and 1/26.

Two aircraft launched from the LPH-2 at 0155H and transferred one med evac from the ship to the U.S.S. Repose.

Two aircraft on standby at Dong Ha were launched at 0630H to drop four passengers at coordinates XD 975565 and then to proceed to XD 960598 and pick-up 6 U.S. KIA and 3 U.S. WIA. Two Deadlock gunships preceded the aircraft to the zone and reported a possible .50 caliber position just north of the zone. The lead aircraft approached the zone and encountered heavy enemy automatic weapons and small arms fire from all sides. The gunships made gun runs to the north and south of the zone, but the enemy fire continued while the aircraft landed to pick-up 4 U.S. KIA. The aircraft then lifted and began to immediately use suppressing fire, and no hits were received. The number two aircraft then approached the zone while the gunships continued their gun runs near the zone. While sitting in the zone to pick-up the remaining med evacs the aircraft sustained three (3) hits. There were no injuries to the crew or passengers, but later examination showed one of the aircraft's servos had been damaged by one of the enemy rounds. The two aircraft evacuated the med evacs to Delta Med and then returned to the ship without further incident.

Two aircraft were launched to XD 960598 to pick-up 4 U.S. WIA. The med evacs were picked up without incident and returned to Delta Med. Two additional aircraft departed Dong Ha at this time to Glimmer Bravo's position at coordinates YD 152718 where they picked up 2 U.S. WIA and 4 U.S. KIA and evacuated them to the Delta Med. No enemy fire was encountered.

Two aircraft departed Dong Ha at 0812H with a 5 man recon team. The team was inserted at coordinates XD 942518 without incident and the aircraft returned to Dong Ha. At 1230H, the same two aircraft departed Dong Ha for an emergency retraction of the same recon team. The aircraft encountered enemy small arms and .50 caliber fire in the vicinity of the zone. The lead aircraft sustained one hit resulting in minor damage, and there were no injuries.

Two aircraft with one Deadlock escort, inserted another 5 man recon team during the afternoon in the vicinity of coordinates YD 0047. No enemy fire was encountered.

Twelve squadron aircraft flew in direct support of operation Prairie all through the afternoon, resupplying each of the battalions and returning their med evacs to Delta Med. No further enemy fire was reported.

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21 September:

The majority of missions flown this date were med evacs in support of 1/26, 1/4, 2/7 and 2/4. Other missions flown by squadron aircraft included aerial recon, resupply, SAR and logistic troop shuttles.

Two aircraft departed Dong Ha at 0630H and provided SAR for Deadlock aircraft while they inserted recon teams at coordinates YD 140723 and YD 924497. No enemy fire was encountered.

The remainder of the morning found squadron aircraft picking up med evacs at Glimmer Charlie's position and from Permission 1/4's positions at coordinates XD 966500, XD 985573 and XD 922498. Other squadron aircraft transported med evacs from Delta med to the LPH-2 and from the LPH-2 to the U.S.S. Repose.

Two aircraft departed the LSA at 1300H and proceeded to YD 275500 where 1 U.S. KIA was picked up and returned to Delta Med. The same aircraft then began resupply missions to XD 975567 in support of 1/4. After making two trips to the zone with cargo and passengers, the aircraft lifted med evacs from XD 987562 to Delta Med for the remainder of the afternoon.

Four squadron aircraft flew resupply missions to the County Fair CP (XD 987562), Glimmer CP (YD 144681), and Glimmer "B" (YD 145702) throughout the afternoon. Six U.S. WIA were returned from the various zones to Delta Med in the course of the flights. No enemy fire was encountered.

Two aircraft launched at 1555H from Dong Ha and evacuated 2 U.S. med evacs from YD 136717 to Delta Med. They then flew to YD 061548 to pick-up observers for an aerial recon of the area in the vicinity of coordinates YD 025595. No enemy fire was reported.

The remainder of the afternoon and evening was devoted primarily to med evac missions. U.S. med evacs were evacuated from Delta Med to the LPH-2, the U.S.S. Repose and to Hue. Others were evacuated from Glimmer Charlie (YD 136717) and from Glimmer Delta (YD 140722) and returned to the LPH-2. No enemy fire was encountered.

Two night med evac aircraft on standby at Dong Ha launched at 2330H to YD 986559 where they picked up 3 U.S. WIA and evacuated them to Delta Med. No enemy fire was encountered.

22 September:

The majority of the missions flown this date were med evac missions. Other missions flown were aerial recon, combat troop lifts, resupply, and logistic troop shuttles between the various company and battalion positions.

Four aircraft began the day's missions when they departed Dong Ha for coordinates YD 986559 and YD 130723. Five U.S. WIA and 1 U.S. KIA were evacuated from these coordinates respectively, and transported to Delta Med. Two of the aircraft then launched to YD 152717, picked up 4 U.S. WIA, and evacuated them to Delta Med. No enemy fire was encountered.

Two aircraft departed Dong Ha at 0650H to the Glimmer CP at coordinates YD 142689. Glimmer Six was then carried on an aerial recon of the area immediately west of the zone. The aircraft dropped Glimmer Six at his CP upon completion of the recon and returned to Dong Ha without incident.

Two additional aircraft then launched from Dong Ha to the Glimmer CP and lifted 46 passengers from 1/26 to Dong Ha. Three trips were required to complete the lift and no enemy fire was encountered.

The remainder of the morning found squadron aircraft flying routine med evac missions from Delta Med to the LPH-2. Elements of 1/26 at coordinates YD 130722 and YD 155402, "A" Battery, and elements of 1/13 at coordinates YD 168682 were resupplied during the morning.

Squadron aircraft began resupply missions at 1400H for all units operating on Operation Prairie. During the course of missions flown, 1 U.S. WIA was evacuated from YD 953567 to Delta Med. No enemy fire incidents were reported.

Three aircraft with Deadlock escort inserted a 10 man recon team into coordinates YD 023655 without incident.

Two aircraft departed Dong Ha at 1700H for the Glimmer CP at coordinates YD 132675. Glimmer Six was then transported to the Bravo Company position at YD 116717. Glimmer Six was then returned to his CP and the aircraft returned to the LPH-2.

23 September:

Most missions flown on this date were resupply missions in support of 1/26, 1/4, 2/7 and 3/4. Fourteen squadron aircraft flew the resupply missions and during the course of the morning evacuated 5 U.S. WIA to Delta Med.

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Two aircraft departed Dong Ha at 0650H to make an aerial recon of the "M" and "L" Company positions of 3/4 at coordinates YD 050623 and YD 055625, respectively. After the aerial recon, the lead aircraft landed at YD 055625 and returned 1 U.S. WIA to Delta Med without incident.

Four aircraft proceeded from Dong Ha to YD 138444 at 0755H and inserted a 12 man recon team of the 1st Recon Co. of 1/4. No enemy fire was encountered.

Two aircraft took a 17 man civil affairs team from the LPH-2 to YD 226719 without incident. Two additional aircraft departed Dong Ha at 1005H and made an aerial recon of coordinates XD 9764. After returning to Dong Ha, they launched again to YD 056608 where they picked up 5 passengers and 2 captured automatic weapons and returned to Dong Ha.

One aircraft departed the LPH-2 at 1235H for the U.S.S. Repose to pick-up an emergency blood supply for the LPH-2. After returning to the ship the aircraft launched again with Hearsay Six and staff to the Glimmer CP. The aircraft then returned to the LPH-2 without incident.

Two aircraft on standby at Dong Ha departed at 1315H for County Fair Foxtrot's position at YD 985597 to pick-up an emergency med evac. Due to the many obstacles in and about the zone, the lead aircraft was forced to wave-off the first approach and come in from a different direction. On the second approach, the aircraft encountered enemy automatic weapons and small arms fire, but continued to the zone where it had to remain in a hover because of the zone's terrain. During the approach, the corpsman aboard the aircraft was slightly wounded from fragments flying through the aircraft as a result of the enemy action. The aircraft remained in a hover under fire while the med evac was lifted aboard with the assistance of the wounded corpsman. All during this time the aircraft's crew chief and gunner were fighting suppressing fire to compensate the enemy fire. Also, while in the zone explosions from either mortars or grenades occurred sending fragments into the aircraft. The aircraft lifted successfully out of the zone under fire and returned the med evac to Delta Med. Later inspections showed the aircraft had eight bullet holes and numerous punctures in the skin caused by the explosions. The corpsman was the only crew member wounded in the action.

Squadron aircraft continued resupply missions for all units participating in Operation Prairie throughout the afternoon without any further incidents.

Two aircraft flying resupply missions picked up 5 U.S. WIA at XD 953567 and returned them to Delta Med. Two additional aircraft flying resupply missions picked up 6 U.S. WIA from coordinates XD 953566 and XD 956564 and evacuated them to Delta Med.

Liaison and resupply missions continued on into the evening in support of Operation Prairie.

All squadron aircraft were aboard the LPH-2 by 1930H and six of them were placed on a condition III standby to lift a reaction force from the ship if it was needed ashore during the night.

24 September:

HMM-363 chopped OpCon from CG, First MAF to CTG 79.5 at 1200H this date.

Twelve squadron aircraft were utilized for the direct support of all units participating in Operation Prairie.

Two aircraft flying resupply missions to the 1st Bn., 4th Marines at coordinates XD 975567 encountered enemy mortar fire while sitting in the zone on one occasion. There were no injuries to the crew and the aircraft returned to Dong Ha without further incident. Later in the morning two aircraft evacuated 5 U.S. WIA from coordinates XD 975567 and 3 WIA from coordinates XD 975567 and 3 WIA from coordinates XD 953567 and carried them to Delta Med.

Four aircraft with one Deadlock escort retracted Glimmer B and Glimmer D back to the LPH-2. Six trips were required to complete the lift which went without incident.

Four aircraft proceeded from Dong Ha to YD 2144 and retracted a 15 man recon team back to Dong Ha. Deadlock aircraft provided escort for the lift and there were no incidents. Three of the aircraft launched again at 1345H and retracted a 10 man recon team from coordinates YD 061655. Two of the recon team personnel were WIA prior to the aircraft's arrival at the zone, and while sitting in the zone enemy automatic weapons fire opened up on the aircraft. No hits were received and the aircraft returned the team to Dong Ha.

Two aircraft proceeded to YD 167682 from Dong Ha at 1407H to retract troops and cargo of "A" Battery to Dong Ha. Eight trips were required to complete the lift which went without incident.

Two aircraft made six trips between LZ Bluebird and the U.S.S. Vancouver carrying troops and cargo back to the ship.

Three aircraft were diverted from resupply missions to coordinates XD 953572 at 1700H for emergency med evacs. The aircraft arrived at the zone to find it under attack from enemy fire. Fixed wing air support was called in to suppress the enemy fire and although still encountering enemy mortar and automatic weapons fire in the zone, the aircraft returned 25 U.S. WIA to Delta Med in two trips. No hits were received.

Two additional aircraft were diverted from resupply missions to XD 958572 to pick-up more emergency med evacs. The zone was under enemy mortar attack, but the aircraft managed to pick-up 2 U.S. WIA and 1 U.S. KIA and evacuate them to Delta Med without receiving any hits.

Two aircraft removing med evacs from XD 959568 encountered enemy fire in the vicinity of XD 900500, but no hits were received.

Six aircraft remained on condition III standby throughout the night aboard the LPH-2 to provide lift capabilities for a reaction force aboard ship in the event it was needed ashore.

25 September:

Twelve squadron aircraft began departing the LPH-2 to LZ Bluebird (Glimmer CP) to retract remaining troops and cargo back to the LPH-2 and the LPD-2. One aircraft experienced a rough running engine during the lift and had to shut down in the LZ. A test pilot and maintenance crew were flown ashore to determine whether or not it could be flown back to the ship. On the subsequent test flight the engine quit completely and the aircraft auto-rotated into the LZ without sustaining any damage. The aircraft was then made ready to be lifted to the LPH-2 by a CH-46 and a CH-37. Remaining troops in the zone provided security for the aircraft and at 1400H, the retraction resumed when the downed aircraft was lifted out to the LPH-2. No enemy fire was encountered, and the lift was completed without further incident.

STATISTICAL SUMMARYOPERATION DECKHOUSE IV

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SORTIES</u>	<u>PAX</u>	<u>CARGO TONS</u>	<u>MED EVACS</u>	<u>FLT HOURS</u>
15 SEP	554	1292	36.0	19	151.5
16 SEP	283	184	32.2	24	73.4
17 SEP	360	406	34.0	51	83.7
TOTAL:	1197	1882	102.2	94	308.6

OPERATION PRAIRIE

18 SEP	299	279	30.1	62	85.5
19 SEP	443	548	59.6	53	109.8
20 SEP	239	250	15.8	50	79.1
21 SEP	242	304	17.2	87	74.4
22 SEP	276	312	22.2	53	86.4
23 SEP	304	375	30.2	75	98.5
24 SEP	362	554	37.9	100	112.9
25 SEP	294	625	22.9	20	83.4
TOTAL:	2459	3247	235.9	500	730.0
COMBINED TOTAL:	3656	5129	338.1	594	1038.6

DECLASSIFIED

1. RESULTS OF OPERATION DECKHOUSE IV

a. The following is an assessment of NVA/VC casualties inflicted by BLT 1/26:

NVA/VC 56 KIA
64 KIA (POSS)
5 WIA
62 WIA (POSS)

b. The following is a compilation of enemy equipment captured or destroyed:

7.62 Carbine sks Chicom type 56	7
7.62 Sub-MG AK-47 Chicom type 56	5
7.62 Light MG RPD Chicom type 56	1
AT Launchers	4
82 MM Mortars	3
U. S. Frag Grenade	13
Stick Type Grenade	85
Booby Trap Kit	1
Booby Traps	9
A.P. Mine	6
Magazines	20
S/A Ammo	400
40 MM AT Ammo	12
Homemade Gas Mask	1
Packboards and Pouches	30
Assorted Clothing	40 lbs.

2. RESULTS OF OPERATION PRAIRIE

a. The following is an assessment of NVA/VC casualties inflicted by BLT 1/26:

NVA/VC 186 KIA
249 KIA (POSS)
9 WIA

b. The following is a compilation of enemy equipment and material captured or destroyed:

7.62 Sub-MG AK-47 Chicom type 56	17
7.62 Carbine sks Chicom type 56	12
7.62 Light MG RPD Chicom type 56	1
AT Launchers	5
Stick Type Grenades	68
Magazines	11
S/A Ammo	4,500 rounds
40 MM AT Ammo	10
Homemade Gas Mask	1
Medical Supplies (Assorted)	10 lbs
Documents	156 lbs
Penicillin	2 cases
Sodium Chloride	2 cases

1.

NOFORN
ENCLOSURE (4)

DECLASSIFIED

Distilled Water
Huts

A tunnel system was discovered in village coordinated YO 121733. Tunnels were 12 feet wide and some 45 feet long. Appeared tunnels were used as Medical Aid Station due to supplies found. Tunnel system was destroyed.

c. Following is a compilation of captured personnel:

3-VCC
12-VC suspects
1-NVA

UNCLASSIFIED

NOFORN

2.

ENCLOSURE (9)