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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
HEADQUARTERS, FLEET MARINE FORCE, PACIFIC
FPO, SAN FRANCISCO 96610

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

28/g1

00540-67

8 JUN 1967

From: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
To: Commanding General, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade

Subj: Submission of Command Chronology for Task Group
79.5 for the period 1-31 January 1967

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.2
(b) FMFPACO 5750.8
(c) CG FMFPac ltr 28/MHS/npm dtd 27Apr67 to Dist.
List

Encl: (1) CO SLF (TG 79.5) ltr 3:BSM:dln over 5750 Ser 006-67
dtd 1Feb67

1. Enclosure (1), the subject chronology, was received without forwarding endorsement from CG, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade and is therefore forwarded for your action in accordance with the provisions of references (a) and (b).

2. This headquarters has partially reviewed enclosure (1) and has noted that it contains the discrepancies listed below, which are cited in order to facilitate appropriate action by your command. Your attention is also invited to reference (c), which is intended to amplify further the instructions contained in references (a) and (b).

3. Among discrepancies noted are the following:

(a) The chronology of the Special Landing Force (TG 79.5) is not prepared according to the format specified in references (a) and (b).

(b) Part II, Narrative Summary, has been omitted, although specifically required by enclosure (1) to reference (b).

(c) Part IV, Supporting Documents, is not included, although required by reference (b). Instead, certain of these supporting documents are submitted as enclosures to the chronology.

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Handwritten: Hq 79.5

Handwritten: c/chron

Handwritten: Jan 1967

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4. Command Chronologies provide an important primary source of historical data which are of great importance to the current and future evaluation of US Marine activities in WestPac. In order to make certain that information may be readily retrieved by future users from among an enormous volume of similar material, it is essential that all units adhere to the specified format.

T. G. BRONLEWE, JR.
Deputy, Chief of Staff

Copy to:

CMC (Code A03D) (W/O ENCL)

CTG 79.5 (W/O ENCL)

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28/JBS/csa

00688-67

20 SEP 1967

(Unclassified upon removal of the basic correspondence)

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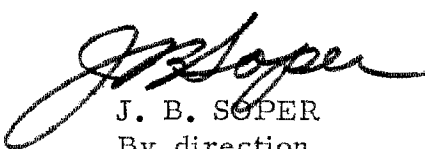
SECOND ENDORSEMENT on CO SLF (TG 79.5) ltr 3:BSM:1mm over
5750 Ser: 006-67 dtd 1 February 1967

From: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code A03D)

Subj: Command Chronology for the period 1 - 31 January 1967

1. Forwarded.

2. The original submission of Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)
Command Chronology for the period 1 - 31 January 1967, was returned
for correction and resubmission by reference (a) of CG 9th MAB
Endorsement.


J. B. SUPER
By direction

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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
HEADQUARTERS, 9TH MARINE AMPHIBIOUS BRIGADE, FMF
FPO, SAN FRANCISCO 96602

67-6130
0012710

IN REPLY REFER TO

3H1/1mm

5750

Ser:00177-67

JUN 28 1967

SECRET-NOFORN (Downgrade to Unclassified upon removal of
enclosure (1))

From: Commanding General, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade, FMF
To: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific

Subj: Command Chronology for Task Group 79.5 for the period
1-31 January 1967

Ref: (a) FMFPac ltr 28/gl 00540-67 of 8 June 1967

Encl: (1) Special Landing Force (TG 79.5) Command Chronology

1. The errors of enclosure (1) have been corrected and the
report resubmitted in accordance with ref (a).

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. E. Glick", is written above the printed name.
J. E. GLICK

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HEADQUARTERS
Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)
USS IWO JIMA (LPH-2)
FPO, San Francisco 96601

#0011764

3:BSM:1mm
5750
Ser: 006-67
1 Feb 1967

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of enclosure (1))

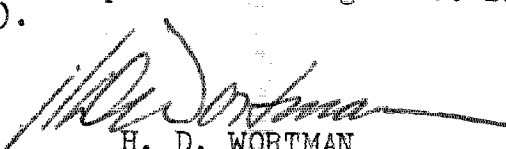
From: Commanding Officer
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code AO2D)
Via: (1) Commanding General, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade, FMF
(2) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific

Subj: Command Chronology for the period 1 to 31 January 1967

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.2
(b) FMFPacO 5750.8
(c) BrigO 5750.1B

Encl: (1) Special Landing Force (TG 79.5) Command Chronology

1. In accordance with references (a) through (c), the
Command Chronology for the Special Landing Force is sub-
mitted as enclosure (1).


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

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HEADQUARTERS
Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)
USS IWO JIMA (LPH-2)
FPO, San Francisco 96601

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY
1-31 January 1967

INDEX

- Part I - Organizational Data
- Part II - Narrative Summary
- Part III - Sequential Listing of Significant Events
- Part IV - Supporting Documents

ENCLOSURE (1)

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Special Landing Force
Command Chronology

Part I

Organizational Data1. DesignationCommanderSpecial Landing Force
(Task Group 79.5)

Colonel H. D. WORTMAN

Subordinate Units

BLT 1/9 (1-25 January 1967)	Major J. L. DAY
BLT 1/4 (26-31 January 1967)	LtCol J. WESTERMAN
HMM 362 (1-19 January 1967)	LtCol M. B. ARMSTRONG
HMM 363 (19-31 January 1967)	LtCol K. E. HUNTINGTON

2. Locations. The Special Landing Force was embarked aboard the following amphibious shipping during the dates indicated:

USS IWO JIMA (LPH-2)	1-31 January 1967
USS VANCOUVER (LPD-2)	1-31 January 1967
USS THOMASTON (LSD-28)	1-11 January 1967
USS POINT DEFIANCE (LSD-28)	11-31 January 1967
USS DIACHENKO (APD-123)	1-31 January 1967
USS WASHTENAW CTY (LST-1166)	1-15 January 1967
USS COCONINO CTY (LST-603)	2-10 January 1967
USS HAMPSHIRE CTY (LST-819)	7-16 January 1967
USS HENRICO (APA-45)	1-17 January 1967

3. Staff Officers

a. Permanent Personnel

Col H. D. WORTMAN	Commanding Officer
LtCol J. M. LANDRIGAN	Executive Officer
LtCol D. R. BRIMMER	S-3
Maj H. B. CROSBY III	Asst S-3
Maj E. W. HERICH	S-4 (27-31 Jan 67)
Maj J. H. BROUJOS	Asst S-3/Civic Action
Capt R. A. AYERS	CommO
Capt F. E. HEURING	Asst CommO (27-31 Jan 67)

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Capt B. S. MCKENNA	Asst S-3/Air Observer
1stLt J. D. CHAPMAN	S-2 (25-31 Jan 67)
2ndLt D. C. SCHULTZ	S-4, Asst S-4 (27-31 Jan 67)
2ndLt C. G. OSGOOD	S-2 (1-24 Jan 67)
2ndLt C. G. COMER	Asst S-3/Air Observer (27-31 Jan 67)

b. TAD Personnel to the SLF for Special Operations.

1-12 January 1967 - Capt G. ANDERSON, MC, USN BUMED Immersion foot study.

1-16 January 1967 - LtCol B. M. MOORE Jr. - FMFPac Observer.

1-18 January 1967 - LtCol R. L. CHRISTIAN - RLT-26, Artillery Group Commander.

1-16 January 1967 - LtCol H. MAYER - 9thMAB ISO.

1-15 January 1967 - Cmdr MILLS, MC, USN - III MAF, Immersion foot study

1-31 January 1967 - Maj C. A. DIXON - MAG 15, SLF Air Officer

1-19 January 1967 - Maj W. W. TAYLOR - 9thMAB, Oral History and Riverine Special Equipment Evaluation.

1-19 January 1967 - Maj W. M. THURBER - 9thMAB, SLF FSC.

1-24 January 1967 - Maj W. M. STEWART - MB, Subic Liaison Officer

1-15 January 1967 - Maj J. C. PAGE - LFDA, Liaison Officer, Medical Field Research Laboratory, Camp LeJeune, N. C. Immersion foot study.

1-24 January 1967 - Capt B. M. FLOYD - MB, Subic Liaison Officer

1-12 January 1967 - Capt P. MURPHY - MarDet, USS CANBERRA, TAO.

12-15 January 1967 - Capt MCCAULLEY - MarDet, USS CANBERRA, TAO.

1-15 January 1967 - Lt L. BUCKELY, MC, USN - Medical Research Laboratory, Camp LeJeune, N.C., Immersion foot study.

1-24 January 1967 - 1stLt J. D. CHAPMAN - 9thMAB, Asst S-2 Officer.

1-24 January 1967 - Lt JG P. R. JENNINGS USN - 9thMAB, NGF Liaison Officer

4. Average Monthly Strength (Does not include TAD personnel)

SLF Staff:	USMC Off - 11	USMC Enl - 29	USN Off - 0	USN Enl - 0
BLT:	USMC Off - 65	USMC Enl - 1576	USN Off - 8	USN Enl - 82
HMM:	USMC Off - 59	USMC Enl - 191	USN Off - 1	USN Enl - 3

ENCLOSURE (1)

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PART II

Narrative Summary

During the month of January, the Special Landing Force, composed of the HQ SLF, BLT 1/9 and HMM 362 continued support of combat operations in the Republic of Vietnam. From 6 January to 15 January, Operation DECKHOUSE V was conducted in Kien Hoa Province, IV Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam. Upon the successful completion of the operation, units of the SLF were rotated in conjunction with the routine intra-theater rotation program. HMM 362 was relieved aboard the USS IWO JIMA by HMM 363 on 19 January while BLT 1/4 relieved BLT 1/9 as the ground element of the SLF on 26 January.

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Part III

Sequential Listing of Significant Events1. 1-5 January 1967

a. On 1 January the ARG/SLF was off the coast of IV CTZ, RVN in preparation for Operation DECKHOUSE V.

b. On 2 January CTG 79.5 and staff representatives made final preparations for DECKHOUSE V at IV Corps Headquarters in Can Tho.

c. On 3 January, I/T team, liaison personnel from 7th ARVN Division, IV Corps and VNMC Task Force Brigade Bravo, and a IV CTZ SFCP arrived aboard the USS IWO JIMA. CTG 79.5 attended a conference with COMUSMACV in regard to command relationships. Colonel N. E. ANDERSON, Senior Advisor to the Vietnamese Marine Corps came aboard to observe Operation DECKHOUSE V. D-Day was postponed from 4 January to 5 January due to heavy seas.

d. On 4 January Lieutenant General KHANG, Commandant of the Vietnamese Marine Corps, visited CTG 79.5 aboard the USS IWO JIMA. D-Day was again postponed to 6 January due to heavy seas.

e. On 5 January General GREENE, CMC, and Lieutenant General KHANG, VN, CMC, Brigadier General LAHUE and Brigadier General METZGER, CTF 79 visited CTG 79.5 and CTG 76.5 aboard the USS IWO JIMA (LPH-2) and were briefed by staff representatives on Operation DECKHOUSE V.

2. 6-16 January 1967

a. On 6 January Operation DECKHOUSE V commenced in Kien Hoa Province, IV CTZ, RVN. General WESTMORELAND, COMUSMACV, Rear Admiral WOLSEN, CTF 76, Rear Admiral WARD, NAVFORV, Lieutenant General VIEN, Chief of Staff ARVN, and Major General PHONG, J-5 JGC, visited the ARG/SLF aboard the USS IWO JIMA to observe Operation DECKHOUSE V.

b. From 6-15 January the ARG/SLF conducted Operation DECKHOUSE V in Kien Hoa Province, IV CTZ, RVN. (See TAB 5).

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c. On 7 January Vice Admiral HYLAND, COMSEVENTHFLT, Brigadier General THANH, CG 7th ARVN Division, and Colonel LANCE, Senior Advisor to the 7th ARVN Division, visited CTG 76.5 and CTG 79.5 aboard the USS IWO JIMA. Brigadier General METZGER, CTF 79, departed for Saigon.

d. On 8 January Vice Admiral HYLAND and Brigadier General THANH observed the helicopterborne assault of the 4th Bn of the VNMC Brigade Force Bravo.

e. On 10 January GLEN FORD, Commander USNR, was briefed on Operation DECKHOUSE V aboard the USS IWO JIMA by CTG 79.5 and staff representatives.

f. On 11 January General WESTMORELAND, COMUSMACV, and Brigadier General CHAISSON, COC COMUSMACV, visited the SLF command post ashore.

g. On 15 January Operation DECKHOUSE V was terminated.

h. On 16 January ITT, liaison, advisor and SFCP personnel were returned to their parent organizations. The ARG/SLF departed IV CTZ for Chu Lai, ICTZ, RVN.

3. 17-31 January 1967

a. On 17 January the ARG/SLF was off Chu Lai, ICTZ, RVN to offload HMM 362 and embark HMM 363. The rotation of helicopter squadrons was delayed due to heavy seas and IFR conditions.

b. On 18 January, Lt Colonel LANDRIGAN, Executive Officer of the SLF, and staff representatives departed for Okinawa as an advance party to assist in the rotation of BLT 1/4 and BLT 1/9. Lt Colonel CHRISTIAN, CO of 1/13, terminated his TAD orders and departed for Okinawa.

c. On 19 January HMM 363 replaced HMM 362 aboard the USS IWO JIMA. HMM 362 returned to Chu Lai, ICTZ, RVN. Maj TAYLOR and Major THURBER terminated their TAD orders and returned to Okinawa. The ARG/SLF departed Chu Lai, enroute to Okinawa.

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d. From 24-27 January BLT 1/4 relieved BLT 1/9 aboard assigned amphibious shipping at Okinawa. CTG 79.5 and staff representatives conferred with CG, 9thMAB (CTF 79) on administrative, logistical and operational matters pertaining to future SLF operations.

e. On 28 January the USS IWO JIMA, USS VANCOUVER, and the USS POINT DEFIANCE departed Okinawa enroute to Keelung, Taiwan.

f. On 29 January units of the ARG/SLF arrived at Keelung, Taiwan. The USS VANCOUVER and embarked units of BLT 1/4 departed Keelung enroute to Subic Bay due to inadequate docking or mooring space. LtCol BRIMMER departed for CONUS on emergency leave.

g. From 29-31 January the USS IWO JIMA, CTG 79.5, CTG 76.5, HMM 363 and embarked units of BLT 1/4 enjoyed liberty in the Republic of Nationalist China (Taiwan). The USS POINT DEFIANCE departed Taiwan for Subic Bay, R. P.

h. On 30 January CTG 79.5 paid a courtesy call on Rear Admiral CHEN YUAN-JUN, Commandant of the Third Naval District, and Mr. D. L. SU, Mayor of Keelung. CTG 76.5 and CTG 79.5 hosted Rear Admiral CHEN YUAN-JUN at a luncheon aboard the USS IWO JIMA. The USS POINT DEFIANCE arrived in Subic Bay, R. P.

i. On 31 January CTG 76.5 and CTG 79.5 attended an official dinner hosted by the Commandant of the Third Naval District. The USS VANCOUVER arrived in Subic Bay, and the USS POINT DEFIANCE commenced loading of its embarked troops and cargo aboard the USS THOMASTON. SLF staff representatives made a reconnaissance of possible training areas near Tso-Ying.

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Part IV

Chronologies of Subordinate Commands and
Supporting Documents

- (a) Command Chronology, BLT 1/9 (TAB 1) 1-23 Jan
- (b) Command Chronology, HMM 362 (TAB 2)
submitted separately
- (c) Command Chronology, HMM 363 (TAB 3) 19-31 Jan
- (d) Command Chronology, BLT 1/4 (TAB 4) 27-31 Jan
- (e) After Action Report, DECKHOUSE V (TAB 5)

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HEADQUARTERS
Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)
USS IWO JIMA (LPH-2)
FPO San Francisco 96602

3:HBC:d1m
Ser: 004-67
20 January 1967
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From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Seventh Fleet
Subj: Combat After Action Report, Operation DECK HOUSE V

Encl: (1) Special Landing Force, After Action Report, DECK HOUSE V
(2) HMM 362 After Action Report, DECK HOUSE V
(3) BLT 1/9 After Action Report, DECK HOUSE V *Retained here with copy of 3/1/67*
(4) Provisional Artillery Group, After Action Report, DECK HOUSE V
(5) VNMC Brigade Force Bravo, After Action Report, DECK HOUSE V (To be forwarded separately)
(6) Amphibious Objective Area overlay

1. Enclosure (1) contains the Special Landing Force After Action Report for DECK HOUSE V.
2. Enclosures (2) through (6) amplify enclosure (1). Comments on appropriate portions of subordinate unit After Action Reports are contained in paragraph 10 of enclosure (1).
3. This letter may be downgraded to unclassified upon removal of enclosures (1) through (6).


H. D. WORTMAN

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COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT DECK HOUSE V

Map Reference: Vietnam, AMS Series L7014; Sheets 6228 I and II; 6328 III and IV.

1. Operation DECK HOUSE V was a unilateral, combined amphibious operation utilizing waterborne and heliborne assault forces. It was conducted in accordance with NWP-22(A).

2. This operation was located in the Thanh Phong Secret Zone, Kien Hoa Province, IV CTZ, Republic of Vietnam. The operation commenced on 6 January 1967 at 0740H with the landing of surfaceborne assault forces on White Beach (XR764848). Initial helo lifted assault forces landed in LZ Crow (XR770955) at 0800H. The operation terminated at 1700H on 15 January 1967, upon completion of the tactical withdrawal of the Landing Force.

3. Task Organization

Special Landing Force

HMM 362 (Rein)

Det., VMO-3 (4 UH-1E)

Det., HMM-164 (2 CH-46A)

BLT 1/9

ProvArtyGrp

VNMC Brigade Force Bravo

3rdBn

4thBn

Colonel H. D. WORTMAN

LtCol M. B. ARMSTRONG

Major J. L. DAY

LtCol R. L. CHRISTIAN Jr.

Col LAAN, VNMC

4. Intelligence

a. Terrain. The objective area, located in the southern portion of Kien Hoa Province, is a peninsula bounded on the south by the Co Chien River and the north by the Ham Luong River. Throughout the area the terrain is very flat, with spot elevations up to 5 meters above mean sea level. Because the area is so flat, it is subject to seasonal and even perennial inundation. The majority of the land is composed of rice paddies. Mangrove swamps exist in the coastal portion of the objective area from 1000 to 5000 meters inland from the coast. Mangrove swamps are also found as far as 8 miles inland along river banks. The vast network of streams and canals are subject to tidal influence ranging from 1.0 to 3.0 meters and present major obstacles. Trafficability is poor to fair throughout the AOA.

b. Beach Study

(1) LOCATION: Centered on the southern tip of Kien Hoa Pro-

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vince, the beach lies on an axis of $242^{\circ} - 62^{\circ}$ grid.

LEFT FLANK - XR760848

RIGHT FLANK - XR770848

(2) LENGTH: 1000 meters. This is a slightly convex river mouth beach. Only a portion of the left flank is usable. None of the beach fronting on the sea was usable.

(3) WIDTH: 200 to 350 meters at low water and 14 to 27 meters at high water.

(4) GRADIENT: (Low water line to high water line). The beach gradient is 1:30 (gentle). The nearshore gradient is 1:120 (flat).

(5) APPROACHES: The offshore approach is clear. The near-shore approach must be made with caution due to shallow depths and the presence of numerous shifting sandbars. Only landings at high tide are recommended to prevent running aground on these sandbars.

(6) SURF AND TIDE: Surf 1.2 meters (4 feet) or greater can be expected to occur as follows: 4% of the time in winter; 6% of the time in fall. The tidal range is 2.5 to 4 meters (8.5 to 13.5 feet).

(7) MATERIAL AND FIRMFNESS: The beach is composed of hard-packed sand at high tide. Trafficability is good for personnel and fair for vehicles. At low tide, 180 to 332 meters of mud flats are exposed and foot trafficability is poor; vehicles are unable to negotiate.

(8) EXITS: Small trails exist behind the beach. Movement inland is greatly hampered by the Rach Khan Bang River which is 70 meters wide and located 1.8km inland behind the beach. Cross country trafficability is fair to poor.

(9) TERRAIN IMMEDIATELY BEHIND BEACH: Scattered rice paddies intermingled with swamp, mangrove, and dense brushwood back the beach. Sand dunes back the entire beach. Heavy tree growth, extending to the water's edge, backs the left flank of the beach.

(10) CRITICAL FEATURES: The presence of tidal flats, sandbars, poor trafficability and the Rach Khan Bang River hindered operations. Landings had to be made only at high tide and during daylight hours.

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c. Enemy Situation. The area of operations has been under the control of the VC for approximately 10 years and all persons in the area were considered VC or VC sympathizers. Intelligence indicated the amphibious objective area was a major infiltration area, and being such, would require VC forces for security and control. The exact location and disposition of enemy forces could not be determined prior to landing. Each village was reported to have at least one guerrilla platoon and each hamlet was reported to have a guerrilla or self defense squad.

d. Order of Battle.

(1) The most recent and accepted OOB for Thanh Phu District included, but was not limited to the following:

(a) C.530 Company

Strength: Approximately 140
 Weapons : 1-60mm Mortar
 1-57mm Recoilless Rifle
 9-Automatic Rifles
 20-Submachine Guns
 20-Carbines
 36-50 Rifles
 3-Pistols

Location: Vicinity XR740934. Usually quartered at the villages of An Thuan, An Khon and An Qui. Believed to be a combat effective district company.

(b) C1 Company 518th Bn.

Strength: Approximately 120
 Weapons : 2-60mm Mortars
 2-AA 50Cal Machine Guns
 2-Submachine Guns
 12-Carbines
 Assorted small arms

Location: Unknown. Primary mission is to protect coastal installation within the Dai mangroves.

(c) C2 Company 518th Bn.

Strength: Approximately 60-80
 Weapons : Believed to be similar to the C1/518th Bn.
 Location: Unknown. Protects coastal installations of Thanh Phu. Believed to be combat ef-

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fective. However, this unit has had little actual combat experience.

(d) VC 62nd Security Battalion of Nam Bo Central VC

Military Region 2.

Strength: 380

Weapons : 2-30Cal Machine Guns
2-57mm Recoilless Rifles
2-60mm Mortars
Assorted small arms

Location: Elements of this battalion often quartered at the Villages of An Nhon (XR740934), Thanh Phong (XR758869), Giao Thanh (XR76-0935) and Thanh Phu (XR668996).

- (e) 261stBn. Elements of this unit have been reported operating in Thanh Phu District but has never been confirmed. The strength, location and weapons are unknown.

e. Enemy Contacts by BLT 1/9

(1) D-Day. Small arms fire was received by the first wave (LVTH) on White Beach. The USS Saint Francis River and USS Point Kennedy received four rounds of 57 millimeter recoilless rifle fire from the bank of a stream at coordinates (XR714895). One Viet Cong was killed and two captured.

(2) D+1. Enemy activity consisted of Viet Cong sniper fire and small size Viet Cong units harassing friendly forces throughout the AOA. **Three Viet Cong were killed and three wounded.**

(3) D+2. The first use of mortars by the Viet Cong was at friendly positions coordinates XR758893. They were believed to be 60mm mortars. The Viet Cong continued to harass and snipe at friendly forces in the AOA. Two Viet Cong were captured.

(4) D+3. An estimated platoon of Viet Cong fired two hundred rounds of small arms fire and five rounds of 60 millimeter mortar into coordinates XR792891. **BLT returned fire resulting in 10 Viet Cong KIA and 2 WIA (Probable).** All through the day sporadic sniper fire was experienced by friendly forces in the AOA.

(5) D+4. A friendly patrol received eighty to ninety rounds of small arms fire and five rounds of 60 millimeter mortar at coordinates XR758951. Artillery was fired at VC position with good coverage with an estimated 10 KIA and 2 WIA.

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(6) D-5. The enemy continued to harass with small arms fire and sporadic automatic weapons fire throughout the AOA. Three Viet Cong were killed.

(7) D-6. Friendly aircraft received small arms and 60 millimeter mortar fire in landing zone located at coordinates XR763948. Friendly patrol stopped four Viet Cong suspects to question them. At this time the Viet Cong prematurely sprung an ambush. The patrol received four hundred rounds of small arms fire and twenty rounds of mortar fire. Sniper fire from the Viet Cong continued through the day.

(8) D-7. The Viet Cong continued to harass and probe friendly positions with small arms fire and some mortar fire. Nine Viet Cong were killed.

(9) D-8. The Viet Cong continued to snipe and harass friendly forces and avoided contact by withdrawing. Five Viet Cong were killed.

(10) Withdrawal Day. Sniper and harassing fire was received from an estimated four to seven Viet Cong from coordinates XR821911. Friendly artillery provided excellent target coverage. An estimated two Viet Cong were killed. Three UH-34D aircraft received small arms fire of unknown caliber from the following coordinates: XR825908, XR822902 and XR828905.

f. Enemy Contacts by Brigade Force Bravo.

(1) D-1. Brigade Force Bravo received small arms fire from coordinates XR737903. Three Viet Cong fired approximately ten to twenty rounds of small arms fire from coordinates XR762907.

(2) D-2. Vietnamese Marines killed one Viet Cong at coordinates XR724926.

(3) D-3. Vietnamese Marines sighted fifteen Viet Cong in the vicinity of coordinates XR723947 and XR735955. Artillery was called in to cover the target. The Vietnamese Marines captured five Viet Cong and twelve Viet Cong suspects.

(4) D-4. The Third Battalion of the Vietnamese Marines received twenty rounds of mortar fire at coordinates XR716962. Sniper fire increased in the Vietnamese Marines area of operation.

(5) D-5. Sniper fire was received in Landing Zone Dart located at coordinates XS750001.

(6) D-6. Sniper fire and harassing fire continued in the Vietnamese Marine area. A Viet Cong squad was encountered at coordinates XR751992. The Vietnamese Marines killed two Viet Cong.

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(7) D+7. Vietnamese Marines received small arms fire from an unknown number of Viet Cong at coordinates XR751922. Two Viet Cong were killed.

(8) Withdrawal Day. Brigade Force Bravo did not have contact with the Viet Cong on withdrawal day.

5. MISSION. As directed by COMSEVENTHFLT message 260354Z DEC66 (Initiating Directive), the mission of the Special Landing Force was to conduct search and destroy amphibious operations against VC forces within the amphibious objective area in the Thanh Phong Secret Zone of Kien Hoa Province and/or other operations as agreed upon with COMUSMACV.

6. Concept of Operations. Operation DECK HOUSE V was a unilateral, combined amphibious operation conducted by the ARG/SLF. The operation was planned as a ten day search and destroy operation utilizing both waterborne and heliborne assault landings. The operation was conducted in two phases. The initial phase was to isolate the AOA to prevent infiltration of enemy forces, supplies and materiel. This was accomplished by the establishment of blocking positions at major routes of egress from the AOA. This phase was characterized by maximum surprise, mobility and shock action. Phase II consisted of a thorough, deliberate, but aggressive search and destroy operation. The AOA was divided into seven sectors for ease of control. This phase was characterized by elements of the Landing Force conducting simultaneous S&D Operations in their assigned sectors. Maximum utilization of supporting fires was emphasized. Fire support was provided by the organic artillery of the BLT, which included a platoon of LVTH-6's; a battery of VNMC 105mm howitzers; NGF consisting of one 8 inch cruiser, one LSMR, and one IFS; and CA3 from the 7th Air Force. Throughout the operation the SLF maintained a rapid reaction posture to contingency employment in I CTZ.

7. Execution

a. Operation DECK HOUSE V was executed in accordance with CTG 79.5 OPlan 328-67 supplemented with a Frag Order issued for the Thanh Phong area.

b. D-Day was tentatively established as 4 January, 1967 with H-Hour at 0800 and L-Hour at 0830. BLT 1/9 was to land at H and L Hour on D-Day by surfaceborne and heliborne assault. At H plus 1 one battalion from the VNMC Brigade was to land by surfaceborne assault.

c. Heavy seas and marginal boat conditions in the objective area twice forced D-Day to be postponed 24 hours. D-Day was 6 January 1967; H-Hour was dictated by tidal conditions. No change in the landing sequence was required by the delay in D-Day. However, the sea state on D-Day (6Jan67) was again unsatisfactory for the employment of landing craft and the landing of Brigade Force Bravo, VNMC, was further delayed until D plus 1. BLT 1/9 landed on D-Day by helicopter and

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LVTs from LSTs that were able to close within 1500 meters of White Beach the night of D minus 1. By darkness on D-Day, BLT 1/9 had established blocking positions in their assigned portion of the AOA. (See enclosures (2) through (5), After Action Reports of BLT 1/9, Provisional Artillery Group, HMM-362, and VNMC Brigade Force Bravo for detail of this execution.)

8. Results. See enclosures (2) through (5).

9. Commander's Analysis. This analysis is limited to those matters at the Special Landing Force level. VNMC Brigade Force Bravo, BLT, Squadron and Artillery Group Commander's Analysis is contained in their respective reports, enclosures (2) through (5).

a. Planning.

(1) Planning for DECK HOUSE V commenced on 7 December 1966 with a preliminary planning conference in Saigon. CTG 76.5 and CTG 79.5 were briefed on the general aspects of the proposed operation in Kien Hoa Province by representatives of COMUSMACV. Planning at this stage by CTG 76.5/79.5 was unusual in that COMUSMACV's general concept for special operations in Kien Hoa Province had not been formulated. However, it did provide an opportunity for CTG 79.5 to assist in the development of the general concept. Subsequently a coordinating conference was held, attended by MACV J-3, 7th Air Force, NAVFORV, Advisors VNMC, TG 116, and U.S. Army Advisors from IV Corps. Prior to departing RVN, CTG 79.5 and staff members obtained the current tactical situation in Kien Hoa Province and the disposition of ARVN forces in the Delta Region. An aerial reconnaissance of the recommended AOA was made by CTG 79.5 and staff representatives utilizing a U.S. Army helicopter.

(2) During the period 23-25 December, 1966 a second conference was held in Saigon to finalize details with all units involved in the proposed operation. The employment of VNMC Forces as part of DECK HOUSE V was tentatively confirmed; arrangements were made for further planning between VNMC representatives, and advisors, with CTG 79.5 staff at Subic Bay, R.P. During this period liaison was established with the CG, 7th ARVN Division at My Tho and an aerial reconnaissance of the agreed AOA was made to select helicopter landing zones. A concluding conference was held on 25 December, 1966 at MACV Headquarters.

(3) During the planning phase the following steps were accomplished:

(a) Procurement of maps, area analysis and enemy order of battle.

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(b) Aerial reconnaissance of the AOA, selection of HLZ's and landing beaches. (This was accomplished by utilizing U.S. Army helicopters flying normal day-to-day flight patterns).

(c) Communication frequencies assigned and coordinated, this included ship-to-shore Orestes for rapid and secure passage of tactical information.

(d) Coordination and development of compatible air control procedures between the ATF and 7th Air Force with provisions for exchanging liaison officers at respective control headquarters.

(e) Arrangements completed for the disposition of captured VC, VCS and handling and processing of detainees.

(f) Arrangements for casualty evacuation of VNMC personnel, civilians, and U.S. personnel as required.

(g) Establishment of command relationships as provided by NWP-22(A).

(h) Arrangements for logistic support of the VNMC forces and SLF, as required.

(4) Plans were made for establishing liaison with the following commands:

- (a) IV Corps Headquarters, Can Tho, RVN
- (b) 7th ARVN Division, My Tho, RVN
- (c) District Headquarters, Thanh Phu, RVN
- (d) VNMC Brigade Force Bravo

b. Intelligence. Prior to DECK HOUSE V, arrangements were made for maps, area studies, aerial photography, Red Haze, daily intelligence summaries, ITT personnel, Document Team, SPAR and support for handling civilian detainees. X

(1) Area study and OOB was provided by MACV, CIOV, IV Corps G-2, 7th ARVN Division G-2, and COMNAVFORV. J-2 COMUSMACV provided ITT personnel, Document Team and support for handling civilian detainees. OOB, SPAR reports and a Black List were provided by U.S. advisors from Sector Headquarters at Ben Tre, RVN. Red Haze and aerial photography support was provided by the 73rd Aviation Company, Vung Tau, RVN. Intelligence summaries from SA, IV Corps and 7th ARVN Division were provided daily. ANO Cubic Point, P.I., provided all map required.

(2) Previous intelligence indicated elements of the C-530 CO. were operating in the objective area. This was confirmed by documents recovered from VC KIA. The enemy exhibited the ability to avoid con-

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tact, remain well hidden, and exfiltrate the AOA.

c. Command Relationships. Operation DECK HOUSE V was a unilateral combined amphibious operation with command relationships in accordance with NWP-22(A). Command relationships between the VNMV Brigade Force Bravo and the Special Landing Force was one of cooperation and coordination with the Vietnamese Commander responsive to the CATF through the Landing Force Commander. A Brigade Command Element was colocated with the Landing Force Commander. This proved highly desirable as coordination of troop movement and supporting fires were quickly accomplished.

d. Supporting Arms.

(1) Naval Gunfire Support for DECK HOUSE V was provided by the USS CANBERRA (CAG-2), the USS SAINT FRANCIS RIVER (LSMR-525) and the USS CARRONADE (IFS-1). The hydrography of the area required the CANBERRA to take station approximately 20,000 meters from the beach, which limited her fire support to eight inch guns. The LSMR and the IFS were able to take fire support stations in the mouths of the Co Chien and Ham Luong Rivers with some difficulty, and provided fire support on the periphery of the Thanh Phong Peninsula.

(2) Close air support was provided by 7th Air Force and was timely and effective. The exchange of liaison officers between the Amphibious Task Force and Air Force control agencies was a significant factor in the ease of coordinating and obtaining close air support.

(3) Artillery assets were task organized into a Provisional Artillery Group after the initial ship-to-shore movement in order to provide tactical fire direction in both the BLT and VNMV Brigade Force areas. Technical fire direction remained with the individual firing batteries and no major problems were encountered in this grouping. Field artillery support for DECK HOUSE V included two towed 105mm howitzer batteries, an LVTH-6 platoon and one 107mm howtar battery.

(4) A FSCC was established at the SLF headquarters level utilizing the BLT FSCC and personnel and equipment augmentation from the 9thMAB. Upon establishment of the BLT and VNMV Brigade ashore, control of artillery and naval gunfire was passed ashore to the SLF FSCC. The SLF Fire Support Coordinator was responsible for the coordination of supporting arms within the AOA while the BLT and Brigade Fire Support Coordinators coordinated supporting arms in their respective sectors in accordance with established doctrine. Control of air remained afloat due to the communication requirements with IV Corps DASC. No problems were encountered in coordination and control of supporting arms.

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(5) The AOA was divided by the Province Chief of Kien Hoa Province into three categories of fire control zones. Throughout the operation a representative of the Province Chief was present in SACC/FSCC to provide immediate approval/disapproval of all requests for the employment of supporting arms. The fire control zones were established as follows.

(a) Specified Strike Area: No approval required prior to employment of supporting arms either upon targets of opportunity or pre-planned missions in support of operations of landing force elements.

(b) Mission Bases Only: Positively identified targets or pre-planned strikes approved by the Province representative prior to attack.

(c) No Fire Area: Approval by Province Chief required for all missions and type of weapon determined by Province Chief.

e. Logistics.

(1) Logistic support for the SLF was provided from embarked supplies aboard the ARG shipping. Prior to commencement of DECK HOUSE V liaison was established to coordinate logistic support from in-country sources. The Vung Tau Sub-Area Command was designated as the resupply point, if required. The VNMC Brigade Force Bravo embarked with 12 days of supply and utilized their organic resupply point at Vung Tau as necessary.

(2) Although normal resupply for the SLF is by helicopter from ARG shipping direct to using units, a limited dump containing Class I and Class V supplies was established at White Beach. Distribution to units was by helicopter from White Beach as well as from ARG shipping. Two helicopters were assigned in direct support of the BLT for supply of units that had been moving during the day. This procedure proved most satisfactory and more responsive to SLF needs than total resupply from afloat since deep draft ships remained fifteen to twenty-eight miles off the beach throughout the operation.

(3) Initial evacuation of casualties, civilian and military, was to the LPH. Seriously injured civilians were subsequently evacuated to RVN hospitals in Vung Tau or Saigon by helicopter. The 36th Evacuation Hospital at Vung Tau processed the evacuation of military KIA's or WIA's and, when tactical operations permitted, evacuation was from the LPH direct to Saigon with the 36th Evacuation Hospital coordinating for terminal transportation.

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(4) Confirmed POW's were evacuated to the LPD (designated as prison ship) after initial interrogation by ITT personnel at the BLT. Follow-up interrogation was accomplished aboard the LPD with subsequent evacuation to the Provost Marshal at Vung Tau. Detainees were evacuated to the District Headquarters at Than Phu for interrogation by an ITT furnished by IV CTZ.

f. Communications

(1) The communication requirements for DECK HOUSE V were more extensive than previous DECK HOUSE operations due to the number of units involved and the nature of the terrain. In addition to the normal ARG/SLF requirements, it was necessary to provide operators, and equipment from SLF assets to man four separate liaison teams. Two operators and two additional FM radios were provided by the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade as augmentation for the Provisional Artillery Group which was organized for this operation.

(2) The usual problems were encountered in the coordination and utilization of frequencies within the objective area causing some overlap with adjacent in-country units. Hydrographic conditions dictated an average 15 miles operating distance from ship-to-shore throughout the operation. This required frequent use of HF circuits when FM operations became marginal due to distance. Four channel radio relay was established the evening of D-Day and served as the primary means of communication between the SLF and the BLT. Because of the distance involved, communications between the SLF and the VNMC Brigade had to be relayed through the BLT. Some problems were encountered due to traffic density; however, this could have been eliminated had an HF capability been available to the VNMC Brigade. To compensate for this deficiency and reduce traffic density, message priority was strictly adhered to and maximum utilization of helicopter courier service was employed for lengthy messages.

g. Tactical Air Observation. During DECK HOUSE V a total of five aerial observers were employed to provide continuous coverage of the AOA. Four observers were stationed with the 7th Air Force FAC's and flew in O-1 aircraft. At least one 7th Air Force O-1 aircraft was on station over the AOA from sunrise to sunset. The fifth aerial observer remained aboard the LPH under SLF control in order to respond to additional requests as required and to provide pre-planned tactical aerial observation throughout the AOA.

h. Psychological Operations

(1) Troop units were disciplined and well-behaved. They respected the rights and properties of the populace.

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(2) A BJU Detachment was employed for psychological operations, consisting of leaflet drops and loudspeaker broadcasts.

(a) 700,000 leaflets were released in seven drops over the 10-day period, covering the 64 square-mile AOA. Five types were used, including a three-color Chieu Hoi appeal and a warning with curfew hours. Civilians interrogated indicated the leaflets were effective in advising the populace to avoid injury.

(b) Loudspeaker operations told the populace why the Marines were there, how to avoid injury, and when and where to move during supporting arms fires; and appealed to VC to surrender. Over 500 people were addressed with propaganda and given leaflets. In one case, over 124 people responded to an appeal to move from an area from which VC fire was received, to avoid injury from Marine fire.

(c) BJU was effectively utilized and reduced civilian casualties.

i. Civic Action.

(1) Civic Action was limited because of several factors.

(a) The brief duration of the operation precluded long-range projects and distribution of material would identify recipients of American aid and result in reprisals.

(b) Interrogation of civilians revealed the VC told the populace that if they did not leave the Marines would kill them. They also told them that when Marines left the VC would come back and expel from the area those who had remained. Relatively few civilians were encountered.

(c) A woman who received medical attention for her children refused to return, saying that the VC would kill her and her children.

(d) The people were substantially healthier than those encountered by BLT 1/9 in I Corps Tactical Zone. This is a rice surplus area and even the animals looked healthy.

(2) Corpsmen rendered medical attention on the spot as units moved through villages.

(3) Approximately 20 serious cases were evacuated to the LPH, from where they were sent willingly to a refugee center.

(4) Civilians who received medical attention were noncommittal in their response.

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j. Special Augmentation Equipment.

(1) Augmentation equipment assigned to the Special Landing Force included: 4 UH1E and 2 CH-46 helicopters, a LVTH platoon, and 36 plastic assault boats with outboard motors.

(2) UH1E helicopters have been available to the SLF for all DECK HOUSE operations, however, the attachment of two armed and two unarmed helicopters for the pre-operation exercise, Mud Puppy II, provided valuable training for both the HMM and BLT. The additional month of training with the SLF, coupled with the opportunity to participate in planning for DECK HOUSE V resulted in more effective utilization of these helicopters. During DECK HOUSE V ground observation throughout the AOA proved to be extremely limited; consequently complete reliance was placed on the UH1E for the conduct of observation. By using two sections of armed and unarmed helicopters, relief on station was possible without undue commitment of aircraft and crews. This proved most satisfactory when it became necessary to increase helicopter escort due to increased sniper fire.

(3) The CH-46 helicopter provided the heavy lift capability during the initial assault and this allowed maximum utilization of the UH-34 for troop lift. In the area of resupply, the CH-46 was employed to ensure maximum utilization of load/lift combinations and thereby reducing flight hours. In addition, the increased troop lift proved valuable in assuring the rapid build-up in landing zones. It is recommended however, that in future operations the CH-46 be configured so that it is capable of lifting the 105mm howitzer intact. This added capability would increase the mobility of the towed 105mm howitzers.

(4) The employment of the LVTH platoon is covered in detail in enclosure (4) and the recommendations contained therein are concurred with. The mobility of the LVTH provided flexibility to artillery support. On D plus 8 one section of LVTH's was displaced forward to provide coverage to a company operating beyond the range of friendly artillery.

(5) The utilization of the plastic assault boats was on an "as required" basis. A boat pool was established at the BLT CP and boats were attached to units for specific operations. Due to the distance between companies, the assault boats were lifted by CH-46's to the units for employment in waterways. The terrain in the AOA was such that reliance on the plastic assault boats was not necessary, consequently they received limited use. Utilization of the assault boats during DECK HOUSE V uncovered several limitations: The plastic assault boat is very fragile and cannot be subjected to hard field usage without damage; the boat does not have a flotation device and sinks readily; the boat transom needs to be reinforced to insure secure installation of the outboard motors. It is also recommended that only motors with manual starters be procured.

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10. The following comments are included on subordinate commander's combat after action reports:

a. HMM 362 After Action Report:

(1) In paragraph 1 of enclosure (2) it should be noted that HMM 362 transported the VNMC Battalions a total of six times. In addition, the initial helicopterborne assault of the 4th Battalion was from the USS VANCOUVER (LPD-2) and this resulted in a highly successful landing and build-up ashore.

(2) The conclusions presented in the "Analysis of Helicopter Operations" are concurred with. Each amphibious assault operation is different, but it is axiomatic there must be a close relationship between the BLT and the HMM. All aspects of training in the SLF point to the inherent mobility of the helicopter and this close relationship. The importance of communications between the ground and air units cannot be overly emphasized. The SLF continues to stress this in training exercises and combat operations.

(3) Enclosure (3) of this report reflects what is considered to be near maximum performance by a HMM Squadron during a combat operation. The overall maintenance effort of HMM 362 was evident at all times and the availability was outstanding.

b. BLT 1/9 After Action Report:

(1) Paragraph 11.b. recommended that the allocation of CH-46 helicopters be increased. In March 1967 HMM -164, a CH-46A squadron, will be assigned to the SLF, thereby increasing the mobility and flexibility inherent in SLF helicopter operations. Until then, it is recommended that modified CH-46's be assigned the SLF to provide the capability of lifting the 105mm howitzer.

(2) Paragraphs 11.c., i., and k. all relate to communications.

a. In past combat operations the SLF stressed the importance of radio relay (MRC-62). The inherent reliability and security of radio relay will continue to be used in future training exercises and combat operations.

b. The 9thMAB provided the SLF with two additional PRC-41s and these were located in the SLF/BLT FSCC to monitor HD #1 and HD #2. BLT 1/9 provided two PRC-25s to the SLF for liaison with adjacent units. The only drawdown on BLT communications assets were the two PRC-25 radios. It is not believed that this hampered the communications capability of BLT 1/9 to a great extent.

c. When frequencies were assigned to artillery conduct of fire and the battalion and company tactical nets it was determined that there was sufficient separation. During the operation when it was evident there was an overlap, the frequencies were switched to prevent further interference.

(3) Do not concur with comments in paragraph 11.1. and m.

a. Supplies and equipment embarked in ARG shipping is determined by higher authority and reflects that required by the SLF to respond to contingencies anywhere in PACOM and is not limited to operations in RVN. Supplies and equipment are combat loaded in ARG shipping in such a manner as to permit selective unloading as required. There was no instance during DECK HOUSE V where a requested item could not be unloaded. The unloading of certain items of supplies/equipment not required for specific operations in RVN would seriously degrade the SLF readiness posture to react to contingencies elsewhere in PACOM.

b. The need for a BSA ashore is not considered desirable in that it limits mobility and increases helicopter flights by double-handling supplies. Past experience proved the most expeditious means of resupply is from ARG shipping direct to using units. However this system relies on timely notification, accurate location of units and reasonable requirements.

(4) The problems outlined in paragraph 11.b. is one that prevails throughout RVN. However, guides may be usefully employed despite this language barrier.

(5) Paragraph 11.d.g. and j. are generally concurred with but believe these are problems that can be solved by unit commanders on the spot.

c. Provisional Artillery Group After Action Report:

(1) The comments, conclusions, and recommendations are concurred with. When the combat situation permits it is the intention of the SLF Commander to group the artillery to gain advantages outlined in this after action report.

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HEADQUARTERS
Battalion Landing Team 1/9
9th Marine Amphibious Brigade
FPO, San Francisco, California

001 467

3/WRVH/rgs
3480
20 Jan 1967

SECRET

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commander Special Landing Force

Subj: Combat After Action Report (Operation DECKHOUSE V)

Ref: (a) Appendix 4 to Annex U to SLF Operation Plan 328-67
(b) Maps: Vietnam, AMS series L 7014: sheets 6228 I and II;
6328 III and IV.

Encl: (1) Overlay of the Operation.

1. Operation DECKHOUSE V.

2. Inclusive Dates and Location. Six January to 15 January 1967 Thanh Phong Secret Zone, Thanh Phu District, Kien Hoa Province, Republic of Vietnam.

3. Command Headquarters. Special Landing Force

4. Task Organization

BLT 1/9

Maj DAY

H&S Company (-) (Rein)

Capt SHAW

Det, Hq Bn, 3rd Mar Div
Det, Postal Section
Det, Disbursing Section
Det, Photo Section
Det, Comm Co (Radio Relay)
Det, Hq Co, 9th Mar (Radio Relay)
Det, Btry "D", 2nd Bn, 12th Mar (LnTm)
Det, Hq Btry, 2nd Bn, 12th Mar (NGF LnTm)
1st Clearing Plt (-) (Rein), Co "B", 3rd Med Bn.
Det, 15th Dental Co.
Logistic Support Unit
Det, 3rd Service Bn.

ENCLOSURE (3)

Capt FESTA

Company "A" (Rein)

Company "A"
FO TM, Btry "D", 2nd Bn, 12th Mar
Det, 1st Plat, Co "C", 3rd Eng Bn
Det, H&S Co
Det, S-2 Section
Det, Med Flat.

1st BN, 9th MAR
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Det, Comm Plat
 1st Section, 81mm Mortar Plat
 1st Sqd, Flame-Thrower Section
 FAC Tm

Company "B" (Rein)

Capt SAYERS

Company "B"
 FO Tm, Btry "D", 2nd Bn, 12th Mar
 Det, 1st Plat, Co "C", 3rd Eng Bn
 Det, H&S Co
 Det, S-2 Section
 Det, Med Plat
 Det, Comm Plat
 2nd Section, 81mm Mortar Plat
 2nd Squad, Flame-Thrower Section

Company "D" (Rein)

Capt KEYS

Company "D"
 FO TM, Btry "D", 2nd Bn, 12th Mar
 Det, Hq Btry, 2nd Bn, 12th Mar (NGF Spot Tm)
 Det, 1st Plat, Co "C", 3rd Eng Bn
 Det, H&S Co
 Det, S-2 Section
 Det, Med Section
 Det, Comm Plat
 4th Section, 81mm Mortar Plat
 4th Squad, Flame-Thrower Section
 FAC Tm

Btry "D" (-) (Rein) 2nd Bn, 12th Mar

Capt GUNDLACH

Btry "D"
 Det, Hq Btry, 2nd Bn, 12th Mar

107mm Mortar Btry. (Rein), 1st Bn 12th Mar

Capt RICHEY

107mm Mortar Btry, 1st Bn 12th Mar
 Det, Hq Btry, 1st Bn 12th Mar

3rd Plat (Rein), Co "B", 3rd AmTrac Bn

Lt HORVATICH

3rd Plat, Co "B", 3rd AmTrac Bn
 Det, H&S Co, 3rd AmTrac Bn

3rd Plat (Rein), Co "A", 3rd AT Bn

Lt RILEY

3rd Plat (Rein), Co "A", 3rd AT Bn
 Det, H&S Co, 3rd AT Bn

1st Plat (Rein), Co "C", 3rd Eng Bn

WO JONES

1st Plat, Co "C", 3rd Eng Bn
 Det, H&S Co, 3rd Eng Bn
 Det, Eng Support Co, 3rd Eng Bn

2nd Plat (Rein), Co "A", 3rd MT Bn

Lt DAVIS

2nd Plat, Co "A", 3rd MT Bn
 Det, H&S Co, 3rd MT Bn

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<u>2nd Plat. (Rein), Co "D", 3rd Recon Bn</u>	Lt MURPHY
2nd Plat, Co "D", 3rd Recon Bn	
Det, H&S Co, 3rd Recon Bn	
<u>2nd Plat (Rein), Co "C", 3rd SP Bn</u>	Lt DEANARO
2nd Plat, Co "C", 3rd SP Bn	
Det, H&S Co, 3rd SP Bn	
<u>3rd Plat (Rein), Co "B", 3rd Tank Bn</u>	Lt VOIST
3rd Plat, Co "B", 3rd Tank Bn	
Det, H&S Co, 3rd Tank Bn	
<u>1st Plat (Rein), 1st Armd Am Co (LVTH-6)</u>	Lt COTTE
1st Plat, 1st Armd Am Co	
<u>2nd Team, 3rd Plat, 1st Force Recon Co</u>	Sgt SUMPER
2nd Team, 3rd Plat, 1st Force Recon Co	
<u>BLT RESERVE</u>	
<u>Company "C" (Rein)</u>	Capt GARD
Company "C"	
FO TM, Btry "D", 2nd Bn, 12th Mar	
Det, 1st Plat, Co "C", 3rd Eng Bn	
Det, H&S Co	
Det, S-2 Section	
Det, Med Plat	
Det, Comm Plat	
3rd Sqd Flame-Thrower Section	

5. Intelligence.

a. Deckhouse V was conducted in the Thanh Phu sector of Keim Hoa Province. The BLT area of operation in Thanh Phu was 69 sq miles. The prominent terrain features were the rice paddies, the waterways and the mangroves. The rice paddies were wet for the most part, but only in the northern sector were they an obstacle. The waterways were a significant obstacle. The mangroves were also an obstacle.

b. For the duration of the operation the weather was moderate. The average high was 83°F and the average low was 76°F. The average humidity was 75%. The prevailing winds were from the North at 20-25 knots. Tidal seepage caused flooding. The skies were generally cloudy.

c. The Thanh Phu area has been the security responsibility of the 518th Coastal Security Battalion, a VC local force battalion. Two companies of this battalion, C1 and C2, normally operate in Thanh Phu. Both companies have approximately 120 men, are well armed and trained, but lack combat experience. In addition to these units a separate company, the C530 company, also operates in Thanh Phu. It is armed and trained in the same manner as C1 and C2. Also, each village has its own self defense squad or platoon, depending on the size of the village. Thanh Phu's value to the VC lies in its logistic function. This area contains installations and support facilities for the VC.

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d. The results of Deckhouse V were disappointing. While some materiel was captured, the bulk of the VC installations and stores are believed to have been moved. In addition the VC forces had also left. Two confirmed members of the 0530 company were killed, but contact was light. Contact was limited to sniper fire, small unit ambushes and light mortar fire. Extensive mining was anticipated but not found. The poor results of the operation were probably due to the Viet Cong's prior knowledge of the operation. This gave the VC sufficient time to move their supplies and personnel out of the area.

6. Mission. The mission assigned BLT 1/9 was as follows:

a. Commencing at H-Hour on L-Day, land by waterborne assault over White Beach. Prevent in/exfiltration and conduct search and destroy operations in Sector White.

b. Commencing at L-Hour on D-Day, land by heloborne assault into LZ CROW and LZ DUCK. Prevent in/exfiltration and conduct search and destroy operations in Sectors Green and Brown. Control main waterways.

c. On order, conduct search and destroy operations in Sector Purple.

d. Provide platoon size Sparrow/Hawk force from the reserve company aboard the USS Iwo Jima (LPH-2)

e. On order conduct a tactical withdrawal.

7. Concept of the Operation.

a. The operation was planned to be executed in two phases. The initial phase (Phase I) was intended to isolate the operation area to prevent in/exfiltration of enemy forces and materiel. This was to be accomplished by the establishment of blocking positions on waterways and other major routes of egress. The second phase (Phase II) was intended to be a slow, deliberate but aggressive search and destroy (S&D) operation throughout the area of operations.

b. The concept called for landing one LVTH-6 platoon, as the first wave, followed by one reinforced rifle company in LVTP-5's over White Beach, as the second wave, to establish a beachhead and secure a BLT operating base. Upon securing the beachhead a third wave of landing craft was to land the heavy equipment for beach support followed by the landing of non scheduled elements including tanks and Ontos.

c. Approximately one half hour after the initial waterborne landing one reinforced rifle company was to be landed by helicopter at LZ Crow followed by another reinforced rifle company to land in LZ Duck. Both companies were to establish combat operating bases. The company which was landed at LZ Crow was to set up blocking positions on the major waterways and routes of egress in the vicinity of LZ Crow while the other company was to commence S&D operations in the southern portion of Sector Green.

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A Recon platoon was to be inserted into the north east corner of Sector Brown to report on in/exfiltration routes and activity. One reinforced company was to form the BLT reserve, provide a platoon size Sparrow Hawk unit and remain aboard the LPH for possible future employment.

d. The 105mm howitzer battery, LVTH-6 platoon and 107mm mortar battery were attached to BLT 1/9, but were to be under Provisional Artillery Group control for the operation. The 105mm howitzer battery was to land over White Beach by LVTP-5 while the 107mm mortar battery was to land by helicopter at LZ Crow after the completion of the helolift of the two assault Companies. White Beach, LZ Crow and LZ Duck were to be prepared by naval gunfire and air strikes prior to the landing.

e. A Composite Provisional Company was to be formed by elements of H&S Company and personnel from uncommitted supporting units, and to relieve the initial company landing over White Beach of the security of the beachhead as soon as possible. The rifle company was then to commence S&D operations in Sector White.

f. After the completion of Phase I, Phase II was to be a thorough search and destroy mission initially conducted by two companies abreast in Sectors Green and White moving in a north-easterly direction. At some later time the company originally in blocking positions was to begin a S&D movement to the east. It was intended that these converging forces would push the enemy into Sector Purple and then annihilate the enemy by conducting a S&D mission in Sector Purple. On order the BLT was to conduct a withdrawal, re-embarking aboard the amphibious shipping in a general reversal of the landing plan.

8. Execution. (All times are local time for time zone H)

a. D-Day 6 January 1967

(1) After two previous postponements due to heavy seas and surf, D-Day was executed on 6 January 1967 and commenced with prep fires consisting of naval gunfire and air strikes on White Beach and LZ Crow.

(2) The 1st Plt, 1st Armd Am Co (LVTH-6 Plt) composed the first wave and landed on White Beach at 0741 which was eleven minutes after the designated H-hour. As the 1st wave approached the beach it received sniper fire which was returned by direct 105mm howitzer fire from the LVTH-6's. No friendly casualties were incurred on the initial landing. At 0743 the second wave consisting of Company "B" landed by LVTP-5 over White Beach without incident. The 3rd wave, which was heavy equipment for beach support, and was scheduled to be landed in landing craft, was not landed due to the heavy sea and surf condition. Company "B" secured a beachhead consisting of White Beach and LZ Sparrow by 0950.

(3) Company "D" was heloborne into LZ Crow with the first wave landing at 0813 which was 13 minutes after the designated L-hour. By about 0950 the helolift of Company "D", which was in three waves, was completed. The landing was without incident. Company "D", while maintaining security on LZ Crow, moved one platoon to the critical river junction at XR 761961 and set in a blocking position. The Recon platoon with the Det. Force Recon was inserted into LZ Crow with the second wave.

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(4) Upon completion of the heloborne lift of Company "D", Company "A" was landed at LZ Duck after prep fires consisting of naval gunfire and air strikes were terminated. The first wave landed at 0953 and the landing was completed by 1100. The company began a search and destroy operation in the southern portion of Sector Green. The landing was without incident.

(5) The 105mm Howitzer Battery, "D" Battery 2/12, was landed by LVT over White Beach and was in place and ready for a fire mission by 1330. The 107mm mortar battery, "W" Battery 1/12, was scheduled to land at LZ Crow after the completion of the heloborne lift of Company "A" but LZ Crow was determined unsuitable for landing the howtars due to the poor surface condition of LZ Crow, which was covered by 18" to 24" of mud. It was determined that the battery would be landed after a suitable alternate LZ was found and a recon party was landed for that purpose. Five VCS were apprehended while reconnoitering for a suitable LZ.

(6) The landing plan was altered and instead of landing the 107mm mortar battery, H&S Company was lifted into LZ Sparrow at 1230. A provisional composite company was formed from elements of H&S Company and personnel from the Motor Transport Platoon, the AntiTank Platoon and one platoon from the BLT reserve, Company "C". The Provisional Composite Company relieved Company "B" of the responsibility of the security of White Beach and LZ Sparrow, which contained the BLT headquarters, by 1500. Company "B" then began a search and destroy mission in the southern portion of Sector White.

(7) At 1550 a suitable alternate landing zone was located for the 107mm mortar battery in Sector Brown at XR 767949 and the battery was landed without incident. The battery was in place and ready for a fire mission by about 1700. The completion of the heloborne lift of 107mm mortar battery completed the initial landing of BLT 1/9.

(8) The first VC contact was at 1640 when Company "A" took 7 VC under fire at XR 749886 during their search and destroy operation. The fire fight lasted about 10 minutes and resulted in 1 VC KIA. The Recon Platoon was helolifted from LZ Crow and inserted by helicopters into the northeast corner of Sector Brown at XR 799972 about 1830. The Recon Platoon mission was to report all VC movements watching especially for routes or indications of in/exfiltration.

(9) The three rifle companies continued their search and destroy missions until dark and then set up defensive positions in platoon patrol bases (PEB's) in their sectors for the night. All companies conducted extensive patrols and ambushes in their sectors. Company "A" in southern portion of Sector Green at XR 741884, Company "B" in southern portion of Sector White at XR 764853, and Company "D" in Sector Brown with one platoon providing security for 107mm mortar battery at XR 768949 and 2 platoons in blocking positions along waterways at XR 765961 and XR 768957. The BLT CP was located at LZ Sparrow XR 764853. At 2330 Company "D" received a harassing, probing attack by 5 VC. They were taken under small arms, and 107mm mortar fire. No known casualties were incurred by either side. There was no further contact during the daylight hours and only light harassing and sniper action the night of 6 Jan, 1967 with no known casualties.

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SECRETb. D+1 7 January 1967

(1) Frag Order 01 ordered Company "A" and Company "B" to carry out S&D Operations in Sector Green & White below phase line March. Company "D" was required to maintain its blocking positions, S&D in Sector Brown, west of phase line October and provide security for the mortar battery. The mission for Recon platoon was unchanged.

(2) At 0613 2 VC were sighted approaching the defensive positions of Company "A" from the direction which sniping had been coming previously. They were taken under fire and at daylight after a search of the area two VC bodies were found.

(3) One platoon of Company "D" was lifted by helicopters to a blocking position at RA 784964 about 0900. Prep fire by artillery was conducted on the LZ and the landing was without incident.

(4) No contact was made during the S&D operations which were in a north easterly direction. A portion of both Sectors White and Green formed a peninsula which was separated by the Rach Khau Bang on one side and the Rach Khen Thuyen on the other side. After prep fires were conducted on both LZ's a continuous helicopter lift was conducted by elements of Company "B" into the portion of the peninsula in Sector White and elements of Company "A" into the portion of the peninsula in Sector Green. At 1620 during the helicopter lift of Company "A" an accidental explosion of a grenade caused one friendly KIA (a member of HMM 362) and 5 WIA from BLT 1/9, (one of whom later died of wounds). There was no enemy contact during the helicopter lift of either company. Company "B" later made contact with 5 VC in a short fire fight of about 5 minutes. The result was the capture of three VCS, all wounded. At 1840 Company "A" received harassing fire which was returned by small arms and 60mm mortar fire. One friendly WIA resulted from a short 60mm mortar round but did not require evacuation.

(5) Just prior to darkness all companies set up defensive positions in PPB's with extensive patrolling and ambushes throughout the night. Companies "A" and "B" were located south of phase line March in Sector Green and White respectively with Company "D" located west of phase line October in Sector Brown in blocking positions. At 2250 the Provisional Composite Company was hit by a squad size VC probe. The fire fight lasted about 10 minutes. A search of the area the next morning was negative. One friendly KIA resulted during the attack. There was no further contact that night.

c. D+2 8 January 1967

(1) Frag Order 02 ordered Company "A" and Company "B" to cross phase line March at 1000 behind naval gunfire, artillery prep fires and air strikes which preceded the advance of the units. After crossing phase line March the units were to conduct S&D operations in Sectors Green and White but not beyond phase line April. Company "D" was to maintain blocking positions, conduct S&D operations west of phase line October in Sector Brown and maintain security for the 107 Howtar Battery.

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(2) At 0730 Company "D" sighted a camouflaged raft floating down the Rach Bang Cung river and destroyed it by M-79 fire. No further contact was made until after crossing phase line March at 1000.

(3) The prep fires consisting of the naval gunfire, artillery and air strikes was conducted from 0900 to 1000 with the artillery shifting fire in front of Companies "A" & "B" as they crossed phase line March. Companies "A" & "D" conducted their S&D operation in Sectors Green and White between phase line March and April until dark.

(4) At 1000 Company "A" found a tunnel complex with surrounding bunkers which had probably been used as a storage/training area. The only equipment or supplies located at the complex at the time of discovery was a small quantity of uniforms. The complex was destroyed by demolitions. At 1155, a patrol from Company "D" was taken under small arms fire by 9 VC at XR 764949. The fire fight lasted approximately ten minutes and small arms and 81mm mortar fire were returned. An air strike, which delivered 2-500 pound bombs and strafed the area, was called upon the fleeing VC. No known casualties resulted from the incident. At 1415 a platoon from Company "B" received automatic weapons fire from an estimated 12 VC at XR 783887. The platoon attempted to envelope the VC unit and returned small arms, M-79 and 3.5" rocket fire. The fire fight lasted approximately 15 minutes with the only known casualty being 1 friendly WIA. At 1430 the reconnaissance platoon was helo lifted from XR 801968 to LZ Sparrow. The platoon provided the BLT GP with a reaction force to assist in the defense.

(5) No other significant contact was made during the S&D operation by any of the companies the rest of the day. Just prior to dark the companies set into night defensive positions, and conducted extensive patrolling and ambushes. Company "A" was located in Sector Green between phase lines March and April. Company "D" remained in its blocking positions in Sector Brown. Company "B" was located in Sector White below phase line April.

(6) At 2115 a patrol from Company "A" sighted 7 to 10 VC directly across a stream at XR 757891 using lights and appeared to be setting up a mortar. The patrol opened fire from hasty positions but were unable to investigate results due to swollen stream conditions. No fire was returned and there were no known casualties. At 2200 Company "B" received the first enemy mortar attack at XR 798873. The enemy fired small arms, 5-60mm mortar rounds and 3-57mm recoilless rifle rounds. The fire was returned with small arms, 60mm mortar fire, M-79 fire and 36-105 Howitzer rounds. The fire fight lasted about 15 minutes and the only known casualty was one friendly WIA. At 2245 Company "A" received jamming on its Company Tactical net and at the same time received 3-60mm mortar rounds. No fire was returned due to the inability to locate enemy firing positions. No casualties resulted.

d. D+3 9 January 1967

(1) Frag Order 03 ordered the landing of Company "C" by helicopter to relieve Company "A" who reverted to BLT reserve. Company "C" was then to

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continue the S&D operation in Sector Green below phase line April. Company "B" was to continue the S&D operation in Sector White below phase line April. Company "D" mission was unchanged.

(2) At 0245 a listening post from Company "B" fired on a friendly patrol returning to its PPB and one casualty resulted who later died of wounds.

(3) Two platoons of Company "C" were helolifted into Sector Green at XR 756892 about 0725 and relieved the two platoons of Company "A" west of the Bach Khen Thuyen. The platoon of Company "C" which had been used as security for BLT CP was helolifted to XR 766881 and relieved the remaining platoon of Company "A" which was landed at LZ Sparrow and was utilized for BLT CP security.

(4) At 1500 one patrol from Company "D" discovered 20 tons of rice in bins at XR 759935. A request was made for transportation to remove the rice but none was available so the rice was destroyed. Company "C" discovered 5 tons of rice and three VCS at XR 786906 about 1600. The VCS were sent back to BLT compound and the rice was later destroyed. At 1615 an ambush from Company "B" called in a fire mission on 3 VC who were sighted in the open. Sixteen rounds of 105 were fired with 3 VC KIA possible.

(5) At 1630 one platoon of Company "C" was helolifted to XR 771891 in order to cross a swollen stream. Prior to dark all companies set into defensive PPB's and conducted extensive patrolling and ambushes throughout the night. Companies "A" and "B" were poised on phase line April in order to cross the following day. Company "D" remained in blocking positions in western portion of Sector Brown.

(6) The recon platoon was inserted at XR 787954 to reconnoiter the eastern portion of Sector Brown on the western side of phase line October under OpCon of Company "D". At 1820 a patrol from Company "C" discovered the first surprise firing device in the operation which was a Chi Com grenade placed in a doorway of what appeared to be a vacated ordinance repair facility. Located at XR 764962. The surprise firing device had a pull device and was destroyed in place. At 2113 a platoon from Company "B" was attacked by an estimated 15 VC at XR 787887 under 60mm mortar and small arms covering. Small arms, 3.5" rockets, M-79 rounds, 25 rounds of 60mm, 57 rounds of 105mm, were returned. An armed UH1E and armed C-47 flare ship were utilized for air strikes. The fire fight lasted about 30 minutes with estimated 10 VC KIA and 5 VC WIA. There were 2 friendly WIA.

e. D+4 10 January 1967

(1) Frag Order 04 designated Companies "B" and "C" to cross phase line April in Sectors White and Green respectively after prep fires consisting of naval gunfire, artillery and air strikes. Company "D" was to provide security for the mortar battery, to abandon blocking positions, and conduct S&D operations west of phase line October in Sector Brown.

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(2) From 0800-0830 prep fires by the artillery were conducted and at 0830 Company "B" followed later by Company "C" crossed phase line April. Company "C" found a supply cache of 18 rifles in a mangrove swamp at XR 764902. At 0930 while on a sweep one platoon from Company "B" received heavy automatic and semi-automatic fire from 5 to 8 VC at XR 788999. Small arms, 55 rounds of 60mm, 25 rounds of 81mm, and 30 rounds of 105mm were returned. The fire fight lasted about 15 minutes and resulted in one friendly KIA and two WIA with estimated 5 VC KIA. At about 1030 a patrol from the Recon Platoon located a hospital complex located at XR 792947. The complex consisted of 4 houses with beds and used medical supplies. The trail leading into the hospital had 4 Chi Com grenades with surprise firing devices implaced along it. The hospital and medical supplies were destroyed. At 1445 a platoon from Company "B" was taken under automatic fire by an unknown number of VC. Small arms, 60mm mortar, 67 rounds of 105mm, and 3-2.75" rockets from an armed UH1B were returned. The fire fight lasted approximately 15 minutes and resulted in 1 friendly KIA and 2 WIA with an estimated 5 VC KIA. At 1515 a 3 man fireteam sighted 5 VC who threw a grenade wounding 2 Marines. The Marines returned fire and saw 2 VC fall at XR 790912. A patrol from Company "D" was taken under fire by 10 to 12 well entrenched VC across the Kinh Eo Loi River at about 1610. The enemy fired small arms and 5-60mm mortar rounds. Small arms, M-79 rounds, 1-M-72, 81mm rounds and 68-105mm rounds were returned. The fire fight lasted about 20 minutes and it was impossible to investigate the enemy position across the river, there were no friendly casualties. There was no further contact in the daylight hours as Companies "B" and "C" swept north easterly in Sectors Green and White and Company "D" searched in Sector Brown. The companies set up defensive PPB's prior to dark and conducted extensive patrolling and ambushes throughout the night. At 1900 Company "B" received 15 sniper rounds at XR 790914 during a helicopter resupply mission. This resulted in one friendly KIA. About 2030 a VC probe of unknown strength inflicted 2 friendly WIA on the Provisional Composite Company at White Beach. During the fire fight one Marine was wounded by friendly fire.

f. D+5 11 January 1967

(1) Frag Order 05 ordered Companies "B" and "C" to continue S&D operations in their respective sectors below phase line June. Company "D" was to provide security for the mortar battery, to continue S&D operations in Sector Brown and advance to north-south grid line 79 and phase line October. The Recon Platoon was to be retracted to the CP of Company "D". A boundary change was promulgated effecting Companies "B" and "C" (See enclosure (1)).

(2) A Marine from a listening post was wounded while entering the lines of the Provisional Composite Company when he failed to respond after being challenged twice. The Recon Platoon was extracted from XR 797954 and lifted to the CP of Company "D" at about 0800. For the rest of the operation the Recon Platoon was employed as rifle platoon under OpCon of Company "D". Plastic assault boats were utilized for the first time in a riverine operation by Company "C" in Rach Khen Thuyen River about 0930

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from a position XR 771891 in a north easterly direction. At 1024 a platoon from Company "B" was engaged by a squad size VC unit with automatic weapons. The platoon enveloped, pinning the enemy machine gunner and his crew down. The fire fight lasted about 20 minutes and resulted in 2 friendly WIA and 3 VC KIA with the capture of a MG and a Russian Carbine.

(3) A platoon from Company "A" was helolifted into Sector Green at XR 790912 and placed under OP CON of Company "C" at about 1500. The companies continued their S&D operations with no contact and at dark established defensive PPB's and conducted extensive patrolling and ambushes throughout the night. No contact was encountered during the night.

G. D+6 12 Jan 1967

(1) The Frag Order 06 required Company "B" to continue its S&D operations in Sector White up to phase line June but not beyond. Company C was to continue operations in Sector Green up to phase line July, and to be prepared to attack east on order. Company "D" was to provide security for the mortar battery and to continue S&D operations in Sector Brown up to but not beyond phase line October.

(2) A patrol of Company "B" was engaged by 15 VC who opened fire with automatic weapons and threw hand grenades at about 0210. The patrol returned fire with small arms, 81mm mortar rounds and 105mm rounds. The patrol leader saw about 5 VC fall with the opening burst of fire. The fire fight lasted about ten minutes and 5 VC KIA were estimated. Two platoons of Company "C" with the Company CP group were helo lifted from the night company patrol base to XR 787927 at about 0730. The LZ was prepped by artillery fire and on a trail close to the LZ. CAS was on station but not used as was an armed UH1E. There was no enemy contact during the landing. A platoon from Company "D" was helolifted from XR 785963 to XR 786953 at about 0830. No prep fires were used and the landing was without incident.

(3) At about 1015 a patrol from Company B was surrounded by an estimated 20 VC at XR 796908. The patrol requested artillery fire, 81mm fire support and air strikes. A total of 10-105mm rounds were fired, an unknown number of 81mm rounds and 3 passes were made by a armed UH1E during the action which lasted 45 minutes. The incident resulted in 5 friendly WIA and possible 4 VC KIA. Company "C" discovered a hospital site at XR 790918 and destroyed it and the medical supplies at about 1145. At 1200 Company "C" discovered the bodies of 4 VC with weapons who were probably killed by Company B on the previous day. At 1205 while searching bunkers at XR 792915 Company C killed one VC who ran out of a bunker after a grenade had been exploded in the bunker. During a search of a hamlet at XR 824907, at about 1515, by a patrol from Company B, 4 VC attempted to flee and were killed, 4 weapons, including a 45 cal pistol were captured. At 1610 a patrol from Company B stopped 4 VCS for questioning. Approximately 17 VC prematurely sprung an ambush with small arms fire from a distance of about 100 yds while the patrol was interrogating the 4 VCS. The patrol returned fire with small arms, M-79 rds, 3.5" rockets, 60mm rounds and 18-105mm rounds. The results were 2 friendly WIA and 3 VC KIA estimated.

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(4) The 107mm mortar battery with a platoon of Company "D" for security, displaced by helicopter from XR 768949 to XR 786931 in order to provide fire support into Sector Purple when required. Company "B" was ordered to continue to clear Sector White up to but not beyond east-west grid lines 92 in Sector White. The Companies continued to carry out their S&D missions until dark without contact when they entered into their night defensive PPB's. Company "B" was poised at east-west grid line 92, Company "C" was at the eastern end of phase line July and Company "D" was at phase line October. No contact was made during the night.

h. D+7 13 Jan 1967

(1) Frag Order 07 required Company "B" to leave one platoon in a blocking position in the vicinity of XR 825908, to take OPCON of the 1st platoon Company "A", which had been under the OPCON of Company "C" and to clear Sector White to phase line July, but not to cross east-west grid line 92 until 0900. Company "D" was ordered to maintain blocking positions along phase line October. Prep fires were scheduled from 0800 to 0900 and then shifting further north until 0930 and to consist of artillery, naval gunfire and air strikes.

(2) At about 0845, 5 to 7 VC snipers engaged the platoon from Company "B" on the right flank at XR 832907. Small arms were returned and an artillery fire mission was called in. The first WP round for adjustment was short and two Marines received non-serious WP burns. The mission was cancelled and no other known casualties were incurred. At 0900 Company "B" took OPCON of the 1st Platoon Company "A". Prep fires were conducted by naval gunfire and air strikes. Company "B" found 5 freshly dug graves at XR 825946 which contained 5 VC KIA, probably from the action the preceding day.

(3) During the afternoon of 13 Jan 1967 Company "B" relieved Company "A" as the BLT reserve. At about 1500 the platoon from Company "B" in the right flank position at XR 824906 was relieved by the Company "A" Command Group and the 2nd platoon which landed by helicopter. The 1st Platoon Company "A" was helo lifted to LZ Sparrow where it relieved the 3rd Platoon, Company "A" under OPCON of Provisional Composite Company. The 3rd Platoon, Company "A" reverted to OPCON of Company "A" and was assigned the mission to relieve the platoon from Company "D" which had provided security for the 107mm mortar battery. The 3rd platoon, Company "A" was helo lifted to XR 786931 and relieved the platoon from Company "D". Company "D" was consolidated and landed at XR 805935 and relieved Company "B" (minus one platoon) which was flown to the USS IWO JIMA (LPH-2). The entire helicopter transplacement commenced about 1500 and was completed about 1900. There was no further contact during the daylight hours and prior to dark the companies set in their defensive PPB's and conducted their patrolling and ambushes.

(4) At 2305, from vicinity of XR 780924 the 107mm mortar battery was taken under 60mm mortar fire. An estimated 8-12 rounds of 60mm were fired in conjunction with a ground attack. The attack was repulsed by small arms, 50 caliber MG fire and 107mm mortar rounds. The attack was preceded by a light signal consisting of 3 flashes followed by a single flash about 15 minutes prior to the attack. The only known casualties were 3 friendly WIA who did not receive serious wounds.

SECRETi. D+8 14 Jan 1967

(1) Frag Order 08 directed Company "A" to maintain its blocking position in the vicinity of XR 832907, and to provide security for the 107mm mortar battery. Company "C" was to conduct a helicopter assault into LZ Goose and then conduct S&D operations in Sector Purple. Company "D" was to maintain blocking positions in its present position.

(2) At 0730 Company "C" was helolifted into LZ Goose. There were no prep fires and the landing was conducted without incident. Plastic assault boats were lifted to Company "C" and were used in riverine operations. S&D operations were conducted by Company "C" in the southern portion of Sector Purple. At about 1100 the 2nd Plt of Company "D" was helolifted to LZ Sparrow and given the mission of providing security for a LVTH-6 section. The LVTH-6 section, two LVTP-5's and the 2nd Plt Company "D" moved to a firing position at XR 802876 in order to support by fire a helicopter assault into LZ Raven. About 1525 a patrol from Co "D" was fired upon at XR 825945 by 4 or 5 VC with automatic weapons. The patrol returned small arms fire, 81mm rounds and 107mm rounds. The only known casualty was one friendly WIA. At 1545 Company "A" located a hospital complex, with about 20 bed capacity and medical supplies. The hospital was destroyed and the medical supplies were sent to BLT CP. At 1630 the 3rd Plt, Company "C" was helolifted to LZ Raven. When the first wave of helicopters landed they received small arms fire from a village at XR 866929. The platoon advanced through the village under effective support of an armed UH1E. The results were 1 VC KIA and 8 VCS captured. At 1730 the CP group of Company "C" and another platoon were helolifted from LZ Goose to LZ Raven and joined with the 3rd platoon. Company "C" continued their S&D mission in Sector Purple until dark. The Companies set up in their defensive PPB's, conducted patrolling and ambushes, and prepared for the scheduled withdrawal the next day.

j. D+9 15 Jan 1967

(1) Frag Order 09 directed all units to conduct the scheduled withdrawal as ordered. At about 0815 Company "D" (minus one platoon) and 107mm mortar battery commenced their tactical withdrawal by helicopter. At about 0830 elements from H&S Company also started to retract from White Beach. Upon completion of the retraction of Company "D", about 1015, the helolift of Company "A" commenced. At about 1045 Company "A" received sniper fire from XR 821911 from an estimated 7 VC. Small arms, 40 rounds of 105mm, and an armed UH1E returned fire. One H-34 helicopter was hit while in the air causing a superficial wound to one marine. Two VC KIA were estimated. The 105mm Howitzer battery was extracted by LVT's the morning of 15 Jan. 1967. After completion of the lift of Company "A" (minus one platoon), at about 1115, Company "C" (minus one platoon) was lifted out from LZ Raven at about 1145, the LVTH-6 section, the LVT Section and the 2nd Plt Company "D", in support of company "C", returned to White Beach. After completion of Company "C" all available helicopters concentrated lifting out the remaining platoon of Company "D", the remainder of the CP group and last of the Provisional Composite Company. The 1st Plt. of Company "A", and LVTH-6 platoon, left White Beach simultaneously for mutual support. The withdrawal of the BLT was completed at 1621.

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k. Recapitulation of Air, Naval Gunfire, and Supporting Arms. During Operation Deckhouse V there were a total 226 sorties flown with a total of 16-1000 lbs, 192-750 lbs, 30-500 lb, 22-260 lb, 68 Napalm and 6 CBU bombs dropped. There were 1368 rockets fired. Artillery support consisted of 30 missions and 5 prep fires for a total of 2136 HE, 116 WP, 32 Smk, 29 illum, 51 HEPT. of 105mm Howitzer, and 530 107mm mortar HE, 130 107mm Mortar WP, and 13 107mm mortar illum. rounds for the operation. Naval gunfire consisted of 10 missions, firing a total of 221-8 inch rounds and 1310-5 inch rounds.

9. Results.

a. Summary of Enemy Casualties and Captured or Destroyed Equipment and supplies.

(1) Enemy Casualties

21	VC KIA (Body Count)
41	VC KIA (Prob)
53	VC WIA (Prob)
3	Captives
59	Civil Defendants

(2) Weapons and Equipment

German 7.92 MG	1
U.S. Carbines	3
Chi Com Carbines 7.92	3
Rifle (Unknown Cal.)	1
Rifles (Old, Rusty & Unserviceable)	11
Home Made Shot Guns (Old, Rusty & Unserviceable)	7
Carbine Magazine W/Ammo	1
7.92 Machine Gun Drum	2
Chi Com Grenades	30
Home Made Grenades	900
Mines (Anti-Personnel)	718
7.62 Ammo Rds	470 rds
7.92 Linked Ammo	1300 rds
M-1 Ammo	92 rds
Clips of M-1 Ammo	3
Carbine Ammo	15 rds
105mm Ammo	2 rds
Home Made Gas Masks	2
Sampans	70
Outboard Motors	7
Sewing Machines W/Drawings for Uniforms	7
Hospital Site	3
Ordnance Repair Facility	1

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(3) Food, Clothing, and Medicine;

Rice	125 tons
Shrimp	300 lbs
Salt	900 lbs
Tobacco	40 lbs
Grain	1000 lbs
Peanuts	3300 lbs
Black Uniforms	4
Brown Uniforms	4
Black Shirt	1
Short Green Trousers	1

(4) Fortifications;

Bunkers	98
Tunnel Complex	1

b. Friendly Casualties;

KIA	6
WIA	38
NBC	46

10. Commanders Analysis.

a. Operation DECKHOUSE V was successful. One large deterring factor however, was the advance information gained by the Viet Cong of the impending operation and the general location of it. This advance information, however obtained, enabled the enemy to remove forces from the AOA and thus avoid large scale contact with a superior force. It is estimate that only scattered squad sized VC units remained behind. Those Viet Cong forces and supplies remaining in the AOA were found and largely destroyed. Operation DECKHOUSE V should have a prolonged effect on VC operations in KIEN HOA Province from a psychological as well as a logistical standpoint.

b. Operation DECKHOUSE V provided an excellent training vehicle for future operations in terrain characterized by swampland. Similarly, it provided a refresher course for previously learned methods of operating against insurgent Viet Cong forces. Small unit operations remain the keystone of anti-guerrilla warfare whether it be in the Mekong Delta or in the rice paddies of the Danang TAOR. This newly formed BLT was significantly tested and undoubtedly improved from its experiences on DECKHOUSE V. The need for rapid fire support and detailed fire support coordination was re-confirmed. The necessity of rapid response in small unit resupply by aerial means was dramatically pointed out. The almost total lack of cross-country vehicular trafficability, including LVT's, placed added burdens on an already heavily committed Medium Helicopter Squadron. Swamps, large paddies, rivers and wide, deep canals likewise necessitated multiple small unit troop lifts by helicopter.

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c. Small unit troop leaders of platoons, squads and even fire teams play the major role in anti-guerrilla operations. Their proficiency in small unit tactics, immediate action, cross-country navigation and the adjustment and direction of supporting arms is all-important. Versatility, imagination and innovation make the difference between success and failure in the exploitation of guerrilla contact.

d. Operation DECKHOUSE V was a relatively short amphibious operation with only a small civilian population in the BLT area of operations. These two factors eliminated the possibility of any large scale civic action projects. Psychological Warfare teams were employed on an on-call basis. Once the BLT CP was established ashore and an initial impression of the tactical situation was gained, the Psy War Teams began operations. Leaflets of the standard variety, including the CHIEU HOI (Open Arms) leaflet and a special leaflet informing the people to remain in their homes were employed. Due to the low literacy rate in the area only those leaflets using pictures and drawings proved effective. Loud speakers were used from the ground and from the air to pass out information and to give warnings prior to the bombardment of certain areas. It was planned that civilians would not be evacuated from Thanh Phu, however, most VCS detained were civilians and thus had to be controlled, treated and evacuated. All civilians detained (including VCS) were held under guard in a compound, fed three meals a day, treated if ill or injured and evacuated by boat to Thanh Phu on a daily basis. Rifle company corpsmen treated injured or sick civilians located in their immediate areas.

11. Lessons Learned.

a. Comment. On several occasions troop units were required to hold up in areas totally unsuitable for good defense or individual rest. Swamp water levels rising to knee or waist deep permitted no sleep and only minimum rest at night.

Recommendation. That simple, light weight nylon hammocks be made an item of individual equipment for operations in the Delta region. This would allow off duty personnel to lie down and gain benefit from sleep. DECKHOUSE V terrain was characterized by deep swamps, but many trees which would allow the use of such a hammock.

b. Comment. Some helicopter movements were delayed or prolonged by the availability of only two CH-46 helicopters. Heavy loads beyond the capability of the UH-34 are still prevalent within the standard BLT T/E.

Recommendation. That the allocation of CH-46 helicopters in support of the SLF be increased from two to four.

c. Comment. Radio relay communications provided rapid, reliable, semi-secure communications between BLT CP ashore and SLF CP afloat. This important link was maintained with little interruption in service.

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Recommendation. That Radio relay ship to shore communication be retained as an integral part of the SLF system.

d. Comment. Terrain limitations imposed by swamps, rivers, canals, large paddies and mud created many problems for heavily laden troops. Particularly true in this case is the flame thrower. Targets for this weapon are also few and far between.

Recommendation. That the flame thrower section be held in general reserve to be employed and helilifted into action at a specific site when requested. Immediate retraction of the flame section is also advised which would then put them in a position for re-charging and available for use elsewhere as required.

e. Comment. Rivers, canals, swamps, etc pose obstacles to foot troops. Time or extra equipment is therefore needed to negotiate these obstacles. In search and destroy operations against guerrilla forces, slow movement almost always allows the enemy to escape.

Recommendation. That advance plans for Delta type operations include considerations for many small unit troop lifts by helicopter to leap frog these natural obstacles. This would take maximum advantage of our superior mobility and enable the infantry units to find and fix the enemy.

f. Comment. A lesson to be reiterated is the deceptive establishment of CP's and PPB's. The VC scout friendly positions during daylight so as to be able to deliver accurate fire into the position during hours of darkness.

Recommendation. That unit positions be moved frequently and after dark. This will confuse the enemy as to actual locations and allow friendlies to better observe VC firing positions when they fire into the abandoned positions. This was done by BLT 1/9 during DECKHOUSE V and on at least 3 occasions mortar fire fell on the recently abandoned positions with negative results.

g. Comment. Tidal conditions in the Delta region have a decided effect on troop movement and overall operations. Fields turn into lakes, streams into rivers and expanses of mud into watery swamp land.

Recommendation. That planners and unit leaders pay particular attention to tide tables and terrain studies. Time attacks and troop movement to coincide with the most favorable tidal condition.

h. Comment. RF/PF Guides provided to BLT 1/9 for DECKHOUSE V were incapable of passing on valid information due to their inability to speak English and the inability of the Marines to understand Vietnamese. It's felt that these guides could have been invaluable had the language problem been eliminated.

SECRET

Recommendation. That English speaking guides be made available for further operations. An obvious alternate solution would be to provide Marine units with capable Vietnamese-speaking Marines.

i. Comment. Radio equipment shortages on the SLF T/E required the BLT to provide radios for use by the SLF. This resulted therefore, in shortages within the BLT.

Recommendation. That the SLF procure sufficient radios to meet its needs. This would then allow the BLT to take full advantage of assigned radio equipment.

j. Comment. Artillery battery firing positions must be selected by the battery commander. In an amphibious operation preliminary site selection can be made only by map study. As soon as the general area is considered at least semi-secure, a reconnaissance party should be landed to select the specific battery firing position.

Recommendation. That Amphibious Landing Plans include consideration for the early landing of Artillery Reconnaissance Parties. This would allow for early selection of artillery firing positions and the orderly landing of artillery units.

k. Comment. The COI for DECKHOUSE V assigned frequencies for the Artillery Conduct of Fire and the Battalion and Company Tactical nets very close together. This resulted in overlapping signals and the interruption of communication on these extremely vital circuits.

Recommendation. That in the future assignment of radio frequencies, close attention be paid to the net traffic, radio set proximity and traffic volume so that interference and interruption do not occur.

l. Comment. Organic supplies and equipment of the BLT are too voluminous and varied for the type shipping assigned to the ARG/SLF. This excess equipment and supplies destroys the selectivity inherent in proper combat loading and essential to any amphibious landing.

Recommendation. That supplies and equipment in excess of the needs of the BLT for a particular operation be staged ashore prior to departure for the AOA or, and preferably, an additional ship be assigned to the ARG/SLF which could provide follow-on shipping if speed would not allow it to keep pace with main force.

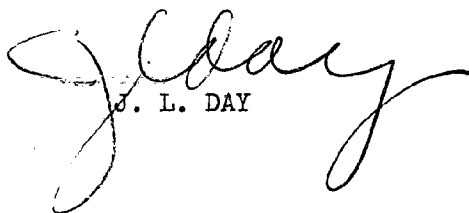
m. Comment. Initial attempts to provide logistical support directly from LPH to the platoons proved unsatisfactory. This system was not responsive in timeliness nor to the needs of the platoon.

Recommendation. That a limited BSA be established ashore, not exceeding 2 DOS' for all common use items. That helo resupply be direct from BSA to using platoons. This would eliminate three echelons of coordination and result in an overall simplification of the resupply chain.

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o. Comment. Plastic assault boats and motors procured for use in a riverine environment proved to have several draw backs. On three occasions boats were swamped and sank rapidly (two sank in shallow water and were recovered, one was lost). The motors designed for civilian use, need modification, to make them suitable for military use.

Recommendation. That assault boats be modified to make them unsinkable. The use of floatation gear is recommended. That the motors be modified doing away with the electric starter and necessary battery and the key actuated switch be removed and a manual start be installed. That a small spare parts bag be affixed to each motor, to include as a minimum 2 spark plugs, spark plug wrench, pliers, screw driver and shear pins.



J. L. DAY

DISTRIBUTION: Special

HEADQUARTERS
Provisional Artillery Group
Special Landing Force
FPO San Francisco 96601

3:RLC:dlm
Ser:
18 January 1967

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, Special Landing Force

Subj: Artillery Support for Deckhouse V, After Action Report

1. BACKGROUND. Terrain studies clearly indicated a general lack of suitable and accessible artillery firing positions throughout the AOA. To off-set this restriction and to insure adequate and continuous artillery support, a platoon of LVTH-6's was attached to the SLF for this operation. An additional artillery battery became available with the assignment of Brigade Force Bravo, VNMC to the SLF task organization. In consideration of these additional units and to insure tactical fire control, the artillery was task organized into a Provisional Artillery Group.

2. GENERAL.

a. TASK ORGANIZATION.

PROVISIONAL ARTILLERY GROUP

Artillery Group Headquarters
Battery D(-) (Rein), 2nd Bn. 12th Marines
107mm Howtar Battery, 1st Bn. 12th Marines
2nd Platoon, 1st Armored Amphibian Co. (LVTH-6's)
105mm Howitzer Battery, Vietnamese Marine Brigade

b. EXECUTION. The sparcity of suitable position areas and limited access to these areas dictated the following initial assignment of missions to the elements of the artillery group:

(1) BATTERY D (-) (REIN) 2ND BN 12TH MARINES

Direct support of BLT 1/9.

(2) 107MM HOWTAR BATTERY (REIN) 1ST BN 12TH MARINES

Direct support Co. D 1st Bn., 9th Marines.

(3) 2D PLATOON 1ST ARMORED AMPHIBIOUS CO. (LVTH-6)

Direct support Co. B 1st Bn., 9th Marines.

(4) 105 HOWITZER VNMC

Direct support Brigade Force Bravo (VNMC).

On completion of the ship-to-shore movement all artillery reverted to the tactical control of the artillery group. The 105 Howitzer Battery VNMC, remained in direct support of Brigade Force Bravo, while the 107mm Howtar Battery, 1st Bn. 12 Marines, and the 2d Platoon, 1st Armored Amphibian Co. reverted to general support, reinforcing, for Battery D (-) (Rein) 2d Bn., 12th Marines.

c. CONTROL. Tactical fire direction was maintained, through the Fire Direction Center of Battery D while technical fire direction remained with the individual firing batteries.

d. AUGMENTATION.

(1) ARTILLERY GROUP HEADQUARTERS. By utilization of the personnel and equipment within the Fire Direction Center of Battery D, 2d Bn. 12th Marines the following augmentation was required;

1 LtCol 0802
1 Capt 0802
1 S/Sgt 0848

(2) 105MM HOW. BATTERY VNMC. Liaison personnel and equipment to provide for tactical control, request for reinforcing fires, and coordination with other supporting arms consisted of the following:

1 - SSgt 0848
1 - Cpl 0844
4 - Cpl/PFC 2531
3 - PRC 25 Radios

(3) 2D PLATOON, 1ST ARMORED AMPHIBIAN CO. The individual platoons of the Armored Amphibian Co. have no organic fire direction capability. To provide this capability the following was provided from 9th MAB resources:

(a) PERSONNEL

1 - Lt 0802
2 - SSgt/Sgt 0848
4 - Cpl/Pvt 0844
4 - Cpl/Pvt 2531
1 - Cpl/Pvt 2511
1 - Cpl/Pvt 2543
18 - Cpl/Pvt 0811

Experience gained in Deckhouse V indicates that future use of the LVTH-6 as a part of the SLF will require the following changes in personnel augmentation. Reduce the number of 0848's to one (1), and increase the number of 0844's to five (5). Delete the 2511 and 2543, and increase the 2531's to six (6). Reduce the number of 0811's from eighteen (18) to twelve (12).

(b) FIRE DIRECTION EQUIPMENT

- 2 - Plotting Boards 36" X 24"
- 2 - Plotting Boards 48" X 48"
- 1 - FDC Chest Complete
- 2 - Tressles for plotting boards
- 2 - Chest, latern, Gasoline
- 1 - CP tent, complete

For future operations delete the two plotting boards 36" X 24". The remaining equipment is satisfactory as to quantity.

(c) COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

- 2 - AN/PRC-25 with accessory pack
- 1 - AN/PRC-41 with PP 3700
- 2 - AN/GRA-39
- 3 - BB 451
- 2 - AN/GRA 6 with H33/PT
- 2 - ST-138 Backpack
- 1 - BC-5 Chest
- 2 - H-44
- 4 - Boxes BA200
- 1 - Box BA386
- 5 - Boxes BA30

The following additions/deletions are recommended for future operations, delete the AN/PRC-41 with PP3700. Delete the two AN/PRC-6's with H-33PT and replace with two TA-1's, and add the following items

- 1 - AN/PRC 25
- 1 - DR-8
- 2 - RC292
- 2 - RA-1
- 1 - AN/GRA-39

e. COMMUNICATIONS. Control of artillery fire was requested and coordinated through utilization of the following radio nets:

- (1) Artillery Command/Fire Direction Net
- (2) Conduct of Fire #1
- (3) Conduct of Fire #2
- (4) Conduct of Fire #3
- (5) AO Net #1
- (6) AO Net #2

All request for artillery fire for BLT 1/9 units was passed over C of F Nets #1 and #2 directed to Artillery Group/Battery D, 2d Bn. 12th Marines. On receipt of the mission, assignment of the firing unit was designated over the same net, and clearance to fire was granted or denied by FSOC. During the period coordination was afloat, all request for clearance

was submitted to the SACC over the Arty. Command/Fire Direction Net. Request for clearance to fire and reinforcing fire, for Brigade Force Bravo (VNMC) was over the Artillery Command/Fire Direction Net, with "will adjust" requests over the conduct of Fire #3. Conduct of Fire #3 was reserved exclusively for the VNMC. Aerial Observer Missions were requested over the conduct of fire nets, and then assigned to a Firing Battery and switched to the Aerial Observer Nets. Wire communications was installed between Battery D, 2d. Bn. 12th Marines and FSCC, as well as the LVTH-6 Battery.

3. CONCLUSIONS. The formations of the artillery group was a practical way of controlling the tactical fire direction of the artillery units assigned for Deckhouse V. It provided for command control through one Headquarters, and a centralization of the logistics requirements for the Organic SLF Artillery Units, thus relieving the senior artillery battery Commander and BLT Staff of these problems. While there was no requirement for logistic support of the VNMC Artillery Battery by the Artillery Group, there may be in future operations, thus increasing the desirability of employment of the artillery group concept.

The employment of the LVTH-6 Platoon in the artillery role is effective and desirable for operations in this type environment, where suitable landing beaches are available, in that it provides for greater flexibility of the artillery once ashore. While the platoon was effective and carried out all assigned missions in an excellent manner, consideration should be given to changing the T/O to provide for a more artillery oriented organization.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS.

a. AUGMENTATION. That the personnel and equipment listed in Para II D above, be utilized for future operations where the formation of an artillery group is desired, and the LVTH-6 Platoon is utilized.

b. LVTH-6 PLATOON. A recommendation be forwarded to FMFPAC to modify the T/O of the LVTH-6 Platoons to make the Platoon Commander an O802 vice 1803, and change the T/O to give it organic fire direction capability.

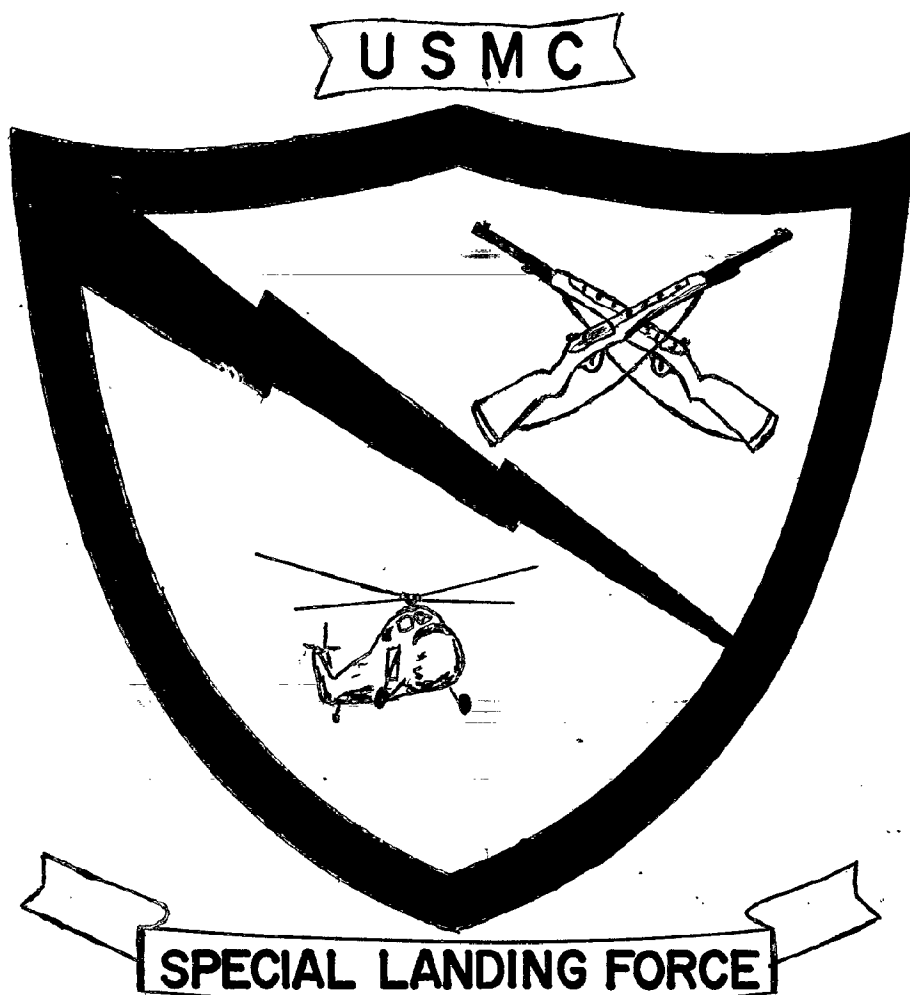
c. AMMUNITION REQUIREMENTS. Ammunition requirements for the LVTH Platoon should be based on that required for a 105mm Howitzer Battery, and not for the LVTH Platoon ammunition allowance. The Platoon is utilized as an artillery battery in addition to its initial mission of direct fire support to the assault waves.

R. L. Christian Jr.
R. L. CHRISTIAN Jr.

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#0012181

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY
1 FEBRUARY - 3 MARCH 1967



CTG 79.5

ENCLOSURE (2)

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HEADQUARTERS
Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)
USS PRINCETON (LPH-5)
FPO San Francisco 96601

#0012181

3:CGC:d1m
5750
Ser: 008-67
8 March 1967


SECRET-NOFORN

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code A02D)
Via: (1) Commanding General, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade, FMF
(2) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
Subj: Command Chronology for the period 1 February ~ 3 March 1967, submission of

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.2
(b) BrigO 5750.1A
(c) CG FMFPac msg 261950Z Jul66

Encl: (1) - Command Chronology - SLF
(2) - Command Chronology - BLT 1/4
(3) - Command Chronology - HMM 363
(4) - After Action Report, DECK HOUSE VI

1. In accordance with reference (a) through (c), the Command Chronology of the Special Landing Force is submitted as enclosure (1) through (4).
2. The period was extended through 3 March in order to include the termination of Operation DECK HOUSE VI Phase II.


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

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SPECIAL LANDING FORCE
Command Chronology1. Organization Data

a. Designation. The Special Landing Force has the Task Designation Task Group 79.5.

b. Composition. The Special Landing Force was composed as follows:

1 February - 3 March 1967 - SLF - Colonel H. D. WORTMAN
 1 February - 3 March 1967 - BLT 1/4 - LtCol J. WESTERMAN
 1-28 February 1967 - HMM 363 - LtCol K. E. HUNTINGTON
 1-3 March 1967 - HMM 363 - Major M. E. DAY

c. Locations. The Special Landing Force was embarked aboard the Amphibious Ready Group, consisting of the following:

USS TWO JIMA (LPH-2)	1 February - 3 March 1967
USS VANCOUVER (LPD-2)	1 February - 3 March 1967
USS THOMASTON (LSD-28)	3 February - 3 March 1967
USS DIACHENKO (APD-123)	1-3 Feb 67, 1-6 Feb 67
USS POINT DEFIANCE (LSD-31)	1-2 February 1967
USS MERRICK (AKA-96)	1-6 February 1967

d. Average Monthly Strength. (Does not include TAD Personnel)

SLF Staff:	USMC Off - 12	USMC Enl - 30	USN Off - 0	USN Enl -
BLT:	USMC Off - 67	USMC Enl - 1633	USN Off - 3	USN Enl - 20
HMM:	USMC Off - 50	USMC Enl - 193	USN Off - 1	USN Enl - 1

e. Commanding Officer and Staff. (Does not include TAD Personnel)

Col	H. D. WORTMAN	- Commanding Officer
LtCol	J. M. LANDRIGAN	- Executive Officer
LtCol	D. R. BRIMMER	- S-3
Major	H. B. CROSBY III	- Asst S-3
Major	W. M. THURBER	- Asst S-3
Major	J. H. BROUJOS	- Asst S-3
Major	E. W. HERICH	- S-4
Capt	R. A. AYERS	- CommO
Capt	F. E. HEURING	- Asst CommO
Capt	B. S. MCKENNA	- Asst S-3/Air Observer
1stLt	J. D. CHAPMAN	- S-2
2dLt	D. C. SCHULTZ	- Asst S-4
2dLt	C. G. COMER	- Asst S-3/Air Observer

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f. TAD to the SLF for Special Operations

1Feb-3Mar67 - Major C. A. DIXON - MAG 15, SLF Air Officer
 3Feb-2Mar67 - Major A. F. THOMPSON - ExO, 1/13, SLF Arty Group Commander
 7Feb-2Mar67 - LtCol V. J. PROSS Jr. - CO ProvSerBn, Liaison Officer
 7 - 21Feb67 - Cmdr H. H. EATON, Chaplain, 9thMAB, Observer
 7 - 23Feb67 - Cmdr E. J. SULLIVAN, USN (MC) Surgeon, 9thMAB, Observer
 10Feb-2Mar67 - Capt G. B. FILES, 9thMAB, FDO, ProvArtyGrp
 14Feb-2Mar67 - Col J. A. GALLO, CTG 79.4, Observer
 14Feb-2Mar67 - Major B. JORDAN, Task Force X-Ray, Liaison Officer
 14Feb-2Mar67 - Lt M. GROTH, U.S. Army, ITT
 14Feb-3Mar67 - Lt HOA, ARVN, Liaison Officer
 14Feb-3Mar67 - Lt R. J. DALTON, 7thMar, Liaison Officer
 22Feb-3Mar67 - Capt P. MURPHY, USS CANBERRA, TAO

2. Chronology of Significant Events During the period 1 February - 3 March 1967.

a. The following is a concise review of the activities of the Special Landing Force (CTG 79.5). Detailed information of BLT 1/4, HMM 363 is shown in the appropriate command chronology, enclosures (2) and (3). Detailed information on DECK HOUSE VI is shown in enclosure (4).

b. 1-15 February 1967

- (1) On 1 February the USS IWO JIMA departed Keelung, Taiwan enroute to Subic Bay, R.P.
- (2) On 3 February the USS IWO JIMA arrived in Subic for rehearsal of MUDPUPPY III. Major THOMPSON, ExO, 1/13 reported aboard for MUDPUPPY III and Operation DECK HOUSE VI. The USS IWO JIMA departed Subic Bay, R.P., for Mindoro and MUDPUPPY III joined by the USS THOMASTON and USS MERRICK.
- (3) On 4 February exercise MUDPUPPY III commenced on Mindoro. Twelve Armed Forces press representatives arrived aboard for a two day briefing. RADM VANNOY and RADM BURKE visited CTG 76.5 and CTG 79.5 aboard the USS IWO JIMA.
- (4) On 6 February Colonel WORTMAN, Major BROUJOS, Captain AYERS, Captain HEURING, Lieutenant CHAPMAN and TG 76.5 representatives departed for DaNang to meet with CG, III MAF, CG 1stMarDiv, 1stMAW, and Task Force X-Ray for SPECOPS planning. Exercise MUD PUPPY III completed and all shipping departed for Subic Bay, R.P.
- (5) On 7 February the USS IWO JIMA, USS THOMASTON and USS VANCOUVER arrived in Subic Bay, R.P. LtCol PROSS Jr., ProvSerBn, Cmdr EATON, Cmdr SULLIVAN reported aboard for DECK HOUSE VI.

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Enclosure (1)

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- (6) From 7 through 11 February the SLF conducted extensive training ashore. The SLF camp was not utilized due to the short "in port" period.
- (7) On 8 February the BLT 1/4 ALO conducted a CASEX with VMA 223 at Tabones Range.
- (8) On 10 February CTG 79.5 and CTG 76.5 representatives returned from the initial DECK HOUSE VI planning conference.
- (9) On 12 February the USS IWO JIMA, the USS THOMASTON, and the USS VANCOUVER departed Subic Bay, R.P., enroute to I CTZ, RVN.
- (10) On 14 February the ARG/SLF was off the coast of I CTZ, RVN and CTG 79.5 and CTG 76.5 and staff representatives made final preparations for DECK HOUSE VI with III MAF, 1stMarDiv, 1stMAW and Task Force X-Ray. Brigadier General PETZGER, CG 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade, and Colonel GALLO, CTG 79.4 aboard to observe portion of DECK HOUSE VI.
- (11) On 15 February D-Day was postponed due to heavy seas and low visibility for supporting air.

c. 16 - 26 February 1967 DECK HOUSE VI Phase I.

- (1) On 16 February Operation DECK HOUSE VI commenced with the landing of BLT 1/4 by helicopters and landing craft.
- (2) From 16 - 26 February the ARG/SLF conducted Operation DECK HOUSE VI in Quang Ngai Province, Southern I CTZ, RVN.
- (3) On 17 February Vice Admiral HYLAND, COMSEVENTHFLT, and Rear Admiral BURKE, CTG 76 visited CTG 76.5 and CTG 79.5 aboard the USS IWO JIMA.
- (4) On 19 February Mr. SILKWOOD, DOD Representative arrived aboard the USS IWO JIMA for an orientation visit. Brigadier General BECKER, Deputy CG, 1st Air Cavalry Division and Brigadier General STILES, CC Task Force X-Ray visited CTG 79.5 aboard the USS IWO JIMA.
- (5) On 20 February Operational control of the SLF passed to Task Force X-Ray, via COMSEVENTHFLT, CG III MAF and CG 1st MarDiv (COMSEVENTHFLT msg 191210Z Feb67, CG III MAF msg 200120Z Feb67 and CG 1st Mar Div msg 200748Z Feb67).
- (6) On 21 February Commander EATON, 9th MAB Chaplain departed for Okinawa.

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Enclosure (1)

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- (7) On 23 February COMUSMACV, CG 1stMarDiv and CG Task Force X-Ray visited BLT 1/4 ashore. Commander SULLIVAN, 9thMAB Surgeon departed for Okinawa.
- (8) On 25 February CTG 79.5 and representatives attended a planning conference at Chu Lai for final planning of Operation DECK HOUSE VI Phase II. LtCol BRONARS, CO 3/7 visited CTG 79.5 aboard the USS IWO JIMA.
- (9) On 26 February BLT 1/4 was backloaded aboard the ARG shipping in preparation for Phase II.

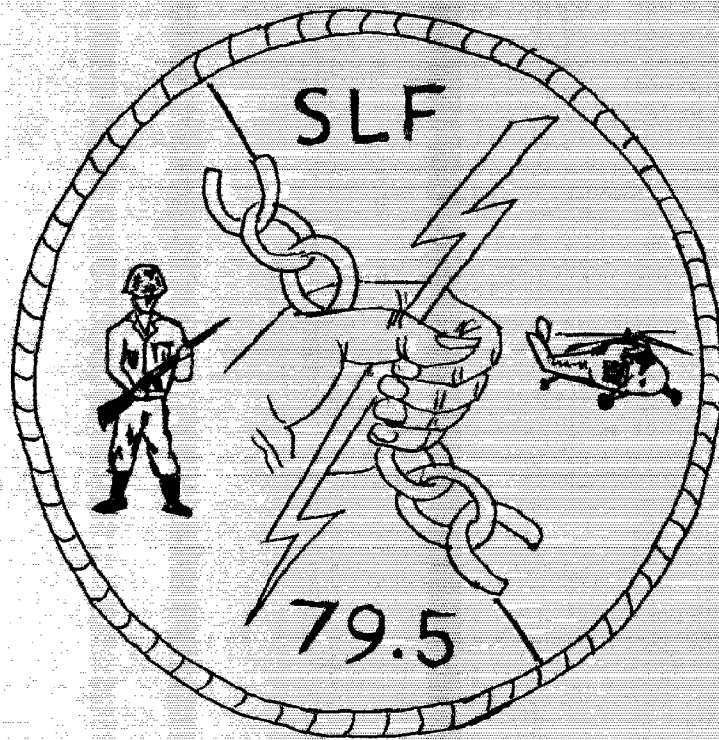
d. 27 February - 3 March 1967 DECK HOUSE VI Phase II

- (1) On 27 February Phase II commenced with the landing of BLT 1/4 by helicopter and landing craft.
- (2) From 27 February - 3 March the ARS/SLF conducted operation DECK HOUSE VI Phase II in northern Quang Ngai Province, Southern I, CTI, NVN.
- (3) On 28 February the CG, III MAF; CG, Task Force X-Ray and Colonel Taon, CG, 2nd ARVN Division visited CTG 76.5 and CTG 79.5 aboard the USS IWO JIMA.
- (4) On 3 March Operation DECK HOUSE VI Phase II terminated with the reembarkation of the SLF in the ARG assigned shipping.

SECRET-NOFORN

Enclosure (1)

SECRET-NOFORN
SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED
AFTER ACTION REPORT
OPERATION DECKHOUSE VI



SPECIAL LANDING FORCE
CTG 79.5

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HEADQUARTERS
Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)
USS PRINCETON (LPH-5)
FPO San Francisco 96601

3:JHB:dlm

Ser: ~~000000~~ 009-67

10 March 1967

SECRET-NOFORN

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Seventh Fleet
Subj: Combat After Action Report, DECK HOUSE VI

Encl: (1) SLF, After Action Report, DECK HOUSE VI
(2) HMM 363, After Action Report, DECK HOUSE VI
(3) BLT 1/4, After Action Report, DECK HOUSE VI, 16 Dec 66
(4) Amphibious Objective Area Overlay

1. Enclosure (1) contains the Special Landing Force After Action Report for DECK HOUSE VI Phase I and Phase II.
2. Enclosures (2) through (4) amplify enclosure (1). Comments on appropriate portions of subordinate unit After Action Reports are contained in paragraph of enclosure (1).
3. This letter may be downgraded to unclassified upon removal of enclosures (1) through (4).


H. D. WORTMAN

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COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT, DECK HOUSE VI PHASE I

Map Reference: Vietnam, AMS L7014, 1:50,000 Sheets 6738 I and II; 6838 III and IV.

1. Operation DECK HOUSE VI was a unilateral amphibious operation utilizing waterborne and heloborne assault forces. It was conducted in accordance with NWP-22(A).
2. The operation was divided into two phases: Phase I being conducted in the Sa Huynh Area and Phase II conducted in the Duc Pho Area. Both areas are located in southern Quang Ngai Province, I CTZ, RVN (vic BS9221). Phase I commenced on 16 February 1967 at 0930H with the landing of the initial helo-lifted assault forces in LZ Robin (BS902254) and LZ Parrot (BS894234), approximately five miles inland. The surface assault forces landed on Blue Beach (BS923213) at 1000H. This phase was terminated at 1800H on 26 February 1967, upon the backloading of BLT 1/4. Phase II is reported separately.

3. Task Organization

Special Landing Force

HEB 363 (Rein)

Det., VMO-2 (2 UH-IE)

Det., VMO-6 (2 UH-IE)

Det., HFM-164 (2 CH-46A)

BLT 1/4

ProvArtyGrp

Colonel H. D. WORTMAN

LtCol K. E. HUNTINGTON

LtCol J. WESTERMAN

Major A. F. THOMPSON

4. Intelligencea. Terrain(1) General

(a) Sa Huynh is the only point in the I Corps area where a branch of the central massif extends to the coastline that is VC controlled. This feature afforded tactical advantages and offered protection and concealment for supply routes. A sheltered harbor and anchorage and several landing beaches in the area enhance the attractiveness of Sa Huynh as an infiltration point.

(2) Landforms(a) Coastal Plain

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1 Rugged hills in the central portion rise abruptly from the coastal plains with elevations up to 300 meters.

2 A narrow beach, 0.1 to 1.5 kilometers wide, is located along a major portion of the coastline, with an average elevation of ten meters and sand dunes scattered throughout. A large number of hamlets are interspersed throughout the riceland and the undergrowth forest of the coastal plains.

b. Enemy Situation

(1) General. The area of operation was a major resupply and rest area for the enemy, supplying the majority of the salt for I Corps and II Corps. Viet Cong forces committed in the Sa Huynh area included one NVA Main Force Regiment, one VC Local Force Regiment, five separate battalions and two enemy companies.

c. Order of Battle, (Phase I)

(1) 7th Bn, 22nd NVA Regt 3rd NVA Div

Strength: Approx 350

Weapons: Unknown

Location: Reported as moving north on 27 January 1967 from BS9104.

(2) 8th Bn, 22nd NVA Regt 3rd NVA Div

Strength: Approx 250

Weapons: Unknown

Location: Reported as moving north on 27 January 1967 from BS9104.

(3) Elements of the 409th Sapper Bn

Strength: Unknown

Weapons: 1 81mm mortar
2 60mm mortar
2 57mm recoilless rifle
2 30Cal. machineguns
Unknown number of small arms

d. Enemy Contact by BLT 1/4

(1) On D-Day, the enemy avoided large scale contacts, but made extensive use of snipers to harass friendly units and fire at helicopters.

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Mines, explosive devices, and punji stakes were encountered. A road-block was destroyed. During the remainder of Phase I, enemy small units continued to harass friendly units, using small arms, automatic weapons, surprise firing devices, grenades, and, on occasion, satchel charges. The BLT destroyed tunnel complexes, assorted small arms ammunition, bunkers, punji traps, and storage areas. Supporting arms were used continuously and effectively by the BLT, often resulting in secondary explosions. On D plus 10 (3 March 1967), backloading was conducted with light enemy contact. Total results during Phase I were 204 enemy killed and 20 detainees were processed, resulting in 1 PW/VC captured.

5. Mission. As directed by COMSEVENTHFLT message 111616Z February 1967 (Initiating Directive), the mission of the Landing Force was to conduct a search and destroy operation against VC Main and Local Force guerrilla units and NVA units in the Sa Huynh Salt Flat Area; conduct search and destroy operations to the north astride and to the east of National Highway 19; be prepared to continue search and destroy operations in the Nui Dau area; link up with and support 1st Marine Division operations to the north; and upon completion or when otherwise directed execute a tactical withdrawal.

6. Concept of Operations. Operation DECK HOUSE VI Phase I was a unilateral amphibious operation conducted by the ARG/SLF, utilizing both waterborne and heloborne assault landings. During this phase, Operation DECK HOUSE VI was separate from, but conducted concurrently with Operation DESOTO (3rd Battalion, 7th Marines (Rein)) in the Duc Pho area (BS8138) of Quang Ngai Province, I CTZ. To prevent in/exfiltration of VC/NVA forces in the Sa Huynh Salt Flat Area, blocking positions were established inland at major routes of egress. Subsequently, search and destroy operations were conducted north along the natural littoral approach to the Nui Dau lowlands. This phase was characterized by aggressive small unit movement, mutual support and maximum utilization of supporting arms. To gain the advantage of attacking from the rear and flank, the SLF, utilizing its inherent mobility, reoriented the direction of attack from West to East. From positions in the Piedmont area search and destroy operations were conducted through the Nui Dau lowlands to the sea.

7. Execution

a. Operation DECK HOUSE VI was executed in accordance with CTG 79.5 OPLAN 120A-67 and supplemented by a Frag Order.

b. D-Day was tentatively established as 15 February 1967, with L-Hour at 0800 and H-Hour at 0830. Due to low ceilings and limited visibility which would hinder helicopter operations and close air support, D-Day was delayed.

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e. On 16 February 1967, SLF landed its heloborne assault forces at 0930H and its waterborne assault forces at 100H. By nightfall on D-Day blocking positions had been established at all routes of egress in the objective area and the SLF was prepared to conduct deliberate search and destroy operations in its assigned area at first light on D plus 1. (See enclosures (2) through (4) for details of execution).

8. Results. See enclosures (2) through (4).

9. Commander's Analysis. This analysis is limited to those matters at the Special Landing Force level. BLT and Squadron Commander's analysis is contained in their respective reports, enclosures (2) through (4).

a. Planning

(1) Planning commenced on 7 February 1967 at III MAF Headquarters when CTG 79.5 and representatives of CTG 76.5 were briefed by the G-3 and other staff members of III MAF and 1st Marine Division. During two days at Task Force X-Ray located at Chu Lai, CTG 79.5 and staff members continued the planning and visited the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines CP at Nui Dang. A helicopter reconnaissance was flown over the proposed objective area. This was followed by a visit to the 2nd ARVN Division Headquarters at Quang Ngai. Upon return to III MAF Headquarters, final conferences were held.

(2) During the initial conferences, staff representatives of III MAF proposed a concept of operations involving four phases, employing the SLF for a period of 22 to 30 days. Since the normal period of employment for Special Operations is approximately 10 days, the concept of operations was changed and divided into two phases, the length of the second depending on the existence of profitable targets. As finalized, Phase I called for a unilateral amphibious landing and search and destroy operations in the Sa Huynh area, and Phase II called for search and destroy operations north of the Duc Pho/Nui Dang area.

(3) During the planning phase, the following steps were accomplished.

(a) Maps, area analysis, and enemy order of battle were procured.

(b) Aerial reconnaissance of the AOA and tentative selection of HLZ's and landing beaches was conducted.

(c) Communication frequencies were assigned and coordinated, which included ship-to-shore Orestes for rapid and secure transmission of tactical information.

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(d) Arrangements were completed for the processing of detainees and disposition of captured VC.

(e) Procedures for casualty evacuation of VN casualties and U.S. personnel were finalized.

(f) Command relationships were discussed in consonance with NWP-22(A).

(g) The requirement for logistical support of the SLF was discussed in detail in view of the proposed extended operation.

(h) Arrangements for psychological warfare operations, including leaflet drops and loudspeaker teams, were tentatively planned.

(i) The requirement for supplies for a short-range civic action program were discussed.

(j) Arrangements were made to obtain a Quang Ngai District representative to be physically present in SACC/FSCC during the operation.

(k) Liaison requirements were discussed and it was agreed that the SLF would maintain liaison officers at Task Force X-Ray, DASC, and 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines.

(4) To insure mutual support and preclude interference during the operation, it was agreed that all forces in the AOA would be responsive to the LFC through CATF.

b. Intelligence. Prior to DECK HOUSE VI, arrangements were made for maps, area studies, aerial photography, Red Haze, daily intelligence summaries, ITT personnel, and support for handling civilian detainees.

(1) Area study and OOB were provided by MACV, III MAF, Task Force X-Ray, 2nd ARVN Division G-2 and 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines. COMUSMACV provided ITT personnel. Aerial photography was provided by the 1st MAW. Intelligence summaries were provided daily from III MAF, Task Force X-Ray and 1st Field Forces Vietnam. ANO, Cubi Point, P.I., and Task Force X-Ray provided map requirements.

(2) Previous intelligence indicated elements of the 22nd NVA Regiment, 409th Sapper Battalion and unknown units in the area. Due to the enemy's ability to avoid contact, remain well hidden and exfiltrate the AOA, none of the above units were confirmed.

c. Command Relationships. Operation DECK HOUSE VI was a unilateral amphibious operation with command relationships in accordance with NWP-

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22(A). During Phase I, OPCON of the SLF was passed to CG III MAF at 200001H February 1967. CG III MAF passed control to 1st Marine Division, who in turn passed it to Task Force X-Ray. Contact between the 1st Air Cavalry Division to the south and the SLF was by radio communication, which was maintained during Phase I to coordinate troop movement and supporting fires. The 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, whose TAOR was partially within the AOA, was responsive to the SLF Commander, with the TAOR designated as a Fire Coordination Line. Link-up points were utilized to coordinate tactical maneuvers.

d. Supporting Arms

(1) To support the landing and scheme of maneuver ashore for Operation DECK HOUSE VI, control and coordination of all supporting arms in the AOA was initially by the Amphibious Task Force Commander. The coordination of all supporting fires was accomplished in the Supporting Arms Coordination Center aboard the USS Iwo Jima until passed ashore to the Landing Force Commander at 0001H on 20 February 1967. The Special Landing Force Commander exercised coordination of supporting arms by the establishment of an SLF Fire Support Coordination Center which was co-located with the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines Command Post and in close proximity to the Mini-DASC at Nui Dang. The SLF FSCC was assigned the mission of coordinating fires for the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines and BLT 1/4 in their assigned areas. All artillery was coordinated by the establishment of the Artillery Command/Fire Direction Net while Naval Gunfire was coordinated on the Naval Gunfire Control/Support Net. Each battalion was assigned an Artillery Conduct of Fire Net and Shore Fire Control Spot Net for adjustment of fire from direct support artillery and assigned direct support ships. A common Tactical Air Request Net was established for close air support, and each battalion had its own Tactical Air Control Party Local Net for internal control and coordination. No major problems existed during this period and both battalions proved to be highly proficient in fire support coordination matters.

(2) A Provisional Artillery Group was formed for Phase I of Operation DECK HOUSE VI to control and coordinate the artillery support of "G" Battery, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines, in direct support of 1/4; "I" Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines, in direct support of 3/7; and two 155 Howitzers with ARVN forces and the 107 Mortar Battery, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines, assigned in general support of the Landing Force.

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e. Logistics

(1) Logistic support for the SLF was provided solely from embarked supplies aboard the ARG shipping. Prior to commencement of DECK HOUSE VI, liaison was established to coordinate possible SLF logistic support from in-country sources. All supplies were delivered directly to units ashore by helicopter from ARG shipping. Logistic support of the BLT ashore was adequate and responsive to SLF requirements.

(2) Initial evacuation of casualties, civilian and military, was to the LPH. Seriously injured civilians were subsequently evacuated to ARVN hospitals in Quang Ngai by helicopter. Military casualties requiring specialized attention were evacuated to the Naval Hospital at DaNang as were all USMC KIA.

f. Communications

(1) The communication requirements for DECK HOUSE VI were quite extensive. In addition to the normal ARG/SLF requirements, it was necessary to provide operators and equipment from SLF assets to supplement the operation ashore. Four additional radio operators and four FM radios were provided by the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade as augmentation for the Provisional Artillery Group which was organized for this operation.

(2) The usual problems were encountered in the coordination and utilization of FM frequencies within the objective area causing some overlap with adjacent in-country units and task-organized units. Four channel radio relay was established the evening of D-Day and served as the primary means of communications between BLT 1/4 and the SLF Headquarters. On D plus 2 radio relay was established with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, linking up the BLT and SLF. This gave the SLF voice capability to Task Force X-Ray and First Marine Division.

(3) Covered voice communications (KY-8 NESTOR crypto system) was not operational as planned due to two VRC-46 radios becoming non operational until D plus 10.

(4) Repair parts for the AN/PRC-25 had to be supplied by Task Force X-Ray as the LSU did not come equipped with spare parts for the repair of AN/PRC-25's. The parts carried by the LSU are for the AN/PRC-10 and AN/PRC-6 which are no longer employed with the BLT/SLF.

(5) During the time the LSU was attached to the BLT they did not have a Communication-Electronics repair facility established aboard any of the three ships. The Communication-Electronics test equipment consisted of one LV-7, one URM 48, one ME-11U and two incomplete USM-15 was not adequate to provide third echelon repair.

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g. Special Augmentation Equipment

(1) Augmentation equipment assigned to the SLF included 4 UH1E's (3 armed and 1 unarmed) and 2 CH-46 helicopters. The value of UH1E helicopters to the SLF has been clearly demonstrated in prior operations and was confirmed during this operation. However, whereas on DECK HOUSE V the helicopters were available during training and planning periods, on DECK HOUSE VI they did not arrive until the morning of the operation. Prior planning and at least a brief period of orientation are essential for smooth and coordinated troop lifts and ground support. A mix of three armed and one unarmed UH1E helicopters provided excellent flexibility. The UH1E (unarmed) is able to accomplish effectively the mission of command and control, reconnaissance, and TAO. With three armed UH1E helicopters, it was possible to schedule them, so as to provide two TAC(A) helicopters on station at all times during daylight hours. The lift and positioning of the MRC-62 radio equipment by the CH-46 helicopter gave the SLF the capability ashore of multi-channel radio relay communications. However, the SLF heavy lift requirement exceeds the capability of an average in-country CH-46. There is a valid requirement for a stripped-down version of the CH-46 or a CH-53 to lift downed CH-34's and artillery pieces. During the critical period of backloading the SLF from Red Beach, the operation was delayed four hours awaiting the arrival of a CH-46 capable of lifting a CH-34 downed by mechanical difficulty.

h. Civic Action

The sympathy of the population around Sa Huynh was considered pro-VC. Therefore civic action was limited in most of the area. However, a successful program was conducted in the villages of Thach By and Chi Trung where 1438 people were given medical and dental assistance. The attitude of the people initially was non-committal, but gradually they adopted a more friendly attitude.

i. Psychological Operations. Troop units were disciplined and well-behaved. They respected the rights and properties of the populace. During the operation, approximately 250,000 leaflets were released over a three-day period, varying from Chieu Hoi (open arms) to warning of our overwhelming firepower. A BJU detachment was effectively employed during the operation, utilizing a loudspeaker system.

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PART II: COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT, OPERATION DECK HOUSE VI PHASE II.

Map Reference: Vietnam, AMS Series L70L4, Sheets 6738 I and II; 6838 III and IV.

1. Operation DECK HOUSE VI Phase I concluded with the backloading of BLT 1/4 on 26 February at 1800H. The SLF, under OPCON of Task Force X-Ray, then commenced Phase II, prepared for repositioning approximately twelve miles to the north at Green Beach.

2. Operation DECK HOUSE VI Phase II was a search and destroy operation by a multi-battalion force including the SLF, operating under the OPCON of Task Force X-Ray. Operation DESOTO had already commenced when the SLF joined the operation as Phase II of Operation DECK HOUSE VI. Forces consisted of two ARVN Battalions, the SLF, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, and 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, with combat and combat service support units. The operation commenced on D minus 1 (25 February 1967) with movement of elements of ARVN and Marine forces into blocking positions. The SLF commenced operations on D plus 1 (27 February 1967) with the waterborne landing of C Company at Green Beach (BS812487) at 0830H, followed by the helo-borne landing of A and B Companies in LZ Bat (BS799484) and Green Beach at 0900H. The area of operations was the Duc Pho area of Quang Nai Province, I CTZ, Republic of Vietnam.

3. Task Organization. The task organization of the SLF was changed only by the deactivation of the Provisional Artillery Group upon the conclusion of Phase I. The 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines assumed control of all artillery support for Operation DECK HOUSE VI/DESOTO.

4. Intelligence

a. The objective area comprises a section of the Quan Duc Pho District located in the southern portion of Quang Ngai Province. The area is bounded on the north by the Quan Duc Pho District line, and on the west by the Song Cau river. Much of the area is covered with light shrubs, bushes or low grass. The area along the Song Cau is cultivated in rice twice a year. There are many hamlets throughout the area and most are surrounded by hedgerows.

b. Enemy Situation

(1) Composition. The enemy units in the objective area consisted of elements of two unidentified battalions (possibly the 19th Battalion and the 93rd Battalion). The strength of the battalions varies from 350 to 450 men. They were armed with approximately 2 to 3 75mm RR, 10 57mm RR, 2 50 Cal. AAMG (possible) and 82mm mortars and 1 HMG. Prepared defensive positions consisted of extensive and well-constructed trenches and bunkers.

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c. Enemy Contact by BLT 1/4. Commencing D plus 1 and until termination of Phase II, small size enemy units employed automatic and small arms fire from concealed positions on advancing friendly units. During the night small enemy probes were made, employing grenades, small arms fire, and 60mm and 82mm mortars. Surprise firing devices continued to be encountered. During Phase II, 76 enemy were killed and 22 detainees were transported to Duc Pho.

5. Mission. SLF as part of Task Force X-Ray conducted search and destroy operations against enemy forces in the area from Mo Duc-Duc Pho boundary to the mouth of the Song Tra Cau River.

6. Concept of Operations. The concept of operations called for the repositioning of the SLF by heloborne and waterborne means in the northern portion of the assigned area, establishment of a blocking position, and conduct of diligent and deliberate search and destroy operations. Prior to the repositioning of the SLF, two ARVN Battalions, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, and 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines had established positions to the northwest, west and south, to force the enemy toward the SLF area and to block exfiltration from the area. Maximum reliance was placed on supporting fires. Artillery fire support was provided by the 105mm Howitzer Battery and 107mm Mortar Battery of the BLT, with general support reinforcing fires from artillery units assigned to Task Force X-Ray.

7. Execution.

a. Operation BECK HOUSE VI Phase II was executed in accordance with Task Force X-Ray Frag Order 8-67 and SLF Frag Order Number 1.

b. D-Day for Task Force X-Ray was 26 February 1967. SLF, having completed backloading of the BLT by 1800H 26 February 1967, was repositioned on D plus one (27 February 1967) by landing of C Company across Green Beach at 0830H. Elements of A Company landed in LZ Bat at 0905H. The first helicopter wave received heavy small arms fire, resulting in 8 of 14 helicopters being hit. The remainder of A Company and all of B Company were then landed by helo in an alternate LZ vicinity of Green Beach, followed by the 105mm Howitzer Battery and the 107mm Mortar Battery. D Company was landed and moved into a blocking position in the northern part of the assigned area. By sunset the BLT had consolidated its position and was prepared to conduct search and destroy operations.

c. By D plus 2, BLT 1/4 had completed operations in Sector Okinawa. On D plus 3 and 4 the BLT moved through Sectors Guam and Guadalcanal. On D plus 5, backloading was completed and OPCON of the SLF was passed to Amphibious Task Force Commander, at 031800H March 1967. (See enclosures (2) through (4), After Action Reports of BLT 1/4 and HMM 363, for details of this execution).

8. Results. (See enclosures (2) through (4).)

9. Commander's Analysis. This analysis is limited to operations during DECK HOUSE VI Phase II.

a. Planning

(1) As operations during Phase I proceeded, CTG 79.5 maintained close and continuous contact with CG Task Force X-Ray. Daily staff visits were made to Task Force X-Ray CP at Nui Dang. On 21 February 1967, at a conference of CG Task Force X-Ray, CO 7th Marines, and CTG 79.5, a concept was developed and subsequently approved by CG III MAF.

(2) As the enemy situation changed, the SLF maintained its uniquely responsive posture for immediate reaction by helo-borne and/or waterborne means. The friendly situation also was a determinant in the planning stage, since the availability of five battalions permitted the employment of the SLF in a blocking and search and destroy mission along the coast as other units moved eastward.

(3) The location of the SLF liaison officer, air officer, and fire support coordinator at Task Force X-Ray CP at Nui Dang facilitated close and effective coordination and planning.

(4) Task Force X-Ray Frag Order 8-67 was received one day prior to D-Day. Frag Orders of the SLF and BLT reflected the landing plan and supporting fire plan contained in CTG 79.5 OPLAN 120A-67 and SLF and BLT Frag Orders issued for Phase I, and this permitted the repositioning of the SLF within a period of fourteen hours.

b. Intelligence. Prior to Phase II of DECK HOUSE VI, arrangements were made for maps, aerial photography, daily intelligence summaries, and current order of battle. Area studies and COB were provided by MACV, I Corps G-2, 1st Marine Division G-2, and 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines. District Headquarters, Quang Ngai Province, provided a blacklist. Maps and photography were furnished by Task Force X-Ray. Previous intelligence indicated that there were elements of two battalions in the objective area. However, sufficient intelligence was not available to confirm these units.

c. Command Relationships. During Phase II SLF remained under OPCON of Task Force X-Ray. Task Force X-Ray retained OPCON of SLF until 031800H March 1967, when it was passed back to 1st Marine Division, to III MAF, and then to Amphibious Task Force Commander.

d. Supporting Arms

(1) On 26 February Task Force X-Ray assumed operational control/command of Operation DECK HOUSE VI and Operation DESOTO with the

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establishment of headquarters at Nui Dang. That headquarters established a Task Force X-Ray FSCC to coordinate the fires of the SLF, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, and two ARVN Battalions. Upon assumption of coordination by Task Force X-Ray FSCC, the SLF FSCC was established on the USS Iwo Jima, utilizing facilities in SACC for fire coordination of SLF units. Task Force X-Ray FSCC established communications on the Artillery Command, Artillery Fire Direction and the Artillery Conduct of Fire Nets with each supporting battery. The NGF Control/Support Net and three Shore Fire Control Spot Nets were activated for coordination of naval gunfire. Tactical Air Request Nets and Tactical Air Control Party local nets were activated for the coordination of air support. Control of air support was retained and accomplished in the previously established Mini-DASC.

(2) The Provisional Artillery Group was deactivated during Phase II of Operation DECK HOUSE VI upon the assumption of control by the 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines of all artillery units under the command of Task Force X-Ray. This assumption of control proved to be essential for effective fire direction control and assignment of reinforcing artillery support.

e. Logistics

(1) OPORD 2-67 issued by Task Force X-Ray tasked FLSG BRAVO responsibility for operating an LSA in Duc Pho to provide logistical support to the SLF during the DECK HOUSE VI Phase II operation.

(2) Liaison was conducted with the LSA Commander and procedures were formulated for drawing supplies from the LSA. By prior agreement, Class V OPRES and MCI rations expended during Operation DECK HOUSE VI Phase I were reconstituted on ARG ships from supplies located on the LST, using direct support helicopters of the SLF. Resupply requirements during Phase II were obtained, with minor exceptions, from the LSA in Duc Pho. Water, "A" rations and the greater amount of 107mm ammunition, were provided to BLT 1/4 from supplies and ship facilities of the ARG/SLF.

(3) Four UH-34's were assigned daily from the HMM Squadron 363 to Task Force X-Ray for medical evacuation and logistical resupply. Supplies were transported by helicopters to the LSA at Duc Pho both from LST's and from designated logistical control centers at Chu Lai and DaNang. In support of this supply line, ARG ships (LPH and LPD) were used as alternate refueling stations by aircraft rotating supplies to and from LSA. In addition, bulk fuel pods were filled from assets of ARG Ships and transported externally by CH-46's to the LSA. These pods were vital in maintaining sufficient quantities of AVGAS to enable the helo refueling dispensing systems to operate within the LSA.

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(4) Prior to commencement of D-Day and as a result of damages sustained during Operation DECK HOUSE VI Phase I, 2 LVT's, 1 tank M48A3 and 3 ONTOS requiring 3rd and 4th echelon maintenance, were delivered to the CP of FLSG BRAVO, Chu Lai, for emergency repairs. Within a 48 hour period, the vehicles concerned were either replaced from the maintenance pool or restored to full operational readiness and returned to the SLF in time to participate in Phase II of DECK HOUSE VI. This demonstrates the outstanding support, cooperation and service provided to the SLF by the FLSG BRAVO.

(5) Logistical support of forces ashore during DECK HOUSE VI was unique in one respect; one hot meal a day was prepared and transported by helicopters to the BLT. Although this service placed a heavy demand on the logistical system, the resulting high morale of troops justified the effort.

(6) The LPH was designated as the Casualty Evacuation Control Ship. All casualties of BLT 1/4 were evacuated by helicopters directly to the LPH for initial medical treatment and further evacuation to DaNang if required. Responsibility for casualty reporting was exercised by the SLF. No significant problems were encountered.

f. Communications

(1) Phase II was a multi-battalion operation requiring communications to Task Force X-Ray, as well as laterally with other Marine units. Communications were on an as-required basis with ARVN units participating in the operation.

(2) In addition to those circuits indicated for Phase I, the SLF became a station on 7th Marines LF TAC #1 (FM) and used 7th Marines LF TAC #2 (FM) for admin/overload traffic. During all periods of operation, the SLF and BLT 1/4 maintained the capability to enter any net required to coordinate/cooperate with 1st Battalion, 5th Marines; 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines; and the ARVN Battalions.

(3) Minor problems were experienced with frequency interference. Shipboard operations were hindered, to a degree, not by frequency interference, but by the near proximity of antennas and the mutual interference created by radiation pattern overlap. This was corrected somewhat by switching AN/VRC-46 equipments to low power. By going to low power, signal strength and readability went from "Loud and clear" to "Medium and clear." This problem was not experienced during Phase I, but SLF communications were increased by three nets during Phase II.

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(4) Radio Relay was limited by the rapidity of movement to one AN/GRC-10-AN/MRC-62 circuit from the SLF CP aboard the LPH to the BLT CP ashore. Once established, this circuit provided excellent means for SITREP, SPOTREP, and other SLF/BLT traffic.

(5) Assignment of FM frequencies continues to be critical. Because of the large number of equipments used aboard ship and the lack of suitable antenna siting, there is an increased demand for strict operator training and close circuit discipline. During this phase of the operation, communication equipment assigned to the SLF was committed 100% with no back-up.

(6) Finally, communications proved highly satisfactory and fully capable of supporting the scheme of maneuver, both afloat and during operations ashore.

g. Psychological Operations. Task Force X-Ray provided leaflet drops and loudspeaker broadcasts. During Phase II, over 500,000 leaflets were dropped in the entire area of operations, substantial numbers of which fell in the SLF area. Loudspeaker broadcasts from Ol-Es were made on an average of one hour per day during Phase II. The SLF continued to employ the BJU detachment in assisting in the handling of over 1,000 civilians in the area.

10. The following comments on BLT 1/4 After Action Report are included:

a. In paragraph 11 e(2) (b), the Report states that covered operation on the Shore Party Control/Tac-Log Net is not feasible until KY-8 equipment is available to the Shore Party Unit. The two MRC-109's and three KY-8's available to the BLT are normally capable of permitting a covered operation on the Shore Party Control/Tac-Log Net, particularly when the BLT CP and Shore Party CP are as close as they were on this operation.

b. In paragraph 11 f, the Report erroneously refers to the LPH as a hospital ship vice Casualty Evacuation Control Ship.

c. In paragraph 11 f (3), the Report states that "the definitive treatment of civilian casualties was observed to compromise the potential care available to military casualties." This could never happen. At no time did treatment of civilian casualties actually or potentially interfere with care of USMC personnel. When Marine casualties increased, civilian casualties were taken to Vietnamese medical facilities.

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d. In the same paragraph, the Report describes the Medical/Dental Civic Action Program (MEDCAP) as unsuccessful. The reasons given are illogical and show a lack of appreciation of the rationale of the Program. A copy of Brigade Order 5710.2A on Civic Action was provided to the BLT. It states the purpose--"to win the favorable attitude of the inhabitants"--and establishes the responsibility of the SLF to conduct "civic action projects that are keyed to short duration/high impact type programs." The statement that badly needed medical personnel were required to leave the LPH is completely unfounded. The Program never conflicted with operations; and personnel usually volunteer to help the people. The limited scope of treatment is realistic because of the limited period of operations and is better than no treatment at all. In addition, the humane treatment of the populace may result in intelligence that may save the life of a Marine.

e. In paragraph 13 a, the Report suggests that the exposure of ships near the landing beach may have caused the withdrawal of enemy forces. Ships approach to fire at numerous points along the littoral of Vietnam. It is improbable that the enemy would withdraw his forces every time a ship appeared offshore.

f. In paragraph 5 d, the Report states that the primary problem in naval gunfire support was one of communications and utilization of the AN/PRC-47 and was caused by an inadequate number of BB451 batteries and personnel errors in getting the batteries to and from the LPH for recharging and use in the field. The AN/PRC-47 radio was used extensively on the Naval Gunfire/Support Net and in no way hindered naval gunfire support. The AN/PRC-25 radio was used on the Naval Gunfire Spot Net #2 and proved to be completely adequate. The T/E for a Shore Fire Control Party authorizes a Battery Charger at the liaison team for recharging the batteries for the AN/PRC-47. The BLT was not required to maintain a guard on the Naval Gunfire Control/Support Net, but was required to be prepared to employ the AN/PRC-47 radio on Spot Net #1 in the event Spot Net #2 (AN/PRC-25) proved to be inadequate.

g. In paragraph 11 d, the Report states that Sav-a-planes were not issued expeditiously and that different formats delayed clearance. It recommends advance liaison with all commands. Page E 3, paragraph h of CTO 79.5 OPLAN 120A-67 states: "If the landing force CHOPS to an in-country forces, fire support coordination will be in accordance with the established in-country fire support coordination organization." During Phase I of the operation, coordination was established with the BLT air officer, artillery officer, naval gunfire officer, and appropriate members of SACC and the SLF FSCC. No problems were encountered with Sav-a-planes in Phase I. During Phase II of the operation, Task Force X-Ray assumed coordination responsibilities of all supporting arms and initiated all Sav-a-planes. The FSCC did use a standard format. No changes in

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format to that previously used were required. Delay in issuing Sav-a-planes was often caused by the BLT, which frequently failed to send the proper coordinates and the times of commencement and cessation of firing.

h. In paragraph 14 e, the Report implies that adequate hydrographic intelligence was not provided. All hydrographic intelligence produced for the area of operation was available to the BLT and was adequate.

i. In paragraph 14 h, the Report recommends that future SLF operations consider the use of two Tac-Log Groups. Do not concur. The ship-to-shore movement is best monitored and controlled by a single Tac-Log Group from the LPH. In addition, do not concur in BLT proposal that the SLF should provide personnel to coordinate Tac-Log. The T/O of the SLF Staff does not provide sufficient personnel to furnish Tac-Log Group representatives. Difficulty encountered by Tac-Log during the operation did not result from lack of staff personnel but from a lack of adequate radio operators. Only two radio operators were provided by the BLT to man three radio nets (BLT Admin Net, BLT Tactical Net, and Shore Party Control/Tac-Log Net).

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