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#0012493

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


3:CGC:dlm  
5750  
Ser: 0012-67  
15 April 1967

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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 4 March - 3 April 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, BEACON HILL I

1. In accordance with references (a) through (c), the Command Chronology for the Special Landing Force is submitted as enclosures (1) through (4).

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

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~~SECRET-NOFORN~~SPECIAL LANDING FORCE  
Command Chronology1. Organization Data

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

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

4 March - 3 April 1967 - SLF - Colonel H. D. WORTMAN  
 4 March - 28 March 1967 - BLT 1/4 - LtCol J. WESTERMAN  
 29 March - 1 April 1967 - BLT 1/4 - LtCol T. J. WILLIS  
 4 March - 3 April 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 IWO JIMA (LPH-2)	4-5 March 1967
USS VANCOUVER (LPD-2)	4-5 March 1967
USS THOMASTON (LSD-28)	4-5 March 1967
USS PRINCETON (LPH-5)	5Mar-3Apr 1967
USS OGDEN (LPD-5)	5Mar-3Apr 1967
USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35)	5Mar-3Apr 1967

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

SLF Staff:	USMC Off - 19	USMC Enl - 28	USN Off - 0	USN Enl - 0
BLT:	USMC Off - 67	USMC Enl - 1558	USN Off - 8	USN Enl - 90
HMM:	USMC Off - 54	USMC Enl - 181	USN Off - 1	USN Enl - 3

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

Col H. D. WORTMAN	- Commanding Officer
LtCol J. M. LANDRIGAN	- Executive Officer (4-25Mar67)
LtCol D. R. BRIMMER	- S-3
Major H. B. CROSBY III	- Asst S-3 (4-15Mar67)
Major J. H. BROUJOS	- S-4
Major W. M. THURBER	- Asst S-3
Major E. W. HERICH	- S-4
Capt R. A. AYERS	- CommO (4-15Mar67)
Capt F. E. HEURING	- Asst CommO (4-15Mar67)
	- CommO (16Mar-3Apr67)
1stLt J. D. CHAPMAN	- Asst S-2
2dLt C. G. COMER	- Air Observer/Asst S-3

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Enclosure (1)  
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f. TAD to the SLF for Special Operations

15Mar-3Apr67 - Major D. J. MUELLER, 9th MAB, SLF Air Officer  
 15Mar-23Mar67- Major W. D. BENTON, S-2, TG 79.4, Observer  
 15Mar-23Mar67- Major R. W. EDWARDS, S-3A, TG 79.4, Observer  
 19Mar-23Mar67- Capt F. D. KELLY, CommO, TG 79.4, Observer  
 19Mar-23Mar67- Major R. M. BROWNE III, S-4, TG 79.4, Observer  
 22Mar-24Mar67- LtCol W. L. SMITH, Asst G-3, 9th MAB, Observer  
 22Mar-24Mar67- LtCol L. A. GUBB, CEO, 9thMAB, Observer  
 19Mar-23Mar67- SSgt W. VAUGHN, CASRepMCO, TG 79.4, Observer  
 19Mar-22Mar67- Major J. P. FERLOW USA, LNO, Gio Linh Subsector

2. Chronology of Significant Events During the period 4Mar-3Apr67

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

b. 4 - 15 March 1967

(1) On 4 March the ARG/SLF was enroute to Subic Bay, R.P., from RVN.

(2) On 5 March the ARG/SLF arrived in Subic Bay, R.P. and TG 79.5 embarked aboard the USS PRINCETON (LPH-5). BLT 1/4 occupied the SLF camp ashore.

(3) From 5 through 15 March the SLF conducted extensive training ashore, utilizing the SLF camp.

(4) On 6 March Colonel AMERINE, Chief of Staff, 9th MAB visited CTG 79.5 aboard the USS PRINCETON.

(5) From 8 through 10 March CTG 79.5 in Saigon for briefing of American Newspaper Study Mission.

(6) On 15 March BLT 1/4 embarked aboard the ARG shipping consisting of the USS PRINCETON, USS OGDEN and USS MONTICELLO. CTG 79.5 and representatives of TG 79.5 and TG 76.5 departed for III MAF for March SPECOPS planning. Majors BENTON, EDWARDS and MUELLER from the Staff of CTG 79.4 reported aboard.

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c. 16 - 19 March 1967

(1) On 16 March the ARG/SLF conducted a rehearsal landing at Subic Bay, R.P. The USS PRINCETON, USS OGDEN and USS MONTICELLO departed Subic Bay enroute to I CTZ, RVN.

(2) On 17 March the ARG/SLF arrived I CTZ, RVN and CTG 79.5 and representatives returned to the USS PRINCETON.

(3) On 18 March the SLF made final preparations for Operation BEACON HILL I.

(4) On 19 March D-Day was postponed due to low visibility prohibiting air operations. Rear Admiral BURKE visited CTG 76.5 and CTG 79.5 aboard the USS PRINCETON. Major BROWNE, S-4, 79.4 and Captain KELLY, Communications Officer, 79.4 reported aboard for five days TAD.

d. 20 March - 1 April 1967

(1) On 20 March Operation BEACON HILL I commenced with the landing of BLT 1/4 by helicopter and landing craft.

(2) From 20 March - 1 April the ARG/SLF conducted Operation BEACON HILL I in Quang Tri Province, Northern I CTZ, RVN.

X (3) On 21 March operational control of the SLF less artillery units passed to CG, 3d Marine Division via CG, III MAF (CTG 76.5 msg 210625Z Mar67 and CG, III MAF msg 211352Z Mar67). OPCON artillery units passed to CO, 12th Marines by CG 3d Marine Division msg 210908Z Mar67.

(4) On 22 March Lieutenant Colonel SMITH and Lieutenant Colonel GUBB from 9th MAB reported aboard.

(5) On 23 March, representatives from TG 79.4 completed TAD and departed for Okinawa.

(6) On 24 March, Brigadier General METZGER and TF 79 representatives visited CTG 76.5 and CTG 79.5 aboard the USS PRINCETON and BLT 1/4 ashore.

(7) On 26 March operational control of BLT 1/4 passed to CO, 3d Marines by CG 3d Marine Division (Forward) msg 260211Z Mar67. Operational control of the artillery units remained with CO, 12th Marines.

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(8) On 1 April SLF CHOPPED to CATF by CG III MAF msg 310940Z Mar67 at which time, CTG 76.5 with prior concurrence of COMSEVENTHFLT, terminated BEACON HILL I. CTG 79.5 directed BLT 1/4 to report operational control to CG III MAF, command less operation control to CG, 3d Marine Division.

e. 2-3 April 1967

(1) On 2 April the ARG/SLF departed Dong Ha enroute to Da Nang I CTZ, RVN.

(2) On 3 April HMM 363 was offloaded at Da Nang and at 1200H reported to CG, 1st MAW. Embarked HMM 164.

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

3:JHB:dlm  
Ser: 0013-67  
April 1967

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From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Seventh Fleet  
Subj: Combat After Action Report, BEACON HILL I/PRAIRIE III

Encl: (1) SLF, After Action Report, BEACON HILL I/PRAIRIE III  
(2) HMM 363, After Action Report, BEACON HILL I/PRAIRIE III, 20-51100067  
(3) BLT 1/4, After Action Report, BEACON HILL I/PRAIRIE III, 20-51100067  
(4) Amphibious Objective Area Overlay

1. Enclosure (1) contains the Special Landing Force After Action Report for BEACON HILL I/PRAIRIE III.
2. Enclosures (2) through (4) 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 (4).

  
H. D. WORTMAN

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COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT, BEACON HILL I/PRAIRIE III

Map Reference: Vietnam, AMS L7014, 1:50,000 Sheets 6442 IV and 6342 I

1. Operation BEACON HILL I was a unilateral amphibious operation utilizing waterborne and heloborne assault forces. It was conducted in accordance with NWP-22(A).

2. This operation was conducted south of the Demilitarized Zone in the Gio Linh District, Quang Tri Province, I CTZ, Republic of Vietnam. The operation commenced 20 March 1967 at 1330H with the landing of heloborne forces in LZ Bluebird (YD209742), and LZ Sparrow (YD203729). Surface-borne assault forces landed at 1430H over Blue Beach (YD322722). Operations of the SLF ashore were in conjunction with Operation PRAIRIE III. The operation terminated at 010200H April 1967.

3. Task Organization

Special Landing Force  
BLT 1/4

HMM 363 (Rein)  
Det, VMO-2 (UH1E)  
Det, VMO-6 (UH1E)  
Det, HMM 164 (CH-46A)  
Det, HMM 265 (CH-46A)

Colonel H. D. WORTMAN  
LtCol J. WESTERMAN  
LtCol T. J. WILLIS  
Major M. E. DAY

4. Intelligencea. Terrain

(1) General. The objective area is generally a narrow coastal lowland and is considered as part of the Northern Plains Region. It extends from the southern boundary of the DMZ south approximately 20 kilometers, and from the beach inland approximately 20 kilometers. National Highway Number One traverses the area in a northwest-southeast direction. There is only one major landing beach (NIS Beach No. 1), which fronts the entire objective area.

(2) Relief. The area is primarily a lowland coastal plain with reliefs that rarely exceed 10 meters. The immediate coast usually falls into one of two categories: (1) that of parallel curved beach ridges, whose populated areas are only a few feet higher than the cultivated de-

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pressions, and (2) local belts of sand dunes, some of which are stabilized by the natural growth of brush and grass. Behind the coast the area is primarily a flat rice growing plain approximately 14 kilometers wide. To the rear of this is an undulating plain linking the level portion of the lowland with rugged inland mountains.

(3) Beach Study. Blue Beach (YD322722) is a straight beach extending in a northwest-southwest direction and is 500 yards long and 60 feet in width. The Gua Viet River is located 1.6 miles south of the beach center. A small village is located on the left flank 400 yards inland. Composition is soft sand, firm when wet, and has an average gradient of 1:12. The beach is obstructed by two submerged longshore sandbars, located 40-70 yards and 190-270 yards off the low waterline. These sandbars are subject to change as a result of storms. Nearshore gradients of the beach vary from 1:37 on the right flank to 1:62 on the left flank.

b. Enemy Situation

(1) Composition

(a) Ground. Enemy ground units in the objective area have been identified as the 5th and 6th Battalions, 812th Regiment, 324B Division; 7th and 8th Battalions, 90th Regiment, 324B Division; 1st Battalion, 31st Regiment, 341st Division; and the K. 400 Local Force Company.

c. Order of Battle

- (1) 5th Battalion, 812th Regiment, 324B Division  
Strength: Approximately 470  
Location: YD070685
- (2) 6th Battalion, 812th Regiment, 324B Division  
Strength: Approximately 470  
Location: YD071685
- (3) 7th Battalion, 90th Regiment, 324B Division  
Strength: 700  
Location: YD097705
- (4) 8th Battalion, 90th Regiment, 324B Division  
Strength: 700  
Location: YD115719



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- (5) 1st Battalion, 31st Regiment, 341st Division  
Strength: 500  
Location: YD110715
- (6) K. 400 Local Force Company  
Strength: 120  
Location: YD192733

d. The above units are equipped with 60mm mortars, 82mm mortars, 120mm mortars, 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles, 12.7 AA/MG, automatic weapons and individual small arms. The enemy was reported to have 140mm rockets positioned in the northern part of the DMZ.

e. Enemy Contact

(1) On D-Day, the waterborne forces made an unopposed landing over Blue Beach. The heloborne forces landing at LZ Bluebird received light small arms fire from the treeline west of the LZ. At 1800H on D-Day the Gio Linh area, including BLT 1/4 GP, was subjected to heavy enemy mortar and rocket fire. The enemy employed 60mm mortars, 82mm mortars, and 120mm mortars. Enemy employment of 140mm spin-stabilized rockets is based upon observation of rocket trails. This report has not been verified due to lack of fragments from the impact area. From D plus 1 through D plus 6 elements of the SLF attacked to the west toward objectives 4 and 5. Enemy resistance became more tenacious as the SLF closed on objectives 4 and 5. Enemy units up to battalion size fought from well prepared fighting holes connected by trench and tunnel systems, utilizing 60mm mortars, 82mm mortars, 120mm mortars 57mm recoilless rifles, automatic weapons and small arms. B Company, while on a sweep in vicinity YD174723 discovered the bodies of 2 NVA soldiers tied by heavy twine to 75 pound sandbags and with their weapons also tied to their bodies by twine. In seizing objectives 4 and 5, the SLF broke through two main lines of enemy defenses after a two day preparation of the objectives by artillery and air. The enemy broke and ran. From D plus 7 to the termination of the operation, enemy activity decreased to sporadic sniper fire and harrassing actions. Few mines and surprise firing devices were employed by the enemy.

(2) Enemy tactics included: sniping and harassing fires, night probes of positions in conjunction with mortar attacks, firing from interconnected trench lines in the nature of delaying action, and night attacks in strengths up to one battalion. Many of the trenches and fighting holes in the vicinity of objectives 4 and 5 were freshly prepared and were concealed by hedgerows crisscrossing the relatively flat terrain.

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The trenches were interconnected with tunnel systems. The SLF made maximum use of artillery fires against the enemy, since limited visibility restricted fixed wing air support.

(3) Six helicopters received hits by automatic weapons and small arms fire. On 26 March while on emergency medevac, one helicopter was forced down by mortar and heavy automatic weapons fire at YD117719.

(4) During BEACON HILL I there were 343 NVA killed (confirmed) and 619 KIA (probables), and 6 detainees were transported to Dong Ha.

f. Weather. The weather in the objective area is characterized by the "crachin" period. During the northeast monsoon--early November to mid-March, there is morning low cloudiness, fog, low visibility, and ceilings 1,000 feet to 1,500 feet (occasionally as low as 500 feet), with the lowest conditions occurring from early morning to late morning. Air-ground support, air reconnaissance, and heloborne operations are hampered by the low ceilings and visibility. April is the period of least cloudiness, highest ceilings, and highest visibility.

5. Mission. As directed by COMSEVENTHFLT message 161336Z March 1967 (Initiating Directive), the mission of the SLF was to conduct a search and destroy amphibious operation against VC/NVA forces within the Amphibious Objective Area in Quang Tri Province and/or other operations as agreed upon with CG III MAF.

6. Concept of Operations. Operation BEACON HILL I was a unilateral amphibious operation conducted by the ARG/SLF. The operation was planned for a period of approximately ten days as a search and destroy operation utilizing both waterborne and heloborne assault landings. Initially, the inherent mobility of the SLF was to be utilized to the maximum extent possible to insure a rapid build-up of combat power ashore, thereby gaining surprise and shock action. Subsequently, aggressive search and destroy operations were to be conducted immediately south of the southern boundary of the DMZ along the Gio Linh-Con Thien line toward blocking positions to the west and south established by friendly forces. Maximum utilization of fire support was an essential part of this concept. Fire support was to be provided by the organic artillery of the BLT, artillery of 3d Marine Division (Forward), naval gunfire consisting of one DD and one LSMR, and close air support from the 1st MAF. The SLF was prepared to CHOP to CG III MAF or his designated subordinate commander for employment in conjunction with Operation PRAIRIE III. In an effort to insure maximum surprise, the concept of operations provided for the following: L-Hour was scheduled at first light; beach and

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landing zones were not prepared by fire however air and NGF were "on call" in the event fire was necessary; and L-Hour was scheduled one hour prior to H-Hour to insure touchdown of the first helowave while ARG shipping remained out of sight from land.

#### 7. Execution

a. Operation BEACON HILL I was executed in accordance with CTG 79.5 OPLAN 120A-67, supplemented by a Frag Order published for the Gio Linh area.

b. D-Day was established as 19 March 1967, with L-Hour at 0700 and H-Hour at 0800. Due to low ceilings and limited visibility which persisted throughout the day, negating helicopter and close air support operations, D-Day was delayed until 20 March 1967.

c. On 20 March 1967, weather again precluded an early L-Hour and H-Hour. However, by 1230H the overcast broke sufficiently to provide minimum ceiling for air operations. At 1330H and 1430H the SLF landed its heloborne and waterborne assault forces. By nightfall on D-Day the BLT was established ashore, well organized, and prepared to conduct, at first light, search and destroy operations as assigned. (See enclosures (2) through (4) for details of execution).

8. Results. See enclosures (2) and (3).

9. Commander's Analysis. This analysis is limited to those matters at the SLF level. BLT and Squadron Commander's analyses are contained in their respective reports, enclosures (2) and (3).

#### a. Planning

(1) The planning phase for Operation BEACON HILL I was very short. Planning commenced on 15 March 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 3d Marine Division. On 16 March 1967, CTG 79.5 and his staff visited the 3d Marine Division (Forward) CP at Dong Ha, where planning continued and a helicopter reconnaissance over the proposed objective area was conducted. Planners visited the infantry and artillery units located at Gio Linh (YD211744). Upon return to III MAF Headquarters, final conferences were held.

(2) During the initial conferences, staff representatives of III MAF proposed a concept of operation calling for employment of the SLF in search and destroy operations in northern Quang Tri Province along the Gio Linh-Con Thien line; link up with friendly units; and continued search and destroy operations to the southeast.

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(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, landing beaches, and objectives were conducted.

(c) Communication frequencies were assigned and coordinated; and arrangements were made to enter ship-to-shore Orestes for rapid and secure transmission of tactical information.

(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 established in consonance with NWP-22(A).

(g) The requirement for logistical support of the SLF was finalized in detail.

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

(i) Arrangements were made to obtain Vietnamese guides familiar with the Gio Linh area to accompany the BLT.

(j) Arrangements were made for the MACV Subsector Advisor for Gio Linh to be present in SACC until coordination and control of supporting arms was passed ashore.

(k) Plans were made for establishing liaison with the 3rd Marine Division (Forward) and the 2nd ARVN Regiment at Dong Ha.

b. Intelligence

(1) Prior to BEACON HILL I, arrangements were made for maps, area studies, daily intelligence summaries, ITT personnel and support for hand-

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ling civilian detainees. Area study and OOB were provided by MACV, III MAF, 3rd Marine Division (Forward) and the Sector Advisor. 3rd Marine Division (Forward) provided ITT personnel. Intelligence summaries were provided daily from III MAF and 3rd Marine Division (Forward). ANO, Cubi Point, P.I., and 3rd Marine Division provided map requirements.

(2) Weather was the predominant influencing factor throughout Operation BEACON HILL I. It directly and adversely affected all aspects of the operation. Limited visibility, low ceilings, fog and cloud cover persisted over the objective area from D-Day until D plus 6. This severely limited all air operations (troop lift, resupply, medical evacuation and air observation) to a few hours each afternoon. Planning for BEACON HILL I, and for all operations, considered the possible occurrence of periods of reduced visibility normally expected to exist in the area, and compensating arrangements were made. However, the prolonged period of reduced visibility experienced during BEACON HILL I required some changes to the modus operandi. Flexibility in employment of the HMM was achieved by leaving about half the helicopters aboard the LPH and the remainder ashore.

c. Command Relationships. Operation BEACON HILL I was a unilateral amphibious operation with command relationships in accordance with NWP-22(A). At 211600H March 1967, CTG 76.5 passed OPCON of the SLF to CG, III MAF (CTG 76.5 message 210625Z March 1967). CG III MAF passed OPCON to CG 3rd Marine Division (CG III MAF message 211352Z March 1967). Concurrently, OPCON of "G" Battery, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines and Whiskey Battery, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines passed to the 12th Marines. At 260900H March 1967, CG 3rd Marine Division (Forward) passed OPCON of BLT 1/4 to CG, 3rd Marines (CG 3rd Marine Division (Forward) message 260211Z March 1967). HMM 363 remained under OPCON of the SLF throughout the operation. At 010159H April 1967, CG 3rd Marine Division passed OPCON to the SLF and at 010200H passed OPCON of the SLF to CG III MAF (CG 3rd Marine Division message 301459Z March 1967). At 010201H April 1967, CG III MAF passed OPCON of the SLF to CTG 76.5 (CG III MAF message 310940Z March 1967). At 010200H April 1967 Operation BEACON HILL I was terminated.

d. Supporting Arms. The concept of operations ashore relied heavily upon the use of supporting arms. During the initial planning phase of BEACON HILL I, it was reaffirmed that the Amphibious Task Force Commander would control all supporting arms fire within the assigned Amphibious Objective Area from the Supporting Arms Coordination Center aboard the USS Princeton (LPH-5). This was accomplished by assigning a liaison officer/FSC and an air liaison officer to the already established FSCC and DASC of the 3rd Marine Division (Forward) located at Dong Ha. These agencies were utilized to control all supporting arms fire within the Amphibious Objective area and were subordinate to the SACC until control of supporting fires was passed ashore. Concurrently, the FSCC and DASC

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continued to control all supporting fires for units outside the AOA. When the Landing Force was firmly established ashore, the Landing Force Commander requested that control and coordination of supporting arms be passed ashore. This was accomplished concurrently with the CHOP of the SLF to CG III MAF who subsequently passed OPCON to CG, 3d Marine Division (Forward) at 211600H March 1967. Upon assumption of OPCON, the 3rd Marine Division (Forward) FSOC and DASC assumed control of supporting arms and supported the Landing Force in an outstanding manner; for example, on 22 March 1967, 54 sorties were flown by fixed wing aircraft and over 4,000 rounds of artillery fire were delivered in support. The 105mm howitzer battery and the 107mm mortar battery assigned to the SLF were assigned to OPCON of the 12th Marines but remained in direct support of the SLF. The tactical fire planning and availability of reinforcing fires from 155mm and 175mm artillery units were assigned with a minimum delay and resulted in artillery support for units of the SLF far beyond organic support capabilities.

e. Logistics

(1) During the planning visit to III MAF, arrangements were made for resupply of the BLT from in-country assets at the LSA at Dong Ha. Similarly, emergency supplies expended from OPRES during the operation would be replenished from the LSA.

(2) To limit drawdown of contingency supplies aboard ARG shipping, plans were implemented with the approval of 3rd Marine Division to commence issue of Classes I, III and V resupplies on D plus 1 direct from the LSA in Dong Ha. Liaison was conducted with the LSA Commander prior to commencement of the operation. Procedures for drawing resupply from the LSA were discussed and provision was made for staging a limited amount of supplies for emergency use on D-Day.

(3) A detachment of Shore Party personnel and supply representatives were transported by helicopter to the LSA on D-Day to activate a tac-log group for conducting resupply operations. Communication was established with tac-log representatives aboard each ship, the LSA Communication Center, and the BLT CP. Land lines were connected to the 3rd Marine Division (Forward) switchboard. Requests for resupplies were received from company units by the Battalion S-4 officer, consolidated, and submitted direct to the tac-log group at the LSA. Requirements were drawn from appropriate supply dumps, staged by Shore Party personnel and delivered by helicopters to units requiring supplies.

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(4) Helicopters used for resupply operations were provided by a detachment of the HMM 363 Squadron established ashore at Dong Ha. Class II resupplies, batteries, and spare parts were provided to the BLT from supplies aboard the ARG ships. Selected vehicles and most of the Class IV supplies were transported by landing craft up the Cau Viet River and off-loaded at the LCU ramp in Dong Ha. Armed truck convoys were dispatched daily to deliver artillery ammunition, water and rations to the units in the vicinity of Gio Linh. It is estimated that approximately one half of the resupply tonnage provided BLT 1/4 in support of the operation was provided by motor transport vehicles. The greatest portion of this tonnage consisted of artillery ammunition.

(5) Excessive amounts of 107mm mortar ammunition issued from the LSA were found to be defective; the increment charges were moist and incapable of igniting properly. Since no other immediate source of 107mm ammunition was available, it became necessary to authorize emergency issue of 1712 rounds of 107mm mortar ammunition to all batteries operating within the northern Quang Tri Province area from OPRES assets held aboard the ARG ships.

(6) Numerous emergency resupplies were accomplished in record time. Support facilities, assistance, and cooperation received from the LSA commander contributed greatly to the efficient and orderly manner in which resupply operations were performed during the entire operation.

(7) Medical. The established procedure for the evacuation of casualties from the battlefield directly to the hospital aboard the LPH was followed only occasionally during this operation. This was due to the fact that fog often persisted over the water several hours after it cleared over land, thus isolating the LPH. As a result, wounded were evacuated by helicopter directly to medical facilities at Dong Ha, Phu Bai and Da Nang.

(8) Casualty Reporting. Since the established procedures for the evacuation of all SLF casualties to the LPH was not followed, problems in casualty reporting occurred. Many of the initial casualties were evacuated directly to Phu Bai and Da Nang thereby by-passing the SLF CRCC aboard the LPH. To insure strict accounting of all casualties, the SLF CRCC was moved to Dong Ha. In addition it was necessary to station casualty reporting personnel at Phu Bai, Da Nang and aboard the USS Repose.

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f. Communications

(1) Upon boarding the USS Princeton, 7 AN/MRC-46 radios were assigned to the SLF. The SLF planned to use its organic equipment to support the forces ashore or as "back-up" if the ship's equipment failed. Of the seven radios assigned the SLF only three VRC-46 radios (BLT Tac-Log Net, BLT Admin Net, and BLT Tac Net #1) were operative after D-Day. The remaining 4 VRC-46 radios operated below acceptable standards, requiring the SLF to "deck-mount" the AN/MRC-110 radio. Satisfactory communications were maintained throughout the operation. The only circuit down-time on SLF Tac Net #1 and 3rd Marine Division (Forward) Tac Net occurred when the ship operated beyond range of the AN/MRC-110 radio.

(2) On D plus 1 much mutual interference and cross-talk was experienced on all circuits. This interference can be eliminated by thoroughly checking out the ship's newly installed radios and antennas. Although time precluded a thorough and detailed check prior to BEACON HILL I, this must be accomplished by the LPH prior to HILLTOP VII. Failure to ensure optimum operating performance of the ship's radios could significantly limit communications on future operations.

(3) Two AN/MRC-62 radios were positioned by III MAF at 3rd Marine Division (Forward) at Dong Ha prior to D-Day. As soon as the BLT was established ashore, one equipment was helolifted to the BLT CP and operated to 3rd Marine Division (Forward). The BLT passed its AN/MRC-62 radio ashore at approximately H plus 4 on D-Day, and began operating almost immediately with the SLF. Radio relay from ship-to-shore proved to be very sporadic. Tests by the ship's electronic equipment found it to be on frequency but the power output was inadequate. As a result, the radio relay was only about 40% effective.

g. Special Augmentation Equipment. The SLF was augmented by the assignment of three UH1E helicopters (armed and unarmed) and five CH-46A helicopters. Two armed UH1E helicopters provided troop escort and ground support. One unarmed UH1E helicopter was used for command and control, reconnaissance, and TAO. Two CH-46A helicopters, stripped for heavy lift, moved the 105mm howitzers, the 107mm mortars, the MRC-62 radios, and other heavy equipment. Three additional CH-46A helicopters augmented the UH-34 helicopters in the D-Day lift of troops and equipment into LZ Bluebird and LZ Sparrow. As a result of this additional helicopter support, the SLF landed, within five and one half hours, four rifle companies, 105mm howitzer battery, 107mm mortar battery, H&S Company, and one day's supply of all classes. The location of MAG-16 (Forward) at Dong Ha enabled the SLF to receive continuous support as required.



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h. Psychological Warfare Operations. Troops were disciplined and well-behaved. They respected the rights and properties of the populace. The BJU detachment was tasked for population control in direct support of BLT 1/4. However, utilization was limited because of the small number of populace encountered. 1,266,000 Chieu Hoi leaflets were dropped in the objective area during the operation.

k. Civic Action. The Civic Action program was limited by the continuous operational requirements against strong NVA forces and because few civilians were encountered.

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

a. In paragraph 12e (2) the report states that the shift of air control from ship to shore caused confusion in requesting and coordinating Air Support. When the SLF chops to in country forces it is then governed by that units existing regulations, therefore when the SLF chopped to CG THIRD MARINE DIVISION FWD it was required to request all CAS through the DASC at Dong Ha. Any confusion that may have existed can generally be attributed to the personnel not completely understanding the mechanics of the shift and then having difficulty adjusting to the in country procedures.

b. The Addendum to the After Action Report stated that difficulties were encountered in obtaining helicopter support. Examples are given concerning MedEvacs Resupply etc. The BLT attributed this problem to maintaining control of Helicopters aboard the LPH. The major contributing factor effecting the operation was weather. This effected both Ground and Sea based operations. To combat this, the SLF stationed 50% of the available A/C at Dong Ha with the staff air officer. The remaining A/C remained aboard the LPH. There were many instances when A/C were grounded due to weather at Dong Ha, yet flying conditions were satisfactory aboard ship. In this same vain there were occasions when A/C were able to launch from both Dong Ha and the LPH but when they reached their destination were unable to land due to poor weather. Three A/C incurred Alpha damage when they crashed attempting emergency MedEvac/Resupply during inclement weather. This split of A/C provided the maximum availability possible considering conditions, but required flexibility in planning on the part of the BLT to take advantage of this availability.

DECLASSIFIED


HEADQUARTERS  
Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)  
USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10)  
FPO San Francisco 96601

1/CGC/cgc  
5750  
Ser: 0014-67  
2 June 1967

SECRET-NOFORN (Downgraded to unclassified upon removal 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 4 April - 12 May 1967, submission of  
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 reference (a) through (c), the Command Chronology for the Special Landing Force (TG 79.5) is submitted as enclosure (1).

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

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HEADQUARTERS  
Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)  
USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10)  
FPO San Francisco 96601

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

4 April - 12 May 1967

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PART II	NARRATIVE SUMMARY
PART III	SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS
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GP-4  
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.

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ENCLOSURE (1)

DECLASSIFIED

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PART I

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

1. DESIGNATION

COMMANDING

Special Landing Force (TG 79.5) Colonel H. D. WORTMAN 4 Apr-12 May 1967

SUBORDINATE UNITS

BLT 2/3 LtCol E. R. DELONG 4 Apr-12 May 1967

HMM 164 LtCol R. D. MCKITRICK 4 Apr-12 May 1967

ATTACHED UNITS

NONE

2. LOCATION

USS PRINCETON (LPH-5) 4 Apr-12 May 1967

USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35) 4 Apr-12 May 1967

USS OGDEN (LPD-5) 4 Apr-12 May 1967

3. STAFF OFFICERS

Executive Officer/S-3 LtCol D. R. BRIMMER 4 Apr-12 May 1967

S-2 Major J. H. BROUJOS 4 Apr-12 May 1967

Asst S-2 1stLt J. D. CHAPMAN 4 Apr-12 May 1967

Asst S-3 Major W. M. THURBER 4 Apr-12 May 1967

AO/Asst S-3 2dLt C. G. COMER 4 Apr-12 May 1967

S-4 LtCol E. W. HERICH 4 Apr-12 May 1967

CommO Capt F. E. HEURING 4 Apr-12 May 1967

4. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

SLF Staff:	USMC Off - 9	USMC Enl - 30	USN Off - 0	USN Enl - 0
BLT:	USMC Off - 58	USMC Enl - 1482	USN Off - 8	USN Enl - 78
HMM:	USMC Off - 51	USMC Enl - 192	USN Off - 1	USN Enl - 3

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Enclosure (1)

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PART IINARRATIVE SUMMARY

The Special Landing Force (TG 79.5) was embarked aboard ARG shipping during the period. The ARG shipping was utilized to transport BLT 3/4 from I CTZ, RVN to Okinawa. Upon arrival of the ARG/SLF at Okinawa BLT 3/4 was off-loaded and BLT 2/3 embarked aboard reconstituting the SLF. Exercise HILLTOP VII was conducted at Okinawa on 16-17 April 1967 and preparations were made and plans confirmed for operation BEACON STAR which commenced on 22 April 1967 in the HUE/PHU BAI area, I CTZ, RVN. On 26 April 1967 operation BEACON STAR Phase I was terminated and the SLF moved to KHE SANH to support operations in the vicinity of Hills 861 and 881. On 12 May 1967 BLT 2/3 reembarked aboard the ARG shipping completing operation BEACON STAR Phase II.

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PART IIISEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

The following is a review of the activities of the Special Landing Force (TG 79.5). Detailed information of BLT 2/3 and HMM 164 is shown in the appropriate command chronology in PART IV. Detailed information on BEACON STAR is shown in PART IV.

A. 4 - 14 April 1967

1. On 4 April the ARG/SLF sailed to Dong Ha, I CTZ, RVN and embarked BLT 3/4.
2. From 6 through 11 April, the ARG/SLF was enroute to Okinawa and evading Typhoon Violet.
3. On 11 April the ARG/SLF arrived at Okinawa and commenced off-loading BLT 3/4.
4. From 11 through 14 April CTG 79.5 and staff representatives conferred with CTF 79 on Administrative, Logistical and Operational matters pertaining to future SLF operations.
5. BLT 2/3 CHOPPED to CTG 79.5 at 131500Z Apr67 and embarked aboard the ARG shipping consisting of the USS PRINCETON, USS OGDEN and the USS MONTICELLO.

B. 15 - 21 April 1967

1. On 15 April the ARG/SLF conducted a rehearsal landing for Exercise HILLTOP VII on Okinawa.
2. On 16 and 17 April Exercise HILLTOP VII was conducted on Okinawa.
3. On 17 April the ARG/SLF departed for I CTZ, RVN. CTG 79.5 and staff representatives of TG 79.5 and TG 76.5 departed for Hq, III MAF for SpecOps planning.
4. On 20 April the ARG/SLF arrived I CTZ, RVN. CTG 79.5 and staff representatives returned from Hq, III MAF. CTF 76 and CTF 79 visited CTG 76.5 and CTG 79.5 aboard the USS PRINCETON.
5. On 21 April the ARG/SLF continued planning for Operation BEACON STAR.

C. 22 - 26 April 1967 BEACON STAR Phase I

1. On 22 April Operation BEACON STAR Phase I commenced with the landing of BLT 2/3 by helicopter and landing craft.

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2. From 22 - 26 April the ARG/SLF conducted Operation BEACON STAR Phase I in Quang Tri/Thua Thien Province, Northern I CTZ, RVN.

3. On 24 April the CG III MAF, CG 3dMarDiv and CG 1stMAW visited BLT 2/3 ashore. Operational control of the SLF CHOPPED to CG III MAF at 241600H Apr67 thence to CG 3dMarDiv at 241600H Apr67 (Auth CTG 76.5 msg 240801Z Apr67 and CG III MAF msg 240820Z Apr67).

4. At 260930H Apr67 BLT 2/3 helo lifted from Thua Thien Province to Phu Bai RVN and then transported by fixed wing aircraft to Khe Sanh I CTZ, RVN. Operation BEACON STAR Phase I terminated at 262400H Apr67. CG 3dMarDiv passed OPCON BLT 2/3 to CG 3dMar at 261200H Apr67.

D. 27 April - 12 May 1967 BEACON STAR Phase II

1. From 27 April through 12 May BLT 2/3 and 3dBn 3dMar plus supporting elements conducted operation BEACON STAR Phase II in Northwestern Quang Tri Province, Northern I CTZ, RVN.

2. On 27 April CG 3dMarDiv passed OPCON Btry B 1/12 to CO 12th Mar at 271400H Apr67.

3. From 6 through 8 May LtCol EASTER, G-1 9thMAB and Captain C. WIEDEN, Adjutant 9thMAB aboard for liaison visit.

4. On 11 May MGen ROBERTSHAW, CG 1stMAW was aboard the USS PRINCETON and presented six Purple Heart Medals to members of HMM 164.

5. On 12 May the CG 3dMarDiv visited CTG 76.5 and CTG 79.5 aboard the USS PRINCETON.

6. Operation BEACON STAR terminated with the reembarkation of the SLF in the ARG assigned shipping. OPCON passed to CATF at 121800H May67.

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## PART IV

CHRONOLOGY OF SUBORDINATE COMMANDS  
AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Appendix 1. Command Chronology, BLT 2/3 *12 Apr - 12 May*
- Appendix 2. Command Chronology, HMM 164 *12 Apr - 12 May*
- Appendix 3. SLF, After Action Report, BEACON STAR Phases I and II
- Appendix 4. HMM 164, After Action Report, BEACON STAR Phases I and II *12 Apr - 12 May*
- Appendix 5. BLT 2/3, After Action Report, BEACON STAR Phases I and II  
*(note: There is a sep. 2/3 file of this A/A, hence this is left w/ DC 7A, 8)*
- Appendix 6. Amphibious Objective Area Overlay

*There  
is NO separate  
file  
w/ this A/A*

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Enclosure (1)



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COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT, BEACON STAR PHASE I

Map Reference: Vietnam, AMS Series L-7014, 1:50,000 Sheets 6442 I, II, III, IV and 6542 III.

1. Operation BEACON STAR was a unilateral amphibious operation utilizing waterborne and heloborne assault forces. It was conducted in accordance with NWP-22(A).

2. This operation was conducted 23 miles south of the Demilitarized Zone in the Hai Lang District of Quang Tri Province and in the Huong Dien District of Thua Thien Province, I CTZ, Republic of Vietnam. The operation commenced on 22 April 1967 at 0800H with the landing of heloborne assault forces in LZ Jay (YD620450) and LZ Wren (YD525495). Surfaceborne assault forces landed at 1000H over Red Beach (YD565513). Phase I of the operation terminated at 262400H April 1967.

### 3. Task Organization

Special Landing Force  
BLT 2/3  
HMM 164

Colonel H. D. WORTMAN  
LtCol E. R. DELONG  
LtCol R. D. MCKITRICK

### 4. Intelligence

#### a. Terrain

(1) General. Quang Tri and Thua Thien Province consist of three basic elements, characteristic of much of north and central Vietnam. The mountains or highland area in the west, the Piedmont or transitional hills, and the coastal plain in the east.

(2) Coastal Plain. The coastal plain in the objective area is part of a broad flat band of alluvial soil stretching from North Vietnam to Da Nang. The plain is dissected by meandering streams, drainage ditches and lagoons with broad sand beaches bordering on the east. The cultivation is predominantly wetland rice, and 80% of the lowland is inundated or moist throughout the year.

(3) Beach Study. Red Beach (YD565513) is the southern portion of NIS Beach No. 1. The beach is straight, extending in a northwest-southeast direction and is 500 yards long and 60 yards wide. A small village is located on the left flank, an intermittent stream empties into the South China Sea 250 yards on the right flank, and the iron hulk of a wreck is distinguishable as a navigational aid at YD557518. Composition is soft sand, firm when wet, with an average gradient of 1:60.

1  
Enclosure (1)

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Appendix (3)

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The beach is obstructed by a sandbar located on the left 125 yards off the beach. Sandbars shift frequently and are greatly influenced by storms in the area.

b. Enemy Situation

(1) Composition

(a) Ground. Enemy ground units in or near the objective area had been reported as the 800th and 802nd Battalion, 6th NVA Regiment, and the 810th and 814th Main Force Battalions.

c. Order of Battle

(1) 800th Battalion, 6th NVA Regiment

Strength: Approximately 311

Location: YD602309

(2) 802nd Battalion, 6th NVA Regiment

Strength: Approximately 400

Location: YD558238

(3) 810th Main Force Battalion

Strength: Approximately 300

Location: YD643302

(4) 814th Main Force Battalion

Strength: Approximately 493

Location: YD408402

d. The above units are equipped with 60mm mortars, 82mm mortars, 57mm recoilless rifles, automatic weapons and individual small arms.

e. Enemy Contact

(1) Phase I was characterized by light contact. On D-Day the waterborne force landing over Red Beach and the heloborne forces landing at LZs Wren and Jay were unopposed. On D plus 1, units received sporadic small arms and 60mm mortar fire, which continued until termination of Phase I. F/2/3 encountered an estimated enemy platoon at YD512518. An air strike was called resulting in 15 enemy KIA (probable). On D plus 4, based upon intelligence provided by ARVN advisors, the BLT was in the process of encircling a suspected enemy battalion size force. H/2/3 was landed first and made contact with an unknown enemy unit. Due to the priority of the mission at Khe Sanh, contact was broken.

(2) Helicopter pilots reported receiving small arms fire on eleven occasions, but no hits were recorded.

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(3) During Phase I of BEACON STAR there were 17 enemy KIA (probable). 50 detainees were interrogated, resulting in 2 detainees being sent to the 3rd Marine Division CP for further interrogation.

f. Weather. The objective area is in the transitional period between the northeast-southwest monsoon seasons. April is the period of least cloudiness, highest ceiling and highest visibility. Although the weather was cloudy to partly cloudy with light rain showers, it had no adverse effects on helicopter operations.

5. Mission. The mission of the SLF was to conduct a heloborne and waterborne amphibious assault landing into Landing Zones Jay and Wren and over Red Beach; to conduct search and destroy operations in assigned areas; to conduct other operations as agreed upon with CG III MAF; and upon completion of mission, or on order, to conduct a tactical amphibious withdrawal.

6. Concept of Operations. Operation BEACON STAR was a unilateral amphibious operation conducted by the ARG/SLF. The operation was planned as a search and destroy operation utilizing both waterborne and heloborne assault landings. Initially the inherent mobility of the SLF was used to insure a rapid build-up of combat power ashore, thereby gaining surprise and shock action. The operation was to be conducted in two phases: (1) amphibious heloborne and waterborne assault and establishment of blocking positions to prevent exfiltration; and (2) a systematic, deliberate and diligent search of assigned sectors. To facilitate control and coordination of maneuvering elements the area was divided initially into three sectors--Orange, Purple and Blue. Later, Sectors Black and Red were established. Maximum reliance was placed on the use of all supporting arms. To insure maximum surprise, beach and landing zone preparatory fires were planned but placed "on call", and L-Hour was scheduled at first light and timed so that the first helo wave landed while the ARG shipping was out of sight of land. Commencing D plus 1, SLF conducted operations so as to be capable of providing immediate support to Operation SHAWNEE, if required.

#### 7. Execution

a. Operation BEACON STAR Phase I was executed in accordance with CTG 79.5 OPLAN 120A-67, supplemented by a Frag Order published for this specific operation.

b. D-Day was established as 22 April 1967, with L-Hour at 0700 and H-Hour at 0900. Low ceilings and the late arrival of armed UH-1E augmentation necessitated delaying L-Hour and H-Hour to 0800 and 1000.

c. By nightfall on D-Day, three companies and the 105mm artillery battery of BLT 2/3 were ashore with blocking positions established at major routes of egress from the objective area. The SLF was prepared to conduct deliberate search and destroy operations in its assigned area.

3 Enclosure (1)

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at first light on D plus 1. (See enclosures (2) through (4) for details of execution).

8. Results. See enclosures (2) and (3).

9. Commanders Analysis This analysis is limited to those matters at the SLF level. BLT and Squadron Commander's analysis are contained in their respective reports, enclosure (2) and (3).

a. Planning

(1) On 11 April the ARG/SLF had arrived at Okinawa to offload BLT 3/4 and embark BLT 2/3. BLT 2/3 was embarked on ARG shipping by 14 April, the next day was the HILLTOP VII rehearsal, and the HILLTOP landing was conducted on 16 April.

(2) COMUSMACV determined that there was a significant build-up of enemy forces in the northern ICTZ, requiring employment of the SLF to support in-country forces.

(3) CINCPACFLT directed positioning of one ARG/SLF on a 24 hour reaction time and one ARG/SLF on a 96 hour reaction time, prepared for immediate commitment in ICTZ in response to a request by COMUSMACV (CINCPACFLT message 160457Z April 1967). CTF 76 directed CTG 76.5/79.5 to backload from the HILLTOP VII Exercise as soon as possible and to proceed to station off the northern ICTZ (CTF 76 message 161534Z April 1967, received at 170130I April 1967).

(4) CTG 79.5 and staff planners departed Okinawa by air on 17 April for Da Nang. Planning commenced 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. The next two days devoted to planning were spent at 3d Marine Division located at Phu Bai. Upon return to III MAF Headquarters final conferences were held.

(5) In addition to the requirement for a search and destroy mission against enemy units in the coastal area of Huong Dien District, CG III MAF proposed that the SLF be available for rapid deployment in support of Operation SHAWNEE, a search and destroy operation in Base Area 114 (vicinity YD465180).

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

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

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(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.

(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.

(h) Arrangements were made for psychological warfare operations, including employment of an Armed Propaganda Team, loudspeaker teams, and an awards-incentive program of cash payments for disclosures of enemy activities.

(i) The feasibility of a limited civic action program was discussed.

(j) Arrangements were made for a district representative to be present physically in SACC/FSCC during the operation.

(k) Liaison requirements were discussed and it was agreed that the SLF would maintain a liaison officer at 3rd Marine Division.

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

b. Intelligence. Prior to BEACON STAR, arrangements were made for maps, area studies, aerial photography, daily intelligence summaries, ITT personnel and support for handling civilian detainees.

(1) Area studies were provided by MACV, III MAF, and G-2, 3rd Marine Division. 3rd Marine Division provided an ITT team and an Armed Propaganda Team. Aerial photography was provided by the 1st MAW. Intelligence summaries were provided daily from III MAF and 3rd Marine Division. G-2, 3rd Marine Division provided maps.

(2) Previous intelligence indicated elements of the 6th NVA Regiment and the 810th and 814th Main Force Battalions were located in

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the area. Due to the short period of operation and the enemy's ability to avoid contact, none of the above units were identified.

(3) An intelligence estimate of Base Area 114, prepared by G-2, 3rd Marine Division, was obtained for planning in support of Operation SHAWNEE, if required by the situation.

c. Command Relationships. Operation BEACON STAR was a unilateral amphibious operation with command relationships in accordance with NWP-22(A). During Phase I, OPCON of the SLF was passed to CG III MAF at 241600H April 1967. CG III MAF passed OPCON to 3rd Marine Division, who in turn passed it to 3rd Marines at 261200H April 1967.

d. Supporting Arms.

(1) The concept for the employment of supporting arms for the initial landing in BEACON STAR Phase I was unique from that employed on previous SLF operations. On this operation maximum tactical surprise was achieved. The helicopterborne assault waves were launched from the LPH approximately 15 miles to sea, out of sight of land. The landing zone prep was on call with a TAC(A) and two fixed wing aircraft on station. The NGF support ship was also out of sight of land and after the first helo assault wave landed the NGF support ship then proceeded to the assigned fire support area, prepared to provide additional fire support.

(2) Control and coordination of supporting arms were passed ashore at 1600 on 24 April 1967. The SLF FSC moved ashore and set up with the BLT FSCC. Upon order to displace to Khe Sanh, the FSC moved with the battalion CP and upon arrival was made available to the SOP Khe Sanh for assignment as the FSC at that headquarters.

e. Logistics

(1) Prior to commencement of Operation BEACON STAR Phase I, liaison was established with CG Third Marine Division, Force Logistic Support Group "A", and the CO 4th Marines, to coordinate logistical support requirements. Logistic support during Phase I was provided entirely from the assets of the SLF. All supplies were delivered directly to units ashore by direct support helos assigned to the SLF.

(2) Beginning on D plus 4, Classes I, III and V supplies were to have been provided by forces ashore from in-country assets located at the LSA controlled by the 4th Marines. However, BEACON STAR Phase I was terminated on D plus 4.

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(3) During the four day period, approximately 49 short tons of supplies were provided from ARG shipping. Of total supplies expended, 22 short tons consisted of Class V Ammunition, the greatest portion of which was supplied to the landing force on D plus 1 to fill basic allowance shortages. Logistic support to the BLT was adequate and responsive to requirements.

f. Communications

(1) Radio communications during Phase I were very satisfactory. Frequency assignments were simplified since the BLT did not require an extensive number of air-ground compatible frequencies (30.0 MCS to 51.9 MCS) on the tactical circuits. Prior to the operation, BLT 2/3 was instructed to activate immediately the Landing Zone Control Net and to establish communications whenever a helicopter approached the company positions. This procedure greatly reduced the requirement for frequencies in a specific range and has allowed for greater flexibility in the acquisition and assignment of VHF frequencies.

(2) Little difficulty was encountered in the installation and operation of radio relay. However the TCC-3 (Multiplex Equipment) was not operating at peak efficiency; it did not indicate a definite malfunction other than weak transmit and receive signals, which were attributed to other factors. These difficulties did not prevent the complete installation of a radio relay system into 3rd Marine Division CP.

g. Special Augmentation.

(1) The SLF was augmented by two armed UH1E helicopters. The value of the armed UH1E helicopter for troop and medevac escort, suppressive fires, and other support missions has been clearly demonstrated in previous operations and was confirmed during this operation.

(2) Effective employment of UH1E helicopters requires adequate briefing of pilots. Two armed and two unarmed UH1E helicopters were requested to arrive on board the LPH the evening of D-1 for briefing on employment during the operation (CTG 76.5 message 201400Z April 1967). The two armed UH1E helicopters did not arrive until five minutes prior to the scheduled L-Hour on D-Day. The requirement to thoroughly brief the pilots delayed L-Hour for one hour.

(3) The SLF also requires the unarmed UH1E helicopter for command and control, TAO, and TAC(A). The use of a CH-46 for command and control missions is considered a misdeployment of transport helicopters.

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h. Civic Action. Due to the short duration of Phase I and upon the recommendation of G-5, 3rd Marine Division, no civic action program was conducted.

i. Psychological Operations. Psychological operations were conducted by the SLF. Troop units were disciplined and well-behaved, respecting the rights and properties of the populace. Two Beach Jumper Teams, each consisting of one officer and four enlisted, went ashore on D-Day with the two assault companies. The teams, equipped with a portable loudspeaker system and accompanied by an ARVN interpreter, made live broadcasts in the villages of Dai Loc, Ke Mon, and Vinh Xuong to approximately 1200 people. The broadcasts announced curfew regulations, told the villagers of Dai Loc that a 60mm mortar rigged with a surprise firing device was destroyed for their protection, and warned villagers to turn in weapons and Viet Cong. Approximately 300,000 leaflets were released over a four day period, varying from Chieu Hoi (open arms) to warning of our overwhelming firepower.

j. Readiness of the SLF

(1) The SLF is embarked upon SEVENTHFLT shipping, prepared to fulfill any amphibious contingency which may arise within the SEVENTHFLT area of responsibility. Continuous emphasis has been placed on training, personnel, supply and equipment readiness.

(2) This readiness posture was clearly demonstrated in the planning and execution of Operation BEACON STAR. BLT 2/3 was embarked for the first time upon ARG shipping on 14 April 1967. On 16 April the SLF commenced Exercise HILLTOP VII on Okinawa. Upon receipt of CTF 76 message directing backload, the BLT was immediately withdrawn. On 17 April 1967 the ARG/SLF got underway and at 200800I April 1967 was in position off northern ICTZ, less than 79 hours after receipt of CTF 76 message. In the meantime, CTG 79.5 and representatives of CTG 76.5 had departed Kadena AFB, Okinawa, and arrived Da Nang, Vietnam, and completed planning by 20Apr67.

(3) The responsiveness of the SLF was further demonstrated by the rapid repositioning of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines (-) (rein) from Thua Thien Province to Khe Sanh in northern Quang Tri Province. At 260830H April 1967, CTG 79.5 received a warning order from CG, 3rd Marine Division to move elements of BLT 2/3 (Command Group Alpha, 3 rifle companies, and 81mm mortar platoon) by air to Khe Sanh. Movement commenced immediately by helolift to Phu Bai and by KC-130 aircraft from Phu Bai to Khe Sanh. At 261430H April 1967, 2/3 moved out to attack Hill 861.



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PART II: COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT, OPERATION BEACON STAR PHASE II

Map Reference: Vietnam, AMS Series L7014 1:50,000, Sheets 6342 I, II, III and IV.

1. Operation BEACON STAR Phase I concluded with the movement of 2nd Battalion 3rd Marines (-) (rein) to Khe Sanh by air. Phase II commenced at 262400H April 1967.

2. During Operation BEACON STAR Phase II, OPCON of the 2nd Battalion 3rd Marines (-) (Rein) was passed to CO 3rd Marines, designated as SOP 3rd Marine Division/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh (SOP Khe Sanh). The battalion conducted search and clear operations northwest of Khe Sanh. An estimated NVA regiment poised for an attack on Khe Sanh had been engaged by Marine units on Hill 861 to the north of Khe Sanh. When additional forces were required, the SLF battalion was moved to Khe Sanh. The battalion seized and defended critical terrain to the north of Khe Sanh (Hill 861 and Hill 881 N) and conducted long range company size patrols. In addition, at the commencement of Phase II members of the SLF Headquarters augmented the staff of SOP Khe Sanh. The rapid reaction of the battalion and the resourcefulness of the SLF Staff played a significant role in preventing an attack on Khe Sanh and inflicting heavy casualties on first line NVA forces.

3. Intelligence

a. Terrain.

(1) General. From the west, the mountains run along a northwest-southeast access which is coincidental with the general alignment of the Laotian border and the eastern coast. The Khe Sanh area is made up of rolling plains, with local reliefs upland less than 500 meters and deep valleys flanked by high reliefs and graduating north into hills of less than 1000 meters. Elephant grass grows to a height of five to ten feet on hilltops and slopes. Dense vegetation is found on the lower slopes and ravines.

b. Enemy Situation.

(1) Composition.

(a) Ground. Enemy ground units in the objective area have been identified as the 4th and 8th Battalions of the 95th Regiment, 325th Division (NVA). This division was not listed in the current Periodic Intelligence Report of III MAF. A prisoner indicated that the 18th Regiment was so badly mauled it withdrew to its base in Laos.

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c. Order of Battle.

- (1) 95th Regiment, 325th Division (NVA) (95th Regiment relieved  
Location: Vicinity XD7944 18th Regiment on 2 May 1967)
- (2) 18th Regiment, 325th Division (NVA)  
Location: Vicinity XD7944

d. The above units were equipped with 60mm mortars, 82mm mortars, 76mm recoilless rifles, sniper rifles, automatic weapons and small arms.

e. Enemy Contact.

(1) Phase II was characterized by contact with an enemy who fought tenaciously from well constructed bunkers and camouflaged trenches, spider holes and tunnels. On 27, 28, and 29 April, the battalion received 60mm and 82mm mortar fire and periodic small arms fire. On 30 April, E/2/3 and H/2/3 engaged enemy platoon size units, inflicting heavy casualties. On 3 May, E/2/3 made contact with an estimated two NVA companies, employing automatic weapons, grenades, small arms fire and 60mm and 82mm mortars. 3 wounded enemy were captured. On 5 May an AO observed one NVA waving a white flag at XD 786460; a CH-46 helicopter from HMM 164 supported by two armed UH1E helicopters landed and picked him up. After light contact from 6 through 10 May, F/2/3 made heavy contact with an estimated enemy company. E/2/3 discovered 203 enemy graves at XD 746463. On 11 May, one NVA surrendered to G/2/3 at XD 772458.

(2) Helicopter pilots reported receiving fire on 18 occasions. In an attempted recon extraction, one CH-46 received 38 hits and another received 48 hits, from small arms and .50 cal machine gun fire.

(3) Bunkers were constructed of logs and earth and connected with trenches and fighting holes. Sleeping bunkers were located in ravines and on reverse slopes. Surprise firing devices on abandoned bunkers were rigged with two Chicom grenades tied across the front of the entrance.

(4) The enemy delivered accurate small arms and sniper fire. They extensively employed a sniper version of the Soviet 7.62 rifle ML891/30 equipped with a 3.5 power telescope. They were selective in their targets and concentrated on unit leaders, radio operators, machine gunners and other crew-served weapons personnel.

(5) During Phase II, 469 enemy were killed (body count), 134 enemy were killed (probable), and four NVA prisoners were captured and one rallier detained.

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4. Mission. The mission was to conduct search and clear operations in the high ground northwest of Khe Sanh to prevent an attack on Khe Sanh and to destroy enemy forces and installations.

5. Concept of Operations. The concept of operations for Phase II called for the repositioning of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines (-) (Rein) from Huong Dien District, Thua Thien Province, to Khe Sanh, northwestern Quang Tri Province. 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines then conducted offensive operations as part of forces already in contact with an estimated enemy regiment in the area northwest of Khe Sanh. Members of the SLF Headquarters augmented the staff of SOF, 3rd Marine Division/III MAF Rep, Khe Sanh. HMM 164 provided additional helicopter support. Maximum reliance was placed upon all supporting arms, particularly close air support.

6. Execution.

a. Operation BEACON STAR Phase II was executed in accordance with 3rd Marine Division Warning Order dated 260830H April 1967 and subsequent frag orders.

b. Upon receipt of 3rd Marine Division Warning Order, Command Group Alpha, three rifle companies, and the 81mm mortar platoon were moved from the LZs in the Phase I area of operations to Phu Bai by helicopters and from Phu Bai to Khe Sanh by KC-130 fixed wing aircraft. The battalion repelled a major enemy attack, seized Hills 861 and 881N, and conducted long range company-size combat patrols. Heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy, fortifications were destroyed, and materiel captured.

c. At 101700H May 1967, CTG 79.5 was notified that relief of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines by another battalion would commence 11 May 1967. Since withdrawal was to be conducted expeditiously and involved movement over a considerable distance, CG, 3rd Marine Division, CATF, and CLF agreed that the move would be administrative. And since withdrawal was through an area where in-country forces controlled and coordinated all supporting arms, it was also agreed that the SLF would remain under OPCON of CG 3rd Marine Division. Withdrawal was by helo-lift to Khe Sanh, by KC-130 to Dong Ha, and by landing craft to ARG shipping. On completion backloading, CG, 3rd Marine Division chopped SLF to CG, III MAF, and CG, III MAF further chopped SLF to CATF, effective 121800H May 1967. At this time the SLF was reconstituted and Operation BEACON STAR was terminated.

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

8. Commander's Analysis. This analysis is limited to operations during Phase II.

11

Enclosure

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a. Planning

(1) As operations during Phase I proceeded, CTG 79.5 maintained close and continuous contact with CG, 3rd Marine Division by daily staff visits to Phu Bai. When the requirement arose for commitment of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines (-) (Rein) in the Khe Sanh area, CTG 79.5 conferred with CG, 3rd Marine Division and CO, 3rd Marines for the expeditious movement of the battalion.

(2) Due to the rapidly changing situation in the Khe Sanh area, the planning period for Phase II was extremely limited. However, since the concept for Phase I required the SLF to maintain a readiness posture to support Operation SHAWNEE the rapid repositioning of the battalion presented no problem.

(3) Plans were also made to augment the staff of SOP Khe Sanh with personnel from SLF Headquarters. This facilitated close and effective coordination and planning.

b. Intelligence

(1) Planning. Prior to Phase II, current OOB and maps were obtained from G-2, 3rd Marine Division and arrangements made for daily intelligence summaries. Initial intelligence was that units of an unknown NVA Division had inflicted heavy casualties on Marine units northwest of Khe Sanh. S-2, SOP Rep Khe Sanh provided the location of contacts and an overlay of trails in the area. S-2, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines provided on-the-spot intelligence.

(2) Intelligence Net. When the battalion was committed to the Khe Sanh area, SOP, 3rd Marine Division/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh provided the intelligence section with a PRC-25 radio. The radio netted with the SOP Khe Sanh Rep S-2, effectively establishing an Intelligence Net. Since the BLT Tactical Net bears heavy traffic during an engagement, intelligence information is often subordinated to priority traffic. This net proved invaluable in the rapid transmission of data and intelligence between the BLT CP and SOP Khe Sanh CP. An example is the processing of information obtained from a prisoner who gave a regimental CP location. Within one hour after capture and within fifteen minutes after the prisoner revealed the location, an air strike was directed against the target, revealing an extensive tunnel system.

c. Command Relationships. At 261200H April 1967, CG 3rd Marine Division passed OPCON of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines (-) (Rein) to CO, 3rd Marines (CG 3rd Marine Division message 260655Z April 1967). At 271400H April 1967 OPCON of B Battery, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines was passed to CO, 12th Marines (CTG 79.5 270347Z April 1967). For withdrawal refer paragraph 6.c.

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d. Supporting Arms. On 26 April 1967 the SLF Fire Support coordinator was assigned to the FSCC at Khe Sanh. Fire support for two Marine battalions, a Special Forces Unit, and a CAC Unit was supplied by aircraft from the 1st Marine Air Wing, 2-105mm howitzer batteries, a platoon of 155mm howitzers, and three 4.2" mortars. To support the concept and scheme of maneuver, a 105 battery was assigned in direct support of each Marine battalion while the platoon of 155 howitzers and the 4.2" mortars were assigned in general support. During this 10-day operation, over 20,000 artillery rounds were delivered in support of the combat forces while over 3 million pounds of aviation ordnance were expended by close support aircraft. Deep support targets were struck by the delivery of 19 ARC Light Strikes, 72 TPQ-10 Strikes, and 8 CBU Strikes. The combined firepower of the artillery and air support, both close and deep support, was outstanding. The close coordination required with supporting arms proved once again the adequacy of our doctrine for coordination.

e. Logistics

(1) During Phase II, total resupply was accomplished by the LSA located at Khe Sanh.

(2) Casualty evacuation of battalion personnel was coordinated through the facilities at Khe Sanh. Casualty reporting for SLF units was accomplished by the SLF CRCC. Liaison was established at medical facilities at Khe Sanh and Dong Ha in order to assist in expediting reports of casualties to the SLF CRCC located aboard the LPH. In addition, liaison visits were made to "A" Medical Company at Phu Bai in order to insure current and complete accounting of all casualties. Where possible, all battalion casualties were evacuated directly to the LPH for treatment, hospitalization, and further evacuation as required.

f. Communications

(1) It was planned to install an MRC-62 at Dong Ha for communications between the ship and an existing radio relay/wire system at Dong Ha. However, a liaison visit revealed that a system already existed between Dong Ha and the mouth of the Cua Viet River and that it would be more feasible to place the MRC-62 at that location and enter the existing relay system. This was considered to be the best method because of the distance between the ship and Dong Ha.

(2) Although slow, due to the many switching centrals involved in placing telephone calls, radio relay was reliable and effective in allowing SLF representatives at Khe Sanh and Dong Ha to provide information for situation reports, spot reports, position reports, and casualty reporting and other administrative information to the SLF Headquarters.

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(2) Covered voice radio communications (KY-8 Nester Crypto System) were used extensively during Phase I and II, on 3rd Marine Division Tactical Net, to exchange classified traffic between 3rd Marine Division, SLF, and SLF representatives at Khe Sanh.

g. Psychological Operations During Phase II, no civilian population was encountered in the Khe Sanh area. Psychological operations were directed against organized regular NVA units. Two Beach Jumper Teams were again employed with the BLT. Since initial operations in Phase II involved heavy combat in the assault and seizure of specific objectives, the teams did not join the battalion until 5 May 1967. An NVA who had surrendered on 5 May indicated, upon interrogation, that there were others who desired to surrender. Pre-recorded tapes provided by JUSPAO were broadcast from Hill 881, with themes stressing the futility of NVA war efforts and urging the NVA to surrender. Approximately 450,000 leaflets of various psy war themes were released over the area of operations.

h. Civic Action The absence of civilian population precluded a civic action program.

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HEADQUARTERS  
Battalion Landing Team 2/3  
APO San Francisco 96602

2nd BN, 3rd MAR, S & C  
CONTROL NO. 00179-67  
COPY NO. 51 OF 150  
05/330/72  
3000  
17 May 1967  
Ser No 0016-67

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

Subj: Combat After Action Report (Operation Beacon Star)

Ref: (a) VICTORY, AHS Series L7014, 1:50,000; Sheets 6442 I, II, III, IV; 6342 III; 6342 III.  
(b) CTG 79.5 Operation Plan 120A-67

Encls: (1) Overlay of operation, Phase I  
(2) Overlay of operation, Phase II  
(3) Sketch of Surprise Firing Device

1. Operation BEACON STAR.

2. Dates of Operation

- a. Phase I Operation BEACON STAR, 22 April - 26 April 1967  
b. Phase II Operation BEACON STAR, 27 April - 12 May 1967

3. Location

a. Phase I was conducted in Huong Dien District, Thua Thien Province and Hai Lang District, Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam.

b. Phase II was conducted in the Huong Hoa District, Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam.

4. Task Organization

HT 2/3

Lt Col DELONG

H & S Co (-) (Rein)  
Det, Hq Bn, 3rd Mar Div  
Det, Hq Co, 3rd Mar  
Det, B Btry (Rein), 1st Bn, 12th Mar  
Det 15th Dental Co  
2nd Clearing Plat (Rein), Co B, 3rd Med Bn  
1st Plat (-) (Rein), Co A, 3rd Hqr Bn  
1st Plt (Rein), Co C, 3rd HT Bn

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Appendix (5)

82T 2/3  
220 Apr - 12 May 67

1st Plat (-) (Rein), Co C, 3rd SP Bn  
Det, LSU, For Log Cmd

Co E (Rein)

Capt LYON

Co E

Det, H &amp; S Co

1st Sec, 81mm Mort Plat

FAC Tm

Det, Med Plat

Det, Intel Sec

Det, B Btry (Rein), 1st Bn 12th Mar

1st Sqd, 1st Plat (Rein), Co A, 3rd Engr Bn

Det, 1st Plat (Rein), Co C, 3rd SP Bn

Co F (Rein)

Capt SORENSON

Co F

Det, H &amp; S Co

2nd Sec, 81mm Mort Plat

FAC Tm

Det, Med Plat

Det, Intel Sec

Det, B Btry (Rein), 1st Bn, 12th Mar

2nd Sqd, 1st Plat (Rein), Co A, 3rd Engr Bn

Det, 1st Plat (Rein), Co C, 3rd SP Bn

Co H (Rein)

Capt MADONNA

Co H

Det, H &amp; S Co

4th Sec, 81mm Mort Plat

FAC Tm

Det, Med Plat

Det, Intel Sec

Det, B Btry (Rein), 1st Bn, 12th Mar

3rd Sqd, 1st Plat (Rein), Co A, 3rd Engr Bn

Det, 1st Plat (Rein), Co C, 3rd SP Bn

106mm RR Plat

2ndLt EIMS

B Btry (-) (Rein), 1st Bn, 12th Mar

Capt ROSS

3rd Plat (Rein), Co B, 1st AMTRAC Bn

2ndLt RUSH

3rd Plat, Co B

Det, H &amp; S Co, 1st AMTRAC Bn

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

2ndLt LAWLER

2nd Plat, Co A

Det, H &amp; S Co, 3rd AT Bn

3rd Plat, Co B, 3rd Recon Bn

2ndLt CARRIGAN

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

2ndLt O'NEIL

2nd Plat, Co A

Det, H & S Co, 3rd Tank Bn

BLT Reserve (Initially)

Capt SHEEHAN

Co G (Rein)

Co G

Det, H & S Co

3rd Sec, 81mm Mort Plat

Det, Med Plat

Det, Intel Sec

Det, B Btry (Rein), 1st Bn, 12th Mar

##### 5. Supporting Forces

a. The variety and quantity of supporting forces available during Operation BEACON STAR were those normally task organized to a BLT, and those assigned missions of general and direct support of a BLT. Air, artillery, naval gunfire, and engineer units all played an important part in the execution of BEACON STAR and contributed to the overall success of the operation.

b. Tank and anti-tank units were not employed in either phase of the operation due to the nature of the terrain in both operating areas. Amphibian tractors, LVTP-5, were utilized during the ship to shore movement and, thereafter, to displace the 105mm howitzer battery to a new firing position in Phase I.

c. The BLT was not afforded the support of a 107mm mortar battery. The absence of this support necessitated a movement of the 105mm howitzer battery from an LSD to an LPD to facilitate an artillery ship-to-shore movement by waterborne or helicopterborne means. This resulted in separating 105mm howitzers from their prime movers afloat and splitting firing battery personnel between two ships. The presence of a 107mm mortar battery particularly during Phase II would have added appreciably to the combat support of the battalion. Such a battery could have been transported by air to KHE SANH with the forward elements of the battalion. On arrival in the Phase II AO, only one 105mm howitzer battery was supporting two infantry battalions.

d. The operation of the FSOC was in accordance with current doctrine and no unusual problems were encountered. CAS and artillery were used extensively during Phase II and the only means of resupply available to the battalion during both phases was by helicopter. These two situations required the utmost supervision and coordination of operations within the FSOC by all supporting arms representatives.

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e. Each assault rifle company was provided close combat engineer support for the destruction of fortifications. The employment of engineer support in Phase II was particularly effective in the destruction of enemy reinforced bunkers and friendly bomb duds which were uncovered as the battalion moved forward in its assigned portion of the AO.

f. Air Support. Air support was utilized in both phases of BEACON STAR. During Phase I, fixed wing fighter attack aircraft and UH-1E gunships from 1st MAW provided CAS. Rotary wing support was provided by HMM-164 and other CH-46s and H-34s from 1st MAW. On occasion, Army UH-1E's were utilized through the cooperation of the local ARVN advisors. Rotary wing support during Phase I was considered to be adequate. CAS during this phase was readily available, accurate and timely. During Phase II, CAS was provided by 1st MAW and Air Force squadrons which provided both fixed wing and UH-1E gunships. CAS was used extensively during this phase due to the large number of targets which lent themselves to this type of support. CAS was highly effective and contributed immeasurably to the success of Phase II. Control of CAS during this phase was provided by the battalion ALO, FAC Teams attached to rifle companies and TAC (A). The consistent on station availability of the TAC (A) provided the battalion with timely target intelligence which enabled it to schedule effective preparation fires against known and suspected enemy positions. The battalion utilized flare ships extensively during the hours of darkness. The employment of C-47 Vulcan Mini-guns (Spooky) on known and suspected enemy positions proved to be highly successful on two occasions.

No 11 Helicopter support was adequate in both phases. The ship to shore helicopterborne movement during Phase I went smoothly. However, the withdrawal of helos on D+1 and D+2 in support of Operation SHAWNEE, materially hampered mobility and the withdrawal of two companies (-) from engagement with the enemy, when the battalion (-) was ordered to another AO to commence Phase II, was executed rather slowly due to the limited availability of CH-46's. Helicopters were the only means of logistics support during both phases of BEACON STAR. This support was considered to be excellent particularly in view of the wide separation of the supported units, the limited number of helicopters available, and the timely coordination which had to be maintained among supporting arms.

Communications was satisfactory in general. During Phase I, no communication problems arose in conjunction with air support. During Phase II, a heavy volume of traffic was passed on both the TAR and TAD nets. Due to the unavailability of a LZ Control Net, the TAR net was used by ground units to direct resupply helicopters

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to their positions. The communication situation was further complicated by the fact that two battalions utilized the same TAR and TAB nets. The initial confusion which arose from this complex situation was alleviated to a certain degree by the excellent coordination of the Command Group located at KHE SANH.

g. Artillery

(1) Phase I. "B" Btry (-) (Rein), 1st Bn, 12th Mar landed on D-Day by LVTP-5 in direct support of BLT 2/3. Initial supply of ammunition carried ashore in LVTs was adequate to support operations ashore. LVTs were used as prime movers for the battery when it displaced to a new firing position to support operation further inland. All missions fired in support of ground units were on call in compliance with standare rules of engagement.

(2) Phase II. On arrival in the Phase II AO, 2nd Battalion (-) (Rein), 3rd Marines was initially supported by "F" Btry, 2nd Bn, 12th Mar. "B" Btry, 1st Bn, 12th Mar arrived at KHE SANH and was CHOPPED OPCON to the 12th Marines 271400H. As combat support forces built up in KHE SANH, "F" Btry, 2nd Bn, 12th Mar was reinforced with two 155mm howitzers and three 4.2mm mortars. In addition, the battalion received reinforcing 175mm fires from Army units located at GIO LINH. All units provided accurate and timely preparation fires in support of advancing ground units. Harrassing and interdicting fires were used extensively along likely avenues of approach and along suspected routes of enemy retirement reported by TAC (A). Counter-mortar fire against enemy 61mm and 82mm mortar fire directed against the battalion proved to be highly successful on two particular occasions. There were three occasions when the battalion received friendly artillery fire in or near its positions from "short rounds". These incidents were investigated and were found to be the result of faulty ammunition. Overall, the support rendered by all artillery units was considered to be excellent.

h. Naval Gunfire Support:

(1) Phase I. Naval Gunfire support was provided by CTG 70.8 during this phase. No LZ preparation or beach neutralization missions were fired; however, this support was available on call. The same situation which applied to artillery support during this phase was applicable to naval gunfire. Strict adherence to the rules of engagement was paramount.

(2) Phase II. No naval gunfire support was utilized during Phase II due to the inland distance of the AO from fire support areas.

i. Recapitulation of Air, Naval Gunfire and Artillery

(1) Phase I. The amount of supporting arms employed during this phase was minimal due to the nature of the AOA and the frequency in which the BLT made contact with the enemy. The presence

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of a large number of villages and the necessity of adhering strictly to the rules of engagement reduced request for on call support considerably. One artillery mission was fired (15 rounds); one naval gunfire illumination mission was fired (21 rounds and two air strikes were requested (8 napalm, 12 - 250 lb bombs, 14 rockets, 400 rounds of 20mm).

(2) Phase II. A variety of air ordnance was dropped in support of the battalion during this phase which included 2000, 1000, 750, 500, and 250 lb bombs; napalm, rockets, 20mm, and 7.62mm (vulcan miniguns). A total of 1,050 tons of air ordnance was used. Artillery support included 175mm, 155mm, 105mm and 4.2 mortar fire of mixed type (HE, WP, SMOKE, ILLUM). A total of 9091 rounds were fired in support of the battalion.

#### 6. INTELLIGENCE

##### a. Enemy Strength and Situation - Prior to Operation Beacon Star

##### (1) Phase I

(a) Enemy Situation. The area of operation was classified as a major VC stronghold and resupply area. The enemy was expected to move additional troops into the lowlands to collect the Spring rice harvest.

(b) Enemy Strength. Insurgent forces committed in the area of operation were identified as follows:

##### i. 800th Bn, 6th Regiment

Strength: Approx 311

Weapons: 60mm and 82mm mortars, 57mm RR, automatic wpns and individual small arms.

Location: YD 602309

##### ii. 802 Bn, 6th Regiment

Strength: Approx 400

Weapons: 60mm and 82mm mortars, 57mm RR, automatic wpns and individual small arms.

Location: YD 558238

##### iii. 810th Main Force Battalion

Strength: Approx 300

Weapons: 60mm and 82mm mortars, 57mm RR, automatic wpns and individual small arms.

Location: YD 643302

##### iv. 814th Main Force Battalion

Strength: Approx 493

Weapons: 60mm and 82mm mortars, 57mm RR, automatic wpns and individual small arms.

Location: YD 408402

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(c) Enemy Capabilities. It was generally anticipated that the enemy would avoid contact. If contact was initiated by the enemy he would do so at his own discretion, utilizing all military advantages favorable to him. He was expected to mine landing zones and avenues of approach in and near his installations and facilities. It was determined that it would be unlikely that the enemy would defend or attack in any strength. In so doing he would have to mass his troops, thereby exposing them to friendly supporting arms.

(2) Phase II

(a) Enemy Situation. As a result of stiff resistance encountered by other friendly forces in the operation area prior to arrival of 2nd Bn (-) (Rein), 3rd Marines, it was determined that the enemy had infiltrated the KHE SANH area in large numbers in the days just prior to this operation. The enemy had fortified the high ground west of the airfield and appeared to be preparing for an attack on KHE SANH. It was learned that the enemy was rapidly infiltrating troops and supplies into the area west of KHE SANH, and by his stiff resistance, he indicated his intentions to retain ~~the~~ critical terrain features overlooking the airfield.

(b) Enemy Strength. Enemy forces located in the operational area were identified as follows:

i. 18th Regiment, 325th Div

Strength: Unknown

Weapons: 75mm RR, 82mm, 120mm and 60mm

mortars, 50 cal MG, and individual small arms.

Location: Throughout objective area

ii. 95th Regiment, 325th Division

Strength: Unknown

Weapons: Same as above

Location: Same as above (The 95th Reg relieved the 18th Reg on 2 May 1967)

(c) Enemy Capabilities. The enemy was expected to heavily defend the high ground located at YD 803443 (Hill 861) and the area northwest toward the Laotian Border. It was anticipated that he would make his defensive stand on terrain that would favor his purposes. He was expected to avoid massing his troops, to any degree, in order to avoid making them vulnerable to friendly supporting arms..

b. Enemy Strength and Situation - During Operation BEACON STAR.

(1) Phase I. Phase I was characterized by light contact. On D-Day the waterborne landing over Red Beach and the heliborne forces landing at LZ Wren and LZ Jay were unopposed. On D-Day plus 1, Company F received heavy small arms fire from YD 500540; Company F also received 60mm mortars and small arms fire from an estimated enemy platoon at YD 512518. An air strike was called resulting in 15 enemy KIA (probable). On D plus 2, Company G destroyed 17 punji

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pits at YD 517535 and Company H destroyed 20 punji pits at YD 514478. On D plus 3 Company E apprehended one detainee at YD 529552. On D plus 3 and D plus 4 units continued to receive light small arms fire. During withdrawal on D plus 4, Company H was in contact with an estimated enemy platoon. Due to the priority of the mission at KHE SANH, contact was broken. On D plus 4 an enemy mine was detonated at YD 516478 resulting in one friendly KIA in Company H. Helicopter pilots reported receiving small arms fire on 11 occasions, but no hits were recorded. There were 23 enemy KIA (probable), and 50 detainees were interrogated, resulting in 2 detainees being sent to the 3rd Marine Division CP for further interrogation.

(2) Phase II. On 26 April 1967 2nd Bn (-) (Rein), 3rd Marines was air lifted from PHU BAI to KHE SANH; night defenses were established at XD 812431 with no enemy contact. On 27 April 1967, the battalion remained in defensive positions at XD 812431 while Hill 861 was prepped by air and artillery fire. On 28 April 1967, after Regimental Objective 1 (Hill 861) was secured, Company E received 23 rounds of 82mm mortar from the vicinity of XD 799499 and destroyed 2 bunkers at XD 797435. On 29 April 1967 Company G found 100 fighting holes on Hill 861 vicinity XD 804443, one enemy KIA was reported and 25 bunkers were destroyed in vicinity of Hill 861 (XD 803443). On 30 April 1967 Company H engaged an enemy platoon at XD 793446, armed with automatic weapons; 81mm mortars, artillery and air strikes were called resulting in 28 enemy KIA (confirmed) and 15 enemy KIA (probable). Company E received fire from enemy in trenches at XD 780451, returned fire with small arms, automatic weapons, mortars and artillery resulting in 17 enemy KIA (confirmed) and 45 enemy KIA (probable). On 1 May 1967 Company G secured Battalion Objectives 1 and 2 with negative contact, destroying extensive bunker system at XD 785460. Company E received heavy small arms and enemy broke contact. Battalion CP and Company F received heavy small arms and 60mm mortar fire from XD 778451; artillery fire called with unknown results. Company G received heavy weapons and small arms fire from an estimated enemy squad in bunker at XD 778460; called artillery on enemy positions. On 3 May 1967, Company E made contact with estimated two enemy companies employing automatic weapons, grenades, small arms and mortars. Air and artillery was called on enemy positions resulting in 84 enemy KIA (confirmed), 70 enemy KIA (probable) and 3 POW's. Air strikes called on trenches and tunnel complex at XD 784446 resulted in 3 secondary explosions. On 4 May 1967 Company E engaged a platoon size unit at XD 786446. Enemy employed small arms, automatic weapons and hand grenades. Company E returned fire with small arms and automatic weapons resulting in 16 enemy KIA (confirmed) and 30 enemy KIA (probable). Company H, during sweep at XD 785445, discovered 8 enemy KIA. On 5 May 1967, TAC (A) observed 1 NVA waving white flag at XD 786460. Helicopter picked up NVA and returned him to KHE SANH for interrogation. Company F received sporadic fire from enemy bunkers at XD 775458,

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bunkers were destroyed resulting in 3 enemy KIA (confirmed) and 5 enemy KIA (probable). Company F received small arms fire from XD 775458, returned fire with small arms and organic supporting weapons resulting in 3 enemy KIA (confirmed). On 7 May 1967, the battalion destroyed 10 bunkers at XD 777462 - XD 765465. On 8 May 1967, Company E on search and destroy mission discovered 3 enemy KIA at XD 774466. Company F destroyed 10 bunkers at XD 770458. On 9 May 1967, a friendly patrol detonated a surprise firing device at XD 773455 resulting in 3 friendly WIAs. Fifty bunkers and several surprise firing devices were destroyed at XD 773455. On 10 May 1967, Company F received heavy small arms fire and grenades at XD 747473 from estimated enemy platoon. Company returned fire with automatic weapons, small arms, and organic weapons resulting in 25 enemy KIA (confirmed) and 35 enemy KIA (probable). Battalion CP at XD 750463 received small arms fire from XD 776473. A squad from Company engaged the enemy with small arms and grenades resulting in 6 enemy KIA (confirmed). Company F discovered 203 enemy graves at XD 750463. Company E made contact with company size unit at XD 740463. Enemy employed small arms, heavy automatic weapons and 61mm mortar fire. Company E returned fire with automatic weapons, 81mm mortars and 106 RR. Enemy broke contact. On 11 May 1967, one NVA surrendered to G Company at XD 772458. Helicopter pilots reported receiving fire on 18 separate occasions. D plus 14 two helicopters received intense small arms and .50 caliber machine gun fire from XD 757531. One helicopter recorded thirty eight hits and the other helicopter recorded forty eight hits resulting in one KIA and two WIA. Phase II terminated with no enemy contact.

c. Summary of Significant Enemy Activities

(1) It is significant to note that there was little indication that the NVA enemy within the objective area disturbed the bodies of friendly dead. Within few exceptions, there were no reports of enemy tampering with friendly KIAs, weapons, ammunition or personal effects.

(2) As is his custom, the enemy thoroughly policed the battle area in every case, except where there was insufficient time to accomplish this task. Generally, all bodies, expended brass, weapons, personal effects and other war materiel were recovered from the battle area. Maximum effort was given to the concealment of burial sites and every attempt was made to prevent the disclosure of the total number of casualties to friendly forces.

(3) The enemy aggressively defended certain selected pieces of terrain until he was killed. Many reports were received that even after serious injury, the NVA regular would continue to resist. He frequently occupied living bunkers and fighting holes and had to be overwhelmed with small arms and grenades until he ceased to resist. A conservative estimate would place the use of the Russian Model 1891 NAGENT Sniper Rifle at one out of every four weapons used to defend certain objectives within the Bn Sector. The enemy's tactic was to wait in his position (usually just inside a woodline

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or in elephant grass at the military crest) until the friendly assault wave was within 25 meters, then open up with sniper rifles and automatic weapons at point blank range. Most of the friendly KIA's were gunshot wounds in the head and chest. By using these tactics, the enemy presented a target that was difficult to see and extremely hard to hit with small arms fire. Grenades were relatively ineffective unless they were thrown directly in the hole or bunker with the enemy. The NVA would also, on occasion, open on friendly troops with sporadic sniper fire in an attempt to lure the friendly unit into an ambush. There was an indication in one case that the enemy, after having observed the forward elements of the friendly assault wave, moved from Hill 881 to previously prepared holes to intercept our forces on terrain that was more favorable to his defense. It would appear that the enemy prepared several defensive positions in order to have an option when our assault wave revealed its direction of attack.

(4) An incident of the enemy placing a U. S. M26 grenade in the head wound of a friendly KIA was revealed when the body reached the U. S. S. PRINCETON. Medical personnel found a pull string leading from the pin on the grenade and after investigation, successfully removed the grenade. This was one of the few reports of the enemy tampering with Marine dead.

(5) The enemy was well nourished and well equipped. He appeared to be somewhat larger in stature than the average Vietnamese male, as is characteristic of the NVA. He was well supplied with arms and ammunition and appeared to have sufficient food and clothing. He wore no helmet and was dressed in a canvas shoe with rubber soles (similar to a high top tennis shoe). Water was available to the enemy from the many mountain streams located in the objective area, which were clean and free from pollution. Ammunition, both high explosive and small arms, was clean and in new condition. Mortar fuzes were packed in vacuum packed cans and were of the point detonating variety. Two 75mm recoilless rifle rounds (CHICOM manufacture) were found at XD 786452. These two rounds were of very good quality and closely resembled US rounds of the same caliber. CHICOM reproductions of Russian hand grenades were found in small quantities.

(6) The objective area was interlaced with an extensive trail network that had obviously been used frequently. In most cases the trails were narrow (less than one meter wide) but one trail two to three meters in width ran from Hill 861 northwest toward the Laotian border for an undetermined distance.

(7) In every instance the NVA bodies discovered were stripped by Bn. personnel, including the shoes, in an effort to disclose intelligence material. Packs and personal equipment were also searched.

(8) Echo company reported that during the enemy attack of 3 May 1967, the NVA had to be shot from trees within the company

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perimeter. It was also reported that the enemy was observed throwing hand grenades on Marine wounded. Instances were recorded of the NVA calling for a Corpsman in English in an attempt to locate and kill our medical personnel.

(9) On occasion, the enemy was heard on battalion radio frequencies, but it is felt that this was coincidental and not an active attempt to monitor our nets.

(10) The demolition material found was of good quality and well designed. Non-electric blasting caps resembled the US Corps of Engineer special #8 non-electric cap. The electric caps were shorter and apparently less powerful than the US type. Demolition blocks were cast TNT in  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound blocks. One cylindrical cardboard container was found to contain flaked TNT. There was some indication that at least partial assembly of hand grenades took place in the field, by the presence of extra grenade fuzes and grenade filler blocks of cast TNT found in captured materials. There was little effort on the part of the NVA to install surprise firing devices. When they were used, they usually consisted of two CHICOM grenades with instantaneous pull friction fuzes joined by a trip wire. These were normally found at the entrance to bunkers, and appeared to have been set prior to withdrawal by the enemy.

(11) Bunkers were usually rectangular in shape with an "L" type entrance. Many were found to contain false floors, under which was concealed grenades, mortar rounds, ammo etc. The false floors were usually located near the narrow wall opposite the entrance end of the bunker. Floors were made of bamboo strips to place the occupants above any water seepage into the bunker. Roofs were made of logs and dirt, and were generally from one to three feet thick. Bunkers and fighting holes were almost all constructed to identical specifications.

(12) Medical supplies captured were small in quantity and of poor quality. Medical evacuation for enemy wounded necessitated long treks over mountainous terrain into LAOS, a distance of some 10-15 miles. It is believed that the NVA burn some of their wounded who cannot make the trip. This was evidenced by four charred skeletons found at XD 808434. Each of the bodies contained a single US hand grenade (burned out) within the skeleton. It is assumed that a volatile fluid was poured over the bodies and then the grenades were used to ignite them.

(13) There was some indication that elephants were being used by the NVA to carry heavy loads in the battalion objective area. Reports were received of the sighting of elephant tracks and dung in the area.

(14) No major communication equipment of any sort was captured during the operation. Two strand electric wire was found on Hill 861, this would indicate a possible land line system between bunkers and trenches.

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(15) It is significant to note that there were no reports of NVA officers, either among the KIAs or prisoners. Several NCOs were found among the dead. It is felt that the NVA gave particular attention to the disposal of officer's bodies if they existed.

(16) Interrogation of prisoners and ralliers, when handled by qualified ITT personnel, produced some intelligence of immediate tactical value.

(17) Night helicopter operations were seriously hampered by low clouds and fog after 1700 in the evening. The early morning hours were characterized by a rapid drop in temperature (75° minimum), with a gradual buildup as midday approached. Days were hot and humid with an average maximum temp of 82°, with thunderstorms and light showers in the afternoons and evenings.

(18) Several incidents were reported that the NVA were heard and seen to be moving in the Bn. area in the early evening hours. Grenades and small arms were brought to bear on these movements with apparent negative results, although one report was received that blood spoors were found after on such sighting. The enemy usually chose the evening for mortar attacks (2100 usually) and the early morning hours for infantry assault (0300 generally).

(19) All mortar attacks were with point detonating impact fuzes. There were no reports of VT or time fuzing. Additionally, the enemy did not use pyrotechnics or illumination. There were numerous reports of the sighting of lights to the west of the Bn. position. The source of these lights was unknown.

(20) Several CHICOM claymore type mines were found with command detonated fuzes (electric blasting caps fired by battery or magneto device). Many chicom grenades were captured. A test of the fuzes by qualified EOD personnel revealed a considerable variation in the burning time of the delay elements. These grenades should be considered unsafe under all circumstances by friendly troops. 60mm mortar increments were packed in a sealed can and were made of a double base propellant resembling ballistite. There were no reports of the use of mines in any form.

(21) Many CHICOM grenades with an instantaneous fuze were found. These were obviously designed to be used as ready made surprise firing devices. They resembled our US MK II fragmentation grenade with a pull friction fuze. It is important to note that this grenade has no delay element and would cause injury if an attempt were made to tamper with it. (See enclosure (3)).

d. Topography and Climate

(1) Terrain, Cover and Concealment:

(a) Terrain - Phase I. The Provinces of Quang Tri and Thau Thien consist of three basic elements, characteristic of much of North and Central Vietnam; the mountains or highland area in the west, the Piedmont or transitional hills and the coastal plains in the east. The coastal plains in the objective area are part of a broad flat band of alluvial soil stretching from North Vietnam to

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Da Nang. The plains are dissected by meandering streams, drainage ditches and lagoons with broad sand beaches fording on the east. The area cultivation is predominantly wetland rice and 80% of the lowland is inundated or moist throughout the year. Red Beach (YD 565513) was the southern portion of NIS Beach No 1. The beach was straight extending in a northeast direction and is 500 yards long and 60 yards wide. A small village is located on the left flank while an intermittent stream empties into the Gulf of Tonkin 250 yards on the right flank. Composition was soft sand, firm when wet, and had an average gradient of 1:60. The beach was obstructed by a sandbar located on the left 125 yards off the beach. Sandbars shifted frequently and were greatly influenced by storms in the area.

(b) Terrain Phase II. The objective area was characterized by rugged hills, with deep ravines and draws, interlaced with streams and trails.

(c) Cover and Concealment - Phase I. Cover and concealment was afforded the enemy in populated areas, not only by the use of man made objects, but also by intermingling with the local populace.

(d) Cover and Concealment - Phase II. Cover and concealment was provided by the use of fighting holes, bunkers, elephant grass and dense foliage throughout the objective area.

(2) Obstacles and Critical Terrain Features

(a) Obstacles

i. Phase I. The principal obstacles to foot and vehicular movement was the deep, soft sand, marshy areas, hedge rows and inundated riceland in the objective area.

ii. Phase II. Steep slopes, and dense vegetation, were the principal obstacles in Phase II. Heavy rains considerably reduced cross country mobility.

(b) Critical Terrain Features

i. Phase I. Objectives One, Two and Three were thought to contain VC. It was necessary to search and clear these areas prior to moving inland.

ii. Phase II. Hills, 861 (XD 803443), 881 North (XD 774457), and 881 South, (XD 777438), proved to be very critical in giving the enemy tactical advantage overlooking the KHE SANH Airfield. All routes of supply and infiltration could be controlled from these vantage points.

(3) Observation and Avenues of Approach

(a) Coastal Plain. Observation and fields of fire in rice paddies and beach were good to poor. Restrictions on observation included, hedgerows, tree stands, ditches, and the height of rice plant. Avenues of approach included streams, dikes, and trails.

(b) Mountainous Area (KHE SANH). Observation was excellent except in dense areas; avenues of approach included trails, draws and streams.

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(4) Weather

(a) Phase I. The objective area was in the transitional stage between the Northeast - Southwest monsoon seasons. April is the period of least cloudiness, highest ceiling and good visibility. There were light rain showers in the afternoon and early evening. Temperature in the operating area ranged from 71 degrees minimum to 84 degrees maximum. Weather had little adverse effect on the operation of helicopters.

(b) Phase II. The weather during the period was generally fair with low clouds, light showers in the afternoon and evening with one thunderstorm reported to have had winds of 110 knots. Ground fog and low clouds in the highlands west of ANS SANE seriously hampered the use of helicopters between 1700 in the evening and 0600. Visibility was unrestricted except during the period mentioned above. The temperature in the operating area ranged from 75 degrees minimum to a 82 degrees maximum.

d. Psychological Warfare Efforts

(1) Phase I. An armed propaganda team of two men joined Hotel Company on the 23rd of April and remained until the BLT was moved to Phu Bai. The team was utilized to guide two patrols in the objective areas with limited results. It is felt that due to the short duration of their stay and lack of familiarity with the area, the usefulness of the APT cannot be accurately evaluated.

(2) Phase II. Through the use of airborne recordings, leaflets, and beach jumper units attached to infantry elements, it is felt that some of the NVA enemy were persuaded to rally to our forces. Information was received that more NVA desired to come over but were fearful of their political cadre.

7. Mission

a. Phase I. 1st Battalion conducts helicopterborne and waterborne assault into landing Zone Jay and area and over Red Beach; on order seizes landing objectives 1, 2 and 3; conducts search and destroy operations in assigned sectors of AOA; conducts other operations as agreed upon by CG III MAF; on order conducts tactical amphibious withdrawal.

b. Phase II. 2nd Battalion (-) (Rein), 3rd Marines relieves 3rd Battalion (-) (Rein), 3rd Marines; on order seizes Hill 861; conducts search and destroy operations in assigned sector of AO.

8. Concept of Operationsa. Phase I. (Enclosure (1))

(1) The operation was planned to achieve tactical surprise and to rapidly isolate the beach areas in Sectors Purple and Orange initially, to set up blocking positions and observation points, and to conduct search and destroy operations in Sectors Purple, Orange

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and Blue.

(2) Commencing L-Hour on D-Day (220800 April), one company (rein) conducted a helicopterborne landing into Landing Zone Jay, established a platoon blocking position at 624465; on order seized Landing Force Objective 1; and was prepared to conduct search and destroy operations in Sector Purple.

(3) On completion of the landing in LZ Jay, one company (rein) conducted a helicopterborne landing into LZ Wren; on order seized Landing Force Objective 2; and was prepared to conduct search and destroy operations in Sector Orange.

(4) Commencing H-Hour on D-Day (221000 April 1967), one company (rein) conducted a waterborne landing in LVTP-5s over Red Beach; on order seized Landing Force Objective 3; established platoon size security element for defense of objective 3; and was prepared to conduct search and destroy operations to SE in Sector Orange. //

(5) "B" Btry (-) (Rein), 1st Bn, 12th Mar was designated as an on call serial to land by LVTP-5s, on order, over Red Beach and to set up a firing position in the vicinity of Red Beach. A recon element from the battery landed with the waterborne assault company to select a firing position. "B" Btry was assigned the mission of D/S BLT 2/3.

(6) The Amphibian Tractor Platoon (Rein) was initially assigned D/S to the waterborne assault rifle company and subsequently reverted to D/S of "B" Btry.

(7) Plans were formulated for the landing of the Recon Platoon in a designated LZ. These plans were not executed as initial intelligence provided by CTG 79.5 and Army and Marine advisors operating in the AOA was sufficient to carry out the BLT mission. Tanks and Ontos were boated as on call serials but were not landed due to poor trafficability on the beach.

(8) The BLT Provisional Company was landed, on order, in the vicinity of Objective 3 to relieve the platoon size security element left by the waterborne assault company. The Provisional Company subsequently provided security for the BLT CP and for the 105mm howitzer battery.

(9) The BLT Reserve consisted of one rifle company (rein) on board the LPD. It had the capability to land, on order, by helicopterborne or waterborne assault and to assume the mission of any assault rifle company. The reserve company was prepared to provide a SPARROW HAWK reaction force consisting of one reinforced rifle platoon.

(10) After the seizure of Landing Force Objectives 1, 2, and 3, the BLT was to conduct deliberate search and destroy operations in Sectors Orange Purple and Blue. On order, the BLT was to conduct a tactical amphibious withdrawal, reembarking aboard assigned shipping in general reversal of the landing plan.

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b. Phase II. (Enclosure (2))

(1) Phase II of Operation BEACON STAR commenced 27 April 1967 and involved only 2nd Battalion (-) (Rein), 3rd Marines, "B" Btry, 1st Bn, 12th Marines, and the Shore Party Plat of the BLT. The commencement of this phase began 261200H April 1967 when 2nd Battalion (-) (Rein), 3rd Marines was CHOPPED OPCON to the 3rd Marines. The battalion (-) (Rein), consisting of three rifle companies, 81mm mortar platoon and Command Group Alpha with a security element was airlifted to Phu Bai for further air transportation via C-130 to KHE SANH. The battalion (-) (Rein) arrived in the Phase II AO 261600H. One company (rein) and "B" Btry, 1st Bn, 12th Marines landed in KHE SANH 27 April 1967 from ARG shipping via Dong Ha. "B" Btry CHOPPED OPCON to the 12th Marines 271400H April 1967 and the one rifle company (Rein) assumed the initial mission of regimental reserve and perimeter security for KHE SANH.

(2) The initial concept of Phase II called for moving the battalion from KHE SANH airfield, utilizing guides from 3rd Battalion (-) (Rein), 3rd Marines, into the designated AO, effect a link up with 3/3, assist 3/3 in disengaging from the enemy, and assist them in passing through 2/3 lines back to KHE SANH.

(3) On relief of 3/3, the battalion was ordered to maintain contact with the enemy and determine his strength. On order, the battalion was to seize Hill 861 (Objective 1) and attempt recovery of 3/3 MIAs, and to be prepared to seize Hill 881 (north) (Objective 3).

(4) On seizure of objective 3, the battalion was to conduct deliberate search and destroy operations in the area surrounding the 881 (north) complex, particularly to the north and west. Company (-) size patrols were to patrol initially 500 meters from the complex of Objective 3 and subsequently to 1000, 2000 and 3000 meters each succeeding day.

(5) On order, the battalion was to conduct a tactical withdrawal to KHE SANH airfield, move administratively via C-130 to Dong Ha for further transportation via amphibious landing craft to ARG shipping.

9. Executiona. Phase I

(1) CTG 79.5 Frag Order #1 was received 201900H April 1967, assigning BLT mission for Phase I. BLT Frag Order #4 was issued 210900H to all units BLT 2/3. D-Day was scheduled for 22 April L-Hour was at 0700 and H-Hour was at 0900.

(2) On 22 April 1967 L and H Hours were delayed one hour due to bad weather and poor visibility.

(3) 220809H. Company H landed LZ Jay with no opposition and commenced seizure of Obj 1.

(4) 220850H. Company F landed LZ Wren with no opposition and commenced seizure of Obj 2.

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(5) 220851H. Company H reported destruction of two punji pits vicinity 593455.

(6) 220900H. Company H reported destruction of ten punji traps vicinity 622464.

(7) 220930H. Company H reported destruction of two punji traps booby trapped with CHICOM grenade at 592455.

(8) 221003H. Company E landed Red Beach unopposed and seized Obj 3.

(9) 221025H. Company H seized Obj 1.

(10) 221133H. Company F seized Obj 2.

(11) 221245H. "B" Btry landed over Red Beach.

(12) 221305H. Company E reported detaining eleven VCS.

Discovered large quantities of rice and tobacco vicinity Obj 3. Suspects interrogated and released. Rice and tobacco turned over to S-2.

(13) 221315H. Command Group Alpha landed LZ Wren.

(14) 221530H. Command Group Bravo landed LZ Wren.

(15) 221600H. All companies held present positions and commenced preparations for night activities.

(16) 221700H. CTG 79.5 Frag Order #2 received directing establishment of night defensive positions and ambush sites.

(17) 221730H. BLT Frag Order #5. VC activity reported grid squares 4953, 5054 and 5447. Company F and H to search these areas. Company E BLT reserve. Co G land over Blue Beach, attack SE direction toward 547526. H-Hour 0830.

(18) 230830H. Company G landed over Blue Beach.

(19) 231020H. Company F received S/A fire vicinity 515490.

(20) 231109H. Company F received S/A fire vicinity 516494.

(21) 231230H. Company G detained 4 suspected VC sympathizers 539528. Interrogation revealed VC operating in grid squares 4953 and 5054. Villagers in this area pay VC tax of 500 piasters a month and provide rice.

(22) 231734. CTG 79.5 Frag Order #3 received. Establish night defensive positions and ambush sites. Continue S&D operations in assigned sectors.

(23) 231755H. Company G detonated pressure type AP mine 535526. One WIA evacuated.

(24) 231825H. Company F received sporadic S/A fire and 61mm mortar fire 504495. Called in air strike. Fire suppressed. Company F estimated 15 probable enemy KIA. One friendly WIA evacuated.

(25) 240300H. BLT Frag Order 6-67. Conduct thorough S&D operations grid squares 4652, 4953, 5054, 5447 with F, G, & H Companies. Company E BLT reserve.

(26) 240930H. Company E discovered bunker, 8 fighting holes 486163. Destroyed bunker.

(27) 240932H. Company G destroyed 15 punji pits 497535.

(28) 241025H. Company H destroyed 160 60mm mortar rounds and 8 82mm mortar rounds vicinity 560470.

(29) 241040H. Company H destroyed 58 60mm mortar rounds vicinity 563470.

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(30) 241400H. Company H discovered 20 punji traps and 20-30 fighting holes vicinity 542478. Punji traps destroyed.

(31) 242155H. BLT Frag Order 7-67. Enemy believed in grid square 4748 in strength of 150. Company G to move by helicopter and establish blocking position west and south of suspected enemy position. Company F move by most direct route to suspected enemy position. Remaining companies continue patrolling in assigned sectors. H-Hour 250700H April.

(32) 250255H. Portion Frag Order 7-67 pertaining to Company G cancelled due to unavailability of helicopters.

(33) 251210H. Company E reported two VC threw 2 grenades at advancing platoon. One VC wounded but escaped. One VC captured and turned over to S-2.

(34) 251530H. CTG 79.5 passed to BLT intelligence information concerning enemy units located 577458, 592453 and 591448. Moved Company H to search area. Negative contact.

(35) 251734H. Company F engaged in fire fight with approximately 50 VC vicinity 472485. Returned fire and called artillery mission. HU-1E gunships also utilized to prep enemy position. Company F assaulted. Discovered four pools of blood on enemy position. No friendly casualties. Three civilians injured during fire fight were evacuated to USS Princeton.

(36) 251735H. Received CTG 79.5 Frag Order #5. New Sector Black established. Conduct S&D operations in new sector. Submit detailed helicopter lift requirements.

(37) 252255H. BLT Frag Order 8-67. At L-Hour BLT 2/3 conducts helicopterborne and land assault in Sector Black, establishes blocking positions in designated areas and conducts deliberate S&D operations in assigned sector. H-L Hour 0740.

(38) 260110H. Company F received heavy automatic weapons fire vicinity 472485. Returned fire. No casualties.

(39) 260255H. Company E perimeter challenged by two individuals. Individuals ran. Perimeter fired with negative results.

(40) 260605H. Company E received 12 rounds S/A fire vicinity 486515. Returned fire. No casualties.

(41) 260740H. Frag Order 8-67 executed. Companies G and H commenced helolift into designated LZs.

(42) 260830H. CTG 79.5 directed cancellation BLT Frag Order 8-67. All units return to original positions.

(43) 260835H. Company H received 6 rounds S/A fire vicinity 492434.

(44) 260904H. Commenced retracting Companies G and H from Sector Black. Company G lifted to Battalion CP, Company H lifted to old position.

(45) 260915H. CTG 79.5 directed 2nd Battalion (-) (Rein), 3rd Marines (three rifles companies, 81mm mortar platoon and Command Group Alpha) to submit helicopter requirements for movement to Phu Bai.

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- (46) 261014H. Company E commenced move to Phu Bai.
  - (47) 261045H. Company H received S/A fire vicinity 492467 returned fire with 3.5 rockets. One probable enemy KIA.
  - (48) 261056H. Company G commenced move to Phu Bai.
  - (49) 261110H. Company H received S/A fire vicinity 497463 and observed VC running into village. Good coverage by automatic weapons on fleeing VC. One probable enemy KIA.
  - (50) 261200H. 2nd Battalion (-) (Rein), 3rd Marines CHOPPED OPCON to 3rd Marines. Command Group Alpha commenced move to Phu Bai.
  - (51) 261230H. Company H commenced move to Phu Bai. Company H had explosion occur in area from an unknown device resulting in 1 KIA and 8 WIA. Casualties evacuated to USS Princeton.
  - (52) 261400H. Shuttle move of the battation (-) (rein) by helicopter to Phu Bai and by C-130 to KHE SANH completed.
  - (53) 261425H. Commenced move of BLT (-) to ARG shipping. All BLT units cleared beach area by 1730.
  - (54) 261445H. Battalion (-) (Rein) moved out from KHE SANH airfield to link up with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines.
  - (55) 261600H. Link up with 3/3 effected by the forward elements of Company G at 806435.
  - (56) 261800H. Battalion set in tight perimeter defense vicinity 812430.

b. Phase II

- (1) 270830H. 3rd Battalion, (-) (Rein), 3rd Marines commenced departing AO and passed through this battalion. Commenced preparation fires on Hill 861. Continuous attack aircraft were on station.
- (2) 271209H. Battalion CP remained 812431 with Company H. Company E moved to 794441 to set in defensive positions for the night. Company G moved to 805435 to set in defensive positions for the night.
- (3) 271115H. Company F arrived KHE SANH; designated regimental reserve and assigned perimeter defense responsibility for KHE SANH.
- (4) 271400H. "B" Btry, 1st Bn, 12th Marines arrived KHE SANH and CHOPPED OPCON to 12th Marines.
- (5) 271510H. Battalion sent all body armor to KHE SANH.
- (6) 271550H. TAC(A) reported two suspected recoilless rifle positions 791448. Attack aircraft directed to position. Unable to determine results of bombing.
- (7) 271845H. Recoilless rifle positions still in tact. Requested heavier air ordnance on these positions.
- (8) 271945H. Battalion set in perimeter defense in company size areas for the night. Continued heavy artillery fire on Hill 861.
- (9) 280500H. Company E reported hearing voices outside their perimeter. Grenades thrown in the direction of voices with negative results.

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- (10) 280736H. Company E commenced patrolling activities vicinity grid square 7944.
- (11) 280850H. Company H commenced patrolling activities vicinity grid squares 8143, 8242, 8241, and 8342.
- (12) 280925H. TAC (A) reported secondary explosion and fire at 800440. Continued heavy bombardment of Hill 861 complex.
- (13) 281133H. TAC(A) reported excellent coverage of trenchline at 803443 and suspected recoilless rifle and mortar position at 787452.
- (14) 281150H. TAC(A) reported excellent coverage of 4 bunkers and trenchline at 794440.
- (15) 281414H. Companies E and G crossed LD in attack in NW direction. Company G to seize Hill 861. Company E to seize high ground vicinity 790444.
- (16) 281550H. Company E destroyed cave at 795438.
- (17) 281600H. Company G secured Hill 861 (Obj 1).
- (18) 281735H. Company E received 6 rounds of 82MM mortar from 793444. Called in air strike on suspected position.
- (19) 281819H. TAC(A) reported air strike at 776457 resulted in 20 confirmed enemy KIA and 40 probable KIA.
- (20) 281900H. Company E received 19 rounds 61MM mortar fire from 790443. Suspected position taken under artillery fire.
- (21) 282030H. Company G reported finding 4 mortar positions on Hill 861. Also reported 11 sleeping bunkers, 42 fighting holes, bloodstains leading in a westerly direction from 861. Company G recovered 6 MIAs from 3/3. Two confirmed NVA KIA. Several bloody bandages found in bunkers.
- (22) 282130H. Company G set in perimeter defense on Obj 1.
- (23) 282145H. Company E set in perimeter defense 793441. Discovered 200 one-man fighting holes and miscellaneous CHICOM 782 gear and S/A ammunition.
- (24) 290633H. Company G continued search of Obj 1.
- (25) 290930H. Company E reported finding two NVA KIA at 793442. Miscellaneous enemy equipment and S/A ammo uncovered.
- (26) 290940H. Battalion CP moved to Obj 1. Company H sweeping area to NW from 800432.
- (27) 291005H. Company E uncovered 3 MIAs from 3/3 at 793446.
- (28) 291800H. Company H moved to 792444. Company G continued to uncover miscellaneous NVA equipment and weapons on Obj 1. Company E moved to 792441. All companies set in perimeter defenses for the night.
- (29) 291005H. Company H uncovered MIA from 3/3 at 790450.
- (30) 290700H. Company F CHOPPED OPCON to 3/3.
- (31) 290730H. Company H jumped off and made contact with enemy at 791449 in well prepared positions. Company H casualties, 9 KIA, 29 WIA (evac), 14 WIA (nonevac). Company H pulled back to 792443. Heavy artillery fires called in at area of contact. Enemy casualties, 14 Confirmed KIA, 25 probable KIA.

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(32) 301258H. Continued heavy artillery and air bombardment vicinity 792443 and Hill 881 (north). Positions held: CP and Company H 792443. Company G 799445, Company E 798445.

(33) 301348H. Company E continued advance to 781449. No contact.

(34) 301520H. Company E received S/A fire from SE Hill 881. One WIA (evac).

(35) 301515H. Company E discovered 4 bunkers with comm wire strung between them at 777452.

(36) 301600H. Bn Frag Order 14-67. Company E hold present position and set in tight perimeter defense.

(37) 301617H. TAC (A) reported enemy troops in open at 787452. Enemy casualties 31 KIA confirmed, 35 probable KIA.

(38) 301714H. Company G jumped off into attack vicinity 791449.

(39) 301830H. Company E received S/A fire from 782449. Fire inflicted 6 WIA (evac) 1 WIA (nonevac).

(40) 301910H. Company G on Bn Obj 1 (791449). Enemy still occupying position. Company G casualties 2 KIA, 7 WIA (evac).

(41) 302055H. Company G consolidated Obj 1, uncovered 1 MIA from 3/3. Action resulted in 7 confirmed enemy KIA. Company G withdrawn from Obj 1.

(42) 010705H. Company E received 18-20 rounds of mortar fire and S/A fire from 744453 resulting in 2 KIA, 9 WIA (evac) and 7 WIA (nonevac).

(43) 010936H. Company G jumped off to retake Bn Obj 1 and seize Bn Obj 2 (787452). Company H and E held present positions. Company G uncovered 5 enemy weapons on Bn Obj 1.

(44) 011300H. Company G on Bn Obj 2. Well prepared enemy positions extending to the west. Uncovered miscellaneous enemy ammunition.

(45) 011345H. Continued to prep Hill 881 (north) (Obj 3). All companies directed to continue search of enemy bunkers in their positions.

(46) 011835H. First Platoon, Co E, 2nd Bn, 9th Mar CHOPPED OPCON to 2/3. This unit directed to take up defensive positions on Hill 861 and continue search of enemy bunkers.

(47) 020210H. Company E position probed. Called in artillery discharging enemy. No casualties.

(48) 020820H. Bn Frag Order 15-67. Company E patrol toward 881 (north) 300 meters and check both sides of ridge line. Company G continue attack to 779459. Company H continue attack to 783447.

(49) 021225H. Bn Frag Order 15-67 Modified. Company E to seize Obj 3.

(50) 021505H. Company G made contact with enemy at 779459. Leading elements Company E reported at 776454 with no contact. Company H at 785458 no contact.

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(51) 021700H. Company G at 779458 and Company H at 786451. Both units receiving mortar fire. Company G casualties, 2 KIA, 5 WIA (evac) 4 MIA; enemy, 2 confirmed KIA, 5 probable KIA.

(52) 021915H. Company E receives S/A fire 777456. Returned fire. Estimated 1 enemy probable KIA.

(53) 021930H. All companies set in perimeter defense for the night.

D16 (54) 030430H. Company E under attack by estimated two enemy companies. Enemy penetrated company perimeter. Company reported heavy close in fighting. Illumination and stopper missions were fired by artillery and MINIGUNS from SPOOKY provided excellent coverage. Company E unable to determine extent of friendly casualties. Enemy was repulsed, however, scattered fighting within the company position continued.

(55) 030645H. Company F chopped OPCON to 2/3.

(56) 030800H. Platoon, Company F chopped OPCON to Company E.

(57) 030805H. Company H on move to 778452. Continued heavy bombardment Hill 881 (north). Supporting fire for Company H provided by section 106RR Platoon.

(58) 030845H. Company E reported secondary explosion from air strike 800 meters NW of their position.

(59) 030930H. Company E under attack at 778451 by estimated platoon size unit. Company received S/A and mortar fire. Initial casualties reported 2 KIA, 4 WIA (evac) 3 WIA (nonevac).

(60) 031200H. Company E reported enemy still along SW finger of their position. Supporting 106RR fire from 3/3 assisted in dispersing enemy. Company E reported 84 enemy confirmed KIA on their position and 70 enemy probable KIA in draw to west where fleeing NVA were caught by 106 fire.

(61) 031600H. Company H received 82mm mortar fire 780462. Casualties: 2 KIA, 4 WIA (evac), 3 WIA (nonevac).

(62) 032005H. Bn casualties 3 May reported to Hq, 3rd Marines. KIA 25, WIA (evac), 48, WIA (nonevac) 40. All companies in night defensive perimeter.

(63) 032300H. Company E reported captured enemy equipment from days action which included, 43 weapons, 32 enemy blanket rolls, 37 ammo belts, and a variety of ammunition and other NVA 782 gear.

(64) 032310H. Company E received hand grenades on edge of perimeter; two trip flares set off. No casualties.

(65) 040115H. Bn Frag Order 17-67. Artillery preped Obj 3 from first light to 1200. Companies E and F attack on order in column of companies to assault position. Assault Obj 3 with two company front. Company G to withdraw to Bn Obj 1 to allow heavier air ordinance to be dropped on Obj 3 without harm to friendly forces. Company H conduct S&D operations in draw running 775449 to 777446 to 782448; Company H, on order, Bn reserve.

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- (66) 040740H. Company E reported 4 more enemy confirmed KIA from previous days action.
- (67) 040825H. Company E reported 1 enemy wounded POW captured. POW sent to 3rd Marines CP.
- (68) 040925H. Company E uncovered 18 more enemy confirmed KIA.
- (69) 041200H. Company H position 785445. During sweep of draw, company uncovered 8 enemy confirmed KIA. One machine gun, miscellaneous A/A ammo and equipment found with enemy KIA.
- (70) 041330H. Company G hit by three rounds of friendly artillery fire. Casualties reported, 1 KIA, 8 WIA (evac).
- (71) 041535H. Company F crossed LD at 1530 toward Obj 3. Company E followed in trace.
- (72) 041900H. Company F and E secured southern portion Obj 3. All companies set in night perimeter defenses.
- (73) 042000H. Bn Frag Order 18-67. Company F secure northern portion Obj 3. Company G secure ridge line north of Obj 3 785445 to 778469. Company E conduct S&D operations to west of present position. Company H, Bn reserve.
- (74) 050855H. Company F received sporadic S/A fire from fortified positions on northern side Obj 3. Casualties, 4 WIA (evac).
- (75) 051125H. Company G uncovered 3 enemy bunkers 783442 with miscellaneous NVA 782 gear, S/A ammo and mess equipment.
- (76) 051130H. Company F located 3 bunkers and 10 NVA at 773459. Launched assault against position but too heavily fortified. Company pulled back to allow CAS to prep area. Casualties, 4 WIA (evac). Enemy casualties, 1 confirmed KIA.
- (77) 051205H. Company F reported excellent CAS coverage Obj 3. Three bunkers destroyed. Enemy casualties, 3 probable KIA.
- (78) 051410H. Company F received S/A fire on Obj 3. Casualties, 1 WIA (evac). Enemy casualties, 1 confirmed KIA.
- (79) 051445H. Company F secured northern portion Obj 3. Company G secured Obj vicinity 778459. Four MIAs from Company G recovered. Status changed to KIA. Company F continued to receive sporadic S/A fire on Obj. Located 6 more bunkers on Obj 3 and 2 more confirmed enemy KIA.
- (80) 051600H. Bn CP moved to 778453. Company H providing security for CP.
- (81) 051745H. Company F uncovered six enemy weapons and assorted documents on Obj 3.
- (82) 052145H. Company F received 48 rounds of 82mm mortar. Immediate counterbattery fired at suspected enemy mortar position. Fire was suppressed. Casualties, 1 KIA, 8 WIA (evac).
- (83) 052315H. 3rd Mar Frag Order. Complete detailed search of Obj 3. Conduct S&D patrols minimum 1000 meters from present positions. Continue to improve defensive position for platoon OP on Hill 861.

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(84) 060015H. Bn Frag Order 19-67. Frag order assigned company patrol routes IAW 3rd Mar Frag Order.

24 (85) 060730H. Company H reported finding 25 enemy bunkers at 773451. Five bunkers were heavily fortified. Miscellaneous NVA equipment and ammunition uncovered.

(86) 061015H. Company F located enemy bunkers 771463. No enemy equipment found.

(87) 061135H. Company E discovered enemy uncompleted bunker at 769454. Enemy mortar data book found in bunker.

(88) 061300H. Company G reported two enemy sleeping bunkers at 777460. Bunkers well constructed with logs and bamboo. Company H reported vacated enemy mortar position at 773451. Three base plate holes and apparent aiming stake holes found in these positions.

(89) 061405H. Company G reported enemy field head at 779455.

(90) 061405H. Company F discovered 10 enemy bunkers and 50 fighting holes 765456.

(91) 061440H. All company patrols returned to IP. Negative enemy contact.

(92) 061905H. Company G reported finding 1 confirmed enemy NCO KIA 777460.

(93) 062000H. All companies in defensive perimeter positions.

1700 (94) 070030H. Bn Frag Order 20-67. Continue to conduct company (-) size S&D patrols in assigned sectors. Patrol routes submitted to 3rd Mar CP.

(95) 070700H. Company (-) size patrols departed IPs.

(96) 070915H. Company F discovered large enemy bivouac area 770458. Patrol believed this area to be same which counterbattery mission was fired on night of 5 May. Several bloody bandages in area and blood stains appeared on ammunition and weapons found. Three 82mm base plate holes discovered. Company continued search.

(97) 070850H. Company G discovered 35 bunkers, 1 field galley and 2 field heads at 769463. Assorted ammunition and weapons uncovered.

(98) 071057H. Company F reported that continued search of bivouac area revealed several more blood tracks and bandages. Commanders evaluation of extent of unit size occupying the area was 100-175 men. Based on amount of counterbattery ordnance fired in this position on night of 5 May, 60 probable enemy KIA were recorded. Company F further uncovered 400 lbs of rice, demolition equipment and a large assortment of NVA 782 gear.

(99) 071530H. Company E reported 15-20 fighting holes on ridge SE of objective 3. Discovered 3 confirmed NVA KIA with two weapons and assorted S/A ammo. Company F discovered assorted NVA 782 gear in artillery craters 772457.

(100) 071600H. All company (-) patrols returned to IPs.

(101) 071700H. Bn Frag Order 21-67. Company (-) patrols will continue S&D operation in assigned sectors commencing 080700H. Patrol routes forwarded to 3rd Mar CP.

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(102) 072000H. Bn reported extent of 2 days patrolling operations out to 2000 meters from 881 (north) complex to 3rd Marines CP. No enemy contact. Indications that enemy left in haste and retired in a westerly direction were found along every company (-) patrol route.

(103) 080700H. Company (-) patrols departed IPs.

(104) 080805H. Company H discovered 29 82mm rounds, 13 61mm rounds, demolition equipment and assorted NVA 782 gear at 773453.

(105) 080915H. Company H continued search of area vicinity 773453. Fifty bunkers were destroyed.

(106) 081050H. Company F discovered 40 3 man fortified bunkers at 758462. Bloody bandages, syringes and other assorted medical supplies were found in this area.

(107) 081429H. Company G discovered 3 MIAs at 792448. MIAs believed to be among those still missing from 3/3.

(108) 081810H. Bn Frag Order 22-67. Company (-) patrols continue S&D operations in assigned sectors. Routes were extended 2500-3000 meters from IPs. Patrols routes reported to 3rd Mar CP.

(109) 090700H. Company (-) patrols departed IPs.

(110) 090830H. Company E discovered 10 reinforced bunkers at 768449. Found 5 82mm rounds and assorted NVA 782 gear in area.

(111) 090840H. Company G discovered old enemy bivouac site at 778467. Area apparently occupied by 15-20 men.

(112) 090945H. Company E discovered old enemy mortar site at 768449. Area was cleared 360° for fields of fire. Evidence present that site had been hit by napalm.

(113) 091145H. Company G discovered what appeared to be a prepared ambush site at 789466.

(114) 091255H. Company F received heavy automatic rifle fire and 61mm mortars at 747473. Artillery mission was called. Direct communication with Company F failed. Company E acted as relay. Chopped one 106RR, a section of 81mm mortars, and a platoon from Company H to Company E to assist Company F.

(115) 091405H. Company E moving to Company F position 747473 to assist in fire fight. Communications with Company E and F very poor. Both companies receiving S/A fire. Bn CP Group (Fwd) moved to vicinity Company E to coordinate action.

(116) 092020H. Bn sent following report to 3rd Mar CP concerning action involving Company E and F. Two companies were engaged with an estimated enemy company which was armed with automatic weapons and 61mm mortars. Enemy company was occupying an area in the vicinity of a grave site which Company F started to uncover. Eight NVA bodies were dug up and a total of 203 individual grave sites were counted. After the fire fight with enemy company, 31 enemy confirmed KIA and 45 probable KIA were recorded. Company F casualties were 25 KIA, 19 WIA (evac). Fixed wing and UH1E aircraft were used to assist Company F's withdrawal. Enemy broke contact under heavy bombardment and fled west. CP (Fwd), Company E and F located

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at 749462. Company G located at 772458. Company H and CP (Rear) remain 778453.

(117) 092315H. 3rd Mar Frag Order. Bn continue S&D operations in assigned sector. Conduct thorough search of area boarded by GL74 on west, GL48 on north, GL77 on east and GL45 on south. Continue to improve defensive position on Hill 861.

(118) 100815H. Bn Frag Order 23-67. Company (-) patrols conduct S&D operations IAW 3rd Mar Frag Order.

(119) 100900H. Company (-) patrols departed IPs.

(120) 101100H. Company H discovered S/A ammo And medical equipment vicinity 777453.

(121) 101232H. Company F reported enemy equipment captured on 9 May. Captured equipment included 3 weapons, assorted NVA 782 gear, 200 lbs of rice and 1200 rds of S/A ammo.

(122) 101515H. Chopped platoon, Company H from Company E to its parent unit.

(123) 101608H. Company G reported 1 wounded NVA wandered into company CP and was captured. POW sent to KHE SANH.

(124) 102315H. 3rd Mar Frag Order. Displace 2 companies and organic supporting arms by helo to KHE SANH. Move 2 companies and command group to KHE SANH via overland route. Chop Platoon, Company E 2/9 to 3/3 effective 110700H. Move 2 companies (rein) via fixed wing aircraft to Dong Ha for further transportation to ARG shipping.

(125) 110700H. Bn Frag Order 24-67. Platoon, Company E 2/9 CHOPPED OPCON to 3/3. Companies E and F and 81mm mortar platoon move by helo to KHE SANH. Companies G and H and Command Group Alpha move to KHE SANH via overland route.

(126) 111410H. Companies E and F CHOPPED OPCON to 3rd Mar Div and departed KHE SANH via fixed wing aircraft to DONG HA for further transportation to ARG shipping.

(127) 121420H. 2nd Battalion (-) (Rein), 3rd Marines CHOPPED OPCON to 3rd Mar Div and departed KHE SANH via fixed wing aircraft to Dong Ha for further transportation to ARG shipping. B Btry, 1st Bn, 12th Mar CHOPPED OPCON to 3rd Mar Div and departed KHE SANH via rough rider to Dong Ha for further transportation to ARG shipping.

(128) 121800H. 2nd Battalion (-) (Rein), 3rd Marines and "B" Btry, 1st Bn, 12th Marines CHOPPED OPCON to CTG 79.5.

## 10. Results

### a. Friendly Losses

(1) Phase I. 22-26 April 1967

#### USMC

OFFICERS			
KIA	WIA	MIA	DOW
0	0	0	0

ENLISTED			
KIA	WIA	MIA	DOW
1	10	0	0

#### USN

OFFICERS			
KIA	WIA	MIA	DOW
0	0	0	0

ENLISTED			
KIA	WIA	MIA	DOW
0	0	0	0



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(2) Phase II. 27 April - 12 May 1967USMC

<u>OFFICERS</u>			
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>DOW</u>
1	11	0	0

<u>ENLISTED</u>			
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>DOW</u>
70	206	0	1

USN

<u>OFFICERS</u>			
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>DOW</u>
0	0	0	0

<u>ENLISTED</u>			
<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>DOW</u>
5	11	0	0

(3) There were no major items of equipment or materiel losses in either phase of BEACON STAR.

b. Enemy Losses

<u>Category</u>	<u>Phase I</u>	<u>Phase II</u>	<u>Total</u>
VC KIA (conf)	0	0	0
VC KIA (prob)	23	0	23
VCC (POW)	2	0	2
VCS (INTERROGATED/RELEASED)	50	0	50
NVA KIA (Conf)	0	469	469
NVA KIA (Prob)	0	135	135
NVA POW	0	5	5
Weapons captured/destroyed	0	93	93
Fortifications destroyed	1	76	77
Fighting Holes uncovered	33	451	484
Punji traps destroyed	63	0	63
Ammunition captured/destroyed			
S/A	0	16,113 rds	16, 113 rds
Chicom grenades	2	143	145
61mm mortar	228	41	269
75mm RR	0	2	2
82mm mortar	3	42	45
Demolition equipment	40 lbs	1,171 lbs	1,211 lbs
Miscellaneous enemy 762 gear	25 lbs	1,701 lbs	1,726 lbs
Rice	300 lbs	700 lbs	1,000 lbs
Medical supplies	0	300 lbs	300 lbs

It was not always possible to search areas where deep supporting fires and air strikes were conducted, therefore, the results of many of these actions could not be evaluated.

11. Administrative Matters. The Administrative Plan proved to be adequate in all respects. The serial assignment table was changed consolidation the 105mm Howitzer battery less prime movers into one serial. The battery was also transferred from the USS MONTICELLO to the USS OGDEN to facilitate deployment of this unit by either helicopter or LVT. The serial assignment table with change #1 permitted rapid deployment of all combat units within the BLT.

Supply Techniques, Combat Loads, Ammunition, and Weapons Carried by Assault Troops.

(1) On D-1 rations, ammunition, and special equipment were staged by units aboard assigned shipping. The issue of these items

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was effected on D-1 with the exception of high explosive ammunition. These items were issued in accordance with the standard BA and the Battalion SOP for Operations. This method of issue was conducted with a minimum of problems. High explosive ammunition was issued on D day just prior to the units boarding assigned transportation to the combat area. Upon re-embarkation, units turned in ammunition on hand in assigned areas. All loose 5.56mm ball ammunition was to be used for test firing of M16E1 rifles which were malfunctioning. High explosive and linked ammunition was cleaned for re-issue or Class III grading, and the BA was to be reconstituted.

(2) The BLT landed in the Phase I AOA carrying the prescribed load as set forth in the Administrative Plan and the Battalion SOP for Operations. Resupply during Phase I of Operation Beacon Star was coordinated by the BLT S-4 located with the Alpha Command Post Group and effected by the Tac Log stations aboard the assigned shipping. Normal resupply requests were submitted by 1800 the day preceeding delivery. The Tac Log staged the proper supplies and coordinated frag orders for helicopter resupply lifts through CTG 79.5. Resupply was made early the following day when the tactical situation permitted. Helicopters carrying split loads were frequently manned by battalion supply personnel to insure delivery to the proper units. Only minor problems were encountered during resupply.

(3) On D+4, three assault companies plus the Alpha Command Group were transported by helicopter from the combat area to PHU BAI for further transportation to KHE SANH by fixed wing aircraft. All remaining units were back loaded aboard assigned shipping. On 27 April 1967, one assault company, the Bravo Command Group and the 105mm Howitzer battery were off loaded for further transportation to KHE SANH. These transfers were coordinated through CTG 79.5 and no problem areas arose.

(4) Resupply of the battalion during Phase II of Operation Beacon Star was shifted to FLSU-A located at KHE SANH. Again resupply was coordinated by the BLT S-4 located with the Alpha Command Group. Resupply requests were called in direct to FLSU-A for staging. HST personnel from the BLT were moved to KHE SANH to assist operations in the logistic support area. Extensive resupply of all classes of equipment were required. The coordination between the battalion S-4, FLSU-A, and the HST permitted rapid resupply in accordance with the tactical situation.

(5) An advance battalion supply station was established at KHE SANH to assist the BAS in the removal of casualties from the combat area. This station also was responsible for the collection of individual weapons and equipment of casualties and for further transportation of these items back aboard the USS PRINCETON.

(6) Upon the completion of Phase II of the operation, the battalion less the 105mm Howitzer battery was flown by fixed wing aircraft from KHE SANH to Dong Ha. A rough rider was assigned to

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transport the battery to Dong Ha. Further transportation of the battalion to assigned shipping was accomplished by amphibious landing craft.

b. Maintenance. Normal maintenance was conducted throughout the conduct of the operation. One stud shaft for an LVTP-5 was fabricated by the USS MONTICELLO, and a contact team supplied by 1st Amtrac Battalion located in Dong Ha completed the repairs. Weapons and equipment requiring 3rd echelon maintenance is to be turned over to the attached LSU for repair.

c. Treatment of Casualties, Evacuation, and Hospitalization.

(1) Phase I. First echelon medical care was provided in the field by corpsmen attached to each rifle company and supporting units. In addition, a forward BAS consisting of one medical officer and four corpsmen was attached to the Bravo Command Group of this battalion. On this level, first aid and initial evaluation of patients was accomplished, minor ailments treated, and the more seriously sick or wounded were evacuated by helicopter to the USS Princeton for more sophisticated care.

Second echelon (Collecting and Clearing Platoon) and third echelon (Surgical Team) care was combined aboard the USS Princeton, and was able to provide immediate treatment for all casualties except those requiring the specialized skills of neurosurgery, ENT, maxillofacial, or ophthalmology. Laboratory, X-Ray facilities, a blood bank, 2 surgical suites, and holding capacity for 283 patients enabled the Princeton to act as a self contained hospital facility.

During Phase I, casualties were as follows:

KIAs 1  
WIA's 10

All were USMC enlisted personnel, and evacuation was quickly accomplished by HMM 164 to the Princeton. One ARVN interpreter was evacuated for non-battle illness.

(2) Phase II

During Phase II, the organization of first and second echelon care was modified as follows:

A collecting and clearing platoon from Third Medical Battalion was set up at KHE SANH and the medical officer from the Bravo Command Group worked in conjunction with them. Casualties were evacuated from the field to this unit where evaluation, supportive measures, and evacuation for third echelon care was accomplished.

A USAF medical evacuation facility (The 903rd Aero Med Evac Flight Casualty Staging Facility "A") was also set up at the base at KHE SANH, for the purpose of evacuation of casualties for third echelon care. This unit had male nurses on standby and could obtain fixed wing aircraft within 30 minutes, and so provided an efficient and highly trained service.

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At KHE SANH, casualties from 2/3, 3/3, 2/9, 1/26, special forces, ARVN, and NVA POWs were treated. Every attempt was made to send patients of 2/3 to the USS Princeton.

The evacuation of patients from the field to the base at KHE SANH was excellent, however a great deal of difficulty in obtaining helicopter evacuation to the USS Princeton was encountered, and therefore much use was made of the Air Force evacuation unit for disposition of patients to Dong Ha, Phu Bai, and the NSA Hospital at Da Nang.

Casualties from 2/3 were as follows:

	USMC (OFF)	USMC (ENL)	USN (OFF)	USN (ENL)
KIA	1	70	0	5
WIA (Evac)	11	157	0	9
WIA (Nonevac)	3	79	0	2
WIA (Evac Princeton)	4	96	0	4
NonBattle	0	69	0	0
DOW	0	1	0	0

In addition to the casualties of 2/3, four WIAs from other Marine units, and one Special Forces man were evacuated to the Princeton. No Vietnamese battle casualties were cared for on board the Princeton. Of the non battle casualties, only six cases of heat exhaustion and one case of infected feet were evacuated. The remainder constituted sprains, gastro intestinal disorders and other non-serious conditions. Of the 330 total WIAs and nonbattle casualties, 197 were returned to duty, 91 transferred, and the remainder (42) are pending further disposition.

d. Transportation. Only limited organic vehicles were off loaded throughout the conduct of the operation. During Phase I LVTP-5's were used as prime movers for the 105mm Howitzers, and limited battery organic vehicles were used during Phase II. The majority of transportation requests for troop movement, med-evacs, and re-supply was supplied by HMM-164 in direct support of the battalion. Troop movements of considerable distances were conducted as stated in paragraph 11.a. above.

e. Communications.

(1) Phase I. This phase was characterized by fair to good communications in all areas. Communication operations were somewhat hampered by frequency override, possibly because all equipment ashore was intergated into an Amphibious Command Tractor. Some improvement was gained by remoting some of the equipment outside the tractor and utilizing various antennas inside and outside the vehicle. Some interference from Vietnamese stations was noted, but in no case was the interference such that it could not be overridden. On ship to shore circuits, it was found that a deck-mounted MRC-109 was superior in both reception and transmission to the internally mounted VHC-46 equipment itself; nevertheless, some difficulty

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was noted in ship to shore transmission on all circuits, regardless of the location, probably due to the orientation of the ship itself. It is possible that when the superstructure is directly between the transmitting and receiving stations, enough energy is absorbed to cancel or distort transmission. The situation did not become critical, as the down time was invariably minimal.

(a) Two radio nets were activated during Phase I linking the BLT and SLF, SLF TAC #1 and SLF TAC #2. TAC #1 was a VHF/FM circuit and TAC #2 was an HF/SSB. Traffic volume was negligible on SLF TAC #2 due to the general reliability of TAC #1 and the early installation of a MRC-62 ashore. Consequently, SLF TAC #2 was used on an as required basis. It was only once necessary to come up on SSB, due to the distance between ship and shore stations.

(b) There was no covered circuit used. It was not tactically advantageous to bring the necessary radio equipment ashore. The Tac Log circuit did not operate in the covered mode. It should be noted that there was no Shore Party/TacLog station ashore. A BLT Rear station was maintained on the BLT Admin Net aboard ship and resupply requests were relayed to TacLog on this net.

(c) Internal BLT radio nets were satisfactory. The use of both a tactical and administrative net proved most advantageous and greatly alleviated traffic volume on the tactical net. Operating distances were never prohibitive during operations ashore. Relay operations to outlying companies became necessary on one occasion when the company was moving through heavy brush.

(d) Radio Relay was employed both to the ship and to Phu Bai, both utilizing the MRC-62 van, without prime mover. Though some technical difficulties beset both shots, both had less than 25% down time.

(2) Phase II. Radio Communications were excellent during Phase II. The terrain with gently rolling hills lended itself to dependable radio transmission. There was no interference from foreign stations. One frequency was only .05 MC from a Battalion TAC, but that was changed on request. Otherwise, no override was experienced whatsoever. Whip antennas were sufficient for even the most distant stations on the nets.

(a) Through there were HF Frequencies available, it was necessary to activate only the VHF/FM Frequency on Regimental TAC.

(b) There was no covered circuit. It should be noted that a logistics net operated directly from S-4 to LSA. Shore Party net was not activated, nor was a covered circuit employed.

(c) All internal BLT radio nets were satisfactory. There was no Administrative Net employed, through use of one would have eased traffic volume on the Bn TAC. Relay procedure was used on only one occasion to an outlying company.

(d) A Radio Relay shot was set up with three stations utilizing the TAC-27 equipment. The shot was not successful. Equipment was plagued with technical difficulties as well as operator inadequacy. The standing wire installation at KHE SANH produced cross

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talk and stray ringing. The shot was finally shut down as more of a tactical liability than a command support device.

f. Medical Evaluation

(1) The combined second echelon (collecting and clearing company) and third echelon (surgical team) functioned well to provide excellent medical treatment. In this operation, the major detriment utilization of this facility was the difficulty in obtaining helicopter evacuations during Phase II to the USS Princeton. Adequate evacuation must be provided for the system to work.

(2) The 903rd Aero Med Evac Flight Casualty Staging Facility "A" was invaluable in providing rapid, medically accompanied evacuation by fixed wing aircraft to in-country third echelon medical facilities. This unit can be utilized in an area where fixed wing can land, and so would provide an alternate means of evacuation in cases when the ship may be weathered in, insufficient helicopter service is available, when the BLT is too far inland for complete helicopter evacuation, or in a situation where the casualties are too numerous for the ARG hospital facilities to handle.

(3) Had the Collecting and Clearing Platoon of 3rd Medical Battalion not been sent to KHE SANH, the mortality and morbidity rate of the battalion would have been much greater, due to the fact that patients would have had to be transported in excess of fifty miles for second echelon medical treatment. In a situation where the operation is such a long distance from the ship, second echelon medical care should be set up at a point between the site of battle and the ship.

12. Special Equipment and Techniques. None

13. Commanders Analysis

a. Operation Beacon Star was successful. Phase I of the operation provided a newly formed BLT with confidence in its abilities and teamwork within its infrastructure which proved to be the two ultimate factors which dealt the NVA a crushing defeat in Phase II.

b. The ship to shore movement during Phase I was executed smoothly in accordance with a contingent type landing plan which was formulated almost a month prior to the operation without the knowledge of the location of the AOA or the enemy situation.

c. Phase I was characterized by a wide separation of units relying solely on resupply by helicopter. Minimal contact was made with the enemy, however, all units reacted quickly to intelligence reports of enemy locations.

d. On D+4 of Phase I, the BLT launched a combined helicopter and overland assault into Sector Black. This portion of the operation was

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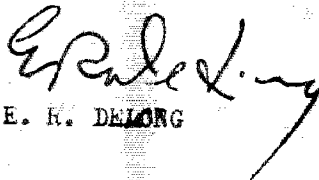
undoubtedly the highlight of this phase as local Army and Marine advisors in the area reported an estimated 250 VC observed in the western portion of the sector. It is felt that the planning and initial smooth execution of this assault would have ultimately resulted in heavy losses to VC units operating in this area. Unfortunately, the remainder of the operation was halted, in response to orders for redeployment to another AO, thus preventing the BLP from realizing their expectations of a good solid contact.

e. The tactical withdrawal from Sector Black, the movement of the battalion (-) from the AOA to PHU BAI for further transportation to KHE SANH, the movement of the battalion (-) from KHE SANH to a new AO with a new mission, in less than six hours attested to the flexibility and readiness of the battalion.

f. Phase II of the operation afforded the battalion combat experience, in sixteen days, which like units could expect to gain over a period of months. In particular, the variety and amount of supporting arms used during this phase gave the battalion FSCC, FAC teams and company commanders a realistic evaluation of the combat support behind them, and added appreciably to their knowledge of the need for detailed coordination and employment of this fire power.

g. Phase II provided the battalion, particularly company commanders, with a better perspective of logistical operations. The constant experience gained in coordinating supporting arms with helicopter resupply, in widely separated areas, proved to be an invaluable education.

h. Intelligence information acquired during Phase II concerning the enemy, his tactics, his habits, and his weapons will surely pay dividends in future operations.

  
E. R. DELONG

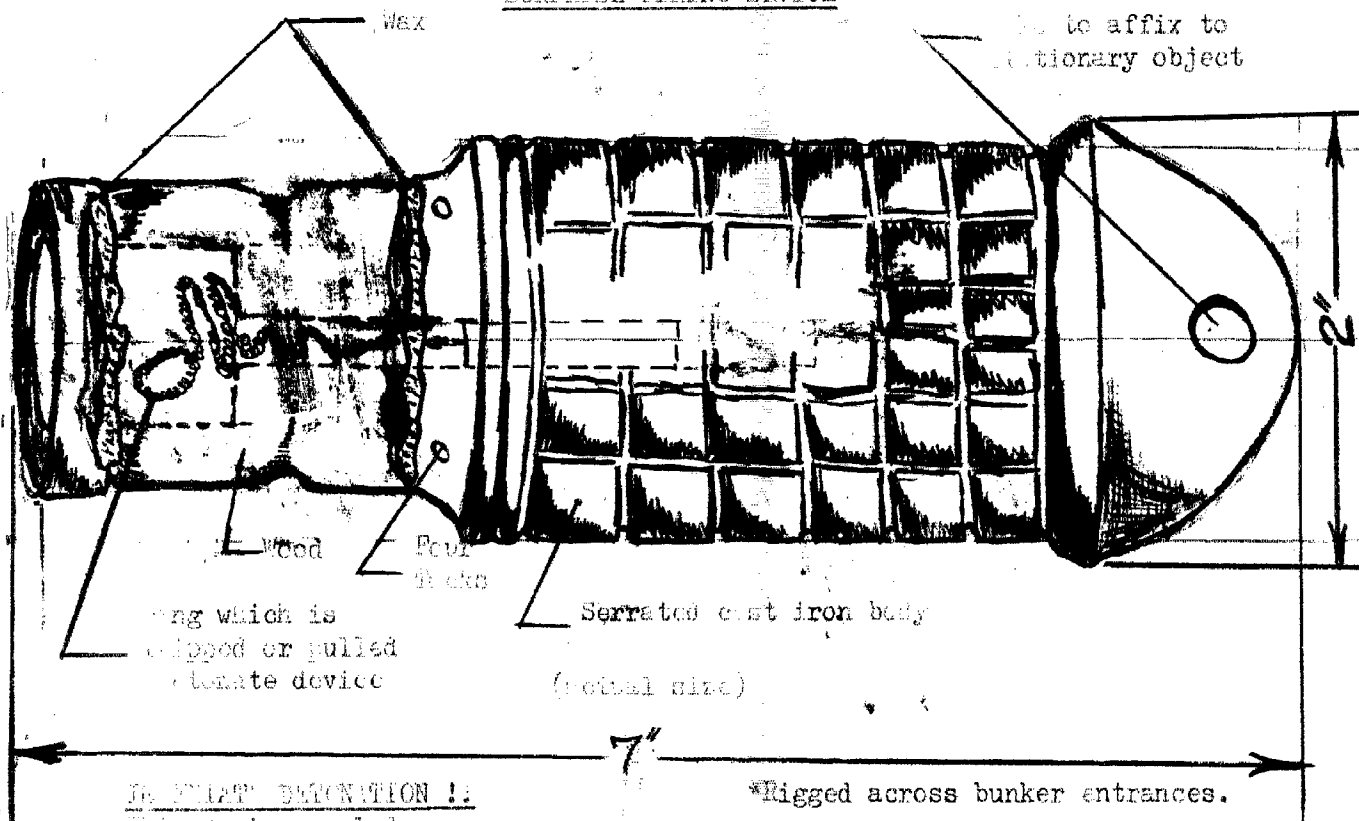
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BM 2/3  
Special Landing Force

SURPRISE FIRING DEVICE



DO NOT ATTEMPT DETONATION !!

This device explodes as soon as string is pulled. DO NOT PULL STRING.

\*Rigged across bunker entrances.

Lying around on the ground.

B E W A R E !!

CERCOM BOOBY TRAP GRENADE

This grenade is manufactured as a ready made firing device to be used by NF and VC troops in the field.

It is functioned by pulling the string that leads from the wooden fuze body.

Do Not attempt to function this grenade as it will detonate instantaneously if your hand if the string is pulled !

The best rig this item with a trip wire as a booby trap near bunker entrances and leave them laying around the battle field. He hopes that you will pull the string to see what will happen !

Report this item to your Platoon Sergeant if you find one.

End 3 to 2/3 4/2 CERCOM STAG  
H/W TA 79.5 C/Chon  
4 Apr - 12 00 67

ENCLOSURE(3)

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DECLASSIFIED


HEADQUARTERS  
Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)  
USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10)  
FPO San Francisco 96601

1/CGC/ego  
5750  
Ser: 0020-67  
22 June 1967

SECRET-NOFORN (Downgraded to unclassified upon removal 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 13-31 May 1967, submission of  
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 reference (a) through (c), the Command Chronology  
for the Special Landing Force (TG 79.5) is submitted as enclosure (1).

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

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HEADQUARTERS  
Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)  
USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10)  
FPO San Francisco 96601

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

13 - 31 May 1967

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PART I	ORGANIZATIONAL DATA
PART II	NARRATIVE SUMMARY
PART III	SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS
PART IV	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT - OPERATION BELT TIGHT/ HICKORY)

GP-4  
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.

1

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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DECLASSIFIED

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PART I

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

1. DESIGNATION

COMMANDING

Special Landing Force (TG 79.5) Colonel H. D. WORTMAN 13 - 31 May 1967

SUBORDINATE UNITS

BLT 2/3 Lt Colonel E. R. DELONG 13 - 21 May 1967  
Major W. O. BEARD 22 - 31 May 1967

HMM 164 Lt Colonel R. D. MCKITRICK 13 - 31 May 1967

ATTACHED UNITS

NONE

2. LOCATION

USS PRINCETON (LPH-5) 13 - 27 May 1967  
USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10) 28 - 31 May 1967  
USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35) 13 - 31 May 1967  
USS OGDEN (LPD-5) 13 - 31 May 1967  
USS TOM GREEN COUNTY (LST-1159) 23 - 31 May 1967

3. STAFF OFFICERS

Executive Officer LtCol D. R. BRIMMER 13 - 31 May 1967  
AO/S-1 2ndLt C. G. COMER 13 - 31 May 1967  
S-2 Major J. H. BROUJOS 13 - 20 May 1967  
Capt C. A. AUSTIN 21 - 31 May 1967  
Asst S-2 1stLt J. D. CHAPMAN 13 - 31 May 1967  
S-3 LtCol R. L. CHRISTIAN JR. 15 - 31 May 1967  
Asst S-3 Major W. A. WESTON 19 - 31 May 1967  
S-4 LtCol E. W. HERICH 13 - 31 May 1967  
CommO Capt F. E. HEURING 13 - 31 May 1967

4. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

SLF Staff: USMC Off - 9 USMC Enl - 27 USN Off - 0 USN Enl - 0  
BLT: USMC Off - 59 USMC Enl - 1465 USN Off - 8 USN Enl - 80  
HMM: USMC Off - 49 USMC Enl - 183 USN Off - 1 USN Enl - 3

SECRET-NOFORN

PART IINARRATIVE SUMMARY

During the period 13-31 May, the Special Landing Force, composed of the SLF, Hq, BLT 2/3 and HMM-164 continued support of combat operations in the Republic of Vietnam. Preparations were made and plans completed for operation BELT TIGHT/HICKORY which commenced on 20 May 1967. Upon successful completion of the operation on 25 May 1967 elements of BLT 2/3 and a detachment of HMM-164 reported OPCON to in-country forces. The ARG sailed for Subic Bay, R. P. for upkeep and transfer of TG 79.5 to the USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10).

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Enclosure (1)

SECRET-NOFORN

PART IIISEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

The following is a review of the activities of the Special Landing Force (TG 79.5). Detailed information of BLT 2/3 and HMM 164 is shown in the appropriate command chronology in PART IV. Detailed information on BELT TIGHT/HICKORY is contained in PART IV.

A. 13 - 19 May 1967

1. On 13 May the ARG/SLF was positioned near Da Nang, I CTZ, RVN.
2. On 15 May, CTG 76.5, CTG 79.5 and representatives were at Headquarters, III MAF for planning. LtCol CHRISTIAN reported aboard for duty.
3. From 16-19 May the ARG/SLF continued planning for operation BELT TIGHT/HICKORY.
4. On 19 May CTF and representatives were aboard the USS PRINCETON for liaison visit. Major W. A. WESTON and Captain AUSTIN reported aboard for duty with the SLF Staff.

B. 20 - 26 May 1967

1. On 20 May Operation BELT TIGHT/HICKORY commenced with the landing of BLT 2/3 by helicopter in the DMZ area of Quang Tri Province. CTF 79 and representatives departed. The CG, 3d MarDiv visited CTG 76.5 and CTG 79.5 aboard the USS PRINCETON. Operational Control of the SLF CHOPPED to CG III MAF at 200700H May67 (Auth CTG 76.5 msg 200012Z May67 and CG III MAF msg 200344Z May67). CG 3d MarDiv passed OPCON Btry B, 1/12 to 12th Marines at 200700H May67 and 2d Plt (Rein), Co A, 3d TkbN to 3d TkbN at 201400H May67 (Auth CG 3d MarDiv msg 191350Z May67).
2. Operational control of BLT 2/3 (-) passed to 9th Marines at 231600H May67 (Auth CG 3d MarDiv msg 230718Z May67).
3. Operation BELT TIGHT terminated at 251600H May67 (Auth COMSEVENTH-FLT msg 250654Z May67).
4. Evening of 25 May the USS PRINCETON departed Dong Ha, I CTZ, RVN enroute to Subic Bay R. P. CTG 79.5 remained in Dong Ha pending CHOP SLF elements to CG III MAF.
5. On 26 May Operational control of the SLF less BLT 2/3 (-) and Det HMM 164 (8 CH46A) CHOPPED to CATF at 261600H May67 (Auth CG III MAF msg 260952Z May67). CG 1st MAW assumed OPCON Det HMM 164 at 261600H May67.

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C. 27 - 31 May 1967

1. On 27 May TG 79.5 debarked from the USS PRINCETON upon arrival at Subic Bay, R. P. and embarked aboard the USS TRIPOLI. The USS OGDEN, with CTG 79.5 embarked, and USS MONTICELLO sailed from I CTZ, RVN enroute Subic Bay, R. P.

2. On 29 May the USS OGDEN and USS MONTICELLO arrived at Subic Bay, R. P.

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Enclosure (1)

SECRET-NOFORN

## PART IV

CHRONOLOGY OF SUBORDINATE COMMANDS  
AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Sited  
sep-77*
- Appendix 1 Command Chronology, BLT 2/3, *12-31 May 67*
- Appendix 2 Command Chronology, HMM 164, *12-31 May 67*
- Appendix 3 SLF, After Action Report, *BELT TIGHT/HICKORY, 20-25 May*  
~~BEACON STAR Phases I and II~~
- Appendix 4 HMM 164, After Action Report, *BELT TIGHT/HICKORY, 20-25 May*  
~~BEACON STAR Phases I and II~~
- 1/10  
1/10  
above*
- Appendix 5 BLT 2/3, After Action Report, *BELT TIGHT/HICKORY, 20-28 May*  
~~BEACON STAR Phases I and II~~
- ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

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Enclosure (1)

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COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT, OPERATION BELT TIGHT/HICKORY

Map: Vietnam, AMS Series L-7014, 1:50,000, Sheets 6442 IV and 6342 I.

1. GENERAL.

a. Operation BELT TIGHT was conducted by the Amphibious Ready Group/ Special Landing Force in the Demilitarized Zone south of the Ben Hai River in Quang Tri Province, I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam.

b. The Operation, held in conjunction with, and in support of 3d Marine Division Operation Hickory, commenced on 20 May 1967 at 0700 with the landing of the helicopter borne assault forces in landing zone Parrot (YD 144775) and landing zone Mockingbird (YD 133771). The operation was terminated at 1600 on 25 May 1967.

2. TASK ORGANIZATION.

Special Landing Force  
BLT 2/3

HMM 164

Colonel H. D. WORTMAN  
LtCol E. H. DELONG (12-21 May)  
Major W. O. BEARD (22-25 May)  
LtCol R. D. MCKITRICK

3. INTELLIGENCEa. Enemy Situation and Capabilities Prior to Operation BELT TIGHT/HICKORY

(1) Enemy Situation. Enemy ground forces in the objective area had been identified as the 32nd Regiment, 341st Division; 4th, 5th and 6th Battalions, 812th Regiment, 324B Division; 29th Regiment, 325B Division; and the K400 Local Force Company.

(2) Enemy Capabilities. It was anticipated that the enemy could attack isolated units and outposts with up to battalion strength; delay or defend in present operating areas with forces available, employing artillery and rockets against friendly forces; employ limited fighter and bomber attacks from north of the DMZ; employ AA/AW and SAM missiles against aircraft; lightly defend the area with forces locally available and attack our helicopter zones with mines, AW/SA fire and mortars.

b. Enemy Situation and Factors - During Operation BELT TIGHT/HICKORY

(1) Enemy Situation. First contact with the enemy was a mortar attack in landing zone Parrot consisting of 20 rounds of 60mm mortar fire

24/6  
BELT TIGHT/HICKORY  
20-25 May 1967



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from YD 147775. Mortar fire was suppressed by fixed wing aircraft on station. The remaining contacts during the operation consisted of light mortar attacks and sporadic SA and AW fires with the exception of the second day of the operation when the Battalion CP was hit with 169 rounds of artillery and mortar fire. Each mortar and artillery attack was countered by friendly artillery or air strikes.

(2) Enemy Tactics The enemy displayed those tactics usually associated with a well trained regular force. Mortar attacks were conducted from well concealed and varied positions with exceptional accuracy. Defensive positions constructed by the enemy were well built and reinforced with steel girders and corrugated steel sides. One such structure at YD 149778 was considered to be the location of a Division CP. Offensively the enemy employed mortar attacks followed by small arms and automatic weapons fire against friendly units both on the move and in defense.

c. Terrain and Weather

(1) Terrain Features, Cover and Concealment.

(a) Terrain Features. Terrain features in the TAOR consisted of low rolling plains that graded into hills rising from 10 to 40 meters high. The plains and hills were covered with a short growth of evergreen shrubs, vines and herbs, with some cultivated areas located in the plains which were used mostly for growing rice. Further south in the TAOR the terrain leveled out. The objective area was crisscrossed with clearly defined footpaths and trails running from north to south. Streams were fordable and posed no problem.

(b) Weather. The weather was considered excellent from the standpoint of supporting fire. No rain and clear skies provided uninterrupted use of CAS. However, the high temperatures during the initial phase of the operation caused numerous heat casualties who were later returned to duty. Visibility at night was also excellent due to full moon.

4. Mission. On D-Day at L-Hour Special Landing Force Bravo will conduct a heloborne assault into the southern DMZ in Quang Tri Province to conduct search and clear operations against NVA/VC forces located in the assigned TAOR.

5. Concept of Operations. The operation was planned as a search and destroy operation utilizing heloborne assault landing. Operation was to be conducted in two phases. The initial phase was the landing by helicopter and seizing 3d Marine Division Objectives 2 and 3. This phase was characterized by maximum surprise, mobility, and shock action. After seizure of assigned objectives, Phase II consisted of a thorough, deliberate and aggressive

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Enclosure (1)

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search and clear operation to the south in assigned TAOR to link up with friendly forces. Maximum reliance was placed on use of supporting arms.

#### 6. Execution.

a. Operation BLET TIGHT/HICKORY was executed in accordance with 3d Marine Division Operation Orders 25-67 and 27-67 and CTG 79.5 Operation Plan 120A-67 implemented by Frag Order for Operation BELT TIGHT/HICKORY.

b. D-Day was established as 20 May 1967 with L-Hour at 0700. By 1500 on D-Day, Command Group "A", with companies "F" and "H" had landed in Landing Zone PARROT and secured Division Objective 3, while Command Group "B", with companies "E" and "G" had landed in Landing Zone MOCKINGBIRD and secured Division Objective 2. The SLF then commenced Phase II of the operation. For details, see enclosures (2) through (4).

#### 7. Commander's Analysis.

##### a. Planning.

(1) On 12 May the SLF backloaded from Operation BEACON STAR and commenced preparations for departing Vietnam and sailing for an upkeep-training period at Subic Bay, R. P. However, CG, III MAF requested the ARG/SLF be placed in a 24 hour readiness posture and that SLF representatives commence planning at Headquarters III MAF, on 15 May to develop plans for future operations. (CG III MAF 121518Z May 1967). Commander, 7th Fleet, approved the request and directed compliance (COM 7TH FLT 130340Z May 1967).

(2) CTG 79.5 commenced planning with III MAF and 3d Marine Division and formulated plans for the employment of the SLF. Planning continued through the issuance of final orders on 19 May 1967. During the planning phase, the following steps were accomplished:

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

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

(c) Arrangements were completed for the processing of detainees and disposition of captured NVA.

(d) Procedures for casualty evacuation and handling of RVN casualties were determined.

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- (e) Command relationships were finalized.
- (f) Logistic support procedures were arranged.
- (g) The civic action program was arranged.

(h) It was determined that the SLF would maintain a liaison officer at 3d Marine Division, and with the 1st ARVN Division.

c. Command Relationships.

(1) Operation BELT TIGHT was not considered an amphibious operation. An Amphibious Objective Area was not established for this operation; and the control and coordination of supporting arms was not the responsibility of the CATF. The entire operation was conducted under the operational control of the in-country commander after the SLF passed the high water mark enroute to the objective area.

(2) Once ashore operational control of various elements of the SLF was passed to other commands during the operation. Battery "B" 1/12 was passed to 12th Marines on 20 May. The Tank Platoon was passed to 3d Tank Battalion on the same day. On 23 May operational control of BLT 2/3 was passed to 9th Marines. A detachment of eight CH46 Helicopters with a maintenance crew was CHOPPED to 1st Marine Air Wing on 26 May. III MAF passed operational control of the remainder of the SLF to CTG 76.5 effective at 1600 on 26 May 1967.

d. Supporting Arms.

(1) The concept for the employment of supporting arms was unique compared with past operations of the SLF. It was not feasible nor practicable for the SLF to assume control or coordination of supporting arms as the assigned area of operations was within the established operating area of the 3d Marine Division and in the center of an operation in progress. BLT 2/3 accomplished normal fire support coordination within its TAOR.

(2) Air support for the operation was controlled and coordinated by 3d Marine Division DASC located at Dong Ha. Direct artillery support was provided by Battery "D" 2/12, a unit of the Provisional Artillery Battalion, Gio Linh.

(3) A Forward Bomb Line was established along the northern boundary of the Demilitarized Zone. Normal fire support coordination procedures were employed on targets south of the line. Fires beyond the line were coordinated with 7th Air Force through the 3d Marine Division FSCC.

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(4) Fire Support provided by the 3d Marine Division was considered to be satisfactory.

e. Civic Affairs.

(1) Civilian personnel in the assigned objective area were moved in an orderly manner to previously designated collection points where they were transported by the 3d Marine Division by family units to the Quang Tri sector family resettlement area at Cam Lo. At Cam Lo, every possible assistance was rendered to insure that refugees were properly registered and received shelter, subsistence and medical care.

(2) All non-combatants located within the DMZ were removed regardless of personal choice. All non-combatants in the assigned area south of the DMZ were strongly encouraged to relocate.

f. Communications.

(1) During Operation BELT TIGHT communications with the BLT were marginal, while communications with the Third Marine Division and SLF liaison personnel were highly satisfactory. Faulty communication with the BLT was caused by long ranges, heavily foliated operational area, and the rapid movement of the maneuver elements.

(2) Average transmission distance from the BLT to the SLF was 22 miles. The tactical situation and the movement of units during daylight hours precluded installation of auxillary antenna equipment, RC-292, and use of portable high frequency radios. Heavy jungle and lack of passable roads also precluded use of vehicular radios such as the AN/MRC-109 and AN/MRC-83. The primary means of communication was the AN/PRC-25. The AN/PRC-47 was used as the alternate means when the BLT established their night positions.

(3) The concept of operations and the type of terrain encountered during this operation precluded installation of radio relay to the BLT, placing the additional burden of administrative traffic on tactical radio circuits. During one twenty-four hour period, 105 radio messages were processed by two operators on two radio circuits.

(4) The SLF communication section provided radio operators for the liaison teams located with the Third Marine Division at Dong Ha, and the Vietnamese Airborne units near Gio Linh. Normally, this would have created a serious shortage of radio operators, however, radio relay was not employed for this operation, thus allowing the radio relay operators to be used to augment regular radio operators.

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(5) A covered circuit provided the Commander the capability of conducting instantaneous coordination and liaison with the Third Marine Division CP at Dong Ha. Previous operations have proven that secure voice communications on a covered circuit are invaluable for providing positive control.

(6) During Operation BELT TIGHT it was necessary for CTG 79.5 to exchange classified matter with the Third Marine Division on a continuing basis using the KY-8. During several vital transmissions, other stations on the net not using security devices, and unaware of stations already in the cipher mode of operation, attempted to pass traffic on this circuit and disrupted transmissions of stations using the KY-8. Solution to this problem would be to establish a separate circuit on which all transmissions would be in the secure mode of operation. It would not be necessary to operate the covered circuit continuously. Initial contact would be established on the uncovered circuit and a request made to activate the covered circuit to transmit classified traffic. Units desiring to discuss classified matters would be the only stations permitted on the circuit. Uncovered stations would not be permitted to enter the circuit, thus preventing interference with covered transmissions.

(7) The rapid build-up of heat, resulting in equipment failure, prevents continued use of the KY-8. Experience gained from frequent use indicates a solution to this problem is to activate the net on a time schedule thus allowing sufficient time for the equipment to cool.

g. Readiness of the SLF.

(1) The SLF, embarked on the Seventh Fleet Amphibious Group Shipping; The USS PRINCETON (LPH-5), the USS OGDEN (LPD-5), and the USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35), is prepared to fulfill amphibious contingencies which may arise within the Seventh Fleet area of operations. Continuous emphasis is placed on personnel, training, supply and equipment readiness.

(2) The SLF readiness posture was again clearly demonstrated in the planning and execution of Operation BELT TIGHT. Upon the completion of Operation BEACON STAR on 12 May 1967 the ARG/SLF was preparing to proceed to Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines for upkeep/training when the CG, III MAF Msg 121518Z May was received requesting the employment of the SLF for support of Operation HICKORY.

(3) The operation marked the first time that the SLF was not initially employed in an amphibious role. The SLF was assigned as the division reserve and was subsequently directed to conduct a helo-borne assault landing. This landing, within the previously established 3d Marine Division area, was conducted under OPCON of the 3d Marine Division.

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(4) The rapid response and ultimate success of the operation, although unique from past commitments, has again demonstrated the flexibility, mobility and the all-around combat capability inherent in the ARG/SLF Navy/Marine Team concept.

#### h. Logistics

(1) Logistic support for the SLF was provided almost entirely from embarked supplies aboard ARG shipping. Prior to commencement of Operation BELT TIGHT/HICKORY, liaison was established with 3d Marine Division and Force Logistics Support Group ALFA representatives to coordinate logistic support from in-country assets located at the LSA in Dong Ha if required.

(2) D + 1 a detachment of Shore Party personnel and a BLT supply representative were transferred with tentage and radio equipment by landing craft up the CUA VIET River to activate a TAC LOG group at the LSA at Dong Ha. However, communications could not be maintained from Dong Ha between the TACLOG detachments aboard ships and the BLT CP ashore with FM equipment normally allocated for TACLOG use. Therefore, in order to support the BLT ashore and to maintain positive radio communication, it was determined that resupply operations could best be accomplished utilizing the facilities and contingency supplies aboard ARG shipping.

(3) During the entire period of the operation the vast majority of resupplies were delivered from ARG ships direct to units ashore by helicopters assigned to the SLF. Although logistic support of the BLT ashore was adequate to meet resupply needs, response time was not on par with previous operations. Delay occurred when resupply requests had to be processed through a single BLT tactical net and then subsequently relayed by message to the primary TAC LOG support detachment aboard the LPH. Thus, lack of direct communication between primary TAC LOG Group and the BLT CP adversely affected response time.

(5) The LPH was designated as the Casualty Evacuation Control Ship. BLT 2/3 casualties were evacuated by helicopters directly to the LPH or the medical receiving station ashore at Dong Ha for initial medical treatment and further evacuation when required. Responsibility for casualty reporting was exercised by the SLF. No significant problems were encountered.

8. The following comments on BLT 2/3 and RMM 164 After Action Reports are included.

#### A. BLT 2/3

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(1) Paras 11f (3) and 11f (4) state UPON CHOP of the BLT in-country and departure of the ARG/SLF the loss of the ARG Medical facilities and the services of the C&C company and Surgical team created a situation that could have been "tragic" had the BLT met with heavy resistance. The Surgical team in the ARG Medical facilities provides medical aid to anyone requiring assistance but has the primary mission of medical support for the SLF. They are not an extension of in-country medical facilities. Upon Chop of BLT 2/3, CG Third Mar Div made the determination as to what units remained in-country. The C&C Company was directed by CG Third Mar Div to remain aboard ARG shipping.

(2) Concur with Para 13a, that an additional day of S&D operations along the Ben Hoi river would have resulted in the uncovering of more enemy supplies. However, all units participating in Operation Hickory were directed to be clear of the DMZ by 222400H.

(3) Para 13 states the BLT experienced numerous delays in receiving clearance for Artillery fire thus hindering the accomplishment of its mission. Battery "B" chopped to 12th Marines at 200700H. During the operation all Artillery support and Fire support coordinations was controlled by in-country forces, therefore the SLF is unable to offer any comment on this statement.

#### B. HMM-164

(1) Para 2a (3) states that the first wave from the USS OGDEN was landed in the alternate LZ. This was the result of mixed loading of two companies in the same wave however the LZ had already been partially secured by units landed in the initial waves in the primary LZ.

(2) Para 3b states that aircraft utilization continues to be a problem due to the assignment of only one type aircraft. This comment is concurred in, however recommendation concerning Helo mix for SLF deployments, have been submitted to higher authority. It is understood that current West Pac resources do not permit the providing of the desired helo mix and still sustain in-country operations. The use of organic aircraft for MedEvacs is considered appropriate and every effort is being made and, will continue to be made to minimize ADMIN/C&C flights using the CH-46.

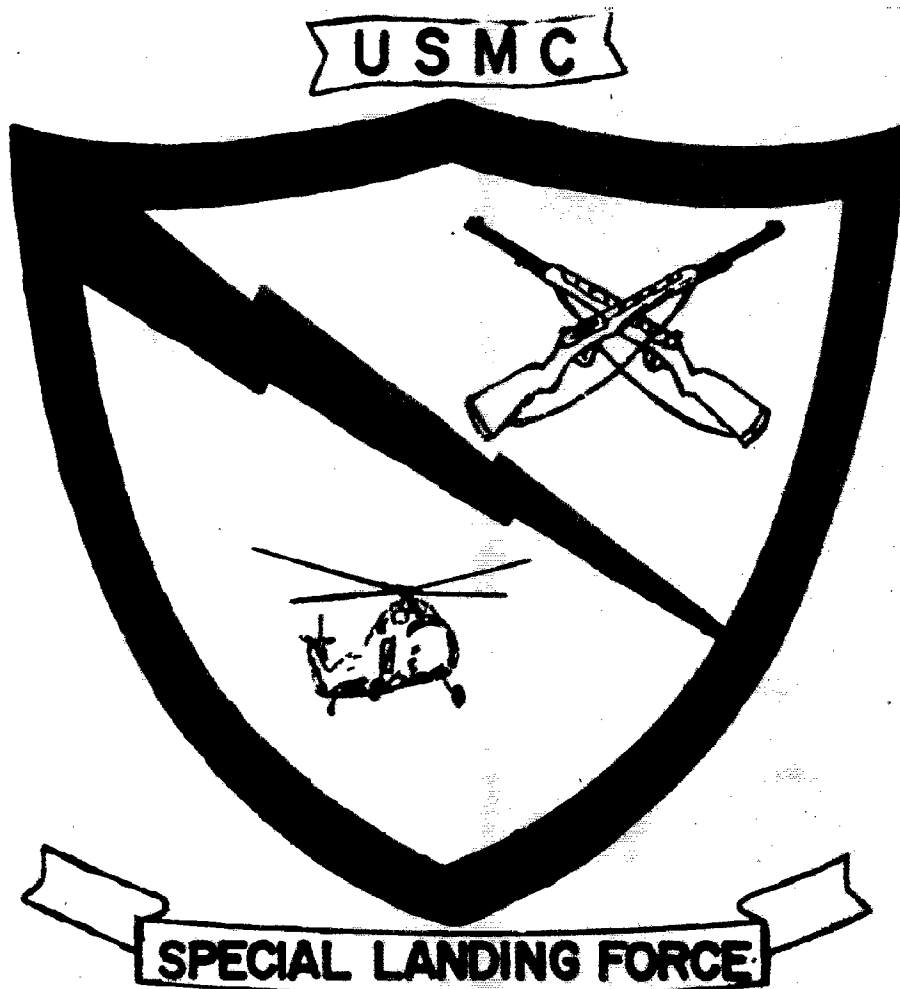
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**SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED**

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## COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

1 JUNE - 3 JULY 1967



79 79.5 (S&F)

# CTG 79.5

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1 June 1967

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HEADQUARTERS  
Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)  
FPO San Francisco 96602

1:CGC:wdm  
5750  
Ser: 0025-67  
18 July 1967

SECRET-NOFORN (Downgraded to unclassified upon removal of enclosure (1))

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding General, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade, FMF  
Subj: Command Chronology for the period 1 June - 3 July 1967, submission  
of  
Ref: (a) MCO 5750.2  
(b) FMFPacO 5750.8  
(c) BrigO 5750.1G  
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 (TG 79.5) is submitted as enclosure (1).

  
J. G. DIONISOPOULOS  
Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps  
Commanding

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HEADQUARTERS  
Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)  
FPO San Francisco 96602

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

1 June - 3 July 1967

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EVENTS  
PART IV \_\_\_\_\_ SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

GP-4  
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.

SECRET-NOFORN

ENCLOSURE (1)

DECLASSIFIED

# DECLASSIFIED

SECRET-NOFORN

## PART I

### ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

#### 1. DESIGNATION

#### COMMANDING

Special Landing Force (TG 79.5) Colonel H. D. WORTMAN 1 Jun-3 Jul 1967

#### SUBORDINATE UNITS

BLT 2/3 Major W. O. BEARD 1 Jun-3 Jul 1967

HMM 164 LtCol R. D. MCKITRICK 1 Jun-3 Jul 1967

#### ATTACHED UNITS

NONE

#### 2. LOCATION

USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10)	1 Jun-3 Jul 1967
USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35)	1 Jun-3 Jul 1967
USS OGDEN (LPD-5)	1 Jun-3 Jul 1967
USS TOM GREEN COUNTY (LST-1159)	1 Jun-3 Jul 1967

#### 3. STAFF OFFICERS

Executive Officer	LtCol D. R. BRIMMER	1-19 Jun 1967
Executive Officer	LtCol R. L. CHRISTIAN Jr.	20 Jun-3 Jul 1967
AO/S-1	2ndLt C. G. COMER	1 Jun-3 Jul 1967
S-2	Capt C. A. AUSTIN	1 Jun-3 Jul 1967
Asst S-2	1stLt J. D. CHAPMAN	1 Jun-3 Jul 1967
	2ndLt R. T. WALLACE	13 Jun-3 Jul 1967
S-3	LtCol R. L. CHRISTIAN Jr.	1 Jun-3 Jul 1967
Asst S-3	Major W. A. WESTON	1 Jun-3 Jul 1967
S-4	LtCol E. W. HERICH	1 Jun-3 Jul 1967
CommO	Capt F. E. HEURING	1 Jun-3 Jul 1967

#### 4. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

SLF Staff:	USMC Off - 9	USMC Enl - 27	USN Off - 0	USN Enl - 0
BLT:	USMC Off - 59	USMC Enl - 1465	USN Off - 8	USN Enl - 80
HMM:	USMC Off - 49	USMC Enl - 183	USN Off - 1	USN Enl - 3

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PART II

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

The ARG/SLF remained in Subic Bay, R.P. for upkeep from 1-7 June 1967. During this period BLT 2/3 remained in-country, OPCON to 3d MarDiv. On 8 June the ARG/SLF sailed for I CTZ, RVN arriving 10 Jun 67. The detachment HMM 164 was backloaded on 10 June 1967 and BLT 2/3 completed backloading on 11 June 1967, thereby reconstituting the SLF. Planning commenced on 12 June 1967 for Operation BEACON TORCH/CALHOUN to be conducted in Quang Nam/Quang Tin Province, I CTZ, RVN. Planning continued through 17 June 1967 with D-Day on 18 June. BLT 2/3 was landed by helicopter and landing craft commencing at L Hour. Upon completion of the amphibious phase of BEACON TORCH, operational control of the SLF was passed to in-country forces. As the BLT continued a search and destroy mission west into Que Son District, they joined with elements of the 1st Marine Division in Operation CALHOUN on 25 June 1967. Operation CANHOUN terminated on 1 July 1967 and BLT 2/3 then continued their assigned mission in an easterly direction toward the sea. BLT 2/3 completed backloading on 2 July 1967 and Operation BEACON TORCH was terminated at 021300H Jul 67.

SECRET-NOFORN

Enclosure (1)

SECRET-NOFORN

PART IIISEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

The following is a review of the activities of the Special Landing Force (TG 79.5). Detailed information of BLT 2/3 and HMM 164 is shown in the appropriate command chronology in PART IV. Detailed information on BEACON TORCH/CALHOUN is contained in PART IV.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
1-7 June	ARG/SLF remained in Subic Bay, R.P. for upkeep.
8 June	ARG/SLF departed Subic Bay and sailed for I CTZ, RVN. CTG 79.5 and representatives departed for Hq, III MAF for SPECOPS planning.
10 June	ARG/SLF arrived I CTZ, RVN. CTG 79.5 and representatives returned from Hq, III MAF. Det HMM 164 (8 CH46A) reported OPCON to CTG 79.5 at 101400H June 1967 and embarked aboard the USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10). OPCON Btry B, 1/12 passed to BLT 2/3 at 100800H June 1967.  Ref: 12th Marines msg 100516Z Jun67
11 June	BLT 2/3 completed backloading aboard the ARG shipping and CTG 79.5 assumed OPCON at 111800H June 1967.
12 June	CTG 79.5 and representatives visited Hq, 1st Marine Division for further SPECOPS planning.
12-17 June	ARG/SLF continued planning for Operation BEACON TORCH.
18 June	Operation BEACON TORCH commenced with the landing of BLT 2/3 by helicopter and landing craft along the Quang Nam/Quang Tin Province border.
21 June	Operational control of SLF PASSED to III MAF thence to CG 1st Marine Division at 210600H June 1967.  Ref: CTG 76.5 msg 201145Z Jun67 CG III MAF msg 210146Z Jun67
22 June	Operational control of Recon Platoon PASSED to 1st Recon Bn at 221800H June 1967.  Ref: CG 1st Marine Division msg 211849Z Jun67

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25 June      Operation BEACON TORCH/CALHOUN commenced as the BLT continued in a search and destroy mission West into Que Son District in conjunction with units of the 1st Marine Division.

1 July      Operation CALHOUN terminated at 011200H July 1967.  
Ref: CG 1st Marine Division msg 010603Z Jul67.  
OPCON Recon Plt CHOPPED to CTG 79.5 at 011800H July 1967.  
Ref: CTG 79.5 msg 280842Z Jun67.  
OPCON SLF passed to CTG 76.5 at 012400H July 1967.  
Ref: CG 1st Marine Division msg 011545Z Jul67.

2 July      BLT 2/3 was backloaded aboard the ARG shipping.  
Operation BEACON TORCH terminated at 021300Z July 1967.  
Ref: COMSEVENTHFLT 020536Z Jul67.

3 July      ARG/SLF was in a holding area near Dong Ha, I CTZ, RVN.

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Enclosure (1)

SECRET-NOFORN

## PART IV

CHRONOLOGY OF SUBORDINATE COMMANDS  
AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Appendix 1 12th Marines msg 100516Z Jun67  
 " CTG 76.5 msg 201145Z Jun67  
 " CG III MAF msg 210146Z Jun67  
 " CG 1st Marine Division msg 211849Z Jun67  
 " CG 1st Marine Division msg 010603Z Jul67  
 " CTG 79.5 msg 280842Z Jun67  
 " CG 1st Marine Division msg 011545Z Jul67  
 " COMSEVENTHFLT 020536Z Jul67
- Appendix 2 Command Chronology, BLT 2/3, 1 Jan - 2 Feb 67
- Appendix 3 Command Chronology, HMM 164, 1 Jan - 2 Feb 67
- Appendix 4 SLF, After Action Report, BEACON TORCH / LAL HOUN, 18 Jan - 2 Feb 67
- Appendix 5 HMM 164, After Action Report, BEACON TORCH, 18 Jan - 2 Feb 67
- Appendix 6 BLT 2/3, After Action Report, BEACON TORCH, 18 Jan - 2 Feb 67

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Enclosure (1)

O 100516Z JUN 67  
FM TWELFTH MARINES  
TO SECOND BN TWELFTH MARINES  
INFO SECOND BN THIRD MARINES  
OTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
CG THIRD MARDIV

BT

S E C R E T

OPCON

A. CG THIRD MARDIV 090219Z

1. IN RESPONSE TO REF A CHOP OPCON BTRY B FIRST BN TWELFTH MARINES  
TO BLT 2/3 EFFECTIVE 100500H JAN 67.

GP-4

BT

App 1-#1



KA104

OO RUMHMF RUMGUL RUMSMA RUHHBRA RUHMFMA RUMSBB RUABQL  
 RUAUBUZ RUMFUE RUMFUAA RUEUDD RUMFKB RUMFUAM RUMFCR RUMHAW  
 RUWJMSA RUAUBAC RUMHLA RUMFKE RUHHHQA RUMSAL RUMECR  
 DE RUAUBJG 154 1781805  
 ZNY SSSSS  
 O 201145Z JUN 67  
 FM CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
 TO ZEN/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
 RUMHMF/CG III MAF  
 INFO RUMGUL/COMSEVENTHFLT  
 RUMSMA/COMUSMACV  
 RUHHBRA/CINCPACFLT  
 RUHMFMA/CG FMFPAC  
 RUMSBB/COMNAVFORV  
 ZEN/CTF SEVEN SIX  
 RUABQL/CTF SEVEN NINE  
 RUAUBUZ/CTF SEVEN THREE  
 RUMFUE/CTF SEVEN SEVEN  
 RUMFUAA/CTG SEVEN ZERO PT EIGHT  
 RUEUDD/CTG SEVEN ZERO PT NINE  
 RUMFKB/CTF ONE ONE FIVE  
 RUMFUAM/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FOUR  
 RUMFUAM/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FOUR  
 RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN THREE PT FIVE  
 RUMHAW/CG FIRST MAW

Ton 0310H  
 AMM 164  
 AT 2/3

PAGE TWO RUAUBJG 154 S E C R E T  
 ZEN/BLT 2/3  
 RUWJMSA/COMPHIBPAC  
 RUAUBAC/CTG SEVEN SIX PT EIGHT  
 ZEN/HMM 154  
 RUMHLA/CG I MARDIV  
 RUMFCR/CTU SEVEN ZERO PT EIGHT PT NINE  
 RUMFKE/CTE SEVEN ZERO PT TWO PT ONE PT ONE  
 RUHHHQA/CINCPAC  
 RUABQL/CG FMFPAC (FWD)  
 RUMSAL/CDR SEVENTH AIR FORCE  
 RUMECR/CTU SEVEN ZERO PT SEVEN PT ONE  
 RUMHAW/CG THIRD MARDIV  
 ZEN/IG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
 ZEN/USS EL DORADO  
 RUMFKB/CTG ONE ONE FIVE PT ONE  
 BT

S E C R E T

BEACON TORCH (U)

A. CTG 79.5 201136Z JUN 67 NOTAL

1. THE AMPHIBIOUS PHASE OF BEACON TORCH TERMINATES. CONTROL

PAGE THREE RUAUBJG 154 S E C R E T

OF SUPPORTING ARMS PASSES ASHORE TO SLF BRAVO AND OPCON SLF BRAVO  
 PASSES TO CG III MAF EFFECTIVE 210600H JUN 67.

2. ORIG REMAINS IN OVERALL SUPPORT OPERATIONS ASHORE.

BT

App 1-2

A030  
MSA671VVV FBB554VV DDKE575  
OO RUAUBJG  
DE RUMHMF 1538 172014G  
ZNY SSSSS  
O 210146Z JUN 67  
FM CG III MAF  
TO ZEN//CG FIRST MARDIV  
RUAUBJG/CTG SEVEN NINE POINT FIVE  
INFO RUMSMA/COMUSMACV  
RUMGUL/COMSEVENTHFLT  
ZEN/CG FMFPAC  
ZEN/CG FMAW  
ZEN/CG FLC  
RUMFUV/CTF SEVEN SIX  
RUAUBQL/CTF SEVEN NINE  
RUAUBJG/CTG SEVEN SIX POINT FIVE  
BT

TOR: 211703H

S/S

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E C R E T

OPCON SLF BRAVO

CR III MAF ASSUMES OPCON SLF BRAVO (CTG 79.5) EFF 210600H JUNE  
67 AND PASSES OPCON TO CG FIRST MARDIV AT SAME TIME.

GP-4

BT

NNNN

app 1-3

0 211849Z  
FM CG FIRST MARDIVREIN  
TO CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
INFO CG III MAF  
CG FMAW  
CG FLC  
CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
FIRST MAR  
FIFTH MAR  
SECOND BN FIFTH MAR  
ELEVENTH MAR  
FIRST RECON BN  
BT

SECRET

- FRAG 0 74-67 (OPCON SLF BRAVO)  
A. CG III MAF 210146Z JUN 67 (NOTAL)  
B. CTG 79.5 170546Z JUN 67 (NOTAL)  
C. DIV 0 3480.1 (NOTAL)  
1. IAW REF A CG FIRST MARDIV ASSUMES OPCON SLF BRAVO (CTG 79.5) EFF 210600H JUN 67.  
2. SLF ORGAINZTION AND ATTACHMENTS REMAIN SAME WITH EXCEPTION CHOP OF RECON ASSETS TO FIRST RECON BN IAW REF B. RECON PLATOON TO ARRIVE FIRST RECON BN AREA WITH HELMETS, ARMORED VESTS, NORMAL PATROL EQUIPMENT AND GAS MASKS IF AVAILABLE, PRIOR TO 221200H JUN 67. CHOP EFFECTIVE ON ARRIVAL FIRST RECON BN AREA.  
3. ZOA OF SLF IS AREA BOUNDED ON EAST BY SOUTH CHINA SEA, TO SOUTH BY LINE FM BT253460 TO BT213438 ALONG SOUTH SIDE OF ROAD TO INTERSECTION WITH NATL RTE ONE TO BRIDGE AT BT138408, THENCE 1 STRAIGHT LINE TO BT0044; ON WEST BY LINE FM BT 0044 TO BT 072457; AND ON NORTH FM BT 072497 ALONG SONG BA REN TO SONG THU BON TO SOUTH CHINA SEA. DIRLAUTH WITH FIRST MAR FIFTH MAR AND QUANG DA SPEC ZONE TO EFFECT NECESSARY COORDINATION.  
4. DURING PERIOD 210600H TO 241800H JUN 67 CONDUCT S&D OPNS IN ZOA EAST OF RAILROADS AND GENERALLY WEST OF NATL RTE ONE.  
5. BE PREPARED ON ORDER TO CONTINUE ATTACK 1 TO PAGODA VALLEY (VIC COORDS BT0044, BT0545 AND BT0646) COMMENCING O/A 25 JUN 67.  
6. SUBMIT REPTS IAW REF C.

GP-4

BT

R040-40/001102LAFH112

PP RUAUBJG

DE RUMHLA 0022E 1820603

ZNY CCCCC

RUAUBJG-T-CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE

P 010603Z JUL 67

FM CG FIRST MARDIV REIN

TO ZEN/FIRST MARDIV/OPCON

INFO ZEN/CG III MAF

ZEN/CG FIRST MAW

RUMHFL/CG FLC

ZEN/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE

ZEN/CTG SEVEN NINE PT 5

RUMNVH/DSA I CORPS

RUMHVH/SA QUANG DASPEC ZONE

RUMNVG/SA SECOND ARVN DIV

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L

OPN CALHOUN (U)

1. OPN CALHOUN TERMINATED 011200H JUL67.

GP-4

BT

Tor: 011751H

S/3

App 1- #5

ZN 3SSSS  
P 0842Z JUNE 67  
FM CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
TO CG FIRST MAR DIV  
FIRST RECON BN  
INFO CINCPACFLT  
CG FMFPAC  
COMSEVENTHFLT  
CG 11 MAF  
CTF-76  
CTF-79  
CTG 79.5  
BLT 2/3  
BT

S E C R E T

OPCON RECON ELMS (U)

(A) CG FIRST MAR DIV 241347Z JUN67 (NOTAL)

(B) CTG 79.5 221110Z JUN67

1. RECOMMENDED RECON ELMS REF A, CHOPPED TO CTG 79.5 FOR OPNS CALHOUN  
BE RETURNED TO OPCON FIRST RECON BN EFFECTIVE 281800H JUNE 67.

2. REQUEST SLF RECON ELMS CHOPPED TO FIRST RECON BN REF B. BE RETURNED

PAGE TWO S E R E C T

TO OPCON CTG 79.5 EFFECTIVE 011800H JULY 67.

GP-4

BT

TOP 02/0129H

TIENR00136  
Z O 011545Z JUL 67  
FM CG FIRST MARDIV REIN  
TO RUAUBJG/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
RUAUBJG/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
INFO Z EN/CG III MAF  
ZEN/CG FIRST MAW  
RUMHFL/CG FLC

BT

S E C R E T

ON SLF BRAVO

A- CG FIRST MARDIV REIN 301215Z JUN 67

CG III MAF 010626Z JUL 67

1. CANCEL REF A.

2. IAW REF B OPCON SLF BRAVO PASSED CTG 76.5 012400H JUL 67.

GP-4

BT

App 1-7

NNNNA077

P 020536Z JUL 67  
 FM COMSEVENTHFLT  
 TO RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
 RUENAAA/CNO  
 RUHHHQA/CINCPAC  
 RUHHBRA/CINCPACFLT  
 INFO RUMFCR/CHG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
 RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN ZERO PT EIGHT  
 RUMFCR/CTF SEVEN SIX  
 RUMSAR/CMDR SEVENTH AF  
 RUMNMG/CG THIRD MARDIV  
 RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FOUR  
 RUABQL/CTF SEVEN NINE  
 RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN THREE PT FIVE  
 RUMSMA/COMUSMACV  
 RUMFKB/COMNAVFORV  
 RUWJMSA/COMPHIBPAC  
 RUHHFMA/CGFMFPAC  
 RUMECR/CTU SEVEN ZERO PT SEVEN PT ONE  
 RUMHAW/CG FIRST MARDIV

TOR 030055H

PAGE TWO RUMGUL 0118 S E C R E T  
 RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FOUR  
 RUMHMF/CG III MAF  
 RUMFKE/CTE SEVEN ZERO PT TWO PT ONE PT ONE  
 RUMFCR/CTF SEVEN THREE  
 RUABHT/CG FMFPAC(FWD)  
 RUMFKB/CTF ONE ONE FIVE  
 RUMFCR/CTF SEVEN SEVEN  
 RUMHAW/CG FIRST VAW

BT

S S CGCZZ

CTE 70.2.1.1 PASS ADVANCE COPY TO COMUSMACV  
 OPERATION BEACON TORCH (U)

1. FOR CTG 76.5. TERMINATE OPERATION BEACON TORCH 2 JUL.
2. FOR CNO, CINCPAC, CINCPACFLT. CANCEL NICKNAME BEACON TORCH 2 JUL 67.

GP-4

BT

RELEADTS

App 1-#8

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COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT - BEACON TORCH/CALHOUN

Map Reference: AMS, Vietnam, 1:50,000, Series L7014, Sheets 6640 I, II, III &amp; IV.

1. Introduction: Operation BEACON TORCH was a unilateral amphibious operation conducted in accordance with MWP 22(A), utilizing waterborne and helicopter assault forces. It was conducted 20 miles south of Da Nang in the Duy Xuyen District of Quang Nam Province and the Thang Binh and Que Son Districts of Quang Tin Province, I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam. Inclusive dates for Operation BEACON TORCH were 18 June to 2 July 1967. The SLF participated in Operation CALHOUN, a division size operation, with the 1st Marine Division during the period 25 June to 1 July 1967.

2. TASK ORGANIZATION.

Special Landing Force BRAVO  
BLT 2/3  
HMM 164

Colonel H. D. WORTMAN  
Major W. O. BEARD  
LtCol R. D. MC KITRICK

3. INTELLIGENCEa. Enemy Situation and Capabilities Prior to Operation BEACON TORCH/CALHOUN.

(1) Enemy Situation. Enemy forces in the objective area had been identified as 1st and 3d Battalions, 3rd NVA Regiment; V.28 Local Force Company; V.29 Local Force Company and two unidentified Local Force Companies.

(2) Enemy Capabilities. The enemy was capable of:

- (a) attacking with a force of up to one NVA Regiment (3rd) or
- (b) defending at a time and place of his choosing with a force of up to one NVA Regiment or;
- (c) reinforce with a force of up to one NVA Regiment (21st), two separate LF Battalions and four separate LF Companies supported by elements of an NVA Artillery Regiment.

b. Enemy Situation and Factors During Operation BEACON TORCH/CALHOUN.

(1) Enemy Situation. This operation was limited to small enemy unit contact; light probes and harassing action with mortars, automatic weapons,



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small arms and surprise firing devices. First contact with the enemy occurred as the second heliborne wave landed in landing zones Wren and Cardinal. The enemy delivered several rounds of automatic weapon and small arms resulting in minor damage to the helicopters. Armed UH-1E's, on station, quickly suppressed the enemy fire and heliborne operations continued unopposed. Heaviest contact with the enemy occurred on D-Day when H 2/3 engaged an estimated 100 Viet Cong. Air strikes were called resulting in 23 enemy KIA (confirmed) and 44 enemy KIA (probable). The remaining contacts with the enemy consisted of light mortar attacks, A/W and S/A fires, mines and surprise firing devices.

(2) Enemy Tactics. The enemy displayed those tactics usually associated with a well trained and organized regular force. They used the well constructed bunkers for protection from air strikes and artillery, the numerous trench systems for evasion and tunnel complexes for concealment. Sniper activity was frequent and accurate. The enemy used small unit tactics with exceptional professionalism, occasionally pressing larger forces but usually relying on the hit and run concept.

c. Terrain and Weather.

(1) Terrain Features. Terrain features in the TAOR consisted primarily of poorly drained flat area of rice cultivation, elevation rarely exceeding 20 meters. To the west, the elevation rose sharply and the topography became extremely rough. The hills and mountainous areas were dissected by numerous perennial and intermittent streams.

(2) Weather. The objective area was presently in the dry season. The temperatures ranged from 85 to 105 degrees causing a number of heat casualties as well as hampering the lift capability of helicopters. Light haze and fog were present during early morning, limiting visibility from five to seven miles but had no adverse effect on the operation. One thunder storm occurred during the final days of the operation which held up resupply for one hour then passed rapidly to the south.

4. Mission. Special Landing Force BRAVO commencing at L and H-Hour on D-Day conducted a heliborne and waterborne assault landing south of the Cua Dai River; conducted search and destroy operations to the SW to vicinity Base Area 116 to destroy enemy forces, supplies and installations; and, upon completion of mission, when ordered, executed a tactical amphibious withdrawal.

5. Concept of Operations.

a. It was planned that the SLF would conduct search and destroy oper-

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ations in the area south of Cua Dai River along the Axis Phuong Tri (BT 220540), Tay Thanh (BT 172503), Mong Nghe (BT 130483) to Pagoda Valley (BT 060460). Upon completion of operations vicinity Pagoda Valley, search and destroy operations would be conducted eastwardly along axis Xuan Lu(1) (BT 145441), An Thanh (2) (BT 195461), Ha Tay (BT 238481).

b. The inherent mobility of the SLF was to be exploited initially to ensure a rapid buildup of combat power ashore thus gaining maximum surprise and shock effect. Search and destroy operations were to be conducted immediately and be characterized by aggressive movement on the part of small units to locate and destroy enemy forces in zone. Maximum reliance was to be placed on use of supporting arms throughout the operation.

## 6. Execution

a. Operation BEACON TORCH was initiated by COMSEVENTHFLT 090814Z June67. Execution was in accordance with CTG 79.5 Operation Plan 120A-67 implemented by CTG 79.5 150103Z Jun67, Frag Order for Operation BEACON TORCH.

b. D-Day was established as 18 June 1967 with L-Hour at 0600H and H-Hour at 0800H. L-Hour was confirmed at 0615H. Company "F" in the first helicopter wave touched down 2000 meters south of LZ CARDINAL (BT 191500) at 0621 without opposition. Deviation from plans was caused by HU-IE flight leader error in marking zone and delay in completing LZ preparation by close air support. Subsequent helicopter waves landed Companies "H" and "E" and the Battalion Command Group in LZ CARDINAL. Company "G" landed over Red Beach at 0800H without opposition. The landing force secured initial objectives and was firmly established ashore by 20 June. Control was passed ashore at 0600H on 21 June and OPCON of the SLF was passed to CG, III MAF, thence, immediately, to CG, 1st Marine Division. Search and destroy operations were conducted east of the railroad bisecting the AOA from 18-24 June. From 25 June to 1 July the SLF participated in 1st Marine Division Operation CALHOUN. Operation BEACON TORCH was terminated upon completion of the tactical withdrawal of the SLF to ARG shipping on 2 July 1967. For details, see enclosures (2) and (3).

## 7. Commander's Analysis.

### a. Planning

(1) On 12 June the SLF in ARG shipping returned to Vietnam from an upkeep period at Subic Bay, R.P., and began backloading BLT 2/3 at Dong Ha. At the request of CG, III MAF, planners reported to Headquarters, 1st Marine Division, Da Nang, at 0800 on 12 June to commence planning for future operations (CG III MAF 060630Z Jun67).

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(2) Planning continued through the issuance of final orders on 16 June. During the planning phase, the following steps were accomplished.

(a) Maps, aerial photography, area analysis and enemy order of battle were obtained and limited aerial reconnaissance of the AOA was conducted.

(b) Current intelligence was obtained from 1st Marine Division, 1st Marines, and U.S. Army Sector Advisor, Hoi An.

(c) Arrangements were made for processing and evacuation of PWs, detainees, refugees, civilian casualties and captured material.

(d) Interrogation - Translator Teams and Document Exploitation Teams were requested from III MAF.

(e) Logistic support procedures were arranged.

(f) Radio frequencies were obtained and assigned and the communications plan was published.

(g) The AOA was agreed upon and command relationships were finalized.

(h) A naval gunfire support ship was requested and requirements for air support were determined and requested.

(i) 1st Marine Division was requested to position one platoon of 155mm howitzers at Thang Binh (BT 170415) to reinforce fires of SLF artillery.

(j) Additional helicopter support was requested consisting of three armed and one unarmed UH-1E, and two CH-53 for landing artillery and heavy lifts.

(k) Arrangements were made to provide liaison with 1st Marine Division and to exchange liaison parties with District Headquarters at Hoi An.

b. Command Relationships.

(1) Operation BEACON TORCH was a unilateral amphibious operation with command relationships in accordance with NWP 22(A). During the Amphibious Phase, operational control of the SLF was with CTG 76.5. Control was passed ashore and operational control of the SLF was passed to III MAF and thence,

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immediately, to 1st Marine Division at 210600H June 1967 (CG, III MAF 210146Z Jun67). Operational control was passed directly back to CTG 76.5 from 1st Marine Division at 012400H Jul (CG, 1stMarDiv Jul67).

(2) At various times during the operation the SLF provided liaison officers to 1st Marine Division, 1st Marines, 5th Marines, and to District Headquarters, Hoi An.

c. Supporting Arms. Supporting arms were available to the SLF in unusual quantities during BEACON TORCH.

(1) Air.

(a) Fixed wing air support was readily available and was utilized when required. After initial neutralization of landing zone CARDINAL, fixed wing close air support was on station until L + 180. Aircraft on strip alert could be obtained within 30 minutes thereafter.

(b) Four armed UH-1E helicopters were assigned to the SLF and based aboard the LPH. This enabled the provision of escort to all CH-46 flights as well as on call support to troop units on the ground. The UH-1E crews controlled fixed wing air strikes in addition to providing support with onboard ordnance.

(c) Aircraft for aerial observation was limited to a period of about 5 hours on D-Day when a armed UH-1E was employed. Since ground observation was severely limited in the majority of the area of operation, the lack of air observation was a limiting factor in the employment of artillery and naval gunfire.

(2) Artillery.

(a) Artillery attached to the SLF consists of one 105mm howitzer battery. To provide additional artillery support to BEACON TORCH 1st Marine Division was requested to position a 155mm howitzer platoon at Thang Binh (BT 170415), on the southern boundary of the AOA, on D-1 to reinforce SLF artillery. Two platoons were provided. The availability of this artillery permitted forward observers to call for artillery fire immediately upon landing. Medium and heavy artillery which could reach any portion of the AOA ashore was also available from BT 108583 near Hoi An. Fires were requested from this unit on several occasions consisting primarily of H and I fires and preplanned defensive targets.

(b) Mobility of SLF Artillery was dependent upon helicopters. The 105mm battery was initially landed in LZ CARDINAL the afternoon of D-Day.

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One displacement was made to BT 153453 from whence the battery was backloaded to ARG shipping on 2 July. All movements were accomplished by CH-53 helicopters provided by 1st Marine Air Wing.

(3) Naval gunfire. HMAS HOBART was scheduled to support 1st Marine Division during the period 17-20 June. In response to the request for naval gunfire support, CTG 70.8 assigned both HMAS HOBART and USS HUBBARD (DD-748) to support BEACON TORCH. After H-Hour, when it became apparent that both ships would not be required by the SLF, HMAS HOBART was released to provide general support fires for the 1st Marine Division. The USS HUBBARD (DD-748) continued to provide support until the termination of the Amphibious Phase. Naval gunfire support was not again required until the amphibious withdrawal. USS AULT (DD-698) was assigned to support the withdrawal commencing at 0700 on 2 July. However, due to a change of plans, USS AULT reported in the evening of 1 July and departed the area at 0400 on 2 July. USS PROVIDENCE (CLG-6), which was to have replaced USS AULT at 0700 on 2 July, did not arrive on station until after 0900. Because of the availability of close air support on station during the initial heavy contact with the enemy and the subsequent scarcity of suitable targets, naval gunfire received little utilization during BEACON TORCH.

(4) Coordination. Coordination of supporting fires was conducted in accordance with current doctrine. During the amphibious phase, liaison officers were exchanged between the SLF and 1st Marine Division FSCC. When control of supporting arms was passed ashore, the SLF Fire Support Coordinator moved ashore and established himself in the BLT 2/3 FSCC. Communications were established with 1st Marine Division FSCC by radio relay direct line reinforced by a FM radio circuit. Supporting arms communication with division FSCC and all stations ashore were generally good while communication with SACC aboard ship was infrequent and very poor on FM circuits. BLT 2/3 FSCC performed all coordination procedures appropriate to an infantry battalion while the SLF FSCC carried out the coordination required with higher and adjacent units. When the battalion command group moved deep inland to Pagoda Valley with the Battalion FSCC, an austere SLF FSCC was maintained in the BLT rear command post utilizing the Naval Gunfire Liaison Team to operate required communications. No problems were encountered with fire support coordination.

#### d. Communications

(1) The USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10) was scheduled for installation of the new family of FM radios and KY-8's while in Subic Bay, P.R., during late

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May - early June for upkeep. The necessity to transfer LFORM ammunition during this same period precluded the energizing of antennas to test the newly installed communications equipment prior to leaving Subic Bay.

(2) Also, the extremely poor weather conditions during the upkeep period prevented completion of top-side location and connection of antennas. Once underway for RVN the ship's electronics technicians worked to complete the overall installation. Upon arrival in RVN, during the backload of BLT 2/3, a limited operational test of the VRC-46's was conducted, but only over very short distances and not under tactical conditions.

(3) (a) On D-Day for Operation BEACON TORCH all of the Landing Force nets were programmed for operation utilizing ship's VRC-46 radios. It became apparent shortly after L-hour that these radios would not be reliable at the distances dictated by the tactical situation. The more critical circuits soon had to be shifted to deck mounted Marine radios.

(b) The majority of the frequency assigned by 1st Marine Division were between 55 and 65 megacycles. Interference, presumably from high power transmitters aboard ship, soon rendered all frequencies above 50 MC completely useless. After several attempts to locate the source of the interference, it was determined that a high frequency transmitter used by the ship to communicate with Japan was the cause of the interference. An emergency request to 1st Marine Division for additional frequencies below 50 Megacycles and a request to the ARG Staff Communication Officer to relocate the transmitter antennas for the NTX entry partially solved the problem.

(c) A concerted effort was made to shift the landing force nets back to ship's radios, only to discover that the wiring and connection of antennas was inadequate or incomplete. In several instances antennas were cross - wired or not connected at all.

(d) Those antennas which were connected and operating were not performing as required due to improper location and poor siting. Two antennas for the VRC-46 radios were located too close to ship's stacks, thus exposing the matching units to excessive heat. One antenna was mounted behind the antenna mast aft of the super-structure, and two antennas were mounted horizontally, level with the flight deck.

(e) Despite repeated attempts to establish reliable communications with the landing force and with 1st Marine Division using ship's VRC-46 radios, the deck-mounted Marine radios provided the only positive means of contact from ship-to-shore.

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(f) Only after continuous and diligent effort on the part of SLF and Naval Comm personnel to correct malfunctions and discrepancies was the SLF able to begin phasing ship's VRC-46 radios into operation on landing force circuits.

(4) KY-8. The configuration, as installed by SRF, Subic, for radio communication using the KY-8 did not meet the requirements of the SLF. An intricate series of changes had to be performed on several patch panels to enable the radio to be used in the plain and cipher modes. The KY-8 was situated in the SLF operations office and the VRC-46 was located in a transmitter room quite a distance from the operations office. Signal loss from the long line lead from radio to trunk line to radio central to KY-8 to the remote unit was considerable and not able to maintain solid contact with distant stations. To insure communications on the covered circuit with 1st Marine Division and the BLT, it became necessary to rely on the deckmounted MRC-110. Subsequently, the KY-8 was placed at the same location as the radio and was able to provide reliable secure voice transmission.

#### (5) Radio Relay

(a) Initially, the GRC-10's aboard ship were not properly calibrated and aligned and were unable to function properly. The SLF was able to obtain technical assistance from 1st Marine Division and soon was able to establish Radio Relay contact with them. The Radio Relay plan provided for a link from the SLF (afloat) to division and from the BLT (ashore) to division. One channel from the BLT would be connected directly to the SLF through division.

(b) Again, antenna location aboard the LPH was not desirable nor was it conducive to sound, continuous communications. This fact, plus the discovery that two radio relay antennas were faulty due to internal flaws, rendered radio relay approximately 25% effective.

(c) The unreliable radio relay performance placed an extremely heavy burden of traffic on tactical communications circuits.

#### (6) Communications Augmentation.

(a) The SLF provided liaison officers to District Headquarters, Hoi An, 1st Marines and 5th Marines. It was necessary to request special assistance from 1st Marine Division to provide these officers with radio operators and still provide the communications required by the SLF operations office aboard the LPH. Four radio operators were assigned to TG 79.5 from Chu Lai to ensure a constant, rapid exchange of vital intel-

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ligence among the liaison officers and the Landing Force Commander.

(b) An attempt was made to use the Canadian Multiplex unit between 1st Marine Division and TG 79.5 to alleviate the problem created by lack of VHF frequencies. This attempt met with very little success, due mainly to the requirement for two relatively clear frequencies ten megacycles apart for reliable operation.

e. Logistics

(1) Prior to the commencement of the BEACON TORCH/CALHOUN Operation, liaison was established with Force Logistics Command to coordinate logistic support from in-country sources. It was agreed that logistic support for the SLF forces ashore would initially be provided from embarked supplies aboard ARG shipping, thereafter, at D Plus 4, from a LSA at Thang-Binh. Activation of the Thang-Binh LSA, however, was subsequently deferred until 1 July 1967 and as a result logistic support for the first phase of BEACON TORCH was of necessity provided entirely from supply resources aboard ARG shipping.

(2) Commencing on 25 June, D-Day for operation CALHOUN, all classes of supply, with exception of water, emergency ammunition and BB 451 battery charger service required in support of the operation, were provided from the Dinh-Ban LSA controlled by the 1st Marine Regiment. A small Shore Party detachment was assigned by BLT 2/3 to augment LSA personnel and to process and stage resupply requirements received from the field.

(3) Resupplies were delivered direct to units ashore by helicopters assigned to the SLF. Resupply procedures established ashore and aboard ship were adequately responsive to SLF needs. No unusual logistic problems were encountered.

(4) The LPH was designated as the Casualty Evacuation Control Ship. BLT casualties were evacuated by helicopters directly from the field to the LPH for initial medical treatment and further evacuation when required. Responsibility for casualty reporting was exercised by SLF. There was no deviation from procedures formerly standardized as a result of previous operations.

f. Civic affairs.

(1) Provisions were made to evacuate all refugees to Hoi An regardless of the province from which they originated. There they would be further placed, as appropriate, by GVN representatives.



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(2) On 21 June BLT 2/3 established its command post vicinity BT 116473, an area containing a large number of civilians. A MEDCAP program was commenced on 23 June and continued daily until leaving the area on 27 June. During this period medical care was provided to 261 Vietnamese and dental care to 10 Vietnamese. Six civilians were evacuated to USS TRIPOLI for medical treatment.

9. Readiness of the SLF SLF BRAVO, embarked in ARG BRAVO shipping (USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10), USS OGDEN (LPD-5), USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35) and USS TOM GREEN COUNTY (LST-1159)) is prepared to respond to contingencies which may arise anywhere within the Seventh Fleet Area of Operations. Continuous emphasis is placed on personnel, training, supply and equipment readiness. The success of Operation BEACON TORCH reflected the continued readiness of the SLF

10. The following comments on BLT 2/3 and HMM 164 After Action Reports are included.

A. BLT 2/3

(1) PARA 13A. The landing of the initial helicopterborne assault is covered in paragraph 6.b of this report.

(2) PARA 13B. Concur that the delay in the movement of B/1/12 could have had a disastrous effect on the operation. However the CH-53 is not permitted to enter a Landing Zone that is under fire. The Zone in question was under fire during this period. The withdrawal of B/1/12 was made with CH-53's from a secure Zone and no problem were encountered.

(3) PARA 13C. Concur that the enemy controlled the beach area prior to the landing and that there were enemy in the area during the withdrawal. However when an area is swept clear of enemy but the tactical situation does not permit permanent occupancy, it is highly probable the enemy will filter back in.

B. HMM 164

(1) PARA 3A. The excess flying requirements placed on the UH-1E Pilots is done only as an operational necessity. Concur with the solution set forth Paragraph 4b.

(2) PARA 3B. The CH-53 A/C were not attached to the SLF but were requested from CG First MAW on a as needed basis. The attachment

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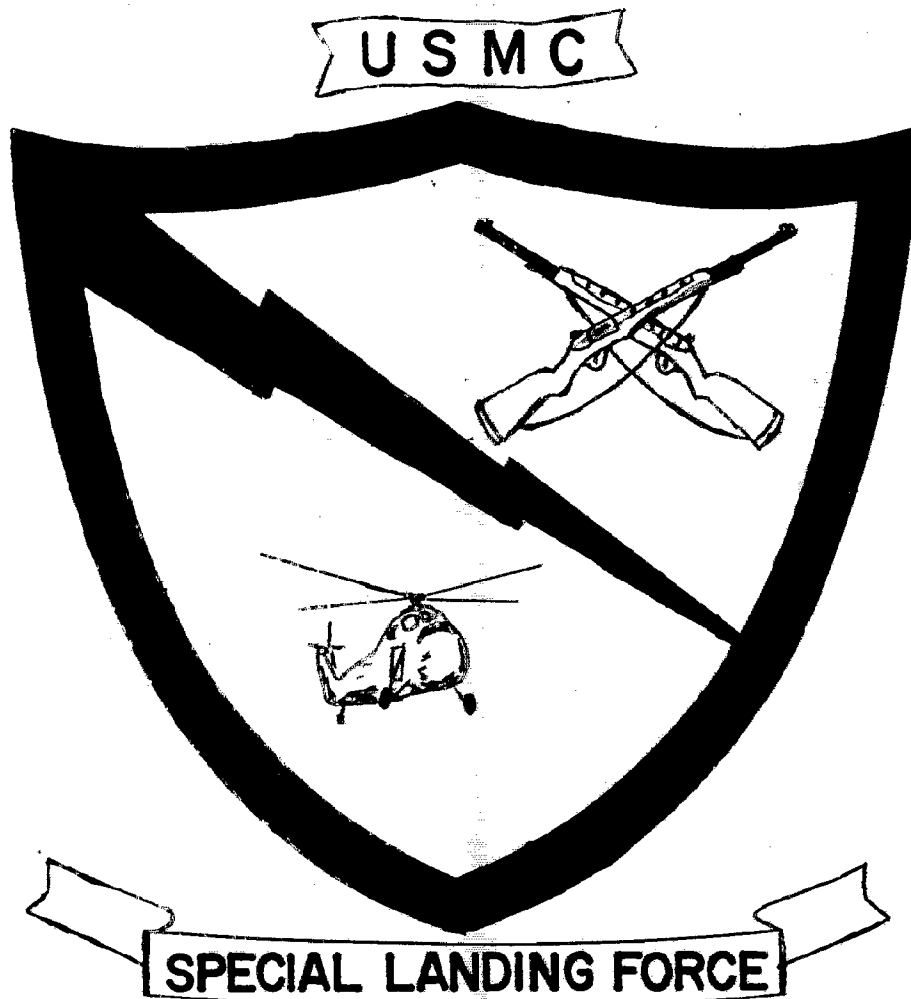
of the UH-1E Detachment to the embarked Helicopter squadron is the normal procedure used by the SLF. The Phrase "operated independently of the embarked squadron" is misleading. The only departure from normal procedure was the UH1E pilots were briefed by the SLF operations duty officers. This was necessitated by the short time frame on most missions during the early stages of the operations.

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**SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED**

#0013025

# COMMAND CHRONOLOGY 4 JULY - 31 JULY 1967



**CTG 79.5**

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**SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRE**  
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79.5 (S.L.F.)

4-81 June 67

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HEADQUARTERS  
Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)  
FPO San Francisco 96602

#0013025

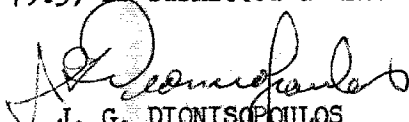
1:CGC:wdm  
5750  
Ser: 0029-67  
4 August 1967

SECRET-NOFORN (Downgraded to unclassified upon removal of Enclosure (1))

From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding General, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade  
Subj: Command Chronology for the period 4 - 31 July 1967, submission of  
Ref: (a) MCO 5750.2  
(b) FMFPacO 5750.8  
(c) BrigO 5750.1C

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 (TG 79.5) is submitted as Enclosure (1).

  
J. G. DIONISOPOULOS  
Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps  
Commanding

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HEADQUARTERS  
Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)  
FPO San Francisco 96602

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

4 - 31 July 1967

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PART II	_____	NARRATIVE SUMMARY
PART III	_____	SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS
PART IV	_____	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

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DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS

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ENCLOSURE (1)

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PART IORGANIZATIONAL DATA1. DESIGNATIONCOMMANDER

Special Landing Force (TG 79.5)	Col H. D. WORTMAN	4-5 Jul 1967
	Col J. G. DIONISOPOULOS	6-31 Jul 1967

SUBORDINATE UNITS

BLT 2/3	Major W. O. BEARD	4-13 Jul 1967
	Major J. H. BROUJOS	14-16 Jul 1967
	LtCol E. W. HERICH	17-31 Jul 1967
HMM 164	LtCol R. D. MCKITRICK	4-12 Jul 1967
HMM 265	LtCol W. R. BEELER	12-31 Jul 1967

ATTACHED UNITSNONE2. LOCATION

USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10)	4-31 Jul 1967
USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35)	4-31 Jul 1967
USS OGDEN (LPD-5)	4-31 Jul 1967
USS TOM GREEN COUNTY (LST-1159)	4-8 Jul 1967
USS TERRELL COUNTY (LST-1157)	8-31 Jul 1967

3. STAFF OFFICERS

Executive Officer	LtCol R. L. CHRISTIAN Jr.	4-31 Jul 1967
AO/S-1	2ndLt C. G. COMER	4-31 Jul 1967
S-2	Capt C. A. AUSTIN	4-31 Jul 1967
Asst S-2	1stLt J. D. CHAPMAN	4-31 Jul 1967
Asst S-2/AO	2ndLt R. T. WALLACE	4-31 Jul 1967
S-3	LtCol R. L. CHRISTIAN Jr.	4-31 Jul 1967
Asst S-3	Major W. A. WESTON	4-31 Jul 1967
S-4	LtCol E. W. HERICH	4-16 Jul 1967
	Major J. F. SHOVAR	19-31 Jul 1967

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Enclosure (1)

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CommO

Capt F. E. HEURING

4-31 Jul 1967

Asst CommO

Capt C. C. ENTWISTLE

12-31 Jul 1967

4. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

SLF Staff:	USMC Off - 10	USMC Enl - 31	USN Off - 0	USN Enl - 0
BLT:	USMC Off - 62	USMC Enl - 1356	USN Off - 8	USN Enl - 87
HMM:	USMC Off - 40	USMC Enl - 170	USN Off - 1	USN Enl - 3

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Enclosure (1)

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PART IINARRATIVE SUMMARY

On 4 July Operation BEAVER TRACK/BUFFALO commenced with an administrative landing of BLT 2/3 in Cam Lo, RVN. During the entire operation the 2d Bn, 3d Marines were OPCON to Third Marines while other units of the BLT were OPCON to the appropriate in-country commander. On 12 July Intra-Theatre rotation of the helicopter squadron was completed with HMM 265 relieving HMM 164. Operation BUFFALO terminated and Operation HICKORY II commenced on 14 July in conjunction with 3d Marine Division operations. Operation HICKORY II terminated on 16 July and BEAVER TRACK terminated on 17 July. The SLF was reconstituted upon completion of the backloading of BLT 2/3 at 0920H on 17 July.

Plans were confirmed with 3d Marine Division and Operation BEAR CHAIN commenced on 20 July. The 2d Bn, 3d Marines and selected attached units were OPCON to Fourth Marines for BEAR CHAIN. BLT 2/3 was backloaded aboard the ARG shipping and Operation BEAR CHAIN terminated at 1200H on 26 July.

The ARG/SLF refurbished while in Da Nang Harbor from 27 through 31 July.

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Enclosure (1)



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PART IIISEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

The following is a review of the activities of the Special Landing Force (TG 79.5). Detailed information of BLT 2/3, HMM 164 and HMM 265 is shown in the appropriate Command Chronology in PART IV. Detailed information on BEAVER TRACK/BUFFALO/HICKORY II and BEAR CHAIN is contained in PART IV.

DATEEVENT

4 July	Operation BEAVER TRACK/BUFFALO commenced with an administrative landing of BLT 2/3 into Cam Lo, I CTZ, RVN. Operational control passed to CG III MAF at 040900H Jul67 thence to CG 3d MarDiv thence to Third Marines at the same time.  Ref: CTG 76.5 msg 032340Z Jul67 CG III MAF msg 040732Z Jul67 CG 3d MarDiv msg 050103Z Jul67
6 July	Designated units of BLT 2/3 Combat Support and Combat Service Support commenced an administrative off-load at Dong Ha, RVN and CHOPPED to the appropriate in-country commands.
12 July	HMM 164 reported OPCON to CG First MAF at 121200H Jul67 for Intra-Theatre rotation and HMM 265 reported OPCON to CTG 79.5 at the same time.  Ref: CTG 79.5 msg 111232Z Jul67 HMM 265 msg 130948Z Jul67
14 July	Operation BUFFALO terminated and Operation HICKORY II commenced on 14 July 1967 in conjunction with Third MarDiv operations.
16 July	Operational Control of BLT 2/3 minus the Truck Platoon passed to CTG 79.5 at 170920H Jul67. Operation HICKORY II terminated at 161600H Jul67.
16-17 July	CTG 79.5 and representatives at 3d MarDiv Hq for planning Operation BEAR CHAIN. Operation BEAVER TRACK terminated at 171800H Jul67 and OPCON BLT 2/3 passed to CTG 79.5 at the same time. SLF reconstituted and BLT 2/3 backloaded aboard the ARG shipping.  Ref: COMSEVENTHFLT msg 172358Z Jul67
18-19 July	Planning continued for Operation BEAR CHAIN.

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- 20 July Operation BEAR CHAIN commenced with the landing of BLT 2/3 by helicopter and landing craft along the border of Quang Tri/Thua Thien Province, I CTZ, RVN.
- 21 July Operational Control of SLF passed to CG III MAF at 211400H Jul67 thence to CG 3d MarDiv at the same time. CTG 79.5 passed OPCON 2d Bn, 3d Mar, Btry B 1/12, 3d Platoon (Rein), Co B, 3d Recon Bn, 1st Platoon (Rein), Co C 3d SP Bn to Fourth Marines at 211400H Jul67.
- Ref: CTG 76.5 msg 210600Z Jul67  
CG III MAF msg 212314Z Jul67  
CTG 79.5 msg 230514Z Jul67
- 26 July OPCON 2d Bn, 3d Mar, Btry B 1/12, 3d Platoon (Rein), Co B 3d Recon Bn, 1st Platoon (Rein), Co C 3d SP Bn CHOPPED to CTG 79.5 at 260001H Jul67 and OPCON CTG 79.5 CHOPPED to CG III MAF at the same time. CG III MAF CHOPPED OPCON SLF BRAVO (CTG 79.5) to CTG 76.5 at 260001H Jul67. SLF reconstituted and BLT 2/3 backloaded aboard the ARG shipping. Operation BEAR CHAIN terminated at 261200H Jul67.
- Ref: CG 3d MarDiv msg 250403Z Jul67  
CG III MAF msg 250820Z Jul67  
CTG 76.5 msg 260152Z Jul67
- 27-31 July The ARG/SLF was in Da Nang Harbor, RVN refurbishing.

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Enclosure (1)

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PART IVCHRONOLOGY OF SUBORDINATE COMMANDS  
AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

## Appendix 1

- 1 CTG 76.5 msg 032340Z Jul67
- 2 CG III MAF msg 040732Z Jul67
- 3 CG 3d MarDiv msg 050103Z Jul67
- 4 CTG 79.5 msg 111232Z Jul67
- 5 HMM 265 msg 130948Z Jul67
- 6 COMSEVENTHFLT msg 172358Z Jul67
- 7 CTG 76.5 msg 210600Z Jul67
- 8 CG III MAF msg 212314Z Jul67
- 9 CTG 79.5 msg 230514Z Jul67
- 10 CG 3d MarDiv msg 250403Z Jul67
- 11 CG III MAF msg 250820Z Jul67
- 12 CTG 76.5 msg 260152Z Jul67

## Appendix 2

✓ Command Chronology, BLT 2/3, 4-31 Jul 67

## Appendix 3

✓ Command Chronology, HMM 164, 4-12 Jul 67

## Appendix 4

✓ Command Chronology, HMM 265, 12-31 Jul 67

## Appendix 5

✓ SLF, After Action Report, BEAVER TRACK etc, 4-17 Jul 67

## Appendix 6

✓ HMM 164, After Action Report, BEAVER TRACK, 4-12 Jul 67

## Appendix 7

✓ HMM 265, After Action Report, BEAVER TRACK, 12-17 Jul 67

## Appendix 8

✓ BLT 2/3, After Action Report, BEAVER TRACK/BUFFALO/  
HICKORY II, 4-17 Jul 67

## Appendix 9

✓ SLF, After Action Report, BEAR CHAIN/FREMONT, 26-26 Jul 67

## Appendix 10

✓ HMM 265, After Action Report, BEAR CHAIN, 20-26 Jul 67

## Appendix 11

✓ BLT 2/3, After Action Report, BEAR CHAIN, 20-26 Jul 67

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Enclosure (1)

0A301  
 ZVY SSSSS  
 Z 032340Z JUL 67 ZFG  
 FM CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
 TO RUMHMF/CG III MAF  
 INFO RUHHBRA/CINCPACFLT  
 RUHHFMA/CG FMFPAC  
 RUMSMA/COMUSMACV  
 RUMGUL/COMSEVENTHFLT  
 RUMHVP/CG THIRD MARDIV  
 RUMHAW/CG FIRST MAW  
 MFUV/CTF SEVEN SIX  
 RUABQL/CTF SEVEN NINE  
 ZEN/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
 BT

*102 04/0836H*

S E C R E T

OPCON SLF BRAVO (U)

4. COMSEVENTHFLT 011442Z JUL 67

1. IAW PARA 9A REF A, AND AS MUTUALLY AGREED UPON BY CG THIRD  
 MAR DIV, CTG 76.5, CTG 79.5 SLF BRAVO LANDS ADMININSTRATIVELY  
 IN CAM LO (YD 143614) RPTS TO OPCON CG III MAF EFFECTIVE 040900H.

GP 4

3.

NNNN

*App 1-#1*



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30CFR44602C-PC03

RECHUP 1055D 1860103

050103Z JUL 67

ZEN-THARA-MARDIV

ZEN/CG III MAF

Ton: 051820 W

### ASSUMPTION OF OPCOM

A. CG III MAF 040732Z JUL 67 (NOTAL)

2. IAW REF ASSUMED OPCON TGN79.5 (SLF BRAVO) AS OF 040900H JUL.

OPCON FURTHER PASSED TO THIRD MARINES AS OF SAME TIME.

2. FOR THIRD MARINES, DIRECT UNLOADING OF ALL COMBAT SUPPORT

COMBAT SERVICE ELEMENTS OF SLF BRAVO ASAP.

GP-4

BT

820 W  
3 — 4 — 5

App 1-23

QA072

OO RUHHBRA RUHHFMA RUMGUL RUMHMF RUMHAW RUABQL RUAUDS RUMHVP  
DE RUABJG 108 1921240

ZNY SSSSS

O 111232Z JUL 67

FM CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE

TO ZEN/HMM ONE SIX FOUR

INFO RUHHBRA/CINCPACFLT

RUHHFMA/CG TNEPAC

RUMGUL/COMSEVENTHFLT

RUMHMF/CG III MAF

RUMHAW/CG THIRD MAR DIV

RUMHAW/CG FIRST MAW

RUABQL/CTF SEVEN NINE

ZEN/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE

RUAUDS/MAG ONE FIVE

RUMHVP/HMM TWO SIX FIVE

BT

S E C R E T

COMMAND HMM-164 (U)

CTG 79.3 291334Z JUNE 67 NOTAL

1. EXECUTE MISSION REF A ON 12 JULY 1967. REPORT TO COMMAND CG FIRST  
MAW EFFECTIVE 121200H JULY 67.

2. FOLLOWING REPORTS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED THIS HDQ ASAP.

A. CMD CHRON 1 JUNE - 3 JULY 67

B. CMD CHRON 4 - 12 JULY 67

C. AFTER ACTION REPORT OPERATION BEAVER TRACK THRU 12 JULY 67.

D. AFTER ACTION REPORT OPERATION BEACON TORCH

GP-4

BT

*Copied - Cj*  
*TON 11/2111Z*  
*HMM 164*

*App 1-114*

A036

PP RUABQL RUHKBRA RUHHFMA RUMGUL RUHHMF RUMHVP RUMHAW RUADDB  
 DE RUABJG 074 1940952  
 ZNY CCCCC

P 130948Z JUL 67  
 FM HMM TWO SIX FIVE  
 TO RUABQL/CG NINTH MAB  
 RUABQL/CTG SEVEN NINE  
 INFO RUHKBRA/CINCPACFLT  
 RUHHFMA/CG FMFPAC  
 JDB/MAG FIFTEEN  
 RUMGUL/COMSEVENTHFLT  
 RUHHMF/CG III MAF  
 RUMHVP/CG THIRD MARDIV  
 RUMHAW/CG FIRST MAF  
 ZEN/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
 ZEN/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
 BT

13 / 1825 H

HMM 265

C O N F I D E N T I A L  
 COMMAND HMM-265 (U)

A. G NINTH MAB 122340Z (NOTAL)

1. IAW REF A HMM TWO SIX FIVE RPTS TO MAG ONE FIVE FOR COMMAND LESS  
 OPCON AND TO CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE FOR OPCON, EFFECTIVE 121200H.

GP-4  
 BT

NNNNN

App 1-#5



P 170000Z JUL 67  
 ADMINO COMSEVENTHFLT  
 1. RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
 RUENASA/CNO  
 RUHHQA/CINCPAC  
 RUHHRA/CINCPACFLT  
 INFO RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
 RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN ZERO PT EIGHT  
 RUMFCR/CTF SEVEN SIX  
 RUABQL/CTF SEVEN NINE  
 RUMSMA/COMUSMACV  
 RUMSBB/COMNAVFORV  
 RUMHMF/CG III MAF  
 RUMFKE/CTE SEVEN ZERO PT TWO PT ONE PT ONE  
 RUMFCR/CTF SEVEN THREE  
 RUWJMSA/COMPHIBPAC  
 RUHMA/CG FMFPAC  
 RUABQL/CG FMFPAC (FWD)  
 RUMFKB/CTF ONE ONE FIVE  
 RUMSBJ/CDR SEVENTH AIR FORCE

PAGE TWO RUMGUL 1242 S E C R E T  
 RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN ZERO PT SEVEN PT ONE  
 RUMFCR/CTF SEVEN SEVEN  
 RUMNMG/CG THIRD MAR DIV  
 RUMHAW/CG FIRST MAR DIV  
 RUMHAW/CG FIRST MAW  
 RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FOUR  
 RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FOUR  
 RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN THREE PT FIVE  
 BT

S E C R E T  
 CTE 76.2.1.1 PASS ADVANCED COPY TO COMUSMACV  
 OPERATION BEAVER TRACK (U)  
 1. FOR CTG 76.5: TERMINATE OPERATION BEAVER TRACK 17 JULY 1967.  
 2. FOR CNO, CINCPAC, CINCPACFLT: CANCEL NICKNAME BEAVER TRACK  
 17 JULY 1967.  
 GP-4  
 BT

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App 1-#6

CU RUTMM RUMHUL RUMSIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA  
 RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA  
 RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA RUMHIA  
 DE RUAUBJG 066 2020723  
 ZNY SSSSS

10600Z JUL 67  
 FM CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
 TO RUMHMF/CG III MAF  
 ZEN/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
 INFO RUMGUL/COMSEVENTHFLT  
 RUMSMA/COMUSMACV  
 RUHHBRA/CINCPACFLT  
 RUHHFMA/CG FMFPAC  
 RUMSBB/COMNAVFORV  
 ZEN/CTF SEVEN SIX  
 RUABQL/CTF SEVEN NINE  
 RUAUBUZ/CTF SEVEN THREE  
 RUMFUE/CTF SEVEN SEVEN  
 RUMGUA/CTG SEVEN ZERO PT EIGHT  
 RUAUDD/CTG SEVEN ZERO PT NINE  
 RUMFKB/CTF ONE ONE FIVE  
 RUAUBJM/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FOUR  
 RUAUBJM/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FOUR  
 RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN THREE PT FIVE  
 RUMHAW/CG FIRST MAW

Tor: 2116 2512

S/3

BLT

HMM

Copy — 6 — Copy

PAGE TWO RUAUBJG 066 S E C R E T  
 ZEN/BLT TWO SLANT THREE  
 RUMSMA/COMPHIBPAC  
 RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN SIX PT EIGHT  
 ZEN/HMM TWO SIX FIVE  
 RUMHIA/CG FIRST MARDIV  
 RUMFA/CTU SEVEN ZERO PT EIGHT PT NINE  
 RUMFKE/CTE SEVEN ZERO PT TWO PT ONE PT ONE  
 RUMHQA/CINCPAC  
 RUEBQL/CG FMFPAC (FWD)  
 RUMSAL/CDR SEVENTH AIR FORCE  
 RUMGUL/CTU SEVEN ZERO PT SEVEN PT ONE  
 RUMHVP/CG THIRD MARDIV  
 ZEN/TS SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
 ZEN/USS ELDORADO  
 RUMFKR/CTG ONE ONE FIVE PT ONE  
 RUMHVP/FOURTH MARINES  
 BT  
 S E C R E T  
 BEAR CHAIN (U)  
 A. COMSEVENTHFLT 180636Z JUL NOTAL

App 1-7

PAGE THREE RU4UBJG 066 S E C R E T

Z. CTG 79.5 210458Z JUL NOTAL

1. SLF FIRMLY ESTABLISHED ASHORE. IAW PARA 9 REF A AMPHIBIOUS PHASE TERMINATED, AOA DISSOLVED AND CONTROL OF SUPPORTING ARMS PASSED ASHORE TO CG III MAF EFFECTIVE 211400H JUL 67. AS MUTUALLY AGREED UPON BY ORIG AND CG III MAF OPCON SLF BRAVO PASSED TO CG III MAF AT THAT TIME.

2. ORIG REMAINS IN OVERALL SUPPORT OPERATIONS ASHORE.

GP-  
BT

*App 1-27*

OF FBC388 DDKE743  
 CG RUABJG  
 DE RUMHMF 1516 2022314  
 ZNY SSSSS

O 212314Z JUL 67  
 FM CG III MAF  
 TO ZEN/CG THIRD MARDIV  
 INFO RUMSMA/COMUSMACV  
 RUMGUL/COMSEVENTHFLT  
 ZEN/CG FMFPAC  
 ZEN/CG FMAW

ZEN/CG FLC  
 RUMFUV/CTF SEVEN SIX  
 RUABQL/CTF SEVEN NINE  
 RUMFUE/CTF SEVEN SEVEN  
 UMFCR/CTG SEVEN THREE PT FIVE  
 RUABJG/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
 RUABJG/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
 RUMFUAA/CTG SEVEN ZERO PT EIGHT  
 RUAUDD/CTG SEVEN ZERO PT NINE  
 BT

S E C R E T  
 OPCON SLF BRAVO - CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
 A. CTG 76.5 211200Z JUL67 (NOTAL)

PAGE TWO RUMHMF 1516 S E C R E T

1. REF A REFERS. CT III MAF ASSUMES OPCON SLF BRAVO (CTG 79.9) AS  
 OF 211400H JUL67 AND PASSES OPCON TO CG 3D MARDIV SAME TIME.

GP-4  
 RT

App 1-#8

Q  
 280 RUMHVP RUHNBRA RUHNFMA RUABUL RUHMF RUHFUV RUABQL  
 DE RUABJG 035 2040514  
 ZNY SSSSS

Q 230514Z JUL 67  
 CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
 TO RUMHVP/FOURTH MARINES  
 INFO RUHNBRA7CINCPACFLT  
 RUHFMMA/CG FMFPAC  
 RUABUL/COMSEVENTHFLT  
 RUMHMF/CG III MAF  
 RUMHVP/CG THIRD MARDIV  
 RUMFUV/CTF SEVEN SIX  
 RUABQL/CTF SEVEN NINE  
 ZEN/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
 /BLI TWO SLANT THREE

*For 23/1351H*

*S-3*

*BLT 73*

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S E C R E T

OPCON SLF UNITS (U)

A. CG THIRD MAR DIV 230135Z JULY 67 (ADJL)

1. IAW REF A 2D BN 3D MARINES, BTRY B 1-12, 3D FLY (REIN), CO B,  
 RECON BN, 1ST PLT (REIN), CO C, 3D SF BN REPORTS TO OPCON FOURTH  
 MARINES EFFECTIVE 211400H.

2. CASUALTY REPORTING/OPSTAT REPORTING REMAINS WITH CTG 79.5.

GP-4

BT

NON

*App 1-29*

A065

A064

CZCPHA689ZCAPA169RT

00 RUAUBJG

DE RUMHVP 74710 2060403

ZNY SSSSS

O 250403Z JUL 67

FM CG THIRD MARDIV

TO RUMHMF/CG III MAF

ZEN/FOURTH MARINES

INFO RUAUBJG/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE

UBJG/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE

BT

S E C R E T

CHANGE OF OPCON

1. FOR FOURTH MARINES. CH

C OPCON BLT 2/3 TO CTG 79.5 EFFECTIVE

260001H JUL.

2. FOR CG III MAF. OPCON CTG 79.5 KJGHOPPED TO CG III MAF EFFECTIVE

260001H JUL.

GP-4

BT

NNN

AP  
NVV MMSA553VV F8C953VV DEXE888

OO RUAUBJG

DE RUMHMF 1752 254082Z

ZNY SSSSS

O 250820Z JUL 67

FM CG III MAF

TO RUAUBJG/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE

INFO RUMSMA/COMUSMACV

ZEN/CG FMFPAC

RUMGUL/COMSEVENTHFLT

/CG THIRD MARDIV

ZEN/CG FIRST MAW

ZENWRG FORLOGCMD

RUMFUV/CTF SEVEN SIX

RUABQL/CTF SEVEN NINE

RUMFUE73:51 SEVEN SEVEN

RUMFCR/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE

RUAUBJG/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE

RUMFUA/CTG SEVEN ZERO PT EIGHT

RUAUDD/CTG SEVEN ZERO PT NINE

BT

S E C R E T

OPCON SLF BRAVO CTG SEVEN

NINE PT FIVE

CG 3D MARDIV 254403Z JUL 67 (NOTAL)

PAGE TWO RUMHMF 1762 S E C R E T

B. CTF 76.5 190130Z JUL 67

1. REF A REFERS. CG III MAF ASSUMES OPCON SLF BRAVO (CTG 79.5) R 260001H JULY AND PASSES OPCON TO CTG 78.5 SAME TIME.

GP-4

BT

NNNN

App 1-11

RUMHVP RUAUBJG 009 207020Z  
 DE RUAUBJG 009 207020Z  
 SSSSS

O 260152Z JUL 67  
 FM CTG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
 TO RUAUBUL/COMSEVENTHFLT  
 INFO ZEN/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FIVE  
 ZEN/TG SEVEN SIX PT FIVE  
 RUMFUAA/CTG SEVEN ZERO PT EIGHT  
 ZEN/CTF SEVEN SIX  
 MMSB/CTF SEVEN NINE  
 RUMSMA/COMUSMACV  
 RUMSBB/COMNAVFORV  
 RUMHMF/CG III MAF  
 RUHHHQA/CINCPAC  
 RUMFKE/CTE SEVEN ZERO PT TWO PT ONE PT ONE  
 RUAUBUZ/CTF SEVEN THREE  
 RUHBRA/CINCPACFLT  
 RUWJMSA/COMPHIBPAC  
 RUHHFMA/CG FMFPAC  
 MMSB/CG FMFPAC (FWD)  
 RUMNVHD/CTF ONE ONE FIVE  
 RUMFKB/CTG ONE ONE FIVE PT ONE

FOR 201000

5/3

PAGE TWO RUAUBJG 009 S E C R E T

RUHAW/CG FIRST MAF  
 RUHBBJ/CDR SEVENTHAF  
 RUMFUE/CTF SEVEN SEVEN  
 RUMHLA/CG FIRST MARDIV  
 RUMHVP/CG THIRD MARDIV  
 RUAUBJM/CTG SEVEN SIX PT FOUR  
 RUHBJM/CTG SEVEN NINE PT FOUR  
 RUHCR/CTG SEVEN THREE PT FIVE

BT  
 S E C R E T  
 BEAR CHAIN (U)  
 A. COMSEVENTHFLT OPLAN 101-67  
 1. IAW ANNEX B TO REF A RECOMMEND TERMINATION OF BEAR  
 CHAIN AT 261200H JULY 67. TACTICAL AMPHIBIOUS WITHDRAWAL  
 WILL BE COMPLETED AT THAT TIME.

GP-4

BT

App 1-12



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COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT, OPERATION BEAVER TRACK/BUFFALO/HICKORY II

Map: Vietnam, AMS Series L-7014, 1:50,000, Sheets 6342 I and 6442 IV.

1. GENERAL.

a. Operation BEAVER TRACK was conducted by the Amphibious Ready Group/ Special Landing Force north of the Cam Lo river in Quang Tri Province, I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam.

b. The operation, held in conjunction with, and in support of 3d Marine Division Operations BUFFALO and HICKORY II, commenced on 4 July 1967 with an administrative heloborne move into landing zone CANARY (YD 143614). The operation was terminated at 0920H on 17 July 1967.

2. TASK ORGANIZATION

Special Landing Force

BLT 2/3

HMM-164

HMM-265

Colonel H. D. WORTMAN (4-6 July)

Colonel J. G. DIONISOPOULOS (7-17 July)

Major W. O. BEARD (4-12 July)

Major J. R. BROUJOS (13-16 July)

LtCol E. W. HERICH (17 July)

LtCol R. D. MCKITRICK (4-12 July)

LtCol W. R. BEELER (12-17 July)

3. INTELLIGENCEa. Enemy Situation and Capabilities Prior to Operation BEAVER TRACK/BUFFALO/HICKORY II

(1) Enemy Situation. Enemy ground forces in the objective area had been reported as the 31st NVA Regiment and 32nd NVA Regiment, 341st NVA Division; 90th NVA Regiment and 803rd NVA Regiment, 324B NVA Division; 29th NVA Regiment, 325 NVA Division; and the 270th NVA Regiment (possibly the 32nd NVA Regiment, 341st Division).

(2) Enemy Capabilities. With forces enumerated above, the enemy possessed the following capabilities:

(a) Attack installations, isolated units and outposts with elements of two reinforced divisions (341st and 324B Divisions) and two Regiments (29th and the 270th).

(b) Defend in positions occupied at the time with forces locally available.

(c) Reinforce with forces in and just north of the central and eastern portion of the DMZ.

Enclosure (1)

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after BEAVER TRACK/BUFFALO/HICKORY II  
 4-17 JUL 67

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(d) Conduct unconventional and psychological warfare to include small scale attacks, ambushes, terrorism and sabotage.

(e) Use mines and surprise firing devices.

(f) Employ SAM's and SSM's from NVN and/or border areas.

(g) Employ limited air strikes from NVN.

b. Enemy Situation and Factors-During Operation BEAVER TRACK/BUFFALO/HICKORY II.

(1) Enemy Situation. The enemy incorporated practically every weapon available to him in an attempt to gain a major military victory in the vicinity of the DMZ. Contacts ranged from perimeter probes to heavy combat involving a reinforced company of 200 to 250 NVA. It is believed this unit was attempting to infiltrate into the vicinity of Camp Carroll and conduct an all out assault preceded by artillery and rocket attack. Bunkers in the objective area were well constructed and strategically located providing the enemy with excellent protection from artillery and air strikes and affording him coverage of likely avenues of approach. Mines and hidden firing devices were used extensively throughout the objective area causing injury to several personnel and damage to one helicopter.

(2) Enemy Tactics. The enemy tactics were those usually associated with a well trained regular force; attack with mortars from well concealed and varied positions followed by small arms and automatic weapons fire; harassment by sniper fire and mines against friendly units on the move and SA/AW fire while in defense.

c. Terrain and Weather.

(1) Terrain. Consisted of low rolling hills with an average range from 30 to 70 meters high. Vegetation coverage ranged from knee high scrub growth to dense undergrowth with occasional trees 30 feet in height. The objective area was crisscrossed with footpaths and trails. Fordable streams posed no problem.

(2) Weather. Generally hot and dry throughout the operation. Average maximum temperature was 92 degrees. Scattered low and middle clouds throughout the objective area. Thunderstorm clouds formed every afternoon around 1400 and provided overcast skies and low ceilings to 800 to 1000 feet. Winds averaged SW at 8-16 knots.

4. Mission. On D-Day at L-Hour Special Landing Force Bravo conduct an administrative helo lift into Cam Lo District Quang Tri Province prepared

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for deployment in 3D Mar Div area of responsibility.

5. Concept of Operations The operation was planned as a reinforcing operation utilizing a heloborne and waterborne administrative landing. The operation was conducted by landing the SLF in designated area's prepared for deployment in the Third Marine Division area of responsibility. The operation was characterized by a high state of readiness and organization permitting instantaneous response to a request for deployment. The inherent mobility of the SLF was maximized.

#### 6. Execution

a. Operations BEAVER TRACK/BUFFALO/HICKORY II were executed in accordance with CG Third Marine Division Operation Order 39-67, 3D Marine Regiment Operation Frag Orders Buffalo 7-67, Hickory II 1-67 and CTG 79.5 Operation Plan 120A-67 implemented by Frag Order for Operation BEAVER TRACK.

b. D-Day was established as 4 July 1967 with L-Hour 0700. By 1000 on D-Day all rifle companies and Command Group Alpha had landed in Landing Zone Canary and were preparing for deployment in accordance with 3D Marine Regiment Operation Frag Order Buffalo 7-67. Command Group Bravo remained aboard the USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10) coordinating offload of remaining BLT elements. For details, see enclosures (2) through (4).

#### 7. Commander's Analysis.

##### a. Planning

(1) On 2 July 1967 the SLF Backloaded from Operation BEACON TORCH and commenced preparations for the rotation of HMM 164 and HMM 265 scheduled for 3-4 July 1967 at Phu Bai. However, CG III MAF requested that the ARG/SLF be made available for possible employment in Third Marine Division area of responsibility. (CG III MAF 021514Z July 67). Commander Seventh Fleet approved the request and directed compliance (Com 7th Flt 030730Z July 1967)

(2) On 3 July 1967 CTG 79.5 commenced planning with Third Marine Division and formulated plans for the employment of the SLF. During the Planning phase, the following steps were accomplished.

- (a) Maps, area analysis and enemy order of battle were procured.
- (b) Communications frequencies were assigned and coordinated, including ship-to-shore Orestes for rapid and secure transmission of tactical information.
- (c) Procedures for casualty evacuation and reporting.
- (d) Command relationships were finalized.

Enclosure (1)

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(e) Logistic support procedures were arranged.

(f) It was determined that the SLF would maintain a liaison officer at Third Marine Regiment.

c. Command Relationships.

(1) Operation BEAVER TRACK was not considered an Amphibious Operation. An amphibious objective area was not established, and the control/coordination of supporting arms were not the responsibility of the CATF. The entire operation was conducted under the operational control of the in-country commander after the SLF passed the high water mark enroute to the assembly area.

(2) Once ashore operational control of 2nd Battalion 3D Marines passed to the 3D Marines. Operational control of attached units passed to their parent unit or a like unit operating in the Dong Ha area.

d. Supporting Arms. It was neither feasible nor practicable for the SLF to assume control or coordination of supporting arms as all Landing Force units were immediately chopped to in-country Commander.

e. Communications Since Operation BEAVER TRACK was not an Amphibious Operation no requirement existed for establishing command and control nets associated with the amphibious assault. Planning for BEAVER TRACK was limited to an in-country visit for the purpose of coordinating frequencies and to obtain the frequencies of established in-country force under whose OPCON the BLT would be operating. This was the first operation with the 3D Marine Division in which frequencies were acquired from Division rather than III Marine Amphibious Force, and proved to be a successful method of coordinating frequencies. Because of distances involved from the SLF Headquarters to the Battalion, operating north of Cam Lo, the principal means of communications was the PRC-47. The Special Landing Force also provided liaison parties to Third Marine Regimental CP, to the casualty reporting facility at Dong Ha, and a team, with the SLF Air liaison Officer daily, to the LSA at Dong Ha for the control of helicopters. Operation BEAVER TRACK marked the first time that high frequency radio was used on the SLF TAC #1 net on a continuous basis. BEAVER TRACK was the first operation during which the SLF utilized in-country communications repair facilities. Electronic Maintenance Company, First FSR, provided excellent service support. KY-8 (Nestor Crypto System) operations to Third Mar Div and to the Third Marine Regiment again were used extensively, coordinating the offload and back load of the BLT, and proved invaluable in allowing instantaneous, secure coordination of assigned missions. The availability of secure voice transmissions has been a definite asset

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to the SLF. The rapidly changing situation during an operation requires constant and continuous control and coordination between the Landing Force Commander, the BLT, and in-country forces.

f. Readiness of the SLF

(1) The SLF, embarked on the Seventh Fleet Amphibious Ready Group Alpha shipping (the USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10), the USS OGDEN (LPD-5), the USS MONTICELLO (LPD-35) and the USS TERRELL COUNTY (LST-1157)), is prepared to fulfill amphibious contingencies which may arise within the Seventh Fleet area of operations. Continuous emphasis is placed on personnel, training, supply and equipment readiness.

(2) The SLF readiness posture was again clearly demonstrated in the planning and execution of Operation BEAVER TRACK. Upon the completion of Operation BEACON TORCH on 2 July 1967 the ARG/SLF was preparing to proceed to Phu Bai for the rotation of HMM 164/HMM 265. The request from CG III MAF was received early 3 July 1967 and the SLF commenced landing at 0700 on 4 July 1967. This rapid response and ultimate success of the operation, although unique from past commitments, has again shown the flexibility, mobility and the all-around combat capability inherent in the ARG/SLF Navy/Marine team concept.

g. Logistics

(1) It was determined during planning for the BEAVER TRACK/HICKORY II operation that required resupply would be provided by the LSA located at Dong Ha. Resupply from the LSA commenced on D + 1 and continued throughout the operation.

(2) In order to ensure rapid reaction to resupply and emergency medevacs, a minimum of two helicopters were positioned at MAG-16 adjacent to the LSA. A detachment of Shore Party and BLT Supply representatives were positioned at the Operations Center of the LSA for coordination of resupply.

(3) The requirements of the using units were consolidated at the Battalion CP and forwarded to the LSA by HF radio. This system minimized delay in reaction time.

(4) The LPH was designated as the Casualty Evacuation Center. BLT 2/3 casualties were evacuated by helicopter directly to the LPH. Because of the close proximity of the Medical Receiving Station at Dong Ha, it was necessary to assign a liaison NCO there to insure onward evacuation to the LPH after initial treatment or accountability of those casualties evacuated elsewhere.

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8. The following comments on BLT 2/3, HMM 164 and HMM 265 After Action Reports.

A. BLT 2/3

(1) PARA 11c(5). It is agreed that the medical evacuation procedures used during operation BEAVER TRACK did not provide BLT 2/3 the same service they normally receive. However the decision to off-load the BAS and C and C Plt was made by the CG Third Mar Div in order to provide better medical support for all units participating in the operation.

(2) PARA 13a. Unable to comment on this particular situation since as stated it occurred after the BLT reported to OPCON 3D Marines.

(3) PARA 13c. CG Third Mar Div ordered the complete off-loading of BLT 2/3 equipment on the assumption that the BLT would remain ashore for a prolonged period. The backloading from Dong Ha was complicated by the need to back load two BLT's simultaneously and the lack of sufficient staging area at Dong Ha ramp. Concur that the 2/3 personnel put forth maximum effort, making the best of a poor situation.

B. HMM 164

(1) PARA 2b. Concur that staging aircraft at the LSA under control of the SLF Air Officer, provided the BLT with expeditious resupply. This system will be used in future operations as the tactical situation dictates.

C. HMM 265

(1) PARA 3a. The feint was controlled by the 3D Marines, the CH-46 were provided from SLF assets while the UH-1E's were from in-country assets. The short time frame did not provide for a joint briefing. The conclusion set forth in PARA 4a. is concurred in and will be used in all SLF controlled operations.

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Copy 1 of 43 copiesCOMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT - BEAR CHAIN/FREMONT

Map Reference: AMS, Vietnam, 1:50,000, Series L 7014 Sheets 6442 I thru IV.

1. GENERAL:

a. Operation BEAR CHAIN was a unilateral amphibious operation conducted in accordance with NWP 22(A), utilizing waterborne and helicopter assault forces. The operation was conducted 12 miles south of Quang Tri, the AOA being centered on the Quang Tri/Thua Thien Province boundary, I Corps Tactical Zone, Republic of Vietnam.

b. The inclusive dates of Operation BEAR CHAIN were 20-26 July 1967; elements of the SLF participated in Operation FREMONT, a Fourth Marines operation, during period 21-25 July 1967.

2. TASK ORGANIZATION

Special Landing Force  
BLT 2/3  
HMM 265

Colonel J. G. DIONISOPOULOS  
LtCol E. W. HERICH  
LtCol W. R. BEELER

3. INTELLIGENCEa. Enemy Situation and Capabilities Prior to Operation BEAR CHAIN.

(1) Enemy Situation. Enemy ground forces in the objective area had been identified as the 802nd Battalion, 6th NVA Regiment; 416th Battalion, 5th NVA Regiment, 325th NVA Division and C.11 Intelligence Company (Recon) of Northern Front Headquarters.

(2) Enemy Capabilities. The enemy was capable of either attacking or defending with a force of up to two NVA Battalions, reinforcing these capabilities within 8-10 hours with a force up to three NVA Battalions or evade direct contact and resort to spoiling attacks, ambushes and harassment with mines and surprise firing devices.

b. Enemy Situation and Factors - During Operation BEAR CHAIN.

(1) Enemy Situation. First contact with the enemy was made on D-Day by Echo Company 2/3 which received automatic and small arms fire from Ap-Sien-Qnan Village at YD512450. Echo Company 2/3 returned fire with small arms, mortars and armed UH-1E with unknown results. The remaining contacts consisted of light mortar attacks and sporadic small arms and auto-

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416, 76 79.5  
a/a BEAR CHAIN/FREMONT  
20-26 July 67

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matic weapons fire from concealed positions with the exception of an estimated company attack on ~~the~~ <sup>Company 2/3</sup> position which was preceded by 60 rounds of 82mm mortar, 25 rounds of 57mm recoilless rifle fire and 15 rounds of 40mm rockets. The enemy also showed a greater knowledge of helicopters during Operation BEAR CHAIN by delivering an accurate base of fire on the more vital areas i.e. aft rotor section, rather than concentrating on the pilots. The results were one helicopter destroyed and several damaged.

(2) Enemy Tactics. Enemy tactics during this operation consisted of individual sniper fire from concealed positions, six to eight man squads armed with small arms/automatic weapons conducting spoiling attacks and a well organized company size assault preceded by mortar, recoilless rifle and rocket attack. Over all, the tactics used by the enemy in the objective area indicated a well organized, well trained and disciplined unit capable of forming at battalion strength and conducting an operation which could result in a much needed victory.

c. Terrain and Weather. Terrain features in the objective area consisted of relief under 10 meters in the lowlands to sand dunes 18 to 20 meters in height in the vicinity of the beach. The major portion of the terrain was characterized by wetland rice paddies and intermittent dry crops. Tree lines and hedge rows surrounded each hut and village providing the enemy with cover, concealment and routes of escape. The weather was considered excellent from the standpoint of supporting fires and maneuverability. No rain and clear skies provided uninterrupted use of CAS. Full moon phase also provided excellent visibility at night.

d. Interpreter, Interrogators and Translators. Interpreters, Interrogators and Translators were desired for this operation due to the heavy civilian population in the TAOR. Requests were submitted through the normal chain of command with negative results.

4. Mission SLF conduct heliborne and waterborne amphibious assault into designated Landing Zones and over Beach Green. Conduct search and destroy operations in assigned TAOR. Conduct other operations as agreed upon with CG III MAF and on order conduct a tactical amphibious withdrawal.

#### 5. Concept of Operations

(a) The inherent mobility of the SLF was to be maximized to insure a rapid build up of forces ashore thereby gaining surprise and shock action. Initially the operation was conducted in two phases.



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(1) An amphibious heloborne and waterborne assault to block avenues of access and egress from the area. This phase was characterized by aggressive movement on the small unit level.

(2) A deliberate search and destroy operation within the assigned TAOR to locate and destroy enemy replacements and caches. Maximum utilization of supporting arms was emphasized.

## 6. Execution

a. Operation BEAR CHAIN was initiated by AdminO COMSEVENTHFLT 180636Z July 1967. Execution was in accordance with CTG 79.5 Operation Plan 120A-67 implemented by CTG 79.5 182116Z July 1967, Frag Order for Operation BEAR CHAIN.

b. D-Day was established and confirmed as 20 July 1967 with L-Hour at 0630H and H-Hour 0700H. Company H in the first helicopter wave touched down in LZ BLUEJAY (YD 463500) at 0629H. Company E landed subsequent to Company H in LZ SPARROW (YD 510460). Company G landed in LVTs over Red Beach (YD 532537) at 0658H. All landings were unopposed. The landing force secured initial objectives and was firmly established ashore by 21 July 1967. Control was passed ashore at 211400H July 67. At that time OPCON of the SLF was passed to CG III MAF thence, immediately to CG THIRD MARINE DIVISION. OPCON of 2D Battalion 3D Marines, Battery B, 1st Battalion 12th Marines, 3D Platoon (Rein), Company B, 3D Recon Battalion and 1st Platoon Company C, 3D Shore Party Battalion was passed to Fourth Marines at that time. These units were to participate in a Fourth Marines operation south west of Highway One, however the battalion had sufficient contact to justify cancelling their participation in the scheduled operation and remain in their original area of operation. OPCON of these units remained with Fourth Marines until 260001H July 1967 when they were chopped to the SLF. At this time CG Third Marine Division passed OPCON of the SLF to CG III MAF who in turn passed OPCON to CTG 76.5. Operation BEAR CHAIN was terminated upon the completion of the tactical withdrawal of the SLF to ARG shipping on 26 July 1967.

## 7. Commander's Analysis

### a. Planning

(1) On 17 July 1967 the SLF backloaded aboard ARG shipping upon completing Operation BEAVER TRACK. At the request of CG Third Marine Division, planners had met with Third Marine Division and Fourth Marine representatives of Phu Bai on 15 July 1967.

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(2) Planning continued through the issuance of final orders on 19 July 1967. During the planning phase, the following steps were accomplished.

(a) Maps, aerial photography, area analysis and enemy order of battle were obtained and limited aerial reconnaissance of the AOA was conducted.

(b) Current intelligence was obtained from Third Marine Division, Fourth Marines and U.S. ARMY sector advisors Quang Tri, Hai Lang and Phong Dien.

(c) Arrangements were made for processing and evacuation of POW's, detainees, refugees, civilian casualties and captured material.

(d) Arrangements were made for the use of one RF/PF squad from each district. (Hai Lang and Phong Dien)

(e) Logistic support procedures were arranged.

(f) Radio frequencies were obtained and assigned and the communication plan was issued.

(g) The AOA was agreed upon and command relationships were finalized.

(h) A naval gunfire support ship was requested and requirements for close air support were determined and requested.

(i) Additional helicopter support was arranged for, consisting of four armed and one unarmed UH-1E, and two CH-53's for the landing of the artillery battery.

(j) Arrangements were made to provide liaison with the Fourth Marines and to exchange liaison parties with 2D Battalion 4th Marines and District Headquarters at Hai Lang and Phong Dien.

b. Command Relationships.

(1) Operation BEAR CHAIN was a unilateral amphibious operation with command relationships in accordance with NWP 22(A). Control was passed ashore and OPCON of the SLF passed to CG III MAF in accordance with the BEAR CHAIN initiating directive (ADMINO COMSEVENTHFLT 180636Z July 1967).

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c. Supporting Arms. The following Supporting Arms were available to the SLF during Operation BEAR CHAIN.

(a) Fixed wing air support was readily available and was utilized when required. After initial L and H hour coverage, aircraft were on strip alert and could be obtained in 30 minutes.

(b) Four armed and one unarmed UH-1E were assigned to the SLF and based aboard the LPH. These provided escorts for CH-46 flights, on call support to the ground forces and aerial observation of the operating area.

(c) Two CH-53's were made available to the SLF for the landing and backloading of the artillery battery.

(2) Artillery

(a) In addition to Battery B 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, attached to the SLF the 3D Battalion 12th Marines made a 155mm Howitzer Battery available as a general support battery for the SLF.

(b) The mobility of the SLF artillery battery was dependent on the availability of CH-53 aircraft. The initial landing and the backload each required 12 CH-53 loads during a three hour period.

(3) Naval Gunfire.

(a) The USS WEDDERBURN (DD 684) provided naval gunfire support for the amphibious landing until relieved by the USS MACKENZIE (DD 836) 210900H July 1967. The USS MACKENZIE was released from naval gunfire support duties at 211400H July 1967.

(b) The USS CHANDLER (DD 717) reported 25 July 1967 to provide naval gunfire support for the tactical amphibious withdrawal, and was released at 261200H July 1967.

(4) Coordination

(a) Coordination of supporting arm was in accordance with current doctrine. During the amphibious phases of the operation, district representatives from Hai Lang and Phong Dien were present in the SACC to provide clearance on designated targets.

(b) During the period the 2nd Battalion 3D Marines were OPCON to the Fourth Marines all coordination of supporting arms was accomplished through the Fourth Marines fire support coordination center.

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NOFORNd. Communication

(1) Operation BEAR CHAIN was characterized by long range communications considering the type equipment employed. Terrain and the rapidly moving situation precluded the employment of radio relay and high power vehicular equipment.

(2) Reliability of communication, both to the BLT and higher head-quarter was excellent. However, due to inability of certain ships FM equipment to function over extended distance it was necessary to employ deck mounted FM equipment to guarantee reliable communications. In this regard, and until such time as reliable, extended communications can be provided by ships equipment, it is advisable for the BLT to deck mount necessary organic FM equipment to provide reliable communications.

(3) Several frequencies assigned for the operation were in use by other units in the Third Division area. This indicates that close scrutiny of frequencies, proximity of adjacent units and type of equipment employed on assigned frequencies is required, to prevent confusion, interference, and excessive frequency changes. Additionally, teletype signals originating from the LPH overrode and blocked some frequencies during the operation. This problem can be minimized through an antenna study and relocation of antennas based on results of the antenna study.

(4) A recurring problem during the operation was high absorption of RF energy in certain FM antennas located near large areas of metal i.e. superstructure. Some antennas radiate only a fraction of the RF energy feed to the antenna. Placement of antennas in high, unobstructed areas, and/or in accordance with antenna study will result in greater range and thereby enhance reliability.

(5) Prior to execution of Operation BEAR CHAIN, several VRC-46's were inoperative due to lack of repair parts. Electronics Maintenance Company, First Force Service Regiment provided excellent repair parts and maintenance float support for the VRC-46's, as well as repairing several other items of the SLF radio equipment.

(6) The KY-8 (Nester Crypto System) was employed on Third Marines Division and Fourth Marine Regiment tactical nets with excellent results during the operation. This system provided a secure and rapid means for coordination and control of the operation. During this operation a method was devised to prevent heat distortion of "Plate, Guide" in the KYK-12, by the placement of cardboard shims between "Plate, Guide" and "Plate, Code Selector". One KYK-12 was installed and operated, utilizing covered/plain mode in excess of 48 hrs experiencing no malfunctions.

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(7) Communications section provided personnel and equipment for one liaison team with the Fourth Marine Regiment. The liaison team utilized an AN/PRC-25/RC292 over an average distance of 15 miles, providing the SLF Commander with excellent communications to the 4th Marine Regiment.

(8) Random monitoring during the operation disclosed erroneous and uncontrolled use of radio circuits. Each circuit within the Landing Force is designed for specific purposes and specific type traffic. Traffic sent over circuits not intended for that purpose invariably create confusion, overload, delays in message delivery and in some instances delivery to a station far removed from its intended recipient. This problem area can be corrected by a thorough knowledge of the intended purpose of all radio circuits employed and re-emphasis of basic principles concerning operator/circuit discipline.

#### e. Logistics

(1) During the planning phase with 3D Mar Div and 4th Mar Regt for operation BEAR CHAIN it was determined that all resupply, less water, would be provided by the LSA located at the 4th Mar CP, water resupply would be provided from the LPH.

(2) The BLT provided a detachment of shore party and battalion supply representatives to the operations center of the LSA for the coordination of resupply requests received from the BLT. No problems existed using this system.

(3) The LPH was designated as the Casualty Evacuation Center. BLT 2/3 casualties were evacuated directly to the LPH for initial treatment and further evacuated when required.

#### f. Civic Affairs

(1) Provisions were made to evacuate all refugees to the LSA at Camp Evans (YD 5334). Civilian medevac's were evacuated to the LPH for initial treatment then to the civilian hospital at Hue.

#### 9. Readiness of the SLF

(1) SLF BRAVO, embarked in ARG Bravo shipping (USS TRIFOLI (LPH-10), USS OGDEN (LPD-5), USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35) and USS TERRELL COUNTY (LST-1157)) is prepared to respond to any contingencies which may arise within the Seventh Fleets area of operation. Continuous emphasis is being placed on personnel, training, supply and equipment readiness. The short time frame between the backload from Operation BEAVER TRACK and the amphibious landing for Operation BEAR CHAIN and the subsequent success of Operation BEAR CHAIN reflected the continuous readiness of the SLF.

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10. The following comments on BLT 2/3 and HMM 265 After Action Reports are included.

A. BLT 2/3

(1) PARA 13a. The statement concerning the outstanding professional performance of the UH-1E detachment and HMM-265 is concurred in. However the phrase "resupply at night" creates the impression that resupply after dark is a common occurrence. Only emergency type resupply is conducted during hours of darkness and this only with specific approval of the Special Landing Force Commander.

(2) PARA 13b. This paragraph pertains to the period the battalion was OPCON to Fourth Marines. The battalion FSOC on several occasions cleared targets in the battalion area and requested permission from Fourth Marines FSOC to fire them. On these occasions, the Fourth Marines Fire Support Coordinator requested to speak with the Battalion Commander and asked him personally if he desired to fire on the target. Not being familiar with present Fourth Marine directives and in view of the battalion being OPCON to Fourth Marines the SLF is unable to comment on this paragraph.

(3) PARA 13c. This paragraph also concerns the period the battalion was OPCON Fourth Marines. It is believed the purpose of the paragraph is to explain the difficulties encountered in meeting Fourth Marines reporting requirements while the C.P.s are on the move. As in paragraph 2 above and for the same reason the SLF is unable to comment.

B. HMM 265

(1) PARA 3a. It is agreed that many problems were encountered involving radio circuits that require air-ground compatible frequencies. The SLF is dependent on the supported in-country commander for frequencies, and in I CTZ there are a limited amount of available frequencies. Adjustments in frequency assignments will be made in future operations in an effort to alleviate this problem.

(2) PARA 3b. This problem is inherent with the employment of CH-46 aircraft aboard the IWO JIMA class LPH. The USS TRIPOLI is making every effort to minimize the problem.

(3) PARA 3c is concurred in, and appropriate commanders have been notified.

(4) PARA 3d is concurred in and the conclusion set forth in para 4d will be used in future operations.

Enclosure (1)  
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