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 196th Inf Bde  
 HAWK HILL, (BT226319), RVN  
 160800 April 1970

Frag 0 #1 to OPORD 16-69 (GOLDEN FLEECE) (U)

TASK ORGANIZATION: No change

## 1. (C) SITUATION:

a. Enemy Forces: See Annex A Intelligence

b. Friendly Forces:

(1) 7th Marines: Continue Current Operations

(2) 198th Inf Bde: Continues current operations with emphasis on rice denial operations.

(3) 5th ARVN Regt: Continue current operations with emphasis on rice denial operations.

2. (C) MISSION: The 196th Inf Bde continues current operations and conducts rice denial operations in accordance with Americal Division OPLAN 07-69 (GOLDEN FLEECE).

## 3. (C) EXECUTION:

a. Concept: 196th Inf Bde coordinate directly with the local RF and PF units, to organize joint operations designed to harvest and evacuate rice to secured areas. 1-46, 4-31 and 3-21 Inf will destroy rice and rice beds in areas where it is impractical to harvest and evacuate the crops. This will be done either by defoliation through direct coordination with the Brigade Chemical Officer or by any expedient means. Rice denial operations will be conducted until the end of the present rice harvest season (See Annex C, Civil Affairs)

b. 2-1 Inf:

1. Continue current operations

2. Support province forces as required through combined operations in which rice in contested areas is harvested by PRO-GVN nationals. Area A-2 are first priority (See Civil Affairs Overlay).

3. Provide security for harvest operations in conjunction with RF and PF units in area A-3 (See Civil Affairs Overlay).

4. Search out and Evacuate rice which is located in enemy transshipping points. (See intell overlay).

c. 3-21 Inf:

(1) Continue current operations.

(2) Support NUI LOC SON CFZ as required through joint operations designed to allow PRO-GVN nationals to harvest rice in contested areas B-3 and B-4. (See Civil Affairs Overlay).

(3) Destroy rice and rice beds in the portions of areas B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4, B-5, B-6 which are inaccessible to PRO-GVN nationals by chemical means or any other expedient. (See Civil Affairs Overlay)

d. 4-31 Inf:

(1) Continue current operations.

(2) Support HIEP DUC CFZ and QUE SON CFZ as required through joint operations to recover rice from areas C-1, C-2, C-3 and C-4. (See Civil Affairs Overlay).

(3) Destroy by chemical or any other means the rice and rice beds in areas C-5, C-6, C-7, C-8, C-9 and C-10. (See Civil Affairs Overlay).

e. 1-46 Inf:

(1) Continue current operations.

(2) Destroy by chemical means or any other expedient means rice and rice beds in areas D-1, D-2, D-3, and D-4 (See Civil Affairs Overlay).

(3) Interdict retransportation points supply trails and confiscate

2-61(c)

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## f. F/17 Cav:

- (1) Continue current operations
- (2) Be prepared to conduct rice denial operations in conjunction with combat operations.

## g. 27th Chem Detachment:

- (1) Continue current operations
- (2) Support Bn's in destroying rice crops and rice beds as required.
- (3) Destroy the rice and rice beds in area E-1 (See Civil Affairs Overlay) in coordination with SF/CIDG at TIEN PHUOC.

## h. Coordinating Instructions:

- (1) Direct coordination between units both US and provincial is directed.
- (2) Interdict enemy supply trails and transshipping points (See Intell Overlay) in conjunction with normal operations.
- (3) Conduct operation designed to locate enemy cache points.
- (4) Confiscated rice will be redistributed by the Bde S5.
- (5) Additional helicopter support requirements will be coordinated through the Bde S3.
- (6) Report to this Headquarters rice control measures, to insure denial to the enemy, imposed by GVN hamlet, village, and district officials

Acknowledge:

## ANNEXES:

- ✓ A - Intelligence
- ✓ B - Intelligence Overlay
- ✓ C - Civil Affairs/Psychological Operations
- ✓ D - Civil Affairs Overlay

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See OPORD 16-69

AREA OF OPERATIONS:

a. Weather for April. (For other harvest months, refer to current Climatological Summaries). April is the transition month between the northeast monsoon and the summer southwest monsoon which dominates the weather of Southeast Asia from mid May through September. Thus, the general flow pattern over Southeast Asia is weak and variable. The main producers of precipitation during the month are rainshowers and thunderstorms. Most precipitation occurs with afternoon and evening thunderstorms and rainshowers during April. Some weather drizzle may occur, however. Average monthly precipitation is approximately one inch, and thunderstorms occur on about 4 days of the month. Precipitation in the hilly areas surrounding the west end of the TAM KY-TIEN PHUOC Highway should be slightly greater. Thunderstorms influencing the AO during April will be of the type that forms over the China Sea during the early hours of daylight and is pushed southwestward over the coastal plain into the mountains. Such storms do produce hail which does not often reach the ground, but do pose a hazard to aircraft. Visibility during April increases generally over the course of the month. Fog also decreases, but in steep sided valleys (vic BT1812) there may be thick fog on 5 to 10 mornings during the month. Fog almost always dissipates by mid-morning. Ceilings average 2,500 feet during the month. In QUANG TIN Province, April temperatures are somewhat less than the maximum, which does not generally occur until June or July. The high during the day in the AO should be about 90 degrees during April, with night time lows about 70 degrees. The general trend of relative humidities during the month of April is downward, ranging from 80% at night to possible lows between 50 and 60% during the day. Surface winds in the AO during April should be generally from the east, and very light. There is a small possibility that typhoon activity would influence the AO during April. Typhoon remnant cells could be blown inland over the hills on the north and south of the highway and the resulting precipitation could cause serious flood damage. See current illumination data for illumination information.

b. Effects on Enemy Course of Action. Enemy rice carrying activity increases as the lunar illumination wanes. The relatively dry, warm nights permit rice carrying patrols to move through populated areas regularly, simplifying his co-ordination and scheduling. The possibility of morning ground fog in the valleys enhances the security of his movements. The necessity for civilians to work the rice paddies in relatively large numbers during the harvest season gives the VC an opportunity to abduct civilian laborers for carrying rice to his base areas.

c. Effects on Friendly Course of Action. The seasonal winds and the low mountain ceilings occurring during harvest periods may limit aerial operations. Friendly ground activity will not be effected, however.

(1) General:

(a) Rice production areas in the Tien Phuoc/Hau Duc areas are compartmented by hills and rows of heavy vegetation. Paddies tend to be terraced to account for the uneven terrain. Rugged, mountainous terrain dominates the cultivated area on all sides. Adequate water is provided by rivers in the area although light precipitation during the ending rainy season has left the ground drier than usual. Wheeled vehicles are limited to Tien Phuoc - Tam Ky road. Off road movement for tracked vehicles is possible but movement is canalized and slow. There are numerous helicopter landing zones in the area.

(b) Rice production areas in the Que Son (D)/Hiep Duc (D)/Thang Binh (D) areas are characterized by generally flat open terrain bordered on the west by the Nui Chom and Deo Le Mountains and on the south by mountains starting on a line between AT9225 and BT1330. Adequate water is provided.

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Rivers and streams throughout the area although the area is this year due to a light rainy season. There is good trafficability for tracked vehicles and foot movement throughout, but wheeled vehicles are limited to Hwys 535 and 534. The terrain is compartmented by rows of vegetation. There are numerous helicopter landing zones throughout the area.

(2) Effect on Enemy Courses of Action: In the Tien Phuoc/Hau Duc areas, the hills and heavily vegetated areas provide the enemy with numerous staging and storage places. Enemy control of the many hills dominating the rice fields would give him the ability to direct fire on harvesting parties and would make the area difficult to secure for friendly troops. There are numerous sites for anti-aircraft weapons. Covered routes into and out of the rice areas are well suited for raids and ambushes. In the Que Son/Hiep Duc/Thang Binh areas, more open terrain with low hills, the enemy is also capable of harassing the harvest activity, using small highly maneuverable forces.

(3) Effects on Friendly Courses of Action. The terrain in the Tien Phuoc/Hau Duc area affords infantry units the capability of infantry and airmobile operations for both the protection and movement of harvesting parties within rice gathering areas. In the Que Son/Hiep Duc/Thang Binh areas the terrain lends itself to more rapid cross-country movement by both tracked vehicles and infantry troops with the exception of the mountainous area. Necessary troop commitment for the securing of rice harvesting areas, and the protection of harvesting parties within the Que Son Hiep Duc/Thang Binh areas should normally be considerably less than the number required for the Tien Phuoc/Hau Duc areas as aerial reconnaissance, artillery and tactical air will be more effective.

### 3. (C) ENEMY SITUATION.

In the GVN controlled areas of the eastern AO, rice is produced almost exclusively by civilian farmers on relatively small farms, whose function is primarily to produce enough rice for the nutritional requirements of the farmers' families. The farmers generally store rice in an unpolished state, transporting it in relatively small quantities to millsites as food requirements dictate. (Unmilled rice spoils less quickly than milled (polished) rice). If there is a plentiful harvest, rice will be sold off to provide family income.

Mills and markets in Thang Binh (D) and Tam Ky (D) are located to the east of the larger cultivation areas, generally along the railroad. As a consequence, the civilian rice transportation routes generally follow an east-west direction. Enemy rice procuring parties must extract captured or purchased grain southwest or west into the hills in the center of the eastern AO in order to take advantage of the security this terrain offers. See Appendix 3 for known locations of rice mills.

The number of captured rice receipts indicates that a substantial quantity of rice presently being procured in the eastern AO is being purchased. (See Appendix 4 for a detailed list of known purchase/transshipment points). In these areas, VC and NVA rice procuring parties sometimes purchase rice directly from farmers or at local markets, using South Vietnamese currency furnished through Provincial or Regimental channels by the Finance and Economy staff sections. Frequently, Finance and Economy cadre supervise these activities directly. Rice purchased in these areas is then evacuated under the control of VC Forward Supply Councils, to enemy base areas, where it is stored for future consumption.

Indications are that Local Force VC units, operating in GVN controlled area, are able to obtain from civilians and from their own farms sufficient food to sustain their campaigns, so that rice caches in VC base areas need be depleted only while these local force units are refitting or standing down for training. This ease in obtaining food is expected to decrease as Local Force units receive larger numbers of North Vietnamese replacements, however, with the effect that some rice will have to be carried forward from base area caches when it is available.

Northern Thang Binh (D) is now the only remaining area of the coastal

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may be obtained without large expenditure of money or time. efforts at strengthening governmental control over the area are being vigorously resisted for this reason.

In the past of the Brigade AO west of the foothills, the enemy obtains rice by growing it himself. Areas of enemy rice production are depicted on the operations overlay at Annex D. Some rice and other foodstuffs is infiltrated along routes indicated, along with storage/transshipment points at Appendix 4 to this Annex.

Acknowledge:

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Appendix

- 1-- Rice Procurement Sources
- 2 - Rice Cache Reports
- 3.- Previous Rice Cache Locations
- 4 - Rice Storage/Transshipment Points and Supply Routes

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