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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry
196th Infantry Brigade, Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96374

12 October 1969

AVDF-BBSC-SC

Subject: Combat After Action Report

Thru: Commanding Officer
196th Infantry Brigade
ATTN: AVDF-BBSC
APO San Francisco 96374

5 MAR 1975
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To: Commanding General
Americal Division
ATTN: AVDF-HL
APO San Francisco 96374

1.(c) TYPE OF OPERATION: Offensive by Task Force A/31 Inf against the 1st MR
Regiment and the 1st NVA Regiment in the Hiep Duc, Qua Sen and Thang Bien
Valley.

2.(v) DATE OF OPERATION: 170001H August to 032400H September 1969.

3.(v) LOCATIONS: FSB West (AT 990251, LZ Siberia (AT 902232), LZ Karen
(AT 914239), Hiep Duc Valley (vicinity AT 938266), and (vicinity BT 006224).

4.(v) COMMAND AND CONTROL HEADQUARTERS: 196th Infantry Brigade

5.(c) REPORTING OFFICERS:

4th Bn, 31st Inf

CO, LTC Cecil M. Henry

CO, Co A/4-31 Inf, CPT James G. Mantall

CO, Co B/4-31 Inf, CPT William H. Gayler

CO, Co C/4-31 Inf, CPT Thomas L. Murphy and CPT John R. Thomas

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CO, Co D/4-31 Inf, CPT John Whitticar and CPT Donald L. Wineman

CO, Co E/4-31 Inf, ILT Barry L. Brandon

Platoon Leader, Recon Platoon, ILT Robert L. Williams

Platoon Leader, Mortar Platoon, 2LT Charles F. Allen Jr.

1st Bn, 46th Inf

CO, Co B/1-46 Inf, CPT Alva R. King

CO, Co D/1-46 Inf, CPT Jesse C. Sellers

2nd Bn, 1st Inf

CO, Co B/2-1 Inf, CPT Dwight D. Sypolt

CO, Co C/2-1 Inf, CPT Rudolph Yap

6.(c) TASK ORGANIZATION:

4th Bn, 31st Inf, 196th LIB

HHC (-), 4th Bn, 31st Inf

Co A, 4th Bn, 31st Inf (Detached to 3-21 Inf 21 Aug thru 26 Aug 69)

Co B, 4th Bn, 31st Inf (Detached to I-46 Inf 30 Aug thru 2 Sep 69)

Co C, 4th Bn, 31st Inf

Co D, 4th Bn, 31st Inf

Co E, 4th Bn, 31st Inf

Co A, 2nd Bn, 1st Inf (OPCON to 4-31 Inf 27 Aug thru 3 Sep 69)

Co B, 2nd Bn, 1st Inf (OPCON to 4-31 Inf 20 Aug thru 2 Sep 69)

Co C, 2nd Bn, 1st Inf (OPCON to 4-31 Inf 18 Aug thru 21 Aug 69)

Co B, 1st Bn, 46th Inf (OPCON to 4-31 Inf 19 Aug thru 27 Aug 69)

Co D, 1st Bn, 46th Inf (OPCON to 4-31 Inf 24 Aug thru 27 Aug 69)

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Btry C, 3-82 Arty (DS)

Btry C (-), 3-16 Arty (GSR)

7.(a) SUPPORTING FIRES:

a. Artillery Support:

(1) Battery C, 3rd Bn (105T), 82nd Artillery

(a) This is a direct support artillery battery with six 105 mm howitzer tubes located in relatively permanent positions on LZ Siberia (AT 902232). They are employed, normally, in direct support of the Infantry units in the field, and in support of FSB West, LZ Siberia and LZ Karen.

(b) Since one of this battalion's habitual missions is the security of C Battery, a very close working relationship has been established between the battery and the Infantry troops. During the period 17 Aug 69 thru 3 Sep 69, the battery was extremely responsive, timely, accurate and effective. They fired close-in defensive concentrations, fired at targets of opportunity, provided scheduled fires, illumination, destruction, and blocking fires. The intensity and close proximity of the ground combat required that artillery sometimes fire within 45 meters of friendly troops. The expenditures during this period were as follows.

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<u>TYPE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF ROUNDS</u>
HE	8455
SMOKE	20
WP	5548
ILLUM	11

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(2) Battery C (-), 3rd Bn (155T), 16th Artillery

(a) This is normally a general support battery minus with three 155mm towed howitzer tubes located in relatively permanent positions on LZ West. During this operation, this battery was placed in a general support reinforcing role in order to insure greater responsiveness. They are employed in general support of the infantry units in the field, and in the direct fire and self-illumination role LZ West.

(b) During the period 17 August through 3 September 1969, this battery was extremely responsive, timely, accurate, and effective. They fired on targets of opportunity, and provided destruction, scheduled, blocking, defensive, and illumination missions. Agents and prisoners of war provided target data for many of the above firing missions. The expenditures during this period were as follows:

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF ROUNDS</u>
HE	3926
WP	436
SMOKE	130
ILLUM	20

(3) The total number of artillery rounds fired in support of the battalion during this period is as follows:

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF ROUNDS</u>
HE	12,381
WP	984
SMOKE	150
ILLUM	31

(4) Enemy personnel and/or equipment destroyed/killed by supporting artillery listed below:

17 Aug-3 Sep 69

NVA/VC

159

WEAPONS

11 crew served

BUNKERS

34

SAMPANS

1

SECONDARY FIRES AND EXPLOSIONS

56

b. Organic 81 mm and 4.2 Inch Mortars:

(1) The 81 mm mortars organic to each company within the 4th Bn, 31st Inf have been consolidated, and in conjunction with 4.2 inch mortars of the Battalion, positioned on LZ West and LZ Siberia. However, during this operation, it was necessary to provide immediate, close-in support to maneuver companies in the field. The companies did not take organic mortars on operations due to the requirement of mobility and difficulty of ammunition resupply. Therefore, 81 mm mortar section of four tubes was displaced with the Bn forward tactical CP on hill 118 (vic AT 920259), and the remainder were positioned on LZ West and Siberia. The mortar crews at the forward CP not only performed their primary mission of providing fire support, but also defended their positions against enemy small arms and indirect fire attacks.

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(2) During the period 17 Aug 69 through 3 Sept 69, the 81 mm mortars and the 4.2 inch mortars were extremely responsive, timely, accurate, and effective. Fires were directed on targets of opportunity, in addition to blocking, defensive, illumination, destruction, and navigation fires. ~~Even while subjected to counter-mortar fire, all mortar elements responded consistently, quickly, and accurately to all request for fire.~~

(3) The expenditures for the period 17 Aug through 3 Sept 1969 were as follows:

81mm Mortars

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF ROUNDS</u>
HE	2541
WP	55
ILLUM	30

4.2 inch Mortars

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF ROUNDS</u>
HE	1694
WP	86
ILLUM	272

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(c) Air Support:

(1) Between the period of 17 Aug and 3 Sep 1969, the 4th Bn, 31st Infantry received both normal and emergency air support from US Army Assault Helicopter Gunships, US Army Medical Evacuation Helicopters, US Army Lift Helicopters, USAF and USMC Tactical Aircraft. Numerous preplanned and immediate airstrikes were used both for direct tactical support and in preparation for planned tactical maneuvers. Additionally, numerous skyspots and becon drops were directed against suspected enemy locations during periods of limited visibility. Transportation requirements were filled both upon request through Bde S-3 Air, and voluntarily by helicopters flying within the area and monitoring emergency requests for lift requirements. Both Air Force FAC and Army pilots utilized direct communications with ground commanders, thus affecting a great degree of accuracy in delivering their ordnance. Medical evacuation helicopters flew 27 missions throughout this period, drawing enemy fire during practically every sortie.

(2) Immediate air strikes for the period of 17 Aug to 3 Sep were directed at observed enemy troops and active enemy anti-aircraft positions. Intelligence gathered from POWs and agents provided much of the target data. Pre-planned strikes were in support of attacking companies.

(c) The number of tactical sorties, amounts and types of ordnance, BDA, target grid, and immediate acknowledged results are listed below:

SORTIES: 55

TYPE AND AMOUNT OF ORDNANCE:

750 lb bombs-15 tons

500 lb bombs-117 tons

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500 lb Napalm-59½ tons

2.75" and 5" rockets-54

20mm Cannon- 24,000 rounds

BDA: The majority were given 100/100 or 100/90. On one occasion the strike was given a BDA of 70/60.

TGT GRIDS: The centers of mass of the majority of the targets were located at AT 895260 and BT 015225

RESULTS: 45 NVA KIA

2-51 cal destroyed

1-82mm mortar destroyed

16-secondary fires

6-secondary explosions

41-structures destroyed

50-bunkers destroyed

36-meters trench destroyed

(4) During this period, a total of 31 skyspots were dropped on intelligence targets or suspected enemy locations for an approximate total of 46½ tons of ordnance.

8.(c) INTELLIGENCE:

- a. WEATHER: The area of operation was under the influence of the fringe effects of a tropical storm from the South China Sea, resulting in light rain and drizzle during the evening hours of 27-28 August. The weather conditions during the day were generally good. Extreme heat was experienced in the valley floor with temperatures ranging from 110 degrees in mid-afternoon to 78 degrees in the late evening and

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early morning hours. From 26 Aug to 29 Aug, light rain fell during the late evening to early morning hours. Illumination ranged from 17% on 17 Aug to 100% on 28 Aug. For the most part, by early morning hours, there was clear weather in the valley with a scattered ceiling of 1800'-2500' and a visibility of 6-7 miles.

b. Terrain:

(1) General: The area consists of terraced rice paddies with hedgerows and heavy foliage throughout the area. The valley floor rises gently from the northern portion to elevations of 118 meters along the southern limits. Slopes become steeper with heavy vegetation along the northwestern and southwestern edges of the valley. ~~Route 534~~ stretches through the valley and is a high-speed resupply route for the enemy. ~~The Seng Lau River and the Seng Thu Bong River are usually fordable in several areas;~~ however, they do present an obstacle because of the canalizing effect on both friendly and enemy elements. The rice lands offer excellent to fair fields of fire. The principal limiting factors are the numerous dikes. The low hills are foliated with bushes and grass from 1 to 4 meters high, which thickens with increased elevation. Air observation varies from excellent in the rice lands to poor in the heavily vegetated areas.

(2) Cover and Concealment: The dikes in the rice paddy lands provides good to fair cover. Concealment varies from poor in the paddies to good in the hedgerows. Heavily wooded forests around the hills and mountains offer excellent to fair cover and concealment.

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(3) Obstacles: The Song Tranh River forms an obstacle in the southern portion of the valley. The paddy dikes hinder the movement of wheeled and tracked vehicles. The dense vegetation and mountains hinder the movement of foot troops, tracked and wheeled vehicles.

(4) Avenues of Approach: The many drystreams and valleys offer adequate avenues for movement in all directions. Vehicles are restricted to existing roads and trails. The valley floor affords numerous large LZ's: however the heavily wooded terrain of the mountains precludes the landing of helicopters.

(5) Effects on enemy courses of Action: The mountainous terrain favors the enemy's employment of defensive and evasive tactics. The enemy's knowledge of the terrain and trail networks provides him an advantage for conducting evasive action, harassing action, and rapid withdrawal.

(6) Effects on Friendly Courses of Action: Ground vehicular movement is limited to existing roads and trails. The rice lands allow good aerial observation and facilitate reinforcement by friendly forces.

c. Enemy

(1) Available intelligence indicated that the enemy forces were resting and refitting for future operations. Therefore, the enemy was expected to avoid contact unless his base area was threatened. The area around the Song Tranh River located in the southern portion of the AO had previously been used by the enemy as a supply base.

(2) On 11 August 1969, elements of the 31st NVA Regiment, 2nd NVA Division conducted an attack on LZ West. After the attack, in which the enemy suffered 51 KIA's and an unknown number of wounded, the Regiment was thought to be operating in the vicinity of Hill 441 (AT 982292) with an estimated strength of 800 to 900 men. This information was obtained from four POW's captured during the attack on LZ West. (See ANNEX B, Defense of LZ West against a combined Sapper and Infantry Attack).

(3) Enemy disposition and strength carried by Division G-2 prior to the operation:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>
2nd NVA Div HQ	BS 11598	200
GK-30 NVA Sig Bn	Unk	275
GK-31 NVA AA Bn	Unk	250
GK-32 NVA RB Bn	Unk	200
GK-33 NVA Mortar BN	AT 9438	200
GK-35 NVA Sap/Rcn Bn	BT 1108	120
GK-37 Trans Bn (NVA)	BT 1598	200
GK-38 NVA Med Bn	BT 1598	200
GK-40 NVA Eng Bn	Unk	200
3rd NVA Regt HQ	AT 9513	180

1st NVA Bn	BT 1517	180
2nd NVA Bn	BT 0820	200
3rd NVA Bn	BT 0612	200
1st MF Regt HQ	BS 3993	225
40th MF Bn	BS 3993	200
60th MF Bn	BS 3396	250
90th MF Bn	BS 2593	210

(4) The enemy's probable courses of action are as follows:

(a) Conduct an attack with one Regiment and one NVA Mortar Bn within the AO.

(b) Conduct harassing and interdiction operations.

(c) Reinforce attack (a) with an NVA Sap/Recon Bn, NVA AA Bn, and NVA RR Bn.

(d) Defend base areas from fortified positions.

(e) Withdraw to safe areas and avoid friendly forces.

(5) Location of the enemy during the operation:

(a) The general location of the 3rd (31st) NVA Main Force Regiment was BT 006224 (Center of Mass) (See ANNEX A- Map and Operations Overlays)

(b) The general location of the 1st NVA Main Force Regiment was AT 938266 (Center of Mass) (See ANNEX A-Map and Operation Overlays)

9.(c) MISSION:

The 4th Bn, 31st Inf's primary mission consisted of securing the resettlement District of Hiep Duc from the encroachment of VC/NVA forces. Unspecified tasks were to find, fix, and destroy and/or capture enemy forces

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and equipment within the Battalion AO.

10.(4) CONCEPT OF OPERATION: (See ANNEX A- Operation Overlays)

The Task Force 4/31 Inf, through a series of offensive maneuvers, attacks to find, fix, and destroy enemy forces in vicinity AT 895260 and BT 015225 beginning 170600H August 1969; Priority of fires withheld until contact.

11. (c) EXECUTION:

(a) General: Maneuver elements of the 4th Bn, 31st Inf had continually operated in both areas of contact for one year. The method of operation was characterized by patrolling and ambushes of platoon or smaller size units. However, for a month prior to the initial contact, this Battalion had two companies committed to a screening mission to the north of its normal TAO, vicinity AT 970330. On 12 August 1969, the screening mission was terminated and the whole battalion began working its normal AO. Between 12 August 1969 and 17 August 1969, the battalion was primarily concerned with policing the battlefield around LZ West following the sapper attack of 11 and 12 August 1969 (See Annex B). The remainder of the battalion was engaged in small unit patrolling north of the Hiep Duc Controlled Fire Zone and below LZ Siberia. During the course of policing the battlefield around LZ West, D Co, 4/31 Inf engaged an enemy force which later turned out to be the 31st NVA Regiment. This meeting engagement took place on the 17th of August 1969. The following day, 18 August 1969, B Co, 4/31 Inf, while searching for a rice cache northeast of Hiep Duc, made contact with what later proved to be elements of the 1st MF NVA Regiment. Both Regiment's parent unit is the 2nd NVA Division. Overall, the execution of the entire operation began with the above two meeting engagements, and continued with various offensive maneuvers including frontal, flanking, and encircling attacks.

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(b) Specific:

17 August 1969 (See attached Overlays-Annex A)

At 1655 hours D Co killed 3 VC/NVA at BT 005229 and while checking out the area they came under heavy fire. The initial exchange of fire resulted in 1 US KIA and 1 US WIA. Contact was broken and Co D prepared to receive resupply. As the resupply ship (Rattler 26) approached Co D they were taken under intense enemy fire which resulted in both pilots being wounded. They managed to fly the aircraft to LZ Center where both pilots were medevaced. At 1900 hours Co D again made contact with the enemy and small arms fire was exchanged resulting in 1 more US KIA and 1 US WIA. At 1930 hours Co D broke contact and moved to their NDP. A medevac was arranged for first light. Results: 1 US KIA, 3 US WIA and 1 US MIA. No other contact was made by any of the companies.

18 August 1969- (See attached Overlays- Annex A)

At 1335 hours Co B/4-31 Inf made contact at AT 947278. The company came under heavy small arms, mortar and RPG fire and suffered 6 US WIA's. At 1430 hours, Co B began taking heavy enemy fire from N-SW-E.

Firebirds on station in support of Co B, received 51 cal fire. Co B remained in heavy contact resulting in additional friendly casualties. One platoon of Co C was dispatched to Co B as reinforcements. Co B remained in contact, and airstrikes and medevacs were requested. At 1840 hours an airstrike began and the jets received heavy small arms fire with negative results. At 1930 hours, a medevac was attempted with gunship support, but failed because the medevac ship took numerous hits and was forced to abort. At 2035 hours, another medevac was attempted, this one was successful.

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and 8 US WIA were extracted. At 2015 hours the 3rd platoon of Co C linked up with Co B and they moved to their NDP. Total casualties for Co B consisted of 9 US KIA, 20 US WIA and 1 Kit Carson KIA. Spooky was brought on station and remained throughout the night to support B Co. B Co accounted for 9 NVA KIA, 1 AK-47, and 1 AK-50 captured in the day's action.

At 1210 hours, via BT 004224 Co D made contact with an estimated company size enemy force. The enemy was well equipped and dug in. Co D suffered 2 US KIA and 5 US WIA. Artillery and gunships support were adjusted on the enemy. During the afternoon Co D continued to maneuver on the enemy but at 1535 hours, were forced to pull back and regroup with a total of 18 US WIA and 4 US KIA and 1 US MIA. At 1735 hours all WIA's were extracted and contact was temporarily broken. At 1925 hours, the company began receiving mortar fire which was followed by a ground attack from all directions, with the main attack coming from the east. The enemy used machinegun, M-79 and AK fire. The attack was repelled; however Co D suffered 2 US KIA and 3 US WIA. Shadow was requested and was on station all night in support of Co D. Co D recorded a total of 52 NVA KIA in the day's action. C Co from 2/1 Inf arrived at LZ West at 1000H and was given the mission of relieving Co D on 19 Aug 1969.

At 1200 hours, AT 963264, the Recon platoon made contact with the enemy and received Chicom grenades and small arms fire from the N, S, and W which resulted in 4 US WIA's. At 1250 hours a medevac was effected and at 1400 hours, contact was broken, and Recon moved towards LZ West closing LZ West at 1600 hours. Five NVA KIA were accounted for by the Recon platoon in this action.

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19 Aug 69 (See Attached Overlays- Annex A)

Co D remained in their NDP to provide supporting fires for Co C/2-1 Inf and the insertion of 3/21 Inf. At 0715 hours defensive targets were fired for Co D because they were receiving heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire from the E and NE. Mortars and artillery were fired on the area, the small arms fire ceased. A link up with Co C/2-1 Inf was effected at 1200 hours. No contact was made during the afternoon and the two companies set up a NDP at BT 004225. At 2240 hours movement was heard on all sides of the perimeter and at 2255 hours both companies received heavy automatic weapons fire and RPG rounds from the E, S, and west, resulting in 1 US KIA and 14 US WIA. Shadow was requested and came on station at 2310 hours. At 0140 hours a medevac extracted 10 US WIA.

Co B was airlifted to LZ Siberia and replaced by Co C/4-31 Inf on the morning of 19 Aug. One platoon of Co C seized OBJ X, Hill 11 8 (AT 920259) and a section of 81 mm mortars was displaced from LZ Siberia to Hill 118. The mortars from E Co 4/31 Inf were used in direct support of the maneuver elements. Co B/1-46 Inf became OPCON to 4-31 Inf effective after they were airlifted to LZ Karen. This airlift was completed at 1300 hours. Co B/1-46 Inf conducted a link up with Co C/4-31 Inf and further coordinated for a combined attack.

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20 Aug 69 (See attached Overlays-Annex A)

Co B/2-1 Inf became OPCON to 4-31 Inf. Co C/4-31 Inf and Co B/1-46 Inf left their NDP and began moving East on the morning of the 20th. Co C was conducting platoon size patrols and the 1st platoon received small arms fire at 1020 hours resulting in 4 US WIA at AT938270. The 1st platoon continued to receive small arms fire from the S, E, and W and were unable to maneuver. Blue Ghost came on station in support of Co C and received small arms fire while supporting Co C. At 1345 hours, 1st platoon closed with the remainder of Co C and formed a defensive position. It was reported that the enemy was on all sides of Co C and closing in. At 1510 hours the CO of Co C and five other personnel were wounded. Blue Ghost was requested by Co C for close support. At 1520 hours the enemy ceased fire but remained in vicinity of the defensive position. At 1545 hours the Blue Ghost received extensive ground fire while supporting Co C. At 1645 hours Co C received incoming mortars resulting in numerous WIA'S. Co C pulled back to regroup and effected a link-up with Co B/1-46 Inf AT 920270. While enroute to the NDP a medevac extracted 14 US WIA'S. Co C suffered 4 KIA and 2 MIA and 21 WIA on 20 Aug. Enemy casualties were unknown.

D Co/4-31 Inf moved to the area vic BT 004229 and recovered the bodies of 5 US MIA. These KIA's were soon evacuated. D Co/4-31 Inf and C Co/2-1 Inf set up a NDP at BT 004225.

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An AO extension was granted and the 2/7 Marines began moving from BT 040307 to BT 000273 in an effort to trap the enemy between the two American forces.

B Co/1-46 Inf found the bodies of the previously reported 10 MIA 18 Aug 69 and secured them until they could be removed.

B Co/2-1 Inf OPCON to 4-31 Inf was airlifted to LZ Karen, and prepared to link up with Co B/1-46 Inf and Co C/4-31 Inf on 21 Aug 69. 21 Aug 69 (See attached Overlays-Annex A)

At 0510 hours a trip flare on the perimeter of D Co went off and movement was engaged with mortars and small arms fire. At 0625 the enemy fired RPG'S but they fell short of the perimeter. At 0630 C Co/2-1 Inf engaged and killed 1 NVA also capturing 1 AK-47. At 0655 Co/C/2-1 reported two more NVA KIA's and 1 AK-47 captured with 2 full magazines and 6 Chicom grenades. At 0700 hours, Blue Ghost came on station and received small arms fire and 0800 hours Co D broke contact. D Co/4-31 Inf was airlifted to LZ West and A Co/4-31 Inf was inserted into D Co's previous location.

At 0845 hours Co B/2-1 Inf successfully linked up with Co C/4-31st at 1000 hours.

At 0900 and 1055 hours LZ West received five incoming 122mm rockets with negative damage.

The 3rd Bn 7th Regt USMC continued to move west in grids AT 9628, AT 9626 and AT 9622. The Marines received heavy automatic and small arms fire. Results unknown.

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B Co/1-46 Inf and C Co/4-31 Inf secured OBJ M (AT 940279) and OBJ N (AT 942276) resulting in 103 NVA KIA. B Co/1-46 Inf, B Co/2-1 Inf and C Co/4-31 Inf set up a combined NDP at AT 921259.

At 1600 hours A Co/4-31 Inf and C Co/2-1 Inf became OPCON to 3/21 Inf and 3/21 Inf assumed control of the battle with the 31st NVA Regt to the SE of LZ West.

22 Aug 69 (See attached Overlays--Annex A)

At 0615 hours Co B/2-1 Inf, Co C/4-31 Inf and Co B/1-46 Inf began their attack from AT 935258 to AT 920259, leaving at staggered intervals. All companies departed phase line blue (from AT 935258 to AT 920259) at 1005 hours under the cover of artillery fire. No contact was made as the companies swept through their areas until Co B/2-1 Inf received mortar and small arms fire from AT 942273 at 1230 hours. Gunships and Artillery were requested and Co B/2-1 Inf suffered 12 WIA's and 1 MIA. At 1325 hours a dustoff was effected and contact was broken. All companies closed to their NDP at 1700 hours in order to set in adequate defenses.

Intelligence reports from Hiep Duc indicated a probable sapper attack on LZ Siberia and artillery was fired on the reported grids; four secondary explosions were reported. Monitored enemy radio transmissions indicated that a large amount of supplies were being shipped from the north to support two regimental size units.

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23 Aug 69 (See attached Overlays-Annex A)

At 0640 hours Task Force 4-31 Inf consisting of Co B/1-46 Inf, Co C/4-31 Inf and Co B/2-1 Inf departed Hill 118 (AT 920259) moving NE. At 0715 hours the 81mm mortars from Co E/4-31 Inf on Hill 118 received about 30 rounds of incoming 82mm mortar rounds resulting in four minor WIA's. the 81mm mortars returned the fire using the grids picked up by the counter-mortar radar on LZ West (AT 990251). Hill 118 continued to receive sporadic incoming mortar fire throughout the day.

At 1010 hours 2/7 Marines were located in a blocking position from AT 972279 to AT 972260.

At 1400 hours an element of the Task Force 4/31 Inf, Co B/1-46 Inf made contact with an estimated platoon of NVA. They received heavy small arms fire, automatic weapons and RPG fire resulting in 2 US WIA's. A dustoff evacuated the wounded at 1525 hours. B Co recorded 11 NVA KIA during this encounter.

At 1600 hours Hill 118 came under enemy mortar fire. Blue Ghost White spotted the possible mortar location and engaged it with unknown results.

At 2020 hours LZ West received six rounds 82mm Recoilless Rifle resulting in 1 US WIA. The location of the 82mm RR was observed and 155's and 4.2 inch mortars returned fire. The enemy fire ceased.




24 Aug 69 (See attached Overlays-Annex A)

All elements of the Task Force 4-31 Inf moved from their NDP's to the northeast to find and destroy the enemy. No contact was made until 1215 hours when Co B/2-1 Inf engaged a force of 20 NVA resulting in 2 NVA KIA and 1 AK-47 captured. At 1300 hours Co B/2-1 Inf received incoming mortars but sustained no casualties.

The 2/7 Marines located at AT 968279 provided a blocking and security force.

At 1300 hours, Co C/4-31 Inf recovered 10 bodies of MIA's, previously reported by B/4-31 at AT 940275. (These bodies had been secured earlier but lost during contact). Co C evacuated the bodies to Hill 118 where they were extracted to Graves Registration at LZ Baldy. At 1500 hours Co B/2-1 Inf received small arms and mortar fire at AT 942270 resulting in 8 US WIA and 1 US KIA. Mortars from Hill 118 fired in support of B Co and the enemy firing ceased. At 1750 hours Co B/2-1 Inf engaged and killed two NVA and captured two AK-47's.

At 1600 hours, Co D/1-46 Inf, OPCON to 4/31, was airlifted to LZ Karen. At 1810 hours, Rattler 27, on a re-supply mission to an element of Task Force 4-31, had a mechanical failure and went down in the vic AT 967255. An element of Co D/4-31 Inf was immediately lifted to the site to secure the helicopter. The helicopter was later extracted by a CH-47. The crew suffered no casualties.



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25 August 1969 (See attached Overlays-Annex A)

At 1000 hours and 1025 hours, Co B/2-1 received small arms and mortar fire from vic AT 941266. 81mm mortars on Hill 118 returned this fire. At 1030 hours, Co B/1-46 Inf began receiving enemy fire as they maneuvered to the east to assist Co B/2-1 Inf AT 941266. Co B/1-46 Inf reported 6 US WIA and 12 NVA KIA. At 1115 hours, Co B/1-46 Inf were still receiving mortar fire and artillery was fired on the suspected enemy locations. At 1245 hours, Co B/1-46 Inf began receiving small arms fire after having advanced about 200 meters. The enemy attempted to surround this element but was halted by artillery and mortar fire.

At 1215 hours, Co B/4-31 Inf was airlifted from LZ Siberia to Hill 118 and began moving forward to become part of Task Force 4/31 Inf. 1/46 Inf Bn took responsibility for the defense of LZ Siberia and the close in defense of Hiep Duc.

At 1500 hours, Co B/4-31 Inf received small sniper fire vic AT 932265. At 1500 hours, Co B/1-46 Inf received sniper fire resulting in 4 US WIA's. As the elements advanced, numerous bunkers, trenches and spiderholes were discovered, indicating it would be a slow process rooting the enemy out.

At 1530 hours, Co D/1-46 Inf made heavy contact while moving east at AT 950267 resulting in 6 US WIA's. A medevac was effected and Co D/1-46 Inf again attempted to move on. The immediately received heavy small arms and mortar fire, resulting in 14 US WIA's. Co D pulled back to regroup and secure an LZ for a medevac, which was successfully completed a short time later.

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At 1600 hours Co E/4-31 Inf received AK-47 fire from the west end of Hill 118. This unit received small arms fire until approximately 1800 hours. At 1920 hours, Co D/1-46 Inf engaged and killed 1 NVA vic their NDP AT 945264.

A summary of the day's actions showed that CoB/2-1 Inf had killed 25 NVA, captured three AK-47's, documents, one AK-50 and also destroyed 20 bunkers which were 6 X 6 and had overhead cover. Co B suffered 17 US WIA.

Co B/1-46 reported 30 NVA KIA. Two US M-16's captured, one SKS, two AK-47's, one AK-50 and 17 bunkers destroyed. Co B suffered 12 US WIA.

Co D/1-46 Inf reported 19 NVA KIA and 5 bunkers destroyed. They suffered 20 US WIA.

Total for the day was 74 NVA KIA, 10 weapons captured and 42 bunkers destroyed. Contact was broken at 1755 hours and all companies moved to NDP's.

26 August 1969 (See attached Overlays-Annex A)

Co B/4-31 Inf moved, on order, to secure objectives 9 AT 946268 and then effect a link up with the Marines AT 950268. Co B made no contact until 1310 hours when they received incoming mortar rounds resulting in 4 US WIA and 1 US KIA.

Co B/1-46 Inf followed Co B/4-31 Inf to objective 10 AT 946268 and established an LZ to be used for resupply and evacuation of all casualties and reinforcements.

Co B/2-1 Inf attacked, on order, to secure objectives 1 AT 936268, and continued on to objective 2 at AT 936272. Co B made no contact until



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1110 hours when a sniper wounded one man. B Co secure their objective without any further enemy resistance.

Co C/4-31 Inf attacked to secure objective 7 at AT 944270. At 0950 hours Co C was stopped by heavy M79, SAF and mortar fire. Mortar and artillery fired and the enemy fire ceased. C Co moved on to secure objective 8 at AT 942273 and received sniper fire resulting in 2 US WIA and 2 US KIA. At 1150 hours, Co C again ran into sniper fire resulting in 5 US KIA's.

Co A/4-31 Inf was released from OPCON of 3/21 Inf and prepared to be airlifted to Join Task Force 4/31 Inf on 27 August 1969.

All elements closed their NDP's at approximately 1900 hours and established night defenses.

27 August 1969 (See attached Overlays-Annex A)

At 0700 hours, Co C/4-31 Inf was airlifted from a field PZ to LZ West and Co A/4-31 and Co D/4-31 Inf were lifted to the field. Co B/1-46 moved to Hill 118. Co B and Co D/1-46 Inf was released from OPCON of 4/31 Inf to control of 1/46 Inf Bn for close-in security of Hiep Duc.

It was learned from POW's taken by Delta 1-7 Marines that the 1st and 3rd Regiments (AKA 31st Regt) of the 2nd NVA Division were the enemy units in contact. The Marines reported 2 NVA KIA and two weapons captured. 2-7 Marines reported a large amount of personal equipment and three weapons captured at AT 959268.

Co A/2-1 Inf was OPCON to 4/31 Inf, airlifted to LZ West, and prepared to move to the vicinity of AT 950258 on 28 August 1969.

All companies conducted detailed searches with operations with negative enemy contact.

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28 August 1969 (See attached Overlays- Annex A)

Co A/4-31 Inf moved to Objective 1 at grid AT 938266 with negative enemy contact. They discovered 1 NVA KIA and destroyed a number of bunkers.

Co B/4-31 Inf moved to Objective 8 at AT 940260 with negative contact and moved on to Objective 3, AT 944262, at 0835 hours. Co B found 1 US steel helmet, two US bodies and one M-16 rifle. The bodies were believed to be former members of Co C/4-31 Inf. At 0840 Co C received sniper fire resulting in one US WIA and one US KIA. At 0930 hours, Co B found one PRC-25, five M-16's and one M-60 believed to belong to Co D/1-46 Inf. At 1240 hours Co B received heavy machine gun fire resulting in three WIA's. They destroyed the machine gun position resulting in 5 NVA KIA.

The Marines reported they had captured two 12.7mm anti-aircraft guns at AT 952275 and AT 950265.

29 August 1969 (See attached Overlays -Annex A)

At 0030 hours, AT 945269, a trip flare went off on the perimeter of Co B/2-1 Inf's NDP and two NVA were observed carrying what appeared to be mortar rounds and grenades. They were engaged with small arms fire. A search in the morning turned up 20 60mm mortar rounds. At 1910 hours Co B recovered one US MIA.

Co A/4-31 Inf linked up with a Marine tank, infantry team.

At 1430 hours Co B/4-31 Inf discovered the body of one US MIA at AT 944263. In this area Co B also found four reinforced bunkers, numerous spider holes, a 60mm mortar base plate, two NVA packs, one carbine, and 17, 60mm rounds.

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Co B/4-31 Inf moved to Hiep Duc CFZ in preparation to be released to OPCON of 1/46 Inf and to secure LZ Siberia on 30 August 1969.

At 2200 hours, all elements closed their NDP's and set up defenses for the night.

At 1500 hours, the Marines discovered seven VN civilians apparently assassinated by the NVA at AT 952278. Also in the area were large bunkers with overhead cover connected by tunnels. These bunkers were capable of housing one hundred men. The Marines destroyed the entire complex.

30 August 1969 (See attached Overlays- Annex A)

Co A/4-31 Inf left their NDP at AT 933267 and moved NE. At 0830 hours, they discovered and destroyed seven large bunkers at AT 939276. At 1010 hours, Co A engaged and killed one VC in a spider hole AT 939276.

All elements conducted detailed search and destroy operations in their designated areas resulting in numerous bunkers being destroyed and negative contact.

31 August 1969 (See attached Overlays- Annex A)

At 0730 hours, Co A/4-31 Inf while conducting detailed search and clear operations, discovered six fresh graves. At 0800 hours, Co A found one VN female who had gunshot wounds. She was evacuated to LZ West for questioning. Three small children were also found at AT 939276 and were extracted to LZ WEST.

Co A/2-1 Inf found and destroyed structures at AT 964244 and AT 965240.

Co D/4-31 Inf found and destroyed three bunkers and one booby-trap at AT 922272. They also engaged two VC at AT 919271 with negative results.

Co B/2-1 Inf moved an element to Hill 118 to secure the forward mortars. At 1900 hours, Co E/4-31 Inf spotted one VC approaching their perimeter and he was taken under fire and was killed.

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1 September 1969 (See attached Overlays- Annex A)

Co A/4-31 Inf moved from their NDP at AT 928266. At 1015H, AT 941271, A Co found three US helmets and an AK-47 containing a full magazine. At this same location they destroyed 15 bunkers and found four graves containing four NVA soldiers KIA. At 1220H, at AT 935274, A Co found one US MIA believed to be from Co C/4-31 Inf. The body was extracted to LZ Baldy by the C & C helicopter. A Co, at 1350H, AT 960248, engaged 10 NVA at a distance of 30 meters resulting in four NVA KIA, and two NVA WIA who were later evacuated by dustoff. Co A/2-1 Inf at 1700H, observed eight NVA in green uniform, AT 949233, and processed artillery resulting in three NVA KIA and one hut destroyed.

There was no further contact during the days activities.

2 September 1969 (See attached Overlays- Annex A)

1-46 Inf was released from the responsibility of the security of Hiep Duc CFZ and LZ Siberia; and the TAC CP of 1-46 Inf departed the AO.

B/4-31 Inf was released from OPCON of 1-46 Inf and returned to control of 4-31 Inf. They then assumed the security of LZ Siberia.

B/2-1 Inf was released from OPCON of 4-31 Inf and was airlifted to LZ Baldy.

There was negative contact during the patrolling operations of 2 September 1969.

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3 September 1969 (See attached Overlays- Annex A)

A/2-1 Inf was released from OPCON of 4-31 Inf.

There was negative contact or casualties in the 4-31 Inf TAOR this date.

(c) Various Techniques Utilized:

(1) Generally, ranges of engagement were less than 100 meters. This made it difficult or dangerous to utilize effective artillery air support. However, helicopter gunships proved very effective since their fires could be adjusted to within 25 meters of friendly positions. In the final analysis, the only effective weapon was the infantryman; closing with and digging out the enemy by the use of small arms and M-26 hand fragmentation grenades.

(2) Aerial broadcasts were attempted, however, the enemy's use of 51 caliber anti-aircraft weapons discouraged the lower level flying required for the broadcast to be understood. (under 3000 feet).

(3) Two Marine Medium Gun Tanks were used on 29 August 1969 in order to close with and destroy four reinforced machine gun bunkers. On 18 August, Lt Col Henry, CO 4/31st, requested a platoon of tanks; however, this request was turned down. The use of a tank infantry team on 29 August proved to be effective in reducing enemy fortified positions and holding friendly casualties to a minimum.

(4) The Bn Cmdr's use of available forces was decisive during this action. Offensive pressure was constantly placed on the enemy by rotating anywhere from two to six companies in and out of contact with at least two relatively fresh companies in the vicinity of contact at all times.

(5) The use of all supporting fire means was extremely effective as demonstrated by the below listed results. Not only were contact missions fired and flown, but the available support was used as a blocking force, to stop retreating enemy forces, and/or destroy them as they attempted to escape during the hours of darkness.

12. (c) RESULTS:

a. Friendly US:

KIA- ~ 39

WIA- 142 WIA/62 WIA/19 HEAT EXPLOSIVES

Radios Lost- 7 (4 destroyed)

M-16 Lost- 22

Ruck Sacks Lost- 59

b. Enemy:

NVA KIA- 415

NVA Captures- 10

Individual Weapons Captured- 36

Crew Served Weapons Destroyed- 11

Bunkers Destroyed- 93

13. (c) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

a. Supply: This operation was supported from three locations. All Class I, some Class V, and special items were sent forward from the battalion rear area in Chu Lai. Class V, water and POL were sent forward from elements of our Support Platoon on LZ Baldy. All resupply was forwarded to the

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remainder of our Support Platoon on LZ West. LZ West became the forward distribution point for all companies in the field, which at one time numbered nine. Transportation to the forward area and company field locations were accomplished utilizing CH-47 and UH-1D helicopters.

(1) Class I:

(a) The following represents the approximate issues of rations during the operation.

"A" Rations-1,190 meals

"C" Rations-9,252 meals

LRRP Rations-1,800 meals

(b) Although ice was available, it was not possible to ship it to the forward distribution point daily. The primary reason was that aircraft could not be provided at any prescribed time due to priority missions. Ice chests were not available to the element in Chu Lai. The resupply pad was located approximately 20 minutes by truck from the ice plant in Chu Lai.

(2) Class II and IV: Stockage of high demand items at LZ West and Chu Lai enabled the battalion to respond to the immediate requirements of combat units and afforded time to replenish our stock. Expendable supplies in this category were sandbags, paper products, plastic eating utensils, radio batteries, heat tablets, water purification tablets, insect repellent and aerial delivery items.

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(3) Class III: All resupply was shipped from LZ Baldy to LZ West. The approximate amounts are as follows:

Mogas- 7,000 gallons

Disel- 1,000 gallons

(4) Class V: With only a few exceptions, all Class V was drawn from LZ Baldy and shipped to LZ West. From the forward distribution point it was forwarded to company field locations on an as requested basis. Special requirements such as 90mm RR rounds, bounding M-79 rounds and WP Smoke grenades that were not available at LZ Baldy were drawn in Chu Lai and shipped to LZ West. There was one tactical emergency of 81mm mortar ammunition shipped from Chu Lai which required two (2) CH-47 sorties.

Total resupplied amounts of high expenditures are as follows:

5.56—	92,400
7.62—	26,400
M-79 (all types)	2,748
M-26—	600
81mm (all types)	3,984
4.2 in (all types)	2,336

(5) Water: The intense heat, the tactical situation, and the fact that the enemy controlled the wells and streams in the operational area contributed to a shortage of water. In order to resupply all companies in the field, LZ West was placed on water ration. For eleven days, there was no shaving or bathing. The mess hall was closed and C-Rations were consumed in an effort to conserve water. At the height of the problem when we were

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resupplying nine infantry companies, 1100 Marines were flown into LZ West without water. They too were resupplied. For the entire period of eighteen days, 73 sorties of water, amounting to some 525,800 gallons, were flown into LZ West. During the eight day period from 21 August to 28 August, 41 water sorties were flown in with 9 sorties being flown on 25 August, amounting to some 5,000 gallons.

(6) CH-47 Sorties: During this eighteen day period, 125 sorties were flown into LZ West from LZ Baldy and Chu Lai with a total weight of approximately 1,125,000 pounds. The breakdown is as follows:

Chu Lai	23 Sorties	207,000 pounds
LZ Baldy	102 Sorties	918,000 pounds

(7) Major Problems Encountered:

(a) Aircraft: Undoubtedly the largest problem was the lack of available aircraft on a timely basis. It was not unusual to receive all scheduled CH-47 sorties and then be able to obtain a UH-1D to resupply companies in the field locations. When UH-1D's were available for only a short period of time it was a near impossibility to resupply five to nine companies in the time allotted.

(b) The initial lack of 500 gallon water blivits and a water shortage point on LZ West were major problems. A water point where blivits can immediately be drained in order to be backhauled is a necessity for future operations of this nature.

(c) The lack of insulated food containers did not permit us to feed all companies in the field locations "A" rations when tactical situation permitted.

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(d) At the outset of the operation, the forward distribution point was not prepared to provide support for the number of troops actually involved. As soon as the requirement for nine companies were known, all supply requirements for the nine companies were filled.

(e) The final problem was that the battalion rear area was in the process of relocating itself from LZ Baldy to Chu Lai. The movement was completed on 17 August; however, the adjustment to resupplying from the new location took two additional days.

b. Medical

(1) During the operation from 17 August to 3 September the 4-31 Inf Bn sustained 39 KIA and 142 WIA which were evacuated. In addition, there were 62 minor wounds and 19 heat casualties treated that were not evacuated.

(2) Medevac helicopter pilots performed skillfully as they flew a total of 27 missions. On three occasions the command and control ship and resupply ship also extracted wounded men. Many of the extractions were met by heavy enemy ground fire. Several lives were saved by the prompt extractions and evacuation; although at times, B, C, and D Companies had seriously wounded patients who waited up to 18 hours prior to extraction. No ships were able to land due to the intense enemy fire.

(3) The great majority of the severely wounded were taken to the 23rd Medical Company at LZ Baldy. Flying time from the battlefield was approximately 10 minutes. After stabilization by blood, intravenous fluids, and emergency surgical procedures, these patients were sent to the 95th Evacuation Hospital in Da Nang or the 27th Surgical Hospital in Chu Lai.

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(4) Patients who sustained minor wounds or heat injuries were taken to the Bn Aid Station on LZ West. They were evaluated and treated. Some were returned to duty within 24 hours, others remained as a security force on the firebase. A few were evacuated to the rear. Several with minor wounds were returned to the respective firebase of their own battalion.

(5) By 20 August, seven medics had been wounded and one killed. Four of the wounded were evacuated. The remainder of the medical platoon was ordered to LZ West. Experienced medics were sent to replace the wounded.

(6) Problem Areas:

(a) The main problems encountered were those of supply and identification of gear. For the initial three days, we obtained emergency resupply for the firebase and field from the 23rd Medical Company by dustoff ships. Due to the intense enemy fire, supply to the field was temporarily impossible. Shirts were employed by D Company when the supply of field dressings was exhausted. The situation eased when an entire connex of medical supplies was airlifted from Chu Lai to LZ West.

(b) This operation involved nine companies from three different Bn's. Identification of gear became very difficult when wounded of different companies and battalions arrived on the same dustoff. When these men were evaluated and quickly evacuated, their gear was tagged and returned by S4 personnel representing the different battalions.

14. (c) SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES

a. Strobe Lights: A great deal of the resupply and medical evacuation was conducted during the hours of darkness. The heavy contact during the day and intensity of the enemy fire made night resupply imperative. In this regard, the availability and use of ~~strobe lights~~ (Light Marker Distress SDU-5/E)

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were essential. All other means of lighting landing zones proved ineffective or very difficult for pilot identification. However, each company had only one strobe light, and in one company it was destroyed when the person carrying it was wounded. Resupply and medical evacuation at night was much more efficient and reliable by the use of strobe lights, when available.

b. 90mm Recoilless Rifle: This weapon proved to be extremely valuable when units were required to attack bunkers and built-up parapits. The LAW proved ineffective because it did not have enough explosive force to destroy the bunker. We fired 73 LAW's at one bunker complex trying to destroy a machinegun position resulting in little damage to the bunker and no damage to the occupants. On the other hand, a 90mm Recoilless Rifle was lifted into the field location and one round destroyed the bunker, the machinegun, and killed the enemy personnel. Although the weapon is heavy and cumbersome to carry everyday in the field, it can be lifted to company locations when required.

c. Armor: Although armor has its limitations as far as maneuverability is concerned, the direct firepower provided by its armament proved extremely useful. B Company suffered numerous casualties in an attempt to neutralize several mutually supporting machinegun positions, and they suffered more casualties in an attempt to extract their wounded. With the use of Marine Medium Gun Tanks the next day, the positions were easily overrun with no casualties.

15. (c) COMMANDER'S ANALYSIS:

A. General: During the recent actions by the 4-31 Inf, 17-29 August 1969, there developed many weaknesses, lessons learned and relearned, and solutions to problems that should be analyzed and discussed. The attack on LZ West the

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night of 11-12 August is considered by higher headquarters to be part of the overall campaign. However, at battalion level, it is viewed as a separate action and therefore covered by a separate analysis. (See Annex B)

b. Finding and Fixing the Enemy: Fortunately, there were two companies that were not tied down to a particular piece of terrain just prior to this action. These companies were operating in widely dispersed areas and were assigned reconnaissance missions. Co D was looking for any signs of the enemy force that conducted the attack on LZ West on the night of 11-12 August. Co B had the mission of locating a rice cache reported to be in the foothills northeast of Hiep Duc. Regardless of the missions, both units were required to move some distance from their patrol bases. A lot of luck was involved in encountering both major enemy units before they were ready to attack. However, it points out the fact that when fighting an elusive enemy, it is a must to cover as much of the units assigned area with mobile forces as possible, even though their speed is only two km per hour. Another important lesson is that during a meeting engagement with NVA forces, if the friendly forces are outflanked, they have encountered a numerically superior enemy force. This fact should be self-evident and was at battalion level, but this battalion could not react immediately as there were no additional forces immediately available for commitment.

c. Span of Control: Initially, the method of reinforcing this Battalion was to attach companies to the Battalion. At the high point of this battle this Headquarters controlled seven maneuver companies in the field and had four separate and distinct missions. These missions were: (1) Protect the refuge village of Hiep Duc; (2) Secure the fire base at LZ West and LZ Siberia;

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(3) Engage and defeat the enemy forces south east of LZ West; (4) Engage and defeat the enemy forces northeast of Hiep Duc. With these missions and the number of units involved, it was difficult for the battalion to concentrate its efforts or to adequately supervise any of the separate actions. Higher headquarters acted quickly to bring two additional control headquarters into the picture and the span of control problem was remedied. Many of the other problem areas to be discussed are directly related to span of control difficulties.

d. Use of Appropriate Forces: As soon as the enemy situation was developed northeast of Hiep Duc, it became apparent that at least one company of tanks could be used to advantage. The enemy occupied strongly fortified positions and was equipped primarily with machineguns, rifles, and M-79's. These positions were vulnerable only to direct hits from airstrikes or artillery. The terrain, although not ideally suited for armor operations, would have provided trafficability and maneuver room for employment of tanks. A verbal request for tanks was denied due to the nonavailability of armor units in the area.

e. Communications: Prior to this battle, two radio nets were in operation for intra-battalion communications. These nets were the Admin/Log net and the Battalion Command. No problems were experienced in the operation of the Admin/Log net. However, the Battalion Command net became so overcrowded that at times it was virtually useless. The net was barely capable of accomodating the normal situations at the peak of activity. Superimposed on this net were the FAC's, gunships, visitors, and other units operating in conjunction with this unit. The problem was alleviated to some degree by having the FAC and gunships switch to company internal nets for control.

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It seemed as if everything happened at one time requiring transmission time on the net. During periods of heavy contact, the units were passing information and requesting assistance, the FAC's and gunships would check in to assist, and adjacent units would call and request information. Air warning data was disseminated over the net for each fire mission as it was initiated and then separately to each aircraft entering the area of operations. At times there were as many as five concurrent fire missions from three separate locations in progress. Consideration should be given to establishing a separate net for the control of aircraft and disseminate air hazards in future operations of this magnitude.

f. Logistics: The greatest potential problem in this entire operation was logistical support. When the supply operations for the period 17 August to 3 September are analyzed this is readily apparent. I realized that any interruption in the flow of supplies would render this unit ineffective in a matter of hours. However, brigade and division immediately established priority of supply and transportation to this unit. The weather was good throughout the period and did not hamper helicopter operations. The two preceding circumstances combined with a dedicated logistical team effort insured a continuous flow of supplies.

g. Visitors: Visitors are always welcome to the 4th Bn, 31st Inf and LZ West. However, the volume and frequency of visits to this unit by VIP from and outside the division, plus the numerous members of the press caused an undue hardship on this battalion. There was an average of five VIP visitors daily, each of which required about 30 minutes briefing and discussion with the Battalion Commander or the S-3. Members of the press also were given a briefing and questions were answered as time permitted. During one day, six

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reporters visited the battalion. In future operations of this importance and scope, a small team from brigade should take over the briefing and welcoming responsibilities of the committed battalion. Not only would this free the Commander and S-3 to perform their primary duties but would facilitate the passing of information and reports to higher headquarters.

16. (c) RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. In order to provide effective and consistent lighting for resupply and medical evacuation at night from field locations, strobe lights should be issued to field units on a basis of one per squad.

b. Upon making contact with a bunkered enemy, consideration should be given to the immediate insertion of 90mm Recoilless Rifles. When a unit is situated in a fixed position for a number of days, the 90mm Recoilless Rifle should also be utilized in its anti-personnel role with the Bee-hive round.

c. Small units, battalion and lower, should saturate areas with platoon, squad, and fire team size missions when seeking out the enemy. In conjunction with these saturation missions, a reaction force should be available, either at Battalion or higher level, to immediately reinforce (within two hours) one of these small units that makes contact.

d. Care must be taken in not taxing the battalion's span of control by the insertion of numerous additional maneuver units. Too many maneuver units under one headquarters is as inefficient as denuding a headquarters of all its units.

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e. A tank team or larger tank task unit should be available to each brigade headquarters for use, when feasible, within the brigade TAOR. This team should be held at a centralized location and used in conjunction with infantry as the need arose and terrain permitted.

f. Communications nets should be broadened to include a common net for dissemination of such information as air warning data, information to incoming visitors, and coordinating information to and from adjacent units. Command nets should not be entered by personnel or elements outside the normal chain of command.

g. A liaison team from Brigade S2/S3 section should have been set up at LZ West in order to free the battalion to maneuver its units rather than spend half its time briefing visitors, sending reports, and conducting liaison with the numerous adjacent and supporting units. This liaison team should have separate communications nets and be located within the Bn tactical operations center. In this way, reports would have been more complete, accurate, and timely. PIO would have been more effective and the maneuver battalion would be free of outside administrative burdens in order to concentrate on fighting the battle.

h. Training should be conducted at all levels in order to instill the importance of security of equipment. Sensitive items such as radios, secure equipment, and SOI extracts should not be abandoned in an area of contact if at all possible. All items that must be abandoned in order to save lives should be destroyed in place. This can be done easily, even from a distance, by shooting the equipment and/or calling artillery fire missions on top of it.

~~_____~~

If for some plausible reason equipment cannot be destroyed when abandoned, this fact must immediately be reported through the chain of command. When reported, steps must be taken by higher headquarters to negate the information possibly attained by the enemy. A Company FO with this battalion lost an SOI carried by a US KIA, and it took nine days for a new SOI to be issued, even though it was known that the enemy was monitoring our radio nets through the use of last SOI.

i. A system should be devised with all supporting units so that high performance air, army air, and artillery could be used concurrently. At the present time, any of the aforementioned support cancels out each other when employed. Air support requires a check fire on all artillery, not only the area they are working, but in wide adjacent areas also. Some type of corridors could easily be established and many times, army air could easily work underneath artillery being fired at different locations. Coordination needs to be in order to establish a mutual confidence in this type of concurrent supporting fires.

j. Training in the small unit tactics of fire and maneuver, and fire and movement needs to be stressed. Even though this battalion has consistently stressed these basics, it was learned from this action, that units cannot be over-trained; and not until the basics become automatic reaction, do units even begin to be proficient. Individual soldiers seem to believe that this war is drastically different from past conflicts. This is true in some technical aspects, but the small unit tactics have not changed in the slightest.

~~_____~~

k. When up against an enemy strength of the magnitude engaged by this battalion, it is recommended that all available fire support be used initially rather than trying to overcome the enemy by ground attacks. ~~Units should even be pulled back far enough to facilitate a B-52 strike, if available. This would drastically cut down on friendly casualties, and inflict a devastating blow upon the enemy, especially since exact enemy locations were known, and he showed no indication to flee the area of contact.~~

CECIL M. HENRY
LTC INFANTRY
Commanding

ANNEXS:

- A- Operations Overlays and Map *(with drawn)* 
- B- Combat After Action Report dated 12 October 1969

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REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED ORDER
SEC ARMY BY TAG PER 5 MAR 1977



DELTA CO INITIAL CONTACT

WEST

AREA OF CONTACT

QUẬN THÂN
QUẬN TIỀN

7502111

5 MAR 1975

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED
ORDER SEC ARMY BY TAG PER

LI O'CONNOR
Trung An 2

CEZ

LZ KAREN

SIBERIA

CFZ

CEZ

LZ KAREN

SIBERIA

CFZ

ANNEX A (Operations Overlay) to Frag Order 15.

NUI CHOM

Leslie

PL
BLUE

PL
BLUE

OBJ
26
X

19 AUG

DONNER

95

-24

HEP-DUC

KAREN

LZ

SIBERIA

GROUP 4

Downgraded at 5 year intervals;
Declassified after 12 years.

LZ DRAGON BASE

LZ LESLIE

ANNEX A (Operations Overlay) to Frag Order 15.

ACKNOWLEDGE

Distributions: Same as Frag Order 15.

OFFICIAL

LEE
S3

HENRY
LTC

NUI LOC SON

MOTOR POOL

A LZ Nui Liet Kiem
WEST

OBJ
A

OBJ
B

HUU 102

PL
RED

PL
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19 AUG

21

APPROXIMATE

ANNEX A (Operations Overlay) to Frag Order 16.

92 < Assuming this is
97 and not 92 as 92
does not work

27

21 AUG

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WEST

LZ
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C 2-1
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03

20

ANNEX A (Operations Overlay) to Frag Order 16.

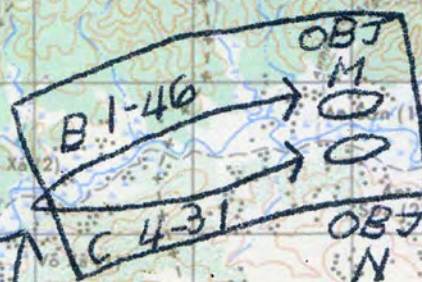
ACKNOWLEDGE

HENRY
LTC

Distribution: Same as Frag Order 16.

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AUG 21

LZ
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91
21