

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry
198th Infantry Brigade, Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96219

AVDF-BCNX

30 June 1968

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report (Night Movement and Engagement)

THRU: Commanding Officer
198th Inf Bde(Lt)
Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96219

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TO: Commanding General
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ATTN: AVDF (DOT)
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The following numbered paragraphs correspond with and are in compliance with the required paragraphs and paragraph headings contained in appendix 1 to Americal Division Regulation 335-8, dated 28 January 1968.

1. (U) Operation Burlington Trail - Search and Clear vicinity of area south of the Tien Phuoc road.
2. (U) 082120 - 090750 June 1968 *8th + 9th of June 1968*
3. (U) Vicinity Tam Son (3) RVN (BT 222068)
4. (C) 1-6 Inf, 198th Inf Bde (Light), Americal Division.
5. (U) LTC William D. Kelley, CO, 1-6 Inf, 198th LIB
MAJ John D. Beasley III, S-3, 1-6 Inf, 198th LIB
1LT John Mills, CO, B1-46th Inf, 198th LIB
CPT Larry Umberger, CO, C1-46th Inf, 198th LIB
1LT Robert E. Miller, CO, D1-46th Inf, 198th LIB
6. (C) 1-6 Inf Command and Control Group
D1-46 Inf
C1-46 Inf
D1-46 Inf

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7. (C) Supporting Forces:

a. D1-14 Arty (Prov). This battery was the direct support artillery for the 1-6 Inf. The battery performed with distinction throughout the Burlington Trail operations, and continually provided immediate close-in fire support, and H and I fires.

b. 176th Aviation Company. The "Minuteman" furnished a command and control helicopter as well as a utility helicopter for the 1-6 Infantry on the morning of 9 June 1968. Numerous sorties were flown in all categories (VR, resupply, C&C, and dust off). The courage, skill and desire to excel on the part of the Minutemen pilots significantly contributed to the success of reorganizing and resupply all ground elements.

8. The 198th Bde had confirmed intelligence reports of trench works and dug in positions in grids BT 209076, 209068, 205085. The area of grid square BT 2006 was continuously hazardous to all aircraft. Exact locations of enemy units in the area were unknown. Intelligence reports indicated that elements of the 2nd NVN Div and of the 1st VC Regiment were in the area. The enemy soldiers were completely equipped for sustained ground contact and their combat equipment included; combat packs, pistol belts, canteens, ponchos, first aid packets, ammunition containers, protective masks and cleaning equipment. Their weaponry included; AK-47, SKS, 60mm and 82mm mortars, light and heavy machine guns, RPG-2, M-1 carbines, pistols and grenades. The enemy units were not hesitant to engage the three rifle companies in the area of operations. They sniped at combat patrols regardless of the time of day. There were many instances of daylight and night mortaring of friendly positions prior to the contact during the night of 8 - 9 June 1968. Several well organized ground attacks were launched against the maneuver companies while in their night defensive positions. There were two large weapons caches previously uncovered in the Burlington Trail operation by A Company 1-6. In daylight hours enemy troops were observed moving in well organized formations to the south. The terrain in the vicinity of Tan Son (3) was dominated with open valleys and large heavily wooded hills. The enemy did not employ mines or anti-personnel booby traps. Observation on the night of 8 June 1968 was limited due to an overcast blocking out moonlight. Civilians were scattered throughout the valley floor, but they were not concentrated in large numbers.

9. B, C, and D Companies, 1-46 Inf were to conduct a night movement to blocking positions along the Song Bong Mieu River, and remained in position until daylight. At dawn, they were to prepare to cross the river on order and conduct combat sweeps to the south.

10. B, C, and D Companies, 1-46 Inf came under operational control of the 1-6 Inf at 082120 June 1968. Their mission was to make a night combat sweep involving all three companies. B1-46 was to sweep west on the southern side of the valley from grid BT 224096 to grid BT 204071 and then sweep southwest astride a trail to grid BT 202055 and establish a blocking position till daylight. C1-46 was to sweep west on the northern side of the valley from

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grid BT 224078 to grid BT 204071 and then sweep south astride a stream line to grid BT 211057 and establish a blocking position at that location till daylight. D1-46 was to sweep south from grid BT 224076 to grid BT 221056 and establish a blocking position till daylight. The movement of B1-46 and C1-46 was to be mutually supporting. All elements were directed to be prepared to move to the south from their blocking positions and conduct further combat operations on order. The moving elements were supported by D1-14 Arty from LZ Bowman and C1-14 Arty from LZ Clifford.

11. EXECUTION: At 082120 June 1968, B, C, D Companies 1-46 Inf started crossing the boundary separating 1-52 and 1-6 Inf area of operations. All three companies were then under operational control of 1-6 Inf. B1-46 and D1-46 Inf moved out on their planned routes on schedule. C1-46 was delayed due to a dust off of 8 VN civilians. D1-46 was the first to gain contact with the enemy. At grid BT 223073 D Company received one round of sniper fire. At 2230 hours, B1-46 received some small arms fire at grid BT 217075. LTC Kelley ordered C Company to close on B1-46 right flank for mutual support during the sweep. At 2303 hours, D1-46 vic grid BT 222072 engaged four enemy coming out of a hooch. The enemy did not return fire. Results of this were four enemy killed, four loaded AK-47 magazines and one complete set of web gear to include pistol belt, first aid packet and ammunition containers. At 2307 hours, B Company, now at grid BT 21076 engaged 4 enemy in the area of a destroyed village. The enemy tried to evade without engaging. Results were two enemy killed, 3 pistol belts with pouches and one M-1 carbine captured. C Company was continuing to sweep the northern side of the valley and trying to link up on B Company's right flank. At 2336 hours, Company B received ten to fifteen rounds of AK-47 fire from approximately 300 meters to their south. Casualties were 4 WHA. Dust off was requested and B Company secured a landing zone. At 2341 hours and D Company at grid BT 226068 engaged a bunker position killing 2 VC. Rear elements of B Company were lightly engaged by sniper fire from the north at approximately 200 meters. At 2355 hours B Company received a mortar attack from grid BT 218081 and small arms fire on 3 sides of their secured landing zone. Small arms fire was coming from a range of 300-400 meters. B Company sustained four more WHA during this action. Gunships were requested to support B Company and to cover the dust off ship. At 0012 hours the 1st Plt, B1-46 Inf reached a small rise at grid BT 211075. Also at this time B Company (-) received another mortar attack. Bravo's first platoon observed the mortar flashes at grid BT 206074 and called artillery on that location. The enemy mortars ceased firing, C1-46 was directed to close on Bravo's rear elements. At 0036 hours dust off landed in Bravo's LZ and picked up 5 WHA and all their gear. The medevac helicopters received a heavy volume of fire from the southwest at about 600 meters. The gunships (Firebird 99) covered the medevac and expended their ordnance on the suspected enemy location. At 0030 hours, C1-46 lead element closed with B1-46 trail elements. B Company still had three WHA(light) to be dusted off. At 0050 hours at grid BT 209075 Bravo's first platoon had massive movement around his elements. B(-)1-46 moved to join his first platoon and C1-46 secured the LZ for the next medevac. Bravo's first platoon leader called in artillery to the west and south of his location as B(-)1-46 closed on his position. At 0102, B(-)1-46 received fire from the south and could observe one machine gun position and many dug in positions. At 0123 hours, dust off was complete with Bravo Company taking out 3 WHA. Dust off did receive fire during the approach, in the LZ and during take off. At 0128 hours, B Company(*) linked up with their first platoon. Bravo's entire company was now at grid BT 209075 and was receiving sporadic fire from 360°. Bravo

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Company sustained three more WIA and one KIA while rejoining with their first platoon. Due to the heavy ground fire it was decided not to dust off these casualties until morning. Bravo's first platoon killed one enemy while the other elements of B1-46 were moving to link up. At 0132 hours D1-46 at grid BT 228057 captured one enemy soldier and could hear a wounded enemy soldier moaning down the hill from their location. They did not attempt to capture this man because of the possibility of a trap. An interpreter questioned the POW and was informed that there was an ambush at grid BT 221057 which was on D1-46 planned route. The captured enemy also informed the D Co Commander that there were emplacements at grid BT 224056. The POW also reported much foot movement on the north-south trail at grid BT 223059. D1-46 stated due to contact to the north, south and west that he was forced to move east. D1-46 was now back in the 1-52 Inf area of operations and returned to their operational control due to the location of 1-52 elements. The 1-52 elements were moving to the same general vicinity as D1-46. At 0219 hours, B Company reported receiving harassing fire from all sides of his perimeter, varying in range from 5 meters to 15 meters. Bravo Company Commander reported the enemy were crawling up to the perimeter and throwing grenades. B Company at 0220 hours, attempted to enlarge the perimeter by moving the first platoon to the south. The first platoon engaged approximately 20 enemy at a range of about 25-50 meters. The engagement took place on the south side of the rise at grid BT 209075 resulting in 3 enemy killed, one M-47 and one 7.62mm machine gun captured. No additional friendly casualties were sustained. C1-46 moved to B1-46 location at this time. At 0258 hours Bravo Co CO reported receiving sporadic hand grenades and small arms fire. Artillery was fired continuously throughout this period of engagement. Enemy forces around B and C companies were estimated at 30-35 personnel with more on the high ground overlooking friendly positions. Both companies were directed by LTC Kelley to move south from their compromised positions and continue their mission. Both companies reorganized and began movement to the south at 0445 hours. They proceeded with careful probes through the woods to their south. At 0610 hours both B & C Companies were at grid BT 208070. Bravo Company left a security element at grid BT 209075 to secure 3 WIA and one KIA and extra gear. At 0728 hours, dust off was completed and resupply was initiated. Dust off extracted the one MIA, two serious WIA, plus four lightly wounded personnel. B Company closed back to grid BT 209075 to distribute resupplies. C1-46 remained at grid BT 208070 and was resupplied at that location. All resupply and extractions were complete without incident. At 0956 hours, Bravo Company was still at grid BT 209075 and received two mortar rounds from grid BT 206074. Artillery was fired on that location. B Company took eight additional casualties and dust off was requested. At 1001 hours, C Company received a mortar attack at grid BT 208070 in which five WIA were sustained. Dust off was completed at 1025 hours for both companies. At 1026 hours, C Company received another mortar attack causing four more lightly wounded personnel. At 1058 hours, B Company finally began moving south. At 1115 hours, C1-46 received four 82mm mortar rounds and B1-46 received 7-10 rounds of 82mm mortars. No casualties were sustained. At 1200 hours both companies were continuing their mission to move south. At 091200 June 1968, 1-46 Inf assumed control of LZ Bowman and their maneuver elements. 1-6 Inf command and control group assumed control of Hill 69 and the Chu Lai TLO.

12. Results:

A. Enemy Equipment and Personnel Losses.

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- (1) Personnel - 12 KIA and 1 CIA
- (2) Weapons -
 - (a) AK-47 - 1
 - (b) M-1 carbine - 1
 - (c) RPD 7.62 MG - 1
- (3) Equipment -
 - (a) uniform - 13
 - (b) web gear - 4 sets assorted gear
 - (c) magazines - 5 AK-47 and 1 M-1 carbine
- (4) Ammunition -
 - (a) 1100 rounds 7.62 short
 - (b) 30 rounds 30 cal carbine
 - (c) 10 Chicor Grenades

b. Friendly Personnel and Equipment Losses:

- (1) Personnel - 28 WHA and 1 KHA
- (2) Equipment - negative losses. All gear was accounted for and casualties gear not taken on dust off was extracted by resupply ships.

13. Administrative Matters:

a. Supply: Ammunition, food and water were air lifted to the rifle companies. All units carried a normal basic combat load. Normal TOE weapons were employed, along with organic supporting fires and direct support artillery. Artillery ammunition on hand was sufficient to support the operation.

b. Maintenance: No significant maintenance problems were encountered since only combat elements were engaged. Normal first echelon maintenance of weapons and equipment was accomplished in the field as required.

c. Casualties: The unit medics displayed outstanding courage and proficiency during the entire battle. Casualties were immediately treated in the field and evacuated by helicopter to field hospitals in Chu Lai. All casualties were evacuated as rapidly as possible and the medical portion of the operation was truly outstanding. One medical ship took several hits but continued the evacuation.

d. Transportation: All transportation of casualties and supplies was conducted by helicopter.

e. Communication: Minor communication problems were encountered when rifle companies were using the short antenna. Radio relays with adjoining units had to be established at LZ Clifford.

14. Special Equipment and Techniques:

Starlight Scopes were used with the point and flank elements. The value of the scopes was limited due to the heavy overcast. However, in the early morning hours, clouds cleared and the scopes were very useful in observing danger areas.