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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
Headquarters, 198th Infantry Brigade, 23d Infantry Division  
APO San Francisco 96374

AVDF-BCC

17 July 1971

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report - Operation MIDDLESEX PEAK (U)

Commanding General  
23d Infantry Division  
ATTN: AVDF-HL  
APO San Francisco 96374

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Department of the Army EO 13526  
ADG 12 JUNE 2012  
Review Date 5/24/2014 By cheney

1. (U) NAME OF OPERATION. Operation MIDDLESEX PEAK (U).
2. (U) DATES OF OPERATION. 010601 March - 011200 July 1971.
3. (U) LOCATION. Quang Tin Province and Northern Quang Ngai Province, RVN.
4. (U) COMMAND AND CONTROL HEADQUARTERS. 198th Infantry Brigade.
5. (U) REPORTING OFFICERS.
  - a. 196th Infantry Brigade - COL William S. Hathaway, 1 Mar - 29 Apr 1971
  - b. 198th Infantry Brigade - COL Charles R. Smith, 11 Apr - 1 Jul 1971.
  - c. 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry - LTC Henry G. Watson, 1 Mar - 29 Apr 1971.
  - d. 4th Battalion, 3d Infantry - LTC John W. Shannon, 3 May - 1 Jul 1971.
  - e. 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry -
    - (1) LTC James W. Sawey, 11 Apr - 21 Jun 1971.
    - (2) LTC Rolfe G. Arnheim, 21 Jun - 1 Jul 1971.
  - f. 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry, LTC L.W. Roberts, 1 Mar - 29 Apr 1971.
  - g. 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry -
    - (1) LTC William Hammill, 1 Mar - 27 Mar 1971.
    - (2) LTC H.S. Mitchell, 27 Mar - 29 Apr 1971; 16 Jun - 23 Jun 1971.
  - h. 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry -
    - (1) LTC William P. Doyle, 1 Mar - 28 Mar 1971.

GROUP-4

Downgraded at 3 year intervals  
Declassified after 12 years

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(2) LTC C.J. Tate, 30 Mar - 29 Apr 1971.

i. 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, LTC Edwin E. Passmore, 1 Mar - 3 May 1971.

j. 1st Battalion, 52d Infantry, MAJ Charles E. Getz, 11 Apr - 1 Jul 1971.

6. (U) TASK ORGANIZATION

a. 196th Infantry Brigade

(1) 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, 8 Apr - 29 Apr 1971.

(2) 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry, 1 Mar - 29 Apr 1971.

(3) 4th Battalion 31st Infantry, 1 Mar - 29 Apr 1971.

(4) 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, 1 Mar - 29 Apr 1971.

(5) 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, 1 Mar - 11 Apr 1971.

b. 196th Infantry Brigade Control

(1) 23d Cavalry Squadron (Provisional), 18 Apr - 29 Apr 1971.

(2) F Troop, 17th Cavalry, 1 Mar - 29 Apr 1971.

(3) 48th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog), 1 Mar - 29 Apr 1971.

(4) 59th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog), 1 Mar - 19 Apr 1971

(5) 27th Chemical Detachment, 1 Mar - 29 Apr 1971.

(6) 10th Public Information Detachment, 1 Mar - 29 Apr 1971.

(7) 3d Battalion, 82d Artillery (DS), 1 Mar - 29 Apr 1971.

(8) A Company, 26th Engineer Battalion (DS), 1 Mar - 29 Apr 1971.

c. 198th Infantry Brigade

(1) 4th Battalion 3d Infantry, 3 May - 1 Jul 1971.

(2) 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, 11 Apr - 1 Jul 1971.

(3) 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, 11 Apr - 3 May 1971.

(4) 1st Battalion, 52d Infantry, 11 Apr - 1 Jul 1971.

d. 198th Infantry Brigade Control

(1) 57th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog), 11 Apr - 1 Jul 1971.

(2) 87th Chemical Detachment, 11 Apr - 1 Jul 1971.

(3) 1st Battalion, 14th Artillery (DS), 11 Apr - 1 Jul 1971.

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(4) B Company, 26th Engineer Battalion (DS), 11 Apr - 1 Jul 1971.

(5) 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry (OFCON), 16 Jun - 23 Jun 1971.

7. (U) SUPPORTING FORCES

a. Artillery - provided by Division FSC, to include naval gunfire.

b. Aviation (Army) - 16th Combat Aviation Group, consisting of the 14 and 123d Aviation Battalions. The 14th Battalion provided UH-1H lift helicopters, UH-1C gunships and CH-47B Chinooks. The 123d Battalion was basically an air cavalry squadron with three air cavalry troops. In addition, the 123d had one administrative lift company. These aviation forces were in general support of the 23d Division.

c. F Troop, 17th Cavalry - F Troop was attached to the 196th Brigade and operated in MIDDLESEX PEAK with the Brigade until 29 April 71, when both moved to Quang Nam Province.

d. Forward Air Controllers. Elements of the 20th Tactical Air Support Squadron provided Forward Air Controller (FAC) and Tactical Air Control Party (TACP).

8. (C) THE AREA OF OPERATION.

a. Weather: The weather in eastern Quang Tin and northern Quang Ngai provinces during Operation MIDDLESEX PEAK was characterized by declining rainfall and increasing temperatures. The amount of rainfall received continued to decline since the end of the wet season in late January. The mountainous regions received frequent late afternoon showers with an average monthly rainfall of 8 to 12 inches. The coastal regions received very light rainfall with a monthly average between 1 to 3 inches. Visibility was generally good with occasional early morning fog and haze in the river valleys in the mountains. Cloud cover was light in the mornings becoming broken to overcast in the mountainous areas during the afternoons. Temperatures ranged from an average low of 73° in April to an average high of 95° in June. Temperatures in the mountains average 3° lower for each 1000 feet increase in elevation over the coastal regions.

b. Terrain:

(1) The region is characterized by three types of terrain: a coastal plain in the east, a narrow transitional piedmont in the middle, and a wide belt of mountains in the west.

(a) The coastal plain extends west from the South China Sea in a north to south strip ranging from 8 to 27 kilometers wide. These plains consist primarily of rice fields and urban areas, interspersed with isolated hills and ridges rising to heights of 50 to 70 meters. In many areas the rice paddies are bounded by dikes 2 to 5 feet high. Most of the hills and ridges are laced with hedge rows of thick brush. The Katangan Peninsula is that portion of the coastal plain which extends south from the Song Tra Bong river to the Song Tra Khuc river, east of QL 1.

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(b) The piedmont consists of hills with elevation varying from gentle to steep. Many of the hills have rock outcrops on their crowns. The piedmont is interspersed by numerous river valleys. The valleys contain numerous terraced rice paddies. Other vegetation consists mostly of brushwood and single canopy forest. Elevation ranges from 30 to 70 meters with slopes between 10 to 20 degrees.

(c) The mountains generally increase in ruggedness and elevation from east to west. Vegetation is multi-canopied dense undergrowth forest with occasional brushwood. The mountains are intersected by numerous small river valleys. Elevation varies from 500 to 2000 feet.

(2) The principle rivers are the Song Ba Ky, Song Bong Mieu, and Song Tram which run generally northwest to southeast in eastern Quang Tin (P). The Song Tra Bong flows from west to east through the northern portion of Quang Ngai (P). The Song Tra Khuc bounds the AO on the south. The Song Ham Giang is a principle waterway in the Batangan Peninsula.

(3) Key terrain is generally those areas along lines of communications. In the mountains it is usually those sections of high ground from which control can be exerted over the valleys, the cultivated areas, and road or trail networks. In the piedmont, it is the high ground which controls the valleys opening out to the east. On the coastal plain the key terrain features include the high ground and those locations which control waterways, roads and trails, and ports of entry.

(4) Cover and concealment varies according to the terrain. In the coastal plains concealment is limited to the wooded areas which are interspersed throught the region. Also, dikes and hedgerows offer some protection. The piedmont and mountainous area offers good to excellent cover and concealment. The numerous valleys and gullies along with the dense vegetation offer the best protection in the entire region.

#### c. Enemy Situation:

(1) Estimated strength, location, and disposition of enemy forces at the start of the operation:

| <u>UNIT</u>                 | <u>STRENGTH</u> | <u>LOCATION</u> | <u>SOURCE</u> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <u>QUANG TIN (P) FORCES</u> |                 |                 |               |
| C-7 LF Co                   | 19              | BT 1615         | AR            |
| C-9 LF Co                   | 12              | BT 1528         | AR            |
| D-11 LF Bn                  | 174             | BT 2010         | AR            |
| V-12 LF Co                  | 45              | BT 1823         | AR            |
| V-14 LF Co                  | 62              | BT 3014         | AR            |
| V-16 Sapper Co              | 30              | BT 2212         | AR            |

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UNIT

STRENGTH UNCLASSIFIED LOCATION

SOURCE

QUANG TIN (P) FORCES

|                        |     |         |    |
|------------------------|-----|---------|----|
| V-18 LF Co             | 40  | BT 2712 | AR |
| V-20 LF Co             | 64  | BT 3708 | AR |
| 70th LF Bn             | 211 | BT 1522 | AR |
| 72d LF Bn              | 220 | BT 1619 | AR |
| 74th LF Hvy Wpns Bn    | 233 | BT 1821 | AR |
| 78th MF Rkt (Arty) Co  | 90  | BT 3900 | AR |
| 402d MF Sapper Bn (-)  | 210 | BS 4097 | AR |
| 409th MF Sapper Bn (-) | 269 | BT 2700 | AR |

QUANG NGAI (P) FORCES

|                       |     |         |    |
|-----------------------|-----|---------|----|
| 21st LF Sapper Co     | 60  | BS 5780 | AR |
| P-31 LF Co            | 10  | BS 6390 | AR |
| 48th LF Bn (-)        | 200 | BS 5587 | AR |
| K-51 LF Co            | 14  | BS 7192 | AR |
| C-72Z LF Co           | 40  | BS 5779 | AR |
| C-71Z LF Co           | 30  | BS 7286 | AR |
| 81st LF Co            | 30  | BS 5465 | AR |
| 95A LF Sapper Co      | 10  | BS 6399 | AR |
| 95B LF Sapper Co      | 40  | BS 5597 | AR |
| 107th NVA Hvy Wpns Bn | 215 | BS 5368 | AR |
| 120th LF Montgnd Bn   | 300 | BS 2763 | AR |
| 406th MF Sapper Bn    | 400 | BS 3883 | AR |
| 506A LF Sapper Co     | 65  | BS 4985 | AR |
| 506B LF Sapper Co     | 50  | BS 5675 | AR |

Hamlet and village guerilla strength was estimated at 1500 to 2000 within the area of operation.

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## (2) Enemy Situation Anticipated:

The enemy will continue to evade confrontation with US units. Most of their efforts will be concentrated on logistical and political indoctrination activities. They will continue their efforts to disrupt the GVN pacification program by acts of terrorism and LOC interdiction. When possible the enemy will conduct small scale ground attacks against RF/PF outposts and attacks by fire against larger US and ARVN installations. Harrassment of allied forces will also include the continued use of mines and boobytraps.

## (3) Enemy Situation Found:

The level of enemy activity was moderate to low as anticipated. The most significant highpoint occurred the last week in March, culminating in an attack of FSB Mary Ann. At 0230 hours, 28 March, sappers struck FSB Mary Ann. Taking advantage of a period of low illumination and pre-facing their attack with a HE and CS mortar attack, the sappers penetrated the perimeter and swept through the fire base. Throwing satchel charges and homemade explosive devices, they destroyed the 1/46 Battalion TOC, a 155mm gun position, and numerous bunkers. In the action, 30 US were KIA and 76 wounded. 12 dead enemy were found the next morning. FSB Mary Ann lies at the crossroads of numerous enemy supply routes leading into Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces. Allied operations in this area have hindered 230th Transportation Regiment activity. The 409th Sapper Battalion probably conducted the attack, in an effort to reduce Allied interdiction of these supply line. The only other significant enemy highpoint which developed occurred 24 through 27 April. Early morning of the 24th, FSB Honey (BS 462815) received a coordinated mortar and ground attack resulting in 22 ARVN KIA, 45 ARVN WIA and 4 US WIA with 21 VC KIA. Simultaneously there was a mortar attack on FSB Stinson (BS 538824) resulting in 8 friendly WIA. Most likely the 406th Sapper Battalion conducted the attack on FSB Honey. During the next three days rockets were received by Pho Tay hamlet (BS 603730), Binh Son District Headquarters (BS 601922), and LZ Dottie (BS 630855). The 107th Heavy Weapons Battalion probably conducted these attacks. During the rest of the operation the level of enemy activity was low as they concentrated on resupply of food and retraining activities. This accounts for the heavy movement of members of transportation elements throughout the AO and the success the 1st Bn 52d Infantry had in its rice denial activities around FSB Stinson. Other enemy activities consisted of the continued heavy use of mines and boobytraps and sporadic small-scale attacks on GVN-controlled outposts and hamlets. One enemy tactic used was the increased number of assassinations of GVN officials. Two and three man teams, disguised as ARVN soldiers and operating in the populated areas along QL 1 accomplished several assassinations. This is part of the enemy's increased attempt to intimidate GVN officials as the fall elections approach. Although enemy units continued to make small moves throughout the AO, there were no major changes in strength, location, and disposition of enemy forces during the operation.

(4) Estimated strength, location, and disposition of enemy forces at the conclusion of the operation:

| UNIT                 | STRENGTH     | LOCATION | SOURCE |
|----------------------|--------------|----------|--------|
| QUANG TIN (P) FORCES | UNCLASSIFIED |          |        |

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| <u>UNIT</u>                  | <u>STRENGTH</u> | <u>LOCATION</u> | <u>SOURCE</u> |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| C-9 LF Co                    | 12              | BT 1726         | AR            |
| D-11 LF Bn (-)               | 132             | BT 1130         | AR            |
| 1 Element                    |                 | BT 1307         | AR            |
| V-12 LF Co                   | 45              | UNLOC           | AR            |
| V-14 LF Co                   | 62              | BT 2811         | AR            |
| V-15 LF Co                   | 15              | BT 2048         | AR            |
| V-16 LF Sapper Co            | 30              | BT 2412         | AR            |
| V-18 LF Co                   | 40              | BT 2811         | AR            |
| V-20 LF Co                   | 64              | BT 3708         | AR            |
| 70th LF Bn (-)               | 211             | BT 1219         | AR            |
| 72d LF Bn (-)                | 220             | BT 1422         | AR            |
| 74th LF Hvy Wpns Bn (-)      | 233             | BT 1421         | AR            |
| 78th MF Rkt (Arty) Co        | 90              | BT 3702         | AR            |
| 402d MF Sapper Bn (-)        | 210             | BS 4492         | AR            |
| 409th MF Sapper Bn (-)       | 269             | BS 1494         | AR            |
| <u>QUANG NGAI (P) FORCES</u> |                 |                 |               |
| 21st LF Sapper Co            | 60              | BS 4883         | AR            |
| P-31 LF Co                   | 15              | BS 6390         | AR            |
| 48th LF Bn (-)               | 200             | BS 5185         | AR            |
| 1 Element                    |                 | BS 6788         | AR            |
| I Element                    |                 | BS 7086         | AR            |
| K-51 LF Co                   | 14              | BS 7192         | AR            |
| 71Z LF Co                    | 30              | BS 7083         | AR            |
| 72Z LF Co                    | 40              | BS 5878         | AR            |
| 81st LF Co                   | 30              | BS 5366         | AR            |
| 95A LF Sapper Co             | 30              | BS 6600         | AR            |
| 95B LF Sapper Co             | 40              | BS 5293         | AR            |
| 107th NVA Hvy Wpns Bn (-)    | 168             | BS 5167         | AR            |
| 120th LF Montgrd Bn (-)      | 300             | BS 3066         | PW            |

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| <u>UNIT</u>           | <u>STRENGTH</u> | <u>LOCATION</u> | <u>SOURCE</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 406th MF Sapper Bn(-) | 400             | BS 3281         | AR            |
| 506th A LF Sapper Co  | 65              | BS 5376         | AR            |
| 506th B LF Sapper Co  | 50              | BS 5774         | AR            |

Hamlet and village guerilla strength is estimated at 1500 to 2000 within the area of operation.

9. (C) MISSION. The 196th and 198th Brigades in coordination with the 5th and 6th ARVN Regiments conducted unilateral and combined operations to secure major lines of communication, to locate and destroy enemy forces and to participate in the 1971 GVN Pacification Program.

10. (C) CONCEPT OF OPERATION. In the initial phases of the operation, from 1 March until 11 April, the 196th Brigade had exclusive control over operation MIDDLESEX PEAK. During this time, the maneuver battalions continued combat operations in their assigned sectors and prepared for deployment to Quang Nam Province. On 8 April, the 2-1 Battalion, previously deployed to Quang Tri Province, rejoined the 196th Brigade for combat operations. At 111200 April, the 198th Brigade relinquished control of Operation Finney Hill to the 11th Brigade and, with the 1-6 and 1-52 Infantry Battalions, began operating in MIDDLESEX PEAK. At the same time, the 5-46 Infantry Battalion was returned to the 198th Brigade from the 196th Brigade. During the period 111200 April through 291200 April 1971, the 196th Brigade conducted limited operations and made final preparations for deployment north to Quang Nam. The 198th Brigade began operations in its familiar AO which included Son Tinh, Binh Son, Son Ha and Tra Bong Districts of Quang Ngai Province and Ly Tin District of Quang Tin Province. At 291200 April, the 196th Brigade ceased operations in MIDDLESEX PEAK and Quang Tin Province and initiated Operation CAROLINE HILL in Quang Nam Province. As a result, the 198th Brigade inherited the remainder of Quang Tin Province and exclusive control of Operation MIDDLESEX PEAK. All operations in the T.O.R were conducted with close coordination between commanders of US forces and the 5th and 6th ARVN Regiments.

11. (C) EXECUTION.

a. The beginning of Operation MIDDLESEX PEAK coincided with an increase in enemy activity after reduced operations during the winter monsoons. During the month of March, 1971, the battalions of the 196th Brigade, conducted company and platoon-sized search and clear operations.

(1) 5/46 Infantry established a jump CP at LZ DONNA (BT281120) on 16 March, and conducted operations with two companies in the valley to the west of the jump CP. Contact was light to moderate during this operation.

(2) Responding to intelligence of an enemy buildup southeast of LZ MARYANN, 1/46 Infantry reopened LZ MILDRED (BS 025976) on 12 March as a temporary firebase and conducted operations to the southeast with light contact. Temporary firebase GRUNT (AT 957112) was closed on 18 March.

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(3) During the middle of the month, intelligence began to indicate pending enemy activity in the eastern portion of the province. On the nights of 26 and 27 March, several PF outposts along the coastal plain reported light mortar attacks and ground probes. At 0230 hours, 28 March, sappers struck LZ MARYANN. Taking advantage of a period of low illumination and prefacing their attack with a HE and CS mortar attack the sappers penetrated the perimeter and swept through the firebase. Throwing satchel charges and homemade explosive devices, they destroyed the 1/46 Battalion TOC, a 155mm gun position, and numerous bunkers. In the action, 30 US were KIA and 76 wounded. 12 dead enemy were found the next morning. LZ MILDRED was closed on 1 April as 1/46 Battalion troops were consolidated around LZ MARYANN.

b. The month of April was marked by light contact and the move north.

(1) 196th Brigade.

(a) On 5 April, 3/21 began movement of material from LZ CENTER, clearing the CENTER Que Son ROSS road and completing a road convoy. On 6 April, B/3-21 moved to and took control of HILL 510 (AT 945405) and established the battalion CP there. On the 7th, C/3-21 moved to HILL 65 (AT 878576 - LZ RAWHIDE) and assumed security for five days. On 19 April, 3/21 Infantry completed the move to their area, signing LZ CENTER over to 4/5 ARVN.

(b) On the 8th, 2/1 Infantry returned to HAWK HILL and 196th Brigade control after a one month operation along the DMZ. 5/46 Infantry was returned to 198th Brigade control on 11 April, and the 196th Brigade southern boundary was adjusted accordingly. On the 12th, B/2-1 moved to HILL 151 (AT 951482) and established the battalion CP there. The same day, D/2-1 was airlifted to LZ RAWHIDE to provide security for the artillery there.

(c) The Task Force 23d Cavalry (Provisional) was organized and attached to the 196th Brigade on 18 April for the duration of the move. It consisted of F and H Troops 17th Cavalry, E Troop 1st Cavalry, and a tactical CP. On 19 April, E and H Troops moved to the 23d Cav area in the flatlands north of Hill 151 (CM AT 9552). Beginning 23 April, F Troop (-) conducted separate and joint operations in the QUE SON flatlands to secure the population centers during the projected high-threat period. While conducting an air cavalry operation on 23 April, two LOHs from D/1-1 Cav received enemy fire and were downed in the northern part of the 23d Cav area. The next day, A/2-1 combat air assaulted into the area and began joint operations with H Troop. During these operations, numerous sharp contacts were made as Charger forces attempted to rout the enemy from well fortified bunkers.

(d) On 22 April, A/1-46 assumed responsibility for HILL 270 (AT 866681); LZ MARYANN was turned over to the 5th ARVN Regiment on 24 April.

(e) After two days of air strikes to clear the LZ, A/4-31 supported by a contingent from A/26 Engr, combat air assaulted onto HILL 350 (AT 837757) and established a firebase and battalion CP. LZ SIBERIA was signed over to the ARVN on 26 April, and LZ WEST was turned over on 28 April.

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## (2) 198th Brigade.

(a) On 11 April, the Brigade was operating with the 1-6, 5-46, and 1-52 Infantry Battalions and in coordination with the 6th ARVN Regiment. On 29 April, as the 196th Brigade pulled out of MIDDLESEX PEAK, the 198th Brigade established liaison with the 5th ARVN Regiment at Hawk Hill, RVN.

(b) On 18 April, the 5-46 Infantry moved from FSB Ky Tra, to re-establish FSB Professional in Base Area 117 to deny the enemy traditional lines of communication between the Dak Rose Trail network and the coastal plains of Quang Tin Province.

(c) Significant contacts - On 17 April, Recon/1-6 detonated a daisy chain boobytrap consisting of six explosive devices set at five meter intervals. Two members of the platoon and their interpreter were killed and two US were wounded. On April, D/1-52, killed six NVA and captured three AK47 rifles in two separate incidents.

## c. Significant activity during May.

(1) On 3 May, the 5-46 Infantry ceased combat operations and began stand-down operations in preparation for redeployment and deactivation. On the same day, the 4-3 Infantry moved to FSB Professional and began combat operations in MIDDLESEX PEAK with the 198th Brigade.

(2) On 18 May the 1-6 Infantry moved its headquarters and Tactical Operations Centers from FSB Dottie to Chu Lai. Dottie was turned over to the 11th Brigade on 28 May.

(3) Significant contacts - On 5 May, D/1-52 accounted for five NVA killed. On 16 May at 1105H, A/4-3 had a mechanical ambush detonate killing four VC. While conducting eagle flights near FSB Stinson on 26 May, C/1-52 killed four VC and gunships working with the company killed two more.

## d. Significant activity during June.

(1) Reacting to intelligence, the 198th conducted an unnamed operation in the vicinity of LZ Center from 16-23 June. On the 16th, the 4-31 Infantry from the 196th Brigade became OCON to the 198th Brigade and inserted a C element on LZ Center. Subsequently, they inserted three of their companies in the AO for operations. The 4-3 Battalion set up a jump TOC on An Dao (BT 145265) to conduct operations in the area. The multi-battalion joint operation was targeted against four local force battalions and elements of the V-16 Support Group. The operation was terminated on 23 June after failing to produce and significant results.

(2) Significant contacts - At 082110 June, night observation devices at Hill 270 in the Northern Rocket Rocket sighted 25 VC with packs and weapons. The target was engaged by Quad-50, .81mm mortar, artillery and gunships, killing 13 VC. Later, at 090350 June, .81mm mortars from Hill 270 engaged three VC, killing two. At 1020H on the 27th, C/4-3 detonated a boobytrap wounding three US.

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e. Other activities in Operation MIDDLESEX IERK.

(1) The 4-3 Infantry, after joining the 198th Brigade, was involved in no major contacts. However, due to their superior employment of the mechanical ambush, they were extremely effective as a combat unit. The 4-3 Infantry employed mechanicals up to 300-400 meters from their field locations. Using the mechanical in an offensive roll, the battalion accounted for 21 enemy killed in two months. This is 60% of the battalion's total kills.

(2) Although it was not a primary goal, rice denial in the area of operation is a continuing mission and an integral part of all operations. In march of this year, implementing instructions were issued to the maneuver battalions directing that, whenever possible, operations would be targets on rice denial. Combat operations, and especially eagle flights in the low ground west of FSB Stinson, were very successful in capturing rice caches of the enemy forces. During Operation MIDDLESEX IERK, the 198th Brigade forces captured 103,985 pounds of rice.

(3) During MIDDLESEX IERK, the 59th Land Clearing Company worked in the heavily mined area around FSB Stinson. Within three months, they cleared 3,865 acres in the Vinh Loc and Chau Nhai Village areas. Additionally, they cleared 1000 acres on the Batangan Peninsula. In the process, they destroyed 129 bunkers, 4,250 meters of trench, 4,605 meter of tunnels and 79 mines and boobytraps.

12. (C) RESULTS

| <u>ENEMY</u> | <u>VC KIA</u> | <u>NVA KIA</u> | <u>IW</u> | <u>CD</u> | <u>HOI CHANH</u> | <u>IWC</u> | <u>CSWC</u> |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|------------|-------------|
| 196 Bde      | 164           | 50             | 13        | 54        | 4                | 66         | 7           |
| 198 Bde      | 192           | 55             | 11        | 44        | 1                | 56         | 9           |
| TOTAL        | 356           | 105            | 24        | 98        | 5                | 122        | 16          |

  

| <u>FRIENDLY</u> | <u>KIA</u> | <u>MIA</u> | <u>WIA(E)</u> | <u>WIA(M)</u> | <u>IW LOST</u> | <u>CSW LOST</u> |
|-----------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 196 Bde         | 39         | 0          | 207           | 0             | 0              | 0               |
| 198 Bde         | 11         | 0          | 188           | 38            | 1              | 0               |
| TOTAL           | 50         | 0          | 395           | 38            | 1              | 0               |

RICE DENIAL TOTAL (198th Bde) - 108330 lbs CIA.

13. (C) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

a. Supply.

(1) The majority of the resupply in the field was accomplished by UH-1H. Bulky items such as concertina wire and large shipments of ammunition were slung by CH-47. The only Fire Support that could be resupplied by road were those located along QL1.

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(2) The rifle companies in the field were resupplied once every three days in order to reduce the possibility of compromising the companies locations by landing helicopters.

(3) Combat loads carried by troops operating in the field normally consisted of three days supply of C-Rations and a one day's supply of LRRP Rations, four to seven quarts of water, and ammunition for weapons. The ammunition for weapons consisted of 15-30 magazines loaded with 18 rounds each, 70 rounds of 40mm and 1000 rounds of 7.62mm per M-60.

b. Maintenance.

(1) An occasional shortage of repair parts hampered maintenance at various times. Shortages that occurred were wheeled vehicle parts, modules for radios, and bolts for M-60 machine guns. However, no shortage developed that seriously hampered operations.

(2) Many of the maintenance problems that developed were the results of old equipment malfunctioning or failing after long periods of improper operator/organizational maintenance.

c. Treatment of Casualties. Casualties were initially treated by the medical aidman in the field, and air evacuated by helicopter to the 91st Evacuation or 27th Surgical Hospitals at Chu Lai. Lightly wounded personnel were held at the 23d Medical Battalion. Seriously wounded personnel were kept at one of the two hospitals and then evacuated to Japan or CONUS.

d. Transportation.

(1) QL1 was the major roadway used. It was an all-weather two lane highway capable of carrying the heaviest truck traffic. Vehicle was the principal means of movement from Chu Lai to FSB Dottie (BS 632857) (1-6 Infantry).

(2) All other transportation throughout the TAOI was either by UH-1H or CH-47 to field locations. Supplies to companies in the field were flown by UH-1H.

(3) Since the operational area was mostly in mountainous terrain transportation for combat troops to and from the field was provided by UH-1H.

e. Communications. No critical problems were encountered with communications. Each rifle company had a IRC-77 with a KY-38 for secure communications with respective battalion Ci. Battalion CIs had secure and plain text communication with Brigade Headquarters. Radio teletype communications were maintained between Brigade and battalions headquarters; however, this proved to be somewhat unreliable due to maintenance difficulties with the teletype. Routine traffic was passed between Brigade and Battalion by means of VHF.

14. (U) SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES. None.

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15. (C) COMMANDER'S ANALYSIS:

a. Enemy Tactics Employed: The enemy within the area of operation was found in small groups never larger than platoon size. For the most part the enemy's principle activity was in the area of resupply. There were no significant enemy initiated contacts during the reporting period. The employment of mines and boobytraps continued to be a favorite enemy tactic. These mines and boobytraps were placed on and near trails, secondary roadways, previously used LZ's and in areas of caches or other VC facilities. The enemy ambushed friendly forces whenever the situation seemed lucrative and employed snipers to good advantage. However, the VC/NVA within the area of operation generally avoided US forces operating in the field. Their primary targets were the GVN pacification villages and RF and PF OPs. Infantry and sapper tactics were used against OPs and terrorism was used against pacification villages. Attacks against US and ARVN fire bases were mostly standoff and diversionary in nature as the primary attacks against GVN targets took place. Infrequently, main force sapper units conducted attacks against fire bases. Armament of the enemy included AK47; SKS and M-16 rifles; K-54 pistols; 60mm, 81mm and 82mm mortars; 57mm recoilless rifles; B-40 and B-41 rockets; 140mm and 122mm rockets; satchel charges and hand grenades; bangalore torpedoes; various caliber machine guns and homemade mines and boobytraps.

b. Friendly Tactics: Friendly tactics employed were primarily dictated by enemy tactics and activity, although a secondary factor was the expanded area of responsibility due to unit inactivations. Small unit tactics proved to be most effective, both in the offensive and defensive aspects of counter-guerrilla warfare and in light of present enemy activity. The infantry squad, or half a platoon size element, was found to be the ideal sized force as it enabled commanders to saturate large areas and deny the enemy freedom of movement. In addition, the use of the mechanical ambush in the offensive role allowed the squad to cover more territory. Maneuvering in squad-sized forces enables a unit to move clandestinely through an area. This has several advantages. Obviously, it affords the unit better results in ambushes and raids when surprise is employed. But, by traveling undetected, the squad also prohibits the enemy from employing such favorite tactics as sniping and emplacing hasty boobytraps. Both of these enemy tactics have menaced larger friendly forces. Forces smaller than squad-size could be effective but commanders would experience control and communication problems. There are four types of small unit operations which have proved to be the most successful. These are the ambush, both manned and mechanical, raid, eagle flight, and cordon and search. The mechanical ambush has become more effective than the manned ambush because it is much more difficult to detect. However, manned ambushes are producing favorable results and are still used extensively. Night raids have always been a useful tactic. Striking village and hamlet areas during the early hours of the morning usually catches local guerrillas by surprise. The Eagle Flight, another form of the raid, has produced excellent results, both in finding and fixing the enemy and in uncovering his weapons and rice caches. The cordon and search is normally accomplished by a platoon or company sized force. The use of National Police and Provincial Reconnaissance Units as the search element became popular. Not only did these units overcome the language barrier, but they also were more adept at uncovering the local guerrilla and his caches.

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c. Civic Action and PSYOPS Effectiveness.

(1) Psychological Operations during Operation MIDDLESEX PEAK are best characterized as being a successful application of PSYOPS programming through constant awareness and close coordination with S-2 and S-3 in response to the ever changing tactical and intelligence situation. The 198th Brigade Chieu Hoi campaign adhered to a program of immediate interrogation of the Hoi Khanh. Leaflets and recorded broadcasts were developed from the interrogations and then carefully targeted at the Hoi Chanh's former area of operation. This activity was supplemented when possible with live Hoi Chanh broadcasts using either the "Earlyword" capability or in-flight broadcasts aboard the organic PSYOPS helicopter. Systematic targeting was conducted through close coordination with the S-3 in response to tactical operations and the S-2 in response to intelligence reports. Themes including standard Chieu Hoi instructions, demoralization, especially in conjunction with air and artillery strikes, and promise of medical care and a new life under the GVN were used. All of the above resulted in the 198th Infantry Brigade accounting for a total of 180 Hoi Chanh in the AO during Operation MIDDLESEX PEAK.

(2) Successes:

(a) One particularly significant success was the Volunteer Informant Program and the large amount of ordnance and explosives recovered. Employing aerial broadcasts, leaflet drops, and two highway broadcast teams along QL 1, vast quantities of ordnance were received. The principal success factor in this program was the fine rapport the HB teams were able to establish with the local populace.

(b) Another PSYOPS success was in the area of Vietnamization of PSYOPS targeting and missions. Beginning 1 March 71, PSYOPS missions prepared and flown by Binh Son and Son Tinh District Headquarters and the 2d ARVN Division were initiated for a total of over 60 hours of PSYOPS broadcasting.

(c) In the area of Civic Actions, continued success was noted in the Modcap II program. More emphasis was placed on training the Vietnamese medical counterpart personnel rather than on patient treatment to insure that the Vietnamese will be capable of continued treatment following US redeployment.

(d) Vietnamization of self-help projects was also emphasized. Efforts were made to insure that all Vietnamese channels had been exhausted prior to donation of US materials and assistance. Progress on each project was monitored closely by local officials and S-5 personnel to insure that materials were not being lost as the result of corruption.

(3) Failures: Conduct of the Chieu Hoi campaign was somewhat impeded due to a partial breakdown in the reporting procedures on incoming Hoi Chanh through Vietnamese Channels. This resulted in initial contact and interrogations with some Hoi Chanh not being made until several days or several weeks after the actual rally date. Rapid exploitation of these Hoi Chanh, a requisite for effective PSYOPS, was impossible.

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(4) Lessons Learned:

(a) In the face of continued US redeployment, a shift should be made from long term to short term self-help projects to avoid units being forced to leave projects incomplete due to standown or unit movement.

(b) It is imperative that highway broadcast teams conducting Volunteer Informat Program operations be EOD qualified or be accompanied by trained individuals. This would minimize danger to civilian and military personnel when collecting boobytraps and materials.

d. Overall Analysis: The success of a four month operation in the pacification of Vietnam is difficult to judge. However, there were indications that continued efforts of allied forces in MIDDLESEX PLK produced favorable results. The enemy's food shortages became more critical as he had to use more of his forces for food production and transportation, robbing him of combat troops. Due to active patrolling in the piedmont by friendly forces, the enemy no longer had free access to food supplies in the coastal plains. Partly due to casualties inflicted by friendly forces, the enemy was known to be short of personnel. Some units were being disbanded to reinforce others. Some units became combat ineffective because of personnel shortages. There were many factors contributing to the enemy's problems which are beyond the scope of this report. However, effective neutralization of enemy forces, denial of enemy LOC's and security of friendly LOC's all led to a successful operation.

16. (C) RECOMMENDATIONS

a. It is recommended that units continue to tailor their forces to interdict the enemy by means of small unit tactics. Ambushes and patrolling should be emphasized, and frequent moves to avoid compromise of a position. Resupply discipline should continue to be stressed.

b. It is recommended that units continue to operate predominately in the piedmont area of their AO. They should move to populated lowlands only when targeted against specific intelligence. Further, this should be done only when the unit utilizes techniques that afford maximum surprise such as eagle flights and night raids.

c. US units at Brigade level and higher should take a more active role in coordinating and assisting the ARVN forces and the territorial forces in achieving a greater degree of compatibility in their planning and in their maneuver. To this end ARVN, in lieu of US, should be encouraged to assist territorial forces in their training and conduct of operations.

d. Units that air assault into an area should not remain in the vicinity of the LZ for more than 24 hours except to conduct offensive operations such as ambushes.

e. Training received by troops in CONUS should emphasize the following:

(1) Squad and platoon-size operations with live fire exercises.

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- (2) Quick fire techniques.
- (3) Detection of mines and boobytraps.
- (4) Ambush techniques.

*Charles R. Smith*

CHARLES R. SMITH  
Colonel, IN  
Commanding

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AVII-GCT (1 Aug 71) 1st Ind

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report: MIDDLESEX PEAK (MACJ3-32 (R2))

DA, Headquarters, XXIV Corps, APO 96349 12 AUG 1971

TO: Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam,  
ATTN: MACJ3-05, APO 96222

Three copies of Combat After Action Report MIDDLESEX PEAK are forwarded with the following comments:

a. Reference pages 6-8, paragraph 4: This order of battle listing is apparently based primarily on agent reports, and differs considerably, in terms of locations and strengths from XXIV Corps OB holdings. XXIV Corps OB holdings are based on all collateral sources. XXIV Corps considers agent reports to be the least reliable source.

b. Reference page 14, paragraph 15c(3): ARVN processing of Hoi Chanh is often a source of frustration to US PSYOP personnel who normally produce "quick reaction" media on ralliers. ARVN does not always follow established time frames for interrogation and exploitation of Hoi Chanh. US units may exploit ralliers after they arrive at the province Chieu Hoi Center. If ARVN consider a Hoi Chanh to be of significant PSYOP value, they will exploit him according to POLWAR concepts.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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as

*J. F. Suda, Jr.*  
J. F. SUDA, JR.  
CPT, ADA  
Act Asst AG

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OF DOD REG 5200.1-R  
BY BAKERS ON 9/2/83

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