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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96375

AMMO-OR

8 December 1970

SUBJECT: Letter of Transmittal

Office of the Chief of Military History
Department of the Army
Washington, D.C. 20315
ATTN: BG Brownfield

Transmitted herewith is one unit Combat Action Report on the VC/NVA TET OFFENSIVE; 29 Jan - 14 Feb 68. This report is submitted by Headquarters Historical Division for your information.

Robert L. Reed

ROBERT L. REED
MAJ, GS
Command Historian

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS AMERICAL DIVISION
APO San Francisco 96374

AVDF-CC

5 April 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Action Report (RCS AVDF-CC-1)

Commanding General
III Marine Amphibious Force
APO 96602

1. TYPE OF OPERATION: VC/NVA TET OFFENSIVE.
2. DATES OF OPERATION: 290001 January - 142400 February 1968.
3. LOCATION: Southern I Corps Tactical Zone.
4. COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: Americal Division
5. REPORTING OFFICER:

Division Commander: MG Samuel W. Koster

11th Lt Inf Bde Commander: BG Andrew Lipescomb

196th Lt Inf Bde Commander: COL Louis Gelling

198th Lt Inf Bde Commander: COL James R. Waldie

3d Brigade, 4th Inf Div Commander: COL George E. Wear

1st Sqdn, 1st Cav Commander: LTC Walter C. Cousland

Division Artillery Commander: COL Mason J. Young Jr.

6. TASK ORGANIZATION:

11th Lt Inf Bde

3d Bn, 1st Inf

4th Bn, 3d Inf

1st Bn, 20th Inf

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6th Bn, 11th Arty

Troop E, 1st Cav

196th Lt Inf Bde

2d Bn, 1st Inf

3d Bn, 21st Inf

3d Bn, 82d Arty

Troop F, 17th Cav

Troop C, 7th Sqdn, 17th Cav

198th Lt Inf Bde

1st Bn, 6th Inf

1st Bn, 46th Inf

1st Bn, 52 Inf

1st Bn, 14th Arty

Troop H, 17th Cav

3d Bde, 4th Inf Div

1st Bn, 14th Inf

4th Bn, 31st Inf

1st Bn, 35 Inf

2d Bn, 35th Inf

2d Bn, 9th Arty

Troop C, 1st Sqdn, 10th Cav

1st Sqdn, 1st Cav

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SUBJECT: Combat Action Report (RCS AVDF-GC-1)

Division Artillery

3d Bn, 16th Arty

3d Bn, 18th Arty

7. SUPPORTING FORCES: Not Applicable

8. INTELLIGENCE: a. PWs and documents captured in QUANG NGAI and QUANG TIN provinces during Nov and Dec 67 indicated there would be a large offensive in these areas during early 1968. References were made to LF/MF units combining with MR-5 elements in a campaign to "expand the VC controlled areas". To aid this campaign a pressurized conscription drive to recruit everyone between the ages of 16 and 35 was initiated between 10 Nov and 15 Jan 68 to "mobilize human resources to meet the requirements of the battlefield". A Hoi Chanh, formerly a VC company commander stated that QUANG NGAI CITY would be attacked during early 1968 by all the forces in QUANG NGAI Province. During the period 20-25 Jan 68 a buildup was noticed in the area west of TAM KY CITY and in the vicinity of Base Area 121. A PW captured during an engagement with the 72d LF Bn vicinity BT 2020 on 27 Jan stated there would be seven coordinated attacks in the TAM KY/CHU LAI area in the next few days. On 30 Jan 68, attacks using mortars and small arms were initiated against the District Headquarters of THANG BINH, and QUE SON, BINH SON, and NGHIA HANH Districts, QUANG NGAI City; and against US forward bases located at LZ ROSS (BTO235) and LZ BALDY (BT1345). On Jan 31 68, enemy forces initiated ground/mortar/rocket attacks throughout the Americal Area of Operations with major ground efforts against TAM KY and QUANG NGAI Cities and an attack by fire against CHU LAI Airfield. CHU LAI Airfield received 48 x 122mm rockets and a large number of 82mm mortar rounds resulting in three aircraft destroyed, ten aircraft damaged and the destruction of two bomb dumps and an ammo dump. At TAM KY City the enemy employed the 165th LF Bn, 70th MF Bn, 72d LF Bn, 74th MF Bn and six LF Companies in a two pronged ground attack directed at the Regional Forces/District Headquarters and the 6th ARVN Regt Hqs. At QUANG NGAI City enemy forces controlled by the VC QUANG NGAI (P) Hqs Unit initiated a four pronged mortar/ground attack using LF/MF/NVA units. The 406th MF-Sapper Bn spearheaded a thrust against the MACV/2d ARVN Div Compound and the QUANG NGAI Jail. The 81st LF Bn, 83d LF Bn, 120th MF Montagnard Bn, 401st Regt Hqs and the 506A LF Sapper Co attacked the 4th ARVN Regt Hqs and 2d ARVN Div Training Center at QUANG NGAI Airfield. The 48th LF Bn and 95th LF Sapper Co combined to attack the RF-PF Training Center and the bridge north of QUANG NGAI City. The 107th NVA AA Bn was positioned west of QUANG NGAI City to protect withdrawing elements. Six other LF companies were used to reinforce units during the attack.

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SUBJECT: Combat Action Report (RCS AVDP-GC-1)

b. The 2d ROK Mar Bde engaged a large enemy force, identified as the V-25 LF Bn and the Q-12 LF Co at BT1659 on 2 Feb 68. On 5 Feb 68, the Americal Division Headquarters received 14 rounds of 122mm rockets at 2322 hours. The 2d ARVN Div supported by Americal gunships contacted a large enemy force identified as the 40th Co/406th MF Sapper Bn, northwest of QUANG NGAI City. On 7 Feb 68, the Chu Lai Airfield received 6 rounds of 122mm rockets, and the 2d ARVN Div supported by Americal gunships contacted a large enemy force south of QUANG NGAI City which was identified as the 83d LF Bn. On 9 Feb 68, Americal Div units engaged the 21th NVA Regt, GK-31 AA Bn and GK-35 Sapper/Recon Bn of the 2d NVA Div south of HOI AN RIVER (BT0454 - ET9954). On 11 Feb 68, Americal Forces contacted the 48th LF Bn at BS7280 in Operation MUSCATE. At 2044H, 14 Feb 68, the CHU LAI Airfield received twelve rounds of 122mm rockets.

c. Significant intelligence facts gained Southern I Corps Tactical Zone.

(1) The 105th LF Bn moved across provincial boundaries for the first time to participate in the attack on TAM KY.

(2) District forces moved out of their Districts to participate in larger scaled attacks.

(3) NVA were used as fillers for LF units for the first time and to reinforce LF/MF units.

(4) A large number of the attackers in the TAM KY attack were youths between the ages of 14 and 19 who had been recruited anywhere from one week to two months prior to the attack.

(5) For the first time the B-41 RL (RPG-7) was employed against friendly elements in QUANG NGAI (P).

(6) The VZ-58 Assault Rifles of Czech manufacture were captured displaying a refinement over the AK-47 with a simpler construction with no loss of accuracy or firepower.

9. MISSIONS: The Americal Division mission was to conduct offensive operations against NVA/VC forces south of SONG DY LAM, SONG DIEN BINH, and SONG CAU LAU and continue current operations in WHEELER/WALLOWA AO, MUSCATE AO, DUC PHO AO and CHU LAI TACR.

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10. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS:

PHASE I: 3d Bde, 4th Inf Div was to continue WHEELER/WALLOWA mission and initiate operations northwest from LZ BALDY to the northern Americal Div boundary; establish fire support base within an extended AO and continue operations north and northwest in coordination with the 2d ROK Mar Bde. 196th Lt Inf Bde deploy 1 Bn to LZ BALDY and continue operations in WHEELER/WALLOWA AO. 198th Lt Inf Bde continue operations in CHU LAI TAOR and MUSCATINE AO. 11th Lt Inf Bde continue operations in DUC PHO AO.

PHASE II: 3d Bde, 4th Inf Div was to continue operations in WHEELER/WALLOWA AO and south of SONG DY LAM and SONG CAU LAU rivers; conduct a combat assault to establish a second fire support base in the extended AO. 196th Lt Inf Bde continued operations in CHU LAI TAOR and MUSCATINE AO. 11th Lt Inf Bde continued operations in DUC PHO AO.

11. EXECUTION:

a. The Americal Division continued on 29 January 1968 to conduct offensive operations, with light contact, in the CHU LAI TAOR and the DUC PRO AO to locate and destroy NVA/VC main and local force units. Operations WHEELER/WALLOWA and MUSCATINE continued with light contact.

b. During the early morning hours of 30 January 1968, Americal Units received mortar and recoilless rifle fire on LZs ROSS, BALDY, COLT, ANI, and DRAGON. TAC Air and artillery continued to engage known and suspected locations.

c. At approximately 0405 hours on 31 January 1968 the Americal Division (Chu Lai Defense Command) received a rocket attack. Damage to MAC-12 was four WHA with six buildings and five aircraft hit. MAC-13 suffered two KHA and five WH with eight aircraft hit. At the same time that the CLDC was under rocket attack, the city of TAM KY came under mortar and small arms attack. Troop C, 1st Sqdn, 1st Cav as well as flare ships, gunships, and artillery were employed in support of ARVN units at TAM KY. While both CLDC and TAM KY were under attack VC/NVA forces conducted a mortar and ground attack at QUANG NGAI. Gunships were sent to QUANG NGAI to support ARVN forces in that area.

d. On 1 February 1968, a pair of gunships were sent to assist ARVN forces in repelling a mortar and ground attack on the QUANG NGAI Airfield. Operations WHEELER/WALLOWA and MUSCATINE continued with moderate contact.

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e. On 2 February 1968 the division continued to conduct operations in the CHU LAI TACR and DUC PHC AO with light contact. Operations WHEELER/WALLOWA and MUSCATINE continued with light contact. In response to the enemy threat which developed in the DA NANG area, the Division prepared to shift forces to the north.

f. On 3 February 1968 there was no significant activity.

g. The 11th Light Infantry Brigade assumed control of operation MUSCATINE from the 198th Light Infantry Brigade on 4 February 1968. Americal Division continues to conduct offensive operations with only light contact resulting.

h. At 2320 hours, 5 February 1968, the CIDC received approximately 14 rounds of 122mm rocket fire. Results of the rocket attack were 12 WHA and slight damage to installations.

i. The Americal Division staged a show of force on 6 February 1968 in QUANG NGAI City. Eight APC's and two Infantry Platoons moved through the city to the QUANG NGAI Airfield, four of the APC's and two platoons remained overnight for further employment if required. No enemy contact was made and action throughout the AO remained light.

j. As a result of the enemy threat which developed by the 2d NVA Div movement north toward the DA NANG area, and the continued threat in that area, the 1st Bn, 6th Inf began movement by air to the area immediately south of DA NANG. Upon arrival of the 1st Bn, 6th Inf in the DA NANG area, they were placed OPCON to the 1st Marine Division.

k. The 1st Bn, 6th Inf completed its movement into the area immediately south of DA NANG on 8 February 1968 and was immediately followed by the deployment of the 2d Bn, 1st Inf to the same area. As a result of the commitment of two battalion size forces into the DA NANG area TF Miracle was formed from division resources as a control headquarters and placed OPCON to the 1st Marine Division.

l. At approximately 0945 hours on 9 February 1968, elements of the 3d Bde, 4th Inf Div engaged an estimated NVA reinforced platoon in the vicinity of BTOCO354. Subsequently, at 1046 hours a company size element of the brigade became heavily engaged with a large NVA force. Numerous contacts made by elements of the two battalions which closed in the area resulted in heavy fighting throughout the day. Action began to subside at 1900 hours and by 2000 hours all contact was broken. The results of this heavy contact were 30 US WHA (evacuated), and 99 WHA (minor) with 291 NVA KIA, 43 Individual and 13 Crew Served weapons captured.

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SUBJECT: Combat Action Report (RCS AVDF-GC-1)

m. At 0117 hours on 10 February 1968 the 11th Light Infantry Brigade headquarters located at LZ BRONCO came under attack. As a result of the VC employment of mortars, grenades, and satchel charges there was 1 US KIA, 7 WMA and 1 confirmed VC KIA.

n. A combined S&D operation was conducted on 11 February 1968, employing a company size force from the 2d ARVN Div matched with a company size force with one platoon of cavalry from the 11th Light Infantry Brigade north of the DUC PHO AO with light contact.

o. TF Miracle units began redeployment by air from the 1st Marine Division area south of DA NANG, into the WHEZIER/WALLOWA AO with all major Infantry units closing on 12 February 1968.

p. Operation MUSCATINE continued with heavy contact on 12 February 1968. The contact developed from a combined TF Barker and 2d ARVN Div S&D operation. The combined force made contact with an estimated VC battalion at 1445 hours in the vicinity of BS 7279 and subsequently broke at 1700 hours. Results of this contact were 1 US KIA, 5 WMA (evacuated) and 78 VC KIA (C).

q. LZ RYDER and LZ POLAR BEAR were established at AT945344 abd AT898471 on 13 February 1968 in the northern extension of the AO. No further significant action occurred as enemy contact remained light throughout the AO.

r. On 14 February 1968 the CHU LAI Airfield received 12 rounds of 122mm rockets at 2044 hours resulting in 1WMA (minor) and little damage. The American Division continued to conduct offensive operations with light contact.

s. Civic Action rendered in support of GVN Civil recovery program.

(1) Division aircraft extracted 57, 030 lbs of captured rice to be used to feed refugees.

(2) 3,800 lbs of foodstuffs in addition to rice was provided to various hamlets to feed the homeless.

(3) 2,050 lbs of donated clothing was distributed.

(4) 4,420 board feet of lumber was used from Army stocks to assist in reconstruction projects. Approximate value \$844.

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(5) 33 units of whole blood and two cylinders of oxygen were provided to QUANG NGAI Hospital from Army stocks. Estimated value \$1,060.

(6) Additional medical supplies valued at \$2,000 were provided to treat injured personnel.

(7) 878 man hours of labor were provided to assist in various reconstruction activities, medical treatment and delivery of materials.

(8) The following equipment hours were provided to various hamlets and villages:

(a) Eight Chinook hours used to move 22,000 lbs of food from TAM KY, BT309227, to HAU DIC, B5027976.

(b) C7A Caribou used for four hours to move 9,000 lbs of food and ammunition from TAM KY BT309227 to TIEN PHOUUC, BT112138.

(c) A bulldozer was provided to work for eight hours at THANG BINH, BT173417 to clear rubble for reconstruction.

(d) A pump was provided for one hour to pump out four polluted wells, at PHU HUNG Hamlet, BT14538, in QUE SON District.

(9) Aviation assets provided total of 311 ton miles of assistance in moving food and ammunition to remote areas in QUANG TIN Province.

t. Summary: The VC/NVA TET Offensive against the Americal Division and its AO was characterized by VC/NVA stand-off rocket/mortar attacks. The VC/NVA attacks apparently had as their goals: The destruction by fire of aircraft and installations in and around CHU LAI Airstrip and the denial of friendly air support to forces in adjacent areas; the interdiction of Highway #1 to the north in order to deny its immediate use by reaction forces; the fixing in place of ground forces by harassing fire attacks in order to prevent or slow the movement of reaction elements; and the ultimate goal appears to have been to gain the support of the civil populace by demonstrating a capability to attack numerous populated areas simultaneously, thus pointing up the GVN's inability to protect the people. The major VC/NVA actions were centered on QUANG NGAI and TAM KY. Americal Division reaction to the VC/NVA TET Offensive was to continue offensive operations in the DUC PHO AO, MUSCATINE AO, WHEELER/WALLOWA AO, CHU LAI TACR, as well as to extend the Division AO to the northwest to continue pressure on the 2d NVA Division and employment of TF Miracle for operations under the OPCON of the 1st Marine Division

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south of DA NANG. The immediate employment of flare ships, gunships and ground elements of 1st Sqdn, 1st Cav in support of ARVN elements at TAM KY and QUANG NGAI contributed significantly to defense of these critical areas and ultimately precluded any VC/NVA tactical success.

12. RESULTS: 29 Jan - 14 Feb 68

a. FRIENDLY FORCES:

(1) Personnel Losses:

KHA	79
WHA (Evacuated)	227
WHA (minor)	202

(2) Equipment destroyed:

UH-1C Gunship	1
Tank M48A3	2
APC M13A1	7
Mortar 81mm M29	1
Machine Gun M60	3
Grenade Launcher M79	12
Rifle M16A1	87
Searchlight Zenon	2
Radio Set AN/PRC-25	8
Radio Set AN/VRC-46	1
Receiver Set AN/PRC-9	1
Transmitter AN/PRT-4	6
Telephone Set TA/312/PT	2

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500 lb bomb	1 ea
250 lb bomb	2 ea
Satchel charge	3 ea
Trip Flares	4 ea

13. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: Not Applicable

14. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES: Not Applicable

15. COMMANDING ANALYSIS: The VC/NVA TET Offensive failed to succeed in the cities of QUANG NGAI and TAM KY due in part to the immediate response of the Americal Division in providing flare ships, gunships and armored cavalry support. Within the division AO the VC/NVA Offensive failed to gain any tactical advantage and all operations continued as planned. The deployment of TF Miracle to the area south of BA NANG proved successful in destroying the enemies potential in that area. As offensive operations continued during the period of the VC/NVA offensive the Americal Division continued to inflict heavy casualties on VC/NVA forces wherever encountered in the area of operation.

16. RECOMMENDATIONS: None

FOR THE COMMANDER:

4 Incl
as
"A True Copy"

F. A. PATSY
Captain, AGC
Asst AG

William H. Offutt Jr.
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HISTORIAN

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