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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 52d Infantry  
198th Infantry Brigade, 23rd Infantry Division  
APO 96374

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Authorizer: WWD-873354  
Date: 11-1971

AVDF-BCPC

3 May 1971

SUBJECT: Input Data for OR-LL for period 1-30 April 1971 (U)

Commanding Officer  
198th Infantry Brigade  
ATTN: AVDF-BCC  
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The following is a report of lessons learned for period 1-30 April 1971 from this headquarters. This report is submitted for inclusion in the 198th Infantry Brigade Operational Report-Lessons Learned.

1. Section 1. Operations: Significant Activities

Operations for the period were characterized by movement of friendly operations to the center portion of the AO to further seek out enemy forces. On 1 April an element of E Recon observed and engaged a squad size element of NVA resulting in 1 NVA killed, and the capture of 2 rucksacks each containing 50lbs of polished rice. Later in the day E Recon observed another NVA. Engaging him resulted in 1 NVA killed and 1 AK-47 rifle captured. Delta company, while on patrol the following day, observed and engaged 1 NVA, resulting in 1 NVA KIA, and later the same day an element of Delta company engaged an enemy platoon killing 5 NVA. Alpha company while patrolling in their AO on 2 April discovered an enemy bunker complex containing approximately 20 positions. A search of the area revealed an assortment of documents, medical supplies, and clothing. Later that afternoon a live ambush conducted by a platoon of Alpha company netted 1 NVA KIA and 1 AK-47 captured. On 3 April, an element of Delta company sweeping an area of previous contact was engaged by an estimated platoon size element of NVA. Another element of Delta company being deployed to support the engaged platoon was also taken under fire by the enemy. A search of the area taken after contact was broken revealed the platoons return fire resulted in 3 NVA KIA. On 4 April an element of Bravo company engaged a squad size enemy force which was cultivating potatoes in a field designated as a pick up zone for the company. Engaged with small arms fire the enemy sustained 3 KIA. Delta company accounted for the death of 1 NVA on the same day when an OP for one of its elements engaged an enemy soldier with M-16 fire. Action on 5 April was light producing no known enemy dead although artillery was processed by Delta company after a mechanical ambush was detonated. A search of the area revealed no bodies although blood trails were found in the area. On 7 April elements of Delta company combined to produce 6 NVA KIA. The enemy had been occupying a base camp area at the time of engagement. On 8 April Delta company found documents in the area of the previous days activity, and an element of that company accounted for 3 NVA KIA in a live ambush. The next day an element of 4

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Charlie company overheard enemy voices approximately 500 meters from their day laager position and processed artillery on the enemy location. While sweeping the area they engaged a squad size enemy element resulting in 2 NVA KIA and the capture of 100lbs of rice and assorted enemy munitions. Later in the day the element engaged and killed 1 NVA, captured 1 AK-47 rifle, and uncovered a cache in the area of contact containing a large supply of feed stuffs which was destroyed. On 11 April Charlie company killed 1 NVA and captured 1 AK-47 rifle and asserted documents as the enemy soldier was attempting to infiltrate past an OP. On 15 April Bravo company discovered a salt cache containing approximately 9000lbs of salt of which 4300lbs was extracted and the remainder destroyed. The following morning an element of Bravo company accounted for 1 NVA KIA when the enemy detonated a mechanical ambush. On 19 April an OP from Delta company engaged 2 NVA soldiers resulting in 1 NVA killed and 1 AK-47 rifle captured. The following day, Alpha company, providing security for an engineer land clearing operation detained 2 VC suspects, and detained another early the next morning during a village raid. On 22 April, Alpha company detained 2 more VC suspects and killed 1 NVA in a separate incident after he was observed checking come wire leading past the Alpha company NDP. On 24 April, Charlie company detained 1 VC suspect evading into a village, and an element of Delta company in a live ambush netted 1 NVA KIA and the capture of 1 AK-47 rifle, 1 K-54 pistol and some documents. On 25 April Charlie company detained 1 Vietnamese female and Alpha company accounted for 2 NVA KIA and asorted military equipment captured when elements of that company received fire after approaching an NVA position. Meanwhile Delta company uncovered a deserted enemy base camp containing numerous structures and mock ups of 105 howitzers, 4.2" mortars and wire emplacements. The following afternoon an element of Charlie company discovered a cache of enemy munitions and documents while they were acting as a security force for a downed LOH in the 1/52 AO. While patrolling on 27 April elements of Alpha company and of E Recon discovered 2 enemy base camps containing numerous structures and small caches of military equipment and munitions. Delta company accounted for 6 NVA KIA and 3 AK-47 rifles captured in 2 separate incidents on 28 April. Enemy munitions and documents were also discovered after Delta company swept a base camp following the contacts. 30 April saw Alpha company kill 1 NVA and capture 1 AK-47 rifle when the enemy walked into a mechanical ambush. Charlie company discovered a small bunker complex which contained 2 122mm rockets and 1 M-2 carbine. In the final action of the month Delta company produced one NVA KIA when one of its elements engaged the enemy soldier during a search of an isolated group of shelters. Total enemy losses for the reporting period were: 43 KIA, 7 Detainees, 12 Weapons CIA, 850lbs Rice, and 9850lbs of Salt.

**2. Section 2. Lessons Learned.**

During the past month, this unit was involved in the occupation, exploration and destruction of a large enemy base area. The following characteristics were observed:

1. Location- The base area was divided into several camps located approximately 400-700 meters apart. The camps were placed so as to make observation from the air virtually impossible and so that the compromise of one

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site would not necessarily compromise the whole area. Maximum advantage was made of friendly artillery dead space by placing the camps in small valleys or steep narrow ridgelines. Although hundreds of rounds of various caliber were placed on the central camp area, only one round actually impacted within the structure complex.

2. Construction- Each of the sub-bases contained 15-30 structures with a total shelter capability of 1-2 companies. Each of the structures had a bunker beneath it large enough to hold all the structure's occupants. Overhead cover ranged from 3-6 feet thick providing protection from all but direct hit with heavy ordnance. Surrounding vegetation was left intact for the most part but some of the underbrush was cleared to provide field of fire. Actual fighting positions were not numerous, however, leading to the belief that the camps were not meant to be defended from major attack. Centrally located was a large training area containing mock-ups of 105 howitzers, 4.2" mortars, and concertina wire.

3. Security- The base area was secured by what were believed to be caretaker elements who were deployed generally a hundred or more meters from the camp itself. Consisting of 3-5 personnel, these elements were heavily armed with AK's and B-40 launchers and usually engaged from concealed positions. Landline communications were found linking an element to the base area and the camps to each other.

4. Caliber of Enemy Forces- Initially contact was made with a sizable enemy force of 50-60 personnel. These elements were very aggressive and once contact had been initiated, began maneuvering quickly in attempts to flank friendly forces. Unlike enemy elements in the lowlands, this unit appeared to seek and exploit contact and maintain a close proximity. Once the larger element had withdrawn, the stay behind units made frequent attempts to scout friendly positions and creep in past OP's and ambushes to harass friendly elements.

5. Effective friendly tactics- Two techniques proved most effective in countering the enemy forces located in this area. First, once contact has been made, the friendly unit must begin maneuvering quickly and aggressively. If the enemy was allowed to gain the initiative, he exploited it rapidly. Secondly, since the enemy was forced to use the available LOC's due to the steep terrain and thick vegetation, multiple live (squad-size) and mechanical ambushes along the trail networks in the camp area were able to interdict enemy elements moving to and from the various camps.

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INITIATED CONTACTS

|         | DAY                       |                        |                                | NIGHT                     |                        |                                | TOTAL<br>ENEMY<br>ELIMINATED |   |   |    |
|---------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|---|----|
|         | TOTAL<br># OF<br>CONTACTS | SUCCESSFUL<br>CONTACTS | % OF<br>SUCCESSFUL<br>CONTACTS | TOTAL<br># OF<br>CONTACTS | SUCCESSFUL<br>CONTACTS | % OF<br>SUCCESSFUL<br>CONTACTS |                              |   |   |    |
|         | KIA                       | POW                    | VCI                            | WPNS                      |                        |                                |                              |   |   |    |
| A Co    | 8                         | 3                      | 37.5                           | 2                         | 1                      | 50                             | 5                            | 0 | 0 | 2  |
| B Co    | 2                         | 2                      | 100                            | 0                         | 0                      | 0                              | 4                            | 0 | 0 | 0  |
| C Co    | 7                         | 3                      | 42.9                           | 0                         | 0                      | 0                              | 4                            | 0 | 0 | 3  |
| D Co    | 20                        | 14                     | 70                             | 0                         | 0                      | 0                              | 26                           | 0 | 0 | 6  |
| E Rcn   | 5                         | 2                      | 40                             | 0                         | 0                      | 0                              | 2                            | 0 | 0 | 1  |
| Snipers | 0                         | 0                      | 0                              | 0                         | 0                      | 0                              | 0                            | 0 | 0 | 0  |
| TOTAL   | 42                        | 24                     | 57.1                           | 2                         | 1                      | 50                             | 43                           | 0 | 0 | 12 |