

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 52d Infantry
11th Infantry Brigade, 23rd Infantry Division
APO SF 96374

AVDF-BOPC

5 August 1971

SUBJECT: Input Data for OR-LL period 1-31 July 1971 (U).

Commanding Officer
11th Infantry Brigade
ATTN: AVDF-BOC
APO SF 96374

The following is a report of lessons learned for period 1-31 July 1971 from this headquarters. This report is submitted for inclusion in the 11th Infantry Brigade Operational Report-Lessons Learned.

1. Section 1. Operations: Significant Activities

During the first part of the month the 1/52d Inf continued operations in the Happy Valley area in conjunction with a refit cycle in the 198th Bde Refit Area. On 2 July, A Co detained 3 suspects while conducting Eagle Flights in vicinity of Stinson. On the 6th, B Co accounted for 1 KIA and 1 IWC as the result of a mechanical ambush. The same day while sweeping the area of an earlier contact, A Co captured 1 AK-47. On the afternoon of the 9th, A Co ambushed 3 NVA soldiers killing one. The next day, 10 July, in another live ambush, A Co engaged and killed 3 NVA and captured 2 AK-47's and assorted military equipment. On the 19th, a Sniper Team on position near Stinson engaged 2 enemy soldiers at 900m killing one. Reacting to sightings by a divisional Air Cav team, the battalion moved B and D Co's plus mortars and a jump TOC to the Nuoc Ong corridor to participate in a joint US-ARVN operation. On the 22d, E Co under opcon of D Co, engaged 3 NVA soldiers resulting in 1 NVA KIA, 1 AK-47 CIA and several documents CIA. On the 24th D Co was placed opcon to the 3/1 Inf to provide security to their firebase further south along the Nuoc Ong. On the 25th, the forward CP was withdrawn to Stinson and the following day C Co was placed opcon to 3/1 Inf. On the 28th, the forward CP was again deployed to relieve 3/1 in place with B and C Co's returning to 1/52 control and C 3/1 plus 2 4.2" mortars becoming opcon to 1/52 from 3/1. While on an Eagle Flight on the 30th, B Co found 1 SKS and assorted foodstuffs in a hut/bunker complex. On the 31st, C Co found and destroyed 4000 lbs of partly spoiled unpolished rice. Total enemy losses during the month were: 7 VC/NVA KIA, 6 IWC CIA, 3 detainees and approximately 5000 lbs of rice captured.

2. Section 2. Lessons Learned

Conducting a medical evacuation from the double and triple canopy jungle which

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is common in the mountainous regions of this unit's operational area is difficult, time consuming, and presents a high risk to the safety of both the helicopter crews and the soldier being dusted-off. The use of the forest penetrator has greatly increased the availability of rapid medical evacuation to injured soldiers. Recently, classes presented by a team from the medevac helicopter unit have measurably increased the speed and efficiency with which the medics and soldiers of this command are able to employ the penetrator. However, several suggestions have come forward from field commanders which warrant further consideration.

Due to air turbulence and/or uneven rotor wash over rough terrain, the individual being extracted will often begin to oscillate in the harness while he is being winched up to the aircraft. This may result in additional injury when the wounded man hits a tree or becomes entangled in branches. It is felt that the addition of a drop rope or cable attached to the penetrator would enable troops on the ground to steady the wounded man as he ascends and guide him through the small openings in the trees which are the rule in this type operation. The rope should be rolled up and attached to the penetrator itself during lowering and then unfastened on the ground if needed.

Secondly, on night extractions, the penetrator itself presents a hazard to ground personnel as it is lowered due to the lack of visibility. It is felt that the attachment of a small light to the penetrator for night use would alleviate this hazard and assist ground personnel in the rapid recovery of the penetrator as well as being able to give better guidance to the pilot.

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