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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

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

AVDF-BCPC

5 Sep 1971

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

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

The following is a report of lessons learned for period 1-31 Aug 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

In conjunction with a refit cycle from 16-30 August, the battalion continued the type of operations conducted during the latter part of July, ie, the opening and securing of forward fire bases to support ARVN operations in the mountains in western Son Ha and Tra Bong districts. The month began with the Bn CP and A 3/1 (OPCON to 1/52) securing FFB Gi Lang (BS289683), B1/52 securing a supporting 4.2 base (LZ Smokey-BS302668), and A & C 1/52 in the field. On the 1st, A Co engaged 3 NVA in a live ambush killing one and capturing 1 rucksack. On 2 Aug C Co found the body of 1 NVA soldier who had been killed by SAF several days previous. The same day, A Co observed 17 NVA moving along a trail. They engaged with SAF and artillery resulting in 4 NVA KIA (3 KBA). On 3 Aug the National Police detained one individual near LZ Stinson. The same day, Gi Lang and Smokey were closed and the Bn CP returned to FSB Stinson. Three days later, the 6th, the Bn jumped forward again opening FFB Freddy, (AKA: Red Dragon, BS230577) and mortar base LZ Cathy (AKA: Blue Cloud, BS240613). A Co secured Cathy while B & C Co's secured the 2 US 105's, 2 ARVN 105's and 2 ARVN 155's on Freddy. While on patrol on the 7th, C Co discovered a quantity of medical supplies and captured 1 SKS. The next evening A Co observed 23 NVA moving across a field. They processed mortar and artillery on the enemy killing 2. While on an eagle flight on 13 Aug, C Co engaged an estimated 4 NVA resulting in 1 NVA KIA, 1 NVA POW and 1 rucksack and a packet of documents CIA. On 15 Aug Freddy and Cathy were closed and the battalion returned to Stinson. On 20 Aug, the battalion deployed 1½ companies forward to secure FFB Duke (BS240856) which was to provide fire support for another ARVN fire base further west from 20-28 August. On 22 Aug, ERcn detained 2 males near LZ Stinson. On 26 Aug while on patrol around Stinson, D Co detained 6 person and found 1 105 round booby-trap which was destroyed in place. Total enemy losses during August were 9 VC/NVA (3 by arty, 2 by mortars), 1 POW, 1 IWC and 9 detainees.

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## 2. Section 2. Lessons Learned

### A. Punji Stake Injuries

During recent operations in the mountainous area of western Quang Ngai Province, this unit suffered numerous casualties due to punji stakes. The punjis were typically scattered over large areas suitable for landing zones (usually grassy ridgelines) and planted on the surface facing in various directions so that anyone trying to move rapidly through the area would eventually strike one. Although the injuries were in most cases minimal, they nevertheless required evacuation, treatment and time lost. Most of the injuries were incurred as troops debarked from helicopters and moved to provide LZ security. The following methods should be used to preclude this type injury in areas that are found to have punji threats.

- (1) If possible, place an airstrike on the landing zone prior to use utilizing "daisy-cutter" bombs.
- (2) Fire a heavy artillery preparation directly on the landing zone in addition to the normal preparation of surrounding treelines or other areas of concealment.
- (3) When the troops debark the helicopters, have them freeze in position, unless they are under fire, until the helicopter (s) have departed. Then they can move slowly to security positions removing or displacing the punjis as they go.

### B. Landing Zone Fires

The 2.75 inch rockets carried by armed helicopters have demonstrated an unusual propensity for igniting brushfires. This effect is especially noticeable in elephant grass which usually is not affected by other types of ordinance. A brushfire in the landing zone may separate elements, preclude further landings for a time or force ground units to move in undesirable directions to avoid the fire. Windy days and dry grass (typical in the dry season) considerably increase the danger of fires. When the situation allows, aerial rocket artillery should not be employed directly on the landing site but should be confined to surrounding areas of concealment which are less susceptible to fires. Artillery should be utilized to prep the LZ proper.

ROBERT J. FREUND  
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INITIATED CONTACTS

	DAY			NIGHT			TOTAL ENEMY ELIMINATED
	TOTAL # OF CONTACTS	SUCCESSFUL CONTACTS	% OF SUCCESSFUL CONTACTS	TOTAL # OF CONTACTS	SUCCESSFUL CONTACTS	% OF SUCCESSFUL CONTACTS	
	KIA	POW	VCI	WPNS			
A Co	6	3	50				7 (5 KIA) 0 0 0
B Co	2	0	0				0 0 0 0
C Co	6	2	33				2 1 0 1
D Co	5	0	0				0 0 0 0
E Rcn	0	0	0				0 0 0 0
Snipers	0	0	0				0 0 0 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>21</b>				<b>9 1 0 1</b>

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