

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 1ST BATTALION, 46TH INFANTRY
196TH INFANTRY BRIGADE
APO San Francisco 96256

AVDF-BCOC

4 March 1972

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned
(Reporting Period, 1 February thru 29 February 1972)

Commanding General
196th Infantry Brigade
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APO San Francisco 96256

During the reporting period 1 thru 29 February, 1st Bn 46th Inf continued its dynamic defense of DA NANG. While at LZ MAUDE, twenty-one (21) airmobile insertions and extractions were conducted. 105mm howitzers fired twenty (20) missions at suspected enemy locations and thirty-four (34) missions at intelligence targets. 4.2in and 81mm mortars fired thirty-one (31) missions. Pathfinders were used extensively with line units throughout the reporting period, and to control aircraft on the day of rotation to the Brigade Ridge.

The following is a report of significant activities and lessons learned during the month of February.

SECTION I: Significant Activities

a. On 2 Feb, 1st Bn 46th Inf, 196th Inf Bde, while at LZ MAUDE (AT 837757), received a report from Northern Artillery Compound (NAC) that 14-22 personnel were spotted on radar as close as 100m from the wire. The spottings continued from 2130 hours to 0830 hours the next morning. Artillery, 4.2in, 81mm, M-60, M-203 and Defensive Targets were fired. A patrol was sent into the area at 030925 Feb with negative results.

b. On 042300 Feb, 1st Bn 46th Inf, 196th Inf Bde, while at LZ MAUDE (AT 837757), received a report from the Northern Artillery Compound that the radar section spotted 5-10 personnel approximately 500 meters east of LZ MAUDE (AT 837757). These sightings continued until 050305 hours. Night Hawk, 81mm, 4.2in and Defensive Targets were employed with negative results.

c. On 7 February, Charlie Co, 1st Bn 46th Inf, conducted an airmobile insertion in the vicinity of Elephant Valley and conducted interdiction operations to the west and south in assigned area of operations. This move

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was based on intelligence indicating that VC/NVA were to attempt to infiltrate and attack the DA NANG complex from the northwest. An Air Cavalry team was used to screen the assigned AO north of Charlie Company's limit of advance and also conduct low level sweeps of the landing zone prior to troop placement on the ground. The original plan called for two companies inserted in the vicinity of Elephant Valley with a Jump TOC, secured by Recon Flt, placed on LZ GUNFIGHTER, One (1) 4.2in section, one (1) 81mm section and three (3) 105mm howitzers from Charlie Battery 3-82 Arty would displace to LZ GUNFIGHTER. The plan was altered with a less extensive commitment and three (3) 105's were sent to the NAC (AT 923798), as well as a radio retransmission team to insure communication with forward elements. Prior to placement of troops on the ground, the 105's and retrans site were emplaced. The mission continued for two days with negative results.

d. On 081930 February, 1st Platoon of Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, 196th Inf Bde, had a mechanical ambush detonate at AT 844722. Illumination was fired over the site and a patrol sent out. The patrol found fresh footprints and fragments of a sampan. At 2012 hours, 2d Platoon of Delta Company spotted lights in the vicinity of the MA detonation (AT 844722). At 2058, 2d Platoon reported movement in the water. Small arms fire was placed in the area and an unknown number of enemy troops evaded to the east. Artillery was employed at 2111 hours and screams were heard. A patrol attempted to check the area out but the dense terrain prevented a thorough search. A Night Hawk had been requested at 1935 hours but was not available.

e. At 101040 February, 1st Bn 46th Inf, 196th Inf Bde, while at LZ MA DE, received a URI report that command elements of the 575th Rocket Bn were located at grid AT 864717, 400 meters north of Bravo Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf. Bravo Company was manuevered and gunships employed. Three suspected enemy troops, evading to the northeast, were sighted by Bravo Company. Artillery was employed with negative results.

f. On 11 February, Alpha Co, 1st Bn 46th Inf, 196th Inf Bde, and 23 attached personnel moved by C-130 to PHU BAI to serve as a security element for the 101st Airborne Division. Alpha Company has provided security for the PHU BAI complex containing the 8th RRFS since 11 Feb and will continue this mission until the 10th of March.

g. At 121825 February, 2d Platoon from Bravo Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, 196th Inf Bde, while setting up a mechanical ambush at grid AT 854712 heard and engaged movement. While reconning by fire, they spotted eight (8) personnel evading to the southeast. Artillery and Night Hawk were employed with negative results.

h. On 162330 February, radar from the Northern Artillery Compound

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notified the 1st Bn 46th Inf, 196th Inf Bde, of a vehicle sighting, possibly a tank, at grid AT 885820. Night Hawk was sent to the location and spotted what appeared to be tank tracks. Artillery was employed with unknown results. On 17 February, the area was reconned and tracks from a wheeled vehicle were observed. Nothing further was discovered.

i. On 23 and 24 February, Delta Co, 1st Bn 46th Inf, 196th Inf Bde, while serving as reaction force for DA NANG was given the mission of securing a ROK convoy of the 2d Marine Division for movement along Highway 1 north to the DA NANG Deep Water Pier. In order to provide additional security, Ren Plt, 1-46th was placed OPCON to D Co. Delta Co was moved by convoy, and platoon size elements were placed at strategic points along the route. An Air Cavalry Team was employed. Overall operational control was accomplished by the Bn CO aboard a Command and Control helicopter.

SECTION II:

a. Personnel: None

b. Intelligence: None

c. Operations: (1) Observation: On 11 Feb 72, Alpha Co, 1st Bn 46th Inf, and 23 attached personnel moved to PHU BAI Combat Base. During the movement from Camp Crescenz to the airfield, no check points and release points were used.

Evaluation: Since the Bn was on yellow alert status, these shortcomings are considered dangerous.

Recommendations: Units should issue that prior to any movement of this nature, OPLANs should be written containing road maps and the route with release points and check points.

(2) Observation: On 23 Feb, Delta Co, 1st Bn 46th Inf, as reaction force was given the mission of securing a ROK convoy along Hwy 1 north to the Deep Water Pier. Aircraft were requested and approved for the emplacement of Delta Co. Due to weather conditions, the aircraft were cancelled and a truck convoy was used. No prior arrangement was made for this alternate means of transportation.

Evaluation: Since no prior arrangement was made for a convoy move, last minute plans had to be made and problems of obtaining road clearance and MP escorts were encountered.

Recommendation: For all air movements where convoy move is possible

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as an alternative, a contingency plan should be coordinated in the event of inclement weather.

(3) Observation: Several flamedrop mission aircraft (CH47) reported to LZ MAUDE without prior notification to this battalion. As a result preparations were hastily made and the A/C wasted blade time in the air.

Evaluation: Coordination for the flamedrop mission had to be made while the bird was in the air.

Recommendation: That confirmation of flamedrops be given to the Battalion 24 hours prior to the mission so that preparations can be made, and additional notification be forwarded by Brigade 1-2 hours prior to the actual employment of flame missions.

(4) Observation: While at LZ MAUDE, it was noted, on several occasions, that A/C reporting to LZ MAUDE did not use FM radio on approach prior to landing. This failure to report approach caused wasted period of blade time spent on the ground and also presented a dangerous situation to the pilot since he had no knowledge of artillery fires or other air data.

Evaluation: To insure maximum use of blade time and prevent dangerous situations, all pilots should report approach to supporting unit before entering operational areas.

Recommendation: That pilots be instructed to have one radio on the Battalion CMD frequency and report prior to arrival to alert the unit of A/C location and receive directions as required by Bde SOP.

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Commanding