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

AVBF-BCOC

5 May 1972

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned
(Reporting Period, 1 April thru 31 April 1972)

Commanding General
196th Infantry Brigade
ATTN: AVBF-SC
APO San Francisco 96256

1. (C) During the reporting period 1-31 April, 1st Bn 46th Inf continued its Dynamic Defense of DA NANG. While on LZ LINDA and in the Brigade Rear, twenty-seven (27) airmobile insertions and extractions were conducted. 105mm howitzers fired sixty-four (64) missions at suspected enemy locations and ninety-eight (98) missions at intelligence targets. 81mm mortars fired fourteen (14) missions.

2. (C) The following is a report of significant activities and lessons learned during the month of April.

SECTION I: Significant Activities

a. On 3 April, 1st Platoon Bravo Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, having been inserted by Eagle Flight into grid 8463 one day prior, found four (4) SKS rifles and 400 lbs of rice together with sleeping positions for 50-75 persons which had been used in the last 24 hours. During a sweep operation, visual reconnaissance was conducted of the area with no movement sighted.

b. On 3 April, Charlie Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, while conducting an airmobile insertion, had one UH1H receive an undetermined amount of small arms fire from vic AT 874695. The last lift ship placed fire onto the approximate area with negative results. Later that evening at 1900, Charlie Company reported finding a small cave vic AT 854693 with a trail running east-west showing signs of use in the last 24 hours. Ambushes were employed on the trail with negative results.

c. On 4 April, Recon Platoon, 1st Bn 46th Inf, while conducting

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an airmobile insertion, sighted an enemy vic AT 901642 from the CAC aircraft and during the insertion of Recon Platoon vic AT 902642 another lift ship took small arms fire damaging the tail rotor. Gunships engaged the area. An Air Cav team conducted a visual reconnaissance of the area with negative results.

d. On 4 April, Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, while conducting sweep operations, reported activity, having heard movement and received one (1) fragmentation grenade resulting in one (1) US WIA at 1055 hours, vic AT 885645. 1st Platoon of Delta Company observed and engaged two (2) enemy from a night ambush location vic AT 879639 at 2100, and reported one KIA.

e. On 5 April, 3d Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, found a grass structure and a trail having been used within the previous hour vic AT 843685. A patrol continued the search of the area with negative results.

f. On 7 April, Recon Platoon, 1st Bn 46th Inf, while patrolling to the southeast, vic AT 915634, found several old and weathered pieces of equipment to include one (1) chicom grenade along with ten (10) sleeping positions approximately three (3) weeks old. All equipment was destroyed.

g. On 8 April at 1215 hours, 1st Platoon, Bravo Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, while conducting patrolling operations, found a trail running SE to N used by 8-10 men within the previous 48 hours. They continued patrolling the area with negative results.

h. On 9 April, 2d Platoon Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, while patrolling grid vic AT 8562 discovered a cave, vic AT 859628, with a small metal box inside. In a second cave nearby a copper tray was found. Signs in the area indicated use within the previous three (3) weeks. All items were destroyed.

i. On 11 April, at 0030 hours, guards at bunker #2 at Camp Cresenz reported movement and received two (2) rounds of small arms fire resulting in no casualties or damage.

j. On 11 April, Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, moved to LZ MAUDE at approximately 0900 replacing an engineer platoon and rear detachment of 2-1 Inf at that location. Final demolition projects to clear that site were continued.

k. On the afternoon of 12 April, Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf

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moved off from LZ MAUDE with no incidents.

1. On 20 April 2d Platoon, Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, while conducting sweep operations, observed one (1) enemy at 1100 hours on an LZ vic AT 909644. They engaged with no casualties. The enemy did, however, drop his AK-47 which was recovered by Delta Company. During the recovery they received several rounds of small arms fire, returning the fire with unknown results. A visual reconnaissance was conducted by the company commander with negative results. On the same day at 1345 hours, 2d Platoon found several caves containing 75 lbs of rice and various debris which was booby-trapped. The booby traps were blown in place. The same day, 3d Platoon of Delta Company located a well-used trail running west to east vic AT 914638. Along the trail they discovered seven (7) caves containing assorted debris. All items were destroyed with the significant exception of one (1) AK-47.

m. On 25 April, 3d Platoon, Bravo Company, observed and engaged three (3) enemy at 1100 hours vic AT 913633, at a distance of 35 meters. Only one (1) on the enemy had a weapon and he returned fire as they evaded to the southwest. Continuing the search, Bravo Company found a cave complex containing among other items, two (2) SKS rifles, five (5) B40 rockets and a series of base camps vic AT 913623. At 1325 hours, 2d Platoon of Bravo Company observed and engaged two (2) enemy, vic AT 908629, with negative results. Patrols were employed in the area with negative results.

n. On 27 April at 1130 hours final movement was completed by elements of 3d Bn 21st Inf and 1st Bn 46th Inf for the change of AO responsibility, with 3-21 Inf taking over the forward Southern Brigade AO and 1-46th Inf taking over responsibility for the Brigade Rear. The changeover was completed with ease and efficiency.

o. On 30 April a report by 3d Platoon Delta Company on OP 48 reported eight (8) suspects carrying building materials. A visual reconnaissance was made of the area with negative results.

SECTION II: Lessons Learned

a. Personnel: (1) Observation: A significant backlog of OMR's and recommendations for awards was anticipated with the possibility of unit's standing down. As a result, OER's were initiated for all officers in the battalion for PCS. The OAR's completed are being maintained unsigned for review, or changes by raters and endorsers. In addition, recommendations for awards have been made with the exception of closing date.

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(2) Evaluation: Prior completion of the majority of these administrative requirements has eased the burden on the S-1 Staff Section and will provide for greater ease of administrative processing of personnel should they depart on short notice from the unit.

(3) Recommendation: Recommend this approach be utilized in other units.

b. Intelligence: (1) Observation: Communications are being made with 196th Infantry Brigade liaison officers assigned to the battalion. In addition, communications are being maintained with S-2 Sections of the respective Districts in which the battalion is operating, notably HOA VANG and HIEU DUC. These sections, together with battalion liaison officers, have been able to effectively coordinate with local regional and popular forces on numerous combined field operations and exchange of intelligence information.

(2) Evaluation: These assets and sources of information have been extremely valuable.

(3) Recommendations: Continued and expanded liaison with GVN Forces should be sought and developed.

c. Operations: (1) Observation: While at LZ LINDA and also in the battalion rear area fixed schedules have not been prepared prior to support aircraft arriving on station causing a waste of blade time. Additionally, lack of continuous planning of missions for these aircraft has caused additional loss of blade time.

(2) Evaluation: Air assets are not being efficiently used while in support of the battalion.

(3) Recommendation: All requests to utilize support aircraft be made to the S-3 Air 24 hours prior to requested mission in order that a flight schedule can be planned. When aircraft scheduled for insertions are used by more than one unit, Brigade S-3 Air should endeavor to notify units when projected arrival times of support aircraft vary, and provide an update on expected arrival times.

d. Organization: The previously reported drawdown of A Company and E Company has not adversely affected field operations. The detriment realized has been in a reduced amount of coverage of operational areas. This has been alleviated to a degree by increased use of Eagle Flight operations, use of Regional and Popular Forces for combined operations, and the frequent move of units from one field location to another.

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e. Training: None

f. Logistics: None

g. Communications

(1) Power Supply: (a) Observation: An increased usage of radio batteries has caused a resupply problem and reduced efficiency in transmission on FSB LINDA. By utilizing an external power supply, a twofold advantage has been achieved; a conservation of batteries, and a constant source of power at all times. Using the mount OA 3633 Amplifier Power Supply, the AN/PRC 25 and AN/PRC 77 radios may, in addition, have batteries mounted simultaneously, thereby giving a source of power in case of electrical failure. Unlike batteries, external power will not fade.

(b) Evaluation: Use of external power sources for AN/PRC 25 and AN/PRC 77 radios has increased operating efficiency.

(c) Recommendation: External power sources should be used whenever possible with fixed radio sites.

(2) Maintenance: (a) Observation: Concentrated stress on operator maintenance and operator familiarity with equipment has resulted in significant improvement in equipment operation. Minor preventive maintenance can save resupply requirements in the field. Protection of equipment from moisture cannot be overstressed. The secure set KYK 38 is not weatherproof and should be protected.

(b) Evaluation: Concentration of efforts on these areas has improved functioning of equipment significantly.

(c) Recommendation: Operator maintenance and care of communication equipment should be heavily stressed.

h. Material: None

i. Other: None

ANDREW D. PERKINS, JR.
LTC, Infantry
Commanding

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