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

AVDP-2000

3 June 1972

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

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

1. (C) During the reporting period 1-31 May 1972, 1st Bn 46th Infantry continued its Dynamic Defense of DA NANG. While in the Brigade Rear and on PSC LINDA, thirty-two (32) airmobile insertions and extractions were conducted, eight (8) of which were combined operations with ARVN and RF/PP units. One (1) operation was conducted in conjunction with a 3d Bn 82d Artillery raid. Extensive efforts were made to conduct combined operations during this reporting period with ARVN/CVN Forces. Due to this type of cooperative effort, resources can be pooled, additional ground coverage is obtained, and a close working relationship has resulted. The major advantage to joint operations of the type conducted has been to combine the extensive knowledge by ARVN/CVN Forces of the terrain and population with the firepower and air assets available to US Forces.

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

SECTION I: Significant Activities

a. At 050300 May 1972, Mortar Platoon, 1st Bn 46th Inf, detected movement and voices outside their perimeter at AT 945742, and engaged with small arms fire with unknown results. Elements of Bravo Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, swept the area at dawn that morning with negative results.

b. At 081445 May 1972, 2d Platoon, Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, on a combined operation with the 158th PP Platoon, were searching a village for possible enemy who had been previously sighted from the air via AT 934812. Inside the village they found a suspicious woman together with several contraband items, including a US .45 and fifty (50) blasting caps.

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It was also discovered that the woman's husband, a suspected VC, worked at DA NANG AFB. The QC's were alerted and the man was arrested at 1615 hours. Approximately 10 lbs of explosives were among the items found.

c. At 051245 May 1972, 1st Platoon, Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, while conducting Eagle Flight operations vic AT 943758, found a recently used cave with sleeping positions for four (4) to five (5) people. They continued sweep operations in the area with negative further results.

d. At 151408 May 1972, Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, while conducting sweep operations, found six (6) to seven (7) sleeping positions vic AT 069819, which appeared to be three (3) to four (4) days old. A small amount of miscellaneous debris was also found. Continued sweep of the area produced negative results.

e. At 161515 May 1972, Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, while conducting Eagle Flight operations detained an individual with no proper identification vic AT 955763. He was extracted to Hieu Duc Headquarters for further investigation.

f. At 161010 May 1972, Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, while conducting Eagle Flight operations, discovered a tunnel vic AT 942697 which contained a fifty (50) gallon drum of rice. Further search of the tunnel area produced negative results.

g. At 162020, Charlie Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, while patrolling the Brigade Ridge line vic AT 940755, engaged three (3) individuals at an abandoned conex, vic AT 936752 with negative results. Further checks of the area on the morning of 17 May produced negative results.

h. At 191030, Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, while conducting a combined village search operation with 150th PP Platoon, vic AT 928813, found the following items in one dwelling: Seven (7) 55 gallon drums of rice, five (5) bottles of beer, two (2) cases of Coca-Cola, twenty (20) pounds of sugar, two (2) transistor radios, sixty-five (65) cans of fish, suspected VC letters, and several other miscellaneous articles. All items were destroyed or returned for 32/35 for analysis.

i. At 201530 May 1972, Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Infantry, while conducting Eagle Flight operations, observed and engaged two (2) enemy vic AT 923631. Their search of the area resulted in one (1) AK-47 CIA.

j. At 250700 May 1972, initial unit movements were conducted in

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conjunction with proposed changes in unit missions of 1st Bn 46th Infantry and 3d Bn 21st Infantry, with 3-21st Inf scheduled to assume AO responsibility for the Brigade Ridge and Special Missions, and with 1-46th Inf scheduled to assume responsibility for the LINDA AO.

k. At 261500 May 1972 final movement was completed by elements of 3d Bn 21st Inf and 1st Bn 46th Inf for the change in AO responsibility. The changeover was completed with no significant problems.

l. On 27 May 1972, Delta Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, operating at AT 891708, found a bunker surrounded by a trench with several fighting positions, miscellaneous debris, and several documents. The bunker was destroyed and the documents were evacuated for further analysis.

m. At 271020 May 1972, Recon Platoon 1st Bn 46th Infantry, found a campsite during patrolling operations vic AT 881659. Rice was still cooking at the site and warm tea was also found. Additionally, a notebook was recovered and sent to S2 for further analysis.

n. At 271005 May 1972, 2d Platoon of Charlie Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf during sweep operations found a four (4) to six (6) man sleeping position, fifty (50) pounds of rice, two (2) pounds of salt, cooking utensils and a letter vic AT 917624. The letter was processed for intelligence value.

o. At 280802 May 1972, elements of Recon Platoon, 1st Bn 46th Inf, hit a pressure-release type booby-trap vic AT 883660. Results were, one (1) US seriously wounded and one (1) US slightly wounded. The booby-trap was estimated to be a 60mm mortar shell.

p. At 292035 May 1972, Recon Platoon, 1st Bn 46th Inf, observed lights vic AT 878664. One light was red, the other white and both were stationary. H-203 H and I fire was processed on the location and the lights went out.

q. At 291930 May 1972, 2d Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, found twelve (12) to thirteen (13) sleeping positions, assorted debris and a booby-trap vic AT 919634. The booby-trap was blown in place.

r. On 29 May 1972, the decision was made by the Battalion Commander, LTC Perkins, to disband Recon Platoon, 1st Bn 46th Inf, and reassign its personnel to the three (3) remaining companies in the battalion. Ceremonies were scheduled to be conducted at Camp Crescenz on 30 May 1972.

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a. At 291000 May 1972, 2d Platoon Charlie Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf found a cache during sweep operations vic AT 918654. It was located in a cave capable of housing fifty (50) persons which showed evidence of use during the past two (2) weeks. Five (5) 82mm mortar rounds, three (3) RPG rounds, and two hundred (200) pounds of rice were captured. Sweeps of the area were continued.

t. At 300805 May 1972, a gunship supporting the insertion of one (1) platoon from Bravo Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, took fire during a false insertion vic AT 888654 and received at least one (1) hit. Gunships processed fire on the area with unknown results.

u. At 300105 May 1972, 3d Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Bn 46th Inf, spotted twelve (12) individuals in the open vic AT 892594. A Night Hawk observed the area with negative results.

SECTION II: Lessons Learned

a. Personnel: None

b. Intelligence: None

c. Operations: (1) Aircraft Flights to Unit Field Locations

(a) Observation: While operating from FSB LINDA, units of 1st Bn 46th Inf, accept aircraft at field locations several times during every twenty-four (24) hour period for resupply, medivacs, command coordination etc. This may be one reason friendly units are not making contact with enemy units known to operate in areas coincident with our own, as unit locations are repeatedly telegraphed.

(b) Evaluation: Regular utilization of aircraft into friendly unit locations tends to fix these locations for enemy observation and consequently reduces the unit's ability to make enemy contact, restrict his freedom of movement, and disrupt his lines of communication.

(c) Recommendation: Aircraft stops at friendly unit field locations be held to an absolute minimum and maximum use be made of air drop resupply techniques for food and materials.

(2) Air Data: (a) Observation: The current system for posting and publishing air data for the LINDA AO is not utilized properly, and as a result inconsistent and incomplete air data is forwarded to aircraft from

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a variety of sources not all of which are equipped or staffed to assume this function. At the present time, pilots using the air space above the LINDA AO ask for and receive air data from a variety of sources. The Air Warning Control Center (AWCC), responsible for posting and publishing air data for the LINDA AO, is rarely consulted by pilots flying for units operating out of FSB LINDA. Instead, they request this information from the Artillery Liaison Section at FSB LINDA which is not equipped or staffed to provide this information for the entire AO, yet, the Infantry Operations Officer at FSB LINDA has full responsibility for insuring that these aircraft have the required air data whenever they are operating in the forward Brigade AO. As a result, aircraft are not receiving complete data on all fires coming into the AO and the officer who is ultimately responsible for aircraft safety has the fewest assets with which to provide the necessary information.

(b) Evaluation: The most capable and well-equipped source of air data is not being properly utilized by pilots flying in the LINDA AO and the sources which are being used are least capable of providing the required data.

(c) Recommendation: Support aircraft in the LINDA AO be required to obtain all air data from the Air Warning Control Center and that the Infantry unit at FSB LINDA only be required to provide air data on indirect fires originating there.

d. Organization: (1) Observation: Recon Platoon, 1st Bn 46th Inf., was disbanded on 30 May 1972.

(2) Evaluation: The long range impact of the recent stand down of Recon Platoon, 1st Bn 46th Inf., cannot be determined, however, there have been positive short range impacts. Field strengths of the remaining three (3) line companies has increased with the distribution of personnel, previously assigned to Recon Platoon, to these elements. The personnel increase has added to the operational effectiveness of these companies and has increased flexibility. Additionally, personnel trained on heavy weapons, previously assigned to Recon Platoon have added versatility, and know-how to these company elements.

(3) Recommendation: Not determined at this time.

e. Training: (1) Observation: Extensive utilization was made of the training and instruction available through the Charger Combat Center in the area of heavy weapons; 90mm recoilless rifle, 106mm recoilless rifle

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and the M72 LAW, in order to provide a platoon-sized element of the battalion with a functional knowledge of these weapons.

(2) Evaluation: Instruction and training provided by the Combat Center personnel was professional and complete. Individuals given the training and instructions were well prepared to tactically employ these weapons.

(3) Recommendation: Charger Combat Center instructors, facilities, and training should be utilized by 196th Infantry Brigade units on a regular basis.

- f. Logistics: None
- g. Communications: None
- h. Material: None
- i. Other: None

FOR THE COMMANDER:

JOHN G. CAMPBELL
CPT, Infantry
Adjutant

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