

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 198th Infantry Brigade, Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96219

AVDP-CCD

26 January 1970

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned 198th Infantry Brigade
for the Period Ending 31 January 1970, RCS CSFOR-65(R2)

Commanding General
Americal Division
ATTN: AVDP-CCD
APO San Francisco 96374

1. (U) References:

- a. Americal Division Regulation, 525-15, dated 8 April 1969.
- b. Unclassified message, Americal Division, ATTN: AVDP-CCD, subject: Operational Reports - Lessons Learned, dated 040302Z April 1969.

2. (U) Personnel: None.

3. (C) Operations: Significant Activities.

a. During the period November, December 1969 and January 1970 activities of the 198th Infantry Brigade were characterized by small unit patrols and ambushes, pacification support operations, and quick reaction to intelligence on enemy locations. Included in the missions of the 198th Infantry Brigade is that of screening Chu Lai area from rocket and mortar attack. The 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry normally accomplishes this mission by means of small unit patrols and ambushes, conducted both during the day and night. To supplement the ground troops, extensive use is made of aerial VR and artillery scheduled fires. The enemy's reaction to these efforts has been characterized by employment of ambushes and booby traps. At 090700 December 1969 a squad from B Company, 1-6 Infantry moved from its night ambush site to check an area from which they had observed lights the previous night. They proceeded along a well used trail, and activated a booby trap, resulting in 2 US WIA. Another squad immediately rushed to assist the wounded personnel, and detonated another booby trap, resulting in 6 more US wounded and a scout dog killed. At 061800 January 1970 a squad from D Company, 1-6 Infantry departed their platoon patrol base to establish a night ambush. At 0110 hours the following morning the ambush was attacked and overrun by the enemy, resulting in 4 US KIA and 1 US WIA. One M-60 machine gun, one PRC-25 radio, three M-16 rifles, and numerous items of individual equipment were lost to the enemy. An evaluation of the action

OP 4 DOWNGRADED TO 3 WAYS
INTERVALS; DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.

CONFIDENTIAL

AVDP-300

26 January 1970

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revealed that the basic principles of individual combat actions and patrolling techniques had been grossly violated (see Incl 1).

b. During this three month period there were two attacks on Fire Support Bases. On 1 December 1969, 3 NVA soldiers were killed attempting to probe LZ Stinson. A combination of barriers, electronic sensing devices, and alertness of the personnel on the bunker line, enabled the enemy to be engaged before he penetrated the wire. At 040130 January 1970 FSB Gator came under mortar and ground attack. The enemy penetrated the defenses, destroyed two bunkers, two buildings, and killed one US soldier. The enemy suffered 6 killed.

c. The actions of 1-52 Infantry on 20 December 1969 are characteristic of the quick reaction to intelligence, and close coordination with aero scouts, employed in the 198th Infantry Brigade. At 0835 hours two Division LIMP teams were inserted near an observation point overlooking a suspected enemy infiltration route. From 1420 hours to 1600 hours the LIMPs observed extensive movement along this route. At 1605 hours the Aero Rifle platoon of D Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st CAV, was inserted in reaction to the LIMP sightings. At 1607 hours, B Company, 1-52 Infantry was picked up from a field location and inserted into an area near the sightings. The insertion of B Company was completed at 1642 hours. A coordinated attack between D Troop, 1-1 CAV and B Company, 1-52 Infantry on the enemy sighted by the LIMP team resulted in 14 NVA KIA and 2 US WIA.

d. A comprehensive report on the pacification operations in the 5-56 Infantry was submitted at the end of November 1969.

4. (C) Lessons Learned: Operations:

a. Subject: Ambushes.

(1) Observations: The enemy, especially the local guerrillas, are masters in the art of using ambushes and booby traps. They will do so very effectively, especially when they know our forces will be operating in the area for extended periods of time.

(2) Evaluation: In the case of the ambush, the patrol failed to maintain proper security, by not making a reconnaissance of the area, and by departing their base area before dark. The men were overburdened with unnecessary equipment, and were allowed to build shelters and sleep. Their position was poorly selected and not checked.

(3) Recommendations: It is clear that in the two cases of friendly units being ambushed there was a violation of basic principles. It is recommended that additional training and supervision be given to infantry

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AVDP-30C

26 January 1970

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for the Period Ending 31 January 1970, RCS CSFOR-65(R2)

units in the subject of ambushes and patrols. The 198th Infantry Brigade has made arrangements with the American Division LRP team to give classes to the rifle platoons in methods and techniques of ambushes and patrols.

b. Subject: Attacks on Fire Support Bases.

(1) Observation: The enemy's employment of highly skilled sappers to penetrate the defenses of our fixed installations continues to be a major threat. The enemy will use small reconnaissance teams to find our weaknesses. He does not always come during the dark of the moon; there was 61 illumination the night three NVA soldiers were killed at FSB Stinson. Once the enemy has discovered the weak points in a defense, he will use those areas to apply his attack. At FSB Gator (see Incl 2) he discovered that there was less NBC fire in the vicinity of the perimeter lights, and used this area to penetrate the wire.

(2) Evaluation: No amount of wire and trip flares alone will stop a determined and well trained enemy. An integrated plan, employing all available means must be developed. This system should include tactical wire, concertina, tripwire, and cyclone fence; electronic sensing devices: PSID (Patrol Seismic Intrusion Detector), MCID (Magnetic Coil Intrusion Detector), IID (Infrared Intrusion Detector) and radar; night observation devices; artificial illumination, electric lights, flares, trip flares, and artillery illumination; cleared fields of fire; and most important, alert personnel manning the bunkers. The bunkers on the perimeter are prime targets for the attacking enemy; and several men have been killed or wounded by satchel charges and RPG rounds used to neutralize the bunkers.

(3) Recommendation: That units reevaluate the defenses of their FSB with a view towards their weak points, and establishing a plan that integrates all available means of defense. Fighting positions should be constructed beside the bunkers, and the bunkers be evacuated and the fighting positions manned in the event of an attack. Replacing cyclone fencing around bunkers has proven extremely effective in defeating RPG rounds and satchel charges.

c. Subject: Quick reaction.

(1) Observation: In the situation where the enemy continually avoids contact with American forces it is imperative to react immediately when he does present himself.

(2) Evaluation: Reaction can be generally divided into two types: first reaction to enemy initiated actions, and second, reaction to intelligence data. Reactions to be of any value must be well planned and rapidly

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AVDF-BCC

26 January 1970

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for the Period Ending 31 January 1970, RCS CSFOR-65(R2)

executed, especially in the case of enemy initiated actions, since he will tend to make only brief contact, do what damage he can, and disengage to avoid a decisive confrontation with Allied Forces. Most of his attacks recently have been against small units or outposts during the hours of darkness, when the ability to respond is most seriously hindered. Reaction to intelligence information must also be quickly executed. A thorough evaluation of intelligence information should be made to ascertain accuracy, timeliness, and reliability. In the case where information is vague further intelligence can be compiled through the use of LRRP teams, APD missions, and visual reconnaissance. In all cases, each Infantry Battalion should have a rifle Company designated for rapid reaction, and a close working relationship must be established between the Battalions and the Aero Cavalry and LRRP teams to enable these assets to also react quickly.

(3) Recommendations: Rapid reactions require that Brigade and Battalion staffs be thoroughly drilled in the steps to be taken when the Commander decides to react immediately. Infantry units must be able to assemble quickly, aviation assets must be redirected, and information on the situation, number of personnel involved, locations, call signs and frequencies must be exchanged quickly and accurately. Daily liaison visits between the Aero Scouts, LRRP teams and Brigade TOC personnel is a necessity.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

2 Incl
as

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