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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 52d Infantry
198th Infantry Brigade, 23rd Infantry Division
APO 96374

AVDF-BCPC

4 June 1971

SUBJECT: Input Data for OR-LL period 1-31 May 1971 (7)

Commanding Officer
198th Infantry Brigade
ATTN: AVDF-BCO
APO 96374

The following is a report of lessons learned for period 1-30 May 1971 from this headquarters. This report is submitted for inclusion in the 198th Infantry Brigade Operational Report-Lessons Learned.

1. Section 1. Operations: Significant Activities

During the first part of May the 1/52 continued operations in the "Happy Valley" area while the last two weeks found the battalion targeting its main efforts on rice denial in the lowlands around Stinson. Security was also provided for the 59th Land Clearing Company who's romo plows were clearing areas near Stinson. On 3 May, a sniper team recorded the 1st kill of the month when they engaged 5 NVA at a range of 700 meters. The same day C Co found and destroyed 600 lbs of polished rice. The next day, a live ambush from D Co engaged and killed one NVA and captured a rucksack. ERon detained two males the same day. In another live ambush on the 5th, D Co engaged and killed 5 NVA and captured 5 rucksacks containing supplies. On the morning of the 8th, D Co again engaged an NVA in a live ambush resulting in 1 NVA KIA and 1 Czech type 50 assault rifle CIA. From 081200-091200 the battalion observed a 24 hour truce in honor of Buddha's Birthday. On 12 May, A Co detained two persons one of whom was carrying a pistol and chicom grenade and who was later classified as a POW. ERon found a small cache containing 525 lbs of unpolished rice on the 14th, while A Co detained 1 male. While on patrol on the 16th, D Co observed and engaged 2 NVA and succeeded in killing one and capturing a rucksack and a small amount of ammunition. The following morning, an element of A Co killed 1 VC after he threw a grenade at them. On the 18th, A Co detained a 20 year old male. The morning of 19 May saw A Co detain two males. In the afternoon D Co engaged 3 NVA in a live ambush killing 2 and capturing 1 AK-47 and 1 K-54 pistol. The same afternoon while conducting eagle flights, C Co detained 1 male and 1 female and discovered a number of caches totaling 5100 lbs of rice, 250 lbs of salt and 35 lbs of tobacco. On the 20th, an element of B Co killed 1 VC while on an eagle flight. On the 21st A Co detained 1 female. During a night raid on the morning of the 22d, A Co detained 1 male. Later that day on Eagle Flight, C Co killed one VC, captured one SMS, and

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captured and evacuated 12,750 lbs of rice from several caches. The next day in another cache, C Co found and evacuated 2500 lbs of rice. On the Eagle Flight on 24 May, A Co found and evacuated 9000 lbs of rice while in another area, C Co found and evacuated 5600 lbs. On the 25th, C Co detained one female suspect. When while on patrol engaged a squad of enemy soldiers resulting in 2 KIA and 6 IWC on 26 May. Later that afternoon on Eagle Flight, C Co engaged a VC element in a deserted hamlet resulting in 6 VC KIA (2 by gunships), 1 AK-47 CIA. In several cache sites they also located 9,000 lbs of rice. On the 27th C Co detained 2 female suspects. Eagle Flighting the 28th, C Co killed 1 VC, detained 5 persons and captured 24,360 lbs of rice. On the 29th, C Co engaged and killed one VC when they observed him setting up a booby trap, while D Co detained one male. While patrolling on the 30th, D Co found and evacuated 2940 lbs of rice from several cache sites. On the last day of the month, D Co located and evacuated 1850 lbs of rice. Total enemy losses for the reporting period were: 22 KIA, 22 detainees, 12 weapons CIA, 87,150 lbs rice, and 250 lbs of salt.

2. Section 2. Lessons Learned.

All too frequently the initial action of ground troops in a contact is a scramble for sheltered positions. This allows the enemy to gain the initiative and either maneuver on friendly units and inflict casualties, prepare an effective defense, or safely evade from the area. While the reluctance to expose oneself to hostile fire is a human trait which can only in part be minimized, by instilling the individual soldier with confidence in his unit and in his unit's capability to gain fire superiority over an enemy force, the unit can become more effective in a firefight.

To gain the spirit of the offensive and of teamwork at the platoon level, this battalion has, for the past several months, integrated a live fire "reaction course" into the bi-monthly training for each company. The course is set up, run, and supervised by the battalion S3 section, but the platoon participates as an organic unit under the control of their own leaders. The course itself is set up to simulate various situations which the platoon might encounter in the area in which they will be operating. These situations have included sniper fire from front, side, and rear, enemy initiated contact, hasty ambushes, booby traps, using smoke grenades, dust-off procedures, and security at the halt and when moving through danger areas and into new NOD's. The situations are limited only by the imagination of the training team and any safety restrictions that must be placed on friendly fires.

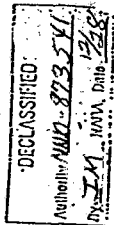
The problem itself is varied each time all of the line platoons have been through the course. Targets, especially manually controlled "pop-up" targets are used wherever they can add realism and are moved each time the problem is changed. The targets are placed so that maximum use can be made of fire and maneuver and fire and movement. Contact is provided by S3 personnel who accompany the platoon during their movement, a lieutenant or senior NCO act as the company commander, initially briefing the platoon on their mission and then providing frag orders to control their movement and activities. Another NCO will move with a different part of the platoon to provide added safety and control. Both of these personnel are linked to the platoon and to the battalion TOC by radio.

Use of the reaction course provides three further benefits. It allows the platoon leader to implement SOP's in a controlled environment where errors

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will not produce casualties. Secondly, replacements can be integrated into the platoon's procedural system and can be observed and given further instruction in weak areas of previous training and by the leaders at the various levels in the chain of command. Finally, the company commander, who usually accompanies each platoon as an observer, is given the opportunity to see each of his platoon leaders, and their platoons, as they face various combat situations, something which he is frequently unable to do in the highly decentralized type of combat now being fought in Southeast Asia.

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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	3	1	33%				1	1		1
B Co	2	1	50%				1			
C Co	4	4	100%				7	1		2
D Co	6	3	50%	1	0	0%	10			3
E Ron	1	1	100%				2			6
Snipers	1	1	100%				1			
TOTAL							22	2		12