

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry  
Americal Division  
APO San Francisco 96374

AVTF-BCCC

31 December 1969

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report,  
Operation FREDERICK HILL (F)

Commanding Officer  
196th Inf Bde, Americal Div.  
ATTN: S-3  
AFC SF 96256

1. (C) Name and Type of Operation: Operation EAGLE STRIKE,  
Battalion Reconnaissance -In-Force.
2. (C) Dates of Operation: 30 November - 7 December 1969
3. (C) Location: HAU DUC District, QUANG TIN (P), RVN (Maps Viet Nam  
1:50,000 Series L7014 6639I, 6639IV).
4. (U) Control Headquarters: 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, Americal Division.
5. (U) Reporting Officer: LTC Foss  
CPT Thetford  
1LT Reed  
MSG Williams  
MAJ Moore  
CPT Bradley  
2LT Taylor

6. (C) Task Organization:

- a. A/1-46 INF  
1. 106th FF Platoon
- b. B/1-46 INF
- c. D/1-46 INF

Bn Control

- a. Recon Platoon(-) 1-46 INF
- b. 1/E/2-1 INF
- c. A/3-82 (105mm) ARTY(DS)
- d. B/3-16(155mm) ARTY(REINF)
- e. Section E Co 4.2inch Mortars(-)
- f. Composite 81mm Mortars(-)
- g. Bde LRRF Teams  
1. Arkansas  
2. Alabama
- h. Task Force Blue Star:  
1. Bn XC & HQ(-) 1-46 INF  
2. Recon Team B 1-46 INF  
3. E Co 4.2inch Mortars(-)  
4. C/1-46 INF  
5. D/A-31 INF  
6. B/1-14(105) ARTY(DS)  
7. C Sqd. 81mm Mortars

GROUP 4  
Downgraded at 3 year intervals  
Declassified after 12 years

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NARA Date 11-16

b. Weather; The area of concern during Operation Eagle Strike was under the influence of the northeast monsoon with periods of drizzle and rain. Heavy cloudiness, showers and thunder showers were common, occurring mostly in the mountainous areas with fog present in mountains and valleys but usually dissipating by noon or mid-afternoon. Temperatures averaged during the day light hours 70 to 80 degrees and in the hours of darkness 65 to 70 degrees. Humidity averaged 85 to 100%, and visibility restricted to one mile or less during morning hours as cloudiness and fog prevailed.

(1) Effects on Enemy Course of Action: The weather is favorable for enemy forces to continue normal logistics activity in the area of concern. Low temperatures with ground fog afforded the enemy the ability to move not making him vulnerable to observation from aerial reconnaissance or ground surveillance. Showers and thunderstorms activity did not hinder or effect enemy operations.

(2) Effect on Friendly Course of Action: The influence of the northeast monsoon with rain, drizzle, heavy cloudiness with fog in valleys and mountains until noon, or later, generally hampered all air operations. Aerial medevacs, reconnaissance, resupply and tactical air were at times near a critical stage.

c. Enemy Situation and Order of Battle at Start of Action:

(1) It is believed that all enemy units in the area of concern had completed resupply and retraining activities and were prepared for sustained offensive activities. Primary targets were population centers such as Hau Duc, Tien Phuoc and Tam Ky which is the Province Capital of Quang Tin (P). Enemy forces operating in Quang Tin Province have repeatedly used the area west, south and east of Tien Phuoc and Hau Duc as a staging and storage area and there is also a critical supply infiltration route into the lowlands of Quang Tin Province. Southeast of Tien Phuoc is Base Area 117 at grid BT 2206.

(a) Enemy Units Operating in the Area: There was a suspected NVA unit operating in the vicinity of Old Hau Duc with the unit size unknown.

(2) Operation EAGLE STRIKE was initially characterized by light enemy activity for the 1-46 Inf. A, B and D companies started their sweep to the southwest with one company in the valley along Highway # 531 and the other two companies to the high ground on each side of the valley. Once friendly operations began moving south the enemy began to harass friendly troop movement with sniper and small squad size units. The enemy's objective in doing this was to slow friendly troop movement and divert friendly troops from his base camp and possible caches. On several occasions friendly troops made contact with enemy platoon and larger size units near hill 288 and to the South, Southeast, Southwest of Hill 162. Despite artillery and airstrikes directed against him, the enemy continued to defend. The enemy engaged were primarily NVA from the 3d Regiment (also known as the 31st Regiment) of the 2nd NVA Division. This was confirmed by a large amount of documents that were captured near hill 288 in a weapons and equipment cache by D/1-46 Inf. Near the Song Vang River the battalion engaged reinforced NVA Companies of the 3d Regt, a headquarters believed to be a battalion headquarters, and was attacked by at least two sapper platoons.

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Ref ID: A6873541  
3B NARA Date 11-16

AKA'sUNITS

C1	1st Co, 40th Bn, 1st MF Rgt, 2nd NVA Div
C2	2nd Co, " " " " " " " "
C3	3d Co, " " " " " " " "
C14	14th Co, 31st Regt, 2nd NVA Div
C18	18th Sig Co, 31st Regt, 2nd NVA Div
E31	31st Regt, 2nd NVA Div
D7	7th Co, 2nd Bn, 31st NVA Regt, 2nd NVA Div
D8	8th Co, " " " " " " " "
D9	9th Co, " " " " " " " "

There were several more units listed in the documents which all belonged to the 3d or 31st Regiment of the 2nd NVA Div. The enemy engaged apparently were attempting to fight delaying actions in order that their HQ and Main Force Units could evacuate to the west. The enemy made maximum utilization of the terrain and vegetation in the area. The enemy usually initiated ambushes and contact from well prepared positions. Friendly troops were often forced to attack fortified bunkers and positions along a narrow front. As friendly units moved into the area the enemy withdrew to the west.

9. (C) Mission: The mission of the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry was to secure LZ professional, continue current operations in our AO and conduct Reconnaissance-in-force operations vicinity Old Hau Duc along Highway # 531 from 30 Nov to 7 Dec 1969.

10. (C) Concept of Operation: The general concept was that the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry(-) would conduct Reconnaissance-in-force operations with three Rifle Companies (A,B,D) and the Recon Platoon(-) along 3 axis paralleling Highway # 531 beginning at landing zone vicinity BT 0701 and terminating vicinity of BT 0297. The purpose was to develop intelligence about a suspected enemy build-up in the vicinity of the Old Hau Duc (Tien Tra) District west of the 05 north-south grid line, to include enemy locations, strengths or weaknesses, dispositions and intentions.

11. (C) Execution:

30 Nov: Operation EAGLE STRIKE 1-46 Inf commenced operations by displacing its forward TOC, 1/B/2-1 and one 81mm mortar squad to the New Hau Duc district headquarters grid BT 076058 at 0730 hours. At approximately 0815 hours, A/3-82(105mm) Artillery began arriving and became operational at 0915 hours. At 0900 hours the forward 1-46 Inf TOC took operational control of 1-46 INF. B/3-16(155mm) Artillery began arriving at New Hau Duc by Hercules Chinooks at 0830 hours and became operational at 1000 hours. A ten minute Prep of the Battalion LZ at grid BT 071017 ended at 0940 hours after B/1-14(105mm, LZ Prof) artillery had expended 90 rounds; B/3-16(155mm, Tien Phuoc) expended 80 rounds; A/3-18(175mm, Tra Bong) artillery expended 10 rounds and B/3-18(8inch, Tien Phuoc) expended 20 rounds. A five minute continuation of the prep was provided by the Fire Bird gunships and likewise covered the insertion of A/1-46 which began at 0946 hours. A/1-46 secured the LZ while D/1-46 was inserted at 1025 hours. B/1-46 having been helolifted to Tien Phuoc airstrip early that morning from the Stand-down area at Chu Lai was then airlifted into the LZ at 1140 hours. With the combat assault completed at 1159 hours. A/1-46 began RIF along axis red,

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 7B NARA Date 11-16

B/1-46 began RIF along axis Blue, and D/1-46 began RIF along axis white. At 1700 hours, B/1-46 reported finding a well used trail at grid BT 067013 which had been widened approx 2 ft on each side and also reported finding rubber tire tracks approx 3 inch wide. They followed the trail for approx 400 meters with negative sightings. A/1-46 and D/1-46 reported no significant sightings on the first day. At approx 1500 hours IRRP team Arkansas and Alabama were inserted into cold LZ's at grid BS 040968 and BS 010981 respectively. At 1630 hours IRRP team Arkansas made contact with an estimated platoon size enemy force. They were extracted at 1740 hours with negative casualties. Blue Ghost 24 which was covering the extraction engaged 50 VC/NVA at grid BT 043965 in a rice paddy and reported 12 VC KIA. Radio contact was lost with IRRP Alabama at 1815 hours and was not regained, although all 1-46 units tried, until Rattler 4 was requested to fly over their last known location. Rattler 4 was successful in regaining contact at 0015 hours 1 Dec.

1 Dec: 1/B/2-1 continued to secure artillery at Hau Duc. IRRP Alabama departed night laager at 0800 hours to southwest and at 1015 hours vicinity BS 020984 spotted 6xVC/NVA and one caucasian, 6'2" to 6'4", with blond hair carrying a weapon and pack, wearing green shirt and shorts. They were moving east. A Blue Ghost Blue Team was requested to make a snatch, but had negative results however Blue Ghost reported observing several enemy shelters with green uniforms drying and a bunker and trench line along the river bank vicinity BT 022984. At 1120 hours IRRP team Arkansas attempted an insertion in grid box UL BT 0297, LR BT 0595 but were unable to find a suitable LZ. At 1315 hours IRRP team Arkansas was inserted at BS 039982 but at 1545 hours they made contact and requested extraction. At 1655 hours extraction was completed with negative casualties. D/1-46 found an old french mine field containing bouncing betty mines at grid BT 057012.

2 Dec: Axis red was cancelled as A/1-46 assumed point responsibility on axis white with D/1-46 following in reserve on the same axis. B/1-46 continued to follow axis blue. This change in the original plan was made because of the slow progress through the heavily vegetated ridgeline of axis red. At 1000 hours B/1-46 engaged 5xVC/NVA at grid BT 058990 at a proximity of 200 meters, but had negative results. The enemy evaded to the east. In searching the area they found one structure and a large amount of military equipment and clothing. At 1055 hours IRRP Alabama reported spotting 6xVC/NVA with packs and weapons moving east to west on a trail at grid BS 014969. Negative action was taken. At 1205 hours IRRP Alabama reported receiving sniper fire, proximity of 300 meters east of their location. They requested extraction which was completed at 1300 hours. At 1430 hours A/1-46 at grid BT 030987 while reconning by fire prematurely sprang an enemy L shaped ambush. Approx 7xVC/NVA evaded to the west. A/1-46 swept the area with negative findings. D/1-46 had negative contact or sightings. Recon(-) was inserted into B/1-46, at grid BT 045001 at 1505 hours, with the mission to screen to the front of B/1-46.

3 Dec: A/1-46 and D/1-46 continued to drive southwest along axis white while B/1-46 continued along axis blue with Recon(-) screening to their front. 1-46 had negative contact this day.

At 1510 hours B/1-46 found two enemy shelters at grid BT 029985 (approx size 5x6ft and 15x30ft). They also discovered two personnel, one male and one female both approx 60 years old. They stated that the tall blond haired caucasian who had been in the area was called "Bob" by the VC. At 1530 hours A/1-46 closed GBJ FOXTROT (hill #162) and at 1655 hours the 106 FF Platoon from New Hau Duc was inserted on hill #162 to operate with A/1-46. The sniffer and Blue Ghost VR missions that were scheduled to be run this day were cancelled due to poor weather conditions.

6  
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Authority NND 813541  
73 NARA Date 11-16

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation Frederick Hill.

4 Dec: 1-46 Infantry conducted saturation patrolling in the Old Hau Duc area with heavy contact. At 0800 hours a 4.2 mortar section and 2 81mm mortar squads were helilifted into A/1-46 location atop hill #162, to provide close support as well as defensive fires. At approximately the same time 1st plt A/1-46 received 15 to 20 rounds of small arms fire from grid BT 026975 at a proximity of 200 meters to their northwest. They returned fire with negative results. At 1000 hours Rattler 24 received an unknown number of rounds of small arms fire from grid BT 0196 while resupplying A/1-46 on hill #162. He took negative hits. 1/A/1-46 again made contact with unknown number of enemy at a proximity of 150 meters, at grid BT 023976. Results were 1xNVA KIA, 1 captured AK47 with 2 full magazines. The KIA was wearing green NVA fatigues and was 25-30 years old. He had a NVA ID card identifying him as a member of the 31st NV. Regiment. At 1430 hours A/1-46 received 21 refugees with white flags into their laager location. During questioning they stated that on 3 Dec approx 20 NVA had instructed the civilians of Old Hau Duc to go into the mountains to the west and to avoid the Americans. The refugees stated that the NVA had been in the area for 5 or 6 days and that they were part of the 31st Regt. On the morning of 4 Dec the 20 NVA left the area in an Easterly direction. They also stated that they knew of a male caucasian working in the area. At 1515 hours D/1-46 while patrolling vicinity of grid BT 014986 captured a large cache in a small village. The cache contained one 12.7mm MG with 150 rounds, 1 RPG launcher, 5 AK47's, 1 chi com grenade, 5 NVA rucksacks, assorted documents and medical supplies. D/1-46 killed one VC age 20-25 who was guarding the cache when he tried to evade and captured one SKS rifle and found 14 refugees. At 1715 hours 1/A/1-46 on a water resupply patrol 75 meters southwest of hill #162 received approx 10 rounds of small arms fire at a proximity of 200 meters. They returned fire with small arms and swept the area with negative results. Recon(-)/1-46 closed A/1-46 location on hill #162 and assisted securing the hill. B/1-46 had negative contact or sightings during the day.

5 Dec: A/1-46 continued to secure hill #162 and the 4.2 inch and 81 mm mortars. Recon(-), the 106th PF platoon and A/1-46 continued saturation patrolling of the area around hill #162. B/1-46 continued its advance down axis Blue. D/1-46 continued to secure the cache. A/1-46's 'dirty dozen' patrol and 3/A/1-46 at 0915 hours while on patrol sprang a hasty ambush on 15-20 NVA at grid BT 019775. They observed 7 enemy fall but the NVA returned fire with small arms, M79 and 60mm mortars. There were 2 US WIA who were treated in the field and released. Blue Ghost Gunships were scrambled but were unable to reach the objective due to heavy ground fog. In an attempt to reach A/1-46 the Blue Ghost Ships received heavy .51 cal MG fire along the Song Tranh River at grid BS 978979. The 'dirty dozen' and 3/A/1-46 a justed artillery and mortar fires into the enemy location and moved to the east toward hill #162 to link up with 2/A/1-46. Meanwhile blocking fires were shot into likely avenues of escape by B/3-16(155mm) artillery units at New Hau Duc and Tien Phuoc. It was determined at this time that the enemy force was of company size. After approx 2 hours of artillery fire the 2 & 3/A/1-46 swept the area and destroyed steel reinforced bunkers, but the enemy had successfully evaded to the southwest. At grid BS 015988, at 1030 hours D/1-46 point element made contact with 2 to 3 enemy at a proximity of 10-15 meters while moving toward an LZ for the extraction of the cache. There were three friendly WIA's who were successfully evacuated by use of a Jungle-penetrator. They engaged the enemy with small arms but had unknown results. At 1300 hours D/1-46 successfully completed the extraction of their cache. A PSYCOPS loudspeaker team

7  
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 11-16  
 NARA Date

was inserted into A/1-46 location on hill #162. At 1600 hours at grid BT 035969 B/1-46 found what appeared to be an enemy rest area or hospital included 9 shelters, 8 bunkers, 20lbs peanuts, 125lbs corn, 130lbs rice, 8 chickens. The following NVA equipment was also found 1 helmet, 1 belt, 4 uniforms (bloodstained), 1 pack, various tubes, fishing gear, and medical supplies. After destroying the shelters, bunkers, and food stuffs B/1-46 moved into a blocking position at BS 040973 and BS 032966 soon after spotted 8xVC/NVA traveling northeast. They engaged with small arms but the enemy successfully evaded to the south. Artillery was processed into the area with unknown results. 2/A/1-46 in search vicinity AS 958975 came across a shelter from which three individuals wearing black PJ's evaded. Results were one KIA and one detainee age 40-45. They also found blood trail leading to the north but were unable to follow it. Recon(-) and 1/A/1-46 secured the 4.2 inch and 81mm mortars throughout the day.

6 Dec: A/1-46, Recon(-) and 106th PF Platoon continued to secure hill #162 and the 4.2 inch and 81mm mortars while B/1-46 and D/1-46 began to clear this location. B/1-46 closed hill #162 at 0810 hours and prepared to be extracted to LZ Professional. At 0915 hours 2/D/1-46 at grid BS 016979 engaged 2xNVA/VC at a proximity of 20 meters resulting in 1 enemy KIA, age 30 years. In sweeping the area they found 2 AK47 magazines with 60 rounds, 2 GI entrenching tools, assortment of clothing and documents. At 0930 hours 3/D/1-46 engaged 3xVC/NVA who were wearing green fatigues without packs or weapons at a proximity of 150 meters. The enemy successfully evaded to the west. At 1020 hours D/1-46 was engaged with M79 and small arms fire by an enemy outpost of 5 or 6 VC/NVA at grid BT 015985 which resulted in 3xUS WIA. An urgent dustoff was called at 1035 hours and was completed at 1120 hours (It was later learned that one of the US WIA's was DOA at 91st Evac in Chu Lai). D/1-46 broke contact under the cover of Blue Ghost gunships and moved on towards hill #162. At 1250 hours D/1-46 was again engaged but this time by an estimated squad of VC/NVA with 1 MG and 4 or 5 AK47's at a proximity of 50 meters. D/1-46 suppressed the enemy fire but was unable to confirm any kills. Again at 1335 hours D/1-46 made contact with an unknown size enemy element in bunkers and spider holes at grid BS 016979. Results were 1 friendly KIA and 2 WIA. Although Blue Ghost gunships were in the air their fire could not be effective due to proximity of contact (75meters). D/1-46 was able to suppress the fire and move on and link up with A/1-46 on hill #162 at 1415 hours. At 1300 hours A/1-46 received 20 to 30 rounds of automatic weapons fire from the base of hill #162. The area was swept by 81mm mortar fire with negative results. A/1-46 had negative casualties. At 1405 B/1-46 was extracted from hill #162 without incident. They took up security at LZ Professional.

At 1150 hours Operational Control of 1-46 Inf was taken over again by TOC at LZ Professional. A/1-46, D/1-46, Recon(-), 106th PF Platoon, and 4.2 inch and 81mm mortars remained on hill #162 and are to be extracted on 7 Dec 69.

7 Dec: All remaining units were extracted from hill #162 this day. The order being D/1-46; Recon(-) and 4.2 mortars; 106th PF Platoon and 81mm mortars; A/1-46. At 0100 hours A/1-46 was hit by 2 or 3 B40 rockets in the southwestern portion of the NDP. At the same time the northeast side of the perimeter was hit by incoming hand grenades. In both cases A/1-46 returned fire with small arms, hand grenades, claymore mines and 81mm mortars. The enemy was estimated to be two sapper platoons and had been discovered by the use of the starlight scope. Illumination was provided by 4.2 inch mortars.

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SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation Frederick Hill.

mortars at that location. Due to heavy fog dustoff was unable to get into A/1-46 location to extract the 2 US WIA until 0705 hours. Under the cover of Artillery being fired into the surrounding high ground and gunships on station D/1-46 was extracted without incident at 1003 hours. Likewise Recon(-), 4.2 inch and 81mm mortars and 106th PF Platoon were extracted at 1034 hours. All but the 106th PF Platoon returned to LZ Professional; they were returned to New Hau Duc. Blue Ghost 24 while on a VK in the old Hau Duc area spotted three fresh graves at AT 984975 and destroyed three camouflaged shelters in the same area. At grid BT 013975 he spotted extensive trench network with fresh footprints leading to the northwest. At grid BT 035975 he engaged one male age 20 to 25 years in green uniform which resulted in a KIA. Also at AS 982982 Blue Ghost received small arms fire and expended combining ordinance but with negative surveillance. At 1125 hours A/1-46 was hoisted off hill # 162 and returned to LZ Professional. A/1-46 was the last ground unit to be extracted and with its extraction all 1-46 Infantry ground operations of Operation Eagle Strike ceased. Because of the unavailability of aircraft and poor weather conditions the extraction of 1/B/2-1, B/3-16(155mm) Artillery and A/3-82(105mm) Artillery from the District Headquarters at New Hau Duc was delayed until 8 Dec. Throughout the extraction of A/1-46 and D/1-46, the Artillery provided suppressive fires. A smoke ship was used to screen the extraction from view by the enemy.

## 12. (C) Results:

a. Operation Eagle Strike was successful in developing intelligence of an enemy buildup in the Old Hau Duc area with certain indications of elements of the 31st NVA regiment moving into the area and possibly collocating with some of the major administrative and logistical elements of the 2nd NVA Division. Operation Eagle Strike also confirmed the fact that highway 531 from coordinates BT 0297 to BT 0501 and then the trail continuing east thru the Dragon Valley area is a major enemy line of communication.

## b. Enemy losses:

- (1) 18 NVA KIA
- (2) 28 NVA KIA (Possible)
- (3) 25 Structures destroyed
- (4) 14 Bunkers destroyed
- (5) Weapons Captured:
  - (a) 1x12.7mm Heavy MG
  - (b) 6xAK47 Rifles
  - (c) 1xSKS Rifle
  - (d) 1xRPG Launcher

## c. Friendly losses:

- (1) 2 KIA
- (2) 11 WIA

## d. Miscellaneous:

- (1) 6 Detainees
- (2) 38 Refugees

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 Copy NND 873541  
 NARA Date 11-16

- e. Body to weapons ratio: 46:1
- f. Enemy to friendly killed ratio: 46:2

13. (U) Special Equipment and Techniques: None

14. (C) Commander's Analysis:

a. Lessons Learned:

(1) Rifle companies habitually underestimate the size of the enemy element. The company reports only the enemy actually observed. During contact on 5-6 Dec 69, it was determined that D Co was in contact with an NVA Company, yet the largest force ever reported by the unit was one squad.

(2) Starlight scopes and anti-intrusion devices were successful in thwarting an attempted NVA sapper attack. Rifle companies should always carry this equipment.

(3) Rifle companies must be forced to use Artillery fire in large volumes and adjusted to within 100 meters of their location. The bunker and trench systems through which D Co was moving on 5-6 Dec were neutralized by 155mm Artillery fire, but the battalion TOC had to "force feed" the unit this fire.

(4) The movement of an 81mm mortar section and a 4.2 inch mortar section into hill 162 provided the companies immediate illumination and close in defensive fires. Mortar fires were instrumental in breaking up the enemy sapper attack during the last night of the operation.

(5) Artillery fire should not be cut-off during contact, when gunships are used. It should be shifted to blocking fires and to neutralize any enemy supporting positions. Gunship crews must learn to fly under the artillery fire. Smoke ships were instrumental in screening the extraction of the battalion from Old Hau Duc.

(6) Communications were poor throughout the time due to the terrain and distance of the forward TOC from the forward elements. The G&O frequently had to assist in relaying reports from the unit. The FRC-77 was less reliable than the FRC-25. If the battalion had stayed in the area, a forward TOC would have displaced again to Old Hau Duc.

(7) A company successfully sprang several ambushes through alert point men and the liberal use of fire on probable ambush locations. Reconnaissance by fire with artillery and M79's should be standard practice for units in a reconnaissance-in-force mission.

b. Commander's notes: None

15. (U) Recommendations: None

PETER J. FOSS  
ITC, INFANTRY  
Commanding

Inclosures

- 1 - Operations Overlay
- 2 - After Action Sketch

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73 NARA Date 11-16