

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS AMERICAL DIVISION  
APO San Francisco 96374

AVDF-IO

16 May 1968

SUBJECT: Summary of OPERATION GOLDEN VALLEY

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. SCOPE AND MISSION OPERATION GOLDEN VALLEY was conducted during the period of 12 May to 13 May at the Special Forces/CIDG camp in Kham Duc, Quang Tin Province, South Vietnam (Coordinate ZC005084). The purpose of the operation was to relieve/reinforce the Special Forces/CIDG Camp at Kham Duc which was under attack. In the original concept the Americal Division was to provide one infantry battalion as a reaction force for the camp.

2. AREA INTELLIGENCE a. Prior to the attack on the 5th Special Forces Camp at Kham Duc intelligence continued to indicate enemy movement around the southern edge of the Camp's TAOR. Reports from local agents also indicated movement of enemy along the western edge of the TAOR. This activity was considered to increase as local forces continued to increase their supply efforts during the rice harvests. Also reported was the improvement of the old French road running between YB950814 and ZB025852. The reported enemy activity and the improvement of the roads in the area indicated the preparation of an offensive operation.

b. A prisoner taken during the fighting said that the 2d NVA Division had the mission of supporting the attack on Kham Duc for the purpose clearing friendly activity in the area so the enemy would have unhampered passage when he began using the improved roads as supply routes.

3. GENERAL SITUATION The Kham Duc Special Forces/CIDG camp is located in the extreme western section of the I Corps Tactical Zone. The camp had the mission of border surveillance and area pacification. It is situated 130 kilometers west of Tam Ky and approximately 20 kilometers east of the Laotian border. The camp was manned by a Special Forces "A" Detachment from "C" Company, 5th Special Forces Group, approximately 300 CIDG with dependents and "A" Company 70th Engineers.

4. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS a. The first sign of enemy aggression against the Kham Duc complex came at 100450 May. The Special Forces personnel manning an outpost at Ngok Tavak about 5 kilometers southwest of Kham Duc, reported a heavy mortar and ground attack. The situation at Ngok Tavak quickly

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became critical. Two 105mm howitzers of the 13th Marines were destroyed since they could not be kept out of enemy hands. Two CH-46 helicopters were shot down and destroyed.

b. Kham Duc also repoted a heavy mortar and recoilless rifle attack. The outpost at Ngok Tavak was overrun at approximately 1130 hours. The personnel manning it, after destroying the two 105mm howitzers and the ammunition they could not carry, used escape and evasion tactics to get to an LZ for evacuation to the perimeter at Kham Duc. The mortar fire on Kham Duc ceased at about 0500. At htis time, the senior officer of the Special Forces Detachment realized that the situation was critical, and requested that the reinforcement plan, OPERATION GOLDEN VALLEY, be initiated. The word was passed from III MAF to the Americal Division at about 0830 that OPERATION GOLDEN VALLEY would be initiated. At 0845, the Americal G3 called III MAF and requested to send a battalion from the 196th Brigade instead of the 1st Bn., 46th Inf. The 196th OPCON to the 2d Bde, 101st Abn Div, was not responsible for any area o operations within the Americal AO, and could be deployed with the necessary support, in a shorter time than the 1st Bn., 46th Inf. The release of the 2d Bn, 1st inf from the 101st Abn Div was approved. The 1st Bn, 46th Inf. sent a command group and one company ("A" Company) to reinforce the Kham Duc Camp until the 2d Bn, 1st Inf arrived.

c. Co A, 1st Bn, 46th Inf closed on Kham Duc at 1050 hours, 10 May. It was assigned the mission of securing the observation posts and patrolling around the camp. Squad-size units were helilifted to the OP's. The company also established defensive positions on the southern side of the airstrip. Patrols and ambushes were conducted with negative contact. There was little activity during the night of 10 May, except for occasional mortar rounds.

d. Elements of the 2d Bn, 1st Inf began arriving about 1530 on 1'0 May, and by 1900 of the 10th, the battalion (with a strength of 571), and "A" Battery, 3d Battalion, 82d Artillery (with 57 personnel) were at the camp.

e. At 0600, 11 May, the 2d Bn, 11st Inf reported receiving 20 rounds of mortar fire near coordinates YC001080. Counter mortar fire was employed and the FAC on station requested TAC Air. At 0858 seven mortar rounds fell on the camp. There were no casualties, and the mortar fire ceased shortly after it started.

f. During the morning of 11 May, the 2d Bn, 1st inf relieved "A" Co. 1st Bn, 46th Inf of the OP's and the latter unit formed a tight perimeter on the southeastern side of the runway. At 0930, 11 May, elements of the 2d Bn 1st Inf reported small arms and automatic weapons fire from the south at a range of about 1,500 meters. In a short time, another unit received