

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 2D BATTALION, 506TH AIRBORNE INFANTRY
APO San Francisco 96383

UNCLASSIFIED

AVDG-CC-C

20 June 1969

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report OPCRD 3-69 (APACHE SMOU) (U)

Commanding Officer
3d Bde, 101st Abn Div
ATTN: S3
APO 96383

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AUTHORITY OF DOD DIR. 5200.1 R

BY ISAKERS ON 11 MAY 99

1. (U) NAME OF OPERATION: APACHE SMOU.
2. (C) DATES OF OPERATION: 211200 May 69 to 080001 June 69 (inclusive dates of 2-506 participation).
3. (C) LOCATION: Northern A Shau Valley, Nam Hoa District, Thua Thien Province, RVN. Maps: Vietnam Map Series L7014, Sheets Grid I and Grid IV, Scale 1:50,000 and Pictomap Supplement Series L8020, Sheet Grid IVS, Scale 1:25,000.
4. (C) COMMAND/CONTROL HEADQUARTERS: Hqs, 3d Bde, 101st Airborne Division.
5. (C) REPORTING OFFICER: LTC Gene T Sherron (ALLIGATOR).
6. (C) TASK ORGANIZATION: A/2-506, B/2-506, C/2-506, D/2-506, E/2-506 (-).
7. (C) SUPPORTING FORCES:
 - a. Artillery:
 - (1) C/2-319th Artillery (105). Direct Support.
 - (2) 2-11th Artillery (-) (155). General Support Reinforcing.
 - (3) 1-83rd Artillery (-) (175/8"). General Support Reinforcing.
 - (4) 4-77th Artillery (-) (ARA). General Support Reinforcing.
 - b. Tactical Air Support: 7th TAF.
 - c. Airlift and Resupply:
 - (1) 158th Assault Helicopter Battalion.
 - (2) 159th Assault Helicopter Battalion.

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SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report OPORD 3-69 (APACHE SMCW) (U)

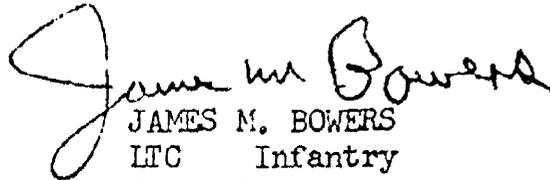
- d. Engineer: 1 Plat B/326th Engr.
- e. Pathfinder: 160th Aviation Group.
8. (C) INTELLIGENCE: See Intelligence Inclosure.
9. (C) MISSION: 2-506th Inf, combat assault, 21 May 1969, into FSB Airborne (YD355070), conduct RIF operations to locate and destroy enemy forces, base areas and caches in assigned area of operation.
10. (C) CONCEPT OF OPERATION: Three (3) companies conduct RIF/Search and Clear Operations on separate axes with the BN CP, one (1) rifle company and the combat support company (-) located at FSB Airborne for security, construction and improvement of the facility.
11. EXECUTION:
- a. Method of Operation:
- (1) A/2-506: Provide security, conduct local RIF and improve defensive positions at FSB Airborne.
 - (2) B/2-506: RIF/Search and Clear from FSB Airborne to the SW.
 - (3) C/2-506: RIF/Search and Clear from FSB Airborne to the S-SE.
 - (4) D/2-506: RIF/Search and Clear from FSB Airborne to the NW.
 - (5) E/2-506 (-): Provide 81mm mortar support from FSB Airborne.
 - (a) Provide ground surveillance through employment of crew-served starlight scopes, radar, and anti-intrusion devices.
 - (b) Recon Plat provide security for FSB Airborne, improve defensive positions and conduct local RIF operations. (See Inclosure 2, Operations Schematic.)
- b. Operations Narrative:
- (1) 21 May 69: The 2-506th Inf began participation in Operation APACHE SMCW with the movement, by CH-47, of the Bn CP, Companies B, C and E (-) from Camp Evans, Phong Dien District Headquarters and An Lo Bridge to FSB Blaze (YD529020). This move consisted of 312 PAX utilizing 10 CH-47 sorties. Upon completion of the Hook move to FSB Blaze, the Bn CP and Company E (-) conducted a CA from PZ FSB Blaze to FSB Airborne. This move consisted of 107 PAX, utilizing 22 sorties. Company A was released from OPCON to the 3-187th Inf and conducted a CA from PZ YC327982 to LZ FSB Airborne with 85 PAX utilizing 17 sorties. Company A and Recon Plat assumed a defensive position on FSB Airborne. Because of darkness, Companies B, C and D remained at FSB Blaze and FSB Currahee overnight.

AVDG-CB

18 June 1969

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation APACHE SNOW.

(3) Recommendations. That supply personnel utilize the 155 powder bag containers for resupply of water.


JAMES M. BOWERS
LTC Infantry
Commanding

2 Inclosures:

1. Area of Operations, 10 May - 9 Jun 69.
2. Area of Operations, 3 Jun - 9 Jun 69.

(2) 22 May 69: The CA of Companies B, C and D from FSB's Blaze and Currahee was completed and consisted of 282 PAX and 57 sorties. Upon completion of this CA, all elements of the 2-506th Inf were on or near FSB Airborne. Companies B, C and D began their RIF/Search and Clear Operations away from FSB Airborne on separate axes. Company A and the Recon Plat conducted local RIF missions in the immediate vicinity of FSB Airborne. All units began finding evidence of enemy activity as they continued their operations, i.e., numerous items of enemy equipment, bunkers and hooches. Some of the bunkers appeared to have been used as recently as three (3) weeks. There was no enemy contact on 22 May.

(3) 23 May 69: The 2-506th Inf continued operations in assigned AO with the Bn CP, Companies A and E (-) located at FSB Airborne. At 0046 hours, FSB Airborne received four (4) rounds of 60mm mortar fire. There were no casualties as a result of this action. Companies B, C and D continued to find evidence of enemy activity in the area. Co B, via YD360072, received small arms fire from an unknown enemy force resulting in 1 US/KIA and 2 US/WIA. At 1010 hours at YD361064, Co B was again in contact with three (3) enemy. The point man was hit, but as a result of an armor chest plate which he was wearing, he sustained only a minor injury. At 1050 hours, at the same location, Co B was again in contact for the third time today with the same three (3) enemy. The Recon Plat was sent from FSB Airborne to Co B's location to assist in the removal of Co B's KIAs and WIAs. 2-506 used blocking fire with 81mm mortars and employed an air strike on a hilltop near Co B's location. At 1213 hours, at YD343076, Co D received small arms and RPG fire. In this action, Co D had one (1) man wounded who, at 1250 hours died as a result of injuries sustained. At 1705 hours, at YD344078, Co D had one (1) incoming round, a suspected 82mm mortar round. This resulted in one (1) man wounded. But, at 1722 hours, this man died as a result of his wounds. For the day, then, there were 4 US/KIA, 5 US/WIA and 1 US/NBI (Non-Battle-Injury).

(4) 24 May 69: The 2-506th Inf continued to conduct RIF/Search and Clear Operations in its assigned AO, with Co B moving to the SW, Co C to the S and Co D to the NW. Signs of enemy activity were still being found as units progressed. At 0545 hours, FSB Airborne received an estimated 38 rounds of 60mm mortar fire from an unknown location. There were negative casualties in this action. Co D had three (3) contacts during the day at 0920 hours, 1210 hours and 1800 hours. In the first action, at 0920 hours, at YD342076, Co D observed one (1) NVA moving about 200 meters from their NDP to the east. They engaged him with small arms fire, however, a RIF of the area had negative results. Then at 1210 hours, at YD341076, Co D received ten (10) rounds of small arms sniper fire. The sniper was believed to be located in a tree. A RIF once again led to negative results. Finally, at 1800 hours, Co D at YD341074 received four (4) rounds of small arms fire with the suspected enemy location being 150 meters to their south. They engaged but did not receive return fire. In all three contacts, Co D did not have any casualties. In other action today, Co C at 1156 hours, at YD349077, discovered and destroyed two (2) 250 pound bombs. Then at 1803 hours, at YD351076, Co C received three (3) bursts of small arms fire but sustained negative injuries. They checked out the area of the suspected enemy location but had negative findings. An LP from Co C spotted one (1) NVA armed with an AK47 who fired at FSB Airborne during the firing of a "mad minute." On the day then, there were no friendly or confirmed enemy

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SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report OPRD 3-69 (APACHE SNOW) (U)

casualties as a result of these actions. There were several bunkers and hooches found in the AO. Additionally, units found various items of enemy clothing and equipment.

(5) 25 May 69: All units continued to maneuver against suspected enemy positions and caches and continued to find bunkers, fighting positions and enemy clothing and equipment. At 0915 hours, an air strike was employed for LZ construction. The only contact for the day was made by Co B at 1835 hours at YD361066, at which time they received three (3) RPG rounds and some small arms fire. They returned fire and after checking out the area, they found a pool of blood but negative further. In the action, Co B sustained five (5) WIA.

(6) 26 May 69: At 1205 hours, three (3) air strikes were employed for LZ construction. There were two (2) enemy contacts during the day, one (1) at 1040 hours when Co D received approximately ten (10) rounds of small arms fire and the other was at 1350 hours when a "stay-behind" patrol from Co B fired on one (1) enemy entering their former FDP at YD361065. Results of these actions were one (1) NVA/KIA and one (1) US/WIA. In other action today, Co C and the Recon Plat each found a bunker complex and Co C also found five (5) graves containing decomposed bodies.

(7) 27 May 69: The 2-506th Inf continued its RIF/Search and Clear Operations in the northern A Shau Valley. At 0425 hours, there was an 82mm mortar attack on FSB Airborne. Seven (7) or eight (8) rounds landed inside the perimeter with direct hits on two (2) bunkers and an LP located 25 meters outside the perimeter. There were four (4) US/KIA and six (6) US/WIA as a result of the attack. Simultaneously, with the mortar attack on FSB Airborne, Co B came under a grenade attack but sustained no casualties. During the day, units continued to find enemy bunkers, hooches, equipment and munitions which was highlighted by three (3) separate caches, found in vicinity YD348063 and discovered by Co C which consisted of a total of 800 rounds of 82mm mortar, 600 rounds of 60mm mortar, 100 RPG-9 and 100 RPG-7 rounds. All of the ammunition in these caches was in good condition and was evacuated.

(8) 28 May 69: The 2-506th Inf continued operations in the northern A Shau Valley with the Bn CP, Companies A and E (-) located at FSB Airborne and Companies B, C and D maneuvering against suspected enemy locations and caches. Co B at YD358056 and Co D at YD329075, found small bunker and hooch complexes and a small amount of clothing and and miscellaneous equipment. Co C, at YD351058, found three (3) new AK47 Rifles wrapped in plastic and some AK47 magazines. At 1748 hours, Co D, while moving into its NDP located at at YD330075, tripped a booby trap consisting of two or three claymores. This resulted in fourteen (14) US/WIA.

(9) 29 May 69: The 2-506th Inf continued to operate in its assigned AO. There were no enemy contacts during the day, however, Co D, while in its NDP located at YD327068, received one (1) incoming White Phosphorous round believed to be a 105mm from C/2-319th Artillery located at FSB Airborne. As a result of this, Co D sustained five (5) US/WIA who had to be Medivaced.

(10) 30 May 69: The 2-506th Inf continued to operate in the northern A Shau Valley. At 1500 hours, vic YD327068, Co D found an anti-aircraft position with 12.7mm ammunition in it and five (5) bunkers and four (4) hooches. Co C found an assortment of old and rusty ammunition and Recon Plat, while on a local RIF of FSB Airborne, found three (3) sets of NVA fatigues and miscellaneous medical supplies and documents in a cave.

(11) 31 May 69: The 2-506th Inf continued RIF/Search and Clear Operations in its assigned AO in the northern A Shau Valley. Companies B, C and D, while operating on separate axes, all found evidence of enemy activity in their respective areas. At YD328066, Co D found a bunker/hooch complex with a latrine, a shower point and an observation platform. At YD349063, Co C located an ammunition cache consisting of 215-82mm mortar rounds, 100-60mm mortar rounds, 31 RPG-7 and 12 RPG-9 rounds and 14 B40 Rockets. Also at YD350067, Co C found another cache of small arms and mortar ammunition. In this cache, there were AK47, 9mm, 12.7mm, 14.5mm and RPG-7 rounds, as well as 82mm and 60mm mortar rounds. Co B at YD351047, found 880 rounds of 12.7mm ammunition. All the above caches were evacuated.

(12) 1 June 69: Companies B, C and D continued their RIF/Search and Clear Operations within the Bn AO. Highlighting the day's activities, was a 6,500 pound, booby trapped, rice cache found by Co C at YD348061. The rice was polished, in 100 pound bags and in excellent condition. Also, at YD349061, Co C found the wreckage of a UH-1D Helicopter. At the crash site was the partial remains of a body, a flight helmet with the name "CPT Begley" on it, 2 M60 Machineguns, serial numbers 6477 and 7005, 1 CAR-15, 1 M79 Grenade Launcher, 2 M16 Rifles and a Jungle Penetrator. Other activities of the day included a cache of fishing equipment found by Co C at YD349061, which consisted of six (6) 100 pound bundles of transparent fishing line, 400 fishing poles and 1000 snap links with swivels.

(13) 2 June 69: As the companies continued to maneuver within the AO, they continually found signs of enemy activity. The 12 element of Co C was air lifted to FSB Airborne to provide security and conduct local day time RIF operations while the Recon Plat was extracted from FSB Airborne to Camp Evans to attend Rappelling School. While conducting a platoon-size RIF to the SE of FSB Airborne, Co A, at 0915 hours and at YD361065, spotted approximately ten (10) NVA setting up US-type claymores. There was an immediate exchange of fire between the NVA and Co A. The NVA detonated their claymores during the exchange of fire. The results of this contact were two (2) NVA/WIA, one (1) US/WIA and four (4) US/WIA. Throughout the day, Companies B, C and D continued to find bunkers, hooches, caves and small amounts of miscellaneous clothing, equipment and ammunition. At 1340 hours, in vic YD353064 and YD354065, Co C found two (2) separate rice caches which totaled 12,900 pounds of polished rice in 150 pound bags and stacked on an 85 degree slope against logs and covered with plastic. The rice was in excellent condition and appeared to have been in this location for approximately two weeks.

(14) 3 June 69: The 2-506th Inf still participating in Operation APACHE SNOW, continued to find signs of enemy activity during its RIF operations throughout the Bn AO. Units continued to conduct individual operations and found small bunker and hooch complexes and small quantities of enemy clothing

and equipment. At 1330 hours, the 11 element of A/2-506, while on a local RIF from FSB Airborne, at YD362064, found two (2) graves containing two (2) NVA bodies killed less than 24-hours. They were killed by small arms fire possibly as a result of contact made by another Co A RIF on 2 June 69. At YD343056, Co C found two (2) SKS Rifles wrapped in plastic and buried under leaves. The rifles were in poor condition but would fire. They were evacuated. There was no enemy contact during the day.

(15) 4 June 69: Companies B, C and D continued to conduct RIF/ Search and Clear Operations in the Bn AO. The only contact occurred at 1000 hours when Co D received approximately ten (10) rounds of small arms fire. There were no casualties as a result of this action. At YD340053, Co C found 22 rounds of 82mm mortar ammunition. And at YD355064, while on a local RIF, Co A found five (5) rounds of 82mm mortar ammunition. All companies continued to find bunkers, hooches and miscellaneous items of clothing and equipment.

(16) 5 June 69: The 2-506th Inf continued participation in the Bde operation in the A Shau Valley by conducting RIF/Search and Clear Operations in its assigned AO with the Bn CP located at FSB Airborne. Companies B, C and D continued to maneuver on separate axes with Co B oriented to the west, Co C to the south and Co D to the northwest. Co A remained as security force for FSB Airborne and conducted local RIF operations during the daylight hours. At 0735 hours, at YD314105, Co D made contact with an estimated two (2) NVA. This action resulted in one (1) NVA/KIA and one US/WIA. The NVA/KIA had in his possession an RPG Launcher which was evacuated to this location. Additionally, Co D found at YD314098, three (3) graves estimated to be one (1) year old and four (4) bunkers with overhead cover. At 1518 hours, at YD314104, the 13 element of Co D again made contact with an estimated NVA squad. Co D sustained three (3) US/WIA in this action all of which were medivaced shortly after the end of the contact. At 1815 hours, Co C received one (1) RPG round which exploded in the trees and thereby causing three (3) US/WIA.

(17) 6 June 69: All elements of the 2-506th Inf continued to operate in the assigned AO. At 0630 hours, at YD315046, Co B had incoming RPG and 60mm mortar rounds. Co B sustained one (1) US/KIA and 12 US/WIA from this attack. At 1500 hours, Co B made contact with 2-3 NVA equipped with small arms at YD305043. In this action, there was one (1) US/WIA.

(18) 7 June 69: Today was the last day for the 2-506th Inf participation in Operation APACHE SFCW. At 1210 hours, a LCH on a VR mission for this battalion received ground fire from vic YD337077. The Bn S3 received a minor leg wound as a result of this action. At YD355068, Co C found five (5) bunkers and ammunition. The ordnance consisted of 40 Rifle grenades, 3 RPG-9 rounds and 2-60mm mortar rounds. Also Co C, at YD355062 made contact with three (3) NVA. In this action there were no US casualties but there was one (1) NVA/KIA. After this action, they later found four (4) hooches in the area. And upon searching, found two (2) SKS Rifles, 1 sniper rifle, 8 Model 44 Carbines, 2 MAS M36 rifles, 1 PPS43 sub-machinegun, 8 cases of B40 Rockets, 1 case of RPG rounds, 8 cases of AK47 ammo, 50-50 pound bags of salt and 20 packs of powdered salmon.

At YD337074, Co D found one (1) AK47 rifle, one (1) SKS rifle, 1 Model 44 rifle with grenade launcher, ten (10) anti-tank grenades and some miscellaneous small arms ammunition, clothing and equipment. During the hours of darkness, radar and crew served starlight scopes located at FSB Airborne, discovered movement of small groups of individuals and various lights. All sightings were engaged by 81mm mortars after which the movement ceased. At 1616 hours, Co B was air moved from their field location at YD309039 to FSB Airborne to take over the security of the fire base. The CA was complete at 1640 hours.

12. (C) RESULTS:

a. The mission was successfully accomplished and vast quantities of enemy supplies and materials were captured.

b. Enemy losses:

- (1) KIA: 30 (includes 21 KIA by A/2-506 while OPCON to 3-187th Inf)
- (2) KBAA: None
- (3) KBA: None
- (4) Captured: None
- (5) Enemy equipment captured or destroyed:
 - (a) Food supplies: 2,600 lbs
 - (b) Small arms weapons: 27
 - (c) Small arms ammo: 84,227 rds
 - (d) 60mm mortar ammo: 712 rds
 - (e) 60mm mortar Base Plate: 1
 - (f) 82mm mortar ammo: 1,361 rds
 - (g) 82mm mortar fuses: 100
 - (h) B40 Rkts: 38
 - (i) RPG 7 and 9: 200
 - (j) 12.7mm and 14.5mm Ammo: 13,708 rds
 - (k) Miscellaneous ammo: 129 rds
 - (l) TNT: 9 lbs
 - (m) Crossbows: 2

AVDG-CC-C

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report OPCR 3-69 (APACHE SMCW) (U)

- (n) NVA Machetes: 2
- (o) Mines and BBT: 7
- (p) Fuel: 20 gal
- (q) Structures: 119
- (r) Tunnels: 2
- (s) Bunkers: 302
- (t) Documents: 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs
- (u) Medical supplies: 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs
- (v) Secondary Explosions: 2
- (w) Rice: 21,360 lbs
- (x) Uniforms: 12
- (y) NVA canteens: 2
- (z) Mittens: 50 prs
- (aa) Fishing line: 600 lbs
- (bb) Fishing poles: 400 ea
- (cc) Commo wire: 5000 meters

13. (C) ADMINISTRATION:

a. Personnel strength:

21 May 1969

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>ASSIGNED</u>	<u>PDY</u>	<u>FIELD</u>
HHC	191	172	36
A	119	105	94
B	131	112	98
C	131	120	106
D	129	113	95
E	85	89	79
	<u>786</u>	<u>711</u>	<u>508</u>

8 June 1969

UNCLASSIFIED

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report OPRD 3-69 (APACHE SNOW) (H)

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>ASSIGNED</u>	<u>PDY</u>	<u>FIELD</u>
HHC	205	189	46
A	112	101	79
B	109	94	75
C	124	112	95
D	113	104	87
E	91	100	72
	<u>754</u>	<u>600</u>	<u>454</u>

Average for period 21 May 1969 -8 June 1969

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>ASSIGNED</u>	<u>PDY</u>	<u>FIELD</u>
HHC	198	180	50
A	115	101	40
B	112	100	81
C	128	116	100
D	116	103	86
E	87	96	72
	<u>756</u>	<u>696</u>	<u>388</u>

b. Number of personnel departed R&R during 21 May-8 June 1969: 32

14. (C) LOGISTICS:

a. Concept of logistical support: Logistical support was provided through normal supply channels. Aviation support for supply was provided by A/158th Aviation and other elements of the 160th Aviation Group. Resupply to maneuver elements was programmed at three day intervals. Hot chow was integrated with each resupply. CH-47 sorties arrived from Cheyenne and Wyoming Pads located at Camp Evans and from forward supply areas at FSB's Blaze and Birmingham.

b. Logistic summary:

- (1) UH-1 Sorties - 170.
- (2) CH-47 Sorties - 49.
- (3) Tonnage by class of supply to each firebase and unit.

(a) Fire Base Airborne

- 1 Class I 30,975 lbs
- 2 Class II 3,000 lbs
- 3 Class III 10,000 lbs
- 4 Class IV 56,000 lbs
- 5 Class V 80,000 lbs

UNCLASSIFIED

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report CPORD 3-69 (APACHE SNOW) (U)

(b) Company B

1 Class I 14,000 lbs2 Class II 300 lbs3 Class III 20 lbs4 Class V 800 lbs

(c) Company C

1 Class I 16,000 lbs2 Class II 300 lbs3 Class III 20 lbs4 Class V 1,000 lbs

(d) Company D

1 Class I 12,000 lbs2 Class II 250 lbs3 Class III 20 lbs4 Class V 700 lbs

c. Problem Areas - Lessons Learned:

(1) Initially, FSB Airborne had insufficient helicopter landing area for the amount of air traffic which some days exceeded 90 sorties. To alleviate this problem, the CH47 Pad, in the Artillery area, was enlarged as well as improved. The existing UH-1 Pad was also enlarged to accommodate two (2) helicopters and a new CH47 Pad was constructed on the southern edge of the perimeter.

(2) A large resupply of demolitions was required to be on hand at all times to allow for bunker destruction, clearing fields of fire on the perimeter and construction of landing zones. An initial stockage of 5000 lbs is recommended.

(3) Much of the Fire Support Base was already constructed when the 2-506 Inf initially moved in. Otherwise a greater amount of Class IV material would have been required.

(4) To facilitate resupply and maintain airmobility, landing zone construction was a continual requirement. Time being a factor, it was soon learned that by lowering the following items, maneuver elements could rapidly

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12-10

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report OPCRD 3-69 (APACHE SNOW) (U)

establish landing zones.

- (a) Two (2) long handled axes.
- (b) Two (2) chain saws.
- (c) Premixed fuel.
- (d) Oil.
- (e) 30-50 electric and non-electric blasting caps.
- (f) 100-700 lbs of CL demolition.

(5) Chain saws were consolidated at FSB Airborne for immediate dispatch to companies and maintenance to include sharpening, adjustment of chain tension and cleaning. The quantity of demolition required for any one landing zone varied and depended upon the condition of the landing zone site. Daisy Cutters and Artillery preparation reduced the amount of demolition required. Due to the wind turbulence in this area, landing zones had to be large enough to allow an additional eight (8) feet beyond the normal area allotted a UH-1 aircraft. Through its maneuverability and small size, the ICH was often used to deliver necessary equipment to finish partially completed landing zones.

15. (U) CHEMICAL: N/A

16. (U) CIVIL AFFAIRS: N/A

17. (U) PSYOPS: N/A

18. (C) COMMUNICATIONS:

a. Communications with maneuver companies and the Battalion rear was consistently good throughout the operation. Due to sporadic failure of vital radio relays and automatic retransmission stations at Eagles Nest, vic YD407035, communications was at times difficult.

b. A forward radio maintenance shop was established at FSB Airborne to facilitate rapid repair and provide back-up radios during the interim repair periods.

c. Transmission security was above average during the operation. One complete SCI change was experienced and the transition was made smoothly.

19. (C) ENGINEER: Upon initial occupation of FSB Airborne, one (1) engineer platoon was utilized to improve fighting bunkers, clear fields of fire, create new helicopter pads and generally expand the fire base.

20. (C) ARTILLERY:

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report OFORD 3-69 (APACHE SNOW) (U)

a. Mission: Provide 2-506th Inf artillery support for Operation APACHE SNOW.

b. Concept: The 2-506th Inf was inserted on FSB Airborne relieving the 2-501th Inf in place. C/2-319th and C/2-11th (-) remained on FSB Airborne to provide Direct Support and General Support Reinforcing fires for the 2-506th Inf

c. Execution:

(1) The infantry mission required a careful and thorough search of the immediate terrain surrounding FSB Airborne; consequently, C/2-319th was very limited in providing fire support due to the proximity of the maneuver elements to FSB Airborne.

(2) B/2-319th Arty, located on FSB Berchestgarden, provided fire support for the majority of the missions fired for the 2-506th Inf.

(3) 4-77th Arty (ARA) (-) provided general support reinforcing fires for the 2-506th Inf. The highly mobile and responsive ARA sections are a definite asset to the ground commander.

d. Analysis: The key to successful indirect fire support is rapid response of the Direct Support Artillery Battery. Airmobile concepts give the ground commander various means of supporting fires. ARA is usually alerted at the time contact is initiated, on station time varied between 10 and 15 minutes; thus tube artillery must have been employed and adjusted prior to the arrival of the ARA section. If this has been accomplished, the ground commander or observer can adjust tube artillery and ARA simultaneously. However, if the artillery unit providing direct support cannot react prior to the arrival of the ARA section, coordination cannot be made between the tube artillery and the Aerial Rocket Artillery, therefore, it is imperative that the reaction time of the tube artillery from the time the mission is received to the time the round is fired be less than 5 minutes. It is a must that an air observer be on station to provide assistance to the ground observer that is in contact. Mountainous terrain is very deceiving to the ground observer; visual contact to the impact is impossible, thus a round impacting 200 meters on the opposite slope of the ground observer's position may sound as though it is at a far greater distance. High angle fire was primarily utilized resulting in an additional hazard. In order for the ground observer to provide himself with close-in supporting fires, he must have an additional set of eyes in the sky.

1. (U) SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES: N/A

2. (C) COMMANDER'S ANALYSIS:

a. Reconnaissance by fire.

(1) Item: Maneuver elements encountered small NVA teams usually employing delaying and harassing tactics creating casualties and time lost

through deployment of the unit.

(2) Solution: Extensive use of recon by indirect fire on planned routes of advance and the use of Pink Teams to screen areas to the immediate front of maneuver elements reduces the possibility of this type of encounter and causes the enemy to move, thereby exposing him and keeping him off balance. Frequent reconnaissance by fire, additionally, benefits the ground commander in that he is able to engage the enemy with indirect fire quickly by shifting from fired in targets.

b. Stay behind force.

(1) Item: In efforts to maintain continual surveillance of friendly elements, small NVA units, usually 2 to 3 individuals, attempt to follow maneuver companies.

(2) Solution: Whenever possible, a small force should remain in the previous night defensive position in an ambush posture as this is one instance where friendly forces are able to choose the location of contact. This tactic was effectively employed yielding one (1) enemy/ KIA during Operation APACHE NOW.

c. Use of stealth while entering night defensive positions.

(1) Item: Avoiding enemy indirect fire attack while in NDP.

(2) Solution: Normal digging and preparation of NDPs causes noise and reveals friendly locations. To avoid indirect fire attack, the maneuver element sends a small reconnaissance force to secure the proposed NDP. After the hours of darkness, the company moves slowly and quietly to the location and further into a perimeter without digging fighting positions. The area for the NDP should contain enough brush and undergrowth to hide the element from visual detection. The key to successful execution is holding movement to a minimum.

d. Additional protection for the point man.

(1) Item: The point element is more susceptible to booby traps and meeting engagements, therefore, all possible measures should be employed to further protect these personnel.

(2) Solution: Shortly after implementing an SOP where all point and flank men will wear breast protectors (of the same variety worn by rotary wing, rioters and door gunners). One (1) possibly two (2) soldier's lives were saved in a contact during this operation. While the weight must be considered a disadvantage to wearing the chest protector, this can be overcome by rotating the point and flank men at frequent intervals and also by a redistribution of their equipment so as to make the additional weight as bearable as possible.

e. Use of Artillery, ARA and Daisy Cutters.

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(1) Item: To avoid aircraft booby traps. Aircraft booby traps are located in all possible landing zones throughout the AC.

(2) Solution: Though this battalion did not experience any aircraft destruction due to booby traps, it is felt that the possibility was reduced by the use of artillery and ARA on all possible landing zones prior to aircraft entry. Booby traps generally consist of CHICOM claymore mines facing the sky with pull-type firing mechanisms activated by the rotor wash. Preparation by Artillery and ARA directly on the landing zone effectively detonates or severs the lines connected to the firing device. Increased use of Daisy Cutter bombs to establish future landing zones and greater airmobile flexibility reduce the likelihood of aircraft damage through enemy mining activity merely by the logistical problem encountered when mining a large number of landing zones.

(f) Destruction of captured enemy equipment and material.

(1) Item: Evacuation of enemy equipment and material proved a time-consuming task in two instances during the operation. One maneuver company required 3 days to move 2000 rounds of mortar and RPG ammunition to a suitable landing zone. In another instance, one day was required to move five tons of rice to an adequate location for extraction.

(2) Solution: In certain situations, destruction of enemy caches is the only reasonable solution. It is understandable that captured enemy goods have an intelligence and training value, however, consideration must be given to the location, ease of extraction, and time required of a maneuver element in relation to their mission.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

George Okamoto
GEORGE OKAMOTO
CPT, Infantry
Adjutant

2 Incl
1 - Intelligence Inclosure
2 - Operations Overlay

DISTRIBUTION:
30 - 101st Abn Div
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1. (C) TERRAIN: Operation APACHE SNOG was conducted in the A Shau-A Luoi Valley, a traditional NVA/VC established base area and infiltration route. The 2-506th Inf area of operation was located northeast of the A Luoi Valley bounded by grids YD3012, YD4109, YD2603 and YD3001. The valley varies in width from 150 meters to two (2) kilometers. Average elevation is from 575 meters in the valley flanks to 1740 meters in the northeast. Slopes on the rolling terrain vary from 2-15 per cent and as steep as 80 per cent on higher elevations.

2. (C) VEGETATION: Multi-canopied dense underground forest dominates the hills and mountains throughout the area. The lower slopes are covered with brushwood and elephant grass.

3. (C) WEATHER: Weather is the major factor which has always limited military operations in the A Shau-A Luoi Valley area. During the reporting period, weather conditions were exceptionally good, with temperatures being consistently in the 80-90 degree range. Early morning and late afternoon low ceiling did not interfere with combat operations or resupply.

4. (C) ENEMY ACTIVITIES:

a. Prior to operation: Prior to the operation, the enemy had free use of routes, warehouses and base areas. Enemy forces in the area of operations consisted of transportation type units. Combat units could be massed and had the capability of conducting offensive operations.

b. During the operation: The enemy moved the 800th and 802nd Battalions of the 6th NVA Regiment into the area of operations. However, in the latter part of May, both battalions were withdrawn from the AO. Contact with enemy forces during the operation consisted of engagements with trail watchers and squad-size elements. Contact was broken by the enemy on each occasion.

c. Results and effects of the operation: Continued pressure by US Forces in the AO forced the enemy to abandon his cache sites and continually relocate his forces. This action resulted in cache sites being abandoned, which were found and destroyed or evacuated by US Forces. During the operation, the enemy was required to curtail his resupply operations to elements in the mountains, to the northeast. He was compelled to withdraw main force units back across the Laotian border and resort to a role of observation and harassment of Allied operations.

5. (C) ENEMY CONTACTS:

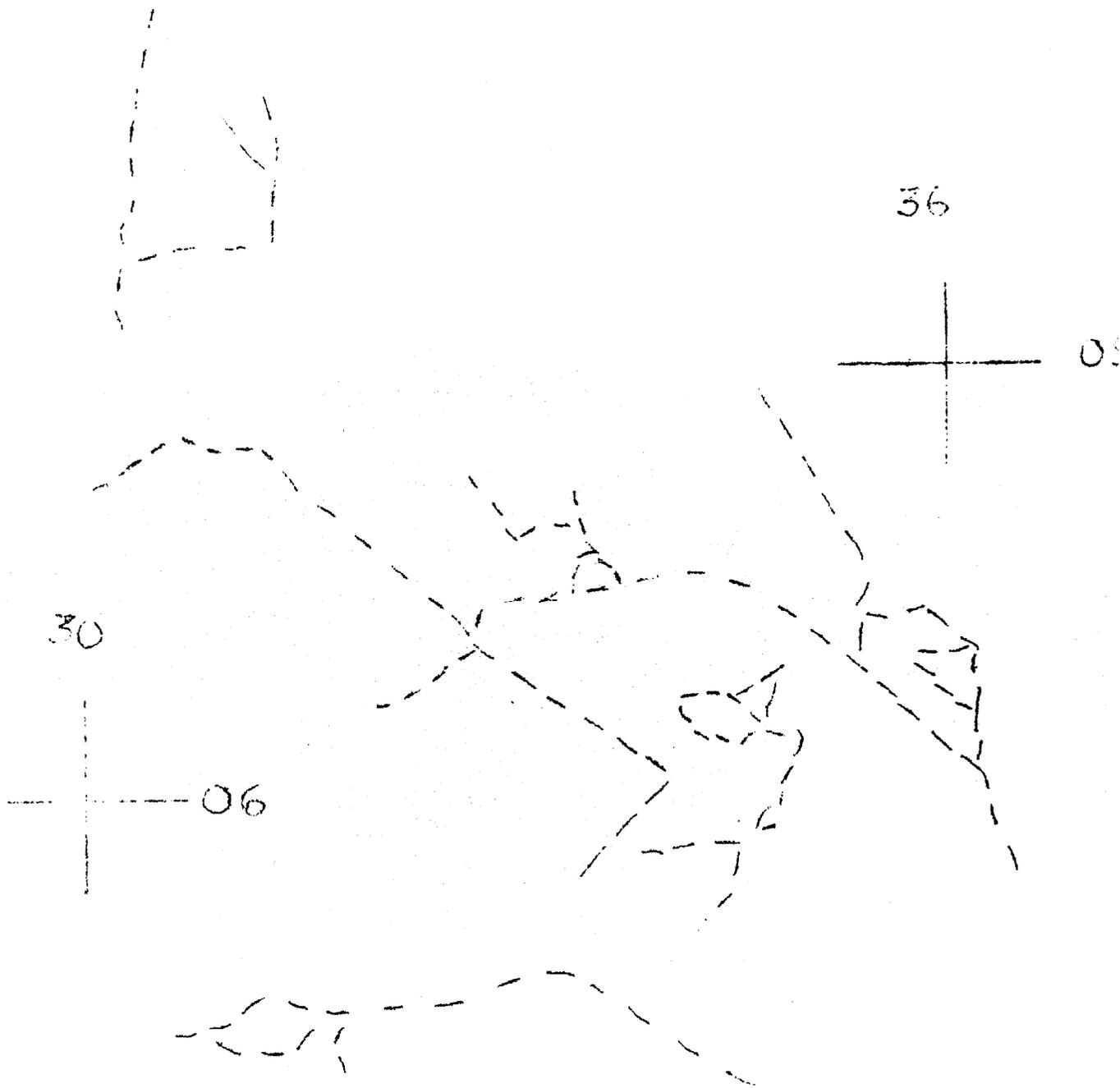
a. Thirty-three (33) contacts were made with the enemy during the reporting period. The following employment against US Forces was encountered.

(1) RPG Fire: Extensive use of the RPG 2 and 7 were used during eight (8) contacts, resulting in four (4) US/KIA and seventeen (17) US/WIA. This weapon is sometimes employed with mortar fire to confuse US Forces as to the direction and type fire they are receiving.

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Tab A (Trails Overlay) to Inclosure 1 (INTELLIGENCE INCLOSURE) to Operation APACHE SNOW (U)

Ref: Map, 1:50,000, RVN, sheet 6441 IV



losure 2 (OPERATIONS OVERLAY) to After Action Report APACHE SNOW (U)

Map, 1:50,000, RVN, sheet 6441 IV

22 May-7 June 69

APACHE SNOW Overlay Summary

