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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
62nd INFANTRY PLATOON (COMBAT TRACKER)
1st SQUADRON 9th CAVALRY
1st AIR CAVALRY DIVISION
APO San Francisco 96490

AVDAIP-CT

15 JAN 70

SUBJECT: OPERATIONAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR OF 1969

TO: Commanding Officer
1st Squadron 9th Cavalry
ATTN: S-3
1st Cavalry Division (AM)
APO US Forces 96490

1. Significant organization and unit activities.

a. Principle operations: Throughout the year the 62nd Infantry Platoon (Combat Tracker) gave their utmost in support of the First Team in the Republic of Vietnam. The tracker platoon worked from various forward areas throughout the year. The major forward areas throughout the year were in Quon Loi Tay Dinh, and Long Be. The heaviest usage of the tracker platoon during the year was in gaining intelligence from enemy tracks and reconnaissance of areas where there was said to be enemy. The main mission of the tracker platoon is neither of the above, but is in fact to regain contact with the enemy. Now to give you a better idea of the missions the tracker platoon has pulled within the last year, here is a brief synopsis of the operations of the platoon for each month of the past year.

(1) The month of January the tracker platoon worked strictly at their primary mission, which is to re-establish contact. However, two missions were to gain valuable information on enemy activities in the division. During the month Combat Tracker Teams discovered a number of enemy bunkers and enemy assemblies. On 7 Jan 69 a Combat Tracker Team made contact with enemy while working with E Company 2/5 Cavalry resulting in 1 NVA KIA and 1 NVA WIA. The NVA WIA turned out to be the NCOIC of 60 NVA regulars. Later in January on the 26th another tracker team made contact resulting however in one member of the tracker team and dog wounded in action. This resulted in the non-operational dog and handler team. Overall the tracker teams in the 1st Cavalry Division received the utmost for the teams available.

228-03

SUBJECT: OPERATIONAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR OF 1969

(2) The month of February found the tracker platoon maintaining effective team support for the 1st Cavalry Division. Again the largest amount of missions were to regain contact. Found during the month were various types of ammunition and bunkers. Contact was made throughout the month. On 7 Feb 69 a tracker team was employed with C company 2/5 Cavalry to regain contact and found an enemy's night position and various NVA equipment. Also that same day another tracker team on a regain contact mission found a cache of grenades and a AK50 Russian rifle. These missions continued to actually give support to division operations. On 23 Feb 69 a tracker team again made contact with the results of 1 enemy KIA and documents. Again on 26 Feb 69 on a follow up of an enemy probe a tracker team captured 1 SKS, M-16 ammunition and other needed enemy supplies and documents. With the fine support from the companies of the 1st Cavalry Division the tracker platoon again experienced proper utilization and employment for the Combat Tracker Teams.

(3) As in the previous two months the month of March was no exception. The majority of the missions remained to be regain contact. However, more missions are becoming less likely to succeed. Either support gives a false impression of what type of mission they had for us or we couldn't find a thing when we got there. However, two out of every 10 missions pulled by this platoon uncovered the following and on said dates. On 9 Mar 69 a tracker team while proceeding on a track discovered 1 NVA KIA, 3 B40 rockets and 3 82mm mortars. On 21 Mar 69 a tracker team while following a track uncovered 3 NVA KIA, 3 B40 rockets, 20 Chicom grenades and 5 satchel charges. During this month the proper usage and employment of tracker teams is getting increasingly worse. As a result the 1st Cavalry Division does not receive the fullest capabilities of the tracker platoon.

(4) The month of April the tracker platoon pulled but one mission the whole month. That mission was to recon after night ambush and again the tracker team found nothing. The past 3 months had found the tracker platoon fairly idle in hopes of a trucky go mission. However, the unit commanders and brigades of the First Team remain uninformed as to our proper usage.

(5) The month of May the tracker platoon in an effort to make known our mission with the First Team worked more recon missions and general support to let the units learn of the capabilities of the tracker platoon. However, in doing this we veered off our main mission, which is to regain contact. Also there were no significant findings during the month. The platoon is however attempting to bring to the unit, battalion, and brigade commanders a working knowledge of the platoon and of tracker team abilities to find the enemy.

MONTHLY OPERATIONAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR OF 1969

(6) The missions were about the same through the month of June. However, we did have more regain contact missions. Out of the 10 missions pulled by the platoon items were found on 5 of the missions. Found on the missions were the following items on said dates. On 3 Jun 69 a tracker team while following a track found 2 satchel charges. On 20 Jun 69 a tracker team found 3 well used trails and upon following one of them found 10 75mm recoilless rifle rounds, 4 Bangalore torpedoes, 3 satchel charges and miscellaneous equipment. On 30 Jun 69 another tracker team found 10 chicom grenades and a satchel charge, also they captured 2 RMs. On 30 Jun 69 a combat tracker team found 6 bunkers and 4 chicom grenades. Except for the few good missions we had this month of June, our missions have not changed much from previous months.

(7) The month of July was increased in the number of missions for the month but only about half of those missions were to regain contact with the enemy. The other half of the missions for the month consisted of area recon and general support to the infantry units. The only reason the tracker platoon worked in general support these past two months was to give some idea of what a tracker team can find and do. Again the missions pulled for the month that were to regain contact only half of them had any sign of enemy contact prior to calling a tracker team. A breakdown of the missions for the month follows in chronological order. On 4 Jul 69 a tracker team followed a distinct enemy track which resulted in 1 enemy KIA, 1 AK47 and miscellaneous VC equipment. Missions pulled on 5-14 Jul mainly were recon missions with negative results on all. On 16 Jul 69 a tracker team while tracking down an enemy force found 1 B40 rocket, miscellaneous clothing and rations, and a grenade booby trap. Again the missions pulled from the 17-22 Jul were recon and regain contact missions with negative results. On 23 Jul 69 a tracker team following an enemy track received enemy sniper fire which fatally wounded the visual tracker of that team. The enemy sniper got away because support did not wish to follow up. On 25 Jul 69 a tracker team again made contact resulting in 1 enemy KIA, 1 enemy WIA and 1 AK47 rifle. Finally on 26 Jul 69 another tracker team made contact while on a recon mission resulting in all members of that team being wounded and removed from area of contact. Again the tracker platoon attempted to give its utmost in support of the First Team for the past month.

(8) The month of August again had tracker teams called out to regain contact where there was no enemy signs in the area. The tracker teams also went on more area recon missions but could only assist in gaining information on a few of those missions. A chronological breakdown of the missions for the month follows. On 2 Aug 69 a tracker team on a regain contact mission followed enemy to a well used bunker complex consisting of 19 bunkers and 3 kitchens. The support unit however did not destroy the bunker complex after it was found because they had to move to a specific grid square, thus leaving them to be used again.

SUBJECT: OPERATIONAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR OF 1969

(8) (The month of August continued) On 10 Aug 69 while on another regain contact mission a tracker team found another bunker complex consisting of 4 bunkers, 1 kitchen, 1 freshly killed and dressed deer, 1 US made bayonet, and a heavily used trail used by 8-10 individuals within the last 14 hours. Again support moved on to night position without destroying the bunker complex. The rest of the missions for the month were a mixture of area recon and regain contact but all resulted in negative findings. The tracker platoon consistently attempts to bring the utmost information and findings possible to the support units, however, after finding information or enemy quarters the support always leaves the area the way they found it not disturbing even a branch of enemy work. The missions with the 1st Cavalry Division are gradually becoming true missions and the tracker platoon will always give their utmost in performance.

(9) The tracker platoon continued to support the 1st Cavalry Division through the month of September with three teams until 19 Sep 69. On 19 Sep 69 a fourth team was activated and deployed to Song Be to support D Troop 1/9 Cavalry and 3rd Brigade. Teams are currently located at Phuoc Vinh (platoon rear), Quon Loi, Tay Minh and Song Be. Heaviest utilization of the teams has been to provide ground reconnaissance to determine the number, direction and age of enemy movement, both after contacts and on pre-planned insertions into suspected enemy locations. The missions are continuing to be a combination of recon and regain contact. The following is a chronological breakdown for the month of September. On 4 Sep 69 3 of the 4 teams pulled area recon missions resulting in negative results. On 5 Sep 69 a tracker team while on a recon mission discovered 1 US grenade booby trap set up by VC. Also on the 5th of Sep another tracker team while on a mission to regain contact made contact results were as follows: 2 enemy KIA, 1 bunker complex of 40 bunkers, 1 107mm rocket, 8 chicom grenades and miscellaneous equipment. On 6 Sep 69 a tracker team while on a visual recon mission found the following on a trail used for an escape route for the enemy: 5 107mm rockets w/fuses, 5 840 rockets, 2 AK47, 1 SKS rifle, 3 NVA KIA, 7 NVA KBRU, 10 chicom grenades, 40 lbs web gear, 3rd documents and 8 bunkers. On 10 Sep 69 a tracker team found 1 old 107mm rocket fuse can and 1 old 75mm RR can. On 11 Sep 69 a tracker team while reconning the greenline found 4 dead VC, 1 RPG launcher, 2 AK47s, 10 chicom grenades and other miscellaneous explosive charges. This seemed to be the trend all through the month but the platoon still isn't quite being used properly. However, the past month the teams were all kept active in reconnaissance and regain contact missions. The support is becoming better in following up an enemy track.

SUBJECT: OPERATIONAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR OF 1969

(10) The platoon continued in general support of the Division with four Combat Tracker Teams. Teams currently operate out of three forward areas: Quon Loi, Song Be, and Tay Ninh. The missions continue to be more recon than regain contact. Examples of the type of missions we have pulled this past month are listed in chronological order. On 1-4 Oct 69 while working with A Company 5/7 Cavalry a tracker team followed an enemy track in an attempt to regain contact. Though not making contact with the enemy the tracker team did find their supply trail, 100 bunkers, 2 base camps 1 B41 rocket, 5 oblong grenades, 1 US Claymore, 1 US frag grenade, and 1 oblong claymore. From 4 Oct 69 to 12 Oct 69 tracker teams were utilized 7 times in a combination of missions, however, the majority of those missions were area reconnaissance. On 13 Oct 69 a tracker team while on a mission to regain contact did in fact make contact while following the track resulting in 3 enemy KIA. From 14 Oct 69 to 19 Oct 69 tracker teams were again utilized 7 times and again the majority of the missions were in area recon and general support of an infantry unit. On 19 Oct 69 a tracker team while working on a regain contact mission again made contact with the enemy resulting in 1 enemy KIA, 1 enemy WIA, 2 AK47s, assorted web gear and documents. From the 22 Oct 69 to the end of the month tracker teams were utilized 6 times all were to recon the area missions. This month the tracker platoon received a little better support from the infantry units requesting teams; however, again the infantry commanders are still utilizing the tracker teams wrong. It is hoped that the next month will bring more utilization of tracker teams and proper usage of the teams within the First Teams operation.

(11) The tracker platoon continued in general support of the Division with four Combat Tracker Teams. Teams continued to operate out of Quon Loi, Song Be, Tay Ninh and the platoon rear at Phuoc Vinh. The number of missions for the month has practically doubled in number of missions that are for recon and general support of infantry units. The only really good missions for the month numbered approximately 10 out of the 60 missions pulled for the Division. From the 1st of Nov 69 to the 4th of Nov 69 tracker teams pulled 9 missions of which 1 was to regain contact. On 4 Nov 69 tracker team 2 found 4 B40 rockets, 1 recoilless rifle round and 1 bangalore torpedo. Also on 4 Nov 69 tracker team 1 found 2 B41 rockets, 1 60mm mortar round, 300 yds commo wire, 1 bunker area consisting of 8 foxholes and 4 bunkers and an NVA pack. From the 6th of Nov 69 to the 10th of Nov 69 tracker teams pulled 9 more missions of which 2 were to regain contact. On 10 Nov 69 tracker team 4 found 66 60mm mortar rounds, map of Phuoc Vinh, NVA clothes, rice, 5 1-man fighting positions and three mortar tube spots. On 11 Nov 69 tracker team 4 again found 1 B40 rocket, ruckpack and 2 fuses for B40 rockets outside

SUBJECT: OPERATION REPORT FOR THE YEAR OF 1969

(11) (The month of November 1969 continued) F3B Buttons as the last mission findings were found there also. On 13 Nov 69 tracker team 4 found just on the eastside of a road coming from F3B Buttons 1 B41 rocket and 7 RPG rounds. From the 13th of Nov to the 19th of Nov 69 the tracker platoon pulled 13 missions of which all were area recon missions. On the 18th of Nov 69 tracker team 4 again working out of F3B Buttons found 4 obicoms grenades and various NVA equipment. From the 19th of Nov 69 to the 25th of Nov 69 the tracker platoon pulled 11 missions of which only 3 were to regain contact and the rest to recon area. On 25 Nov 69 tracker team 1 found 1 US type 81mm mortar round and 1 US type 60mm mortar round near F3B Buttons. The remainder of the missions for the month were also area recon missions. Though the primary mission of the tracker platoon is to regain contact with the enemy the month of November found the tracker platoon giving much needed and valuable information throughout the First Team area of operations to the infantry units requesting tracker teams. However, it is hoped that the tracker platoon won't continue to give out unnecessary mission time to recon missions when regain contact missions occur. Again the 1st Cavalry Division gave the tracker platoon splendid cooperation in getting air transportation available for the tracker teams.

(12) The platoon continued in general support of the Division with four tracker teams during the month of December. Teams continue to operate out of Quon Loi, Song Be, Tay Binh and the platoon rear at Phuoc Vinh. The missions are still veering off our main mission again which is to regain contact. Also as we do find good tracks to regain contact with the enemy the support keeps refusing to follow up track because of it differs with the commanders (unit) night defensive plans. Missions worth mentioning for the month are as follows: On 5-6 Dec 69 tracker team 1 worked near F3B Buttons with A Company 2/12 Cavalry tracked an estimated 7 enemy who ambushed a friendly squad on a trail. They tracked the enemy for 400 meters and the dog though not working alerted of enemy equipment 50 meters ahead. Discovered were 1 M16 rifle, 1 M16 ammo can, 1 can of M60 ammo, 3 RPG2 rounds, 1 ammo can of documents, 3 obicoms claymores, 3 bunkers, 3 radio batteries, 10 60mm mortars and 1 map. The next day the team continued the previous night's track and made contact resulting in 1 POW and 1 AIC. This is a perfect example of the way a tracker team should be used.

SUBJECT: OPERATION REPORT FOR THE YEAR OF 1969

(12) (The Month of December continued) On 7 Dec 69 tracker team 2 working with A Company 2/5 Cavalry near Quon Loi were called out to track one NVA who had set an ambush on the friendlies. The NVA was wounded during his ambush and was tracked down by tracker team 2 and found dead. The tracker team recovered 1 AK47, documents and satchel charge. On 10 Dec 69 tracker team 2 again working out of Quon Loi with the 11th ACR L Troop attempted to regain contact with an estimated VC band of 15 men who had fired upon the APCs. The enemy were not found but the tracker team did locate a bunker complex consisting of 35 bunkers. On 22 Dec 69 tracker team 3 working with D Company 2/12 Cavalry pulling their missions out of FSB Buttons tracked an estimated 10 enemy from an abandoned bunker complex. No contact with the enemy or signs of recent use by enemy, however, the tracker team discovered 3 bunkers used as overnight positions. This should give some idea of the amount of missions pulled by the tracker platoon for the month and the type of missions pulled during the month. It is quite evident that the tracker teams are pulling missions that a recon patrol from an infantry unit could pull. This would leave the tracker team available for more regain contact missions. Again the tracker platoon has attempted to give the 1st Cavalry Division its utmost in service.

Total missions pulled by the tracker platoon for the year were 226.

b. Other activities: The utilization of Kit Carson Scouts by tracker teams did not start until August of 1969. The use of Kit Carsons has enhanced the knowledge of enemy tactics and escape techniques. However, through this period of time it is found that working with them and their capability of following superiors orders are not what we had hoped they would be. Therefore from the four we had in September of 1969 we now have two left. The two we have now are the best we have seen anywhere and follow orders fairly well.

c. Base defense: Up until July 1969 tracker platoon furnished a guard for bunker 39 on the Phuoc Vinh perimeter guard duty. It was found to hamper the effectiveness of the individual for missions the next day therefore the tracker platoon became except from guard duty on the greenline. However, the tracker platoon has given many services since to the recon of the wire at both Phuoc Vinh and FSB Buttons at Song Be.

d. Base improvements: An additional bunker was built for the personnel of the 37th Inf Flt (Scout Dog) which now maintains a forward area at Phuoc Vinh to support 2nd Brigade and AO Chief.

SUBJECT: OPERATIONAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR OF 1969

e. Training and Organization: Due to the turnover of dog handlers the month of August, training scout, sentry and bloodhound handlers has been the principle training task of this unit. Because of a shortage of qualified dog handlers instructors and a general lack of excess personnel to conduct training this particular phase of unit training has been hampered this month. The training conducted during September has been primarily directed at integrating three new visual tracker replacements from Ft Gordon, Ga.. The addition of a new dog handler, and a dog team from Ft Gordon has improved the platoon's strength in trained personnel. During the Month of October a weekly training schedule has been employed to provide continuous retraining for Combat Tracker Teams as they rotate to the platoon rear. One dog has been sent to USARV Dog Training Detachment for two weeks retraining, the dog is not expected to be operational until 15 November. During the month of November the weekly training cycle is progressing well and rappelling classes will be initiated next month. Use of a new training area has been arranged with Divarty for longer, better training missions. A rappelling class was conducted the last week of December and will continue weekly until all tracker teams are capable of this aerial delivery technique.

2. LOSSES

a. Enemy	KIA	WIA	POW	KIA Found
January	1	1	0	0
February	1	0	0	0
March	0	0	0	4
April	0	0	0	0
May	0	0	0	0
June	0	0	2	0
July	2	1	0	0
August	0	0	0	0
September	2	0	0	14
October	4	1	0	0
November	0	0	0	0
December	0	0	1	1
Total	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>19</u>

Assessment of Findings for the year:

(1) Mines	14
(2) SA ammo (rds)	2490
(3) RPG rounds	78
(4) RPG Launchers	7
(5) Rockets (107mm)	21
(6) Mortar rounds (all)	124
(7) Grenades	98
(8) Claymores	3
(9) Bangalore Torpedoes	4

SUBJECT: OPERATIONAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR OF 1969

Assessment of Findings for the year: (Continued)

(10) Explosives (lbs)	80
(11) Foodstuffs (lbs)	322
(12) Documents (inches)	16
(13) Medical supplies (lbs)	5
(14) Web gear (lbs)	75
(15) Packs	9
(16) Radios	1
(17) Bunkers	326
(18) Base Camps	13

b. Friendly Losses for the year of 1969:

(1) KIA	1
(2) WIA	4
(3) MIA	0
(4) DOG KIA	0
(5) DOG WIA	1
(6) DOG MIA	0

4. Commanders Comments: A major problem encountered during the year was, the elapsed time from an actual contact, to when the mission was actually laid on. Many units do not realize that time is the biggest obstacle that Combat Tracker Teams encounter. To many tracks were 7-10 hours old and the enemy exfiltrated before the team was even inserted. Also even with tracks two hours old units are reluctant or unwilling to deviate from preplanned lines of march to pursue the enemy. Hence, Combat Tracker Teams have only rarely been utilized to their true potential.
5. Recommendations: It is hoped that all missions will be called in through Division G-2 Operations and that utilization of tracker teams for reconnaissance purposes decrease and regain contact missions increase.

WILLIAM C. MILLER II
2LT Infantry
Commanding

Courtesy of the
U.S. Army Military History Institute