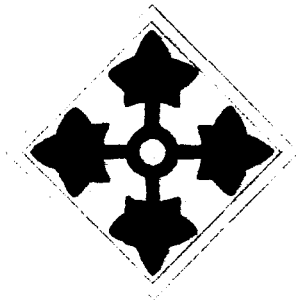


COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT



“Cacti Blue”

2^D Battalion 35th Infantry

2^D Bde, 4th Inf Div

Operation

“PUTNAM PARAGON”

21 May - 28 June 1970

This report was provided by:

Jim Anderson, Bravo Co. 2/35th 1967-68.

Having Received this report from:

Richard “Caz” Cazeault, Delta Co. 2/35th 1970

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
 HEADQUARTERS, 2D BATTALION 3RD INFANTRY
 APO San Francisco 96262

7 July 1970

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report (U)

Commanding Officer
 2d Brigade, 4th Inf Div
 ATTN: S3
 APO San Francisco 96262

1. (C) Name of Operation: PUTNAM PARAGON.

2. (C) Dates of Operation: 21 May - 28 June.

3. (C) Location: The general location of the operation was 24 kilometers NW of CAMP RADCLIFF, RVN, west of the SONG BA RIVER VALLEY.

4. (C) Control Headquarters:

a. 2d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division located at CAMP RADCLIFF.

b. 2-15th Inf Forward Command Post located at LE WARRIOR (21 May - 31 May);
 LE LANGE (31 May - 18 June); LE WELCH (18 June - 28 June);

5. (C) Key Personnel:

POSITION	NAME	DATE
BN CO	LTC WILLIAMS L. HARRISON, JR.	21 May - 28 Jun
BN XO	MAJ WILLIAM J. HARDENBURGH	21 May - 28 Jun
BN S1	1LT ROBERT P. BOSKING	21 May - 28 Jun
BN S2	CPT KIRK W. LARSEN	21 May - 28 Jun
BN S3	MAJ EVERETT R. THOMAS	21 May - 28 Jun
BN S3 A1R	1LT PHILIP R. BOSS	21 May - 11 Jun
BN S4	CPT BURL D. MAGNE	21 May - 28 Jun
BN SPT PLT LDR	1LT MICHAEL D. MACMANN	21 May - 8 Jun
BN SPT PLT LDR	1LT RICHARD A. WETHERELL	8 Jun - 28 Jun
A CO	CPT JERRY S. CLARK	21 May - 28 Jun
B CO	CPT BERT L. JACOBS	21 May - 28 Jun
C CO	1LT RALPH W. JAMES	21 May - 28 Jun
D CO	CPT DAVID B. O'BRIEN	21 May - 2 Jun

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B CO	1LT MARSHAL W. BRIGGS	2 Jun - 28 Jun
B CO	CPT MICHAEL GUNNING	21 May - 28 Jun
BROCK PIR LDR	1LT THOMAS M. WAJER	21 May - 28 Jun
4.2 MORT PIR LDR	2LT WILLIS M. MUSKA	21 May - 28 Jun
A/4-42 ARTY CO	CPT PAUL STEWART	21 May - 28 Jun
A/4-42 ARTY LO	CPT GORDAN CAMERON-STUART	21 May - 28 Jun

6.(C) Task Organizations

A Co 2-35 Inf	BN COB
B Co 2-35 Inf (OPCON 1-12 20 Jun - 23 Jun)	BROCK PIR 2-35 Inf
C Co 2-35 Inf	4.2 MORTAR PIR 2-35 Inf
D Co 2-35 Inf	A/4-42 ARTY (DS)
	SGT/C/4th BGR (DS)

7.(C) Supporting Forces:

a. Supporting artillery to include TIG, Night Fire, Quick Reaction Fire, and Defensive Targets, were provided by A/4-42 Arty in direct support of 2-35 Inf.

b. Gunship support was provided on a mission request basis by 2d BDE, 4th Inf Div, located at CAMP RADCLIFF.

c. Tactical Air Support was available on a pre-planned and/or immediate request basis through 2d BDE, 4th Inf Div. Numerous pre-planned requests were submitted by and five were flown in support of this battalion.

d. SNOOPY/SCORPION missions were available on a pre-planned basis through 2d BDE, 4th Inf Div. Numerous SNOOPY/SCORPION missions were flown for this battalion, however, none led to any significant findings by ground troops.

8.(C) Intelligence:

a. Terrain: The terrain to the northwest of AN KHE is composed largely of very mountainous, rugged steep inclines, tapering off to moderate valleys and gentle lowlands. There are many secondary streams both inter-mittent and larger tributaries. In the northern portion of our AO the SONG HA RIVER makes its path down the main valley floor. The vegetation is thick, with occasional areas of bamboo thickets. Although there was dense undergrowth and much triple canopy jungle, there were areas where cleared areas and cultivated fields were quite prominent.

b. Weather: During the period we experienced the effects from the southwest monsoon. Afternoon rain showers were prevalent and evening thunder showers were prominent for the period. There were times when, due to the low cloud cover, it became impossible to fly in the AO. The temperature averaged 85°F during the majority of the operation.

c. Enemy Situation: The area 12-15 kilometers northwest of AN KHE was expected to produce elements of the C2 Sapper Co. Although several contacts

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were made, there was no real evidence that the unit was actually operating in the area during our tenure there. We did, however, manage to find several small caches of food stuffs.

Further to the north, 20 kilometers, we expected to find members of the GIA LAI Provincial Unit. There were numerous contacts where the VC/NVA appeared to have very stealthfully observed our movements and then capitalized on our mistakes. The enemy force appeared to be native, possibly VMC, who knew the trails and areas very thoroughly. Although several caches, to include one containing 2-3 tons of rice, and one containing 47 82mm mortar rounds complete with fuses, were found, there were never indications that more than a few enemy were in the area. Numerous bunkers and hootches in a deteriorated condition were found, to indicate use in the past. The area was also infested with punji stakes, most of which were old.

9(C) Missions: 2-35 Inf conducted aggressive search and destroy operations in AO BUICK with OBJ DUMBO and high ground via LZ WARRIOR as two initial objectives to destroy elements of C2 Co, 401st Sapper Bn.

On 30 May, 2-35 Inf conducted aggressive search and destroy operations in AO PORSCHE to destroy members of the GIA LAI Provincial Unit.

On 18 Jun, 2-35 Inf moved into AO SCHLITZ to locate & destroy 3d NVA Div HQ and rear service elements, locate and destroy enemy supply bases, and interdict enemy infiltration and supply routes.

10(C) Concept of Operations: The operation was conducted in four phases:

a. Phase I: B Co conducted a CA into LZ WARRIOR, and secured LZ for construction of FSB; A,C,D Co's and Ron Plt conducted CA's into LZ's CUB, YANKEE, BREWER, and SENATOR, respectively. (ANNEX A)

b. Phase II: A,C,D Co's and Ron Plt conducted aggressive search and destroy operations in AO's SILK, LINEN, COTTON and RAYON, respectively. (ANNEX A)

c. Phase III: On 30 May, C Co conducted a CA and moved overland to OBJ DASH and secured it for construction of FSB LANCE; on 31 May, A,B,D Co's, Ron Plt and TAC CP conducted CA's into AO PORSCHE and continued search and destroy operations in that AO. (ANNEX B)

d. Phase IV: on 18 Jun, A Co conducted a CA into LZ WELCH and secured it for the subsequent construction of FSB; B,C Co and Ron Plt conducted CA's into new AO's and continued search and destroy operations. (ANNEX C)

11(C) Execution: On 21 May 70, 2-35 Inf began OPERATION PUTNAM PARAGON by establishing the battalion CP at FSB WARRIOR (BR323558).

a. A Company: On 21 May 70, at 1425H, A Co completed a CA from CAMP RADCLIFF into LZ via BR273578 and began search and destroy operations in their assigned AO. A Co had no contacts and made no significant finds while working in AO SILK. On 311035H May 70, A Co completed a CA from PZ via BR286614 to LZ via BR285694. Upon reaching the LZ, 2/A sent a sweep to the north and located 1 hootch, via BR286692, containing 47 82mm rounds. On 041625H Jun 70, via BR281687, 2/A found a village consisting of 11 hootches and 8 bunkers. Also found were 11 graves. The graves were

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dug up but the bodies were too badly decomposed to determine the cause of death. The graves were estimated to be 6 mo to 1 year old. On 051250H Jun 70, via HR294706, 1/A found 1 hootch containing 2-3 tons of rice, placed in the hootch within the last 3 days. The rice was evacuated to S2, 2d BDE. On 18 Jun 70, at 1305H, A Co completed a CA from PZ via HR262792 to LZ WHICH to secure it for the construction of the FSB. On CA 'ing from the PZ, 3/A received 5-7 rounds of AK-47 ground-to-air fire from SEL HR260792. The helicopter took 2 or 3 hits in its fuel tanks as gunships expended on the SEL.

b. B Company: On 24 May 70, B Co(-) moved overland from FSB WARRIOR into their ambush AO's. 1/B continued the security mission at CAMP RADCLIFF. B Co conducted extensive search and destroy operations, however, none led to any significant findings while working in AO BUICK. On 311218H May 70, B Co(-) conducted a CA from PZ via HR335381 to LZ via HR264729. 1/B re-joined B Co(-) at this time. The company moved into its ambush AO to begin search and destroy operations in AO PORSCHE. On 031606H Jun 70, 1/B, while conducting a sweep from LZ via HR263722, received 2-3 rounds of small arms fire from an undetermined number of enemy. Small arms fire was returned, however, a sweep of the area revealed negative findings. Results of the contact were 1 friendly WIA and unknown enemy casualties. On 040913H Jun 70, 2/B, while sweeping LZ via HR263722, set off a grenade type booby trap wounding 3. At 1142H, via HR263738, an OP on LZ security for 1/B heard movement 50 meters to the NE. OP initiated fire and received 15-20 rounds AK-47 fire. Artillery was employed as the enemy fled to the east. A sweep of the area revealed negative findings. The results of the contact were 1 friendly WIA and unknown enemy casualties. On 071324H Jun 70, via HR292728, 3/B had established an ambush when they observed one enemy moving towards them from the west. The ambush was initiated when the enemy was 50 meters away. No fire was returned, and a sweep of the area revealed tracks of 3-5 individuals with a blood trail to the NW. A tracker team was set upon the trail and followed it for 500 meters until it disappeared into a stream. On 111026H Jun 70, via HR289736, 1/B was moving NE when an estimated 2 enemy initiated small arms fire from 25 meters to the NW. 2/B returned fire and employed artillery. A sweep of the area revealed that the enemy fled to the NE. Results of the contact were negative friendly casualties and unknown enemy casualties. On 151225H Jun 70, via HR247747, 1/B was in a patrol base when one enemy was observed 25 meters to the NW. 1/B initiated small arms fire and the enemy dropped to the ground and returned AK-47 fire. Artillery and gunships were employed and a sweep of the area revealed that the enemy had fled to the NW. Results of the contact were 1 friendly WIA and unknown enemy casualties. B Co became OPCON to 1-12 Inf from 20 Jun to 23 Jun. On 231213H Jun 70, B Co completed a CA to LZ via HR388954 and began search and destroy operations in AO SCHLITZ. On 25 Jun 70, B Co was airlifted to FSB WHICH and assumed the security and training mission.

c. C Company: On 211300H May 70, C Co completed a CA from CAMP RADCLIFF to LZ via HR297581 and departed into their AO to begin search and destroy operations. C Co had no contacts and made no significant finds during their operations in AO LINEN. On 301123H May 70, C Co completed a CA from PZ via HR302590 to LZ via HR278695 and moved overland to via HR279748 and began clearing the area for the construction of FSB LANCE. On 7 Jun 70,

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C Co moved overland from FSB LANCE into their AO to begin search and destroy operations. On 081014H Jun 70, via BR278764, C Co OP and 2/C were moving NE when the point element was taken under fire by M-16 and AK-47 fire from 75 meters to the NW. Small arms were returned and artillery employed. A sweep of the area revealed foot prints of 3-5 individuals leading to the N. On 091158H Jun 70, via BR277775, 2/C received 20-25 rounds of small arms fire from SEL BR279777. Small arms were returned and 81mm blocking fire employed as the enemy fled to the N. A sweep revealed negative findings. On 121030H Jun 70, via BR295776, while 3/C was preparing to depart their night location, 1 individual engaged them from 50 meters to the NE. Small arms fire was returned and artillery employed. However, a sweep revealed negative findings. Results of the contact were 1 friendly KIA, 1 friendly WIA and unknown enemy casualties. On 190938H Jun 70, 1/C OP observed 1 enemy 30 meters to the S and engaged him with small arms fire. The individual fled to the south and 1/C pursued immediately, but had negative findings. On 24 Jun 70, C Co conducted a FE/AL to CAMP RADCLIFF to assume the mission of Golf Course security and training.

d. D Company: On 211624H May 70, D Co completed a CA from CAMP RADCLIFF to LZ via BR277545 and began search and destroy operations. On 231400H May 70, via BR287539, while 2/D was moving to the east, the point element was engaged by 3-4 enemy 30 meters to their front. 2/D returned small arms fire and employed artillery as the enemy fled to the NE. Results were 1 friendly WIA. As the dustoff was lifting-off with the WIA it received ground-to-air fire from SEL BR290545. 3/D moved in pursuit of the enemy, however, they had negative findings. On 1 Jun 70, D Co closed out FSB WARRIOR and CA'd to LZ via BR245703 and resumed search and destroy operations. On 17 Jun 70, D Co conducted an airlift to CAMP RADCLIFF to begin the mission of Golf Course security under the control of IDCC. On 24 Jun 70, D Co came back under the operational control of 2-35 Inf and conducted a CA to LZ via BR447896 to resume search and destroy operations in AO SCHLITZ. On 261435H Jun 70, via BR443879, 2/D located a small village consisting of 12 hootches and 12 bunkers.

e. Recon Platoon: On 21 May 70, Recon Plt conducted a CA from CAMP RADCLIFF to LZ SENATOR to begin RIF operations. On 251010H May 70, via BR301560, Recon Plt OP observed 1 enemy 35 meters to the east. The enemy was engaged with small arms and returned AK-47 fire before fleeing to the east. Recon Plt pursued the enemy while employing artillery blocking fire, however, they had negative findings. Results of the contact were 3 friendly WIA's due to friendly M-79 shrapnel. Enemy casualties were unknown. On 291226H May 70, via BR291548, Recon Plt OP was approached by 1 enemy. When the enemy was 100 meters to the north he engaged Recon with small arms fire and fled to the NE. The OP returned fire, however, the contact resulted in 1 friendly WIA with unknown enemy casualties. When the dustoff came in to pick up the WIA, it received ground-to-air fire from SEL BR294548. Artillery was employed, however a sweep revealed negative findings. On 31 May 70, Recon Plt conducted a CA from PZ via BR307547 to LZ via BR287754 to continue RIF operations in the new battalion AO. On 181600H Jun 70,

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vic BR353756, Ron Plt found a village consisting of 20 hootches and 8 bunkers, estimated to have been last used on 6 Jun. All hootches and bunkers were destroyed. On 19 Jun 70, Ron Plt conducted a CA from PZ vic BR353758 to LZ vic BR503900 in AO SCHLITZ to continue RIF operations. At 1206H Ron Plt received small arms fire from an estimated 4 enemy while awaiting the CA. Small arms fire was returned and artillery employed, however, a sweep revealed negative findings. Results of the contact were 1 friendly WIA and unknown enemy casualties. On 260935H Jun 70, vic BR533945, Ron Plt received approximately 25 rounds of AK-47 fire from 100 meters to the NW. Small arms were returned and enemy fled to the NE. Ron sent a sweep in pursuit and employed artillery as blocking fire. The sweep returned with negative findings. On 27 Jun, Ron Plt was extracted to FSB WELCH to begin stand-down in preparation for Recondo School to begin 1 Jul 70.

12.(C)Results: Operation PUTNAM PARAGON yielded the following results:

23 x contacts	13 x long bows
207 x hootches	5 x crossbows
157 x bunkers	75 x AK-47 rds
6610 x lbs rice	33 x SKS rds
47 x 82mm rds	13 x graves
90 x charges for 82mm rds	8 x rolls commo wire
30 x primers for 82mm rds	1 x field telephone
9 x fuses for 82mm rds	1 x claymore (US)
64 x fighting positions	numerous misc equipment

13.(C)Administrative Matters:

a. Supply: Battalion trains was located at CAMP RADCLIFF, and a forward resupply point for emergency Class I and V was maintained at the forward fire base.

b. Maintenance: Limited organizational maintenance was performed at the trains area, and items requiring repair beyond battalion capability were transferred to C Co, 704th Maint.

c. Treatment of Casualties: Battalion aid stations were located at both the trains and forward fire base. Due to triple canopy jungle in the area of operation, a majority of the casualties had to be extracted with the jungle penetrator of the "Dustoff" helicopters. All casualties were evacuated to 17th Field Hospital at CAMP RADCLIFF.

d. Transportation: The availability of aircraft for resupply and operations was not a problem; however, bad flying weather very frequently caused delay.

e. Communications: The only communications problems occurring during this operation was due to terrain and weather. This problem was alleviated by relaying between units.

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14.(C) Special Equipment and Techniques: The PPS-4 Radar set was employed with great success on PSB WARRIOR and PSB LANCE. Also, the GRC/163 Multiplex radio provided continuous 4-channel communications with BDE and the rear area in CAMP RADCLIFF.

15.(C) Commanders Analysis:

a. Enemy: Throughout the operation the numerous contacts were characterized by sniper fire, ground-to-air fire and harassing ground fire in proximity to resupply landing zones. Fresh trails or well-packed infiltration trails were virtually non-existent, yet the enemy appeared to move freely through the AO, thus, concluding that we were opposed by indigenous Montagnard and Vietnamese VC.

b. Tactics Employed: To meet the challenge of a knowledgeable and cunning enemy, the companies employed a greater variety of stay-behind ambushes, more early warning devices and an increased number of OP/LP's. To reduce the influx of helicopters into the area, units walked into their AO's rather than conduct combat assaults. On one occasion, B Co(-) conducted a final extraction while 1st platoon moved overland to the PZ to establish a stay-behind ambush. D Co trailed behind A Co to determine if the enemy was searching abandoned night locations. Trip flares and smoke grenades were placed along trails which could be observed from PSB LANCE to pick up any movement and defensive artillery targets were pre-planned on each trip wire location.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

EVERETT R. THOMAS
MAJ, Infantry
S3

ANNEXES: A - AO BUICK
B - AO PORSCHE
C - AO SCHLEIZ

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