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HEADQUARTERS  
2D BRIGADE, 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIR)  
APO US Forces 96490

AVCBB-C

29 January 1966

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report

TO: Commanding General  
1st Air Cavalry Division  
Attn: G-3  
APO US Forces 96490

1. Name and type of Operation: MATADOR I, Securing and defending; MATADOR II, Search and Destroy.

2. Dates of Operations: MATADOR I, 311300 Dec 65 to 130800 Jan 66; MATADOR II, 130800 Jan 66 to 171800 Jan 66.

3. Location: MATADOR I, BINH DINH Province bounded by BR6575, BR6530, BR2475, BR2430 and PLEIKU Province bounded by ZA1975, ZA1930, BR2475, BR2430. MATADOR II, PLEIKU Province bounded by AR8050, AR8075, YA6540, YA0175, and KONTUM Province bounded by AR8075, AR8095, YA6595, YA6540.

4. Control or Command Headquarters: 2d Bde, 1st Air Cavalry Division.

5. Reporting Officers: Col William R. Lynch

6. Task Organization:

a. MATADOR I

1/5 Cav  
1 Platoon B Co 8th Engr  
T.CP

2/12 Cav  
Platoon (-) Co B 8th Engr  
2d Platoon (-) 545 MP Co  
T.CP

1/77 arty  
(Reinf as Required)

Bde HHC

2d Platoon (-) 545 MP Co  
2 FWD Spt Element  
Sig Spt Tm, 4/13 sig  
IP/1/CITM, 191 MI Det  
Tm 10th RRU  
Tm 54th Survl Det.

b. MATADOR II

1/5 Cav  
T.CP

2/5 Cav  
T.CP

1/77 arty  
2/20 Air Reinf

Bde HHC

B Co 8th Engr  
2d Platoon 545 MP Co  
IP/1 Tm 191 MI Det  
Sig Spt Tm, 4/13 Sig  
2 FWD Spt Elements  
C Trp 1/9 Cav Reinf with  
one CIDG Co

7. Supporting Forces:

a. MATADOR I

(1) During this phase of Operation MATADOR, 1/9 Cav provided a weapons section and a scout section to 2/12 Cav to help recon and conduct active reconnaissance for enemy activity along Hwy 19 from BINH KHE to BINH KHU. At times when gun ships were not available from 1/9 Cav, 2/20 Artillery provided AR rocket ships in place of

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Cav gun ships. This cover was flown during the time that convoys were being escorted along the highway. Tactical fighter support for convoys was provided by the 2d Air Division on an "on call" basis. An airborne FAC was kept airborne during the time convoys were being conducted along the highway.

(2) Security along highway 19 from BR244495 to PLEIKU was provided by the 2d Armored Recon Squadron (ARVN) and troops from 24th Tactical Zone (ARVN).

b. MATADOR II

(1) This phase of MATADOR was characterized by tactical fighter support provided by the 2d Air Division. A total of 87 sorties were flown during the four day period. On 13 January 25 sorties were flown to strike proposed landing zones. This technique helped clear the LZ of 20' - 30' bamboo, heavy brush and elephant grass prior to the troops landing on the LZ's the following day. Several areas scattered throughout the zone of operations were hit so as to deceive the enemy as to the true location to the LZ. During the hours of darkness, "Smookey the Bear" was on strip alert to be available in case the need arose.

(2) Artillery fire support was provided by 1/77 Artillery with batteries at FURCH, DECK, and STRAIGHT. Infantry ground units always moved within range of supporting artillery fire. Once again 2/20 Artillery provided AT fire support to ground elements.

(3) 1/9 Cav elements provided reconnaissance of the entire area. 1/9 Cav was assisted by a CIDG company from POLBI DJERUNG Special Forces Camp. 1/9 Cav would drop CIDG personnel along with ground elements from 1/9 Cav into a pre-selected area and then recon the outlying area while the ground element patrolled several thousand meters around the landing area. Then the CIDG personnel and 1/9 Cav ground elements would be lifted out. Operating in this manner 1/9 Cav was able to cover three to four areas a day over a wide area.

8. Intelligence:

a. General: Prior to the execution of MATADOR II minimum intelligence information in terms of VC strength, disposition, and location was available in the area of operations. Because of this the Brigade was required to develop its own intelligence during the conduct of operations.

b. Sources of Information: Intelligence sources from the POLBI DJERUNG CIDG Camp, the 24th Special Tactical Zone, and PONTUM indicated that the area of operations was dominated by the VC and that no extensive probe into the area had ever been made by friendly forces. The area of operations was suspected to contain numerous trails and infiltration routes used by the VC to infiltrate into the PONTUM and PLEIKU provinces. Aerial photos, map study, and reconnaissance showed that the area of operations consisted of numerous streams with a multi-jungle canopy characterized by dense jungle, tangled vines, and tall bamboo thickets. Vertical photos were of little help because of over-exposure, however, the oblique photos were excellent for the purpose of reflecting landing zones. The area was so dense with jungle growth and bamboo thickets that LZ's had to be initially prepared by use of 18 tons of napalm and 39 tons of HE. The results of the napalm was negligible since it only charred the bamboo and did not burn off the heavy thickets as expected. 800 lbs of white phosphorus was used on LZ STRAIGHT on the morning of the assault. The WP continued to burn and smoke, which hindered the initial heliborne landings. Infrared coverage was used throughout the operation and hot spots were reported on a timely basis. Several targets of clustered hot spots were engaged with artillery and TOW-IR. The air was generally timely, however, on several occasions reaction was slow due to communications problems and non-availability of Air Cap. On one occasion an Air strike was requested which the ALC attempted to fulfill with Air Cap. However, this strike was delayed over two hours because the air caps had been diverted without the ALC being cognizant of this fact. One VC and one VCC were captured during the operations.

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Interrogation of the prisoners resulted in two suspected VC and PAVN locations, air strikes were called in on those locations.

c. Troops: Daily Air reconnaissance, ground patrols and Air Assaults were conducted by the 2/5 Cav, 1/5 Cav and A Troop 1/9 Cav. Results of these operations showed that the area of operations contained numerous trails, several bivouac areas and two medical aid stations. One major trail under a heavy jungle canopy 2 to 7 feet wide ran from N to S and appeared to be still under construction. (See Annex B.) Trails Over-ly). A wide trail running E to W was located which had elephant dung estimated to be 2-3 days old. The trees along the trail were found to be scarred and high branches broken indicating possible transportation of heavy and bulky equipment. Several villages were discovered containing ammunition, rice, uniforms and medical supplies. In addition a regimental and a battalion size bivouac area had numerous frames for groundnuts but no sign of entrenchments.

9. Mission:

a. MISSION I - 2d Brigade relieves 1st Brigade of responsibility for securing assigned portion of Div Base, Hwy 19 East of BR410445 to TACR and movement of US convoys there on. Effective 021200 Jan 66, 3d Brigade relieved 2d Brigade of responsibility for securing the Div Base to include Hwy 19 East of BR410445 to TACR and movement of US convoys thereon. 2/5 Cav, 1/5 Cav and 2/8 Cav were relieved by 1/7 Cav, and 2/7 Cav. 2d Brigade units returned to base camp. On 04 Jan 66 2/8 Cav and 2/5 Cav moved to PLEIKU and became attached to 1st Brigade upon arrival. At 0600 4 Jan 2/12 Cav secured Hwy 19 from AN KHE West to BR243493 and provided security for all US convoys moving between PLEIKU and AN KHE. On 5 Jan 66 1/5 Cav, moved to PLEIKU and secured an area for the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.

b. MISSION II - On 13 January conduct an air assault into LZ FLUSH on objective ACE with 1/5 Cav and established a base from which to conduct search and destroy operations. Upon seizure of base by 1/5 Cav, 2/5 Cav conducted an air assault into LZ STRAIGHT and established a base from which to conduct operations. On 14 January one battalion (2/5 Cav) conducted operations in the vicinity of JOKER and position 1 while 1/5 Cav conducted extensive patrolling around LZ FLUSH and maintained a reserve reaction force for 2/5 Cav. On the 15th of January 1/5 Cav conducted a two company air assault into LZ DUCHE in the vicinity of objective KING while 2/5 Cav patrolled in the rear around LZ STRAIGHT and became reaction force for 1/5 Cav. On 16 January 1/5 Cav conducted patrols in the vicinity of LZ FLUSH and became reaction force for 2/5 Cav while 2/5 Cav conducted a company air assault into LZ STAY and LZ HIT. On 17 January all units moved back to position CRIB.

11. Execution:

## a. MISSION I

(1) MISSION I was started at 1200 hours on 31 Dec 65 when 1/5 Cav assumed control of the 1st Brigade sector of the Barrier Line and Hwy 19 from BR410445 East to the Division Boundary and 2d Brigade assumed control of 2/8 Cav on the Barrier Line and Hwy 19 West of AN KHE. On 2 Jan 1/7 Cav and 2/7 Cav relieved 1/5 Cav, 2/5 Cav and 2/8 Cav in their assigned sectors. Relief was complete at 1200 when 3d Brigade assumed control of the entire Division Base and Hwy 19. On 4 January at 0600 elements of 2/12 Cav, 1/77 Artillery, and 2/17 Artillery assumed positions along Hwy 19 from AN KHE to PLEIKU. At 0830 2/5 Cav moved to PLEIKU by motor vehicle while 2/8 Cav moved to PLEIKU by C-123. 2/5 Cav and 2/8 Cav became attached to 1st Brigade upon closing into PLEIKU. On 5 January 1/5 Cav moved by motor convoy along with 2d Brigade Headquarters to help secure the base for 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.

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(2) 2/12 Cav was assigned the responsibility to secure Hwy 19 from AN KHE West to BR243493 and to provide security for US convoys traveling the entire distance from AI KHE to PLEIKU. This was accomplished by placing a rifle company along Hwy 19 from AN KHE to BR 243493 and there after providing a reaction force of one rifle company mounted on trucks and interspaced around the convey vehicles to provide security for the remainder of the distance. In addition 2/12 Cav maintained one rifle company on an Eagle flight status in Base Camp as an airborne reaction force. Artillery fire support was provided by 1/77 Artillery and 2/17 Artillery which took up positions all along the highway. The 3d Armored Cavalry Squadron (ARVN) and elements from 24th Tactical Zone (ARVN) provided security of the highway from BR243493 to PLEIKU. 2/12 Cav also used a weapons and scout section from 1/9 Cav to fly cover for all convoys. ARA was substituted when the ships from 1/9 Cav were unable to make the flight. An airborne FAC was airborne over the hwy when convoys were traveling so as to be able to call in strike aircraft in event of an emergency.

(3) During the time period from 4 January to 12 January 2/12 Cav provided security for a total of 37 convoys consisting of a total of 2913 vehicles. All vehicles traveled the highway without any incidents.

(4) During the same period 1/5 Cav provided security around the base camp of 3d Brigade 25th Division in the vicinity of AR795525. This was accomplished by placing one company on outposts about 500 meters from the base perimeter. At the same time 1/5 Cav conducted a company size operation North of PLEIKU in the vicinity of CHI JOR and DAN ROIL. This was operation LIGHTING, a sweep and destroy operation. 1/5 Cav rotated companies into the exercise so as to train new personnel received during December. No enemy or enemy activity was sighted.

(5) During this operation 2d Brigade controlled the operation from the vicinity of BIEN HO, AR771545.

**b. MATADOR II**

(1) MATADOR II was started on 11 January when 1/5 Cav (-) moved to position DECK, YA957533 along with B 1/77 Artillery. The move from CRIB, AR771545, was made utilizing 4 CH-47's and 4 UH-1D's to shuttle troops and artillery guns and equipment. On 12 January 1/5 Cav completed movement to DECK while 2/5 Cav became attached to 2d Brigade and closed on positions DECK utilizing aircraft to make the move from THUM BINH to DECK. 2d Brigade Headquarters set up operations in the Special Forces Camp at POLEI DJERING. During this same time TAC air strikes were conducted on LZ FLUSH and STRAIGHT and other false LZ's using napalm and 250 pound fragmentation bombs to help clear LZ's for the following day. On 13 January TAC air once again struck LZ FLUSH and STRAIGHT. Immediately after the air strike on FLUSH 1/5 Cav landed on the LZ with C company. Once secure, a company of Engineers utilizing CH-47s with troop ladder landed on the LZ and began work to enlarge the LZ to receive more aircraft. Once the LZ was clear, the remainder of 1/5 Cav closed on FLUSH. At noon 2/5 Cav conducted an air assault into LZ STRAIGHT while 1/77 Artillery fired protective fires from FLUSH. 1/9 Cav ground elements and CIDG secured LZ STRAIGHT prior to 2/5 Cav making their assault. Once again after the first company landed and secured the LZ, a company of Engineers was landed to start clearing operations. After the infantry had landed and enlarged the LZ, C Battery, 1/77 Artillery was lifted in by CH-47. Both 1/5 and 2/5 Cav conducted local patrolling around the LZ once the entire force had landed. (See Annex C)

(2) On 14 January 1/5 Cav conducted five platoon size patrols which ranged from 3 to 5,000 meters from a position FLUSH. A platoon from B 1/5 Cav received M fire from Y.713880 which resulted in one US wounded. Fire was returned but the enemy fled into the jungle. The patrols did find numerous trails and huts. In addition they found a civilian radio, heavy MG gun, uniforms, blankets and three tins of medical supplies. Recon platoon from 1/5 Cav and CIDG personnel landed at Y.647820 to search out objective area near LZ DUCE for a two company assault on 15 January. 2/5 Cav sent A Co into a blocking position at Y.770861 and then

LZ STRAIGHT YA 755875 (LA)  
 LZ FLUSH YA 719869

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conducted an air assault into JOKER, YL785840, with C Company. However the LZ at JOKER was too small to receive a company so the plan was changed. C Company was sent to a blocking position just South of Position 1 while elements of 1/9 Cav and CIDG were landed on Position 1 and made a sweep to Company C. 1/9 Cav screened the area South of J.C. vicinity of YA783839 and Position 1. The 1/9 sweep by the CIDG elements and 1/9 Cav ground elements noted one VC in their sweep to the blocking position. A Company conducted a sweep to JOKER and then returned to base camp.

(3) On 15 January 1/5 Cav conducted a two company air assault into LZ DUCE with A and C Companies. In the area around DUCE 1/5 Cav found 300 bushels of rice at YA646825, a well used trail running SE to NW at YA646825, and captured one VC. 1/5 Cav further found a Regimental size complex with many bamboo huts, however it looked as if it had not been used for 6 months. Three huts were also found in the area with 1500 lbs of rice each. One significant fact noted that there were no bunkers or entrenchments in the area. Complex was located at YA670825. The two companies lifted back to LZ FLUSH while the Recon Platoon and two CIDG squads stayed at KING. 2/5 Cav conducted patrols around LZ STRAIGHT during the day. No contact was made, however they did find a camp site with improvised stoves at YA745892 and a trail running N to S at YA742896. 2/5 Cav further found another campsite and well used trail at YA737892. At YA735893 2/5 Cav found a small village with trenches and sleeping quarters for 16 personnel. Fresh food, fish, and rice was found in the mess hall and bread on a table in what appeared to be a dispensary. All elements reconnoitered the entire area finding three huts approx 20' x 20' in size under the trees at YA633805. Huts were destroyed. Elements of 1/9 Cav and CIDG landed and patrolled the area around position 6. No enemy contact was made.

(4) During 16 January 1/5 Cav patrolled around LZ FLUSH and up to objective QUEEN. At YA717894 1/5 made contact with 4 VC. Fire was exchanged with VC breaking off encounter, no casualties were sustained. All elements closed back into FLUSH. 2/5 Cav conducted a two company operation by Landing Co B at LZ HIT and moving Northwest to seize LZ MELD and then moved North, to vicinity LZ STAY for 3,000 meters and then moved back to LZ HIT. C Company landed on LZ STAY, and moved SW to LZ MELD where they were picked up by 1/9 Cav and returned to LZ STRAIGHT. No enemy contact was made. 1/9 Cav continued to recon the area throughout. 1/9 Cav ground elements along with CIDG elements were landed at 11, 5, 11, and T.735935 and patrolled 2,000 meters out from these locations. No enemy contact was made.

(5) On 17 January 1/5 Cav and 2/5 Cav along with 1/77 Artillery (-) moved from positions on FLUSH and STRAIGHT back to CRIB. On 18 Jan B Battery 1/77 closed CRIB while 2/5 Cav moved from CRIB to the Division Base Camp near J.KHE by CV-2 and convoy. 1/5 Cav closed base camp on 19 January using CV-2 and convoy.

(6) During Operation M.T.DOR II aircraft support provided to 2d Brigade was at times inadequate to accomplish the mission of the Brigade. To move 1/5 Cav, two batteries and battalions Hq of 1/77 Artillery, and 2d Brigade Headquarters to DECK from CRIB four CH-47's and 4 HU-1D's were utilized. The distance involved was some 24 miles. It took some ten hours to complete the move into CRIB. 1st Brigade moved 2/5 Cav to CRIB with their allocated aircraft. The move to FLUSH and STRAIGHT was accomplished by HU-1D's and 8 Ch-47's. The move was completed in 10 hours.

## 12. Results: The results of M.T.DOR I and II yielded the following:

3 VC Captured	Small amount of ammunition
3 Tins Medical Supplies	Documents
1 Civilian Radio	300 Bushels of Rice
1 Hand Grenade	5400 lbs of Rice

Also included was much information gained on trails in the area, way stations, possible battalion rest stations, location of trenches and bunkers in the

LZ DUCE YA648825

LZ CRIB

(5)

KING YA655825

Base base = CRIB = A2775545

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area. US losses for the entire period amount to three killed and 12 wounded, this includes battle and non battle losses. Also included are two aircraft lost on FLUSH and STRIGHT due to accidents.

13. Administrative Matters:

a. The Brigade employed two water points during the operation, one at FLUSH and one at DECK, to provide water for the combat units. The water point at FLUSH was of great assistance in supplying water to the forward area since the log time was cut to only 10 to 15 minutes in some cases.

b. Medical evacuation ships were logyered at DECK to provide fast and effect evacuation for the wounded from the forward area.

14. Commanders Analysis:

a. MATADOR I was complete success as pointed out by the large amount of traffic which the Brigade secured in the nine day period that 2d Brigade controlled Hwy 19. It is felt that air cover by Cav A/C was responsible for the lack of enemy activity.

b. MATADOR II is considered a success due to the fact that the Brigade gained much information about trails and the enemys pattern of movement through out the area. The mobility of aircraft allowed the Brigade to operate in an area never before penetrated by friendly forces due to the lack existing of roads or trails. The technique of having TAC air clear proposed LZ's with napalm and bombs proved to be a success in an area where LZ's were extremely limited due to the dense jungle growth.

15. Recommendations:

a. That in future operations of this type the attached Engineer Company can better be utilized as an entire company. In this way a concentrated effort is obtained with better results.

b. That lift Battalions LNO's not be changed during the middle of a tactical operations.

c. That Medical Evacuation personnel provide their own communications equipment.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

*Vincent A. Paelli*  
VINCENT A. PAELLI  
Major, Infantry  
Adjutant

ANNEXES

ANNEX A Lessons Learned

ANNEX B Trails Overlay

ANNEX C Operations Overlay

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(Annex A) Lessons Learned after action report "M.TADOR"

## Problems:

To determine a functional system in allocating logistical aircraft to support FSE activities.

## Discussion:

The airborne concept dictates that a daily aircraft allocation will be made to the Bde who in turn will make allocations to organic and attached units. Since arriving in VIETNAM the FSE's have generally received their aircraft allocations from Support Command. However, during M.TADOR II the 2 FSE received aircraft from both sources. (The 2d Bde and Support Command). Ideally the supported unit should not provide the supporting units needs.

## Recommendations:

That a firm system be established in order that FSE's requirements will receive proper consideration.

## Problems:

To determine responsibilities of units in submitting requests for supplies and equipment.

## Discussion:

Each Bn and HHC should submit request for supplies and equipment directly to the FSE. The Brigade S4 will monitor and assist when requirements were not available. Further involvement will only complicate what is otherwise a simple system. The FSE must have certain information that only the requesting unit can provide.

## Recommendations:

That units submit requests for supplies and equipment.

## Problems:

To determine optimum procedures in recovering individual weapons and equipment from casualties (WIA and KIA).

## Discussion:

During operation M.TADOR II all weapons and individual clothing and equipment were recovered without difficulty. Bde and Bn had S4 representatives at the FSE.

## Recommendations:

That the system adopted for M.TADOR II be continued.

## Problems:

To determine the optimum point in time in establishing a forward water supply point.

## Discussion:

It is recognized that an area must be relatively secure before establishing a water point. In addition, the water point should be accessible via UH-1D and CH-47 aircraft. When these conditions have been

not the WSP should be displaced forward **ASAP**. A plentiful supply of water is considered a must for the infantry soldier hacking away at virgin jungle and simultaneously fighting and looking for the enemy. Forward WSP's reduce the requirements for airlifting this item from the FSE which was approximately 38 kilometers during MATADOR II. In addition to being a more functional system a forward WSP results in substantial savings of man hours and aircraft flying hours.

The 2d Bde assaulted LZ's FLUSH and STRAIGHT on 13 Jan 66. A WSP was established at 131630 Jan 66, vic LZ FLUSH.

Recommendations:

That a WSP be displaced to forward areas as soon as an accessible area is relatively secure.

Problems:

The necessity of monitoring the Med Evac Frequency.

Discussion:

On occasion units have initiated requests for Med Evac assistance and immediately switched back to their own frequencies. The Med Evac ships will require additional information prior to landing at requesting units location. It is of utmost importance for a unit initiating a request to continue to monitor the Med Evac frequency until assistance arrives and the casualty is safely evacuated.

Recommendations:

That units continue to monitor Med Evac frequency after placing the initial call for support.

Problems:

To determine the most functional location of Bn trains in relation to the FSE.

Discussion:

In view of the dependence on air transportation during an operation the FSE is best located adjacent to an improved air strip. The FSE has the responsibility to deliver supplies and equipment Bn trains. The Bn S-4 in turn, delivers to the companies. During the operation MATADOR II the Bn trains were located at CRIB which dictated double handling and an excessive loss of time. The Bde and Bn S-4 representatives at the FSE, assigned to recover weapons and TA 50-901 equipment were idle most of the time. These representatives could assist in rear operations if co-located with the FSE.

Recommendations:

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That Brigade and Battalion trains be co-located with the FSE.

Problems:

To determine the most functional manner to refuel aircraft in forward areas.

Discussion:

All units with aircraft as part of their TO&E have sufficient quantities of Kenco pumps and allied equipment to establish forward refueling points. When units fail to establish forward refueling points, they often "sponge" on another units refueling point which results in undue delay of the operation.

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Recommendation:

That units attached or in direct support of 2d Bde operations establish forward refueling points.

## Problem:

To determine the proper method for medical personnel to monitor Med Evac frequency.

## Discussion:

Med Evac aircraft layered at 101st ABZ with the rear CP. Their PUC-25 did not function properly. The B-4 provided communication equipment to monitor Med Evac frequency during operation 101 ABZ II.

That Med Evac personnel provide own communication equipment.