

Place in Unit History File

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HEADQUARTERS
1ST SQUADRON 9TH CAVALRY
1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)
APO 96490

AVDARS-3

2 March 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report for February 1968 (U)

TO: Commanding General
1st Cavalry Division (Air)
ATTN: ACoFS, G3
APO US FORCES 96490

1. (C) Significant Organization and Unit Activities.

a. Operations.

(1) General.

(a) The 1st Squadron 9th Cavalry began the month of February with A Troop still attached to the Second Brigade for OPERATION PERSHING II. This attachment remained in effect until 17 February at which time A Troop rejoined the Squadron and co-located with C Troop at Dong Ha. This marked the first time the Squadron has operated with all resources since 5 April 1967.

(b) With the North Vietnamese Army conducting a full scale offensive throughout the I CTZ, the Squadron was taxed to its utmost to provide effective coverage of the Jeb Stuart AO. In addition to the increased enemy activity throughout the AO, marginal weather conditions hampered our operational capability but did not curtail operations.

(c) Due to the increased enemy activity, equipment losses rose proportionally. This coupled with the lack of repair parts and adequate support maintenance facilities, resulted in an unacceptable level of mission ready aircraft. This maintenance problem was compounded by the marginal weather and adverse tactical situation as we were unable to extract damaged aircraft on a timely basis.

(d) On 25 February 68, A and C Troop, co-located at Dong Ha, became the prime target for enemy artillery, rocket and mortar fire for two successive days. This motivated a move out of Dong Ha to a more relatively secure area. A Troop displaced south to LZ Sharon and C Troop co-located with the Squadron Hq's, B and D Troops at LZ Evans.

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(e) Although the enemy situation was in sharp contrast to that experienced in and around Bong Son, all elements of the Squadron responded magnificently to the operational requirements placed upon them. Although aircraft availability was at an all time low, and marginal weather prevailed throughout the month, the Squadron performed its mission of finding and fixing the enemy in an astounding manner. The most significant reconnaissance mission during the month in the Jeb Stuart AO were flown by C Troop and B Troop respectively. The reconnaissance of the area to the northwest of Base Area 101 resulted in the early detection of a sizeable enemy element moving east to reinforce the units in contact in the vicinity of Quang Tri. The early detection of this force allowed the Division to react by placing an Arc Light on the area and numerous air strikes. It is the consensus of opinion that this action greatly influenced the allied combat successes gained during the Battle of Quang Tri. The reconnaissance performed by B Troop in Base Area 114 revealed a major base camp of the enemy. This resulted in numerous air strikes being placed upon the area, destroying the major portion of this enemy installation. In a typical 1st Cavalry Division operation, A Troop, operating in the Pershing AO, detected an area of numerous bunkers with indications of heavy traffic into and out of the area. This reconnaissance effort was exploited by the 2d Brigade and resulted in the destruction of a hospital complex.

(f) Throughout the month the Squadron flew daily reconnaissance missions and contributed immeasurably to the tactical success enjoyed by the Division. In addition to the reconnaissance and screening missions, the Squadron kept the MSR open between PK 17 and Dong Ha. It should be noted that during this month, 2 or 3 convoys a day traveled the MSR without one successful ambush on the convoy. Two attempts were foiled because of the efforts of D Troop and the aerial cover provided by the air cavalry troops. The enemy did, however, continually employ plastic, command detonated mines which took a fair toll of casualties and equipment.

(2) Concept of Operations

(a) The size of the Division AO remained fairly constant throughout the period. The Division had three Brigades that required support and the number 1 priority for the first portion of this period was keeping Route 1 open between Camp Evans and Quang Tri. Factors that influenced the concept of operations during the period of 1-17 February were:

1. Two Cavalry Troops to support three Brigades.
2. Aircraft availability.
3. Areas of interest assigned by Division.

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(b) The general concept of operations during this period was to assign the northern portion of the AO to C Troop and the southern portion to B Troop. As a rule C Troop supported the 1st Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division and the 2d Brigade of the 101st ABN Division. B Troop supported the 3d Brigade in their operation in the vicinity of Mue. Operational control as to mission assignments remained at Squadron level, with all mission requests being approved by the S3. Troop boundaries were flexible and were based on those factors that influenced the concept of operations.

(c) During the period of 18-29 February the concept of operations reverted back to the more familiar role of one troop primarily supporting one brigade. Although the Squadron remained in general support of the Division the troop areas of responsibility coincided with that of the Brigades. A Troop supported 1st Brigade operations. C Troop supporting 2d Brigade operations. B Troop supported 3d Brigade operations. The LNO's at each Brigade Headquarters called mission requests directly to the troop. Division areas of interest were given to the Squadron S3 who in turn assigned missions to the respective troop.

(d) Throughout the month the Squadron was committed to maximum utilization of available resources. By tailoring available resources, i.e., a lift ship chasing a scout aircraft, the Squadron achieved record breaking results. There were a total of 548 KIA's during this period.

(3) Mission: An additional mission was assigned the Squadron, that of control of all convoys from Camp Evans to Quang Tri.

(4) A Troop.

(a) The Troop continued to provide surveillance of the PERSHING II AO from 1-17 February. All operations during this period were in support of the 2d Brigade.

1. The most significant action during this period occurred on 11 February. An aeroweapons team operating in the vicinity of BR956917 detected fresh digging in this area. They engaged the area with rockets which opened the canopy and revealed a large bunker complex. An immediate airstrike was called for and placed on the target. Assessment of the air strike revealed articles of clothing, cooking utensils, more bunkers and 2 KIA. C Company 2/5th Cavalry was air assaulted into the area and determined that the troop had uncovered a hospital complex. Results of this action were: 8 NVA KIA, and 4 weapons, assorted medical supplies, 30 inches of documents and 10 prisoners of war captured.

2. Summary of losses for 1-17 February (Pershing II)

a. Enemy.

66 VC KIA

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18 NVA KIA

b. Friendly

0 KIA
 0 WIA
 4 A/C Firing
 1 A/C Hit
 1 A/C Not flyable
 0 A/C Destroyed
 0 A/C Accident

(b) The troop moved to Dong Ha on 18 February. Due to marginal weather conditions the advance party was forced to RON at Da Nang on 17 February. Weather improved the following day which allowed the advance party and the remainder of the troop to move forward to Dong Ha.

(c) The troop closed at Dong Ha on the 18th and was operational on the 19th. The troop had light contact on a daily basis throughout the rest of the month.

(d) On 25 and 26 February, Dong Ha came under rocket and mortar attack throughout the day and night. This situation completely disrupted maintenance activities and resulted in 8 US KIA, one aircraft destroyed, and other minor equipment damages. On 27 February the troop displaced further south and co-located with the 1st Brigade at LZ Sharon.

(e) Losses for 18-29 February 1968 (Jeb Stuart)1. Enemy.

52 NVA KIA
 4 VC KIA
 0 NVAC
 1 VCC
 75 Detainees
 30 Returnees
 6 Weapons (Indiv)
 0 Weapons (Crew)
 140 Rounds
 26 " documents
 21 Packs
 .001 Rice (tons)
 0 Salt
 16 Grenades

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2. Friendly

1 US KIA
14 US WIA
43 A/C Firing
14 A/C Hit
8 Not flyable
1 Destroyed
1,101 Total hours flown

(5) B Troop.

(a) Throughout the reporting period the troop has been in a GS role but primarily supported the 3d Brigade in and around the city of HUE. The troop assumed responsibility for the southern portion of the Jeb Stuart AO and conducted general area reconnaissance throughout the area. The troop also provided reconnaissance and aerial cover to the 3d Brigade on a mission request basis.

(b) Several significant actions took place during this period.

1. On 2 February the troop was supporting the 3d Brigade in the vicinity of Hae. While providing an aerial screen for the ground unit the aircraft on station became the target for intense ground to air fire. The weapons aircraft was hit and crash-landed in enemy controlled territory. The crew escaped serious injury but were immediately engaged by small arms fire. While the crew was being extracted by a Marine helicopter (CH46), scout aircraft engaged the enemy resulting in 15 KIA's. In scattered contacts, throughout the remainder of the day the troop killed an additional 20 enemy resulting in a total of 35 enemy KIA for the day.

2. In an effort to improve operations within the PHANG DING district the troop coordinated with the District Advisor and conducted a search and sweep operation utilizing the infantry platoon and the intelligence squad of the District PF platoon. This squad consists of 11 Vietnamese with an American Advisor. Classes were conducted by the infantry Platoon Sergeant on the loading and off loading of aircraft in the conduct of a combat assault. The initial combined operation was conducted on 21 February with a good deal of success. This operation resulted 1 VC KIA, 1 VCC and one detainee (IC). In addition 180 rounds of carbine ammunition were captured. Future operations are planned utilizing the Intelligence Squad of the PF Platoon.

3. While conducting general reconnaissance of Base Area 114, vicinity of YD4923, a large assembly area was observed. As the team assessed the area they received small arms fire. An air strike was called for

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and placed on the target. Making an assessment of the air strike, which had opened the canopy, the team observed a regimental size, semi-permanent installation. 20 buildings, 20 feet by 40 feet were observed with another 50 to 60 smaller buildings in the general area. Uniforms were observed to be drying in the area and indications were that a battalion size element was presently occupying the area. Due to commitments through the Jeb Stuart AO the decision was made to engage the target area with maximum fire power to develop the situation. The following day while performing reconnaissance around this base area thirty NVA were observed in the vicinity of YD400230. Scout aircraft engaged the enemy resulting in 13 NVA KIA. Air strikes were requested and placed on the target area. The infantry platoon was inserted and killed 1 NVA and picked up one Soviet 7.62 HMG SG-43. This entire area will be further developed for future operations.

1. Losses for February.

a. Enemy

152 NVA KIA
 52 VC KIA
 0 NVAC
 0 VCC
 7 Weapons (Indiv)
 1 Weapons (Crew)
 0 Ammunition
 5 " Documents
 0 Packs
 2 Rice (tons)
 0 Salt (tons)
 0 Grenades

b. Friendly

0 US KIA
 13 US WIA
 56 A/C fired at
 16 A/C hit
 6 Not flyable
 2 Destroyed
 1095 Total hours flown

(6) C Troop.

(a) Throughout the reporting period the troop has been in a GS role but primarily supporting the 1st Brigade and the 3d Brigade of the 101st ABN Division. The major portion of the troops effort has been directed to the northern portion of the Jeb Stuart AO from 1-17 February with an adjustment of areas of responsibility after the arrival of A Troop. 18-29 February

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found the troop concentrating primarily in the central portion of Jeb Stuart AO providing the majority of their support to the 2d Brigade of the 101st ABN Division.

(b) On 25 and 26 February, Dong Ha came under mortar and rocket attack throughout the day and night. This disrupted operations with the troop and resulted in one OH-13 destroyed and one AH-1G damaged to the extent that it had to be slung out. On 27 February the troop displaced south to co-locate with the Squadron Headquarters at LZ Evans. The troop remained operational during the move and conducted general area reconnaissance throughout the day.

(c) Several significant actions took place during this period.

1. On 7 February while performing first light reconnaissance around Dong Ha, a well-fortified area was observed at coordinate YD194610. This area was engaged resulting in 12 NVA KIA. Exploiting the area of contact the troop continued to develop the situation by having a team observe the area throughout the day. In scattered contact in the vicinity of YD200621 the troop engaged and killed another 41 NVA. This location placed the area of contact in the 3d Marine Division AO. The Division was unable to insert a force for ground exploitation and the destruction of this force became the responsibility of C Troop. Artillery was programmed into the area when C Troop curtailed operations in the area.

2. On 19 February the troop, responding to intelligence information, conducted reconnaissance of the SONG TACH HAN River. Their trails crossed the river at YD232421 and moved generally eastward to a point at YD275415. This trail was heavily traveled and the area where the trail stopped, appeared to be a large assembly area. Artillery and airstrikes were placed into the area throughout the day and night. Again, due to the commitments of the Brigade and Division, a ground exploitation was not possible. It is felt that the fire power placed into this area prevented a build-up of enemy forces in Base Area 101.

3. Losses for February

a. Enemy

204 NVA KIA
0 VC KIA
0 NVAEL
1 VCC
9 Detainees
0 Returnees
12 Weapons (Indiv)
1 Weapons (Crew)

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- 5 Rounds ammunition (B-40)
- 12 " Documents
- 5 Packs
- 0 Rice (tons)
- 0 Salt (tons)
- 0 Grenades

b. Friendly

- 1 US KIA
- 11 US WIA
- 3 A/C losses
- 68 A/C Firings
- 20 A/C Hit
- 11 A/C not flyable
- 1 A/C destroyed
- 1871.7 Total hours flown

(7) D Troop.

(a) The troop provided mine sweep, convoy and road security on Route 1 from LZ Evans to Quang Tri and from LZ Evans south to PK 17. During this month there were no combat assaults. Primary emphasis remained on road clearing with daily clearing missions and escort missions being the order of the day. As the general NVA offensive progressed the MSR from the south was cut and the Division relied upon Route 1, north to Dong Ha for the major portion of the supplies.

(b) Throughout the month there were nine incidents of light contact resulting in 2 VC KIA, and 9 US WIA. The Kit Carson scouts and assigned interpreters were on Route 1 on a daily basis questioning civilians along the route. This resulted in 12 detainees being taken to District Headquarters for questioning.

(c) On the night of 11 February, LZ Evans became the object of an intense mortar attack. A major portion of the rounds fell in D Troop area resulting in 3 US KIA and 11 WIA.

(d) Summary of losses for February.

1. Enemy

- 0 NVA KIA
- 2 VC KIA
- 0 NVAC
- 0 VCC
- 17 Detainees
- 0 Returnees
- 0 Weapons (Indiv)

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- O Weapons (Crew)
- O Ammunition
- O Documents
- O Packs
- O Rice (tons)
- O Salt (tons)
- O Grenades

2. 3 US KIA
19 US MIA

b. Other activities.

(1) Base Defense. The Squadron continued to improve the outer perimeter and completed the first line of inner wire defenses. The construction of secondary fighting positions was completed and inner perimeter wire installation was started. All perimeter positions have overhead cover. The majority of the Squadron now sleep in bunkers with overhead cover. This project will see completion by the end of March.

(2) Aircraft revetments. This project has continued to progress and was very nearly completed when A and C Troop were moved out of Dong Ha. This project has now assumed one of top priority to insure completion or revetments in the new areas as soon as possible.

(3) Training. The marginal weather during the past month has greatly curtailed aviator training. It is expected with the arrival of fair weather that this training back log will soon be caught up.

	OH-13S	OH-6A	UH-1	AH-1G
Aviators in training	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>15</u>
Aviators completed	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>15</u>
Hours flown	<u>28:00</u>	<u>48:00</u>	<u>36:05</u>	<u>35:00</u>

c. Personnel and Logistics

(1) Personnel

(a) Strength

<u>AUTHORIZED</u>			<u>ASSIGNED</u>			<u>PRESENT FOR DUTY</u>		
OFF	WO	EM	OFF	WO	EM	OFF	WO	EM
78	96	618	80	71	647	74	66	617

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(b) Losses (ETS, DEROS, MEDEVAC)

OFF	WO	EM
7	12	51

(c) Replacements Received.

OFF	WO	EM
12	6	55

(d) Awards for Valor

DSC	SS	DFC	BS	AM	ARCOM
0	4	10	3	10	0

(e) Promotions

E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9
58	47	0	0	0	0

(2) Logistics

(a) General: This past month has been a month of shortages in all classes of supply except in Class V. Items considered critical are barrier material, I.E, concentrina, engineer stakes and tangle foot. Bunker material is also on the critical list of items needed. Laundry facilities have not been adequate for the needs of the Squadron.

(b) Class I: The first part of the month consisted primarily of C rations. During the last two weeks of the month the C rations were supplemented with A and B rations.

(c) Class II: The quantity of Class II was not sufficient to meet the needs of the Squadron.

(d) Class III. The supply of fuel became critical during some periods of the month. It assumed such a critical condition that the Squadron flew in its own supply of fuel during the most critical periods. Totals flown in were as follows:

JP4	5,000 gallons
AVGAS	6,000 gallons
MOGAS	1,500 gallons

(e) Class IV: Construction material remained critical throughout the month. There was not sufficient quantities to provide overhead cover for all members of this Squadron.

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(f) Class V: The supply of ammunition presented no particular problem throughout the period.

(3) Aircraft Maintenance. The lack of spare parts and adequate support maintenance facilities located in the vicinity of Camp Evans have resulted in an unacceptable level of mission ready aircraft. The weather was a contributing factor to the already critical situation. Unable to sling out aircraft on a timely basis, we found that the lack of supporting maintenance facilities located at Camp Evans delayed the time these aircraft could be repaired and placed back in a mission ready category.

2. (C) Commanders Comments/Lessons Learned

a. Item: Management of the Kit Carson Scout Program.

Discussion: The Kit Carson Scout has proven his worth many times while this program has been in effect in the Squadron. His acceptance into the units has been superb and presented no problems whatsoever. Regardless of how well he is accepted and employed by the gaining unit, the matter of personnel services will greatly affect his performance. We presently have two scouts who have not been payed in two months. In addition to this, we have received Kit Carson Scouts without the benefit of a personal data card or a piece of paper with his name on it. The present system for paying the KCS is a payroll is prepared at Division and a Class A Agent is designated to travel to Saigon to pick up the payroll from CORDS. This agent then returns and personally pays each KCS in the Division.

Recommendation: That each gaining unit receive some sort of personnel data card with each Kit Carson Scout assigned to the unit. The card should list his name, DOB, POB, units of previous assignment (if any) and accomplishments (if any) since he has been a Kit Carson Scout. This gives the gaining unit the information needed to integrate the Scout into the unit in the shortest possible time. The matter of finances is a problem that must be resolved. A solution would be for Division to require submission of a certified roster NLT the 20th of each month. The Class A officer for the Division could then pick up the payroll and return to Camp Evans prior to the end of the month. The final step in this cycle would be for the individual units to assign a Class A agent to pick up the payroll from Division and pay the Scouts within the unit.

b. Item: Flying in IFR Conditions.

Discussion: It has been the sad experience of this unit to experience the loss of life and equipment while pilots were attempting cross country flight in marginal weather conditions. In most instances, minimum flight planning had not been accomplished and in some instances not even attempted. Such flagrant disregard for established procedures indicates a lack of professionalism and can only end with one result. Inoperative GCA, inoperative ADF are all conditions that the aviator must be prepared to cope with. A successful IFR flight requires detailed flight planning and a review of emergency enroute procedures. IFR flight attempted by a pilot who is not instrument rated is a sure invitation to disaster.

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Lessons Learned: Instrument flight must not be permitted unless thorough pre-flight planning has been accomplished. If inadvertant IFR conditions are encountered, the old but reliable rule of performing a 180° turn must be complied with. The aviator must be prepared for the unexpected to happen. VFR conditions should be maintained at all times and if unable to maintain these conditions, the aviator should return to a secure base and remain over night if necessary.

c. Item: Flexing of the main rotar blade on the AH-1G (Cobra).

Discussion: This unit has experienced two incidents of damage to the tail rotar drive shaft because the main rotar flexed down and struck the main rotar drive shaft. Both of these occurrences took place with the main rotar tied down and the helicopter parked in a revetment. When another helicopter hovers by, the down wash causes the main rotar to flex even when tied down.

Lessons Learned: In order to insure that this does not happen in the future, a wooden "saddle" was placed over the tail boom with a partially filled sand bag on top of it to cushion the main rotar blade if it should flex down.

Richard W. Diller

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LTC

Armor

Commanding