

RG472

1STCD, G2
CMD RPTS
68-71
Box 1

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS:

WELCOME TO THE 1ST AIR CAV DIVISION'S OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA. I WILL FOCUS ON THE ENEMY SITUATION AS WE SAW IT JUST PRIOR TO 1 MAY AND HOW WE VIEW IT TODAY, COVER THE SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED AND FINALLY DISCUSS THE CACHES THAT WE HAVE DISCOVERED.

IN THE FISHHOOK REGION WE HAVE LONG BEEN OPPOSED BY THE 7TH NVA DIVISION. WE EXPECTED, BASED UPON THEIR DISPOSITIONS AT THAT TIME, THAT WE WOULD ENCOUNTER STIFF OPPOSITION INITIALLY AND AFTER BREAKING THROUGH THIS CRUST, WOULD BE ABLE TO DRIVE TO THE NORTH. BASED UPON THIS ESTIMATE A TASK FORCE WAS CREATED, CONSISTING OF MY 3RD BRIGADE, ELEMENTS OF THE ARVN ABN DIV AND THE 1ST ARVN CAV REGT. THE ENEMY'S REACTION WAS JUST ABOUT AS WE PREDICTED. THE GROUND UNITS INITIALLY HAD A TOUGH TIME GETTING GOING, PARTICULARLY THE ARMOR UNITS OPERATING IN TERRAIN NOT COMPLETELY FAVORABLE TO THEM. BUT BY THE END OF D-DAY, ALL UNITS WERE PROGRESSING WELL. THE COORDINATION AND TEAMWORK DISPLAYED THAT DAY WAS TRULY REMARKABLE. AFTER OUR INITIAL SUCCESS, WE CONTINUED OUR MOVE TO THE NORTH AND NORTHWEST, RAPIDLY EXPANDING OUR OPERATIONS IN THIS AREA. IT BECAME APPARENT THAT WE HAD ACHIEVED TACTICAL SURPRISE BASED UPON THE CACHES WE FOUND, THE REACTION OF THE ENEMY, AND INTERROGATION OF PW'S. ON 5 MAY THE TASK FORCE WAS DISSOLVED.

50-625
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ON 6 MAY, WHILE THE 9TH ARVN REGT MOVED INTO BA 350, WE MOVED A BRIGADE INTO BA 351, LONG A STRONGHOLD FOR THE 86TH RSG. THE 86TH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FURNISHING AND MAINTAINING SUPPLIES FOR SEVERAL UNITS OPERATING IN PHUOC LONG PROVINCE. ALTHOUGH THE 5TH VC DIV HABITUALLY OPERATED IN THIS AREA, THEIR CURRENT DISPOSITIONS WERE SUCH THAT WE DID NOT EXPECT A FIERCE FIGHT BUT RATHER SMALL, HARRASSING ATTACKS. THIS PROVED TO BE THE CASE.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority AND 873541
By 102, NERA Date 4/2/01

ON 14 MAY, WE MOVED COMPLETELY OUT OF THE SOUTHERN PORTION OF THE FISHHOOK AS THE ARVN ABN DIV ASSUMED A SEPARATE AO IN THAT REGION. MEANWHILE ELEMENTS OF THE 11TH ACR BEGAN MOVING TO THE EAST OF SNOUL. THEREBY COMPLEMENTING THE ARVN OPERATIONS IN BA 350, AND OUR OWN IN BA 351. IT WAS ABOUT THIS TIME THAT WE SENSED THAT THE ENEMY WAS WELL ON ITS WAY TO GETTING REORGANIZED AS THEIR OPERATIONS SEEMED TO BECOME MORE COORDINATED. THE WORD HAD GOTTERN AROUND THAT WE WERE IN CAMBODIA.

AS WE BEGAN TO DIG INTO THE CACHES IN BA 351, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THE ENEMY WAS ATTEMPTING TO MOVE HIS SUPPLIES OUT OF THE AREA BOTH BY VEHICLE AND ON FOOT. WE DISCOVERED SEVERAL ROADS NOT KNOWN ABOUT EARLIER, AND IT SEEMED THAT ORANG WAS A POSSIBLE TRANSSHIPMENT POINT AND A NATURAL FUNNEL FOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC. WE THEREFORE DECIDED TO TRY AND PUT A CAP ON THE AREA. FORTUNATELY, AT ABOUT THIS TIME, THE AREA NORTH OF THE FISHHOOK WAS RAPIDLY DRYING UP, SO ON 20 MAY I FLIPPED THE 1ST BDE INTO THE ORANG AREA.

WE HAVE CONTINUED TO EXPAND OUR OPERATIONS NORTH OF BA 350. IT HAS BEEN HERE THAT WE HAVE FOUGHT ELEMENTS OF ONE NVA REGIMENT AS WELL AS THE 70TH RSG. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE RECEIVED A FEW ATTACKS BY FIRE IN THIS AREA AND IN THE WESTERN PORTION OF BA 351, THE ACTION HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY SMALL UNIT CONTACTS. WE HAVE FOUND THAT THE ENEMY IS DOGGEDLY TRYING TO SAVE HIS CACHES AND WE HAVE HAD SOME BITTER FIGHTING AS WE GET CLOSER AND CLOSER TO HIS SUPPLIES. THE ENEMY ALSO USES THE TECHNIQUE OF DRAWING US INTO A CONTACT WITH THE HOPES THAT HE WILL DIVERT US AWAY FROM HIS CACHES. THIS THEN IS THE TOUGHEST DECISION FOR THE COMMANDER: IS THE ENEMY TRYING TO PROTECT A CACHE THAT HE IS SETTING ON, OR IS HE ATTEMPTING TO CONCEAL THE TRUE LOCATION AND PULL US AWAY.

WE FEEL THAT WE HAVE BEEN MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL IN ANSWERING THAT QUESTION BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE FULLY REALIZE THAT THERE ARE ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES LEFT TO FIND.

HERE ON THIS CHART, WE HAVE DEPICTED THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CACHES DISCOVERED BY US. THEY ARE INDICATED BY THE RED PINS AND DENOTE ALL SIZES OF CACHES, FROM THE TWO OR THREE WEAPONS CACHE TO THE SIZE OF THE CITY OR ROCK ISLAND EAST. THE ARVN CACHES ARE DENOTED IN BLUE. WE FLY RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT EVERYDAY IN ORDER TO FIND LOCATIONS OF OTHER CACHES. WHEN WE FIND AN AREA THAT LOOKS PROMISING, WE MARK THAT FOR FURTHER REFERENCE UNTIL WE PLACE TROOPS ON THE GROUND. THOSE TARGETS ARE MARKED BY THE WHITE AND YELLOW PINS—THE YELLOW INDICATING THAT WE ARE CHECKING THAT AREA OUT NOW, WHILE THE WHITE INDICATES THOSE TO BE CHECKED OUT IN THE FUTURE.

THIS CHART GIVES US A GOOD INDICATION OF WHERE CACHES HAVE BEEN LOCATED AND THEREFORE WHERE MORE MAY BE FOUND. SIGNIFICANTLY, YOU WILL NOTICE THAT WE HAVE FOUND RELATIVELY FEW IN BA 350 AS OPPOSED TO THOSE IN BA 351. INITIALLY THIS SURPRISED US UNTIL WE ANALYZED IT FURTHER AND REALIZED, FIRST, THAT THE 86TH RSG IN BA 351 IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPLYING MORE UNITS THAN IS THE 70TH RSG IN BA 350, AND SECOND, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT MUCH OF THE SUCCESS THAT WE HAVE HAD IN BA 351 IS DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE OPERATIONS THAT WE RAN SOUTH OF HERE IN FEB-APR OF THIS YEAR. WE EFFECTIVELY CUT OFF THE ENEMY'S TRADITIONAL SUPPLY ROUTES CAUSING THE SUPPLIES TO BACK UP. THIS PARTIALLY EXPLAINS WHY WE HAVE FOUND CACHES ABOVE THE GROUND. THE ENEMY SIMPLY DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO DIG THESE CACHES IN THE WAY THEY WOULD HAVE LIKED—YOU'LL SEE A GOOD EXAMPLE OF A SOPHISTICATED BUNKER CACHE SYSTEM A LITTLE LATER AT SHAKEY'S HILL.

WE OFTEN ASK OURSELVES - HOW WELL HAVE WE DONE? IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION BUT AS WE LOOK BACK TO WHAT WE KNEW ABOUT THE AREA BEFORE 1 MAY AND COMPARE THAT WITH WHAT WE HAVE DEVELOPED SINCE THEN, WE HAVE LEARNED A GREAT DEAL ABOUT HOW THE ENEMY OPERATES. (DROP FIRST ACETATE). YOU WILL NOTICE THAT WE ONLY HAD A VAGUE FEELING FOR WHERE HIS SUPPLIES MAY BE BASED UPON OUR OPERATIONS IN THIS AREA FOR $1\frac{1}{2}$ YEARS. WE GENERALLY THOUGHT THAT MOST OF HIS TRAINING AREAS AND SUPPLY POINTS WERE LOCATED IN THESE AREAS OUTLINED, AND REALLY DID NOT KNOW FOR CERTAIN HOW HE WAS RE-SUPPLIED.

SINCE 1 MAY, WE HAVE DEVELOPED QUITE A NETWORK OF ROADS AND TRAILS IN THE AREA, OF WHICH THE MAJOR ONES ARE LOCATED ON THIS SECOND OVERLAY (DROP SECOND ACETATE). WE ALSO HAVE GAINED INFORMATION ABOUT HIS TRAINING AREAS (MARKED ON OVERLAY), SOME OF HIS REGIMENTAL SIZE BUNKER COMPLEXES (MARKED ON OVERLAY), AND HIS HOSPITALS (MARKED ON OVERLAY).

WE HAVE ALSO GAINED REASONABLY RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT JUST ABOUT ALL THE SUPPLIES COMING INTO THESE AREAS WERE TRUCKED FROM SIHANOUKVILLE TO PHNOM PENH AND THEN TO OUR AREA, BEING ESCORTED AND PROTECTED BY THE CAMBODIAN ARMY.

ON THIS CHART (SHOW 1ST G4 CHART) I HAVE DISPLAYED THE LARGEST CACHES IN TERMS OF TONNAGE THAT WE HAVE EXPLOITED (THE CITY, PICATINNY EAST, ROCK ISLAND EAST, AND SHAKEY'S--SHOWN ON THE OVERLAY).

AND ON THIS CHART (2ND G4 CHART) WE HAVE DEPICTED OUR ACCOUNTING SYSTEM FOR HANDLING THE EVACUATION AND DESTRUCTION OF THE CACHES.

WE FEEL THAT WE HAVE DAMAGED THE ENEMY'S SUPPLY SYSTEM. AS A ROUGH ESTIMATE WE THINK WE HAVE FOUND 30% OF HIS SUPPLIES. WE HAVE MORE WORK TO DO, MORE CACHES TO FIND, AND SHORT TIME TO DO IT; BUT, AS THE FIRST

TEAM WE FEEL IF ANYONE CAN DO IT, WE CAN AND WE WILL.

I AM PASSING OUT TO YOU BROCHURES WHICH INDICATE A DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED (BROCHURES HANDED OUT).

FINALLY (LIFT BACK BOTH ACETATES) I WANT TO SHOW YOU WHERE YOU WILL BE GOING FOR THE REMAINDER OF THIS MORNING. FROM ORANG, WE WILL FLY INTO HILL 423 OR AS IT IS BETTER KNOWN, SHA-EY'S HILL, TO VIEW AN ACTUAL CACHE SITE. AFTER THAT, WE WILL FLY OVER THE VILLAGES OF SNOUL AND MINOT ON OUR WAY TO LANDING AT KATUM WHERE THE 25TH INF DIV WILL HOST YOU.

ANY QUESTIONS?