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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 1ST BATTALION (MECH) 5TH INFANTRY
APO San Francisco 96225

AVDCSM-A

15 April 1969

SUBJECT: Annual Supplement to Unit History

THRU: Channels

TO: Chief of Military History
Department of the Army
Washington, D.C. 20315

1. The following Annual Supplement to Unit History is submitted in accordance with AR 670-5, para 61.
2. Reporting unit: 1st Battalion (Mechanized) 5th Infantry.
3. Reporting period: 1 January 1968 through 31 December 1968.
4. Commanding Officers during reporting period:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. 2 January 1968 - 28 February 1968 | - LTC Henry Murphy Jr. |
| b. 28 February 1968 - 27 June 1968 | - LTC Thomas C. Lodge |
| c. 27 June 1968 - 29 October 1968 | - LTC Andrew H. Anderson |
| d. 29 October 1968 - 31 October 1968 | - MAJ Robert D. Wood |
| e. 31 October 1968 - present | - LTC William E. Klein |
5. The following is a narrative description of this unit's activities, accomplishments and major achievements:

JANUARY

The first of the year found the "Bobcats" operating in the Tay Ninh area. January was a month of very scattered action with no major battles. Companies A and B of the 1st Bn (M) 5th Inf were OPCONED to the 2nd Bn, 34th Armor the entire month while the remainder of the battalion worked most of the period with two companies from the 3rd Bn, 22nd Inf. The

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nature of the "Bobcats" function within the overall strategy of the 25th Infantry Division required it to remain flexible. Attached to the 1-5 Task Force near Vinh Hanh, the battalion was responsible for search and destroy operations in the Military Capitol District. Beginning 22 January 1968, for the remainder of the month operating in and around Tay Ninh, the "Bobcats" were classified as a Division Reaction Force. Light action in January accounted for 3 VC killed on the morning of the 16th and 3 VC POW's taken on 21 January 1968.

FEBRUARY

February proved to be far more action loaded for the battalion than the previous month. Involved throughout the month in part of a major allied plan known as Operation Yellowstone, the 1st of the 5th killed 99 communists in scattered minor action and several heavy contacts. Functioning as a battalion minus its Alpha and Charlie Companies which were OPCONED to the 2/34th Armor, reacting for Tay Ninh, escorting convoys to Hoc Mon and securing Engineers accounted for much of the battalion's missions during February. Beginning the 13th of February, however, relatively heavy contact by Companies A and B near Hoc Mon accounted for 65 enemy dead, 96 bunkers destroyed and 4,600 pounds of rice captured. The last four days of the month saw another 32 enemy killed and 143 bunkers destroyed.

MARCH

The battalion continued to be involved in Operation Yellowstone in March. During March the battalion's emphasis was placed primarily on reconnaissance-in-force operations in the Rainy Towers area. AP8s and LP's were also an important part of the overall strategy against the enemy. Charlie Company continued to be OPCONED to the 2/34th throughout the entire month while Company A of the 2/34th, in turn, came under the control of the 1/5 (M) during the last week of March to aid in Rome Flow security. On 3 March 1968 until 9 March 1968, constant contact resulted in 41 enemy dead, 103 bunkers destroyed and 222 RPG-2 rounds and 71 RPG-7 rounds captured. During the last week of the month, 30 tunnels and a hospital complex were destroyed while 942 bags of rice were yielded from one large cache.

APRIL

April was a month of light contact for the "Bobcats". Two airborne assaults by Companies A and B had negative contact. Operating in the Hoc Mon and Rainy Towers regions near Saigon, daylight reconnaissance missions and nightly ambush patrols were employed to try and put the enemy off balance. On April 6th, such a reconnaissance mission uncov-

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ered 55 bunkers and later a VC classroom in a Buddhist temple. In the war against sickness, Medcaps were conducted on 4 April 1968 in the villages of Ap Tay and Ap Co. In a successful night ambush, Alpha Company engaged 7 VC killing 5 with Claymore Mines and small arms fire. On the 22nd of the month, a similar action occurred when Bravo Company killed 3 enemy in an ambush. April also saw Operation Quyet Thang when the "Bobcats" were credited with killing 7 VC during a running battle along the Saigon River. The action took place while the "Bobcats" were sweeping through woods and rice paddies.

MAY

Heavy fighting contrasted May against the first four months of the year. Two battalions of the 5th Regiment lost at least 34 dead when they launched a rocket, mortar and ground attack on the night laager site of Company of the 1st Bn (M) 5th Inf, 15 Km northeast of Cu Chi in the HoBo Woods.

JUNE

June undoubtedly gave the "Bobcats" the type of duty they so earnestly deserved after the heavy fighting of May. The battalion served as a reactionary force for Ton Son Nhut Air Base. The operation consisted largely of ambush patrols each night and conducting inspections in conjunction with the National Police during the day. The Mech unit sustained zero casualties for the month of June and had a negative body count.

JULY

The major portion of July was merely a repetition of the previous month. The battalion continued to operate close to Ton Son Nhut, providing security and acting as a reactionary force for the huge complex. Again, work with the National Police was frequent and ambush patrols were conducted nightly. Company A made one Eagle Flight into a cold LZ and made no contact during the operation. Occasional missions required elements to escort convoys to the Hoc Mon Bridge. Near the end of the month the battalion began operations near Tay Ninh at the "Rock Crusher".

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AUGUST

August opened with the battalion operating near Tay Ninh. After a week of operations in this area, the entire battalion moved into Day Tieng Base Camp. Reconnaissance-in-force missions, ambush patrols and securing vital supply routes were all a part of operations to find, contain and destroy the enemy. A long rumored enemy "third offensive" materialized in the middle of August when in several fiercely fought battles, the battalion killed 295 of the enemy. On the 18th of the month, the combined elements of the battalion killed 42 of the enemy in a day-long battle in which elements utilized strategy and quick maneuvering to obtain victory. Most of the heavy action began with the incident mentioned above and lasted four days until August 22nd. On the 21st, Company C killed 182 in a one and one-half hour long battle in the Ben Cui Rubber Plantation after running headlong into a regimental NVA ambush. Near the end of the month it appeared that most of the large enemy forces had relocated as little action occurred.

SEPTEMBER

September seemed to be a continuation of the fighting of August. In four separate attacks on company night laagers at the village of Ben Cui III on September 11, 16, 17, and 20. Each attack seemed to be more fierce than previously. A mortar attack followed by a human wave was the strategy of the communists. The body count totaled 256 NVA in these four separate battles. The "Battle of Ben Cui" became a well known phenomenon throughout the Division. The II Field Force Commander, LT General Kervin, expressed his gratitude to the "Bobcats" in a letter to LTC Anderson, the Battalion Commanding Officer:

"The 1st of the 5th is the fightingest damn battalion in the II Field Force! That must make about 900 body count since the first of August, about one-third of our total output. The enemy hasn't learned that they just can't fool with that outfit."

OCTOBER

October found the 1st Bn (M) 5th Inf in Dau Tieng, with the primary mission of providing security for rice plows. No major engagements were recorded during the month.

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NOVEMBER

November found the 1st of the 5th Mech in Dau Tieng during the rainy season. The month was spent primarily as security for the rice plows. There were no major engagements during the month.

DECEMBER

December found the "Bobcats" in several scattered actions when they moved into the Trung Lap area. During the period 3 December to 13 December 1968, the 1st Bn (Mech) 5th Inf engaged the enemy in several fiercely fought battles and distinguished itself by soundly defeating the enemy in each engagement. This was a week marked by heavy fighting in which 56 enemy were killed during operations in the HoBo Woods.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

E.J. GUZZO
1LT, Inf
Ass't Adjutant

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by *RC* NARA Date 3/21/01