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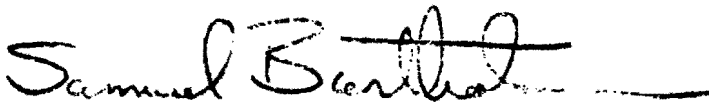
31 January 1969

SUBJECT: Operation Report - Lessons Learned for Period Ending 31 January 1969

TO: See Distribution.

1. (U) References: AR 525-15, AR 220-346, AR 380-5, AR 870-5, and USARV Regulation 525-15.
2. (U) Attached is the Operations Report - Lessons Learned covering activities of the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry during the period 1 November 1968 - 31 January 1969.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

  
SAMUEL W BARTHOLOMEW  
CPT, Armor  
Adjutant

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HEADQUARTERS  
3D SQUADRON, 4TH CAVALRY  
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96225

AVDCCAV - 3

31 January 1969

SUBJECT: Operations Report - Lessons Learned (Quarterly Report for 1 November 1968 to 31 January 1969)

TO: See Distribution

1. Section One - Operations (Significant Activities)

a. Combat Operations

(1) During the reporting period 1 November 1968 through 31 January 1969 this unit participated in OPERATION TOAN THANG, Phase II (13 December through 26 December) and supported Operation Pizza. Additional operations were conducted in the following areas: the Mushroom (XT5832), the Boi Loi Woods (XT5036), the FILHOL Rubber Plantation (XT7020), the Little Rubber (XT3733) and Go Dau Ha (XT3925).

(2) Control headquarters during this report period were:

(a) 2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (3/4 Cav minus one line troop, D Troop and F Co, 50th Infantry) 13-26 Dec.

(b) 1st Bde, 25th Infantry Division (one troop) 13-19 Dec.

(c) Headquarters, 25th Infantry Division: 1 Nov - 13 Dec 68 and 26 Dec 68 - 31 Jan 69.

(3) Units OPCON to 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav during reporting period:

C Co 2-12 Infantry, 25th Infantry Division: 13 Dec 68 - 1 Jan 69.

(4) Missions during the reporting period were:

(a) From 1 November - 24 November this headquarters provided a troop sized ready reaction force for Tay Ninh (XT1652). In addition the Squadron controlled road sweep, convoy escort and security (outposts) on the MSR from XT1652 to XT3533 (Sector I). This mission was accomplished by a single cavalry

troop which was based in Tam Ninh.

Significant activity during this period: none.

(b) From 1 November - 13 December convoy escort and night operations were conducted by 2 cavalry troops in Sector II. The two troops cleared and outposted the MSR in Sector II and provided security for Engineer clearance teams in this area. These operations, day and night, were used to hinder the VC/NVA efforts to interdict the main MSR. Significant activity during this period included;

1. On 5 Nov at 1825H D Trp Aero-Rifles were inserted to support a Long Range Patrol (LRP). Extraction "slicks" received heavy RPG & SA fire. Two UH-1D were grounded and destroyed immediately. One UH-1D gained some altitude but was forced down by ground fire. One UH-1D flew to XT553138 before being forced down. Results: 3 ea UH-1D completely destroyed, 2 heavily damaged. 3 D Troop personnel KIA.

2. On 6 November an AP engaged enemy. Results: 1 BC, 5 possible. 2 US WIA. Probable mission of enemy was mine laying. C Trp VTR had major damage to suspension system from a 50 lb mine (XT30184).

3. On 22 Nov a UH-1D on VR received 15 SA hits. Pilot, Co-pilot and one passenger were wounded. Ship returned to Cu Chi. Military was alerted and a LFT was scrambled. Results were unknown.

4. On 30 Nov a C&C ship was destroyed by RPG fire while landing. Results: no injuries, aircraft destroyed.

(c) The Squadron conducted operations in the FLARL Rubber Plantation Area and in the area of Operation TOAN THANG, Phase II, while OPCON to 2nd Bde, 25th Infantry Division (13 Dec - 26 Dec 68). This action included road sweep and night outposting operations along highway QL 1 from Cu Chi to Tang Bang. The Troop D Aero-Rifle Platoon was OPCON to Troop B at FSB Stewart. Both elements were employed on night ambush patrols and in improvement of FSB Stewart.

Significant activities included:

1. On 17 Dec vic XT693211 in the FILHOL, C Troop received a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire and approximately 10 RPG rounds during a brief engagement. Results: 6 US WIA, 1 ea tank combat loss, no body count.

2. On 23 Dec B Troop received 15 rds of small arms fire. Fire was returned with organic weapons. Results: 1 VCI body count.

(d) From 26 December 1968 to 31 January 1969 the Squadron was under the control of Headquarters, 25th Infantry Division. During this period, the Squadron conducted operations in the Mushroom, the Boi Loi, south of the Ben Cui and along the MSR. Reconnaissance in force actions were used to develop the situation in these areas. Maximum use was made of artillery, gunship firepower and air strikes in support of ground operations. Areas of stiffest resistance were submitted for future B52 and other type air strikes.

Significant activities during this period were:

1. D Troop reacted to Operation Pizza on 4 Jan. Results: 1 VC body count, assorted VC equipment, 1 RPG-2 round and assorted documents.

2. On 5 Jan C Troop uncovered 1000 lb rice at XT517324. Also 5 bunkers containing equipment were discovered and destroyed at XT518328. At XT516339 16 bunkers and 7 spider holes were destroyed. At XT522325 an 8'x8' reinforced bunker, believed to be a hospital, was found and destroyed. Items found in this hospital included a 5'x3' dirt table (blood stained), several hundred empty penecillon bottles. B1 & B2 vitamin pills and sample containers of other pills. At XT522325, a large bunker believed to be a mess hall was discovered and destroyed.

3. On 6 Jan B Troop discovered a cache with 5700 lb rice and 1200 pairs of sandals (XT533245). RPG fire hit one tank (1 US WIA). Fire was returned with rockets, 500 lb bombs, artillery and napalm (XT523337). A second rice cache was found with 2000 lb rice (XT528307). Results: 1 VC body count,

65 bunkers destroyed, 1 KHA, 1 WHA. 9 RPGs were fired, but no vehicles were destroyed.

4. On 6 Jan C Trp lost an APC to a mine (XT525335) w/2 minor WHA; had one tank hit by 2 RPGs w/no casualties (XT522338); destroyed 10 bunkers; took 1 VC POW (XT550370); captured 3 ea AK rifles and 1 ea RPG-2; and had a 6 VC body count.

5. On 7 Jan B Troop captured 10,000 lb rice (XT518331) and discovered an operating room w/table and nurses quarters (XT518339). 100 lbs of medical supplies were evacuated from this location.

6. On 7 Jan C Trp captured and destroyed 2 ea 30 lb Russian AT mine, 2 ChiCom grenades and 200 lb rice (XT519338). Nine reinforced bunkers 8'x8'x8' at the same location were destroyed.

7. On 8 Jan A Trp received 2 RPG hits (XT575315) resulting in 2 US WIA. Suppressive fire resulted in a 1 VC body count.

8. On 8 Jan B Trp received RPG fire (XT510318) and evacuated 3 WHA. Return fire yielded 2 VC body count. Cache discovered with 20,000 lb rice and 1100 lb salt (XT496313). Additional 4 VC body count during day's action.

9. On 8 Jan C Trp made contact (XT517318) and discovered 8000 lb rice and one bicycle in vicinity of contact. Contact continued throughout the move. Artillery and organic Cobra helicopters were used in support. 2200 lb rice were found vic XT517318. One VC officer was captured vic XT504316. Additional 8000 lbs of rice were found in same vicinity.

10. On 10 Jan C Trp discovered 400 lbs of rice and 40 sandbags of salt (XT518300) in a series of 10 bunkers. At XT510300 a bunker containing 700 AK-47 rds, documents and medical supplies was destroyed. Two VC with RPG were engaged and killed (XT510301).

11. On 11 Jan A Trp found and destroyed 2500 lb rice at XT499309, 1800 lbs of rice at XT504317 and 1700 lbs of rice at XT496316.

12. On 11 Jan C Trp destroyed 2000 lbs of rice (XT498310). Two AK-47s were found at XT492311 and one AK-47 and one ChiCom carbine were taken at XT506302.

13. C Trp discovered and destroyed 2400 lbs of rice (XT498310). One rifle grenade, 3 carbine magazines, 1 bike and 1 case 7.62 ammo were captured. Result: 1 body count.

14. On 13 Jan C Trp received small arms fire (XT482368). Return fire resulted in a 6 VC/NVA body count and a captured ChiCom 30 cal machine gun. Two POWs were evacuated with shrapnel wounds.

15. On 17 Jan A Trp had continuous contact starting with SA fire at XT528254. Return fire killed 2 VC and yielded 1 AK-47 and 1 RPG launcher. At XT517346 one tank was destroyed. Return fire yielded a 2 body count and 1 AK-47. Total body count 16. US MIA 17. The Troop Commander, CPT Moss, was slightly wounded and dusted off.

16. On 17 Jan B Trp had continuous contact from XT522358 to XT474378. Results: body count 14 VC, US MIA 6. Air strikes and artillery (700 rds) were used liberally. The Troop Commander, CPT Headley, was slightly wounded and dusted off.

17. On 17 Jan C Trp had continuous contact on RIF from XT528353 to XT479390. Results: 16 VC body count, 6 US MIA. 1LT Jackson acting CO was wounded and evacuated. CPT Tompkins was assigned as the new CO.

18. At 0215H on 26 Jan the B Trp night laager (XT340185) near the Cambodian border received a heavy enemy attack from the NW and SE. This incoming fire consisted of SA, 57mm, AW recoilless rifle and RPG rounds. The enemy broke contact (ceased fire) at 0506H. A sweep of the area of contact at dawn revealed 3 POWs 15 VC (BC), 11 RPG-7 rounds, 16 RPG-2 rounds, 35 ChiCom hand grenades, 21 AK-47 magazines, 3 AK-47s, 1 light machine gun, 1 US frag grenade and 1 US M14 rifle magazine. US casualties: 7 US MIA and 2 US KIA.

b. Principal Activities: during the report period the activities of organic elements were:

HQ & HQ Troop: 92 days operations

A Troop: 86 days operation; 6 days training and maintenance

B Troop: 86 days operation; 6 days training and maintenance

C Troop: 86 days operation; 6 days training and maintenance

D Troop: 92 days operation

F Co, 50th Inf (LRP): 92 days operation

2.4) Section 2 Lessons Learned: Commander's Observations, Evaluations and Recommendations:

a. Personnel: None.

b. Operations: None.

c. Training:

(1) Rigging of personnel carriers for helicopter assisted recovery operations.

(a) Observation: During operations in extremely wet areas, normal recovery methods using organic vehicles have been enhanced by use of CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

(b) Evaluation: This method of recovery has been successful in six of nine attempts. The successful recovery efforts were made by rigging the bogged down vehicle to a Chinook. The lift of the helicopter enabled the immobile vehicle to recover itself. Additional recovery vehicles were not needed. In the three unsuccessful attempts the suction created by especially sticky, loose mud was too great for the helicopter to overcome. However, the addition of a recovery vehicle on the ground permitted easy extraction in each of these three cases.

(c) Recommendation: That each line platoon should be briefed on rigging vehicles for helicopter assisted recovery; that each line platoon should carry 100 feet of tow cable for rigging; and that additional recovery operations with helicopters should be made to further develop and to improve this type operation.

d. Intelligence: None.

e. Logistics:

(1) Excessive Logistical Report Requirements:

(a) Observation: The number of reports required by higher headquarters is excessive and duplicative in nature.

(b) Evaluation: The Squadron Supply Officer has had twenty recurring reports, plus many one-time reports during this reporting period. In many cases these reports differed only in format and could have been consolidated into a single comprehensive report. For example, command deadline reports, aircraft status reports and all the various 2406's fall into the same category and could be consolidated.

(c) Recommendation: That higher headquarters analyze recurring reports, consolidate those of a duplicating nature, and eliminate those that are not absolutely necessary.

f. Organization: None.

g. PSYOPs:

(1) Quick Reaction missions:

(a) Observation: By working closely with the Squadron S2, a great deal of pertinent enemy information was obtained and used in time to be of effective psychological advantage.

(b) Evaluation: In cases where POWs were questioned by the unit S2 who incorporated PSYOPs EEI into the interrogation, effective material, suitable for quick reaction, i.e. same day loudspeaker broadcasts, was obtained. This proved to be a much faster method of dissemination of information than was available through normal channels.

(c) Recommendation: That the S5 work closely with the S2 in order to obtain "same day" information suitable for PSYOPs missions.



(2) Background information on Kit Carson personnel.

(a) Observation: Knowledge of a Kit Carson's past area(s) of operations and his past position in the Viet Cong Organization was extremely useful when his old Area of Operations (AO) coincided with the Squadron's AO.

(b) Evaluation: Additional useful information may be uncovered from the Kit Carson's experience in a particular area. This knowledge of the area can then be used by the Commander and his staff to increase the effectiveness of the unit's operation in the AO.

(c) Recommendation: That a complete background dossier be sent with each Kit Carson when he is assigned to a unit.

h. Medical:

(1) Food Poisoning:

(a) Observation: Personnel who save A ration type meats for consumption at a later date have contracted a fulminating staph, food poisoning.

(b) Evaluation: In warm climates non-refrigerated meat spoils easily a short time after it is cooked.

(c) Recommendation: That instruction on the proper storage of food stuffs be given to all personnel. That this instruction should be repeated before all hol days where special food, such as turkey, increases the temptation to save unrefrigerated meat.

(2) Medics:

(a) Observation: Two of the three medics killed in action since June 1968, died in the performance of a non-medical duty.

(b) Evaluation: These deaths were attributed to participation in non-medical action which the medics were neither commanded nor trained to perform.

(c) Recommendation: That we emphasize to the medics that they are to perform only their medical duties.

(c) Recommendation: That commanders emphasize to the medics that they are to perform only their medical duties.



ROBERT S. MCGOWAN  
LTC, ARMOR  
Commanding