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IN REPLY REFER TO

AD 503184

AGAM-P (M) (15 Jul 69)

FOR OT UT 69X014

25 July 1969

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report - Hancock Eagle, conducted by 3d Battalion (Airborne), 506th Infantry, Period 4 February 1969 to 31 March 1969 (U)

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2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

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**KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General**

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3d Battalion (Airborne), 506th Infantry

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 3D BATTALION (AIRBORNE), 506TH INFANTRY
APO San Francisco 96383

AVDC-AF-0

31 April 1969

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report

THRU: Commanding Officer
Task Force South
APO San Francisco 96204

1. Name or Identity and/or Type of Operations:

HANCOCK EAGLE

2. Date of Operations:

- a. Phase I: 04 February - 21 February 1969.
- b. Phase II: 28 February - 03 March 1969.
- c. Phase III: 23 March - 31 March 1969.

3. Location:

AO SHERIDAN, Binh Thuan Province.

4. Control or Command Headquarters:

Task Force 3-506 Infantry Battalion (ABN)

5. Reporting Officer:

LTC Manuel A. Alves, Infantry, Commanding

6. Task Organization:

- a. 3-506 Infantry Battalion (ABN)
- b. 4-44th ARVN Battalion
- c. D/2-320th Artillery (105)
- d. Provisional Platoon/1-69 Armor
- e. Engineer Section/HHC/326th Engineer Battalion
- f. 1st Chemical Detachment (OPCON)

7. Supporting Forces:

- a. 192d Assault Helicopter Company
- b. B/7-17 Cavalry

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SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report

- c. 5-22 Artillery (8"/175mm) (GS)
- d. A/5-27 Artillery (105) (GS)
- e. B/5-27 Artillery (105) (GS)
- f. 183d Airplane Reconnaissance Company
- g. Forward Air Controller (USAF)
- h. Logistics Support Activity
- i. 3rd Military Police Platoon, 630th MP Company
- j. 101st Military Intelligence Detachment
- k. 55th Military Intelligence Detachment

8. Intelligence: (See Inclosure 1)

9. Mission:

TF 3-506 is assigned a continuing three fold mission (each of equal importance):

- a. Locate and destroy all NVA/VC forces within TF 3-506 AO.
- b. To conduct combined operations with and provide tactical, logistical, and fire support to the ARVN counterpart unit, 44th ARVN Regiment.
- c. To conduct combined operations with Regional and Popular Forces and provide combat support to the Revolutionary Development Program in conjunction with Binh Thuan Province.

10. Concept of Operation:

TF 3-506 conducted combined and unilateral Reconnaissance in Force and Bushmaster Operations throughout the AO. Several platoon and company size combined VCI operations were conducted with the National Police Field Forces.

11. Execution:

TF 3-506 continued OPCON to TF South with light to moderate contact during the reporting period.

The AO for Operation HANCOCK EAGLE was in Binh Thuan Province, north of Phan Thiet City: ZT2009 - ZT2060 - BN1060 - BN1014. Operation HANCOCK EAGLE, Phase I, commenced 04 February 1969 and terminated 21 February 1969. The Task Organization consisted of TF 3-506 (ABN) and 4th Bn, 44th ARVN Regiment.

On the first day of the operation there was negative contact with the enemy. On 05 February 1969, 1/C/3-506, while conducting RIF operations NW of Thien Giao vicinity AN808386, engaged and killed 1 VC and captured 1 M-1 Carbine, documents, and a medical supply kit. 3/D/3-506,

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while conducting Bushmaster operations NW of Thien Giao, in the vicinity BNO26559, engaged and killed 1 VC and captured 1 Chicom Pistol and documents discussing psychological operations. 1 US was wounded in this contact. While moving into a night defensive position vicinity AN856315, 3/B/3-506 discovered a rice cache containing 2 tons of rice. The rice was evacuated for redistribution. On 06 February 1969, B/3-506 (-) found an additional 1½ tons of rice in the vicinity AN851314. This rice was also evacuated for redistribution. On 07 February 1969, 3/C/3-506, while conducting sweep operations north of Phan Thiet, vicinity AN833197, detonated a booby trap resulting in 2 US WIA. Recon Plat/3-506, conducting reconnaissance NE of Phan Thiet in the Le Hong Phong Forest, engaged 2 VC with SA fire. Results were negative friendly casualties with the enemy sustaining 1 VC KIA and 1 Chicom Pistol, 2 M-26 grenades and documents captured. 3/D/3-506, while conducting RIF operations north of Phan Thiet, had 1 US injured as a result of punji stakes. On 08 February 1969, 1/B/3-506, while conducting Bushmaster operations vicinity AN875318, engaged 2 VC with SA and AW fire. A sweep through the contact area revealed 1 VC KIA, 1/B/3-506 also detained 4 Vietnamese suspects in the same vicinity; they were extracted to LZ Betty for interrogation and classification. B/3-506 (-), conducting RIF operations in the vicinity AN859310, found 1500 lbs of rice in a hollowed out mound and evacuated it for redistribution. 2/D/3-506, while conducting RIF operations vicinity AN842192, was engaged by an estimated VC squad which employed SA and AW fire. 2/D/3-506 returned the fire and swept through the contact area. Results were: 2 US WIA, Enemy unknown. On 09 February 1969, 3/D/3-506, while conducting Bushmaster operations in the vicinity AN771289, engaged 1 NVA squad with SA & AW fire. The NVA returned fire and withdrew. Results of this contact were 1 US WIA, 3 NVA KIA, 2 AK-47's and 2 rucksacks captured. 2/D/3-506, while continuing RIF operations in the vicinity AN828178, captured 1 VC PW and documents. On 10 February 1969, 3/B/3-506, while conducting RIF operations NW of Thien Giao in the vicinity AN843293, engaged an estimated VC squad with SA & AW fire. The VC returned fire and withdrew. Results were: negative friendly casualties and enemy unknown. A thorough search of the contact area revealed a rice cache containing 1500 lbs of rice which was evacuated for redistribution. 3/B/3-506, while conducting RIF operations in the Le Hong Phong Forest vicinity AN883114, engaged a VC squad with SA and AW fire. A sweep through the contact area revealed 4 VC KIA and 2 AK-47's, 2 Chicom Pistols and documents. On 11 February 1969, 3/B/3-506, while conducting RIF operations in the vicinity AN858310, discovered a rice cache containing 2½ tons of rice which was evacuated for redistribution. 2/D/3-506, while conducting RIF operations in the vicinity of AN840197, were engaged by an estimated VC squad which employed SA, & AW fire and B-40 rockets. 2/D/3-506 returned the fire and swept through the contact area. Results were 3 US WIA and enemy unknown. On 12 February 1969, US, ARVN, RF and PF forces were engaged in heavy contact near OP Sara vicinity AN919161. Results were 3 US KIA, 15 US WIA; Enemy: 66 NVA/VC KIA (BC), and 18 AK-47's, 4 Chicom K-54 Pistols, 3 B-40 Rocket Launchers, 2 B-41

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Rocket Launchers, 2 DPM Chicom 53 LMG's, and 3 RPD Chicom 56 LMG's (See Inclosure 2 Combat After Action Report "SARA/Hoa Tan"). On 13 February 1969, B/3-506 (-), conducting RIF operations in the vicinity AN876324, north of Thien Giao, discovered an additional 2½ tons of rice and evacuated it for redistribution. 2/B/3-506, while conducting RIF operations in the vicinity AN946245, in the Le Hong Phong Forest, engaged a VC squad with SA and AW fire resulting in 1 VC KIA and 1 Russian sniper rifle captured. C/3-506 (-), while conducting RIF operations in the vicinity AN898161, discovered 15 graves containing 15 NVA killed as a result of SA fire. 2/D/3-506, while conducting RIF operations in the vicinity AN840197, found several large rice caches totaling 20 tons of rice; all of the rice was evacuated to LZ Betty for redistribution in the Phan Thiet area. On 14 February 1969, 2/D/3-506, while conducting RIF operations NE of Phan Thiet at vicinity AN850211, engaged 5 VC with SA fire. Artillery was employed in support and a sweep through the contact area revealed 3 VC KIA; 2 AK-47's and 1 Chicom Pistol captured. On 16 February 1969, 1/D/3-506 found one grave containing 1 VC KIA as a result of SA fire. B/3-506 (-), continuing RIF operations around Thien Giao vicinity AN847206, found 1 ton of rice which was evacuated for redistribution. The 2/D/3-506 at vicinity AN838199, found 2 graves containing 2 VC KIA as a result of SA fire. On 18 February 1969, B/3-506 (-), while conducting RIF operations NE of Thien Giao vicinity AN858304, was engaged by an enemy sniper resulting in 1 US WIA. US artillery was employed in support. On 19 February 1969, 2/B/3-506, while conducting RIF operations in the Le Hong Phong Forest vicinity BN015215, captured 3 VC and medical supplies. On 20 February 1969, 2/C/3-506, while conducting RIF operations vicinity AN778298, detonated a booby trap resulting in 1 US WIA. B/3-506 (-), in the vicinity AN857303, found an additional 1200 lbs of rice. Rice was evacuated for redistribution. 2/B/3-506, while conducting Bushmaster operations in the Le Hong Phong Forest, engaged an NVA squad on a trail resulting in 5 NVA KIA, 2 AK-47's, 3 SKS's, and 3 Chicom Grenades captured. On 21 February 1969, a Recon Team from 3-506 engaged a VC squad with SA & AW, and artillery. A sweep through the contact area revealed 13 enemy rucksacks containing clothing, food and 2 US pistol belts. Operation HANCOCK EAGLE, Phase II, commenced 28 February 1969 and terminated 03 March 1969. On 28 February 1969, 1/C/3-506, while conducting RIF operations in the Le Hong Phong Forest in the vicinity BN062168, engaged a VC platoon with SA and AW. 192d Assault Helicopter Company gunships were employed in support resulting in 1 VC KIA, accredited to 192d. On 01 March 1969, 1/C/3-506, while moving into their night defensive position, was engaged by a VC squad who employed SA, AW fire and B-40 rockets. B/7-17 Cavalry Cobras were diverted to provide support resulting in 3 VC KIA accredited to B/7-17 Cavalry. Earlier on 01 March 1969, B/7-17 Cavalry, while OPCON to TF 3-506 and operating in the Le Hong Phong vicinity BN061295, engaged an estimated VC squad resulting in 5 VC KIA. A/3-506 (-), while conducting RIF operations north of Phan Thiet vicinity AN840185, detonated a booby trap resulting in 2 US WIA. On 02 March 1969, A/3-506 (-), in the vicinity

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AN848194, received sniper fire resulting in 1 US WIA. 1st Co, 4th Battalion, 44th Regiment, while in an ambush position vicinity AN989350, engaged 4 VC with SA fire resulting in 1 VC KIA and 1 VC captured. On 03 March 1969, a Recon Team in the vicinity BN155263, found 1 grave containing 1 VC KIA as a result of SA fire.

Operation HANCOCK EAGLE, Phase III, commenced 23 March 1969 and terminated 31 March 1969. On 25 March 1969, a Recon Team from 3-506, while operating west of Phan Thiet in the vicinity AN764084, engaged a VC squad with SA and AW fire. Artillery was employed in support and the contact resulted in 1 US WIA, 2 VC KIA, and 1 AK-47, 1 rucksack captured. On 26 March 1969, 3/D/3-506, while conducting Bushmaster operations 1W of Phan Thiet vicinity ZT169116, engaged and killed 1 VC with SA fire and captured miscellaneous documents. On 27 March 1969, B/7-17 Cavalry, while OPCON to 3-506, operating NW of Phan Thiet vicinity ZT145150, engaged 3 VC near a bunker complex resulting in 3 VC KIA. B/7-17 Cavalry Infantry platoon employed in the contact area, captured 1 typewriter, various medical supplies, 20 B-40 rockets, 23 B-40 rocket charges and documents. Later that same day, B/7-17 Cav Infantry platoon engaged a VC platoon in the vicinity ZT142156. Cobras were employed in support; contact resulted in 3 US WIA, 5 VC KIA with 1 Mauser Rifle, 1 Chicom Pistol and 1 medical kit captured. 1/A/3-506, while conducting RIF operations in the vicinity AN812516 NW of Thien Giao, discovered 1 grave containing 1 VC KIA as a result of SA fire. Also in the grave was one gas mask and a diary. 3/D/3-506, conducting RIF operations NW of Phan Thiet, found 2 graves containing 2 VC KIA as a result of SA fire. 1st and 3rd Companies, 4th Bn, 44th ARVN Regiment, while conducting RIF operations NW of Phan Thiet in the vicinity AN775172, was engaged by a VC squad with SA & AW fire. The ARVN's returned fire and swept through the contact area. Results were 1 ARVN KIA, enemy unknown. On 29 March 1969, 3/C/3-506, while conducting RIF operations NW of Phan Thiet in the vicinity AN736291, found a weapons and ammunition cache containing one 57mm Recoilless Rifle, 1 US .30 cal machine gun, 2 PRC-10 radios, 1 RPD Chicom 53 IMG, 3 SKS's, 1 Mauser, 22 rounds of 82mm mortar ammunition, 5 rounds of 60mm mortar ammunition, 19 B-40 rocket rounds, 16 RPG rounds, 6,000 rounds of assorted SA ammunition, 500 rounds .30 cal machine gun ammunition (linked), 3 wire cutters, 35 B-40 rocket charges, 20 60mm mortar fuses and 5 home made bombs. All items were evacuated. On 31 March 1969, 1/A/3-506, while conducting RIF operations vicinity AN738286, found 3 graves containing 3 VC KIA as a result of SA fire. 1/D/3-506, in the vicinity AN746047, found 1 grave containing 1 VC KIA as a result of SA fire. A Recon Team from 3-506, while conducting reconnaissance along a trail at vicinity AN730277, engaged 2 VC with SA & AW fire. A sweep through the contact area revealed 1 AK-47 and 1 rucksack containing food and documents. 1st Co, 4th Bn, 44th ARVN Regiment, while conducting RIF operations in the vicinity AN823125, engaged a VC squad with SA and AW fire. A sweep through the contact area revealed 1 VC KIA.

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SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report

12. Results:

a. Personnel (Friendly):

(1) US: 3 KIA
34 WIA

(2) Vietnamese:

1 KIA
1 WIA

b. Personnel (Enemy):

134 NVA/VC KIA (BC)
5 CIA
4 Detained

c. Equipment:

(1) Friendly losses negative
(2) Enemy:

CIA: one 57mm Recoilless Rifle
1 US .30 cal MG
4 RPD Chicom LMG
2 DEM Chicom LMG
31 tons rice
28 AK-47's
3 B-40 Rocket Launchers
2 B-41 Rocket Launchers
39 B-40 Rocket Rounds
58 B-40 Rocket Charges
22 rounds 82mm mortar
5 rounds 60mm mortar
20 60mm mortar round fuses
16 RPG Rounds
10 Chicom Pistols
1 BAR
1 Russian Sniper Rifle
6 SKS's
2 Mauser Rifles
1 M-1 Carbine
5 Chicom Grenades
17 rucksacks
2 PRC-10 Radios
1 typewriter
6,000 rounds assorted SA ammunition
500 rounds .30 cal MG ammunition (linked)
5 Homemade Bombs

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3 wire cutters
assorted documents & medical supplies

13. Administrative Matters:

During the conduct of combined ARVN/US operations the ARVN soldiers consistently required excessive water resupplies because each soldier only carries one canteen. Through careful analysis of the terrain and enemy situation, the ARVN units were usually employed near streams to alleviate this problem. A more suitable solution would be to provide additional canteens to the ARVN and emphasize water discipline and require them to precook their rice prior to the operation or prepare it during the resupply.

14. Special Equipment and Techniques:

a. The use of 175mm and 8" Howitzer cannisters as water containers was most effective during HANCOCK EAGLE. The cannisters should not be completely filled, 8" - 10" expansion space should be provided to preclude damage when dropped from the resupply aircraft. The use of these cannisters also precludes a backhaul mission because the user can destroy or bury the cannisters; this also reduces helicopter activity over the platoon position.

b. The use of marking panels and mirrors was emphasized to the ARVN and this procedure also reduces the possibility of revealing friendly positions i.e. Resupply aircraft can easily identify a panel marker or mirror on a higher altitude pass (1500 - 2000 feet) then double back, slow the speed and kick out the resupply without hovering or landing.

c. During these combined operations, MACV and ARVN advisors and US unit leaders must cross exchange MACV SOI and US unit SOI's to facilitate communication and enhance communications security.

15. Advisor/Commander Analysis:

The combined operations with the ARVN 14th Regiment and the National Police Field Forces were significantly improved. ARVN commanders continue to be reluctant to separate the companies into platoon size operations in order to effectively conduct Bushmaster and small unit Reconnaissance in Force operations. The Combined Reconnaissance ARVN American Team (COBRAA) consisting of eight ARVN LRP's and seven US LRP's have convinced the Regimental Commander (ARVN) that the ARVN soldiers can operate independently if well led, supported and provided adequate communications. The mutual exchange of operating techniques and awarding combat decorations to both ARVN and US LRP members has also contributed to upgrading the combat effectiveness of the ARVN. Continued command emphasis will be placed on combined operations and the Regional Forces will be assisted in the near future.

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16. Recommendations/Lessons Learned:

Premature firing by ambush positions continued to be a problem; however, the technique of integrating ARVN and US man for man on ambush positions has significantly reduced premature firing. It is believed that the ARVN have truly learned that by waiting until the enemy is within 50 meters before opening fire, the ambush will produce results. The use of claymores was emphasized and the ARVN now have confidence in its safety and employment.

Manuel A. Alves
MANUEL A. ALVES
LTC, Infantry
Commanding

Inlosures:

- 1. Intelligence**
- 2. Combat After Action Report "SARA/Hoa Tan"**

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Inclosure 1, Combat After-Action Report (Operation Hancock Eagle)

A. Intelligence.

1. Enemy Disposition: As Phase I of Operation HANCOCK EAGLE commenced Military Region 6 remained in the vicinity of Base Area 347; however, the Military Staff Section was believed to have displaced forward into the Nui Dang Salin area with the VC Binh Thuan Province Committee in order to control the military units. The 482 LF Bn remained in its normal operational area throughout the period in the vicinity of Lo To Mtn (vic AN 7526). The 840 MF Bn during early February 1969 operated from the Le Hong Phong Secret Zone; however, as Phase I came to a close the 840 had moved from the Le Hong Phong across QL 1 and Highway 8B into the Triangle area to support the 482 LF Bn. On 30 Jan 69, PW Ha Huu Thuy, captured in Phan Rang, stated that he was a member of the 186 MF Bn, and that his unit had moved from Tuyen Duc (P) to Binh Thuan (P) in early January 1969. During February 1969 PWs, Hoi Uhanhs and documents confirmed the presence of the 186 MF Bn within Binh Thuan (P). Throughout the reporting period the 186 MF Bn was based out of the Le Hong Phong. The presence of the 240 NVA Bn was upgraded to probable with the capture of a PW on 12 Feb 69 and repeated mention of the unit in captured documents. Numerous PWs and Hoi Chanhs from various MF and LF units have mentioned the 200C Sapper Bn and documents taken from KIA have indicated the unit designation; however, no substantial information could be developed on the 200C during the reporting period. The Local Force Companies and the Village Guerrilla units remained in their normal operating areas with no significant change in operations, strength or equipment.

2. Enemy Activities:

(a) During Phase I the 482 LF Bn was no identified in contact with friendly elements, as the unit remained in their base area conducting military and political training. Due to heavy losses the 482 attempted to upgrade LF and guerrilla personnel into the unit as replacements were received during this period. A PW captured on 15 Mar 69 stated that the C-3 Co, 482 Bn was completely destroyed in the Binh Lam (H) contact on 22 Feb 69. A Hoi Chanh who had formerly been a member of the 89th LF Co (Pham Ly Cham District Unit) stated that 25 replacements from the Bac Binh area had been sent to the 482 thus increasing the strength of the unit to approximately 70 personnel. As Operation HANCOCK EAGLE came to a close on 31 Mar 69, documents captured by Recon Team 55 off of VC KIA identified the KIA as members of the 482 LF Bn in the vicinity AN 730277.

(b) The 840 MF Bn continually acted in a supporting role in three contacts; with the 482 EN on 22 Feb 69 and 22 Mar 69, and with the 186 Bn on 12 Feb 69. The 840 moved from the Le Hong Phong after supporting the 186 Bn into the mountains northwest of Thien Giao to support the 482 Bn in early February. Documents captured by A/3-506 on 6 Mar 69, vic AN 734270, from VC KIA identified the 840 MF Bn. It is believed that the 840 MF Bn joined with the 482 and elements of the 200C in this vicinity to attack Thien Giao District Headquarters on 22 Mar 69; however no positive unit identification could be gained in the attack on Thien Giao. Throughout the period the 840 MF Bn was never decisively engaged during Operation HANCOCK EAGLE.

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(c) After suffering heavy casualties during February 1969 the 186 MF Bn continued to be harassed by friendly operations within the Le Hong Phong. Documents captured by C/3-506 on 27 Feb 69, vic EN 058283, contained what was determined to be a sketch and attack plan of Song Luy Village, vic EN 081405. A rallier from the C-2 Co, 186 Bn on 28 Feb 69 confirmed Song Luy as the target for the 186 Bn. Since the captured sketches appeared to be a finalized plan, the capturing of the documents and the killing of the reconnaissance element negated the enemies element of surprise and as Phase III ended the 186 Bn had remained relatively inactive.

(d) Agent reports continued to place the 240 NVA Bn in the Song Mao area in the vicinity of the Ba Che valley, but no positive identification of the unit could be made. Captured documents in the Le Hong Phong contained the identification of the C-40 Unit which is a reported AKA for the 240 Bn. When the 240 NVA Bn was in Tuyen Duc (P) it was rarely identified in contact and never initiated action on its own but usually as a supporting or reinforcing element.

(e) Due to interrogation of Local Force PWs and Hoi Chanhs it is believed that the 200C Unit is divided into three elements; this also seems to be substantiated by agent reports which report the 200C in the Song Mao area and the Le Hong Phong. Captured documents also point to an element of the 200C in the mountains northwest of Thien Giao. Since the 200C designation was originally an infiltration group number it is entirely possible that the unit has divided in three sapper units. One element is probably supporting the 182 Bn west of Highway 8B, another element is possible operating in conjunction with either the 186 Bn or the VC Thuan Phong District Committee out of the Le Hong Phong and directed against the population centers and ARVN outposts along QL 1. The third element is most likely under the operational control of the Bac Binh Committee in the Song Mao-Hoa Da-Tuy Phong area.

(f) During the month of March LZ BETTY received a total of nine stand-off mortar attacks with a total of between 73 and 77 rounds of 82mm mortar; and on two separate occasions the perimeter of LZ BETTY was harassed with SA fire. This significant increase can probably be attributed to the fact that the enemy suffered heavy casualties in February; therefore the enemy increased his stand-off attacks in order to keep pace with the second phase of his Winter-Spring Offensive, while risking and suffering minimal casualties.

3. Enemy Disposition at Conclusion of Operation HANCOCK EAGLE

182 LF Bn vic AN 7330
840 MF Bn vic AN 7533
186 MF Bn vic EN 0528
240 NVA Bn..... unk
200C Bn vic AN 7330, vic EN 0528, vic EN 2158
181 LF Bn vic 2S 2799, vic AN 9616, vic ZT 2314
130 LF Co vic AN 8019
150 LF Co vic AN 9722
180 LF Co vic AN 7305
0115 LF Co..... vic AN 9439

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 3D BATTALION (AIRBORNE) 506TH INFANTRY
APO US FORCES 96383

15 February 1969

AVDQ-AF-0

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report

Commanding General
I FORCECV
APO US FORCES 96350

1. Name of Identity and/or Type of Operation

"SARA/HOA TAN"

2. Date of Operation:

120300 FEB - 131025N FEB 1969.

3. Location:

AO SHERIDAN, Binh Thuan Province, vicinity AN898164.

4. Control or Command Headquarters:

Task Force 3-506 INF (ABN)

5. Reporting Officer:

ITC Manuel A. Alves, Infantry Commanding

6. Task Organization:

- a. 3-506 Infantry Battalion (ABN).
- b. D/2-320 Artillery (105mm) (AS)
- c. Provisional Platoon/1-69 Armor
- d. Engineer Section/326 Engineer Bn.
- e. First and Second Companies/2-44 ARVN
- f. 888 Regional Force Company
- g. 443 Regional Force Company
- h. 164 Regional Force Company
- i. 26 and 27 Popular Force Platoons
- j. Advisory Team 37, APO San Francisco 96317

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- a. 192d Assault Helicopter Company
- b. B/7-17 Cavalry
- c. 5-22 Artillery (8" and 175mm)
- d. 5-27 Artillery (105mm)
- e. B/29 Artillery (Searchlight)
- f. 183d Airplane Company
- g. Forward Air Controller
- h. Naval Gunfire Liaison Officer
- i. Logistics Support Activity
- j. 272d Military Police Platoon
- k. 101 Military Intelligence Detachment
- l. Chemical Section

8. Intelligence:

a. During the night of 11 February 1969, the 186 MF Bn linked up with elements of the 840 MF Bn and the 450 LF Co, vicinity AN9825, in order to attack the RF outpost, Sara, along QL-1. Sapper elements of the 240 NVA Bn were attached to the C-5 (Sapper) Co, 840 MF Bn and elements of the 450 LF Co comprised the attacking force.

b. South of outpost Sara along QL-1 an ambush position was established in order to delay friendly reinforcements. Two Companies of the 186 MF Bn with a heavy weapons element from the C-4 (Hvy Wpns) Co, 186 MF Bn established this ambush, which also consisted of mutually supporting three man positions. One of the enemy Companies identified was the C-1 Co, 186 MF Bn by a prisoner captured during the contact and documents captured during the sweep the next morning. The PW stated that his unit was ordered by MR-6 to remain in their ambush position for a minimum of 24 hours and a maximum of 48 hours. A second prisoner captured on the morning of 12 February 1969 at Sara outpost stated that he was a member of the 240 NVA Bn; he also stated that elements of the 186 MF Bn were in ambush position south of Sara. In addition the PW from the 240 NVA Bn mentioned that elements of the 840 MF Bn also occupied ambush positions with the 186 MF Bn.

c. A Hoi Chanh who rallied on the morning of 14 February 1969, stated that he was a member of the C-4 (Hvy Wpns) Co, 186 MF Bn. He stated that the most of his company along with elements of the 840 MF Bn were ambushing an LZ, vicinity AN928168, in the anticipation of friendly forces using this LZ for reaction or blocking forces. When C/3-506 (-) combat assaulted directly into the contact area the enemy could not engage them as they were too far away. The Hoi Chanh had no knowledge of what weapons the 840 MF Bn had in this LZ ambush, but his company was armed with two 57mm RR, three 12.7mm MG, two 82mm mortars, and 2 carriage mounted Soviet HMG (dual barreled).

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d. After the attack on Sara the enemy initially withdrew to Hong Son (V) area, vicinity AN9825, where the battalion aid station was located, the wounded were then transferred to the District Dispensary in O RO jungle, vicinity BN0830.

9. Mission:

To destroy an estimated NVA/VC battalion located at AN898164.

10. Concept of Operations:

Scheme of Maneuver. See Enclosure 1, Operation Overlay. Task Force 3-506 conducted a combined operation with ARVN/RF/PF units within AO Sheridan. C/3-506 conducted a combat assault to engage and destroy an enemy battalion. Provisional Platoon (PP)/1-69 Armor, Reconnaissance Platoon of 3-506 and the 888th Regional Force Platoon was organized into a combined Strike Force to conduct a coordinated attack in conjunction with C/3-506. The 1st and 2d Companies, 2-44th ARVN Regiment and the 443 and 164 Regional Force Companies occupied blocking positions on the periphery of the area of contact. Company A/3-506 occupied blocking positions astride enemy withdrawal routes.

11. Execution:

At 1200H February 1969, the PF outpost located at AN95818 (Sara) came under 60mm mortar fire; at 1315H an estimated VC battalion launched a ground attack. Artillery was employed immediately, fires being adjusted by FO's and aircraft pilots of the 183d Airplane Company. Armed helicopters from the 192d AHC arrived on station at 0320H and supported; Spooky arrived on station at 0420H and supported until the contact broke at 0600H.

At 0620H, A/3-506 was ordered to move from AN9620 to occupy blocking positions vicinity AN908198 and AN940170. At 0645H, 2/B/3-506 was airlifted to vicinity Sara outpost for insertion to conduct sweep operation.

At 0715H, while enroute to Sara, D/3-506 received small arms fire vicinity AN840170, and 2/B/3-506 was diverted for possible insertion in this contact.

At 0725H, the contact with D/3-506 broke and at 0730H the 443 and 164 RF Companies made contact with two reinforced NVA/VC Companies vicinity AN897162.

2/B/3-506 was again diverted for possible insertion to reinforce or block for the two RF Companies. The Senior Advisor, Binh Thuan Province, recommended that 2/B/3-506 be inserted at AN8920 to conduct a sweep operation to the south paralleling QL-1 from point of insertion to the

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contact area vicinity AN894164. At 0815H, 2/B/3-506 was inserted at AN894200 and ordered to sweep south. At 0815H - 0830H, Commanding Officer, Task Force 3-506, Senior Advisor, Binh Thuan Province, and Province Chief, Binh Thuan, effected a coordination meeting during which it was decided that the Province Chief would command the operation to attack and destroy the enemy location as he requested. The Commanding Officer, 3-506's plan of attack was as follows: C/3-506 would be combat assaulted into the immediate area of contact to rout the enemy force and reinforce the two RF Companies in contact. A combined force consisting of the 888 RF Company, tank platoon/1-69 Armor, and the Reconnaissance Platoon/3-506 would assemble at a rendezvous point vicinity AN866225, conduct a road march cross country to QL-1 vicinity AN902185, then sweep south towards the area of contact. Upon arrival at the area of contact this combined force was to spearhead a coordinated attack accompanied by the two RF Companies (443 and 164) and C/3-506.

At 0945H the combined force assembled at the designated rendezvous point and commenced the movement to area of contact. Between 0830H and 0945H, the advisory team with the two RF Companies in contact (443 and 164) requested and received two airstrikes vicinity area of contact AN897164. At 1015H, B/7-17 Cavalry was diverted from another portion of the AO and ordered to conduct reconnaissance of known enemy locations and probable routes of withdrawal from the contact area. The Light Observation Helicopters making the reconnaissance drew heavy small arms fire and automatic weapons fire from entrenched enemy forces in vicinity AN896162, AN902164, AN903161, AN904158, and AN905165. At 1020H, 1/A/3-506 arrived to occupy a position vicinity AN908192 prepared to assist the attack.

At 1025H, 2/C/3-506 was combat assaulted into a "hot" LZ vicinity the area of contact at AN897163. As the initial insertion was made, all aircraft drew intense small arms and light machine gun fire from three locations on the periphery of the LZ. As the first lift went into the LZ and the enemy fire commenced, the two RF Companies (443 and 164), occupying blocking positions vicinity AN894161, withdrew to the southwest vicinity AN885155.

At 1045H, 1/C/3-506 was combat assaulted into the same LZ which was then occupied 2/C/3-506. As this, the second lift, approached the LZ on short final, the lead aircraft received a hit in the engine, and the entire lift of four aircraft passed over the LZ to the northwest. The lead aircraft was forced down at vicinity AN884187, at this time 2/B/3-506 was ordered to move from AN896181 to AN884187 to assist in securing the downed helicopter and join the fire team of that ship since one man was KIA. The three remaining aircraft made a second pass and landed on the same LZ to insert the second lift of C/3-506.

At 1115H, 3/C/3-506 was combat assaulted into a "hot" LZ vicinity AN895163. It should be noted here that the initial LZ was located on

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the east side of QL-1 vicinity AN897163 and the second LZ was located vicinity AN895163, located west of QL-1. The insertion of C/3-506 was completed at 1110H.

Between 1130H and 1500H several actions took place in preparation for the coordinated attack which was to commence as soon as the combined force arrived vicinity AN89165.

Three medical evacuations of U.S. wounded personnel were conducted at approximately 1200H - 1330H. Artillery was employed against known and suspected enemy locations and routes of withdrawal. The USAF airstrikes were requested and employed at AN901161. The Dustoff aircraft and the USAF fighter aircraft drew intense small arms, light machine gun, and B-40 rocket fire during these actions. At 1300H, 3/A/3-506 arrived to occupy blocking positions vicinity AN897165 and at 1330H 2/A/3-506 was airlifted from BN000207 to occupy blocking positions with 3/A/3-506. At 1340H, 3/D/30506 was extracted from vicinity AN815285 and returned to LZ Betty to be prepared as a reaction force.

At 1500H, the combined force (888 RF Company, tanks and Recon/3-506) arrived at the area of contact vicinity AN896165 to commence the attack to the south and southwest towards AN856157. At this time the 888 RF Company elected to occupy a blocking position vicinity AN899165 rather than accompany the attacking force.

At 1515H, the tank platoon and the Reconnaissance Platoon launched the attack directly towards the dug in enemy forces vicinity AN890160. Once the attack was launched, the attacking force began to receive 60mm and 81mm mortar fire from enemy bunker positions vicinity AN899164. Armed helicopters from the 192d AHC provided suppressing fires against the enemy positions. Artillery was employed and a third airstrike was requested and received to support the ground attack.

At 1715H, 1/A/3-506 was extracted from AN908193 and returned to LZ Betty for reaction force. At 1725H, 3/C/3-506 was successful in linking up with the first and second platoons on the east of QL-1. C/3-506 was still unable to maneuver as the enemy positions vicinity AN989164 were effective in holding C Company in the vicinity of the LZ. As the situation developed, Commanding Officer 3-506 intended to maneuver the tanks and Reconnaissance Platoon to the south, then east and then north to flank the enemy and relieve the pressure from C/3-506. This maneuver met stiff enemy resistance and at 1830H the tanks reported the stream and marshy area vicinity AN898158 was impassable and the intended flanking maneuver to occupy high ground vicinity AN905155 and flank the enemy would be impossible. Commanding Officer 3-506 ordered the tank and Reconnaissance platoons to move west to QL-1, then north to organize and occupy Night Defensive Position with the 888th RF Company vicinity AN889165.

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At 1920H contact broke and artillery and Spooky were employed continuously throughout the night of 12-13 February 1969 on known enemy locations and probable routes of withdrawal. The tanks and Reconnaissance platoons closed their NDP with the 888 RF Company at 2130H. At 2430H resupply of minimum combat essential items was made without incident.

At 2100H - 2400H, Psywar C-47 aircraft was employed using tapes recorded by captured POW's from the contact area. 300,000 leaflets and 88,000 safe conduct passes were dropped throughout the area of contact. Additionally, these same media were employed on 13 February 1969 in the vicinity of AN955270 where a POW stated the 186th and 840 battalions had planned to use as a hospital and assembly area. On 13 February 1969 at 0645H, resupply of all necessary items was initiated and completed at 0730H. At 0730H, it was apparent that the enemy had fled the battlefield during the hours of darkness.

A sweep of the battlefield was planned as follows: Tanks and Reconnaissance platoons would sweep to the south paralleling QL-1 on the west flank; C/3-506 would sweep the center portion of the battlefield directly to the south and the 888th RF Company would sweep to the southeast on the east flank.

At 0730H, the sweep commenced; the 88th RF Company moved prematurely and bypassed C/3-506 and consequently masked the fires of C/3-506. At this time, several persons wearing civilian clothes were observed infiltrating from the known enemy positions vicinity AN895159 into the hamlets vicinity AN890154. Simultaneously with these events, approximately 200-300 civilians from Phu Long Village vicinity AN884142 began to move directly into the area of contact which then caused the fires of the tanks and Reconnaissance platoons to also become masked. It became obvious to Commanding Officer, Task Force 3-506 that an extremely hazardous situation had developed; all U.S. units were ordered to withdraw from the battlefield immediately after reaching planned sweep objectives. C/3-506 moved west to an LZ vicinity AN892158 and was extracted at 1025H, 13 February 1969. The tank and Reconnaissance platoons withdrew south to Phan Thiet on QL-1, then returned to FSB Sherry via Highway 8B. ARVN and RF/PT units remained in the area of contact to conduct police of the battlefield.

12. Results:

- a. Personnel (Friendly):
 (1) U.S.: 3 U.S. KHA
 15 U.S. WHA

(2) Vietnamese:

2 KHA (outpost Sara)
 5 WHA (2 at Sara)

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b. Personnel (Enemy):

66 KIA (BC)

c. Equipment:

- (1) Friendly losses negative.
- (2) Enemy:

CJA: 18 AK-47's
 4 Chicom K-54 Pistols
 3 B-40 Rocket Launchers
 2 B-41 Rocket Launchers
 2 DPM Chicom 53 LMG's
 3 RPD Chicom 56 LMG's

Destroyed: 1 each 81mm mortar
 1 each Chicom RPD 56

13. Administrative Matters:

Negative comments

14. Special Equipment and Techniques:

Negative comments

15. Advisor/Commander Analysis:

The technique of landing on the enemy positions or as close as possible definitely reduced the number of casualties immeasurably. Obvious Landing Zones near the contact area were later determined to have the 240 NVA Battalion in position to meet the combat assault forces.

16. Recommendations/Lessons Learned:

a. Command and Control: During the conduct of combined operations with Regional and Popular and ARVN units, control is extremely difficult unless these units are accompanied by U.S. Advisors.

b. It is recommended that these units be accompanied by U.S. advisory personnel and then both the advisors and GVN unit carry adequate smoke with which to mark friendly positions.

This definitely facilitates the employment of combined fire support systems (TAC air, armed helicopters, and artillery).

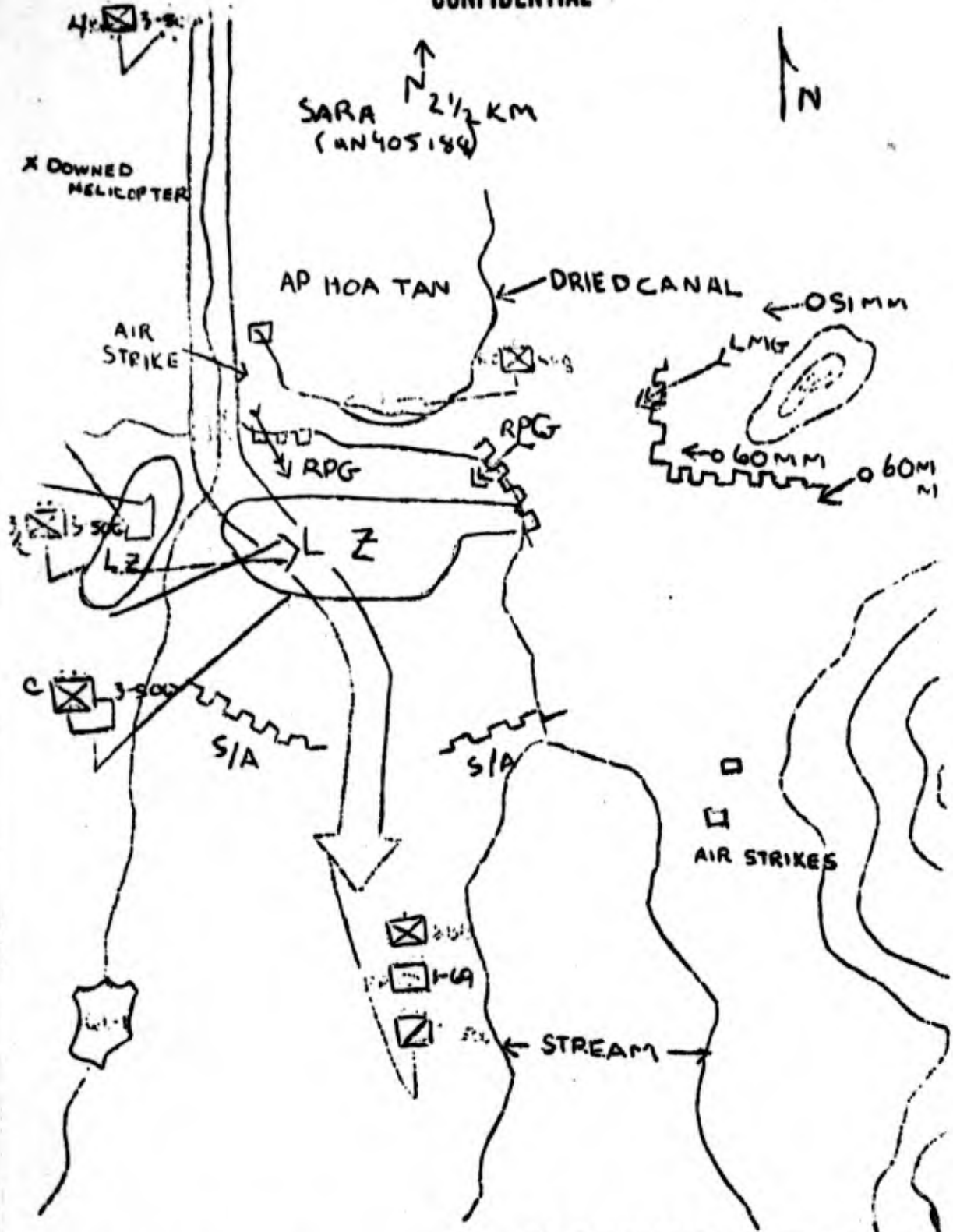
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MANUEL A. ALVES
 LTC, Infantry
 Commanding

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SCALE: 1/25,000

PHU LONG VILLAGE
2 KM SW
(AN 883142)

SCHEMATIC OF
"SARA/HOA TAN"

12 FEB 69
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