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VIETNAM

COMBAT OPERATIONS AFTER ACTION REPORT
OPERATION FORREST
CONFIDENTIAL

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES

HEADQUARTERS 1ST AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE VIETNAM

HUI DAT


TO: Commanding General
   II Field Force Vietnam
   Attention AG of S. G3. (6)

COPIES TO: HQ AFV (7)
HQ NZ Force Vietnam (2)
HQ 2 AIFSS
HQ 6 Task Force (3)
HQ 10 Task Force (3)
Internal (15)

1. Reference is made to maps VIETNAM, 1: 50,000, L7014, Sheets 6429 I, 6429 IV, 6430 II, 6430 III.

2. Name and Type of Operation: Operation FORREST - rice denial operation.

3. Dates of Operation: The operation was conducted over the period 23 Nov 67 to 5 Jan 68.

4. Location: PHUOC TUY Province.

5. Command Headquarters: HQ 1 ATF.

6. Reporting Officers: Brigadier R.L. HUGHES, DSO.

7. Unit Commanders:
   a. 2 RAR
      Lt Col H.R. CHARLESWORTH,
   b. 7 RAR
      Lt Col B.H. SMITH,
   c. 4 Fd Regt
      Lt Col R.J. GARDNER,
   d. A Sqn 3 Cav Regt
      Maj G.J. MURPHY,
   e. 1 Fd Sqn
      Maj J.H. KEMP,
   f. 1 SAS Sqn
      Maj D. BURNETT,
   g. 1 ARU
      Maj W.N. LUSH.

8. Task Organization:
   HQ 1 ATF
   2 RAR
   7 RAR
   A Sqn 3 Cav Regt
   4 Fd Regt
   1 Fd Sqn
   1 SAS Sqn
   1 ARU
   1 Div Int Unit
   161 (Indep) Recce Plt
   A Sect 1 Topo Svy Tp
   1 Aust GA Unit
   Pay Ops

9. Supporting Forces:
   a. Armour:
      (1) A Sqn 3 Cav Regt was used in both Cavalry and APC roles.
      (2) A Sqn was used on the following task:
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2.

(a) Carriage of infantry to perimeter of rice paddy areas. Mobility was limited as APCs were not allowed on the paddy during the harvest.

(b) Security of LZs and PZs.

(c) Route security to and from FSBs.

(d) Security of FSBs.

(e) Command and control of road moves.

(f) Patrolling from FSBs.

(g) During Operation LIMLEY A Sqn assisted in the rapid redeployment of infantry coy.

(h) Provision of one troop for the T/Ready Reaction Force.

b. Artillery.

(1) Grouping.

(a) 108 Fd Bty in direct support of 2 RAR.

(b) 106 Fd Bty in direct support of 7 RAR from 23 Nov 67 to 16 Dec 67.

(c) 161 Fd Bty RNA2 at priority call to 7 RAR 16 Dec 67 to 27 Dec 67.

(d) 161 Fd Bty RNA2 in general support 1 ATF 23 Nov 67 to 16 Dec 67.

(e) 106 Fd Bty reverted to direct support of 7 RAR on 27 Dec 67.

(f) Bty A 1/83 US Arty remained in general support, reinforcing 4 Fd Regt.

(2) Deployment.

(a) Artillery Tactical Headquarters and Regimental Headquarters remained at 1 ATF Base.

(b) To provide continuous field gun support, fire support bases were established as follows: (See Annex 2)

i. 106 Bty occupied FSB ALPHA YS3974 from 27 Nov 67 to 7 Dec 67.

ii. 106 Bty occupied FSB BRIVO YS2570 from 7 Dec 67 to 16 Dec 67.

iii. 161 Bty occupied FSB CHARLIE YS2962 from 16 Dec 67 to 23 Dec 67.

iv. 108 Bty occupied FSB RINGO YS5365 from 27 Dec 67 to 31 Dec 67.

v. 106 Bty occupied FSB ALBIONROOKS YS4578 from 2 Jan 68 to 9 Jan 68.

vi. 108 Bty remained at HORSESHOE YS5962 with the exception of its occupation of FSB RINGO and a period from 23 - 31 Dec at NUI BCT.

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vii. A Pl A Bty 1/63 (two 8" guns) occupied a FSP at YS25710 from 9 Dec 67 to 13 Dec 67.

(a) A total of 10 battery moves were made, five by road and five by air.

(3) An active policy of DF adjustment was carried out, with a requirement for at least one adjusted DF for each separate and unit location. Due to the large number of fire missions this involved, and the time required, it was necessary to advise company commanders to halt their sub units early enough to adjust DFs in daylight; this was not, however, always done resulting in many attempts to adjust DF by night.

(4) White phosphorous rounds were used to burn off unauthorised paddi; this was generally unsuccessful due to the water remaining in the paddies.

(5) A heavy harassing fire programme was fired. FOs assisted in II and I planning by submitting target lists based on local intelligence assessments at company level. These targets were coordinated at Task Force level.

(6) Artillery fire was at all times prompt and effective, clearances being obtained with the minimum of delay.

c. Engineers.

(1) 1 Fd Sqn was given the following tasks:

(a) Provide combat engr teams when required to 2 EAR, 7 EAR and mini teams to A Sqn 3 Cav Regt.

(b) Repair gaps in the HORSESHOE HILL YS4962 - LONG PHUOC HAI YS5153 minefield fence.

(c) Provide dzer assistance when required to FSBS.

(2) Combat teams and mini teams were provided to the units as required. The general concept was that teams were held on stand by at 1 ATF Base unless specifically required. This allowed 1 Fd Sqn to maintain sufficient men in the Base to continue with the 3 EAR Base construction programme which was in progress during the operation.

(3) The repair of the minefield fence was completed by 2 Tp 1 Fd Sqn on 16 Dec and 17 Dec 67. Security was provided by 4/48 ARVN Bn.

(4) A large natural cave complex at YS37679 was destroyed by 2 Tp 1 Fd Sqn (Detailed diagram is shown at Annex 1). This cave complex was in use by the VC prior to Op LONGE.

d. Aviation.

(1) No 9 Sqn RAAF (UH1D, UH1E) supported 1 ATF throughout the operation.

(2) Extent of Deployment and Effectiveness.

(a) RAAF helicopters were used with and in addition to US Assault Helicopter Coys (AHC) in troop moves by air.

(b) Effective support for the following activities was provided:

i. Resupply.
ii. Evacuation of captured rice.

iii. Command and liaison.


e. US Army Aviation. During Operation FOREST support was provided with CH47, CH46 and L100 lifting 4,700 troops and 7,062.1 short tons of equipment and supplies between 23 Nov 67 and 2 Jan 68. A Light Fire Team (LFT) was provided daily and remained on standby at 1 ATF Base.

f. USAF. Twenty-one close air support missions were flown in support of the operation.

Intelligence.

a. This operation was planned to follow on after the earlier operations AINSLIE, KENNOL and SANTA YE which had caused considerable damage to the VC logistic system. Captured documents indicated serious food shortages were being experienced by the VC in and around PHUOC TUY.

b. Harvest time Dec/Jan, is considered by the VC the best time to restock with rice because of the large amounts of it that are available and the difficulty that FM and GH troops have in controlling it. All Province Intelligence Sources (Sector 3C (Intelligence G (Int))), Revolutionary Development Cadre (RD), Census Grievance (CG), Province Recce Unit (PRU), Committee for the Collection of Intelligence and Conduct of Operations against the VC Infrastructure (CIOS), District Operations Intelligence Coordinating Centre (DOICC), 10th Military Interrogation Detachment (10 MIO) and 1 ATF Intelligence Units) were used to get the broadest and most accurate picture possible of the resupply network within PHUOC TUY used by the VC at harvest time. This information showed the most likely places the VC would use to procure rice and the routes he would use to move it to restock his caches and major bases. A priority for searching villages was also established. This information was transferred to a Map overlay Annex P. These methods proved successful in determining where and how the VC would go about his resupply during the operation.

c. The frequency and nature of the contacts prevented the majority of VC from infiltrating the populated areas. It is probable that the VC obtained and extracted rice through the Northern area of the TOR where VC movement in small groups was observed, but where the operation did not take effect until late in the harvest period. VC movement was restricted to small parties and any large scale resupply thwarted. Gordon and search of six villages resulted in 400 suspects being detained 42 of which were identified as VC infrastructure.

d. During the operation:

(1) Infiltration groups were detected and intercepted on known VC approach routes.

(2) Important staging and lay up areas were detected and denied to the VC at the time most critical to his resupply plan.

(3) Confirmed VC and sympathizers were apprehended.

(4) 1 ATF penetrated the CHAU MOC District base HQ and CHAU MOC Coy (CL1) base areas and forced the VC to withdraw to the NORTH and away from the most important rice areas.
(5) Captured useful documents which proved valuable for background intelligence study.

11. Mission. 1 ATTF between 23 Nov 67 and 5 Jan 68 in close co-operation and coordination with ARVN and GVN, province and district officials was to conduct rice denial operations in PHUOC TUY Province.


a. General Outline. During the operation battalions would be required:

(1) To conduct saturation patrolling astride known avenues of approach to apprehend couriers.

(2) To search out known staging areas for camps, personnel and caches.

(3) In co-operation with GVN officials conduct cordon and search operations in nominated villages and hamlets.

(4) To search and destroy in allotted AO's.

b. 2 RAR.

(1) Conduct operations in the allotted AO from 230800H Nov 67 to 050800H Jan 68 (Annex P).

(2) Take the HORSESHOE Company under command from 221700H Nov 67.

(3) Throughout the operation maintain one company in the LONG GREEN, centre of mass YS5553, with frequent rushes on the gaps in the fence from HORSESHOE YS5553 to PHUOC HAI YS5153.

(4) From 230800H Nov 67 to 050800H Dec 67 carry out maximum patrolling astride the avenues of approach in the AO.

(5) Search and destroy within the AO paying particular attention to the staging areas indicated on 1 ATTF Intelligence Assessment (Annex P).

(6) By 051700H Jan 68 conduct cordon and search operations in the following villages (listed in order of priority):

(a) HOI MY YS5056.
(b) AN NHUT YS4699.
(c) LONG BINH NORTH YS45596.
(d) TAM PHUOC YS4558.
(e) DAT DO SOUTH EAST YS495590.
(f) PHUOC LOI YS5057.

(7) On order assist in the 1 ATTF cordon and search of BINH GIA YS4377.

(8) Be prepared to provide a reaction force of one company on one hour's notice, for Ready Reaction Force activities against tax collection points, small base locations, caches etc found as a result of 1 SLS Sqn or air recon activities.

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6.  

(1) Conduct operations in allotted AO from 230800H Nov 67 to 050800H Jan 68.

(2) From 230800H Nov 67 to 050800H Dec 67 carry out maximum patrolling astride the avenues of approach in allotted AO.

(3) From 230800H Nov 67 to 050800H Jan 68 provide "distant" patrol protection to AP SU01 NGKS 7871 and regular liaison visits to that village.

(4) Search and destroy within the AO paying particular attention to the Staging areas indicated on 1 ATF Intelligence Assessment (Annex P).

(5) By 051700H Jan 68 conduct Cordon and Search operations in the following villages (listed in order of priority):
   (a) PINGOC HOA XS2662.
   (b) HOA LONG XS4264.
   (c) FIIU MY XS3974.
   (d) ORG THANH XS3968.

(6) As order assist in the 1 ATF Cordon and Search of DINH GLA YS4877.

(7) Be prepared to provide a reaction force of one company on one hour's notice, for Ready Reaction Force activities against tax collection points, small base locations, caches etc found as a result of 1 SAS Sqn or air recce activities.

d. A Sqn 3 Cav Regt.  From 230800H Nov 67 to 050800H Jan 68:

   (1) Be prepared to assist in Cordon and Search operations.
   (2) Be prepared to assist in Search and Destroy operations.
   (3) Be prepared to "check out" paddy workers during the rice harvest period.
   (4) Be prepared in cooperation with National Police to set up temporary check points on Route 15.
   (5) Hold one troop as a reaction force on one hour's notice.

e. Artillery.

   (1) 4 Fd Regt.  Remained in DS of 1 ATF.
   (2) 1/83 Arty (US).  Remained in General Support (GS), reinforcing 4 Fd Regt.
   (3) 2/35 Arty (US).  Remained in GS, reinforcing 4 Fd Regt.
   (4) Be prepared to provide dismounted troops to assist in Cordon and Search operations.

f. 1 Fd Sqn.

   (1) When requested provide combat engineer teams to scale, to 2 RAR, 7 RAR and A Sqn 3 Cav Regt.

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(2) Be prepared to provide a small engineer team to assist 4/48 INN to in repairing the HORSERIDGE Fence.

g. 1 SAS Sqn. On order from HQ 1 ATF conduct patrolling, searching and ambushing in allotted AO from 230000H Nov 67 to 050000H Jan 68 (Annex F).

h. 1 ARU.

(1) Commencing 230000H Foy 67 until 130000H Dec 67 provide two patrols by day and night in the ARU AO (Annex F).

(2) Be prepared to assist in cordon and search operations.

i. Det 1 Div Int Unit. Assist in cordon and search operations.

j. 161 (Indep) Recce Plt. From 230000H Nov 67 to 050000H Jan 68 provide one UH in DS of each 2 NAR and 7 NAR.

k. A Sect 1 Tnco Plt. Be prepared to provide survey parties in the operational and village areas.

l. 1 Aust GI Unit. Be prepared to assist in cordon and search operations.

m. Pay Opn.

(1) Coordinate with ARVN, GVN and Civilian Organisation for Revolutionary Development (CORD) representatives with developing an intense Pay Opns programme in an attempt to persuade the people not to sell rice to the VC but only to accredited buyers.

(2) Prepare taped messages for use by voice aircraft over all districts of PHUOC TUY Province.

(3) Ensure that sufficient quantities of explanatory leaflets are available for troops to hand to householders in the event of house searches.

(4) Be prepared to make quick reaction tapes or leaflets to support the rice denial operation.

n. HQ Coy 1 ATF. The Platoon Platoon is to be prepared to assist in cordon and search and check point operations.

o. GVN PHUOC TUY Province. The Senior Advisor PHUOC TUY Province is requested to arrange with the PHUOC TUY Province Chief for the following tasks to be carried out by ARVN and RF units:

(1) Provision of a Check Point on Route 14 WEST of BR12 YS3760.

(2) Continuous ambushes on the routes leading NORTH and EAST out of the LONG HI Hill*, centre of mass YS6653.

(3) Beach control in the vicinity of PHUOC M1 and WEST of the fence to deny the use of the beach and the sea routes.

(4) Active and continuous patrolling of the fence. SOUTH of M1 to detect and repair any breaches.

(5) Active rice denial operations in the NONG NCC village and AO (YS6668).

(6) Cordon and search of the following villages:

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13. Execution. Operation FOREST commenced on the 23 Nov 67. During the operation and as part of Op FOREST, there were a number of complementary operations.

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<td>OOSTARRITA</td>
<td>7 HAP</td>
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<td>2 HAP</td>
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<td>ALDERLEY</td>
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<td>7 HAP</td>
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<td>IOWIE</td>
<td>7 HAP</td>
<td>Search and destroy (RSI HLN Mountains YS3465).</td>
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<td>LAVONI</td>
<td>1 ATF</td>
<td>Cordon and search (RAN MLG1 YS4677).</td>
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14. Sequence of Events.


(1) 2 HAP issued orders for the operation. The op was to be conducted by phases. At this time the orders were given for the first two phases:

(a) Phase 1.

i. D Coy to assist 7 HAP in the cordon and search at RAN LONG YS2261 24 Nov 67 and to deploy to coy AO 25 Nov 67.

ii. A Coy, G Coy and V Coy to deploy to allotted AO's 23 Nov 67.

iii. B Coy reaction coy NUI HAP.

(b) Phase 2. Search, destroy and ambush in allotted AO's.
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(c) Phase 3. (Approx 4 Dec 67) Cordon and search NOI HY YS5056 orders to be issued later.

(d) Subsequent Phases. Orders to be issued later.

Sequence and probable timings as follows:

1. Cordon and search ops in the following villages:
   - AM NHUT YS4659 7 Dec 67.
   - LONG DHER North YS439593 18 Dec 67.
   - TAN PHUOC YS4458 21 Dec 67.
   - Assist in 1 ATF cordon and search of NOI HY YS4677. Date to be confirmed.
   - D elaborate South East YS45990 27 Dec 67.
   - PHUOC DAI YS5057 5 Jan 68.

Note. Operations listed as 2, 3, 5 above, were not conducted due to ARVN operations in the area and secondly subsequent tasks of higher priority.

ii. Between cordon and search ops coy activities in allotted AO's will continue.

iii. Bn will be in base 24 - 26 Dec 67.

(2) 7 RAR issued orders for Operation OODNADATTA.

(c) General Outline. 7 RAR op consisting of 7 RAR plus 7th Cav Regt plus one 105M, 116th Fi Bty (dismounted), 161st Fi Bty (-) (Pl nine group), two combat engineer teams 1 Pl Sqn, 1 SAS Sqn (->), D Coy 2 Div, 1 ASH with water cond Def Pl HQ Coy 1 AT, 2 Div Int Unit, three LPRPs, Det 1 Div Pro Unit, 1 pl of 1 Just Cn Unit, National Police including Ranger and urban police, ARVN troops and Pay Ops Det. Task to cordon NOI HY YS44564 village before first light on 24 Nov 67. Commencing at first light the village to be searched, all inhabitants to be screened and suspect persons moved to PHUOC DAI YS3862 for further interrogation by VN personnel.

b. 24 Nov 67.

(1) 2 RAR (-) commenced operations in its allotted AO centre of mass YS5264. D Coy assisted 7 RAR in Operation OODNADATTA.

(2) 7 RAR (-) commenced Operation OODNADATTA, cordon and search of NOI HY YS44564.

a. 24 Nov 67.

(1) 2 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations. D Coy returned to 1 ATF Base.

(2) 7 RAR concluded Operation OODNADATTA. A total of nine suspects were detained and evacuated to PHUOC TUY Provence HQ BANRC for further interrogation.

(3) 1 SAS Sqn deployed two LPRPs.

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d. 25 Nov 67.

(1) 2 AR (--) continued search and destroy operations. At 1600H at YS59670 A Coy contacted 4 VC without result. D Coy commenced search and destroy operations.

(2) 7 AR remained in 1 ATF Base and issued orders for the period 26 Nov to 4 Dec 67.

(a) General Outline.

i. Corded and attack a known enemy base camp YS38707.

ii. Search and destroy in allotted AOs.

(3) 1 SAS Sqn deployed two LRP.

e. 26 Nov 67.

(1) 2 AR (--) continued search and destroy operations. At 1015H at YS566691 D Coy contacted 2 VC without result. At 1015H at YS56659 D Coy sighted 2 VC, contact was not initiated. At YS56659 A Coy located and destroyed a VC Base Camp consisting of 8 bunkers and a cook house.

(2) 7 RAR (--) secured FS3 ALPH and LZ ROCK (see Annex D).

(3) 1 SAS Sqn extracted one LRP.

f. 27 Nov 67.

(1) A Sqn 3 Cav Regt conducted a road runner and clearing patrol between 1 ATF Base and No 1 LC YS1677.

(2) 4 RI Regt 106 Fd Bty was inserted into FS3 ALPH.

(3) 2 AR (--) continued search and destroy operations. At YS58666 A Coy located a VC Base Camp which was booby trapped. A booby trap was set off with the result 2 Aust KIA, 1 Aust WIA.

(4) 7 RAR (--) was inserted into LZ ROCK to commence a corded and attack of a known VC Base Camp. At 1600H D Coy contacted an estimated 20 VC and were engaged by machine gun fire. The MG was destroyed with M72 rocket fire. The VC withdrew SOUTH but continued the contact with RPG fire from the WEST. The contact was broken at 1610H with the result 3 VC KIA (BC), 2 VC WIA, 1 Aust KIA and 17 Aust WIA.

(5) 2 TAR (--) continued search and destroy operations. At YS55668 with the assistance of 1 Fd Sqn elements detected and removed two R16 mines and two Chinese grenades set up as booby traps. At YS55692 A Coy located and destroyed a camp consisting of 9 bunkers interconnected by a tunnel system.

(6) 7 RAR (--) continued search and destroy operations. At YS33705 D Coy contacted 2 VC resulting in 1 VC KIA (BC). At 1300H at YS31697 B Coy contacted 1 VC without result. The VC Base Camp at YS33707 was investigated and found to consist of 9 huts and 100 metres of trench. The camp contained 39 individual weapons, 2 crew served weapons, 3 mines, 10 grenades, a large quantity of ammunition, clothing and documents.

g. 28 Nov 67.

(1) 2 RAR (--) continued search and destroy operations. At YS55668 with the assistance of 1 Fd Sqn elements detected and removed two R16 mines and two Chinese grenades set up as booby traps. At YS55692 A Coy located and destroyed a camp consisting of 9 bunkers interconnected by a tunnel system.

(2) 7 RAR (--) continued search and destroy operations. At 1050H at YS33705 D Coy contacted 2 VC resulting in 1 VC KIA (BC). At 1300H at YS31697 B Coy contacted 1 VC without result. The VC Base Camp at YS33707 was investigated and found to consist of 9 huts and 100 metres of trench. The camp contained 39 individual weapons, 2 crew served weapons, 3 mines, 10 grenades, a large quantity of ammunition, clothing and documents.
(3) 1 SAS Sqn extracted one LRP.

(4) 161 (Indop) Recce Flt. At 1830H at YS583974 two H13 helicopters sighted 1 VC and engaged with 3A with result 1 VC KIA (BC).

b. 29 Nov 67.

(1) 2 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations. At 0730H at YS509647 C Coy located and destroyed one (US) M16 mine and two HUSAII type M16 mines.

(2) 7 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations in AO ZULU (See Annex Q). At 1057H at YS330702 D Coy contacted 15 VC resulting in 1 Aust WIA. At YS335709 D Coy located a cache which contained 300 lbs of polished rice. At YS337707 D Coy located a VC base camp consisting of 3 huts and bunkers, 3 weapon pits and a 75 metres range. The camp contained one rifle.

(3) 1 SAS Sqn at 1430H at YS567767 a LRP contacted 3 VC resulting in 3 VC KIA (BC) and 2 Chicom 7.62 rifles captured. The LRP was extracted.

c. 30 Nov 67.

(1) 2 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations. At 0830H at YS582593 D Coy contacted 3 VC resulting in 2 VC KIA (BC) and 1 VC WIA. At 1400H at YS550664 D Coy triggered off a VC mine resulting in 1 Aust KIA and 7 Aust WIA.

(2) 7 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations. At 1300H at YS327706 B Coy attacked an occupied VC Base Camp resulting in 3 Aust WIA.

d. 1 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations. At 0935H at YS558568 D Coy contacted 2 VC without result.

(2) 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations. At 2110H at YS593745 A Coy contacted 2 VC without result.

e. 2 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations. At 1030H at YS579593 D Coy contacted 6 VC resulting in 4 VC KIA (BC), 1 VC WIA and 3 weapons captured.

(2) 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations. At YS337714 D Coy located a VC Base Camp which contained 2 weapons and a number of Chicom stick grenades.

f. 3 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR.

(a) 2 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations. At 1700H at YS551648 A Coy contacted 2 VC with the result, 1 VC KIA (BC).

(b) The Tac HQ plus two Coys commenced Operation CAMUNGRA.

(2) 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations. At 1100H at YS317575 D Coy contacted 3 VC with the result 1 VC KIA (BC), 1 VC WIA and one AK47 captured. At 1600H at YS317575 Sp Coy contacted 2 VC with the result, 1 VC KIA (BC), 1 VC WIA and one AK47 captured.

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4 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations, concluded Operation CANUNGRA and issued orders for Operation ALDERLEY. A total of 23 people were detained for further interrogation as a result of Operation CANUNGRA.

(2) 7 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations. B Coy returned to 1 ATF Base.

5 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations. C Coy contacted 3 VC with the result, 1 VC KIA (BC), 1 VC WIA, two weapons and one grenade captured.

(2) 7 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations.

6 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations.

(2) 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations and issued orders for the establishment of FSB BRAVO and the commencement of search and destroy operations in new AO centres of mass YS3068. Included in the orders were detailed orders for the following operations:

   (a) Op SHEPPARDO, Cordon and search of PHU MY YS3274 on 11/12 Dec 67.

   (b) Op DENGBOOA, Cordon and search of CHN MY YS3266 on 13/14 Dec 67.

   (c) Op NEILDONNUL, Cordon and search of PHU HOA YS32862 on 15/16 Dec 67.

(3) General Outline. 7 RAR group consisting Op A Sqn 3 Cav Regt, three MP Det AFV Pro Unit, Det 1 Div Int Unit, Det 1 Aust GI Unit, National Police, Field Force Police, Human Police and Interpreters. Task to cordon each village on the dates stated. The villages to be searched and all inhabitants screened. Suspect persons to be moved to ALMA STADIUM for further investigation by VN personnel. FSB BRAVO to be reinforced by A Sqn 3 Cav Regt (-).

7 Dec 67.

(1) A Sqn 3 Cav Regt secured FSB BRAVO (see Annex F) for the move of 106 Fl Bty from FSB ALPH.

(2) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations.

(3) 7 RAR redeployed to new AO to continue search and destroy operations after a helicopter assault into LZ GAINER YS3073.

(4) 1 SAS Sqn extracted two LDAPs.

8 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations. At 1913H at YS574605 B Coy contacted 6 VC with the result 1 VC KIA (BC), one AK47, 100 rounds of SA ammunition and 1 pack captured.

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(2) 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations. At 0740H at YS300734 A Coy contacted 1 VC with the result 1 VC KIA. At YS290736 A Coy located a VC Base Camp which contained explosives, one W181 Claymore Mine, twenty claymore grenades, one flare, some documents and tools. At YS311746 C Coy located one hut which contained salad oil and 610 lbs of rice.

(3) 1 SAS Sqn extracted one LRRP.

(4) 161 (Indep) Recce Flt. At YS402747 a H3 helicopter flying in support of 7 RAR received ground fire resulting in the pilot WIA and no damage to the helicopter.

2 Dec 67.

(1) 4 Field Regt. A Bty 1/83 (US) Arty was deployed from 1 ATF Base to FSB BRAVO.

(2) 2 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations. At YS573601 B Coy contacted 2 VC with the result 1 VC KIA, 1 AK47 and 140 rounds of ammunition captured.

(3) 7 RAR (-) continued search and destroy operations. In YT3071 B Coy located numerous small caches all were old and not used recently.

(4) 1 SAS Sqn deployed one LRRP.

10 Dec 67.

(1) 1/83 (US) Arty was escorted by 3 Tp A Sqn from FSB BRAVO to 1 ATF Base.

(2) 2 RAR and 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations.

(3) 161 (Indep) Recce Flt. At YS539724 a H3 helicopter received ground fire. The area was engaged by artillery without result.

11 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations. At YS565678 A Coy contacted 5 VC with the result 2 VC KIA, 3 weapons and 7 packs captured.

(2) 7 RAR moved to cordon positions in preparation for the cordon and search of PHU HY, YS2374.

(3) 1 SAS Sqn. Three LRRPs were deployed and one extracted. At YS641991 a LRRP contacted 6 VC with the result 1 VC KIA.

12 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations.

(2) 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations and concluded Operation SHERRINGTON the cordon and search of PHU HY YS2374. A total of 26 people were detained for further interrogation.

(3) 1 SAS Sqn. At 1500H at YS566793 a LRRP contacted 7 VC resulting in 7 VC KIA and 2 weapons captured. One LRRP was extracted.

13 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations.
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(2) 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations and commenced Operation DE-BOOOLA, the cordon and search of COM TRINH YS2568 and YS2666.

w. 14 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations. At 0713H at YS592600 B Coy contacted 2 VC without result.

(2) 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations and concluded Operation DE-BOOOLA. A total of 15 suspects were detained.

(3) 1 SAS Sqn extracted one LRRP.

x. 14 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations.

(2) 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations and commenced Operation MELBOURNE, the cordon and search of FINOC KAI YS2662.

y. 16 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations. At 1430H C Coy became op con to 7 RAR.

(2) 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations and concluded Operation MELBOURNE. A total of 17 suspects were detained.

(3) 1 SAS Sqn at 1715H at YS669214 a LRRP contacted 3 VC with the result 1 VC KIA.

z. 17 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR and 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations.

aa. 18 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations. The cordon and search of LONG DINH North was cancelled due to FINOC operations in the same area.

(2) 7 RAR commenced Operation LOUIE, a search and destroy operation in NUI DINH Mountains YS3466. At HQ, C and D Coys were inserted into a LZ at YS347679. 1 and 3 Coys with C Coy 2 RAR were deployed into blocking positions NORTH of the NUI DINH Mountains.

bb. 19 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations.

(2) 7 RAR continued Operation LOUIE. At 1635H at YS37679 C Coy contacted 3 VC with the result 1 Aust KIA.

cc. 20 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations.

(2) 7 RAR continued Operation LOUIE. At YS37679 C Coy located 2 VC bodies killed in the contact 191535H. At 1000H at YS36695 A Coy contacted 3 VC with the result 3 VC KIA and 3 weapons captured. At YS37669 C Coy located a camp which contained 4 rifles, 1 D10 claymore and 2 Chinese grenades. At YS36685 D Coy located a cache containing 37 rifles and some ammunition.
dd. 21 Dec 67.

(1) 4 Fd Regt. 161 Fd Bty RNZA was extracted from FSB CHARLIE YS2966 to 1 ATF Base.

(2) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations. All elements except V Coy returned to 1 ATF Base. V Coy continued patrol operations in the LONG GREEN YS5559 from HORSESHOE HILL YS4962.

(3) 7 RAR conclude Operation LOUIE. At 0910H at YS333694 B Coy contacted 5 VC without result. 7 RAR returned to 1 ATF Base.

e. 22 Dec 67.

(1) 1 ATF commenced Operation LA MERE, the cordon and search of NGAI GIAO, consisting of hamlets YS267773, WIET TANH YS468779 and NGAI GIAO YS467793. 7 RAR was to cordon and search the first two hamlets, 2 RAR the last hamlet. The operation commenced at 0600H with a FSB established in area YS4471. The cordon was inserted by air and APCs and was in position by 1830H.

(2) 1 SAS Sqn extracted two LNRFs.

ff. 23 Dec 67.

(1) 1 ATF continued Operation LA MERE. A 3 coy elements secured Route 2 for movement of ba road convoys. By 0730H the screening centres were erected and at 0800H the search commenced. 1 ATF deployed a Control HQ to NGAI GIAO during 23 Dec to control the operation. At 1400H the operation was complete. A total of 1218 civilians were screened of which 43 were obtained for ID card irregularities and a further 53 suspects were evacuated for further investigation by the Provincial Authorities.

(2) All units returned to 1 ATF Base for the Christmas Truce period.

gg. 24 Dec 67. 1 ATF remained in base locations except for patrolling of the FSB. The Christmas Truce was observed between 241800H to 261800H.

hh. 25 Dec 67. The same as for 24 Dec 67.

ii. 26 Dec 67. The same as for 24 Dec 67 except 1 SAS Sqn deployed 1 LNRF.

jj. 27 Dec 67.

(1) 1 SAS Sqn assisted 2 RAR in securing FSB KINNO YS5365.

(2) 4 Fd Regt. 108 Fd Bty deployed to FSB KINNO.

(3) 2 RAR recommenced search and destroy operations in a new AO centre of mass YS5870.

(a) General Outline.

i. Phase 1 (21 Dec). A Coy plus one tp of APCs secured FSB KINNO and an LZ for FSB at YS532658. 108 Fd Bty flew into FSB KINNO.

ii. Phase 2 (22 Dec). D and C Coys were inserted into the new AO and commenced search and destroy operations in allotted AOs.

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16. 7 RAR recommenced search and destroy operations.

(5) 1 SAS Sqn at 0940H at YS287725 a LRRP during insertion contacted 2 VC without result. At 1366H at YS762678 a LRRP during insertion contacted 2 VC with the result 1 Aust WIA. Both LRRPs were extracted, a further LRRP was deployed.

17. 28 Dec 67.

(1) 1 ATF elements continued search and destroy operations.

(2) 2 RAR. W Coy relieved V Coy at NORTHEN HILL and on completion of its relief V Coy moved into its allotted AO to commence search and destroy operations.

18. 29 Dec 67. 1 ATF elements continued search and destroy operations.

19. 30 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations. At 0710H at YS56275 V Coy contacted 4 VC without result.

(2) 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations.

20. 31 Dec 67.

(1) 2 RAR except V Coy and W Coy returned to 1 ATF Base.

(2) 7 RAR returned to 1 ATF Base.

(3) 1 ATF elements commenced the New Year Truce at 1800H.

21. 1 Jan 68.

(1) 1 ATF remained in Base locations except for patrolling of the TAOR. At 0940H at YS496670 a 2 RAR patrol were fired on by 6 VC, the patrol returned fire without result. The New Year truce continued till 1800H.

22. 2 Jan 68.

(1) 1 ATF deployed to new AOs to continue search and destroy operations.

(2) 4 Pl Regt. 106 Pl Bty deployed to FSB ALMIRDOKE YS4578.

(3) 2 RAR deployed A Coy by APC to search and destroy in an area centre of mass YS5073. The area of search was to include the EASTERN edge of SINV 11 rubber plantation and the SOUTHERN edge of DUC MINH AO. D Coy with 2 sects of marines was deployed by APC to establish a coy base and mortar FSB RIN YS2577 (Annex P). V Coy continued to maintain domination of the area of the LONG GREEN YS5659.

(4) 7 RAR deployed to new AOs to continue search and destroy operations. Bn HQ, B and C Coy moved by APC to via YS453792. B Coy secured FSB ALMIRDOKE. After 106 Bty was in action at the FSB, A and D Coys were inserted by helicopters in a LZ in YS450341. At 1315H at YS436858, D Coy contacted 1 VC without result. At 1330H at YS435947 B Coy contacted 2 VC with the result 2 VC KIA, 1 weapon and 1 D10 claymore captured. At YS415802 G Coy located a new camp consisting of 2 huts, 8 bunkers and 4 tunnels.

(5) 1 SAS Sqn deployed one LRRP.
16. Administration. The concept of operations allowed for all administration and logistic resupply to operate from 1 ATF Base. As a result no problems arose.

17. Lessons Learned.

a. The predicted routes of approach, which were the traditional routes the VC had used for some years, can be successfully intercepted during the rice harvest season by wide scale patrolling.

b. Rice denial operations can be successfully mounted in PHJC TUY Province by 1 ATF.

c. Even with the lack of silos in towns and villages and the minimum of Government control, rice can be denied to the VC, the most important aspect of denial is preventing the VC obtaining the rice directly from the paddy fields.

d. Cordon and search operations can be particularly successful during the rice harvest season, as the VC must make contact with the villagers and the VC infrastructure at this time. The capture of 42 confirmed VC infrastructure during the operation proves this lesson.

18. Commander's Comments.

a. As far as it went FORREST was a most successful operation in denying the rice to the VC. The success of the operation was due initially to the very comprehensive intelligence appreciation made as the result of pooling all intelligence information available to the many intelligence agencies within the Province.

b. While the operation denied rice to the VC during the actual period of FORREST, complete denial of rice to the VC throughout the year will not be possible until Government silos are built and all rice farmers are required by law to store their rice in these silos.

\[\text{R.L. HUGHES}\]
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17.

On 3 Jan 68.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations. At 1140H at YS55787 B Coy contacted 3 VC with the result 1 VC KIA and 1 weapon captured. At 1150H at YS52767 B Coy contacted 3 VC with the result 2 VC KIA and 1 weapon captured. At YS5176 B Coy located a small camp which contained 800 lbs of rice. V Coy returned from its search and destroy operations to 1 ATF Base.

(2) 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations. At 0739H A Coy contacted 3 VC with the result 3 VC KIA and 3 weapons captured. At 1615H at YS42325 B Coy contacted 3 VC without result.

On 4 Jan 68.

(1) 2 RAR continued search and destroy operations. At 0939H at YS51763 A Coy contacted 1 VC with the result 1 VC KIA. At 1022H at YS55786 B Coy contacted 1 VC without result.

(2) 7 RAR continued search and destroy operations. At 1400H at YS42805 C Coy contacted 1 VC with the result 1 VC KIA, 6 weapons and 16 packs captured.

On 5 Jan 68.

(1) 1 ATF elements concluded Operation FORREST and returned to 1 ATF Base as detailed below:

(a) By 1200H one tp of A Sqn had secured Route from FSB ALANBROOKE to the bridge at YS43492.
(b) Comprising 1230H, A Coy 2 RAR was extracted by one AEH from area FSB FAM YS5477.
(c) At 1230H, B Coy 2 RAR moved from FSB FAM by APC.
(d) At 1400H, A and B Coy 7 RAR commenced extraction by AEH from area of the CB 31 rubber plantation YS6282.
(e) On completion of A and B Coy extraction, C Coy 7 RAR returned by AEH to 1 ATF Base.
(f) At 1530H, 106 Rd Bty came out of action and returned from FSB ALANBROOKE to 1 ATF Base.
(g) At 1530H, Bn I/7 RAR was extracted by air from NUI NHAN YS4357.
(h) At 1700H B Coy 7 RAR returned with one tp of A Sqn from FSB ALANBROOKE.
(i) At 1730H, A Sqn was released from Route security.
(j) By 1800H, all elements were in 1 ATF Base and Operation FORREST concluded.

(2) 2 RAR at 1115H at YS53789 B Coy contacted 2 VC with the result 1 VC KIA.

Results.

Australian Losses

VC Losses

4 KIA
33 WIA

47 KIA (SC)
2 KIA (Poss)
15 WIA

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AYFC-RE-H (Undated) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report

DA, HQ II FFORCEV, APO San Francisco 96266 16 MAY 1968

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C. 20310

The attached after action report for the 1st Australian Task Force, Vietnam, Operation Forrest, is forwarded in accordance with MACV Dir 335-8, 1 September 1967, subject: Combat Operations After Action Reports (MACV J3-32(K-1)). Pertinent comment follows: This headquarters requests MACV consider the proposal made by Commander ATF, page 18, para 18b, which states: While the operation denied rice to the VC during the actual period of Operation Forrest, complete denial of rice to the VC throughout the year will not be possible until Government silos are built and all rice farmers are required by law to store their rice in these silos.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

[Signature]

O B Fory
S/T, AGC
Assi AG
DESTRUCTION OF CAVES AT X636680
AT 2 TP 1 FD Sqn

Introduction

1. The cave complex was found by C Coy 7 RIR in the NUI DINH Hills during Operation LORJRE. This area has been occupied by the C4 (Chou Dai) Company and the caves showed evidence of use as protection against artillery and air strikes. The caves were of a natural formation.

Outline of Task

2. 2 Tp (-) was allotted the task of clearing and destroying the caves. The reserve combat team was committed and Tp Comd moved forward to take command of the task.

3. The caves were blown using 40 lb beehive charges which provided a good shattering effect. One hundred 40 lb beehive charges were flown out to the job site on the 20 Dec 67. The charges were carried by UH1B Iroquois and winched into the site. Each sortie carried three lots of beehive charges. Each winch load consisted of two charges.

4. The distance to the task site from the loading point was approximately 10,000 metres and using three aircraft, the time taken to complete the fly in was two hours. On the following morning additional explosives were flown in to an improvised LZ.

Summary

5. The caves were destroyed by the afternoon of the 21 Dec 67. The beehive charges provided a good shattering effect. Several combinations were tried in the ring mains varying the distance between the charges.

6. The demolition of the caves was considered successful. A sketch map of the layout of the caves is attached.
VC RISE PROCUREMENT
IN PHUOC TUY PROVINCE
INCLUDING T.A.T.F. AOS
AND FSBs
AVENUE OF APPROACH (NOT a track plan)

STAGING AREA - already in use by VC for camps connected with Forward Supply Council activities or used previously for temporary storage and staging purposes.

SUGGESTED AREA OF SEARCH
Numerical indicates priority of search in Areas A and C.

KEY

MAP 4 OF 4

SHEET 6428 I
SERIES L7014

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