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IN REPLY REFER TO
AGAM-P (M) (3 Sep 68) FOR OT RD 68X069 6 September 1968
SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report - Op TOAN THANG, 1st Australian Task Force, Period 21 April - 7 June 1968 (U)

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1. Subject report is forwarded as inclosure for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 5b, AR 525-15

2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure that the Army realizes current benefits from lessons learned during recent operations.

3. To insure that the information provided through the Lessons Learned Program is readily available on a continuous basis, a cumulative Lessons Learned Index containing alphabetical listings of items appearing in the reports is compiled and distributed periodically. Recipients of the attached report are encouraged to recommend items from it for inclusion in the Index by completing and returning the self-addressed form provided at the end of this report.

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US Army Limited War Laboratory
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SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report

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

1. Subject report is forwarded.

2. This headquarters has reviewed the attached After Action Report of the 1st Australian Task Force, Operation Toan Thang Phase I and concurs with it.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

O. B. FORY
1LT, AGC
Asst AG

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
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AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES

HEADQUARTERS 1ST AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE VIETNAM

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report

TO: Commanding General
II Field Force Vietnam

ATTN: AC of S. 03.

COPIES TO: HQ AFV (7)
HQ II Force Vietnam (2)
HQ I ALERG
HQ 6 Task Force (3)
HQ 10 Task Force (3)
Internal (15)

MAPS: VIETNAM Series L7014, Sheet 6430 III and IV (1:50,000),
VIETNAM Series L607, Sheet 6331 (1:100,000),
VIETNAM Series L7014, Sheet 6331 II, 6331 III (1:50,000).

1. Name and Type of Operation. Operation TOAN THANG Phase I.

2. Dates of Operation. The operation was conducted over the period 21 Apr 68 to 7 Jun 68.

3. Command Headquarters. HQ 1 ATF.

4. Unit Commanders.
   a. Cord 1 ATF
      Brigadier R.L. HUGHES, DSO
      D Cord 1 ATF
      Colonel D.B. DUNSTAN, MBE
   b. 1 RAR
      Lt Col P.H. BENNETT
      2 RAR
      Lt Col M.R. CHARLESWORTH
      3 RAR
      Lt Col J.J. SHELTON, MC
      12 Fd Regt
      Lt Col J.D. KELLY
      C Sqn 1 Arm Regt
      Maj F. BAIMAN
      A Sqn 3 Cav Regt
      Maj J.D. KELEHE
      1 Fd Sqn RAE
      Maj J.H. KEMP

5. Location. North East PHUC TUT Province centre of mass YT3000,
   LONG KHANH Province centre of mass YT3004, BIEN HUA/LONG KHANH Province
   centre of mass YT7715 and BIEN HUA/BIEN DUONG Provinces centre of mass YT9129.

   1 RAR
   12 Fd Regt
   2 RAR
   A My 2/35 Arty (US)
   3 RAR
   1 Fd Sqn RAE
   C Sqn 1 Arm Regt
   161 (Indep) Recce Plt
   A Sqn 3 Cav Regt
   9 Sqn RAAF

7. Supporting Forces.
   a. C Sqn 1 Arm Regt

   (1) Deployment.
   (a) On the 22 May 68 C Sqn 1 Arm Regt departed NUI DAT
       via Route 2 and Route 1. The Sqn staged the night 22/23
       May at LONG KHANH and arrived at FSPB CORAL 23 May.
   (b) 1 Tp was placed under op con 3 RAR, 2 Tp was placed
       under op con 1 RAR and Sqn HQ was located at FSPB CORAL.
(e) 1 Tp departed FSPB BAIMORAL on 4 Jun and rejoined Sqn HQ at FSPB CORAL.

(d) On 5 Jun C Sqn 1 Armd Regt departed FSPB CORAL and returned to NUI DAT via Route 15. The Sqn staged the night 5/6 Jun at BEARGAT.

(2) Employment.

(a) Sqn HQ operated from FSPB CORAL and in addition to its normal command and administrative functions was coordinated into the defences of FSPB CORAL.

(b) 1 Tp was placed under op con 3 RAR and located at FSPB BAIMORAL.

(c) 2 Tp was placed under op con 1 RAR and was located at FSPB CORAL.

(d) Both troops were used extensively on recon in force operations and when deployed proved a very decisive factor in contacts with the enemy. They also added considerable strength and fire power to the defences of FSPB BAIMORAL and CORAL during their attacks by the NVA.

b. A Sqn 3 Cav Regt.

(1) Deployment.

(a) 3 Tp was placed under op con C Coy 1 RAR and deployed from NUI DAT to FSPB LONG YS2575 from 23 Apr to 25 Apr.

(b) 1 Tp moved to AO MURRAY BRIDGE on 29 Apr and was placed under op con 2 RAR.

(c) 1 Tp moved to FSPB WATTLE YS3591 on 3 May and came under op con Comd FSPB WATTLE.

(d) 3 Tp escorted a convoy from NUI DAT to BEARGAT Y1600 and returned on 3 May 68.

(e) 1 Tp was placed under op con 1 RAR on 5 May and moved with A Coy 1 RAR to BLACKHORSE en route to FSPB HARRISON Y1716.

(f) Sqn HQ and 2 Tp provided escort for A Bty 2/35 Arty (US) from NUI DAT to FSPB ANDERSB. Y2012 on 5 May and was placed under op con 2 RAR.

(g) Sqn HQ and 2 Tp were placed under op con 3 RAR on 10 May as a result of 3 RAR relieving 2 RAR.

(h) On 12 May A Sqn less 3 Tp escorted the road convoy from AO COLUMBUS III to AO SURFERS staging as follows:

1. A Sqn (-) BEARGAT.

2. 3 Tp 1 Bty HQ in sp of A Bty 2/35 Arty (US).

(i) On 13 May A Sqn (-) arrived in AO SURFERS and deployed as follows:

1. Sqn HQ FSPB CORAL.
II. Protection of road convoys.

III. Recce in force operations.

IV. Evacuation of casualties. During the second battle of FSPB CORAL the APCs collected casualties during darkness from various locations around the perimeter and brought them to a central collection point where they received medical treatment until the LZ for DUSTOFF could be declared secure.

V. Defence of FSPBs.

(b) From 13 May until the conclusion of the operation OC A Sqn 3 Cav Regt was made responsible for the layout, coordination and command of local defence at FSPB CORAL, with the reliable communications provided by the ACV and having the ability to reinforce sectors under attack with his APCs this proved a very successful task for the OC of the Cav Sqn.

c. Artillery.

(1) 12 Pz Regt.

(a) The affiliations throughout the operation were:

i. 102 Pz Bty in DE of 1 BAR.

ii. 108 Pz Bty in NB of 2 BAR.

iii. 161 Pz Bty in NE of 3 BAR.
(b) 102 Fd Bty occupied the following FSPBs:
   i. FSPB WATTLE YS359 3 May - 5 May.
   ii. FSPB HARRISON YS359 5 May - 12 May.
   iii. FSPB CORAL XT9329 12 May - 5 Jun.

(c) 108 Fd Bty occupied the following FSPBs:
   i. FSPB HUNT YT2501 25 Apr - 3 May.
   ii. FSPB WATTLE YS359 3 May - 5 May.
   iii. FSPB ANDERSEN YT2012 5 May - 10 May.

(d) 161 Fd Bty occupied the following FSPBs:
   i. FSPB THOMSON YS3571 21 Apr - 23 Apr.
   ii. FSPB DIKE YS2780 23 Apr - 25 Apr.
   iii. FSPB EVANS YT2206 25 Apr - 3 May.
   iv. FSPB ANDERSEN YT2012 10 May - 12 May.
   v. FSPB CORAL XT9329 12 May - 13 May.
   vi. FSPB COOGEE XT8929 13 May - 24 May.
   vii. FSPB CORAL XT9329 24 May - 6 Jun.

(2) A Bty 2/35 Arty (US).
   (a) Throughout the operation A Bty was in general
   support of 12 Fd Regt.

   (b) A Bty occupied the following FSPBs:
       i. FSPB LONG YS2575 23 Apr - 25 Apr.
       ii. FSPB ANDERSEN YT2010 5 May - 12 May.
       iii. FSPB CORAL XT9329 13 May - 6 Jun.

(3) A Bty 5/42 Arty (US) was in general support of 1 ATF at
   NUI DAT from 6 May to 19 May.

(4) Employment of Artillery. Operation TOAN THANG provided
   a wide variety of tactical situations in which artillery was
   used, these were as follows:

   (a) Preparation of LZs for air assault landings.
   (b) Preparatory bombardment of occupied enemy camps.
   (c) Covering fire plans for attacks.
   (d) Close defensive fire tasks during enemy attacks.
   (e) Having to defend gun positions from enemy who had
       infiltrated into the gun positions.
   (f) Having to fire defensive fire tasks whilst being
       engaged by enemy mortar and rocket fire.
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(g) Cut off missions on enemy withdrawal routes.

(h) Counter bombardment of enemy mortar and rocket locations.

(i) Destruction missions against enemy in the open, and against enemy installations.

(j) Harassing and interdiction tasks against enemy infiltration routes.

(k) Illumination missions.

(5) Corps Artillery Net. A Corps Artillery net was established under the control of II Field Force Artillery. This proved successful and enabled additional fire to be employed especially during the NVA attacks on FSFBs CORAL and BAIMORAL.

(6) AWCC. An "ad hoc" AWCC was deployed at FSFB CORAL. This was successful. However it had to be staffed by untrained personnel. In future operations where the Task Force has its own air space the AWCC at NUT DAT will have to split.

(7) Artillery support was effective throughout the operation and played an important part in the success of the operation.

d. Engineers.

(1) Deployment.

(a) 1 Fd Sqn deployed one engineer combat team to each battalion and one engineer mini team to each troop of C Sqn 1 Armd Regt and A Sqn 3 Cav Regt throughout the operation.

(b) 1 Fd Sqn (-) was deployed to FSFB CORAL from 13 May to 6 Jun.

(2) Employment.

(a) Prior to their deployment as a Sqn (minus engineer combat teams under operational control of the battalions) the following tasks were undertaken:

i. Destruction of enemy installations.

ii. Destruction of captured enemy ammunition and explosives.

iii. Construction of gun positions in the FSFBs.

iv. Construction of LZs and winch points.

v. The mini teams were employed on clearing routes of mines for APCs of A Sqn 3 Cav Regt.

vi. Establishment of a water point at FSFB ANDERSEN.

(b) On deployment to FSFB CORAL the Sqn undertook the following tasks:

i. Land clearing around both FSFBs CORAL and BAIMORAL.
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11. Construction of FSPB defences at FSPBs COOGEE, CORAL and BANMORAL.

iii. Construction of command post, HAP and signal centre at FSPB CORAL.

iv. Laying a booby trap field at FSPB BANMORAL.

v. Assisting the infantry and artillery to prepare their defensive positions.

vi. Occupying a section of the defensive perimeter at FSPB CORAL.

e. Aviation. During Operation TAN THANG (Phase 1), extensive use was made of the air resources available. This was particularly so with the deployment and redeployment of Task Force units and with logistic resupply.

(1) 161 (Federal) Puma Ht. The flight provided 1 H3 in DS of each battalion and Hq 1 ATF. In addition 1 CESSNA was provided for day and night VR in the operational areas and for liaison and radio rebroadcast tasks. The flight also continued to provide PUMA and HU aircraft for VR, liaison and pay ops tasks at the 1 ATF Base. The aircraft supporting the operation initially worked from NUI DAT. On 25 Apr a detachment deployed to BEARCAT YT1600 and redeployed to PHU LOI XT164 on 13 May where it remained until the operation concluded. The H3's in DS of battalions were used for close VR, liaison and artillery observation.

(2) 9 Sqn RAAF. The squadron provided "ROSKY" helicopter support for resupply, troop positioning, DUSTOFF and command liaison tasks. Initially operating daily out of VUNG TAU, a detachment deployed to PHU LOI on 13 May to support operations in AO SURPLUS. From PHU LOI the aircraft positioned daily at FSPB CORAL.

(3) 35 Sqn RAAF. The squadron provided logistic support CARIBOU aircraft that operated between VUNG TAU, NUI DAT and BEARCAT whilst HQ 1 ATF and the logistic elements of the force were located at BEARCAT.

(4) US Army Aviation.

(a) Offensive Support. Throughout the operation a LFT was positioned daily at NUI DAT. As the Task Force deployed further away from the 1 ATF Base it became necessary to leave the LFT at NUI DAT to support operations in PHU OC TUY and "on call" LFT's requested through MAE HQ II FEV. Response to requests was good and no difficulties were experienced with the systems. During the attacks on F3 CORAL and BANMORAL LFT's provided excellent close support in the face of heavy and accurate enemy AA M-203 fire.

(b) DUSTOFF Support. Casualty evacuation requirements were met by DUSTOFF helicopters based at LONG BINH. Response to requests was completely satisfactory although when numerous casualties were sustained, assistance from 9 Sqn RAAF enabled the wounded to be delivered to hospital without undue delay.

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(c) Transport Support. The force was almost completely maintained by air during the operation and deployment and redeployment was by air. Details of transport support provided by US Army Aviation are listed below. 9 Sqn RAAF supplemented US AHCs in troop moves and assisted US transport support in daily resupply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deployments and Redeployments</th>
<th>Troops</th>
<th>Cargo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AHCs</td>
<td>5215</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH47</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>367.5 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH54</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>31 tons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Logistic Resupply

| CH47 | 1242 | 1471 tons |
| CH54 | Nil  | 18 tons    |

(5) USAF. The 1 ATF TACP provided continuous daylight VR throughout the operation as well as controlling preplanned and immediate airstrikes and SPOOKY and MOONSHINE aircraft. A significant “first” during this period was the employment of close tactical air by night during the attack on FSPB CORAL 16 May 68. A forward TACP was deployed with HQ 1 ATF and the FACs and aircraft operated from VUNG TAU and NUI DAT until 13 May 68 when a detachment deployed to PHU LOI. This detachment subsequently redeployed to BIEN HOA AB on 31 May 68 in order to take advantage of the better maintenance facilities available.

(6) During the operation there were 184 missions flown by USAF aircraft. Of these, 134 were preplanned airstrikes, 7 were immediate airstrikes in support of troops in contact, 37 were combat air support, 3 were SPOOKY and MOONSHINE missions and 3 were B52 strikes.

8. Intelligence.

a. From the intelligence point of view, the overall area of 1 ATF operations during Operation TOAN THANG I consisted of three main areas of interest:

   (1) NUI THI VAIs, North to include the HAT DICHI area.

   (2) Northern HAT DICHI and AO COLUMBUS III.

   (3) AO SURFERS I and II.

b. Prior to operations in each of the three areas, the following indications of enemy activity were noted:

(1) NUI THI VAIs, HAT DICHI Area. Indications were that there was possibly up to one VC main force battalion in the HAT DICHI area. This derived from a 9 US Div LRIP sighting of 250 well armed men in the vicinity of YS3914 on 25 Mar, heading South. The CHAU DIX District VC, C41, was thought to be in the general area of the HAT DICHI/NUI THI VAIs. The last known contact with C41 was on 2 Apr 68 when a patrol from 2 RAR contacted 35–50 VC near HOA LONG, killing six, at least four of whom were members of C41. Numerous base camps were known throughout the area.

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(2) Northern HAT DICH. AO COLUMBUS III. II FFV intelligence indicated that the enemy would conduct coordinated attacks on SAIGON and BIEN HOA/LONG BINH in the timeframe 24 Apr - 1 May and probably would use the same avenues of approach used during TET. It was expected that these attacks would be preceded by attacks by fire. The area of AO COLUMBUS III had been used as an approach avenue during TET and also as an area for rocket sites for fire attacks on BIEN HOA/LONG BINH. The area of the Northern HAT DICH showed signs of increasing activity. During the period 9 - 16 Apr 68, 9 US Div LRRPs had had four contacts resulting in 21 VC KIA (EC) and 10 KIA possible. Red Haze emission reports had noticeably increased, and there were also reports of the existence of a K34 Arty Battalion in the general area of YS2990. One enemy KIA in a contact on the 16 Apr had been identified as being from 52 VC Arty Bn, 69 Arty Command. It was possible that 0445 LF Battalion, or elements of it, were co-located with these Arty units.

(3) AO SURFERS I and II. Since the start of the second enemy offensive on 4 May 68, it had become apparent that substantial mainforce and local force units had passed through the AO SURFERS area and would probably continue to do so. Further, in the event of the second offensive being called off it was anticipated that the AO SURFERS area would be in a position to interdict exfiltration routes from SAIGON.

(a) Up to 10 May 68, contact had been made by US units with the following enemy regiments in the AO SURFERS area:

i. 141 NVA Regt, 7 NVA Div.
ii. 165 NVA Regt, 7 NVA Div.
iii. 274 VC Regt, 5 VC Div.
iv. 275 VC Regt, 5 VC Div.
v. DONG NAI Regt.

(b) In addition, the following local force or district elements had been operating in or near AO SURFERS:

i. 3 VC LF Bn.
ii. C300 DONG NAI Coy.
iii. C303 Coy.
iv. C302 TAN UTEN Pl.
v. DI AN Pl.
vi. 83 Rear Services Group.

(c) The village of BINH NY (XT9036 - XT9132) had been noted as an important staging area and resupply point for enemy troops moving either North or South.

Area I Operations (Period 21 - 24 Apr). Operations in the NUI THI HAT/HAT DICH area were curtailed before entering the HAT DICH area proper. At the end of operations in this area there had been one contact with two enemy with unknown results.
d. Area 2 Operations (Period 24 Apr - 11 May). Operations continued in the Northern HIT DICH area to Highway 1 until 5 May when the deployment to AO COLUMBUS III was affected. Up to 5 May no major contact had been made and there were seven minor contacts with the following results:

- 5 VC KIA (VC)
- 1 VC WIA
- 6 Individual weapons captured
- 1 Crew served weapon captured

e. One enemy unit was identified from documents following a contact on 28 Apr 68. The documents identified the Political Officer of J600, a rear services element subordinate to 274 VC Regt.

f. Operations in AO COLUMBUS III continued until 11 May with the following results:

(1) Three minor contacts yielding six enemy KIA, seven individual weapons and one crew served weapon captured. Two unit identifications from bodies were made during this period, firstly from Coy C22 of 167 Engineer Battalion and secondly BIEN HOI Province tax collection elements.

(2) 1 RAR had located a 122mm rocket site which had last been used during TET against BIEN HOI/LONG BINH.

(3) 3 RAR had two rockets of an unknown type, probably RPG, fired near their location.

g. Area 3 Operations (Period 12 May - 6 Jun 68). During operations in AO SURFENS I and II, there were a total of 69 contacts, including two regimental sized attacks against FSBs, with the overall result as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enemy KIA (VC)</th>
<th>237</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enemy KIA Pass</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detainee</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoi Chanh</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew served</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 237 Enemy units and infiltration groups identified were:
  - 141 NVA Regt
  - 165 NVA Regt
  - 85 Regt
  - 32 Infiltration Group
  - 269 Infiltration Group
  - 275 Infiltration Group
  - 725 Infiltration Group
  - NAH MA Infiltration Group
  - 233 Infiltration Group
  - 220 Infiltration Group
  - 165 Infiltration Group

h. Trends Noted in Area 3 Operations:

(1) Detailed recces done by the enemy. He conducted close, detailed recces by day and by night and also recces in force up to Company strength. An example of the detailed recces being carried out was the finding of saplings bent to point to VC positions.
Before his large attacks the enemy moved close to his objective several hours before attacking. A PW from 275 Infiltration Group captured after a Regimental attack on FSPB CORAL said that his unit had force marched for six hours, then laid up for three hours 250 metres from our FEBA before attacking.

The extremely heavy fire support employed by the enemy during his recce in force and attacks. He employed 60mm and 82mm mortars, 75mm RCL and RPG2 and 7 with considerable accuracy, and effectiveness.

The enemy was very aggressive and willing to prolong contact after first light to enable him to clear the battlefield.

The enemy’s employment of anti aircraft heavy machine guns. These were sited around his HQ areas to prevent detailed air recce, and also employed in the attack, sited close to friendly locations to minimise fire from LFTs.

Following attacks, the enemy dispersed rapidly, even after first light. After an NVA Regimental sized attack against FSPB CORAL on 16 May 68 contact broke at 0630 hrs and immediately all traces of the enemy vanished. It is now suspected that he hid in prepared bunkers and foxholes in a stream bed about 700 metres North of CORAL, most likely remaining there throughout the day and moving off the following night.

The large number of Infiltration Groups identified in the area showed the importance of AO SURFERS as a movement route. Considerable flare activity accompanied by the sounds of shots every night indicated that the enemy was by-passing our locations.

The number and size of the attacks against our positions showed the importance that the enemy attached to the BINH MY area.

The whole of 7 NVA Div was concentrated in the area of AO SURFERS, with 141 NVA Regt to the East of FSPB CORAL and 165 NVA Regt to the North of FSPB BALMORAL.

**9. Concept of Operations.**

**a. General Outline Phase 1.**

(1) 1 ATF was to destroy VC/NVA elements in the following AOs:

(a) AO GILES.
(b) AO STURT.
(c) AO HUME.
(d) AO KENNEDY.
(e) AO LAWSON.

(2) 3 RAR commenced the operation on 21 Apr 68 by securing FSPB THORNTON Y33571 with C Coy and Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt. The remainder of 3 RAR with '61 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt moved by air to FSPB THORNTON.

(3) 3-RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) Recce in force in AOs GILES and HUME.
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(b) Secure FSPB BEAVIS, vicinity YS2736, on 27 Apr for the fly-in of 2 RAR commencing at first light on 28 Apr.

c) Destroy all enemy installations within their AO.

(d) On 22 Apr 68 on orders from II FFV the concept of the operation was changed.

b. General Outline Phase 2.

(1) 2 RAR and 3 RAR were to conduct roce in force in AOS LAWSON and KENNEDY in the period 24-26 Apr 68.

(2) 2 RAR and 3 RAR were then to attack North astride the general line of the LONG KHANH/BIEO BRIDGE boundary to the North of AO MURRAY BRIDGE in the period 27-30 Apr 68.

(3) Finally 2 RAR and 3 RAR were to occupy ambush positions and patrol in the North of AO MURRAY BRIDGE to cover East/West tracks which could be used as likely enemy avenues of approach into SAIGON, LONG BINH and BIEN HOA.

(4) 2 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) Establish FSPB CAPE in vicinity YS3081 on 24 Apr.

(b) Recce in force in AO LAWSON.

(c) Attack North to the East of the inter battalion boundary, within AO MURRAY BRIDGE, to destroy NVA/VC forces bases and staging areas.

(d) Occupy ambush positions and patrol in AO NEPEAN to cover East/West tracks which could be used as likely enemy avenues of approach into SAIGON, LONG BINH and BIEN HOA.

(e) Be prepared, on order, for airmobile insertion into AO NEPEAN to interdict VC/NVA approaches to LONG BINH from the East, should this be required by higher authority.

(5) 3 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) Establish FSPB DYKE in vicinity YS2700 on 23 Apr.

(b) Secure FSPB CAPE on 23 Apr for the fly-in of 2 RAR on 24 Apr.

(c) Recce in force in AO KENNEDY.

(d) Attack North to the West of the inter battalion boundary, within AO MURRAY BRIDGE, to destroy NVA/VC forces bases and staging areas.

(e) Occupy ambush positions and patrol in AO HUNTER to cover East/West tracks which could be used as likely enemy avenues of approach into SAIGON, LONG BINH and BIEN HOA.

(f) Be prepared, on order, for airmobile insertion into AO HUNTER to interdict VC/NVA approaches to LONG BINH from the East, should this be required by higher authority.

(6) On the 23 Apr 68 1 ATF received orders from II FFV to insert by air 2 RAR and 3 RAR into AOS NEPEAN and HUNTER. As a result of this order 2 RAR was not deployed. 3 RAR was ordered to secure FSPB DYKE and CAPE and conduct RIF operations in the vicinity of FSPB DYKE.
c. General Outline Phase 3.

(1) 3 RAR was to continue recce in force in the vicinity of FSPB DYE and secure FSPB CAPE.

(2) 2 RAR and 3 RAR fly into AOs NEPEAN and HUNTER and occupy ambush positions and patrol to cover East/West tracks which could be used as avenues of approach into SAIGON, LONG Binh and BIEN HOA.

(3) 2 RAR was given the following tasks:
   (a) Conduct airmobile insertion into AO NEPEAN, on conclusion of 3 RAR insertion, on 25 Apr.
   (b) Establish FSPB HUNT in vicinity YT2602.
   (c) Occupy ambush positions and patrol in AO NEPEAN to cover East/West tracks which could be used as avenues of approach into SAIGON, LONG Binh and BIEN HOA.

(4) 3 RAR was given the following tasks:
   (a) Continue present operations in AOs KENNEDY and LAWSON.
   (b) Conduct airmobile insertion into AO HUNTER commencing 250800H Apr.
   (c) Establish FSPB EVANS in vicinity YT2206.
   (d) Occupy ambush positions and patrol in AO HUNTER to cover tracks from the North and the East which could be used as likely enemy avenues of approach into SAIGON, LONG Binh and BIEN HOA.

d. General Outline Phase 4.

(1) 2 RAR commencing on 29 Apr extended their operations into AO SWAN.

(2) 3 RAR took over the responsibility of AO NEPEAN and screened the area from FSPB HUNT to the AO Boundary in the vicinity of TRANG BOM YT9190.

e. General Outline Phase 5.

(1) Commencing 3 May 1 ATF was to extend recce in force operations into AOs BELIZE, KENNEDY, LAWSON and TAUPO.

(2) 1 RAR was given the following tasks:
   (a) To be inserted into FSPB WATTLE on 3 May.
   (b) To provide one coy for the security of FSPB WATTLE and subsequently for FSPB ASH and FSPB WILLOW.
   (c) To conduct recce in force operations in AOs BELIZE, LAWSON and TAUPO.

(3) 2 RAR was given the following tasks:
   (a) To extend recce in force operations into AOs BELIZE and KENNEDY.
(b) To secure and provide protection for FSPB CEDAR.

(c) On completion of recce in force operations in AO KENNEDY to be extracted by AHC to NUI DAT.

(d) Be prepared on order to deploy one coy under operational control of 1 RAR to ambush tracks in vicinity of YS3269.

(4) 3 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) To be extracted by AHC to NUI DAT on 3 May.

(b) To be inserted into FSPB PINE on extraction of 2 RAR and conduct recce in force operations in AO TAUNO.

(c) Provide one coy for the security of FSPB PINE.

(5) On the 5 May 68 1 ATF was ordered by II FFV to deploy into AO COLUMBUS III. At this stage operations in this phase concluded in AO BELIZE.


(1) 1 ATF was required to relieve 199 Bde in AO COLUMBUS III by 051500H May and establish counter rocket ambush positions along the general line YT100210 - YT150170 and YT190120.

(2) 1 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) To be inserted by AHC into FSPB HARRISON YT167172 and LZ's YT137192 and YT120172.

(b) Establish counter rocket ambush positions in AO ANNE in the vicinity of YT109197, YT137192 and YT133170.

(c) Establish FSPB HARRISON YT167172 and provide one coy for its protection.

(3) 2 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) To be inserted by CH47s into FSPB ANDERSEN YT209127.

(b) Establish counter ambush positions in AO SIMPSON in the vicinity of YT168155, YT20148 and YT170130.

(c) Establish FSPB ANDERSEN and provide one coy for its protection.

(4) On 10 May 68 3 RAR relieved 2 RAR in AO SIMPSON. 2 RAR returned to NUI DAT and 3 RAR continued to patrol and occupy counter rocket ambush.

g. General Outline Phase 7.

(1) During this phase which commenced on 12 May 68 1 ATF was ordered by II FFV to occupy blocking positions within AO SURFERS to interdict enemy withdrawal routes from the South and South West.

(2) 1 RAR was given the following tasks:

(a) Establish 102 Pd Bty, 12 Pd Regt, in FSPB CORAL.
(b) To clear Route 16 from FSPB CORAL to TAN UYEN, vicinity XT99243 and secure it for the convoy movement on 13 May.

(e) Establish blocking positions and patrol in AO BONDI to interdict enemy withdrawal routes from the South and South West.

(3) 3 BAR was given the following tasks:

(a) Conduct air assault landing into FSPB CORAL and secure LZ for fly-in of 3 BAR and 1 KAR.

(b) Establish 161 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt, in FSPB CORAL.

(c) Provide one coy and one sect mors for the protection of FSPB CORAL.

(d) Establish blocking positions and patrol AO MANLY to interdict enemy withdrawal routes from the South and South West.

(4) On the 13 May 3 BAR were ordered to establish FSPB COOGEE in the vicinity of XT9329.

(5) On the 23 May C Sqn 1 Armd Regt arrived at FSPB CORAL from NUI VAT.

h. General Outline Phase 8

(1) On the 24 May 1 ATF redeployed 3 BAR from AO MANLY to AO NEWPORT. On completion of the redeployment 1 ATF continued recce in force operations in AO SURFERS II.

(2) 1 BAR was given the following tasks:

(a) Continue the defence of FSPB CORAL.

(b) Conduct recce in force operations to the North of FSPB CORAL prior to the move of 3 BAR from AO MANLY to AO NEWPORT.

(c) Secure the right flank for 3 BAR move to AO NEWPORT.

(d) Provide one coy to escort one tp C Sqn 1 Armd Regt to FSPB BALMORAL.

(e) Commencing 25 May conduct recce in force operations into AO BONDI.

(3) 3 BAR was given the following tasks:

(a) Commencing 24 May move to and secure a battalion defensive position (FSPB BALMORAL) in the vicinity XT9333. To be concentrated in new location by 1600 hrs 24 May.

(b) Develop the battalion defensive position on 25 May, allowing space for the possible deployment of a Fd Bty.

(c) Be prepared to conduct recce in force operations in AO NEWPORT commencing 26 May, to locate enemy base camps with a view to initially destroying them with air attack and artillery.
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(d) Until otherwise directed by HQ 1 ATF sub units conducting recce in force operations were to return to the battalion base at night.

(e) Priority of recce in force operations were to be into the Northern sector of AO NEWPORT against the suspected base camp of 165 NVA Regt followed by the Eastern sector against the suspected base camp of 141 NVA Regt.

(4) On the 5 Jun 68 3 RAR returned to NUI DAT and FSPB BAIMORAL was abandoned.

(5) On the 5 Jun 68 C Sqn 1 Armd Regt departed FSPB CORAL for NUI DAT.

(6) On the 6 Jun 68 the remainder of 1 ATF departed FSPB CORAL and AO SURFERS II was handed over to 1 (US) Div.

10. Execution.

a. Phase 1. 3 RAR operations 21-23 Apr 68.

(1) 21 Apr 68. 3 RAR deployed into AO GILES. D Coy carried out an air assault into area YS3577 and secured the area by 1115H. A and B Coys and 161 Fd Bty then flew in and FSPB THORNTON was established. C Coy moved by APC, arriving at FSPB THORNTON at 1145H, and taking over the task of defence of the FSPB. Coys then deployed as follows:

A Coy area YS3473.
B Coy area YS3470.
D Coy area YS3372.

Bn HQ was established on NUI NGHE YS3972. There was no contact with the enemy.

(2) 22 Apr 68. Coys continued RIF in allotted areas. At 1230H at YS33703 B Coy engaged 2 enemy without result.

(3) 23 Apr 68. 3 RAR concluded operations in AO GILES and, with the exception of C Coy, deployed by air to AOs KENNEDY and LAWSON. FSPB DIKE was established in area YS2780 and D Coy was given the task of its defence. Bn HQ moved to FSPB DIKE with A Coy in area YS2680 and B Coy in area YS3081. C Coy remained overnight 23/24 Apr at FSPB THORNTON. There was no enemy contact.

b. Phase 2. 3 RAR operations 24 Apr 68. C Coy moved by air to FSPB DIKE. At 1700H at YS265034 the ASLT Pnr Pl engaged 1 VC with unknown results.


(1) 25 Apr 68. HQ 1 ATF (Main) moved to REARGUARD YT1600. 2 RAR (-) deployed by air to AO NEPEAN with V Coy securing an LZ at YT275007 and W Coy securing the area for FSPB HUNT in YT2602. B and C Coys and 708 Fd Bty flew into FSPB HUNT and the coy deployed to areas YT2701 and YT2702 respectively. A Coy remained at KENNELHILL YS2562. 3 RAR concluded operations in AoOs KENNEDY and LAWSON and deployed by air to AO HUNTER. C Coy secured the area for FSPB EVANS YT2206 for the fly-in of Bn HQ, B Coy and 161 Fd Bty. A Coy carried out an air assault into YT29080 and D Coy into YT22994. There was no contact during the day.
(2) 26 Apr 68. Both 2 RAR and 3 RAR carried out reconnaissance in force operations (RIF) within their respective AOs without contact.

(3) 27 Apr 68.

(a) 2 RAR continued operations with minor contact. At 0630H at their night location YT280032, B Coy engaged 2 enemy with small arms with the result 2 enemy KIA (SC) and 2 small arms weapons captured. At the same location at 0820H 6 enemy were engaged with the result 2 enemy KIA (SC) and 1 small arms weapon captured. At 1415H at YT280040 9 Pl found an enemy camp consisting of 10-15 bunkers, 1 enemy was sighted in the area and fired on, but although wounded he escaped. 1 small arms weapon was captured.

(b) 3 RAR continued patrolling without contact.

(4) 28 Apr 68. Both 2 RAR and 3 RAR continued RIF. 2 RAR had one contact at 0720H at YT280060 when V Coy contact 1 enemy moving along a track. 1 enemy was killed and 2 small arms captured.

Phase 4. Operations in AO MURRAY BRIDGE 29 Apr - 2 May 68.

(1) 29 Apr 68. 2 RAR commenced to move SOUTH into AO SWAN. 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt came under operational control of 2 RAR and moved from MUI DAT to BEARCAT. 2 Pl W Coy moved by air to BEARCAT and then deployed with 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt and commenced operations in the area of the rubber estate, YT2400. Neither 2 RAR nor 3 RAR made contact with the enemy. At YT280036 4 Pl 2 RAR found 3162mm Checca mortar bombs and at YT280037 Pl found 2x82mm Checca mortar bombs, 1500 lbs of rice and a quantity of small arms ammunition. Both the rice and the ammunition were destroyed.

(2) 30 Apr 68.

(a) 2 RAR continued its deployment into AO SWAN. W Coy moved to area YT2400 to join 2 Pl and 1 Tp A Sqn. At YT280036 9 Pl found a partly destroyed camp containing a RPG2 complete with "round, 1 Checca burp gun, 40x60mm mortar rounds and 25 Checca grenades. At YT280099 9 Coy found a camp which was still being built.

(b) 3 RAR deployed to occupy both AO HUNTER and AO NEPEAN with A Coy moving by air to YT220243 and D Coy moving by air to FSPB HUNT. C Coy remained at FSPB EVANS and D Coy in area YT2400. At 1326H at YT240063 B Coy detained an unarmed person wearing greens and without an identity card. There was no other contact.

(3) 1 and 2 May 68. There was no contact on either of these days. Locations on night 2/3 May 68 were as follows:

2 RAR

Bn HQ FSPB HUNT
B Coy YT2393
C Coy YT2400
V Coy YT280039
W Coy YT2793
A Coy HAYMAN
108 Pl Bty FSPB HUNT

3 RAR

Bn HQ FSPB EVANS
A Coy YT2393
B Coy YT2400
C Coy FSPB EVANS
D Coy FSPB HUNT
161 Pl Bty FSPB EVANS
e. Phase 5. Operations in AO BELIZE 3-4 May 68.

(1) 3 May 68.

(a) 1 RAR deployed by air to AO BELIZE. A Coy secured the LZ at YS3991 for the remainder of the battalion and 102 Fd Bty. FSPB WATTLE was established at this point with BN HQ, A Coy and 102 Fd Bty. C Coy moved to the following areas: B Coy YS3399; C Coy YS3490; D Coy YS3488. At 2045H 1 enemy engaged on the perimeter of FSPB WATTLE with no result.

(b) 2 RAR commenced operations in AO BELIZE without contact. At YS285919 W Coy found a battalion sized camp with about 250 bunkers that had not been used for about one month. BN HQ moved by air and joined V Coy at YS301933, and 106 Fd Bty moved by air to FSPB WATTLE.

(c) 3 RAR was extracted by air to NUI DAT.

(2) 4 May 68. Both 1 RAR and 2 RAR continued RIF. D Coy 1 RAR contacted small groups of enemy twice without result.


(1) 5 May 68. Both 1 RAR and 2 RAR deployed by air to AO COLUMBUS III with 1 RAR occupying FSPB HARRISON (YT1617) and AO ATRE and 2 RAR FSPB ANDERSEN (YT2012) and AO SIMPSON. 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt passed to operational control of 1 RAR and two Pls of A Coy provided the escort for the move by road to FSPB HARRISON, staging overnight at BLICKHOUSE. 2 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt provided escort for A Bty 2/35 Arty (US) from NUI DAT to FSPB ANDERSEN and then came under operational control of 2 RAR.

(2) 6 May 68. Both battalions continued deployment. At 1600H at YT225153 8 PI 2 RAR sighted 6 enemy moving along a track and engaged them. The enemy proved to be the scout group for a party of approx 20 who returned fire before breaking contact and withdrawing at 1715H. This contact resulted in 2 enemy KIA (10), 1 enemy WIA, and 1 AK47, 1 RPG4 with 6 rounds, and quantities of grenades, medical supplies and documents captured. Locations for night 6/7 May were:

1 RAR

BN HQ YT152171
A Coy YT1125
B Coy YT1171
C Coy YT1149
D Coy FSPB HARRISON
102 Fd Bty FSPB HARRISON

2 RAR

BN HQ FSPB ANDERSEN
B Coy YT1614
C Coy YT2210
V Coy FSPB ANDERSEN
W Coy YT1612
106 Fd Bty FSPB ANDERSEN
A Bty 2/35 Arty (US) FSPB ANDERSEN

(3) 7-9 May 68. During this period 1 RAR and 2 RAR continued patrolling and ambushing within their AOs. On 7 May at YT135155 B Coy 1 RAR found a 122mm rocket site that had been last used during the TET offensive in Jan 68. At 0615H on 8 May at YT125124 2 PI 1 RAR engaged a party of 4 or 5 enemy killing 3 and capturing 5 small arms.

(4) 10 May 68.

(a) 1 RAR. At 1206H at YT124216 1 PI contacted and killed 1 enemy capturing a Chicom pistol.

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(b) 2 RAR extracted by air to NUI BCT, being relieved by 3 RAR.

c) 3 RAR deployed by air to AO SIMPSON and occupied areas as follows: 1 RAR HQ and D Coy FSPB ANDERSEN; A Coy YK214; B Coy and C Coy YK1714.

(5) 11 May 68. Potrolling continued without contact.


(1) 12 May 68. Operations in AO COLUMBUS III concluded and 1 RAR and 3 RAR with their supporting FD Btys, and advance parties from TP HQ and supporting units, deployed by air to AO SURFERS.

(a) FSPB CORAL was established at XT9329 with 1 RAR group and TP HQ and TPMA elements. At 1815H at XT93309 11 Pl 1 RAR sighted and engaged an enemy 10 man party, killing one and capturing 1 AK47. 1 member of 11 Pl was wounded and later evacuated. At 1935H 4 Pl 1 RAR fired on 10 enemy seen at YV96280 with unknown results.

(b) 3 RAR conducted the assault landing into the area of FSPB CORAL to secure the area for the fly-in of the remainder of the battalion, 1 RAR, and the Field Batteries. 3 RAR then deployed WEST into AO MAHLY. On two occasions during the afternoon enemy in small groups were seen and engaged without result.

(2) Night 12/13 May 68. Several times during the night enemy were seen or heard in the vicinity of FSPB CORAL. At 0145H the enemy commenced firing RPG and mortars into the FSPB. This was followed by a ground attack by an estimated battalion, directed mainly at 102 Fd Bty and 1 RAR mortar position, both of which were held by the enemy for a short period; SPOOKY and LFTs were called to assist in the defence. The attack was repulsed, and the enemy broke contact and withdrew at 0800H. Sweeps of the area revealed the following enemy casualties. 52 NVA KIA (BC) and 1 NVA FM, 23 small arms and 7 crew served weapons captured. Our own casualties were 9 KIA, 28 WIA, 1 105mm HOW and 2x81mm mortars damaged.

(3) 13 May 68. The occupation and development of FSPB CORAL continued with the arrival of HQ 1 ATF (Main) and two road convoys with TPMA pers and stocks, 3 RAR established FSPB COOKE at XT9299 and 161 Pl Bty moved to there from FSPB CORAL. At 0924H at XT941309 D Coy 1 RAR contacted 5 enemy, killing 3 and capturing 3 AK47s. At 1600H at XT989308 D Coy 3 RAR engaged 5 enemy, with the result 1 NVA KIA (BC) and 1 M16 rifle and a quantity of mortar ammunition, rice and documents captured. At 1928H D Coy 3 RAR engaged 3 enemy at XT901261 with no result, and at 2233H at XT977275 A Coy 3 RAR fired on 5 enemy, killing one and possibly wounding another.

(4) 14 May 68.

(a) 1 RAR carried out patrols in the vicinity of FSPB CORAL and engaged small groups of the enemy on six occasions. At 1200H at XT924207 12 Pl were ambushed by approx 3 enemy with the result 1 AUST KIA and 3 AUST WIA. The enemy opened the contact by firing RPG and then withdrew. Their position was engaged by small arms fire, and their withdrawal route with artillery, with unknown result.
At 1253H at XT942282 5 Pl engaged 10 enemy with small arms fire and possibly wounded two. At approx 1630H at XT945293 2 Pl fired on a group of approx 13 enemy. The enemy immediately broke into two groups and withdrew. At 1700H at XT942300 7 Pl contacted 9 enemy presumed to be from the earlier 2 Pl contact, and killed 7 and captured 2. They also captured 9 weapons, including 1 M16. 7 Pl suffered 1 KIA and 1 WIA as a result of this contact. At 1730H at XT942282 a section of 5 Pl was ambushed by approx 6 enemy. In the initial contact the leading scout was killed and his M16 rifle was captured before the enemy were forced to withdraw. 1 other soldier was wounded and 4 NVA were killed. At 1800H an RPG round was fired into A Coy's position at XT942282 with the result 2 AUST WIA.

(b) 3 RAR had three contacts during the day. At 0730H at XT897273, whilst sweeping the area of the previous night's contact, A Coy contacted 2 enemy and killed one of them. In the same area at 0900H A Coy contacted an unknown number of enemy. The enemy withdrew with unknown result. At 1253H at XT992860 5 Pl fired on 1 enemy without result.

(5) 15 May 68. At 0340H at XT933282 2 Pl 1 RAR observed 2 enemy outside their perimeter and engaged them without result. At 1026H at XT901289 7 Pl 3 RAR contacted 3 enemy with no result, and at 1140H at XT901282 A Coy 3 RAR contacted and killed 1 enemy. 10 Pl 1 RAR found a company sized camp at XT923297 which had been recently used.

(6) Night 15/16 May 68. FSPB CORAL received an attack from an estimated regiment during this night. At 0200H the enemy commenced a heavy mortar and RPG attack directed mainly against A Coy 1 RAR and the Section HQ area. At 0240H, under cover of this fire, the enemy attacked A and B Coys 1 RAR in battalion strength. The attack was held on the perimeter. At approx 0340H the enemy broke contact. Whilst the attack was in progress other contacts had occurred around the perimeter, and these continued sporadically. At 0515H the enemy attempted to thrust between A and C Coys but was prevented by mortar fire. An attack was then mounted against A, B and C Coys' positions but this was repulsed. An attack was also mounted against D Coy at 0600H, again in about battalion strength supported by mortars and RPGs. The enemy finally broke contact and withdrew at approx 0645H. SPOOKY, LFT and ground attack aircraft supported the action. APCs were used for ammunition resupply and for collection of wounded and their transport to a central medical evacuation point. Total own casualties were 5 KIA, 19 AUST WIA, 2 US WIA. Sweeps conducted after last light revealed 34 NVA bodies and indicated more had been carried away. One FI was taken, and 16 small arms and 11 crew served weapons captured. Two enemy HQs were silenced by ground attack aircraft but the weapons were not captured.

(7) 16 May 68. At 0900H at XT942293 B Coy 1 RAR contacted and killed one enemy and captured an AK47. There were no other contacts during the day.

(8) 17 May 68.

(a) At 1700H 5 Pl 3 RAR sighted approx 35 enemy moving NE along a treeline at XT992264. They were out of range of small arms fire but were engaged with artillery and LFT with the result 6 NVA KIA (30) and a further 5 KIA (Poss).
At 1812H at XT902280 A Coy 3 RAR contacted 6 enemy, killing one, taking two PW, and capturing three cnuall arma. At 1712H at XT934288 5 Pl 1 RAR engaged and killed one enemy. At 2140H at XT902279 A Coy 3 RAR fired on 4 enemy and a sweep at first light on 18 May 68 revealed 1 NVA KIA (BG). 1 RAR patrols during the day located mortar positions used during the attacks on night 15/16 May and captured quantities of ammunition.

(b) Locations of the battalions on the night 17/18 May were as follows:

1 RAR
In close perimeter defence of FEPB CORAL
- En HQ FEPB COOGEE
- A Coy XT9028
- B Coy XT8925
- C Coy FEPB COOGEE
- D Coy XT9930

2 RAR

(9) 18-21 May 68. During this period RIF operations carried out throughout the AO resulted in a series of minor contacts:

(a) At 180630H at XT898258 4 Pl 3 RAR contacted and killed one enemy.
(b) At 190745H at XT899278 1 Pl 3 RAR engaged 4 enemy with unknown result.
(c) At 201250H on an OH-13 (SIOUX) aircraft of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt received ground fire from an HMB at XT99322. A camp in the area was subjected to airstrike and artillery.
(d) At 210825H at XT888308 an APC of 2 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt detonated a mine, wounding one soldier and severely damaging the APC.

(10) 22 May 68. Between 0203H and 0240H FEPB CORAL received mortar and RPG fire. There were no casualties and no damage to equipment. C Sqn 1 Arm Regt departed NUI DAT for FEPB CORAL, staging overnight at LONG BINH. On Route 2 in the vicinity of XT9498 one Centurion detonated a mine and returned "minor torn" and suspension damage. There were no other contacts with the enemy.

(11) 23 May 68. At 1600H a CESSNA-C1 (BIRDDOG) aircraft of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt crashed after receiving ground fire in the area of XT94194 and killed the pilot. At 0940H at XT94904 D Coy 1 RAR fired upon 1 enemy without result. C Sqn 1 Arm Regt completed its move to FEPB CORAL.

Phase 8. Operations in AO SURFERS II 24 May-6 Jun 68.

(1) 24 May 68. 3 RAR abandoned FEPB COOGEE and moved by foot and air to AO NAMOUR and established FEPB RIPANEL at XT9333. 161 Pl 3 Pl moved by air to FEPB CORAL. At 0530H at XT930375 D Coy 3 RAR contacted and killed 1 enemy soldier. At 0630H at the same location 4 VC fired upon D Coy wounding 1 Australian soldier. A sweep of the area revealed 10 bunkers that had been occupied the previous night. The leading elements of D Coy were again fired upon by a small group of enemy at 0927H and one soldier wounded. Neither of the two D Coy soldiers were evacuated. At FEPB COOGEE at 0746H 1 enemy soldier bearing a CHIEF NOI pass surrendered.
(2) 25 May 68. B Coy 1 BAR escorted 2 Tp C Sqn from FSPB CORAL to FSPB BALMORAL. At 1050H at XT932312 the leading platoon, 6 Pl, of B Coy sighted 2 enemy and engaged them with no result. At 1132H at XT931311 2 enemy were again fired upon. B Coy then came under MG and RPG fire from an engaged enemy platoon in bunkers. 2 Tp engaged the enemy positions with cannon and enabled the group to withdraw. The area was subjected to airstrike during the afternoon, uncovering a number of bunkers. 2 NVA were killed and 1 AK47 captured during the contact and one member of B Coy was evacuated wounded.

(3) 26 May 68.

(a) FSPB CORAL received mortar, 75mm AR and RPG fire from 0415H to 0430H with result 1 AUST KIA and 1 AUST WIA. This coincided with a ground attack against FSPB BALMORAL.

(b) 1 BAR. B Coy, accompanied by 1 Tp C Sqn, carried out RIF to the area of B Coy's contact on 25 May. At 1227H at XT931310 10 Pl contacted an unknown number of enemy. Fire support was given by 1 Tp C Sqn and the enemy broke contact at 1315H. 3 NVA were killed during this contact. At 1420H at XT930313 10 Pl engaged NVA MG and SI fire, and RPG directed at the tanks. The enemy were discovered to be in a well constructed bunker complex of approx company size. Before contact was broken at approx 1520H 14 bunkers were destroyed. Some of these were occupied but were not searched due to lack of time. The action resulted in 3 NVA KIA (BC) and a number of small arms captured. At 1520H at XT951291 2 Pl found 16 newly dug weapon pits. 15 x 75mm AR spent cases and approx 35 x 60mm mortar nose caps were found in the area.

(c) 3 BAR. At 0245H FSPB BALMORAL received a heavy mortar attack from the NORTH and IE, followed by a ground attack supported by RPG and LCG from the IE. The attack was defeated and the enemy broke contact and withdrew at 0500H, although movement was heard outside the perimeter for some time after that. It is estimated that a battalion group was present, with the actual attack being carried out by a company. A subsequent sweep revealed 6 NVA KIA (BC), 3 crew-served weapons and quantities of mortar and RPG ammunition. A bunker position was found at XT936344 with approx 100x82mm mortar caps in the vicinity. Own casualties were 3 KIA and 14 WIA, all of whom were evacuated. During the day A, C and D Coys carried out RIF in the area NORTH of FSPB BALMORAL without contact.

(4) 27 May 68. Both 1 BAR and 3 BAR continued patrolling in their respective AOs with minor contact. At 1200H at XT955299 C Coy 3 BAR engaged 12 enemy with no result. While sweeping the area of this contact 5 enemy were engaged with the result 3 AUST WIA, 1 NVA KIA (BC) and 1 RFC captured. At 1010H at XT949338 B Coy 3 BAR engaged 3 enemy killing one and possibly wounding another. At 1325H at the same location B Coy again contacted 3 enemy and killed one. At approx 1300H at XT903322 an OH-13 (SIoux) helicopter of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt received heavy fire from automatic weapons although few hits were sustained. The area was subject to airstrike which uncovered several bunkers and then engaged with 155mm and 175mm artillery. Air observation showed the area to be the site of an enemy HQ with a number of large buildings and bunkers, many of which were destroyed or severely damaged.
(5) 28 May 68.

(a) FSPB CORAL received a mortar and rocket attack between 0245H and 0300H with the result 3 US WIA.

(b) 1 RAR continued RIF operations. At 1530H at XT969312 3 Pl A Coy was engaged with automatic weapons. The enemy withdrew with unknown casualties when fire was returned by 1 Tp C Sqn.

(e) At 0230H FSPB BALMORAL received a mortar and RPG attack followed by a ground attack from the SOUTH. This attack ceased at approx 0315H and was followed by movement and attempts to cut the wire with Bangalore Torpedoes on the NE. At 0340H a small probe was made from the EAST. All movement had ceased by 0500H. SPOOKY and LFTs engaged the enemy during the action, and A Bty 2/35 Arty (US) provided, from FSPB CORAL, continuous illumination from 0500H until first light in an attempt to prevent the enemy recovering his dead and wounded. It is estimated two battalions participated in the attack. Own casualties were 1 KIA and 8 WIA. Enemy casualties were 43 NVA KIA (DC), 12 KIA (Poss) and 6 PA, 20 small arms, 12 crew served weapons and quantities of ammunition, and personal equipment were captured.

(6) 29 May 68. Patrolling continued without contact.

(7) 30 May 68. C Coy 1 RAR carried out RIF to the EAST of FSPB CORAL and at 0830H at XT963301 they contacted an estimated enemy company. The leading elements of the company originally sighted and engaged 3 enemy and then came under heavy fire from a bunker complex. The area of the remainder of the company was also mortared. 7 Pl then became pinned down by small arms and RPG fire whilst attempting to move to a flank. At 1000H C Coy was reinforced by 1 Tp C Sqn and 1 Tp A Sqn, and an assault was made on enemy’s position enabling 7 Pl to withdraw. At 1155H C Coy broke contact and withdrew to allow the area to be engaged by airstrike. C Coy suffered 1 KIA and 7 WIA and had 1 M60 captured. Enemy casualties were 24 NVA KIA (DC) and 8 KIA (Poss). At XT967297 a group of enemy were observed moving in an open clearing and they were engaged with artillery with the result 13 enemy KIA (Poss). There was no other contact with the enemy during the day.

(8) 31 May - 6 Jun 68.

(a) There was only minor contact with the enemy during this period. On 5 Jun FSPB BALMORAL was abandoned and 3 RAR and 104 Pl Bty returned to NUI DAT by air. On 6 Jun FSPB CORAL was also abandoned and units and equipment moved to NUI DAT by road and air.

(b) Contacts during this period were:

i. At 311410H at XT972271 3 Pl 1 RAR engaged and killed 1 enemy.

ii. At 310210H a number of FR and RIG rounds fell outside the perimeter of FSPB CORAL. When checking this area at 0900H 2 Pl 3 RAR were engaged by 3 enemy with automatic weapons. Fire was returned and the enemy withdrew without casualties.
iii. At 310911H at XT942324 D Coy 3 RAR were engaged by 4 enemy with RPG and automatic weapons with the result 4 AUST VIA.

iv. At 311758H at XT942334 11 Pl 3 RAR engaged 5 enemy killing one.

v. At 011825H whilst conducting a clearing patrol, 3 Pl 3 RAR were engaged with small arms. The area of the fire was engaged with artillery and mortars without result.

vi. At 021200H at XT945234 D Coy 3 RAR engaged one enemy without result.

vii. At XT944350 on 2 Jun D Coy 3 RAR detained one wounded PW.

11. Administration.

a. General.

(1) Operation TOAN THANG (Phase 1) saw the deployment of the TPMA for the second time to support the combat elements of the Task Force. The lessons learnt from Operation COBURG were applied to enable a generally smooth functioning logistic system to operate.

(2) As in COBURG, 1 ALSG deployed an element to LONG BINH and the TPMA split to provide a detachment forward.

(3) The Task Force logistic elements deployed as follows:

(a) Period 25 Apr - 13 May - BEARCAT (XT1600).

(b) Period 13 May - 6 Jun - FSPB CORAL (XT9329).

(4) As in COBURG there was no change to the system of maintenance employed during the complete operation. Only the delivery means changed to meet the tactical requirement.

b. The System Used.

(1) From our COBURG experience the Fwd TPMA deployed with a basic load of stocks as an immediate emergency reserve. Units carried three days requirements on deployment.

(2) During the first three days stocks were built up to allow greater flexibility as well as the first issues to units.

(3) Whilst based at BEARCAT planning provided for daily resupply to the Fwd TPMA from Fwd ALSG using road transport. Gun ammunition and large quantities of defence stores were, of course, delivered direct to Fire Support Bases.

(4) After deployment to FSPB CORAL the delivery means switched to air resupply because of the tactical and technical problems associated with keeping open a road L of C through previously enemy dominated territory.

(5) Fwd TPMA received in bulk and issued in detail to units their daily maintenance requirements. In addition it held the Task Force reserve of material.
(6) Movement of stores from unit echelons to users was generally achieved using R.A.F helicopters although, at times, mortar ammunition was delivered direct from Fwd ALSO whenever an economical CH47 sortie was requested.

c. Material and Services.

(1) Rations.

(a) During this operation both combat and fresh rations were issued by the Fwd TMA. Generally the logistic plan was for units in the field to receive one fresh meal a day whilst, as far as possible, those units in the base area received three fresh meals a day.

(b) The above plan worked well until the Task Force deployed from BEARCAT to FSPB CORAL when, for operational reasons, it was considered impracticable for the FSPB troops to consume three meals a day. The pattern of feeding was quickly changed to two combat and one fresh meal a day.

(c) The combat ration issue was generally based on 50% Australian to 50% American C rations. This policy provided a degree of variety and was in line with stocking policy for the theatre. Towards the end of the operation there was a surplus holding of Australian combat rations and an increase in the 50% issue rate was made in an attempt to reduce the backloading problem.

(d) A central kitchen was used to prepare fresh meals. This was unfortunately an unsatisfactory arrangement and as far as possible in future operations unit echelons will operate their own kitchens.

(e) One lesson learnt from this operation was that, if possible, meals should be prepared further to the rear and hot boxed forward as required.

(2) POL. The requirements for POL varied greatly during the operation depending on the location of the Fwd TMA:

(a) At BEARCAT. A small amount of POL products was supplied from the Fwd TMA but bulk MOGAS and DIESEO was supplied direct to using units by Fwd ALSO. The main POL products supplied by the Fwd TMA were KERO and some oils and greases.

(b) At FSPB CORAL.

i. Bulk stocks were required in the Fwd TMA which became responsible for all issues other than MOGAS and DIESEO to FSPB BALMORAL. This latter was supplied in bulk direct by Fwd ALSO.

ii. Some problems occurred as a shortage of pumps developed. There are insufficient reserve POL pumps readily available in the theatre.

(3) Ammunition.

(a) Small Arms.

i. In the initial stages, expenditure was light and no problems occurred.
ii. At CORAL stocks ran dangerously low on one occasion. This occurred because the experience gained on previous operations indicated that the reserve stocks carried by the TIMA would be approximately 30% of a battalion's first line. We have now amended this figure to a complete first line.

(b) Gun and Mortar.

i. As far as possible a usage rate was forecast and amounts were delivered direct to gun or mortar lines.

ii. The unexpected scale of contact meant increased use of the OPDEM demand principle and it is to the credit of 1 ALSEG that all demands were rapidly met and that at no time were the infantry restricted in the amount of fire support on which they could call.

(4) Water.

(a) At BEARCAT there was no problem as requirements were drawn from existing American water points and distributed in either jerry cans or water bottles by unit echelons to users.

(b) CORAL presented a difficult problem as no permanent water point was available. Delivery by air was the only means. Initially jerry cans were used but there was insufficient stock available to meet the Task Force needs. New rubber fuel bladders were successfully used to transport water from LONG Binh. The rate of supply was approximately 3000 gallons per day.

(c) The maximum use of rain water was made, most soldiers collecting enough to at least have a wash. The supply of water by air required five CH47 sorties daily.

(5) Engineer Stores.

(a) From a staff point of view this was the most difficult problem in the logistic system. The Task Force had never experienced attacks of the size delivered by the enemy and initial forecasts of requirements after deploying to CORAL were, as a result, underestimated.

(b) It was necessary to have a stringent control system for defence stores. Unit demands were approved by the DAM&G within the priorities laid down by the GSO2.

(c) Problems of handling defence stores delivered by CH47 aircraft became obvious as ground conditions deteriorated. There is a need for at least one size 7 forklift and a separate staff submission has been made. Two size 5 forklifts were deployed on this operation.

(6) Canteens. A detachment was established at FSPB CORAL. Dry goods came from NUI DAT and beer and soda were arranged from American depots at LONG Binh. This amenity is recommended for future operations.
(7) Postal. A postal NCO was attached to the Pwd TRMA for the whole operation and the quantity of mail handled was such as to make this attachment necessary.

(8) Ordnance.

(a) Operation COBURG pointed out the need for an ordnance detachment to be deployed with the forward TRMA. On this first deployment of Det 1 OFF, too much stock was carried and the system of replenishment via 2 AOD was too ponderous.

(b) A smaller sized detachment with an improved and faster replenishment system is required. Such a system is being tried on current operations and is working satisfactorily.

(c) Stocks held included clothing and equipment, weapon and vehicle spares and some items of unit equipment. There is a requirement for spare weapons to be held this far forward and these will be included in Det 1 OFF scaleings when weapons are released to 1 OFF.

(9) Courier Services.

(a) The requirement for an air courier service was established during COBURG and was instituted during this operation.

(b) Whilst the TRMA was based at BEARCAT the service was provided by RAAF courier. This worked well primarily because it was guaranteed and ran to a set schedule.

(c) At CORAL an airstrip did not exist and reliance had to be placed on a daily CH47 sortie. No set schedule could operate and backloading in particular was rather haphazard. This could not be avoided as the Task Force cannot guarantee the availability of a suitable rotary wing aircraft with the required passenger/freight capability.

(d) There is still a case for a better air movements control system.

d. Delivery Means.

(1) Whilst deployed in AOe SURFERS and SURFERS II the Task Force was completely reliant on air resupply from Pwd ALSG at LONG BINH. One road convoy did run during the period.

(2) The greatest number of CH47 sorties in any day was 32 with a daily average of approximately 20 sorties. This represents maintenance tonnages of a high of approximately 130 tons daily with an average of about 80 tons. The greatest number of sorties were taken up with ammunition of all natures.

e. Summary.

(1) The present maintenance system is sound but relies on accurate forecasting by both units and the staff.

(2) The various handling agencies are competent and extremely flexible when changing situations demand different methods.

(3) This operation has confirmed the stock holding figures of the Pwd TRMA.

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(4) TPMA capacity is reduced when it must itself develop its own defences. By day additional labour was provided by FDL to compensate for this loss of capacity.

12. Commander's Analysis.

a. Operation TOAN THANG (Phase 1) proved to be relatively quiet during the phases prior to 1 ATF deployment into AOs SURFERS and SURFERS II. However it proved the Task Force could be quickly deployed at short notice from one operational area to another. This was particularly notable in the movement of FSPBs. In all, the Task Force occupied eleven FSPBs, during Operation TOAN THANG (Phase 1).

b. Operations in AOs SURFERS and SURFERS II introduced the Task Force into operations where for the first time the enemy was met in regimental strength and where he launched determined ground attacks against our FSPBs. These attacks were preceded by heavy and accurate mortar, RCL and RTG fire.

c. Some of the more significant points to be noted as a result of Operation TOAN THANG (Phase 1) are:

(1) While the enemy possessed the capability of launching up to regimental size attacks it was necessary to plan operations so that battalions were concentrated in a defensive position at night to ensure the security of the force. At the time of the extraction of 1 ATF to NUI HIT Base the situation had been reached, due to the withdrawal of the major portion of the enemy, where company size forces could have been secure at night.

(2) The effectiveness of the tanks and APCs in RIF operations with infantry. On many occasions when contact was made, against enemy in well prepared positions, the armour played a decisive role.

(3) The need for a local defence commander of field rank with a small headquarters to lay out, coordinate and command the local defence of a large FSPB such as FSPB COPAL. It is recommended that the OC of the Cavalry Squadron be employed in this role, as he was at FSPB COPAL. This proved successful because of his experience, good communications provided by the AUV and APCs and the ability of his unit, due to their mobility and fire power, to quickly conduct counter penetration and counter attack roles.

d. Overall Operation TOAN THANG proved a most successful operation in that the Task Force:

(1) Interrupted one of the main enemy infiltration routes into SAIGON and inflicted heavy enemy casualties.

(2) Identified seven infiltration groups, four of which we were the first to identify. These four had been in SVN for periods ranging from two to fifteen days.


2. Map showing Phase 5.
CONTOUR INTERVALS 20 AND 10 METERS.  
SUPPLEMENTARY CONTOUR 10 AND 5 METERS.

CLOSE INSPECTION OF EACH MAP SHEET QUADRANT IS REQUIRED TO DETERMINE THE PROPER INTERVAL.

SPECIAL USE S.E. ASIA 1:100,000  

EDITION 2 - AMS (29 ETB)  
XUẤT - BẤN LÀN THỦ 2 - AMS (29 ETB)

KHOẢNG CẢNH ĐỀU VÔNG CAO ĐÔ.
20 MET VA 10 MET
CAC VÔNG CAO ĐÔ PHƯ VÔNG 10 MET VA 5 MET.

SPECIAL USE S.E. ASIA 1:100,000  

EDITION 2 - AMS (29 ETB)  
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KHOẢNG CẢNH ĐỀU VÔNG CAO ĐÔ.
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KHOÂNG CẢNH ĐỀU VÔNG CAO ĐÔ.
20 MET VA 10 MET
CAC VÔNG CAO ĐÔ PHƯ VÔNG 10 MET VA 5 MET.

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KHOÂNG CẢNH ĐỀU VÔNG CAO ĐÔ.
20 MET VA 10 MET
CAC VÔNG CAO ĐÔ PHƯ VÔNG 10 MET VA 5 MET.

CLOSE INSPECTION OF EACH MAP SHEET QUADRANT IS REQUIRED TO DETERMINE THE PROPER INTERVAL.

KHOÂNG CẢNH ĐỀU VÔNG CAO ĐÔ.
20 MET VA 10 MET
CAC VÔNG CAO ĐÔ PHƯ VÔNG 10 MET VA 5 MET.
OPERATION TUAN THANG
PHASE 5
Scale 1:1000000
CLOSE INSPECTION OF EACH MAP SHEET QUADRANT IS REQUIRED TO DETERMINE THE PROPER INTERVAL.

SPHEROID: EVEREST
GRID: 1,000 METER UTM: ZONE 48
PROJECTION: TRANSVERSE MERCATOR
VERTICAL DATUM: MEAN SEA LEVEL AT HÀ TIÊN
HORIZONTAL DATUM: INDIAN DATUM 1980

1965 MAGNETIC DECLINATION FROM TRUE NORTH FOR CENTER OF THE SHEET IS 10° (10 MILES) EAST.

REFER CORRECTIONS TO THIS MAP TO COMMANDING OFFICER, ARMY MAP SERVICE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

DELINERATION OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES IS APPROXIMATE.

WHEN REFERERING TO POPULATED PLACE NAMES, INCLUDE UTM GRID COORDINATES.

SEE ADJOINING SHEET FOR LEGEND.

VIETNAM STOCK NO. L607X6430
OPERATION TOAN THANG
PHASE 6
Scale 1:100000

AO COLUMBUS III
AO SIMPSON

Andersen
Harrison
XG LANE

16
## Combat After Action Report - Op TOAN THANG, 1st Australian Task Force

**Experiences of unit engaged in counterinsurgency operations.**

21 Apr - 7 Jun 1968

CG, 1st Australian Task Force

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ITEM 5

SUBJECT TITLE
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PAGE #

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***PAGE #: That page on which the item of interest is located.
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