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SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, Period Ending 30 April 1968 (U)

1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 5b, AR 525-15. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT RD, Operational Reports Branch, within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.

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

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

C. A. STANFIELD
Colonel, AGC
Acting The Adjutant General

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CO, 3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division

Regraded unclassified when separated from classified inclosure.
SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3D Brigade 101st Airborne Division
for period ending 30 April 1968, RGS CFOR-65 (KL)

SEE DISTRIBUTION


a. During the reporting period, the 3D Brigade conducted counter-
insurgency operations in Bien Hoa and Binh Duong Provinces. Two organic
and one attached battalion were responsible for security of the rocket-
belt north and east of Long Binh/Bien Hoa complex and interdiction of
movement along primary avenues of approach into the area. The remaining
organic battalion provided local security for Phuoc Vinh Base Camp and
conducted Bushmaster-Type operations in Binh Duong Province.

b. The significant activities portion of this report will include
only that period the 3D Brigade was OPCON to II FORCIN, 5 March thru
30 April. The two major operations occurring during this period were:

(1) Operation BOX SPRINGS

(2) Operation TOAN THANG (AO LOS DONG, initially Operation
HARRISBURG)

(a) Operations

On 16 March the 3d Battalion (Airborne), 187th Infantry
conducted Operation BOX SPRINGS in southern section of Binh Duong
Province from 16 March to 22 March 1968. The area of operation included
long time enemy sanctuaries in the western section of War Zone D.
Numerous small unit actions to include airmobility assaults, reconnaissance
in force, and Bushmaster-type operations were conducted throughout the
area of operation. Participating units experienced light but steady
contact with major action beginning in the afternoon and early evening
hours and continuing into the night. The employment of night operations
in conjunction with the use of scout dogs kept the enemy off balance;
often catching him by surprise and forcing him to fight a brief but
tenacious battle in an effort to break contact. The persistence of
friendly forces forced the enemy to move his position constantly which
apparently resulted in the permanent relocation of some enemy units.
Base camps, which had been considered sanctuaries by the enemy, were
cleared and destroyed. At 1650 hrs 22 March the last Company was
moved by air to Phuoc Vinh Base and Operation BOX SPRINGS terminated.
16 UC personnel were killed, 62 wounded of which 52 were evacuated from
the battle field. Enemy losses were 37 killed.

On 21 March 1968 the 2d Battalion (Airborne) 506th
Infantry was released from operation control of the 109th Light Infantry
Brigade in AO UPWARD and moved to a Fire Support Base in AO HARRISBURG,
later changed to AO LOS DONG. The 3d Battalion (Airborne) 506th
Infantry moved by air to Fire Support Base Paris in AO HARRISBURG
on the same day. The mission of the two battalions in the area of operation
was to secure the Rocket Belt to the north, east and south of Bien Hoa
in Binh Duong Province and to protect the Bien Hoa/Long Binh military
complex against ground and rocket attacks. The battalions conducted reconnaissance
in force, airmobility assaults and ambush patrols in the operational area.

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DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10
The name of the area of operations was changed from AO HAIPHONG to AO LOS BANGS on 21 March 1965. On 8 April Operation AO LOS BANGS was incorporated into the 121 Corps Operation PLAN THUC, as were operations conducted in AO CLEVERVILLE in Binh Dinh Province. On 9 April the 1st Battalion (Airborne) 506th Infantry returned to Phuoc Vinh Base and the 2nd Battalion (Airborne) 506th Infantry assumed responsibility for the entire AO LOS BANGS. The 3rd Battalion (Airborne) 187th Infantry went under the operational control of the 1st Infantry Division on 16 April and conducted operations in the southern portion of Binh Dinh Province and northern portion of Phuoc Vinh Province. On 23 April the 3rd Battalion (Airborne) 187th Infantry was released from operational control of the 1st Infantry Division and moved to the southern end of AO LOS BANGS. With the increasing threat of rocket/ground attack on Long Khanh/Phuoc Vinh area, the 5th Battalion 12th Infantry (198th) A Troop 3rd Squadron 17th Air Cavalry and F Company 1st Long Khanh Rangers were placed under the operational control of the 3rd Brigade on 21 April. The 5th Battalion 12th Infantry was given tactical responsibility for Fire Support Base PARIS and AO LOS BANGS southeast of Long Khanh. The 3rd Battalion (Airborne) 187th Infantry moved all units into AO LOS BANGS CENTER, east of Phuoc Vinh and the 2nd Battalion (Airborne) 506th Infantry assumed responsibility of AO LOS BANGS NORTH, north of the Dong Hai River.

2 Company C47 Air, Range Patrol conducted operations north of AO LOS BANGS in AO URBAN II. A Troop 3-25th Air Cav conducted air reconnaissance, provided fire support, and maintained the Brigade Ready Reaction Force. Contact during the period was moderate with increasing activity and rocket/mortar attacks towards the end of the reporting period. The operation is continuing at present. 13 US personnel were killed, 81 wounded of whom 57 were evacuated from the battlefield. Heavy losses were 57 killed. Cumulative results of the reporting period's operations are recorded in Enclosure 1.

c. The organizational structure to include attached units and units under the operational control of the 3rd Brigade is attached as Enclosure 2.

d. Units of the Brigade, not participating in tactical operations, conducted training on a daily basis. Each battalion is required to maintain a rooster training chart as prescribed in 101st Airborne Regulation 350-1, dated 25 March 1953. Training included Code of Conduct, Safety, Mines and Trench Warfare, Small Arms Individual Firing Program, Lessons Learned to include Vietnam Primer, Division and Brigade Combat Notes, and First Aid to include personal hygiene. Fifty-six days of tactical operations and training have been conducted since 5 March.

e. There were no major troop movements during the reporting period.

f. One major innovation was the consolidation of all 60mm mortars into one plot attached to the combat support company. The 60mm mortar squads are returned to their parent unit and attached to other units, according to tactical requirements. When there are no requirements by units operating outside the base area, the 60mm mortars are incorporated into the base camp's fire support role and provide ready close-in support as well as immediate illumination.

g. An additional asset that became available to the 3rd Brigade in March was the Scout Dog Platoon of the 55th Infantry. Immediately several dogs were incorporated into as many operations as possible. Primary emphasis was placed on using the scout dogs as a member of the point element. It was necessary to train troops and leaders at all levels in the employment of the scout dogs. Once the units had grown accustomed to the use of the scout dog and their idiosyncrasies, increased use was emphasized. Dogs were made available for ambushes, patrols, road clearing operations, cordon and search operations, and any other use the ground commander might desire which met with the Scout Platoon Leaders approval.
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The scout dogs proved valuable in all respects. A rotational system to exchange dogs and handlers once their effectiveness and efficiency had decreased was implemented. This system assured the ground commander of a relatively fresh scout dog team at all times. Whenever possible each platoon was assigned its own dog to utilize on cleared, operations and platoon sweeps. Every effort was made to assign dogs to the same unit each time. This resulted in a greater familiarity between the soldiers and dogs which proved conducive to greater effectiveness.

2. Section 2, Lessons Learned: Commanders Observations, Evaluations and Recommendations,

a. Personnel. NONE

b. Operations

Limited Resupply

(1) OBSERVATION. The ability of a unit to keep the enemy from pinpointing its location or having knowledge of its presence has tactical significance toward the success of the operation.

(2) EVALUATION. On 17 April, A Company 1st Battalion (Airborne) 568th Infantry began a 5 day reconnaissance in force operation. The company carried only rations, water, medical supplies, ammunition, and minimum field equipment. No resupply, except for emergency was planned. On the evening of 20 April the company opened a large enemy force, whose location indicated complete surprise at the presence of an Allied Force. 1 US personnel was killed, 6 wounded (evacuated) and 24 enemy killed by body count.

(3) RECOMMENDATION. That Allied Forces conduct more small unit night operations with limited resupply or other activities that tend to pinpoint the location or reveal the presence of the unit in a specific area.

c. Training

Replacement Personnel

(1) OBSERVATION. The 26 Battalion (Airborne) 107th Infantry conducted a series of classes for replacements newly assigned to the battalion. By means of analyzing student responses and personal interview of students, it was apparent that the majority of replacements arriving in Vietnam for their first tour are under the misconception the Viet Cong is a ragged, poorly trained and ill-equipped guerrilla.

(2) EVALUATION. To under estimate the ability of the enemy is a mistake that has lost numerous battles throughout the history of war. Never to till until engagement with the Viet Cong to discover he is a well trained, highly motivated soldier can be costly to the individual.

(3) RECOMMENDATION. That Advance Individual Training for trainers and Vietnam Orientation Courses for other replacements stress the capabilities and motivation of the enemy.

d. Intelligence.

Chiou Hoi

(1) OBSERVATION. Chiou Hoi are of tremendous value when employed on a regular scout basis with company and platoon size elements.

(2) EVALUATION. The employment of ratters as guides and scouts against their former comrades is hardly a new technique. However, building a Kit Carson Scout Program is a slow process. Chiou Hoi must be screened and selected from those who have completed the prescribed indoctrination course prior to their full time employment as scouts.
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This Brigade has attempted to obtain rolloges who are familiar with the brigade area of operations. However, more important is obtaining rolloges who are familiar with enemy techniques in the field, have served in the field and are willing to accompany US forces on sustained operations. Close liaison must be maintained with province Chieu Noi centers to obtain personnel of this caliber.

Once obtained the individual must be screened and a rapport established with the unit to which the rolloge is assigned.

(3) RECOMMENDATION. That the value of using Chi Noi as guides for combat operations be stressed to all units newly arrived or reporting for deployment to the Republic of Vietnam.

i. Logistics. NONE

j. Organization. NONE

g. Others. NONE

Incl as

LAWRENCE L. MOORE
Colonel Infantry
Commanding

Distribution:

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USARPAC OPP-DC
USARM AVICO (DST)
LOST DIV DIV

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SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3D Brigade 101st Airborne Division for period ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

DA, HQ II FFORCZV, APO San Francisco 96266 29 MAY 1968

THRU: Commanding General, US Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC(DST), APO 96375

Commander, US Army Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-GT, APO 96558

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

1. Subject report is forwarded.

2. This command has reviewed the attached Operational Report - Lessons Learned of the 3D Brigade, 101st Airborne Division and concurs with it.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

[Signature]

Cdr. H. F. Leete
Ass't AG
AGC AD
AVHGC-DST (16 May 68) 2d Ind  CFT Arnol/bw/LEN L/R5
SUBJECT: Operational Report of 3d Brigade 101st Airborne Division for period
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM APO San Francisco 96375 6 JUN 1968

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army Pacific, ATTN: GFOS-DT,
APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned
for the quarterly period ending 30 April 1968 from Headquarters, 3d Brigade
101st Airborne Division as indorsed.

2. Reference item concerning replacement personnel, page 3, paragraph 2c.
Concur. DA Pam 360-518, Know Your Enemy: The Viet Cong, should be used as
a basis for orientation training.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

C. S. NAKATSUKASA
Captain, AGC
Assistant Adjutant General

Copy furnished:
Hq, II FORCOSV
Hq, 3d Bde 101st Abn Div
GPOP-DYT (16 May 68) 3d Ind (U)
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div, for Period Ending 30 April 1968,
RCS CSFOR-65 (Rl)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 14 JUN 1368

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

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding indorsements and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

[Signature]

K. F. OSBOURN
MAJ. AGC
Asst AG
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|       | 13 | 81 | 57 | 7  | 0  | 20  | 0  | 139% KDS |    |       |

- 7,800 LBS Rice
- 257 Barrows
- 58 Claymore Mines
- 2130 LBS Rice, 2 LP mines
- 2 LP mines, 6 Bodybags
- 67 Barrows, 26 Structures
- 135 LBS HE, 60 LBS Explosives
- 6 Barrows, 2 Orgs
- 7 Sampans, 6 Trucks
- 7 Claymores, 53 Grenades
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Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Hqs, 3d Bde, 101st Airborne Division (U)

Experiences of unit engaged in counterinsurgency operations; 1 Feb - 30 April 1968

CO, 3d-Bde, 101st Abn Div

Report Date: 16 May 1968

Project No.: N/A

Distribution Statement: N/A

Supplementary Notes: N/A

Sponsoring Military Activity: OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310

Abstract: N/A