

ORLL 3RD BDE, 4TH DIV

PERIOD ENDING 10-31-67

ED Note: This report edited to show 1/35th and 2/35th participation.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

HEADQUARTERS 3D BRIGADE TF, 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION

APO San Francisco 96355

AVDC-C-OP 10 November 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 October 1967

TO: See Distribution

Section 1 (C) SIGNIFICANT ORGANIZATION ACTIVITIES

1. (C) GENERAL During the reporting period 1 August 1967 to 31 October 1967 the 3d Brigade TF, 4th Infantry Division participated in Operation Baker for a total of 92 consecutive days in combat. The 3d Brigade TF, 4th Infantry Division has participated in 540 consecutive days in combat as of 31 October 1967.

The area designated as the 3d Brigade AO encompasses the majority of DUC PHO and MO DUC Districts, QUANG NGAI Province; covering an area of approximately 606 sq. km.

c. Control: The 3d Brigade TF, 4th Infantry Division was under the operational control of TASK FORCE OREGON, later designated The Americal Division, throughout the reporting period.

d. Task Organization: Principal units of the 3d Brigade TF, 4th Infantry Division, with commanders' names and dates of command, and the major supporting and operational controlled units are as follows:

Headquarters, 3d Brigade TF, 4th Infantry Division

Commander: Colonel George E. Wear

1st Battalion, 35th Infantry

MAJ James E. Moore (1 Aug -8 Aug 1967)

LTC Robert G. Kimmel (9 Aug -31 Oct 1967)

2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry

LTC Norman L. Tiller, Sr.

2nd Battalion, 9th Artillery

LTC Gerald B. Bobzien

2. INTELLIGENCE:

a. General: During the reporting period, 1 August through 31 October 1967, enemy activity within the Brigade's Area of Operation (AO) can be categorized into three phases.

b. Phase One: The first phase was a continuation of the phase that began in July and lasted until late August. During this phase, the majority of contacts centered around hole-hunting operations. There were three significant contacts during this period: On 8 August, the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, in response to information gained from a Hoi Chanh, engaged elements of the 38th LF Battalion along the SONG VE river, vic BS6757. The battle resulted in 65 enemy KIA and the capture of 20 weapons. Company C, 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor and elements of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry engaged a company of the 97th MF Battalion on 20 August, vic BS8145, resulting in the killing of 53 enemy and the capturing of 19 weapons. The last significant contact during this phase took place on 24 Aug, vic BS7847 with elements of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry engaging a company of the 406th MF Battalion. The operation was a classic hole-hunting operation that resulted in 24 enemy killed and the capture of 19 weapons. The thickly forested mountains to the west of the Brigade's AO provided LF and MF VC units areas for rest, refit, and resupply. Enemy units would often withdraw to these areas after an engagement with US Forces in the lowlands. Intelligence reports revealed that MF and NVA units up to battalion-size were located in aid around the Brigade's AO, but the enemy continued to be evasive and displayed a reluctance to openly engage US units. During operations in the mountains, US units located base camps with obvious signs of recent use, but seldom made contact with more than a few snipers.

c. Phase Two: The second phase was short but definite. In mid August, local force activity in the lowlands increased markedly. Mining incidents on Highway #1, ground to air fire, and probes of base camps indicated that local guerrillas were becoming more aggressive. Agent reports indicated that the main force units had moved south from their mountain bases into BINH DINH Province. It is believed this movement was prompted by two factors: 1) the requirement to recruit, resupply, and rest as a result of the heavy losses of personnel and equipment encountered while operating in QUANG NGAI Province; 2) the requirement to move to a more populated area in order to have a more direct influence in the 3 September National elections. During search and clear operations against known local force guerrillas, NVA and LF VC soldiers were often killed or captured. It was learned that these troops were usually individuals who had been wounded or because of sickness were left with local hamlet and village guerrilla units to recuperate. The more educated and better trained soldiers would function as political training cadre during their convalescence.

d. Phase Three: In mid-September the third phase of enemy activity began. This phase continued through the end of the reporting period. Intelligence reports and supporting collateral information revealed that the 97th Battalion of the 2nd Main Force Regiment returned to the mountains on the western flank of the 3d Brigade AO. Main Force and NVA units in western Quang Ngai and KONTUM Provinces based carrying parties in these same areas. The carrying parties would displace to the lowlands where they collected rice, salt, fish, and medical supplies with the assistance of village and hamlet VC cadre. These supplies were then transported to the mountain bases under cover of darkness. Other elements of the 2nd VC Regiment and 22nd NVA Regiment were also reported in these mountain bases during this period. Only scattered contact with the 38th Local Force Battalion has been made since 1 September. It has been reported that the once-strong LF Battalion is down to approximately 150 men and its four companies are operating independently of the battalion in order to recruit and resupply. This unit operated in the northern SONG VE Valley but has avoided contact with 3d Brigade units. PWs captured during this phase disclosed the use of the mountain bases southeast of BA TO by NVA infiltration units. These units would stop to rest and resupply before continuing on to the south. Two local force companies continue to operate in the coastal low lands in close coordination with the village and hamlet guerrillas. The C219 Company continued to operate in the SONG TRA CAU Valley. The present strength of the company is approximately 60 men, one half its size at the start of the reporting period.

Indications are that the C219 Company has split into in to cells with missions of probing US and RF/PF posts in the lowlands at night and hiding in the hills during the day. The C120 Company is a local force sapper unit that operates in the southern part of the Brigade's AO. This well] trained unit is undoubtedly responsible for the increased number of mining and booby trap incidents that occurred on Highway #1 south of DUC PHO. Hamlet and village guerrillas as well as the political infrastructure were the targets of infantry search and clear operations in the coastal lowlands. These operations were often frustrating, but each political cadre that was killed or captured weakened the hold of the Viet Cong and enhanced revolutionary development.

3. OPERATIONS AND TRAINING:

(2) Due to the rapid increase in size and facilities at LZ MOUNT BRONCO (formerly LZ MONTEZUMA) a Base Defense Command was established in late October and several base defense plans were published.

(3) Operations:

(a) General: The 3d Brigade continued with the mission assigned for Operation Baker throughout the reporting period. The First and Second Battalions, Thirty-fifth Infantry conducted search and destroy operations in their respective areas of responsibility with attachments from C Troop, 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry and Co C, .2nd Battalion, 34th armor. The contacts during the period were moderate, except for two heavy contacts on 8 August, 1967 and 20 August, 1967 both of these being in the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Area of Operations. The contacts during the period were in some cases initiated by the enemy, however, in all cases the enemy force was defeated and heavy enemy casualties resulted. Friendly casualties were light; the 3d Brigade enemy/friendly killed in action ratio is a very respectable 20 to 1 for Operation Baker. During the latter part of the reporting period contacts became moderate to light. This was caused by the brigade's continuous operations which forced the enemy to break up in to small groups (six to ten individuals) and to attempt to relocate in the high ground to the west of the brigade AO. Operations became a process of searching for, locating, and destroying small groups of enemy in tunnels, caves, and spider holes. The two large contacts were a result of a combination of timely intelligence and the combat assault. In each case the enemy was surprised and destroyed. In addition to the named objectives for an infantry brigade, the additional objective of denial arose. By denying the enemy the use of the inhabited lowlands of DUC PHO and MO DUC Districts he was cut from his sources of food, intelligence, labor and recruits. In order to accomplish this objective it was necessary to have either physical presence, of US troops or extensive harassing and interdicting fires from artillery and the US Air Force throughout the AO. The two infantry battalions, having established battalion fire support bases within the Brigade AO by using one rifle company (-) to secure a firing battery were able to combat assault the remaining three companies throughout the areas of responsibility at will. This combined with this brigade's extensive H&I fires has resulted in: first, accomplishment of our mission; second, security for the entire AO; third, a high rate of NVA/VC returnees and fourth, relative safety within our fire bases. While it is true that some look with disfavor on our extensive H&I program it should be taken into account that since 22 April one Battalion fire base, and the brigade fire base have been mortared by the enemy only once each and very lightly, after a temporary reduction of .H&I fires. Enemy captured in action and returnees through the "Open Arms" program have repeatedly stated that their main reason for giving up is the continual artillery fires and air strikes, which serve to destroy their already weakened determination to carry on the war. The only argument against H&I fires, is that they are costly. War, regardless of scale, has never been an economical process, and success in war is seldom described in dollars and cents.

Harassing and interdicting fires based on sound intelligence are useful and should be employed when the mission so dictates.

During the reporting period the infantry was used in its classical role of finding and fixing its enemy. Once this had been accomplished all available fire power was directed on the enemy. Then the infantry advanced, methodically searching and destroying every enemy position.

(4) 1st Battalion, 35th. infantry: During the, reporting period the 1st Battalion 35th Infantry conducted search and destroy operations in their area. of operations with the battalion CP located at LZ OD (OLIVE DRAB) (BS786368). Th. battalion had ho major contacts, however, there were many minor contacts and ambush engagements. On 4 October 1967 the 1st Battalion was airlifted to TAM KY, RVN, and placed under the operational control of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division,

(5) 2nd, Battalion, 35th Infantry: During the reporting period the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry conducted search and, destroy operations in their area of operations with the Battalion CP being located at LZ LIZ (BS751436). The battalion had two major contacts on 8 and 20 August 1967, (See Inclosure "2 and "3). A detailed explanation 'of the techniques employed during these operations is included in the inclosures.

(9) 2nd Battalion, 9th Artillery: During the period 1 August 1967 through 31 October 1967 the mission, of the 2nd Battalion, 9th Artillery was in direct support of the 3d Brigade TF, 4th Infantry Division; Battery A was in direct support of the 1-35th Infantry; Battery B was in direct support of the 1 - 14th Infantry; Battery C was in direct support of the 2 - 35th Infantry.

(a) During the reporting period the 2nd Battalion, 9th Artillery fired the following missions and rounds:

	<u>OBSERVED MISSIONS</u>	<u>OBSERVED ROUNDS</u>	<u>UNOBSERVED MISSIONS</u>	<u>UNOBSERVED ROUNDS</u>
Aug	343	2664	2594	7927
Sep	606	3152	9691	12236
Oct	284	1806	6685	10631
TOTAL	1233	7622	18972	30994

(b) The 2nd Battalion, 9th Artillery had operational control of one searchlight section of Battery G, 29th Artillery throughout the reporting. period. A second section was put under the control of the battalion from 1 August 1967 to 9 October 1967. These sections were employed in the harassing and interdicting program, as navigational aids to aircraft and in perimeter defense.

1. Item: Hole Hunting

Discussion: Hole hunting is the technique of locating underground bunkers, caves and spider holes used extensively by the VC and NVA throughout the AO. The enemy has adopted the concept of inflicting a few casualties at long range and then going underground to void further contacts.

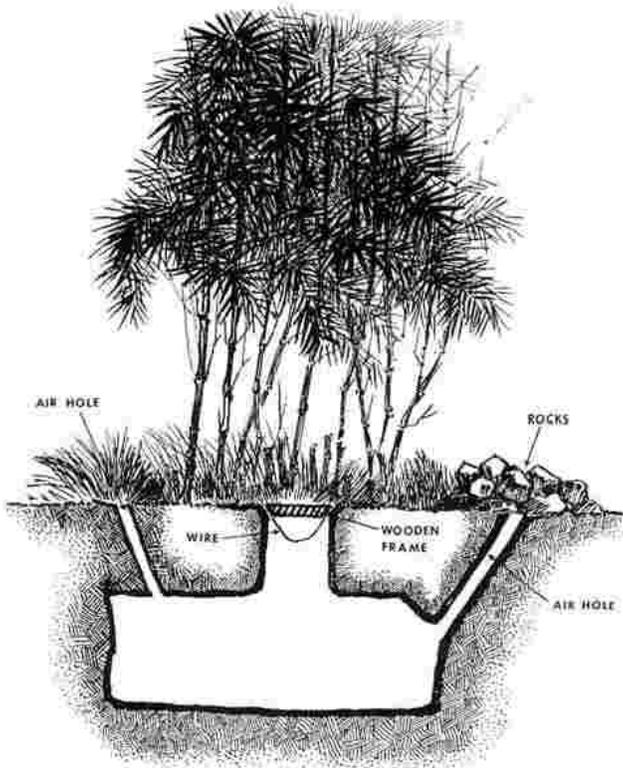


Figure 1

There are three main types of holes and they are classified more by location than by their construction, bamboo, beach, and water. The most common is the "under bamboo" hole shown in sketch #1, inclosure #5. This hole is easily and quickly camouflaged, characteristic of all the holes found in the Duc Pho - Mo Duc area of Vietnam. The entrances to the holes differ widely as do the techniques of camouflage. Most of the entrances are located within the edge of a bamboo clump or just outside the edge. The hole cover or trap door contains the camouflage material. Some have pieces of cut bamboo affixed to the door itself. The edges of the door fit snugly into the entrance. Many other entrances are covered only by the door which is camouflaged by spreading leaves, rocks, and other materials over the top. Another characteristic common to all these small tunnels is the air hole which is normally made from a hollow piece of bamboo three or four inches in diameter, inserted into the tunnel and camouflaged on the surface.

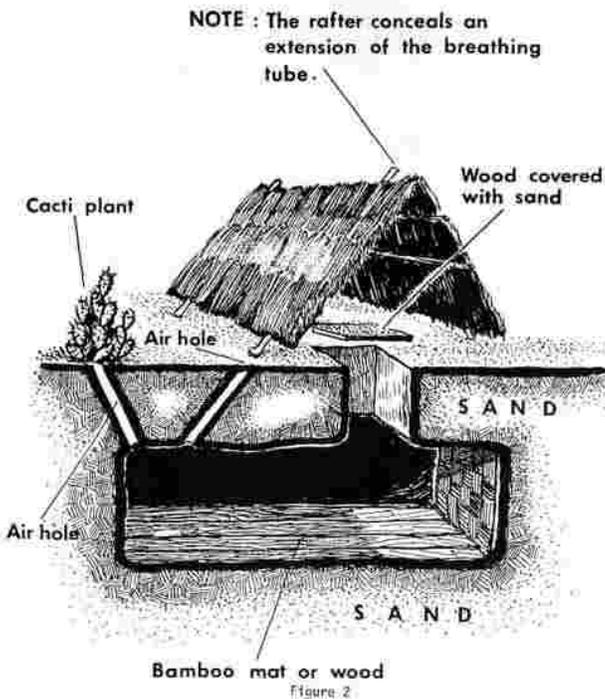


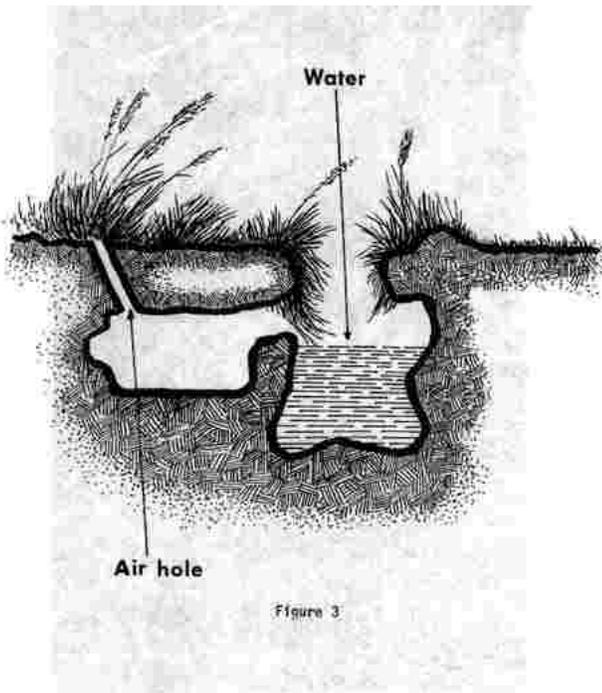
Figure 2

The air hole is the only telltale indicator of the second type hole, the "beach hole." The beach hole differs from the bamboo hole in that it is made in the sand and normally constructed from cut timbers. It does not depend upon the bamboo roots to add rigidity to the roof. Naturally, the entrance to a beach hole is impossible to locate as it is often buried under a foot of loose sand however, it can be detected by finding the breathing tubes. Some air holes are a continuation of the bamboo frames that make up the local fisherman's "lean to." Other air holes can be exposed by pulling up the cacti plants that grow along the sand dunes on the beach. See sketch #2, inclosure #5.

The third type of tunnel, the least common, is the "water entrance type. This tunnel may be located near a small stream or beside an old bomb crater that has filled with water. Normally these holes have no lid and depend on the natural growth along

the stream bank to hide the entrance. Sometimes the entrance is completely submerged, but not always. A typical water entrance is depicted in sketch #3, inclosure #5.

Before the enemy can be engaged he must first be located. This can only be accomplished through the deliberate search technique. Once located, he has already fixed himself by choosing a small tunnel in which to hide. The enemy, dependent only on his experience at passive camouflage, has no choice but to be killed or captured.



There are several indications that should prove to be helpful in locating these holes. Visual indicators often disclose the general area of the hole but not its precise location. Worn places on the bamboo that the enemy has used as hand holds are good visual indicators. Another indicator is a small trail, much like a game trail, through the brush into a bamboo clump. Easily seen, although not a sure sign, is cut bamboo. Frequently, the VC dig their holes under these partially harvested bamboo clumps. A good visual indicator, but difficult to detect, is a slight depression in or around the bamboo clump.

This depression is often the location of a trap door. The depression collects leaves and trash and aids in the camouflage of the hole entrance. The surest of all visual indicators is the ever present air hole. Once located these bamboo breathing tubes will always reveal the tunnel

below. Visual indicators are by far the best indicators, but they are not the only ones. A lone individual, especially a female, signals that the VC are not far away. She places the finishing touches of camouflage around the hole. Fresh cooked food with no one attending the pot is a sure sign the VC departed in haste or are hidden nearby. The VC being lazy and not very good soldiers, often dispose of human waste near their hole. Fresh human feces can point out an unwary enemy.

The places to look are in the corners of hedgerows, in the corners of villages and in the corners of trails or trenches. The enemy often hides in these corners as he can see from them while not being seen. Additionally, hiding in a corner allows the party who puts the finishing touches on the camouflage to escape undetected.

Reduction of the hole is a simple four step process beginning with a soldier firing one or two magazines from his M-16 into the trap door. This has tendency to discourage enemy grenadiers from getting too close to the door. Various American and Vietnamese expressions are shouted into the hole exhorting the enemy to come out or be killed. Sometimes he will give up without a fight. When all else fails and the enemy remains within the tunnel, a few strategically placed grenades normally reduce both the tunnel and the enemy to rubble. The last step is the insertion of a tunnel rat to insure that all weapons and documents have been recovered as well as all enemy killed or captured. A caution to remember is that the enemy's defense is to toss out a grenade when everyone is standing around the hole and attempt to escape from another exit of the tunnel.

Observation: Deliberate search techniques are easily taught and quickly learned. The emphasis is, of course, placed on where to look for the enemy, a location that provides him with observation, cover and concealment and a route of escape. The soldier then learns what to look for; the indicators, a game trail, worn and cut bamboo, an air hole, human feces, a depression, fresh food, a lone individual. These trigger a mental alert in the curious American soldier that the enemy is not far away. The four step reduction process provides a simple means of effectively combating the enemy with minimum friendly casualties.