

OPERATIONAL REPORT LESSONS LEARNED



4TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 31 OCT 1968



SECTION 1 (C) OPERATIONS: SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

1. (C) General.

a. During the period covered by this report, the 4th Infantry Division continued its participation in Operation MAC ARTHUR.

KEY PERSONNEL

Key personnel by position as of the end of the reporting period: 31 Oct 1968

Stone, Charles P. MG CG, 4th Inf Div

Battalions

Buckner, Garrett D. LTC CO, 1st Bn, 35th Inf

Moore, William C. LTC CO, 2d Bn, 35th Inf

3. (C) OPERATIONS AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

(2) During the reporting period the 4th Infantry Division made widespread use of a new patrolling technique called the Short Range Patrol (SRP) Screen. The concept involves the saturation of an area with a series of four man stationary teams equipped with radios and positioned for a 48 hour period astride likely enemy infiltration routes. The SRPs are located up to 3 kilometers from the patrol firebase. The mission of the SRP is to adjust artillery and mortar fire and to call in air-strikes and gunships on any enemy which it can observe or hear. The concept is designed generally to disrupt the enemy's activities and specifically to prevent the enemy from massing for an attack. During the month of October the division maintained an average of 150 SRP s in position per day. Frequent contacts made by SRP s in the BAN ME THUOT area proved the effectiveness of the technique and were largely responsible for thwarting the attack by the 66th NVA Regt on BAN ME THUOT. On several occasions SRPs were successful in adjusting timely air/artillery fires on NVA forces of company and battalion size.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

OPERATION BINH TAY - MACARTHUR

1 August. At 0835H in the vicinity of AQ854122 D Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry found storage bins containing an estimated one ton of rice. Also found in the area were two individuals without ID cards and some documents.

2 August. At 0945H in the vicinity of ZV178127 a patrol from A Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry found two civilian jeeps hidden in the bush. Vehicles were evacuated.

4 August. Eight more HOI CHANHS rallied during another cordon and search conducted by D Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry.

5 August. At 0110H in vicinity of ZU202874, B Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry made contact with an estimated squad size element. Patrol swept contact area and found miscellaneous equipment and documents.

10 August. At ZV120157, A Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry found a grave containing 1 NVA body estimated one day old.

25 August. At 1902H D Co, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry received an unknown volume of small arms/ automatic weapons fire from northwest of their location at AR773393. Negative casualties were sustained and gunships were employed with unknown results.

26 August. At 1330H in vicinity of ZV209098 a patrol from B Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry made contact with 7 individuals with weapons resulting in 1 US KIA. Artillery was employed and a sweep conducted revealing 2 NVA KIA., 1 AK-47, 2 rucksacks CIA.

28 August. At 1630H in vicinity of AR766686, C Co, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry made contact with unknown size enemy force. Artillery and gunship were employed resulting in 1 NVA WIA/CIA and miscellaneous documents CIA.

29 August. D Co, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry found 18 bunkers at AR774684. A search was conducted and 6 NVA KIA were found with 1 B-40 RL and 3 57mm rounds.

3 September. At 02 2325H in the vicinity of ZA095499 D Co, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry received 30 rounds of 82mm mortar fire which resulted in 2 US WIA. The fire was returned with unknown results.

8 September. A patrol from D Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry observed 15 armed individuals at AQ792194. Artillery and gunships were employed with negative results. At 1250H, B Co, 2-35 while on a sweep in the vicinity of YU887714 found 3 NVA KIA, 1 NVA/WIA and 1 AK-47 as a result of the 07 Sept contact.

9 September. D Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry located at AQ776183 received 15 rounds of 82mm mortar fire at 0445H, one US was WIA.

12 September. At 1330H in the vicinity of YA815256, a SRP from C Co, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry made contact with an estimated 6-8 NVA. Small fire was exchanged and mortar fire was adjusted resulting in 1 NVA KIA.

13 September. At 0800H, B Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry, made contact with an estimated reinforced 2 platoons of enemy located in bunkers. Artillery and air strikes were employed with unknown results. At 1200H the contact was broken. Friendly casualties were 3 US KIA, 1 US MIA and 24 US WIA. At 1151H, at ZA170709, a SRP from A Co, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, made contact with an unknown size enemy force resulting in 1 US KIA and 2 US WIA. At 1600H another SRP from A Co, 1-35th was surrounded at ZA178726 and as a result received 2 US WIA before extraction.

15 September. A CHICOM booby trap grenade exploded resulting in 1 US KIA and 1 US WIA from the Recon Platoon of the 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry at YU856782. At 0005H in the vicinity of AR793889, the 2d Platoon of B Co, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry reported 45 rounds of mortar

fire impacted in the vicinity of the KONTUM ASP. Small arms fire was also received resulting in 1 US WIA.

17 September. C Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry, at YU869903 (?), found 1 60mm mortar complete, 3 60mm mortar rounds, 3 CHICOM grenades, 3 SKS and 4 NVA KIA. Also the following US equipment was found 3 M-16's, 1 M-79, 1 M-60 MG, 2 protective masks, 10 rucksacks and 4 pistol belts.

20 September. Between 1600 and 1935 a SRP from C Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry observed some 600 to 700 NVA, heavily laden with personal equipment and crew-served weapons, pass within 15 meters of their position ((YU788702). Artillery fired more than 800 rounds of HE and 28 rounds of firecracker into the area with unknown results.

21 September. C Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry conducted a sweep in the vicinity of YU788703 and found 3 NVA KIA by artillery and 1 NVA WIA CIA,, and 1 LMG.

24 September. At 0840H in the vicinity of YU818700, B Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry made contact with a estimated NVA company. Gunships and artillery were employed resulting in 5 NVA KIA, and 2 B-40 rocket launchers, 1 LMG and 1 AK-47 CIA. One US WIA . At 1045H, in the vicinity of YU796697, a SRP from C Co, 2-35th reported heavy incoming small arms fire. Radio contact was lost and a sweep was conducted by the company. The results of the sweep were 2 US KIA, 1 US WIA and 1 NVA WIA/CIA.

25 September. At 0905H in the vicinity of YU797707, C Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry received a ground attack from an estimated Co size force using small arms, automatic weapons and mortars. Contact broke at 1020H when artillery and gunships were employed. B Co and the Recon Platoon, 2-35th received small arms fire enroute to C Co position resulting in 1 US WIA. The results of the contact were 23 NVA KIA, 1. NVA WIA/CIA, 2 ARVN WIA, 3 US KIA, 8 US WIA and 2 B-40 rocket launchers, 4 RPGs, 2 MGs, 6 AK-47s CIA.

27 September. At 0800H at YU823706, a SRP from A Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry heard movement near their location, At 0820H the SRP reported that it was in heavy contact with an unknown size enemy force and unable to withdraw. 1/A/2-35th Inf, conducting operations 400 meters from the SRP location, heard the contact and moved to assist the SRP. The platoon arrived at the SRP location at 0901H and made contact with the enemy force. Artillery was adjusted into the area and the remainder of A Co arrived at 1012H. A Co then received 3 ground assaults from an estimated 2 NVA companies. At 1110H D/2-35 Inf joined A Co and the contact was broken. Results of the contact were 32 NVA KIA, 10 US KIA and 17 US WIA; 5 AK-47's, 1 SKS and 1 LMG were CIA.

30 September. At 1215H, at YU798705 the 3d platoon of C Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry made contact with an estimated platoon size force. The enemy employed small arms, automatic weapons and B-40 rockets. At 1450H, at YU801711, a 4th Aviation Battalion gunship supporting the contact was shot down. The crew escaped injury. Contact broke at 1930, leaving 11 US KIA, 15 US WIA, 1 NVA KIA, 3 AK-47 CIA and 1 LMG CIA. At 0845H, at ZA185730, a SRP from the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry observed 50 NVA moving west. Mortar fire was adjusted with unknown results.

1 October. At 1440H, a SRP from A Co, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry made contact with an enemy force of unknown size at ZA162727. The SRP broke contact and the ARP from C Trp, 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry was inserted into the area. Results were 1 US WIA and miscellaneous NVA equipment and documents CIA.

8 October. At 1630H one unarmed, wounded VC surrendered to the Reconnaissance Platoon, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry at YU808722.

10 October. At 1035H, at YU831705, an NVA threw a grenade at a SRP from A Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry. The SRP killed the NVA and then received small arms fire from 3 more NVA armed with M -16' s. One US was wounded. The SRP returned the fire, killing the 3 NVA.

11 October. SRP s from A and C Co s, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry found 23 NVA KIA apparently by artillery fire during the previous 2 weeks.

31 October. At 0817H, a SRP from B Co, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry was ambushed while returning to its patrol base. Four US were KIA. The 2d Platoon of B/2 -35th and the Reconnaissance Platoon, 2 -35 moved to reinforce the SRP. 2/B/2 -35 received sniper fire at YU810773, resulting in 2 US WIA. The platoon found one survivor of the SRP contact at YU815767. At 1541 the platoon made contact and exchanged fire with an unknown number of NVA at YU815766. 1 NVA KIA and 1 AK-47 CIA.