

OPERATION WAYNE PIERCE

29 July to 27 August 1970

Richard Cazeault, Delta 2/35th 1970 Provided This Report

**These Young Men of the 2/35th Gave It All During The Period of This Operation
8/17/70 A Co. Sp4 Paul Demaline Age 20 Delta, Ohio Helicopter Crash
8/17/70 C Co Pfc Robert Ater Age 25 Canton, Ohio Helicopter Crash**

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

HEADQUARTERS, 2D BATTALION 35TH INFANTRY

APO San Francisco 96262

10 September 1970

SUBJECT: Combat after Action Report:

Commanding Officer

1st Brigade, 4th Inf Div

ATTN: S3

APO San Francisco 96262

1. Name of Operation: WAYNE PIERCE.

2. Dates of Operation: 29 Jul – 27 Aug.

3. Location of Operation: The general location of the operation was 68 kilometers NNW of CAMP RADCLIFF, in the AN LAO VALLEY.

4. Command Headquarters:

a. 1st Brigade, 4th Inf Div located at LZ UPLIFT.

b. 2d battalion 35th Infantry forward command post located at FSB POWDER (BS 636179).

5. Key Personnel:

POSITION	NAME	PERIOD
BN CO	LTC WILLIAMS L HARRISON, JR	29 Jul – 27 Aug
BN XO	MAJ WILLIAM J HARDENBURGH	29 Jul – 27 Aug
BN S1	1LT KIT M H JOHNSTON, III	29 Jul – 27 Aug
BN S2	CPT GILBERT L JACOBS	29 Jul – 4 Aug

BN S2	CPT WARD K ODOM	4 Aug – 27 Aug
BN S3	CPT JERRY S CLARK	29 Jul – 27 Aug
BN S4	CPT BURL D MAGEE	29 Jul – 27 Aug
BN S5	1LT PATRICH H CASSETY	29 Jul – 27 Aug
BN S3 AIR	CPT ROBERT S REARDEN, JR	29 Jul – 27 Aug
BN SPT PLT LDR	1LT RICHARD A WETHERELL	29 Jul – 11 Aug
BN SPT PLT LDR	1LT EDWARD F MOSEY	11 Aug – 27 Aug
A CO	CPT MELVIN BANKS	29 Jul – 27 Aug
B CO	CPT JACK R VANDERPOOL	29 Jul – 27 Aug
C CO	1LT RALPH W JAMES	29 Jul – 27 Aug
D CO	1LT CLYDE R WHITE	29 Jul – 27 Aug
E CO	1LT THOMAS M WAJER	29 Jul – 27 Aug
RECON PLT LDR	1LT GEORGE W LANIER	29 Jul – 27 Aug
4.2 MORT PLT LDR	1LT WILLIS M MUSKA	29 Jul – 27 Aug
A/4-42 ARTY CO	CPT PAUL STEWERT	29 Jul – 27 Aug
A/4-42 ARTY LO	1LT MICHAEL J PITTIGLIO	29 Jul – 27 Aug

6. Task Organization:

A/2-35 Inf	BN CON
B/2-35 Inf	RCN PLT/2-35 Inf
C/2-35 Inf	4.2 MORT PLT/2-35 Inf
D/2-35 Inf	A/4-42 ARTY (DS)
	2/A/1-92 Arty (155) (GS)

7. Supporting Forces:

a. Supporting artillery to include Troops in Contact, Night Fire, Quick Reaction Fire, and Defensive Targets, we provided by A/4-42 Arty in direct support and 2/A/1-92 Arty (155) in general support of 2-35 Inf.

b. Gunship support was provided on a mission request basis by 1st BDE, 4th Inf Div.

c. Tactical Air Support was available on a preplanned and/or immediate request basis through 1st BDE, 4th Inf Div. Numerous preplanned requests were submitted and flown in the support of this battalion.

d. SNOOPY/SCORPION missions were available on a preplanned basis through S2, 1st BDE, 4th Inf Div. Numerous SNOOPY/SCORPION missions were flown for this battalion, however, none led to any significant findings by ground troops.

8. Intelligence:

a. Terrain: The terrain north of the An Lao Valley in the region known as the fishhook is largely composed of rugged hills with steep slopes, tapering off to moderate valleys and a few lowlands. There are secondary streams both intermittent and largely tributaries. In the northern section of the AO tributaries of the SONG AN LAO RIVER flow east and west and then out to the south where they join the SONG AN LAO and flow into the AN LAO VALLEY. The vegetation is thick with a good deal of elephant grass three to four feet high. Although the area was covered with dense vegetation some cultivated areas were found.

b. Weather: The weather during the operation was generally good. On several days we experienced rain showers some of which were heavy and once we experienced hail. But generally they did not prohibit flying. However, on several days inclement weather in AN KHE made it impossible for the aircraft to reach the AN LAO VALLEY thus resupply was not always timely. The temperature during the operation averaged about 85 degrees F.

c. Enemy Situation: The area north of the AN LAO VALLEY was expected to produce support elements of the Third NVA Division. Specifically, the 509th Training Battalion, 500th Transportation Battalion, 600th Medical Battalion and the 403rd Sapper battalion. Although no documentation was found to prove it, caches found by B Company of salt, cloth, pepper, and miscellaneous goods along with several cultivated fields indicated that the 500th Transportation Battalion was operating in the area. Three NVA/VC killed by B Company had papers indicating they had just been released from a dispensary believed to be an element of the 600th Medical Bn, and documents indicating they belonged to the 8th Bn formerly of the 22d Regt which is believed to be operating east of our AO. A Co also found a cache of mortar rounds including 88 82mm rounds and 71 60mm rounds and numerous charges and detonators.

Several hipshoots were established and were the target of many incidents of harassing NVA/VC sniper fire. The employment of light organics and artillery as well as small arms did not seem to discourage the enemy snipers. There were also several incidents of resupply birds receiving ground to air fire and several aircraft receiving hits although none were downed and none suffered casualties. The enemy in the area were never seen in groups of more than 2-3 and there were few heavy trails in the area. Numerous bunkers and hootches were found both new and old as well as several storage caves. They were numerous punji fields and several punji pits found. Three booby trapped 81mm mortars which appeared old and were found and destroyed in place.

9. Mission:

a. On 29 Jul 70, 2-35 Inf initiates reconnaissance operations in the fishhook region of the AN LAO VALLEY.

b. On 6 Aug 70, 2-35 Inf initiates search and destroy operations in the fishhook region of the AN LAO VALLEY to locate and destroy elements of the 3rd NVA Division; specifically its forces, resources, and installations in assigned AO.

10. Concept of Operation: Operation WAYNE PIERCE was initiated when 2-35 Inf conducted a convoy on 29 Jul from LZ PONY to LZ TWO BITS. Upon arriving at LZ TWO BITS the Bn conducted CA 's into multiple LZ's with the Bn CP being established at FSB POWDER; D Co secured and began construction of FSB POWDER.

11. Execution:

a. A Company: During the period 29 Jul – 4 Aug, A Co conducted extensive RIF operations. During the period A Co made one significant find when on 30 Jul, vic BS 563102, A Co found a hootch containing 88 82mm mortar rounds, 71 60mm mortar rounds, 61 mortar heads, and 10 cans of detonators. A Co made contact with the enemy on three different occasions. All were of short duration and resulted in negative casualties for either side. On 5 Aug, A Co established a hipshoot, vic BS 638134, and began search and destroy operations on 6 Aug. The hipshoot location received sniper fire on four different occasions. Even though the location had been fired on with both light organics located at the hipshoot, and artillery located at FSB POWDER and swept repeatedly with negative findings, the fire continued to come from the same SEL. This sniper fire resulted in one friendly WIA. Numerous other contacts were made with the enemy, the most significant of which occurred on 141655H Aug 70, vic BS 733224, when an individual of 2/A engaged one individual inside a hootch, with a .45 cal pistol, resulting in one NVA/VC KIA and one AK-47 CIA.

On 20 Aug, A Co was A/L from the field to FSB POWDER and assumed the security and training mission.

b. B Company: On 291403H Jul 70, B Co completed a CA into LZ vic BS 624222 and began extensive RIF operations in their assigned AO. B Co made no significant contacts on no significant findings during this phase of the operation.

On 4 Aug, B Co CA 'd into a new AO and established a hipshoot vic BS 698218 with supporting fires from their organic 81mm mortar platoon. B Co had numerous instances of sniper and ground to air fire both at the hipshoot location and at the locations of the individual platoons working within the AO. On 101735 Aug 70, vic BS 697227, an OP for 1/B observed 3 enemy approaching him from the south. A claymore mine was employed when the enemy was 4 feet away resulting in 3 NVA/VC KIA and 3 AK-47 rifles CIA plus numerous documents. On 15 Aug vic BS 682222, 2/B discovered 2 hootches containing 700 lbs. Of salt, 2 French sub-machine guns, a Singer sewing machine, plus various other miscellaneous items. Friendly casualties for the period were 2 WIA.

On 27 Aug, B Co conducted a FE/AL from the field to LZ BEAVER and convoyed to CAMP RADCLIFF to begin a training stand down.

c. C Company: On 291146H Jul 70, C Co completed a CA into LZ vic BS 681181 and departed into their assigned AO to begin RIF operations. On 5 Aug, C Co conducted a CA into a new AO and began search and clear operations. On 8 Aug, vic BS 658188, 3/C found a hootch containing one US M2 Carbine, various miscellaneous ammunition and documents. All were evacuated to S2, 1st BDE located at CAMP RADCLIFF. C Co had only 4 instances of sniper fire during this period with negative enemy sightings. There were no friendly casualties during this period.

On 21 Aug, C Co conducted a FE/AL to LZ UPLIFT and, on 22 Aug, convoyed to CAMP RADCLIFF to assume the mission of Golf Course Security under the control of IDDC.

d. D Company: D Co continued the mission of security and construction of FSB POWDER until 20 Aug, when they CA'd to LZ vic BS 709165 and began search and destroy operations in their assigned AO. On 251520H Aug 70, 3/D, vic BS 708143, observed and engaged 3 enemy (1 male and 2 female). Small arms was returned as artillery was employed as blocking fire. A sweep of the area revealed one enemy KIA (male) and negative weapons. There were no friendly casualties.

On 27 Aug, D Co conducted a FE/AL to LZ BEAVER and convoyed to CAMP RADCLIFF to begin a training stand down.

e. Recon Platoon: During this operation, Rcn Plt had the mission of conducting RIF operations to the southeast of FSB POWDER. On 191240H Aug 70, Rcn Plt observed and initiated fire on one enemy, resulting in one enemy KIA and one SKS rifle CIA. Rcn Plt made contact with the enemy on two other occasions, however, neither resulted in casualties for either friendly or enemy forces.

On 27 Aug, Rcn Plt conducted a FE/AL to LZ BEAVER and convoyed to CAMP RADCLIFF to begin a training stand down.

12. Results: Operation WAYNE PIERCE yielded 2-35 Inf the following results:

49 x contacts	57 x bunkers
6 x G/A fire	31 x sleeping positions
6 x enemy KIA	3 x fighting positions
4 x AK-47 rifles	3 x caves
1 x SKS rifle	8 x tunnels
1 x US M2 carbine	3 x punji pits
3 x Fr. Sub-machine guns	1 x training camp
88 x 82mm rds	4 x spider holes
71 x 60mm rds	1 x Singer sewing machine
61 x mortar heads	700 x lbs. Salt
10 x cans detonators	600 x lbs. Corn
5 x booby traps	numerous documents
83 x hootches	Various misc. items

13. Administrative Matters:

a. Supply: Battalion forward trains were located at LZ NORTH ENGLISH, with a forward resupply point consisting of Class I and V maintained at LZ POWDER for emergency requirements. Daily resupply to all units in the field was attempted on a trial basis. Due to the irregularity of air craft, it hindered tactical operations and was discontinued.

b. Maintenance: Limited organizational maintenance was performed at the trains area, and items requiring repair beyond battalion capability were transferred to C Co 704th Maint.

c. **Treatment of Casualties:** Battalion aid stations were maintained at both the rear area and forward fire base. All casualties were evacuated to B Medical Detachment located at LZ UPLIFT. Casualties requiring additional treatment were evacuated to 67th Field Hospital at QUIN NHON.

d. **Transportation:** The availability of aircraft for operations was not a problem. However, due to bad flying weather in AN KHE and no access to aircraft from other locations, resupply was irregular.

e. **Communications:** Existing communications problems were due to terrain and weather. The problems were alleviated by relaying between units.

14 Special Equipment and Techniques: Periods of instruction and employment of mechanical ambushes were given to individuals of each sub unit in the battalion. Numerous mechanical ambushes were employed each night to broaden the area of coverage and to interdict enemy movement during hours of darkness.

15. Commanders Analysis: The enemy continues to operate in small 3-5 man groups as captured documents have continually pointed out. Most of the sightings by this battalion were of enemy groups of 2-3 individuals. Based on the nature of the enemy threat, the battalion conducted small unit ambushes of squad sized elements. Many platoons did not operate as part of the company set. This seemed to be the most effective way of combating small enemy units using numerous trails. The difficulty of locating small elements tended to create an atmosphere of no enemy present causing our soldiers to relax his vigilance. Fortunately, no friendly soldiers were killed. By and large, the operation was a success as the enemy could not travel freely in this area. The enemy had to concentrate his movement at night, thereby creating undue hardships on his ability to operate. Expected contacts with elements of the 403rd Sapper Bn, 500th Trans. Bn, and 600th Med Bn did not materialize.

Resupply of units in the field was spotty if not highly inefficient. Too many reports were required by the BDE HQ's. There were unnecessary reports to S4 which the S4 can do nothing about. If reports were meaningful and action was being taken to assist the Bn, it would see no problem. On many occasions the BDE HQ's wanted to employ platoons which is not a BDE function. The BDE commands Bn's not platoons. Once all of these problems were ironed out the operation went smoothly.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

CHESTER GARRETT
MAJ, Infantry
S3