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ROBERT H CARTER
LTC, Infantry
Commanding

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HEADQUARTERS 1ST BATTALION 12TH INFANTRY
4TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO San Francisco 96262

AVDDB-12I

1 Nov 68

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons learned for the period ending 31
October 1968

TO: Commanding Officer
2nd Brigade, 4th Inf Div
APO San Francisco 96262

I. Significant Organization or Unit activities:

1. General: During the reporting period, the "Red Warriors" were engaged in defense of the Ban Me Thuot area.

Several cordon and search operations were conducted in conjunction with Vietnamese National Police and Military Intelligence Teams. Local V.C. committee leaders and supply personnel were detained which assisted in the disruption of the V.C. infra-structure. Simultaneously, MONCAP operations were conducted by unit medical personnel.

The majority of operations during the reporting period were conducted against NVA forces, particularly units of the 1st NVA division.

- a. Task organization: The task organization during the reporting period was subject to the following breakdown.

- (1) From 1 Aug to 19 Aug the organization was composed of.

1st Bn, 12th Inf

Co A

Co B

Co C

Co D

Recon

4.2

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B/4/42 (DS)

1/B/4 Engr (DS)

(2) During 19 Aug to 16 Sep

C/1/10 Cav became OPCON 1/12

(3) During 17 Sep to 27 Sep the following were made (changes)

C/1/10 Cav was released from OPCON 1/12 Inf

C/1/12 Inf OPCON 1/10 Cav

B/1/10 Cav OPCON 1/12 Inf

(4) During 27 Sep to 1 Oct the following changes were made

B/1/10 was released from OPCON 1/12 Inf

B/2/8 Inf (Mech) became OPCON 1/12

(5) During 1 Oct to 22 Oct the following changes were made

B/2/8 Inf (Mech) was released from OPCON 1/12 Inf

B/4/42 Arty changed from DS 1/12 Inf to DS 1/10 Cav

(6) During 22 Oct to 25 Oct the following changes were made

B/2/8 Inf (Mech) OPCON 1/12 Inf

B/4/42 Arty DS 1/12 Inf

(7) During 25 Oct to 27 Oct the following change was made

B/2/8 Inf (Mech) was released from OPCON 1/12 Inf

(8) During 27 Oct to 31 Oct the following changes were made

C/1/12 Inf returned to parent unit

A/4/42 Arty DS 1/12 Inf

B/5/16 Arty DS 1/12 Inf

Commanders and Principal Staff:

Commanding Officer: LTC JOSEPH T. PALASTRA JR.

Executive Officer: 1 Aug to 17 Oct, MAJ. RALPH M. CHESNEY

5 Oct to 31 Oct, MAJ. RALPH T. CORRELL

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S-1	1 Aug to 2 Sep, 1LT. DAVID L. SMITH
	2 Sep to 31 Oct, CPT LYLE D. GESSFORD
S-2	1 Aug to 25 Sep, CPT DONALD F. HIRSH
	25 Sep to 31 Oct, CPT WILLIAM McDONOUGH
S-3	1 Aug to 31 Oct, MAJ. DOUGLAS S. KERRY
S-4	1 Aug to 10 Oct, CPT LAWRENCE COUSINS
	10 Oct to 31 Oct, CPT FLOYD BROWNFIELD
S-5	1 Aug to 14 Aug, 1LT JAMES KING
	14 Aug to 31 Oct, 1LT RICHARD CARPENTER
CO HHC	1 Aug to 7 Aug, 1LT DOUGLAS BUNKER II
	7 Aug to 14 Aug, 1LT WALTER SUPTON
	14 Aug to 31 Oct, CPT ERNEST OLIVER
CO A Co	1 Aug to 11 Aug, 1LT ROBERT PETERS
	11 Aug to 31 Oct, CPT RICHARD WALKER
CO B Co	1 Aug to 31 Oct, CPT EMMETT BURTON
CO C Co	1 Aug to 31 Oct, 1LT WILLIAM BENEL
CO D Co	1 Aug to 28 Aug, CPT LYLE D. GESSFORD
	28 Aug to 31 Oct, CPT BRUCE A. HARRIS
CO E Co	1 Aug to 13 Aug, 1LT SHERMILL CLEMENTS
	13 Aug to 27 Aug, 1LT CARL McGLOCKLIN
	27 Aug to 31 Aug, 1LT JOHN A. FITNEY
	31 Aug to 19 Sep, 1LT ANTHONY VINCENNES
	19 Sep to 10 Oct 68, CPT FLOYD BROWNFIELD
	10 Oct to 31 Oct, 1LT CHARLES HAWKINS

c. Mission: The two primary missions for the "Red Warriors" during the reporting period were; (1) defense of Ban Me Thuot and Duc Lap against NVA, and (2) the disruption of the V.C. infrastructure.

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2. Intelligence:

During the period 1 Aug to 31 Oct 1/12 operated in two areas. (1) North of Ban Me Thuot, vicinity of the Newal Plantation and, (2) West of Duc Lap, near the Cambodian Border.

August intelligence reports indicated the presence of a large enemy force moving into position for a major attack on the Ban Me Thuot area. These enemy units operating in the "Red Warriors" AO were identified as the 66th NVA Regiment as well as the 301 and 401 VC local force Bns. Contact with these elements were limited to contacts with 3-5 man patrols during the first part of August.

A C/S of the village EA Poo (A0792173) produced on detainees from the current blacklist. Supplies and material supplies captured during this period included a sizeable quantity of medical supplies, small arms ammunition and 181 mortar rounds.

During the second half of August, the battalion made several moves within their AO continued cordon and search operations, employed Short Range Patrols. Of particular note during this period was the sighting of a 200 man enemy force traveling Southeast vicinity of A0803387 on 17 August 1968. In addition to individual weapons the unit carried eight mortar tubes. On 20 August a sub-element uncovered a cache of rice weighing approximately three tons. There were eight confirmed enemy KIA during the period. Captured were five AF 47's, one SKSM 30 cases of 12.7mm ammo, 34 rockets propellants, 18 cases of B-40 rockets and 117 82mm mortar rounds. The enemy made no major advances but continued to resupply and reinforce for it's mission against Ban Me Thuot. Small forward elements continued to seek routes which would enable them to bypass "Red Warriors" elements and gain access South of the Newal Plantation area.

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S-1 1 Aug to 2 Sep, 1LT. DAVID L. SMITH
2 Sep to 31 Oct, CPT LYLE D. GESSFORD

S-2 1 Aug to 25 Sep, CPT DONALD F. KISHAN
25 Sep to 31 Oct, CPT WILLIAM McDOUGHER

S-3 1 Aug to 31 Oct, MAJ. DOUGLAS E. EMBRY

S-4 1 Aug to 10 Oct, CPT LAWRENCE COUSINS
10 Oct to 31 Oct, CPT FLOYD BROWNFIELD

S-5 1 Aug to 14 Aug, 1LT JAMES KISS
14 Aug to 31 Oct, 1LT RICHARD CARPENTER

CO HHC 1 Aug to 7 Aug, 1LT DOUGLAS BUNKER IT
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14 Aug to 31 Oct, CPT ERNEST OLIVER

CO A Co 1 Aug to 11 Aug, 1LT ROBERT PETERS
11 Aug to 31 Oct, CPT RICHARD WALKER

CO B Co 1 Aug to 31 Oct, CPT EMMETT BURTON

CO C Co 1 Aug to 31 Oct, 1LT WILLIAM BEARL

CO D Co 1 Aug to 28 Aug, CPT LYLE D. GESSFORD
28 Aug to 31 Oct, CPT BRUCE A. HARRIS

CO E Co 1 Aug to 13 Aug, 1LT SHEPHERD CLEMENTS
13 Aug to 27 Aug, 1LT CARL McCLOCKLIN
27 Aug to 31 Aug, 1LT JOHN A. PITNEY
31 Aug to 19 Sep, 1LT ANTHONY VINCENTES
19 Sep to 10 Oct 68, CPT FLOYD BROWNFIELD
10 Oct to 31 Oct, 1LT CHARLES H. WILKINS

e. Mission: The two primary missions for the "Red Warriors" during the reporting period were; (1) defense of Ban Me Thuot and Duc Lap against NVA, and (2) the disruption of the V.C. infrastructure.

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During September, contact with enemy forces were few and light. Trails and bunker complexes uncovered by SRP's, indicated the continuing presence of the 66th Regiment.

Enemy equipment captured during this period included several Chicom rifles grenades, an M1 rifle and two two pounds of documents.

The withdrawal of the 66th Regiment to the Northwest and the lessening of the threat on Ban Me Thuot prompted the move of the "Red Warriors", to the Duc Lap area where elements of the 1st and the 4th NVA Divisions were massing in Cambodia in preparation for an attack on Duc Lap. Contacts in the area were few. On several occasions mortars rounds were received near FSB Pack Rat (YU818738) however they appeared to be directed more toward the nearby RF/PF compound than our own position. Enemy reconnaissance parties equipped w/flashlights were observed by OP's on several occasions. On 21 October and OP observed eight NVA during daylight hours (0815) within 500 meters of FSB Pack Rat.

On 22 Oct the "Red Warriors" returned to LZ George (AQ83721177) to engage the 310 and 401 LF Bns reportedly operating the Mewal area.

Significant activity occurred in this area on 26 Oct when a cordon and search of the village of Mewal flushed a 15-20 man enemy force from the village. VC elements were in the village reportedly to affect coordination for a build up of supplies for the Bns nearby. Results of contact were 3 SKS's and two carbines (M1&2), captured in action, one VC KIA, and 5 VC CIA. POW interrogators continued to gain information concerning location of enemy forces and supplies. Exploitation of that information is in progress at the time of this report.

3. Operations:

During the period 1 Aug to 9 Aug, 1/12 Inf was established at LZ Allen

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Weapon zeroing

AQ777182. Co's A, B, and C established patrol bases to the North and West of LZ Allen, D Co secured the Fire Support Base. Company size reconnaissance in force operations were conducted as the unit moved to their patrol bases. After the immediate areas were swept and cleared the companies established a Short Range Patrol screen. D Co also conducted a cordon and search operation the village Buon Ba Pac vicinity AQ793173 resulting in the detention of five VC sympathizers.

On 9 August the battalion moved South of Ban Me Thuot by air and established a series of blocking positions against a suspected NVA Regiment. There was no enemy contact.

On 13 August the battalion moved to LZ Sally vicinity AQ772327 and established a Fire Support Base. Co's A, B, and C moved on foot to the West, North and Northeast, conducting reconnaissance in force as they moved. The companies set up patrol bases and emplaced a Short Range Patrol screen around them. The result of properly conducted Short Range Patrol was that the lead elements of the 66th NVA Regiment were observed by the SRP and hit with artillery and air strikes called in by the SRPs.

C and D Co's conducted two sweeps of Arc light areas to assess bomb damage. One sweep resulted in a contact with 5-6 NVA with two NVA KIA.

On 25 Aug the battalion moved from LZ Sally to LZ George in the vicinity AQ837216 to conduct SA Screen north of the Meual. The size of the AO required the battalion to move South on 19 Sep to LZ Schuyler vicinity AQ821183 North of Quang Nhieu Hamlet. Co B remained at LZ George in order to observe the Meual. Co's A and D were located to the East and West of the Fire Support Base, respectively. At this time Co C was placed OPCON to the 1/10 Cav and moved to LZ Rosa vicinity RU256045.

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B 1/10 Cav joined the battalion at LZ George and secured the Fire Support Base at LZ Schuyler. On 27 Sep they were replaced by B 2/8 Inf (Mech). Local sweeps of the area were conducted and resulting contacts were with no more than four individuals.

The decrease of enemy activity North of Ban Me Thuot and the rising threat of a large ground attack in the vicinity of Duc Lap, resulted in the Battalion moving on 1 October to Duc Lap. The Fire Support Base was located at LZ Pack Rat vicinity YU818738. The battalion's mission was to prevent infiltration from the West. The 4.2 mortar platoon was in general support as B/4/42 remained at LZ Schuyler. The NVA recon elements were unable to effectively penetrate the SRP screen, and the planned (NVA) offensive of 4 October did not take place.

When the Battalion went to Duc Lap, the VC increased activity in the Mewal. Consequently, with the diminishing threat to Duc Lap, the Battalion returned to the Ban Me Thuot area on 23 October. The Fire Support Base was located at LZ George with Company D and B/4-42. B company added BCo/LZ Philip to secure B/5-16, Artillery. A company and the 4.2 mortar platoon were located in the vicinity of A0868256.

SRP's were employed. On 26 October A and D company cordoned and searched the Mewal village vicinity A08622. The cordon was effective, the VC lost one (1) KIA and (5) five WIA. Among those captured was the chief of Ban Me Thuot district autonomous committee.

4. Training: During the period of the report, all training was conducted in the field by unit Officers and NCO's. Heavy emphasis was placed on cover and concealment, deception measures, and indirect fire adjustment. All these subjects were beneficial for the proper employment of Short Range Patrols.

Weapon zeroing was accomplished by weekly at the fire support base and patrols.

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Two enlisted men from each line company attended every session of the 4th Infantry Division NCO Academy with excellent overall standings:

No EM graduated #1 in class 3

" " " #2 " " 2

" " " #4 " " 2

A total of 48 persons attended the NCO Academy with a 97% completion.

5. Logistics:

The primary means of supply and resupply was by air. While at LZ George and LZ Schuyler, limited overland resupply was accomplished. The trains area remained at Ban Me Thuot Airstrip. While the Battalion was located at Duc Lap, a forward supply team was located at Duc Lap airstrip to facilitate of supplies distribution.

6. Organization: NONE

7. Other: NONE

AN/pre 77's with secure voice attachments were made available at company level, making possible secure transmissions between the Battalion commander and company commanders.

8. Personnel: NONE

9. Operations:

1. Observation: Before leaving their patrol bases SRP need to be thoroughly briefed and trained in light and noise discipline, movement, indirect fire adjustment, and air strike adjustment.

2. Evaluation: Four man SRP's when properly trained and employed become the forward observers for their units and are able, with the use of Artillery and airstrikes to interdict the approaching enemy.

Recommendation: SRP's should be employed whenever an element is employed in a relatively static position.

3. Observation: When SRP's come in position they should not engage forces unless it becomes necessary to break contact or unless they are observed.

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Four man patrols are very valuable as forward observers (eyes and ears) for friendly forces, but are not of sufficient size to engage in combat. Specially when exact size of enemy elements is unknown by observing and adjusting fire, the SRP's can interdict the enemy and usually can remain unobserved and relatively safe.

Recommendations: That SRP's thoroughly understand that they are observers and should not engage the enemy unless absolutely necessary.

3. Training: NONE
4. Intelligence: See S-2
5. Logistics: NONE
6. Organization: NONE
7. Tactical cover and conception.

Observation: When a small patrol bypass it's night location, it should bypass the location by 200-300 meters, and then double back to their night location.

Evaluation: If a small patrol is approaching a night location, they can check the night location for suitability, check the surrounding, and when doubling back, check to see if they were followed.

Recommendation: Short Range Patrols should bypass proposed night locations for the previous reason.

JOSEPH T. PALASTRA JR.
LTC, Infantry
Commanding