

File

CONFIDENTIAL

Regimental Landing Team-7

U.S. ARMY MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE

3/10/2015
3000
31 Aug 1965

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, 3d Marine Division (Fwd)
Subj: RLT-7 After-Action Report 1-65 (Operation STARLITE)
Ref: (a) 3dMarDiv OpOrd 321A-65

- Encl: (1) Concept of Operations Overlay
- (2) D-day Operations Ashore Overlay
- (3) 2d Bn, 4th Marines After Action Report 2-65
- NIF- (4) 3d Bn, 3rd Marines After Action Report #33 — MISSING!
- (5) D+1 Operations Ashore Overlay
- NIF- 3/7, 65 (6) BLT 3/7 After Action Report (Operation "STARLITE") — MISSING!
- (7) D+2 Disposition of Units Overlay
- (8) 1st Bn, 7th Marines After Action Report #1, Operation "STARLITE"
- (9) D+3 Disposition of Units Overlay
- (10) D+4 Disposition of Units Overlay
- (11) D+5 Disposition of Units Overlay
- (12) Route of March of BLT 1/7 Overlay
- (13) Problems, Comments and Recommendations

1. In accordance with reference (a), this report is submitted.

Unit: RLT-7

Strength: 4513

Time: 171000H - 242100H August 1965

Place: Van Tuong Village Complex; Binh Son District, Quang Ngai Province south of the Chu Lai enclave.

Casualties: Friendly: KIA-46 WIA-204 DOW-5
 Enemy: KIA-688 WIA-263 (est)
 (includes 115 est)

2. As the enclave defense forces at Chu Lai had not been of adequate strength to consider attacking a Viet Cong (VC) regimental sized unit outside but near-by the enclave, this was made possible upon the arrival of RLT-7, consisting of Headquarters, BLT 1/7 and with BLT 3/7 afloat nearby as the SLF.

3. Intelligence preceding Operation "STARLITE" indicated that a large Viet Cong force in the Van Tuong Village complex was preparing to attack the Chu Lai enclave. From prior intelligence, this force was believed to include the First VC Regiment (main force) and a company from the 52d Battalion (local force). The 1st VC Regiment is composed of the 60th, 80th and 90th Battalions, however the 80th Battalion had not been confirmed as being in the area. The 40th and 45th Battalions were also believed to be in the area, as well as an unidentified heavy weapons company.

DECLASSIFIED BY
AUTHORITY OF DOD DIR. 5200.1 R
BY BAWETS ON 24 JUL 85

RLT-7
OpOrd 1-65 (Op STARLITE)

19-24 Aug 65
(3) Aug 65

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The capabilities of this force, particularly when augmented by the heavy weapons company, were such a great and impending threat to the Chu Lai enclave that the Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF), directed that a combined amphibious and helicopterborne attack be executed immediately in the Van Tuong Village complex to conduct a search and destroy operation against the Viet Cong. RLT-7, consisting of BLT's 3/3, 2/4, with 3/7 available as a reserve afloat, and RLT-7 Headquarters, was activated and assigned the mission. On the evening of 16 August 1965 the participating units were alerted to Operation "STARLITE". BLT 3/7, afloat as the Special Landing Force (SLF), was alerted by message to rendezvous in the Amphibious Objective Area (AOA) and assume the mission as RLT Reserve. Since RLT-7 Headquarters had landed administratively in Viet Nam only two days before, the facilities of the 4th Marines Headquarters were utilized for planning. The battalion and regimental staffs assembled with supporting arms representatives and on the morning of the 17th, the operation, administrative and embarkation orders were completed and distributed.

The operation commenced on D-1 at 171000H when M/3/3 departed the Chu Lai area by LVT for subsequent overland foot march to occupy a blocking position in the northern sector of the Amphibious Objective Area prior to H-hour and D-day at (BS 683971). At 171400H, RLT-7 Headquarters and BLT 3/3 commenced embarking aboard the following ships:

USS BAYFIELD (APA-33) - RLT-7 Headquarters
USS CABILDO (LSD-16) - BLT 3/3
USS VERNON COUNTY (LST-1169) - BLT 3/3

At 180600H, HMM-261, 361 and BLT 2/4, less Company F, which remained in position on the Chu Lai perimeter, were staged at the Chu Lai Airstrip. Prior to H-hour, two of the following fire support ships (FSS) arrived in the AOA and took station.

USS GALVESTON (CLG-6)
USS ORLECK (DD-886)
The USS PRICHARD (DD-531) arrived on the 19th of August, on D+1.

On the morning of D-day, at H-hour (180630H), attack aircraft from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (FMAW) commenced preparation of landing zones RED, WHITE and BLUE while Companies I and K of BLT 3/3 landed abreast at GREEN Beach. See enclosure (1) for the Concept of Operations Overlay.

BLT 2/4 commenced landing as follows:

1st Wave: LZ BLUE at L-hour (H+15)
2nd Wave: LZ WHITE at L+25
3rd Wave: LZ RED at L+50
4th Wave: LZ WHITE at L+60

The original plan was to land as follows:

Company E in LZ WHITE at L-hour
Company H in LZ BLUE at L-hour
Company G in LZ RED at L+25

The original plan was based on a helicopter availability of 40 UH-34's but alterations as shown above were necessary due to only 26 helicopters being available.

[REDACTED]

the command and control elements of the RLT-7 Headquarters landed at 180130H. By 1200 the CP was established at (BS 706925), and before the end of the day, housed not only the command post but the logistic support and re-supply complex for the operation. See enclosure (2), D-day Operations Ashore Overlay and enclosure (3), 2d Battalion, 4th Marines After-Action Report 2-65. Additionally I/3/3 (in the adjacent Zone of Action on the right) encountered heavy fire from An Cuong (2) and requested and received permission to cross over into the BLT 2/4 Zone of Action to secure the village. (See 3d Battalion, 3rd Marines After Action Report #33). In the trace of these two incidents involving heavy casualties, five LVT's carrying supplies from the RLT-7 CP complex to BLT 3/3 were ambushed at 181255H in the vicinity of (BS 698932).

The five LVT's were accompanied by two flame tanks requested by the CO of BLT 3/3 for use by I/3/3. One of the flame tanks returned to the Regimental CP complex which was only a few hundred meters away, and reported the ambush.

A relief force, consisting of elements of BLT 3/3 rear CP, five LVT's, five Ontos and one gun tank set out to relieve the halted column but encountered heavy fire prior to attaining their objective. One LVT was disabled and the gun tank did not fire because of friendly troops in the target area. This relief force, under the Executive Officer of BLT 3/3, was located in the RLT-7 CP complex. The XO of BLT 3/3 was directed to take I/3/3 to relieve the LVT column. This new relief force started at 181305, but became engaged in a heavy fire fight at (BS 703927) at 181400. The enemy heavy weapons (3.5, 57mmRR, and 81mm Mortars) firing across the open ground prevented I/3/3 from locating the relieving the column, but it did locate the 2d Platoon of H/2/4 nearby.

These attacks resulted in the RLT Commander temporarily halting the attack and requesting the landing of BLT 3/7.

At 181600H, L/3/7 landed at (BS 708927) and was assigned to the operational control of BLT 3/3. Reinforced with two gun tanks, L/3/7 was assigned the mission to juncture with I/3/3 at (BS 700930). Before effecting juncture with I/3/3, L/3/7 became engaged in a heavy fire fight at 181845H in an attempt to cross the open ground. This situation prevented L/3/7 from reaching I/3/3. In this action L/3/7 received 4 KIA and 14 WIA. Although juncture was not effected with I/3/3, L/3/7 located the LVT's and flame tank but could not advance to them. However, L/3/7 relieved sufficient pressure from I/3/3 to enable it to break contact. Since it was well after dark, L/3/7 was directed to move to the 3/3 CP and arrived at 190130H. I/3/3, and the 2d Platoon of H/2/4 returned to the RLT-7 CP complex, arriving at 190500H, and after resting were assigned the mission to provide security for the Regimental CP complex and GREEN Beach, respectively. I/3/7, which had been helilifted to the RLT-7 CP complex at dusk on the 18th to provide security was thus relieved of their security mission. At 190025H, M/3/7 landed at GREEN Beach.

On the morning of 19 August, BLT 3/3 resumed the attack to the northeast at 0700, and BLT 2/4, less H/2/4, attacked at 0800. At 0900, BLT 3/7 (-) composed of Companies I and M, attacked to the northeast near the center of RLT-7 Zone of Action and uncovered and secured the area of the LVT/flame tank column. All personnel present were brought out and previously made plans were executed to evacuate the LVT's and tanks. During the afternoon both BLT's 2/4 and 3/3 reached the coast. During this time escape by the VC to seaward had been blocked by the fire support ships. See enclosure (5), D+1 Operations Ashore Overlay and enclosure (6), BLT 3/7 After-Action Report (Operation "STARLITE").

[REDACTED]

9

On 20 August, BLT 2/4 was helilifted out of the operation and back into its normal operation in the Chu Lai enclave. The return trip of the helicopters from the Chu Lai enclave was utilized to lift BLT 1/7 into the BLT 3/3 area at (BS 717942). BLT 1/7 relieved BLT 3/3, and BLT 3/3 was retracted by surface craft from GREEN Beach. (Upon retraction of BLT 3/3, L/3/7 was returned to BLT 3/7 control). Companies A, B, D, the Battalion Command Group and 50% of Company C were helilifted into the area at (BS 717942). The remainder of Company C was helilifted to the Regimental CP complex. The balance of the company moved overland to close onto the CP at 202100H. C/1/7 was to provide security not only for the logistics installations, helicopter landing zone and command post contained in the RLIT-7 complex, but also security for GREEN Beach. Prior to completion of the helilifts, TAORs were assigned and both BLT 1/7 and 3/7 were assigned the mission to conduct search and clear operations within their TAORs to confirm the VC KIA count, collect any material of intelligence value and to eliminate VC resistance that might remain in the area. See enclosure (7), D+2 Disposition of Units and enclosure (8), 1st Bn, 7th Mar After Action Rpt #1, Operation STARLITE.

On 21 August (D+3), BLT's 1/7 and 3/7, in execution of their mission, conducted battalion size search and clear missions. During the course of these operations, engineers were employed to destroy many of the caves, tunnels and fighting positions in the area. BLT 3/7 conducted its operations in the hamlet complex of An Thoi (1) and Nam Yen (3). Companies moved out on foot except for L/3/7 which was helilifted. M/3/7 received sporadic small arms fire, which at the moment, was BLT 3/7's only contact with the VC. BLT 1/7 concentrated their efforts in the hamlet complex of Van Tuong. A/3/7 moved out on foot to search and clear Van Tuong (2), and D/1/7 to search and clear Van Tuong (5). On the way to its objective, D/1/7 encountered sniper fire from the vicinity of (BS 715942) but received no casualties. None of the companies encountered organized resistance.

At 211800H, M/3/7 relieved C/1/7 as security for the RLIT-7 CP complex and GREEN Beach. See enclosure (9) for the D+3 Disposition of Units Overlay.

On 22 August, BLT 3/7 received a new mission to conduct a reconnaissance in force to determine the presence of organized VC and to destroy any VC encountered in line of hills from (BS 690905) to (BS 690870). To further support this mission K/3/7, the unit of the landing force to come ashore, was landed from the SLF at 220630H. All companies moved out on foot in an approach march, I/3/7 on the right, L/3/7 on the left, with K/3/7 in reserve following in trace to (BS 690870), where BLT 3/7 established defensive positions for the night.

BLT 1/7 continued its operation in the Van Tuong complex. All companies reported receiving sniper fire. B/1/7 fired on 3 VC at (BS 707937). One VC was wounded and evacuated to Co B, 3d Medical Battalion. A/1/7 killed a VC at (BS 703937) while conducting its search and clear operation of Van Tuong (3). See enclosure (10) for the D+4 Disposition of Units Overlay.

On D+5, 23 August, BLT 1/7 was alerted to conduct, on the 24th of August, a reconnaissance in force across the Trung Phan Peninsula. At 231200H, BLT 1/7 commenced moving all equipment that was not desired for the overland movement such as wheel and tracked vehicles to GREEN Beach for subsequent embarkation and movement by ship. In continuing its search and clear operations, BLT 1/7 reported search of Van Tuong (4) had been completed. B/1/7 made contact with an unknown number of VC in caves (BS 698955) and here three VCS were captured. At 231600H, BLT 1/7 secured their search and clear operations, commenced movement of all other remaining equipment to GREEN Beach and prepared for its new mission.

[REDACTED]

By 231800H RLT-7 Headquarters displaced from (BS 725928) to GREEN Beach and subsequently to the USS BAYFIELD (APA-33) by LVT's. Supporting arms representatives and the Regimental Communications Officer, in conjunction with the staff of Amphibious Squadron 7 activated the Supporting Arms Control Center (SACC). See enclosure (11) for the D+5 Disposition of Units Overlay.

On 23 and the morning of 24 August, BLT 3/7 conducted search and clear operations in the previously mentioned line of hills. This operation was conducted by a series of ground sweeps supported by blocking companies which were helilifted into position 500 to 1500 meters in advance of the sweeping company. During the course of the sweep of this hill mass, over 80 Viet Cong were captured and 13 VC were killed in action. Numerous fortifications and training sites were destroyed, as well as VC equipment. At 241400H, BLT 3/7 was directed to cease search and clear operations and to return to GREEN Beach to reembark prior to dark. The last elements of BLT 3/7 were embarked by 241900H and BLT 3/7 resumed its mission as SLF.

On the morning of 24 August, BLT 1/7 began overland march through the Trung Phan Peninsula to destroy any enemy encountered. See enclosure (12), Route of March of BLT 1/7. During the march, the fire support ships maintained station advancing at sea parallel to the advancing column to support the BLT with Naval Gunfire if necessary. Maintaining progress with the BLT ashore were two LCU's preloaded with tanks, to be landed if heavy enemy resistance was encountered. The USS BAYFIELD, with its SACC in full operation also sailed parallel to the advance of BLT 1/7. While on the march, BLT 1/7 was supported by helicopters that delivered water and rations, as well as evacuating heat casualties. At 241700H, BLT 1/7 reached its pickup point (BT 630021) near the mouth of the Song Tra Bong and embarked aboard LVT's. Movement of the LVT's from Chu Lai was coordinated so as to arrive at beach near the Song Tra Bong with the arrival of the BLT. Upon return to its area in the Chu Lai enclave, BLT 1/7 assumed the positions of the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines in the TAOR.

Operation STARLITE was completed when the last elements of RLT-7 Headquarters landed at Chu Lai at 242100H.

In retrospect, the RLT, on a very short notice, embarked prepared to conduct an operation of duration up to 36 hours. Many of the challenges encountered listed in enclosure (13) were a result of the protraction of Operation STARLITE. Many conditions satisfactory for a short duration operation, as planned, resulted in some make shift arrangements on a day-to-day basis as the operation was extended. However, inasmuch as a hard-core VC regiment had been destroyed, it was obviously in the best interest of the operation to extend it so the entire area could be systematically searched and to assure that no organized resistance was in the area.

It is believed (based on ITT interrogation of POWs) that the VC encountered in the AOA were the remnants of the 45th Battalion and possibly the 40th Battalion (unconfirmed). Reports received through interrogation of not only VC POWs, but also civilians, indicated that the Staff of the 1st VC Regiment located in Van Tuong (1), split and fled upon the landing of RLT-7. Undoubtedly a considerable number of the staff was killed or wounded during the initial battle while trying to escape.

[REDACTED]

Positive identity of enemy units remains pending results of III MAF IIT interrogation of POWs. However, III MAF IIT has stated that BIF 2/4 landed in the middle of the 60th VC Battalion and that both the 60th VC Battalion and the T-121 Heavy Weapons Company were almost completely destroyed. The VC has been confirmed by III MAF IIT to be two-thirds destroyed. 80%

Operation STARLITE undoubtedly accomplished its mission, for the enemy in the Van Tuong Village complex that once posed so great a threat to the Chu Lai enclave no longer exists as an effective fighting force.

In Operation STARLITE, NGF played its greatest amphibious support role since the Korean War. The need for further Naval Gunfire Support was apparent throughout the operation the fire response of the fire support ships was rapid and reliable, though not without problems. During the ship-to-shore movement Naval Gunfire was available prior to the landing of artillery. In further operations where air support radar teams are not available, Naval Gunfire will play an even greater role in providing fire support during the period of low visibility.

In line with fire support, the 60mm Mortar would have proved a valuable asset by being immediately available to the company commander during periods where communications/coordination problems in priority of fires slowed the response of the larger caliber supporting arms. Although 81mm Mortar fire is generally available to the company commander, the time required to bring a target under fire is considerably longer than that of the 60mm Mortar.

There is a definite requirement among our several supporting arms for a light automatic weapon. Amtracs, Tanks, Ontos and Engineers often find themselves in a position where a heavy volume of small arms fire is needed to overcome enemy attack during the period when the above supporting arms are vulnerable, such as at halts, bivouacs, etc. The M-14 is too bulky to handle in the interior/confines of the combat support vehicles. Firing from a hatch/aperture or moving vehicle demands a light, small automatic type weapon such as the AR-15 or M3A1 submachinegun.

O. F. Peatross
O. F. PEATROSS

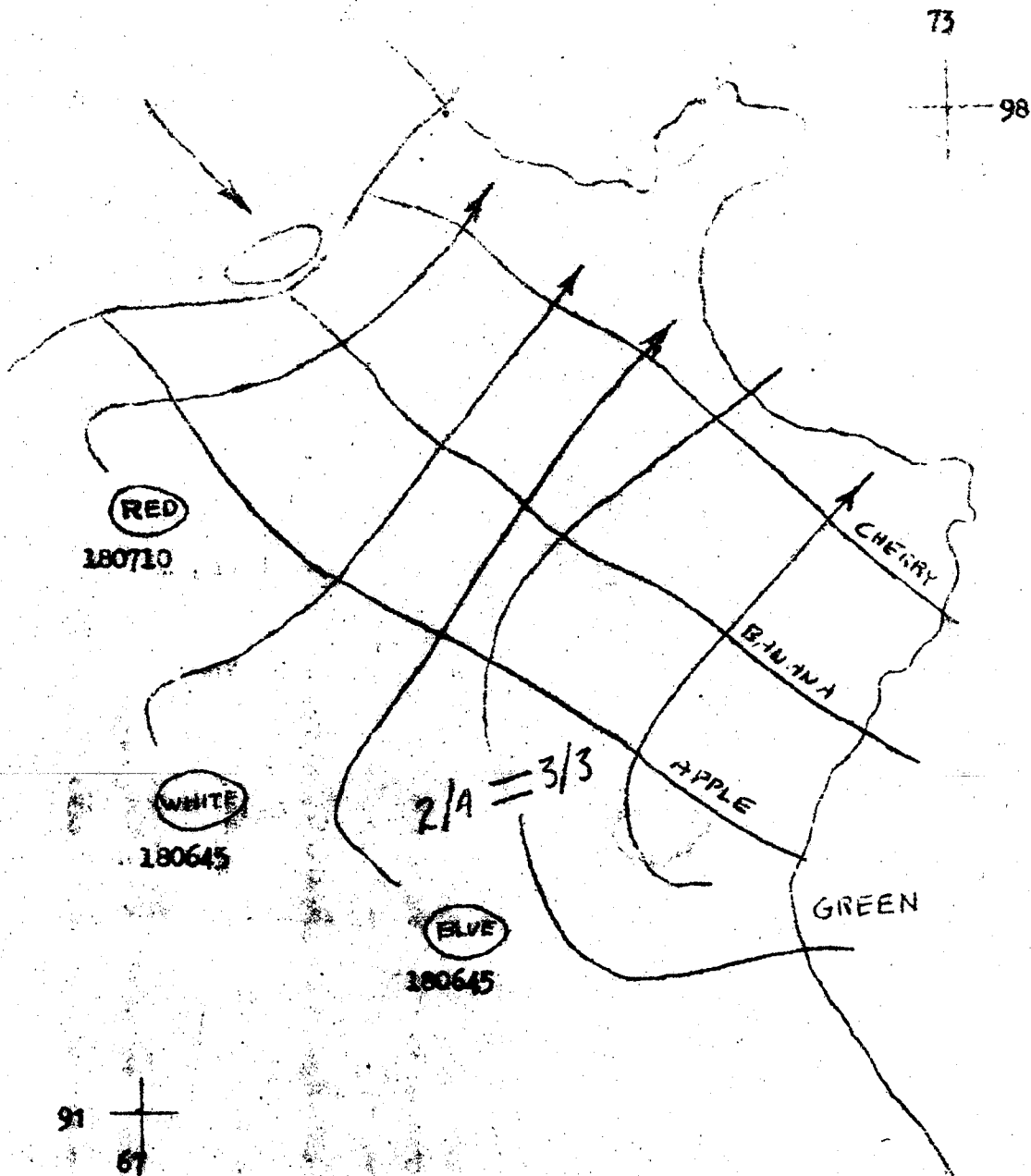
DISTRIBUTION:

CG, 3d MarDiv	5
CG, 1st MAW	2
ADC, 3d MarDiv	2
CO, 4th Mar	1
TF 76 ATF	1
TF 78 LF	1
TG 78.5	1
TG 76.0	1
TU 76.0.1	1
TG 76.5	1
TG 76.2	1
COMPBIBRON-7	2
CO, USS GALVESTON	1

[REDACTED]

CONFIDENTIAL

CO, USS ORLECK (DD-886)	1
CO, USS PRITCHARD (DD-561)	1
CO, USS BAYFIELD (APA-33)	1
CO, USS IWO JIMA (LPH-2)	1
CO, USS TALLADEGA (APA-208)	1
CO, USS PT DEFIANCE (LSD-31)	1
CO, USS CABILDO (LSD-16)	1
CO, USS VERNON CNTY (LST-1161)	1
CO, BLT 3/3	1
CO, BLT 2/4	1
CO, BLT 1/7	1
CO, BLT 3/11	1
CO, BLT 3/7	1
CO, 3/12	1
CO, 4/12	1
CO, MAG-11	1
CO, MAG-12	1
CO, MAG-16	1
CO, HMM-161	1
CO, HMM-261	1
CO, HMM-361	1
CO, HMM-163	1
CO, VMO-2	1
CO, VMA-311	1
CO, VMA-214	1
CO, VMA-225	1
CO, VMFA-542	1
CO, VMCU-1	1
CO, VMAR-152	1
CO, Co B, 1st Pk Bn	1
CO, Co A, 3d Amph Bn	1
CO, Co C, 1st AT Bn	1
CO, Co C, 1st Recon Bn	1
CO, Co C, 1st Engr Bn	1
CO, Co B, 3d Med Bn	1
FLSU#1	1
FILES	<u>15</u>
	70

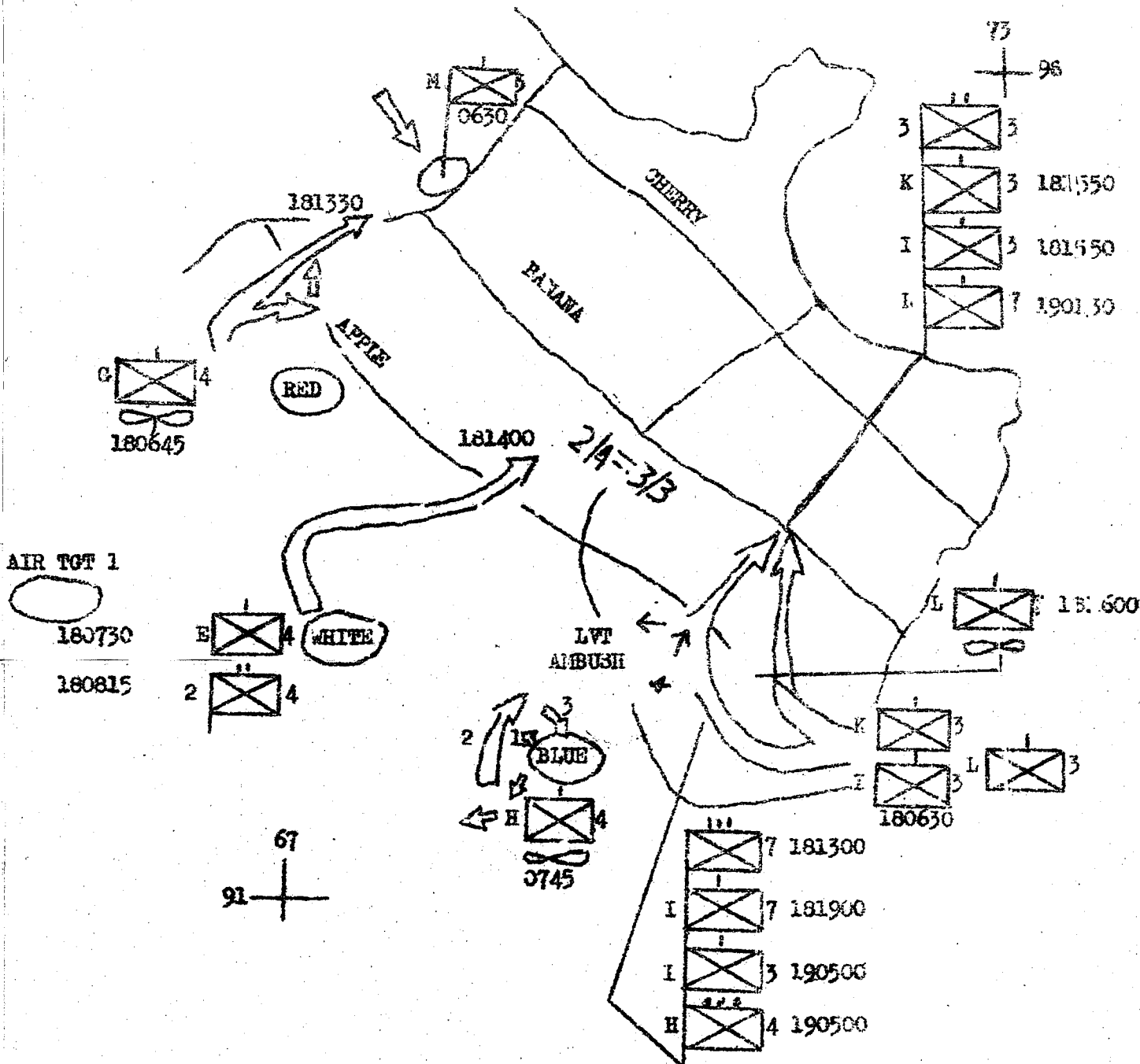


Maps: AMS 1701 1:50,000 sheets 6756 I, 6757 II, III

Enclosure (1) Concept of Operation Overlay to MLT-7 After Action Report 1-65,
(Operation PARLITE)

Time Zone: Hotel

ENCLOSURE (1)



Maps: AMS L701, 1:50,000, Sheets 6756 I, 6757 II, III

Time Zone: H

Enclosure (2) D-day Operations Ashore Overlay to
 RLIT-7 After Action Report 1-65 (Operation SP. RLIT-7)

ENCLOSURE (2)

2d Battalion, 4th Marines (Rein)
CHU LAI, VIETNAM
25 Aug 1965

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, 7th Marines (Rein)
Subj: 2d Battalion, 4th Marines After Action Report 2-65
Ref: (a) Div Op Order 321-65
(b) FLT-7 Op Plan 323-65
Encl: ✓(1) Summary Overlay of Operation
✓(2) Break Down by Units of VC Killed, Wounded and Captured
✓(3) Company H After Action Report

1. Statistical Data

a. Units Involved

(1) Companies E, G, H and H&S	(519 personnel)
(2) 3 Platoons PF's	(54 personnel)
(3) 2d Platoon, Co B, 3d Engineer Bn	(28 personnel)
(4) Platoon MP's 7th Marines	(28 personnel)
(5) Det, Force Recon	(21 personnel)
(6) Lt Section, 1 Plat, Co C, 3d Tk Bn	(8 personnel)
(7) Heavy Section, 2d Plat, Co B, 3d AT Bn	(12 personnel)

b. Strengths

c. Time. The operation was conducted between 180645H to 202100H.

d. Place. The operation took place in the QUANG-NGAI Province, BINH SON District.

e. Casulties

(1) Friendly

USMC KIA	18
USMC WIA	95 (including WIA's not evacuated)
USMC MIA	None
USMC Heat Casualties	9

ENCLOSURE (3)

PF's KIA	6
PF's WIA	6
Inter. Members WIA	1
Civilian Photographer WIA	1
(2) <u>Enemy</u>	
VC Killed	342
VC Wounded	2
VC Captured	2
VCS	33

2. Narrative Account of Operation

- a. 2d Battalion (-)(Rein) consisting of Companies E, G, H, R&S (-) and 3 Platoons of PF's departed their position vicinity (BT 527035) at 180645H to conduct a 3 day search and destroy operation 13 miles southeast of CHU LAI.
- b. At 180645H Co G landed west of LZ Red at (BS 666955). The landing was unopposed. At 180730H Co E landed in LZ White (BS 675933) under small arms fire from ridge line (BS 674946 to 680933). The landing zone was secured from close in fires while an air strike was taking place by attack aircraft and UH1E Helicopter on the ridge line mentioned above. Sporadic small arms were received from the ridge line while in the Landing Zone. No casualties were sustained. At 180745H Co H landed in LZ Blue (BS 692921) and moved into the attack toward NAM YEN (3) (BS 692922). At 180815H the Command Group landed at LZ White (BS 675933) under sporadic small arms fire from the ridge line (BS 674946). At 180830H Companies E and G moved into the attack in a north westerly direction. In the the attack Co E and the Command Group came under 60mm, 81mm, machine gun and small arms fire from an estimated 50-60 VC occupying the north sector of the ridge line. One platoon moved into the attack to seize the ground at (BS 680933). In the attack the platoon received incoming 81mm, 60mm, machine gun and small arms fire from an estimated 50-60 VC occupying the hill. The platoon sustained 2 KIA and 3 WIA while registering a direct hit with a 3.5 rocket on 3 VC killing all three fleeing some 400 meters to the southeast. When the platoon reached the top of the hill they received 6 rounds of 60mm incoming fire with negative results. Co G moved one platoon into blocking positions (BS 673960) over looking PHU LONG (1) and (2) and the remainder moved out with the PF's to search PHU LONG (1) and (2). The village contained many tunnels, trenches and fox holes most of which were located in hedge rows and were difficult to locate. Eight VCS were picked up in and around the village.

At 180830H Company H moved toward NAM YEN (3) (BS 692922). One platoon moved into positions at (BS 689918) and took some VC under fire on Hill 43 (BS 685916). The remainder of the Company maneuvered toward NAM YEN (3) with no contact. As one platoon closed on the village they came under heavy small arms fire. After moving 25 meters in the village they were pulled back to (BS 690922) in order to utilize air on the objective. During the air strike 11 WIA's and 1 KIA was evacuated.

- c. At 180900H Company E maneuvered the remaining platoons to seize the ridge line from (BS 678942 to 683937). During the attack Company E (-) and Command Group received 81mm, 60mm and automatic weapons fire from an estimated 60 VC. While in the assault one section of 81mm provided fire on the objective area, and to the rear. The hill was secured at 181000H and enemy casualties are unknown. Company E reorganized and attempted to evacuate their 2 KIA's and 15 WIA's. At this time several requests were sent in for evacuation and it took approx 50 minutes for the helos to arrive. The 81mm section displaced forward and continued to fire at probable VC withdrawal routes. At 181000H Company H was joined by 3 tanks and 2 Ontos bearing casualties, captured VC weapons were evacuated. At 181030H 1 platoon from Company H continued to sweep Hill 43 up to the topographical crest, at that time the VC broke contact. At 181100H Company E and Command Group moved out in a north easterly direction to continue the sweep in assigned sector. At 181200H while moving into the hamlet at (BS 687944) Company E and Command Group began receiving 81mm, 60mm, 57mmRR, machine gun and small arms incoming fire from (BS 688945, 688948, 691945) from an estimated 50 VC. Fire was returned by all organic weapons including 1 .50 cal machine gun that was attached to Company E. The hamlet was secured at approx 181300H which action resulted in 8 friendly WIA's. One VC FO was shot from a tree and carried away with other casualties. During this period the Command Group received 81mm, 60mm, 57mmRR and small arms fire which resulted in 2 WIA's. At 1230H Company H departed from the vicinity (BS 688919) to resume the attack. Company H by-passed NAM YEN (3) as Company I 3/3 had swept through and reportedly cleared the village. The company moved in a northeasterly direction with no contact. At 181300H the company received small arms from the rear, simultaneously tanks and Ontos began to have increased difficulty in movement due to the rice paddies. Company H held up at (BS 688925) in order to give armor a chance to maneuver. At this time the company began taking heavy small arms, 81mm, 60mm, 3.5" rocket and 57mmRR fire from the vicinity of Hill 30 (BS 698390) and NAM YEN (3). During this time the company was still receiving heavy automatic weapons, 80mm, 60mm and 57mmRR fire from all directions. This fire was returned at maximum rate possible utilizing the tanks and Ontos weapons. The fire fight continued and the armor was unable to move forward, and was continuing to receive intense incoming fire. All personnel and equipment were evacuated from the area while still under intense fire. At this time one platoon of Company H lost contact with the company and came upon Bravo

- Command of 7th Marines under Major COLEMAN, vicinity (BS 702928). The Major ordered the platoon to secure the hill and wait for him to return with I and L and downed Amtracs. The platoon waited until 190430H when they returned and then moved out to the Regimental CP. At 181630H the remainder of the company moved to (BS 695923) under sporadic small arms, coming from NAM YEN (3) and made contact with Company I. The company was unable to effect liaison with Company I and therefore preped Hill 43 (BS 685916) to prepare it as a night defensive position.
- d. At 181330H Company G vicinity PHU LONG (1) (BS 668959) received the order to move to blocking positions vicinity (BS 683972). The company arrived there at 181500H with no contact and coordinated with M 3/3. Company G moved to the hill complex vicinity (BS 678968) and established defensive positions.
- e. At 181400H Company E finished evacuating casualties and continued to sweep in assigned sector to (BS 693948). Along the route numerous spider holes and camouflaged punji traps were uncovered; also, empty 60mm and 81mm mortar casings were scattered throughout the area. At 181400H the company began digging in for night defensive positions (BS 693948). At 181515H approx 100 VC armed with 81mm, 57mmRR and small arms were observed by the Command Group moving south vicinity (BS 696946). A flash message was sent requesting arty immediately. A lapse of 12 minutes between the time the message was sent to when the first round landed. Howtars fired 20 rounds with devastating effect on the VC. It was later reported by the Battalion Commander that he had observed approximately 90 VC bodies while flying in a UH1E in the vicinity (BS 696946). At 182100H Company E's ambush party was proceeding along the trail at (BS 692947) when they killed 1 VC armed with only 2 grenades. It is probable that this VC was an FO for mortars because later on during the night 15 rounds of 60mm mortar fell wide of Company E and the Command Group. There was no other contact during the night due to the fact aerial illumination constantly kept the area illuminated along with constant H&I fires.
- f. At 181730H Company H requested fuel for the Ontos. At that time they only had 1/8 tank of gas were unable to travel any distance. At 181800H a section of 81mm Mortars arrived at Company H's position along with resupply of food water and ammunition. Company H was still unable to effect liaison with Company I. No reinforcements could be expected and no fuel arrived for the Ontos therefore, the company established a tight defensive perimeter in the vicinity (BS 693921). The perimeter consisted of 3 Ontos, 3 tanks, 1 section 81mm Mortars and 24 infantry men. The company remained there during the night with no contact with the enemy.
- g. At 182300H Company G vicinity (BS 678968) observed approx 1 khaki clad VC moving from east to west at (BS 678962). The VC got out of sight before fire could be ordered on them. Artillery was called for on the draw where they were last seen. It took approx 15 min to receive the first arty round (due to no fault of the FO) and by the

time fire for effect arrived it's to be assumed the VC had cleared the area. No further contact was made during the night. At 190700H Company G was ordered to continue assigned mission and drive to the coast. It's to be noted that although it had been sent by helicopter Company G did not get a resupply the night before and therefore was out of food and water. The company moved out and at 190800H they received heavy small arms fire from the vicinity (BS 685965) and (BS 699973). Fire was returned but very few VC were observed as the majority of the fire came from behind hedgerows. Arrival of personnel at the hedge yielded negative results. At 190830H Company G arrived on the ridge line at (BS 692968) and received heavy small arms fire from vicinity (BS 693970 to 698965). Several VC were observed in hedge rows both to the front and right flank. The Company Commander felt there were possible many VC across the draw to his front and were waiting for the company to cross the ravine. The locations of adjacent units were requested and this indicated no friendly units in the immediate area. An air strike was requested on the VC positions at 190845H. As the first bomb hit the target, the VC in the hedge rows erupted with heavy small arms fire from approximately 40 to 50 VC. After the second bomb dropped the Company Commander received a message from CO M 3/3 that the air was hitting friendly troops. The air strike ceased and it was found that Company M was at (BS 690973) instead of their reported position. Company G assaulted the position killing 4 VC and finding 2 VCs hiding in the hedge rows. No weapons were found. The hill mass was secured at 190930H with no friendly casualties.

- h. At 190800H Company E continues to attack in their zone of action. Prior to the attack the Battalion Commander utilized all available supporting arms on possible VC locations in each direction. At 190900H Company E swept thru the village of VAN TUONG (1) (BS 6995) and collected various documents, VC packs, small arms ammunition, grenades and VC communication wire. The ammunition was blown in place and documents turned over to the Bn S-2. The VC communications wire was laid from north to south and from east to west, which led to the high ground where they had OP's. Company E moved through the village with no contact. The village was exceptionally large for one rifle company to search thoroughly. The Battalion Commander immediately recommended to CO, 7th Marines that an ARVN Bn be sent to the village to search after Company E had left. At 191000H Company E received intense small arms fire from approximately 20 VC who were located vicinity (BS 705964) Company E assaulted the VC position and when they got to the top of the hill the VC fled in a northerly direction. No friendly casualties were sustained. At 191030H contact was made with K 3/3 in the right flank. At this time the Command Group received 2 incoming rounds of 81mm Mortar fire sustaining no casualties. At 191100H Company E reached the high ground vicinity (BS 707960) at which time it received the order to sweep to (BS 705974) turn northeast and sweep the peninsula to include the village of PH UOC THUAN (1) (BS 7197). At 191200H Company E moved out on

the sweep as ordered and received small arms fire from the left rear (BS 701973). The area was marked with 3.5 rocket WP as a mortar target and Company E continued on its assigned mission. The 81mm section with the Command Group fired 8 rounds of HE on the target area and the VC firing ceased. Co E continued to sweep thru the assigned sector capturing 1 VCS. The company moved to the top of Hill 32 vicinity (BS 712978), prepared night defensive positions and sent out 2 seven man patrols to scout to the east, to the northeast and the southwest.

- h. At 190800H Company H received a resupply of fuel and received word to move to Green Beach (BS 7192). At 191130H the company arrived at Green Beach and was joined by the platoon that was detached from them on the previous day. Co H then was assigned the mission of Regimental Reserve and CP security. At 201200H the company was retracted by surface craft and arrived CHU LAI at 202100H.
- i. At 191300H Co G received word to move overland to the vicinity (BS 706967) for a new mission. During this movement Co G sustained 8 heat casualties which was due to not receiving a resupply of food and water. Co G's new mission was CP security for the Command Group.
- j. At 191500H Co, 7th Marines arrived and assigned 2d Bn (-)(Rein) the mission of mining and booby trapping the area in which we held. Co E booby trapped Hill 32 (BS 712978) and all avenues of approach. 1 squad of B Engineers and Det, Force Recon booby trapped trails and avenues of approach vicinity (BS 7096). Approximately 125 MK, 26 fragmentation grenades was used to accomplish this mission.
- k. At 191100H an AO reported sighting 3 VC in the coast line (BS 710978). A patrol from Co E was sent to scout the area and encountered 3 VC. This patrol killed 1 VC and captured 2. Four enemy grenades were blown in place. At 191800H the company sighted movement on the high ground vicinity (BS 716978). Artillery was called on the target with unknown results. By 191830H Co E night defensive positions were completed and the company prepared for the night.
- l. Between the periods 192100H Co G and Command Group received 5 rounds of Naval Gun Fire all of which were fire directed at Co G and the Command Group. The rounds landed behind these units with no damage inflicted. Several flash messages were sent requesting to cease the firing of Naval Guns. The danger was that we were not directing their fire, also the rounds were being fired directly over head and could have hit the high trees, causing an air burst. At 192300H an air strike (not requested or controlled by this unit) was conducted vicinity (BS 714974). The rockets and bombs used fell within 200 meters of Co E position on Hill 32 vicinity (BS 712978). A flash message was sent requesting cease fire on the air strike. During the

hours of darkness there was no enemy contact due to the fact that aerial flares constantly illuminated the area.

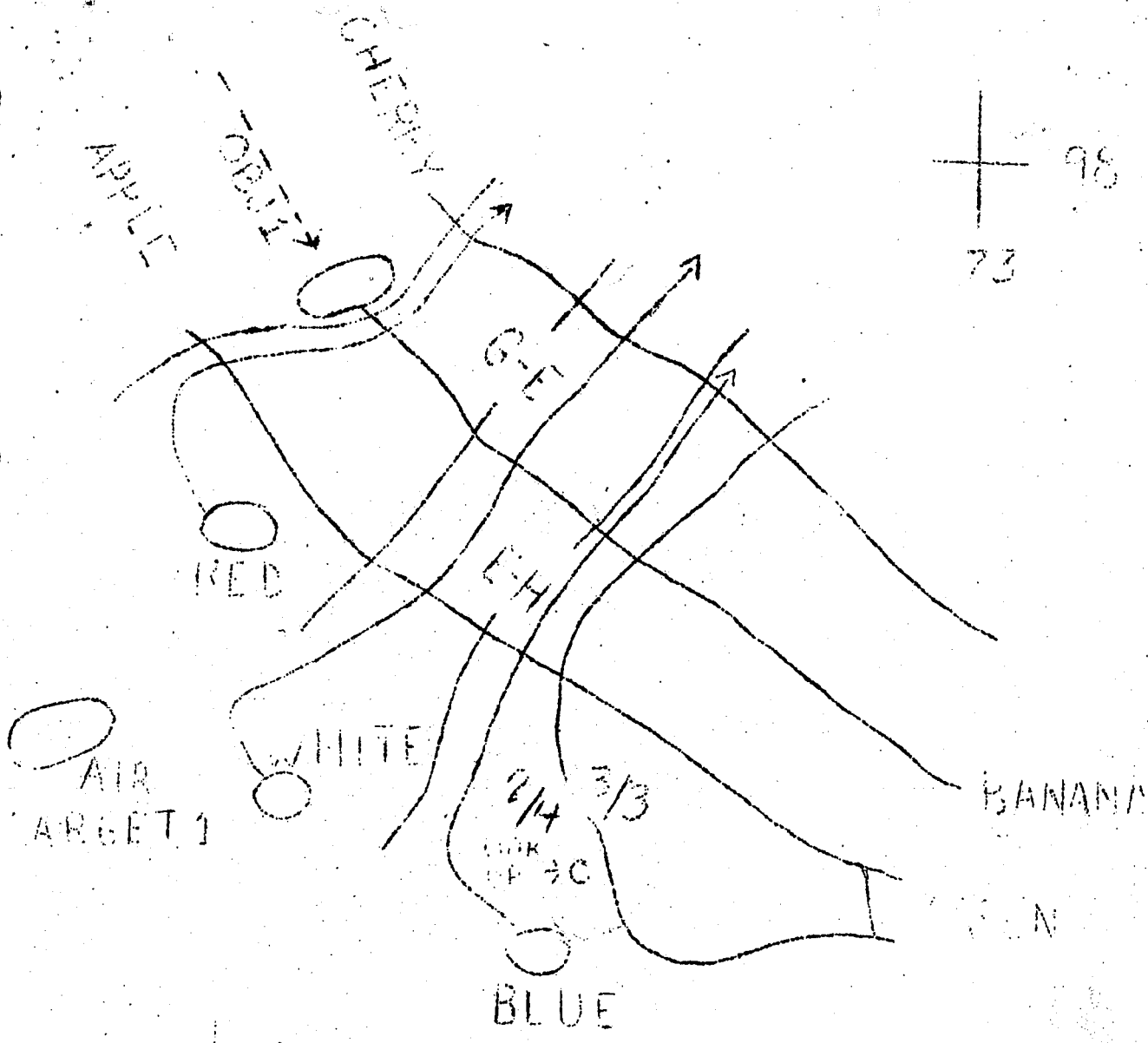
- m. At 200600H a Popular Forces soldier attached to Co G was wounded by our own booby traps (BS 719968) when he tried to retrieve an aerial flare dropped the night before. The PF's had been instructed several times not to move around until they were told to. A team from B Engineers and Det Force Recon was dispatched and recovered the wounded PF and he was evacuated by helo. Between 200745H and 201000H 5 villagers came to Co G position; (BS 718968) 2 children, 2 adult males and 1 adult female all of whom were wounded. The 2 children and the adult female were wounded by the air strike conducted at 192300H the night before. All 5 were helo evacuated to B Med immediately. At 201030H Co E commenced retraction from their positions (BS 712978) utilizing 4 helos and no close air support. Co E arrived back at CHU LAI on 201230H.
- n. At 201315H CO, 7th Marines reported that 1 VC platoon was hiding in a cave vicinity (BS 704970). Co G was assigned the mission to search the area and blow all caves and tunnels. Co G swept thru the objective area with no contact. Several large tunnels and caves were blown by B Engineers. Co G returned to their position by 201500H and prepared to retract by helo. The Command Group was retracted by 201530H and Co G was retracted by 201700H without incident.

3. Problems encountered

- a. The RLT-7 TAC Net was continuously clogged with messages that were up graded to a degree that a normal routine or priority message could not be transmitted; for instance, this Hq received a priority message concerning 26 reporters who were to be at RLT-7 Hq. Frag Orders were sent with a Precedence of Routine, a Flash message was sent concerning CO, 7th Marines coming to our CP.
- b. This Hq was not informed on air strikes and Naval Gunfire being used within our area of operations resulting in 5 rounds of Naval Gunfire being fired into our position and 2 air strikes, 1 of whose rockets landed 200 meters in front of Co E.
- c. In several instances it took as long as 50 minutes for helos to arrive for evacuation of wounded.
- d. During the retraction of Co E there was no air escort for the helo.
- e. A helicopter must be readily available for use as a air relay/ command helicopter for the Battalion Commander.
- f. Artillery was apparently too long in arriving on target after fire mission was called.

- g. The PF's would not cooperate. They wanted to go to the villages to cook and get water. They were instructed several times to remain with the company as they might get shot or hurt. They demanded twice the amount of food and water as we normally get.
- h. Logistic support was inadequate by the 7th Marines. Co G did not receive any food or water for 1½ days. Co E and Command Group* received no food and only 30 gallons of water for 1½ days.
- ✓ i. Having CAS a/c on station is the only proper way to provide the type of support operations like this will require.
- ✓ j. We need to have an airborne DASC to operate in the capacity of overall air coordinator to handle both air strikes and helo missions.
- ✓ k. Primary HD, UHF can not be the same frequency as primary TAD, UHF.
- ✓ l. Additional F-105, and HD, UHF frequency must be assigned and utilized.
- ✓ m. Administrative traffic can not be tolerated on tactical nets.
- ✓ n. B-47 battery resupply is critical and sufficient reserves of charged batteries must be maintained at all times during an operation of this size.
- ✓ o. We need napalm and zuni rockets to enable FAC's to work the air strikes closer than 150-200 meters from the friendly troops. Working 500 pounders at this range is extremely hazardous but can be done if required. The ACro 7D pod is not well suited to close support due to the wide dispersion pattern.
- ✓ p. We need more helicopters, both for resupply and tactical mission.
- ✓ q. We need VT fuzes for 250 and 500 lb bombs.

J. R. Fisher
J. R. FISHER



STARLITE

2/4
 CHU LAI
 17 Aug 1965
 OPERATION OVERLAY
 Map: 1:50,000
 AMS L701
 Sheet 6757I, 1I
 Prepared By
 S-3 2/4

BREAKDOWN BY UNITS OF VC KILLED, WOUNDED AND CAPTURED

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>KILLED</u>	<u>WOUNDED</u>	<u>CAPTURED</u>	<u>VCS CAPTURED</u>	<u>WEAPONS CAPTURED AND DESTROYED</u>
Co E	31			12	100 Grenades blown in place
Co G	4			11	10 Grenades blown in place
Co H	156				58 assorted small arms 1 Chi Com 3.5 rocket launch including 1 81mm mortar 1 57mmRR 1 .50 cal MG destroyed.
Command Group	1	2	2	10	
Air	60				
Artillery	90				
Total	342	2	2	33	

COMPANY H AFTER ACTION REPORT

Company H (Rein) landed in LZ Blue (BS 69242) at 180745H and set up in a 360° perimeter. The UH1E Helicopters who were flying security for our landing immediately took the VC to our southwest under fire with their machine gun and rocket strikes. Also we were taken under fire by small arms from our southwest (BS 697920). We gained fire superiority immediately with M-14's and M-79 fire. Three VC KIA's were counted at this position before we moved out in the attack in a north westerly direction. The 2d and 3d Platoons were in the attack with the 1st Platoon as rear security. The 2d Platoon was on the left flank and was engaged in a heavy fire fight with VC on Hill 43 (BS 689918). The 1st Platoon was ordered to attack the village with the 3d Platoon located in vicinity of NAM YEN (3) (BS 690924) providing a base of fire. At this time there had been no fire from NAM YEN (3). At 180840H the 1st Platoon moved into the village and came under intensive small arms fire. After moving past the first row of houses in the village the 1st Platoon was pulled back out of the village for an air strike. We were still receiving small arms fire from the village even as the air strike continued. Immediately after the air strike Company I, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines swept the village of NAM YEN (3). Two M-48 tanks arrived at our position at 180945H. The 1st Platoon and the two tanks made a tank-infantry coordinated attack to relieve pressure on the 2d Platoon who were at this time pinned down by automatic small arms fire, 81mm and 60mm Mortar fire. The tank-infantry attack caused the VC to break contact and fall back to the west. An air strike was called to the west also to hit the fleeing enemy. During this attack one VC .50 cal MG and one .30 cal MG was knocked out but due to heavy small arms fire and heavy mortar fire the weapons were not recovered. Automatic fire was coming from a house at (BS 684919) and one tank moved over to get a shot at the house when the tank was hit by some type of recoilless weapon. The second tank moved over also to get a shot at the house and was also hit but the house was destroyed and no more small arms fire was received from that area. The tanks were not damaged severely and were back in action in approx 5 minutes. We then began receiving heavy small arms fire from a hedgrow at (BS 687919). Also at this time a flame tank arrived at our position and he was moved to within range of the hedgrow and burned it out. For approx 30 minutes after this we received no incoming fire from any direction. By 181000H a total of 5 tanks and 3 Ontos had joined me at my position. All friendly casualties were evacuated at this time and approx 50 VC weapons and one VC POW was sent out by helicopter also. The 1st Platoon while giving us security to the southwest inspected numerous VC fighting positions and found as many as 6 VC KIA in the previous .50 cal MG hole and numerous VC KIA in other small fighting holes. All fighting holes were observed in the hedgrows and were well camouflaged. At 181100H we moved out again in the attack with the 2d Platoon on the right and 3d on the left with the 1st Platoon as rear guard. We moved out in a north easterly direction, bypassing the village of NAM YEN (3) believing it was cleared by Company I, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines. As the 2d and 3d Platoons moved out, the tanks were immediately behind the assault line with the Ontos to the rear and on the flanks in general support. As the assault line reached the stream and rice paddies to the east of NAM YEN (3) the rear guard (1st Platoon) began to receive heavy automatic fire from NAM YEN (3) and

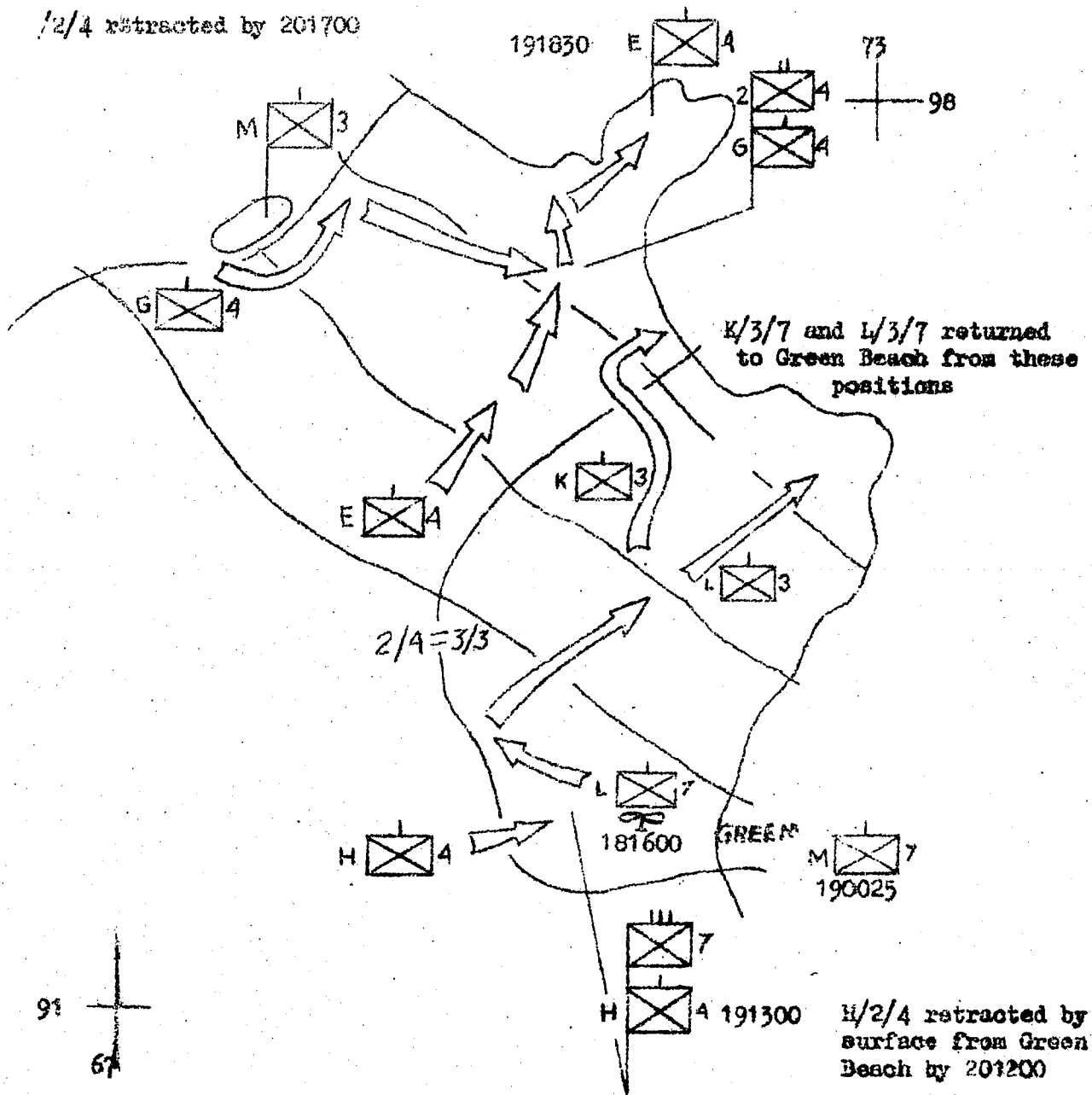
from their east flank also. Shortly thereafter the 2d and 3d Platoons began receiving heavy small arms fire and heavy 81mm and 60mm Mortar fire. The 2d and 3d Platoons moved across the rice paddy and set up a defense to protect the tanks and Ontos as they looked for a place to cross the rice paddy. The paddy was searched in both directions with no crossing located. The Ontos tried to cross the paddy at the same place the troops crossed. The first Ontos made it across with the second getting stuck in the mud. Under heavy automatic and mortar fire the second Ontos was pulled from the mud and both Ontos recrossed the paddy to join up with the tanks. The first Platoon had moved one squad around to the northwest on NAM YEN (3) and had killed 9 VC who were operating an 81mm Mortar. The small arms fire then became so intense that the squad had to pull back in closer to the tanks and they were unable to recover the 81mm Mortar. Friendly WIA and KIA's were also being evacuated by helo under this intense fire. All that were not evacuated by helo were loaded on tanks and began to pull back toward LZ Blue to try and flank the rice paddy in order to cross it with the armor. While evacuating the wounded NAM YEN (3) was hit by artillery at the high ground at (BS 698929) was hit by an air strike. At 181400H the Company with all attachments started moving back to LZ Blue with the 1st Platoon as the point and the 2d and 3d Platoons in the rear fighting a delaying action. As the 1st Platoon moved out they were pinned down behind a dike by small arms fire from NAM YEN (3) and were receiving some small arms fire from (BS 698926). At this time the 1st Platoon had cut across the rice paddy toward (BS 698930). Numerous helicopters were landing in this area so they moved out toward that high ground. After arriving on the high ground they met the Bravo Command group from Regt under Major COLEMAN. The Major ordered the 1st Platoon to secure the hill and wait for him to return with Companies I and L of 3d Battalion, 3d Marines. The 1st platoon waited until 190430H when the Major returned and then moved out to the Regt CP where they joined us the following day. At 181630H the remainder of Company H had moved back to LZ Blue and had received instructions from the Battalion Commander to coordinate with Company I, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines and set in a defensive position. Contact was made with one Platoon Company I, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines but the remainder of the Company could not be located. At 181715H that platoon pulled out to the Regt CP. Further instructions were received from the Battalion Operations to set in a defense at LZ Blue for the night. Prior to this instruction another air strike was made on Hill 43 to insure that no VC dug in positions were still there and also to prepare it for our night defensive position. At that time it was unknown that a large ditch was between LZ Blue and Hill 43 which prevented the armor from getting to this hill. We were still getting sporadic small arms fire from the village of NAM YEN (3). At this time the Ontos and tanks proceeded to level all houses which remained standing and doing so all small arms fire ceased. At 181800H we were resupplied with food, water and ammunition. Also we received a section of 81mm Mortars. Still unable to effect liaison with Company I, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines we set in a defense at (BS 698921) with 24 infantrymen 1 section of 81's, 3 Ontos and 3 tanks. The other 2 tanks had gone back to the Regimental CP with the platoon from Company I, 3d Battalion, 3d Marines. We had

constant illumination throughout the night with no enemy probes or enemy action of any kind. At 190800H we received more supplies and orders to move to Green Beach. Our movement to Green Beach was uneventful. Upon arriving at Green Beach we received further orders to report to the Regimental Command Post. Upon arriving at the Regimental Command Post we set in a defense around the Regimental Command Post for the night. That afternoon at 201400H we moved back to the beach and loaded aboard ship to return to our positions at CHU LAI.

1/2/4 retracted by 201230

Cmd Grp 2/4 retracted by 201530

1/2/4 retracted by 201700

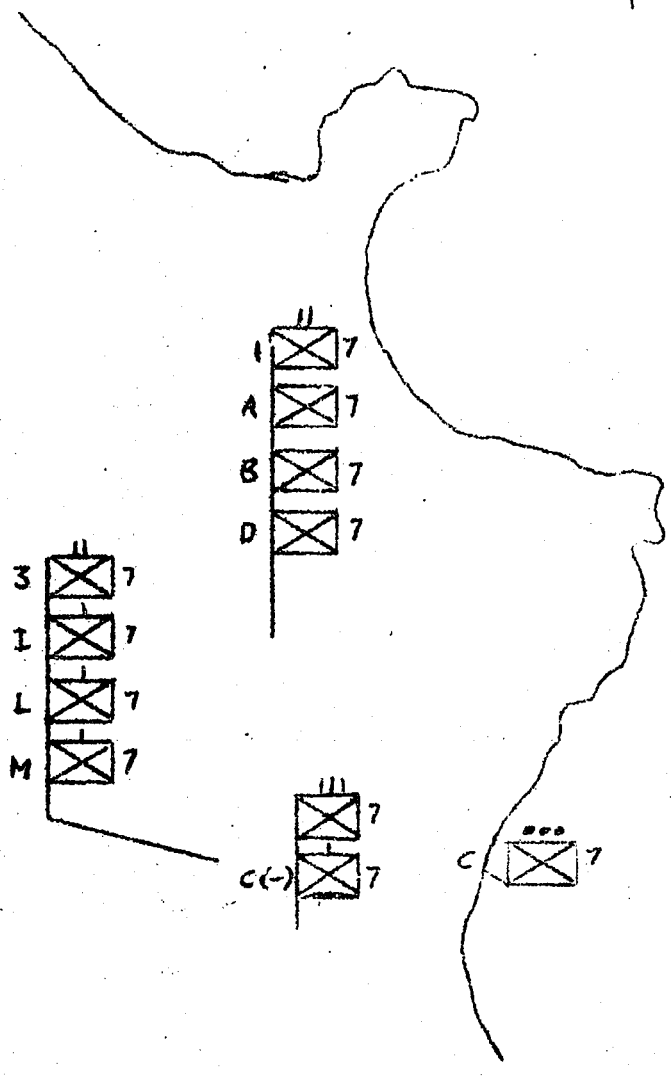


Maps: AFS L701 1:50,000 Sheets 6756 I, 6757 II, III

Time Zone: Hotel

Enclosure (5) D+1 Operations Ashore Overlay to
RLT-7 After Action Report 1-65 (Operation STARLINE)

ENCLOSURE (5)



Maps: AMS L701 1:50,000 Sheets 6756 I, 6757 II, III

Time Zone: Hotel

Enclosure (7) D+2 Disposition of Units Overlay to
RIT-7 After Action Report 1-65 (Operation STARLITE)

ENCLOSURE (7)

HEADQUARTERS

1st Battalion, 7th Marines

Marine #13

3rd Marine Division (Rein) FMT (FWD)

c/o FPO San Francisco, California

9660*

1ST BN, 7TH MARINES

0221-65

3:RDK:op

3000

27 Aug 1965

Copy#

File#

4 of 35

BN

Plans

7th Marine Division
0429-65 3 of 5

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, 7th Marines

Subj: After Action Report # 1, Operation STARLIGHT

1. General

a. Identification of Units Involved:

	USMC		USN	
	OFF	ENL	OFF	ENL
1st Bn (Rein) 7th Mar	51	1130	3	42
1st Bn, 7th Mar	43	989	2	42
3d Plt, Co B, 3d AT Bn	1	15	0	0
1st Plt, Co C, 1st AT Bn	1	12	0	0
Det, 3d Plt (Rein), Co A, 1st AmtracBn	0	4	0	0
Det, Btry G, 3d Bn, 11th Mar	4	18	0	0
SEEP, HqBtry, 1st Bn, 12th Mar	0	2	1	0
1st Plt, Co C, 1st Engr Bn	1	21	0	0
Det, 3d IIT	0	2*	0	0
Det, ARVN (Interpreters)	0	2*	0	0
Dog Teams	0	3*	0	0
1st Plt, Co C, 1st Recon Bn	1	22	0	0

b. Dates of Action: 201315H Aug 65 to 242015H Aug 65.

c. Place of Action: Van Tuong Village Complex, (South Vietnam (Quang Ngai Province), and Van Tuong Peninsula.

d. Casualties

(1) Friendly: 2 DOW, 3 WIA.

(2) Enemy: 4 KIA, 3 WIA.

e. Nature of Action

(1) Search and clear. (20-23 Aug).

(2) Reconnaissance in force. (24 Aug).

* includes ARVN pers (1 IIT, 2 interps, 2 dog tms)

ENCLOSURE (8)

2. Narrative account of Action

a. At 200900H Aug 65, 1st Bn, 7th Mar received a warning order from Hq, 7th Mar to be prepared to move that day by LVT, landing craft, or helicopter and join 7th Mar for Operation STARLIGHT. Preparations were initiated.

b. The move commenced at 200315H Aug 65 with a small command group. 1st Bn, 7th Mar joined 3rd Bn, 3rd Mar Headquarters at coordinates BS 70594. After the command group, rifle companies landed in the order of Co A, Co B, and Co D. Co C was to have been diverted to the 7th Marines CP for CP security at coordinates BS 705926; however, by mistake Co C was landed with the rest of 1st Bn, 7th Mar and later marched on foot after dark to the 7th Marines CP.

c. At 201802H, the Bn CO issued his operation order for the following day. Co A was ordered to search and clear Van Tuong 2. Co D was ordered to search and clear Van Tuong 3. Co B was to be prepared on order to search and clear Van Tuong 1.

d. The first night of operations was quiet except for one incident of sniper fire in the Co A sector of defense at 202300H. Co A defended the western half of the Bn perimeter, Co D defended the eastern half of the perimeter. The sniper fire was returned without casualties on either side.

e. At 202355H Aug 65, a 5" shell from U. S. Naval Gunfire landed on the eastern edge of the Bn perimeter, resulting in 2 friendly DOW in Co D and 1 friendly WIA in Co B. The cause of the accident is as of this date unknown.

f. On the second day of operations, Co D departed the Bn perimeter at 210700H to search and clear Van Tuong 3. Throughout the day Co D encountered moderate to heavy sniper fire in the village, resulting in two VC KIA in the village and one Marine WIA (non-critical abdominal wound). The village contained about 200 civilians, mostly old men, women, and children. The villagers were terrified and reluctant in response to the search and clear activities. Entrenchments were found on the rim of the village. Inside the village there were numerous individual shelter caves and dugouts. Only about 3 large caves were found. All caves that would lend themselves to concealed storage were destroyed by demolitions. The villagers were found to be very poor; so poor in fact that they reported that the VC did not tax them. Villagers reported that the VC would not permit anyone to possess more than 30 pounds of rice at any one time. All adults were interviewed through the interpreter and IFF. Villagers reported that the VC village cadre had departed the village the night before, headed in the direction of Binh Son, and taking along with them the Village Chief, an old man who was described as a VC puppet.

g. Co A departed the Bn perimeter at 210835H to search and clear Van Tuong 2. While enroute to the village the company encountered and killed one VC sniper at coordinates BS703937. Upon arrival at the scene, the company found that the sniper's weapon had been taken away.

[REDACTED]

Co A searched and cleared Van Tuong 2 throughout the day, receiving light to moderate sniper fire resulting in one VC KIA in Van Tuong 2. Co D returned to the perimeter just after dark.

h. On the afternoon of 21 Aug, Co B wounded a VCS who ran out of the bushes in front of the perimeter. He was unarmed. The wounded VCS was evacuated for medical treatment.

i. At 211730H, the Bn CO issued the operation order for the following day, calling for search and clear operations in Van Tuong 1 and 4. At 212235H, 7th Marines Frag Order 4-55 was received by message confirming the next day's mission.

j. At 220630H, Co C departed the Bn perimeter to seize and occupy the high ground south of Van Tuong 1. Objective C (coords BS 698956 to BS 704955) was secured by 220925H. Objective B (coords BS 694954) was secured by 220940H. Co C reported wounding two VC snipers while seizing these objectives (unconfirmed). As Co C was seizing Objective B, Co B advanced from the Bn perimeter to conduct the search and clear operation. Meanwhile, from 220630H through 220830H, Air strikes, artillery, and Naval Gunfire interdicted the high ground to the north, east, and west of Van Tuong 1 in order to block the escape of any VC in the village. Co B began search and clear of the village at 220955H.

k. Van Tuong 1 (centered at coords BS 698955) was found to be heavily fortified. The village was encircled with a trench line and double apron fence. The village streets had punji traps for personnel and vehicles, as well as spider traps. There were numerous hand-painted wooden Anti-American signs. There were very numerous caves throughout the village, most of which were destroyed by demolitions. Some 5 tons of rice, corn, potatoes, barley and other foodstuffs were found in large storage jars, obviously not personal stores. These were destroyed. Most of these supplies were found in the vicinity of coordinates BS 698957. Other items found in village caves included an AN-PRC 10 Radio with associated equipment, together with numerous VC documents, munitions, manuals, letters, and propaganda materials. Some 578 civilians were processed and interviewed. These people were generally terrified and reluctant at first, but settled down after it became apparent that the Marines would not harm them. Villagers reported that uniformed VC, part of a training company, and armed with carbines had billeted in the village and departed 10 days previously. A team of war dogs were used during the village search and succeeded in locating a VC deep in a cave. The Sergeant in charge of the dog team stated he had not seen such extensive fortifications and tunnels anywhere in Vietnam (14 months in country) except in Zone D. The only incident of enemy fire in the village occurred in a cave where VCS fired at Marines in a cave. These VCS were never found. Co B did, however, capture 3 VCS during the day in caves. One of these later turned out to be a VC hard core leader, another turned out to be a resident cadre guerrilla. Co B returned to the Battalion perimeter just after dark without completing the search and clear operation in Van Tuong 1.

l. At 220930H, the Battalion CO ordered 1st Platoon, Co C, 1st Recon Bn to establish surveillance over Van Tuong 4 (coordinates BS 722953). Subsequently, Co D departed the Bn perimeter at 221255H to

[REDACTED]

conduct search and clear operations in Van Tuong 4. A vehicle breakdown caused a delay in Co D's progress, requiring that Co D establish a perimeter defense at coordinates BS 731954 for the night and continue search and clear operations the following day with the Recon Platoon attached.

m. On the night of 22 August at about 2200H, small arms fire was received and returned on the Bn perimeter. No casualties on either side.

n. At 222200H, 7th Mar Frag Order 5-65 was received directing 1stBn to continue search and clear operations in Van Tuong 1 and Van Tuong 4 the next day, and also to conduct a two-company search and clear operation southward parallel to the coastline from Van Tuong 4 to Green Beach (coordinates BS 718923). This order also directed that all wheeled and tracked vehicles be delivered to Green Beach by 231200H. The Bn CO issued his operation order for the following day.

o. At 230920H, Co C and a small command group from Bn Hq arrived at Van Tuong 4 to join forces with Co D for the coastal search and clear operation. Co D was still searching and clearing Van Tuong 4. It was found that most of the village had been burned out by alleged napalm air strikes on 18 August, and that there were several civilian casualties in the village. Two of these casualties were evacuated by helicopter for medical treatment. Villagers were terrified at first but calmed down after seeing that the Marines meant no harm to them. Villagers also reported that the VC always arrived in the village at night and departed early in the mornings. No fortifications were found, only small family shelters. Villagers reported that the village was VC controlled and that the Village Chief was a VC (not present). Some 35 young males were singled out in the village and closely interviewed. None were VC. Company corpsmen set up a treatment station at the village well and treated numerous civilians, most of whom had skin diseases.

p. At 230920H, a message was received from 7th Marines Hq to cancel the coastal search and clear mission towards Green Beach as prescribed in 7th Marines Frag Order 5-65. Consequently, upon completion of the search and clear mission in Van Tuong 4, Co D and Co C returned to the Bn perimeter at 231410H.

q. The orders for the following day were received from Hq, 7thMar on the evening of 23 August. The Bn CO issued his operation order the same evening.

r. 1stBn, 7thMar commenced a reconnaissance in force from the Bn perimeter at coordinates BS 705945 to a beach pickup point at coordinates BT 635024 at 240640H. Co A initially led the Bn tactical column, occupied Check Point 2 (coordinates BS 675986) to support by fire the advance of Co C to Check Point 3 (coordinates BS 668992). At Check Point 3 the Bn was resupplied with water by helicopter. After water resupply, Co C supported by fire the advance of Co B to Check Point 4 (coordinates BT 650005). Check Point 4 was subjected to an airstrike, using 500-lb bombs and strafing, prior to Co B moving out. After seizure of Check Point 4, Co B led the Battalion to the beach, where 23 LVT's were waiting to transport the troops to the Chu Lai Enclave. The last elements of the

[REDACTED]

Bn boarded LVT's at 241910H, and arrived at Chu Lai (coordinates BT 565044) at 242015H. The Battalion established an assembly area on the beach for the night.

s. Throughout the reconnaissance in force mission, there were no encounters with VC or VCS. An aerial observer was on station at all times throughout the march. 1st Platoon, Co C, 1st Recon Bn was deployed by helicopter advance of the Bn tactical column at Check Points 2, 3, and at the beach.

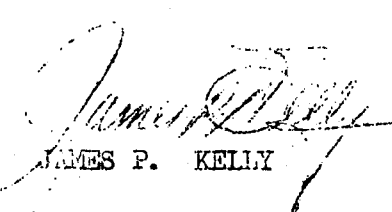
3. Commentary

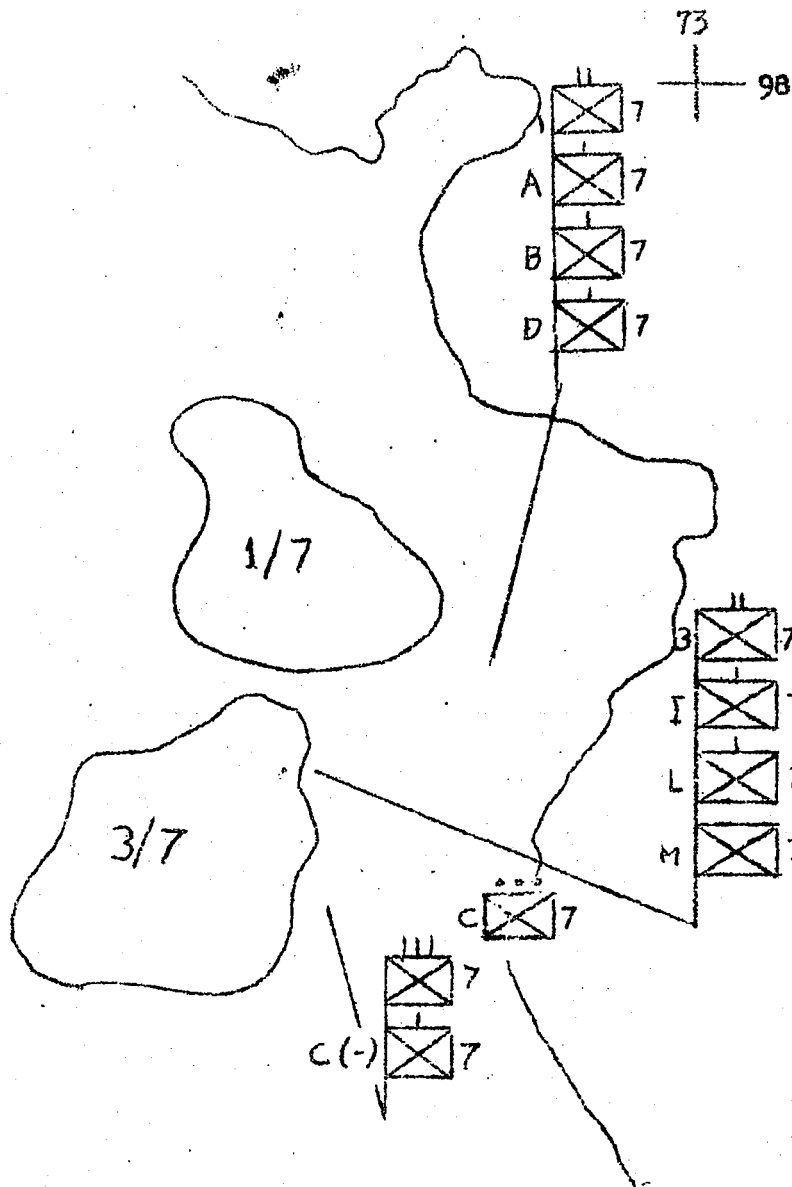
a. War dogs can be very useful in locating personnel hiding in caves. Although 1st Bn, 7th Mar was able to use War Dogs on only one brief occasion, the potential for their successful employment in counterinsurgency operations was manifestly apparent.

b. When moving through guerrilla country, an aerial observer is invaluable, especially in preventing a surprise attack or in locating targets.

c. There is a need for higher levels of command to issue orders on a more timely basis than was experienced in Operations Starlight. Orders were issued late in the evening, making it difficult to issue orders and carry out troop leading steps at the small unit level. Similarly, plans were changed on 24 August after forces were already deployed and committed to the original plan. This change in plan was apparently not caused by enemy action.

d. More concern must be given to the safety of villages. Instances were noted where villages were severely damaged or destroyed by napalm or naval gunfire, wherein the military necessity of doing so was dubious.


JAMES P. KELLY

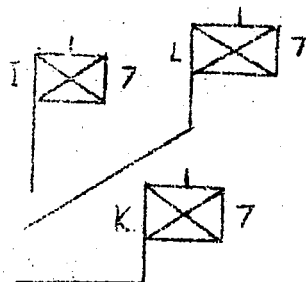
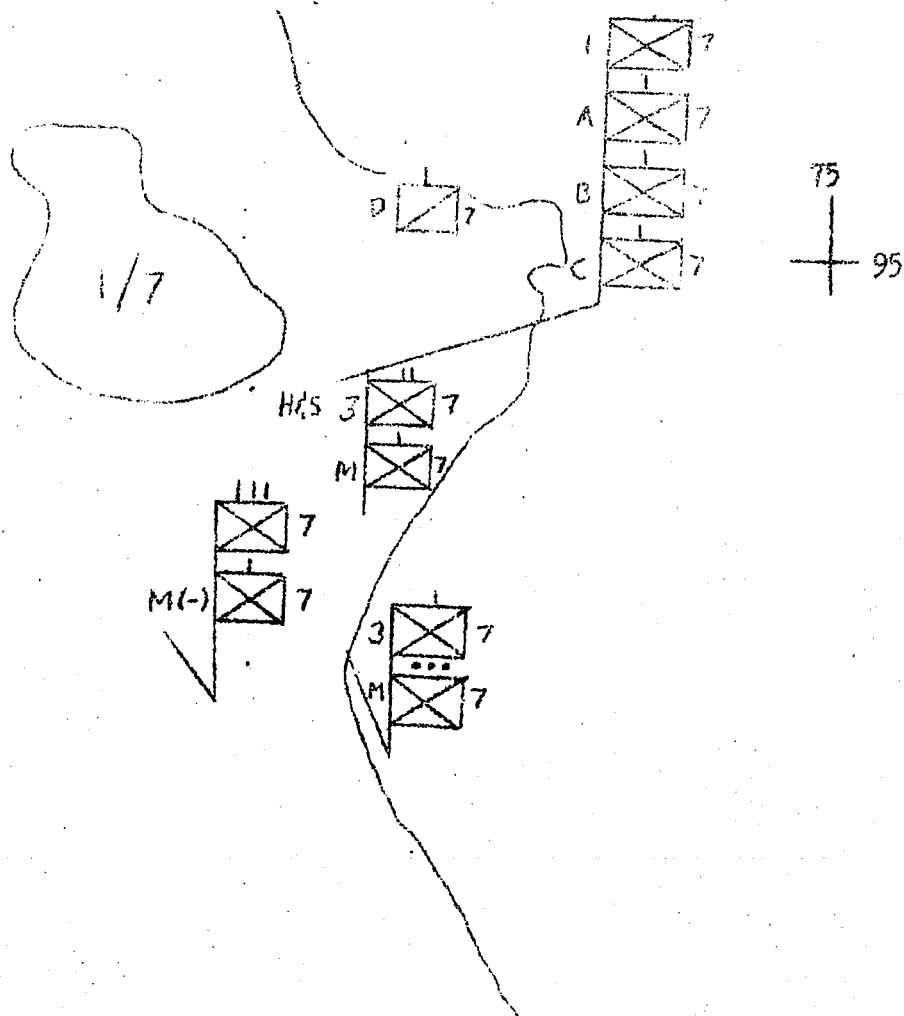


Maps: AMS L701 1:50,000 sheets 6756 I, 6757 II, III

Time Zone: Hotel

Enclosure (9) D+3 Disposition of Units Overlay to
RLP-7 After Action Report 1-65 (Operation ST. RLIFE)

ENCLOSURE (9)



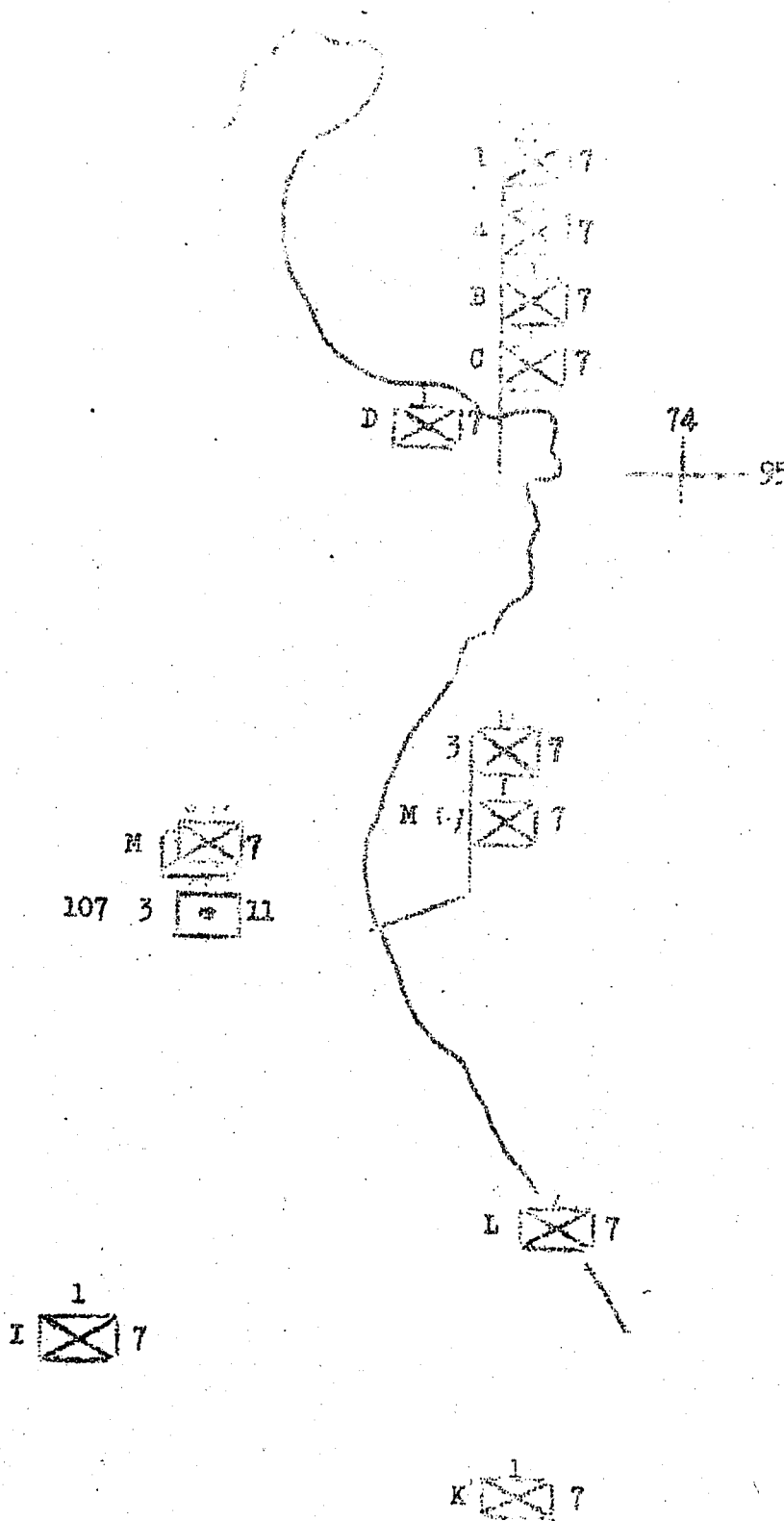
88
 +
 88

Maps: AMS L701 1:50,000 Sheets 6756 I, 6757 II, III

Time Zone: Hotel

Enclosure (10) D-4 Disposition of Units Overlay to
 RLT-7 After Action Report 1-65 (Operation STARLITE)

ENCLOSURE (10)

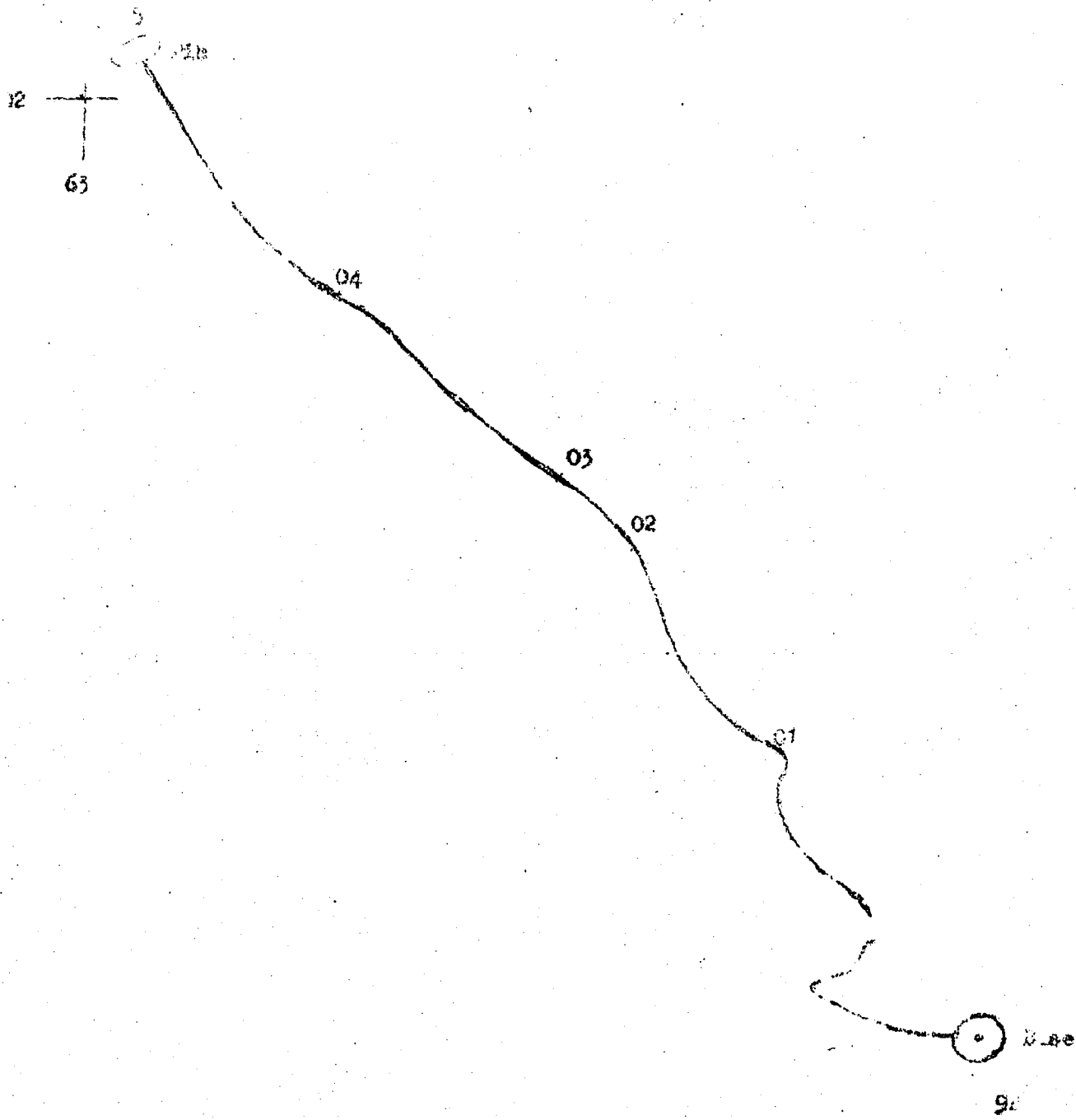


Maps: AMS L701 1:50,000 Sheets 6756 I, 6757 II, III

Time Zone: H

Enclosure (11) D+5 Disposition of Units Overlay to
 RLP-7 After Action Report E-65 (Operation STARLIT)

FIGURE (11)



Map: UFG 1:50,000 sheets 6756 I, 6757 II, 6758

Time: 10:00 Hotel

Enclosure (12) Route of March of BLT 1/7 Overlay to
BLT-7 After Action Report 1-65 (Operation MASHA)

ENCLOSURE (12)

1. S-1

a. Prisoners Of War

(1) Based on the planned short duration of the problem, previous experience, and helicopter availability, prisoners were to be evacuated direct from the battalions to the POW Stockade at Chu Lai. There was no plan to have a central stockade within the landing force objective area. As planned, this system worked satisfactorily for the first two days. However, in that operation STARLITE had been so successful during the first two day in destroying the Viet Congs' main force 1st Regiment, the decision was made to extend the operation and to conduct a thorough search of the area in order to locate enemy weapons, stores, and items of intelligence value. When the operation was extended each day the number of prisoners increased beyond that which had been predicted. As the availability of helicopters was reduced, the POWs increased, and as the duration of the problem was further extended, battalions were no longer furnished adequate numbers of helicopters to handle their POWs. The POWs were then sent to the RLT CP. Although the RLT Headquarters satisfactorily handled the POW situation, it nevertheless strained the already overtaxed small tactical headquarters, as the POWs could not be evacuated immediately, and as most POWs had to be retained overnight. Based on the aforementioned method evacuating prisoners into Chu Lai, the MP Platoon organic to RLT-7 Headquarters, was assigned to the understrength BLT 2/4 as there was no planned use for their services in the RLT-7 CP complex. Further, these MPs were retracted with BLT 2/4 on D+2.

(2) Recommendation. That in an extended operation that provisions be made by regimental or higher level for collecting, safeguarding, and evacuation of POWs by means in addition to helicopters. This is necessary as there may be times that helicopters cannot fly and times when other priorities preclude evacuation of POWs by helicopters. Also, due to frequent movement of battalion command posts, the battalion headquarters should seldom be anymore than a way-station.

b. Civil Affairs.

(1) Comment. Due to the expected short duration of the operation, no provisions were made in the planning phase for prolonged control, safeguarding, and welfare of the refugees. It was expected that civilians encountered would be screened for arms, etc., by the searching and clearing unit, and then held in a temporary local collecting point. Initially, refugees were controlled and provided with water by BLT Headquarters. Later, however, this was accomplished for some units by the RLT Headquarters. Moreover, this situation was complicated by the fact the first attempts to evacuate civilians from danger areas was difficult as they were frightened and initially distrustful of Marines.

(2) Recommendation. Since it is reasonable to expect that civilians will always be present on the Vietnamese battlefield, our policy of humane treatment of the civilian victims of war dictates that we be prepared to feed and provide medical treatment. To facilitate this, it is recommended that civil affairs with an English speaking Vietnamese civil official accompany the senior headquarters on independent operations such as Operation "STARLITE". These teams should be trained and equipped to provide food and medical treatment to civilians, so as to not drain the military resources that are designed to support the operational forces.

[REDACTED]

c. Control of Civilian News Media.

(1) Comment. The planned duration of Operation "STARLITE" was so short that had it ended as planned, undoubtedly no correspondents/photographers would have been present during the operation. For this reason, no provisions were made to control or brief them. However, due to the noteworthy success of the operation and its extended duration, on D+2 newsmen began to arrive in the RLT-7 CP complex in large groups. Although notice was given of their coming, there was no PIO or any one person available solely for them. Therefore, the CO, S-3, S-2, S-1, briefed small groups when their time permitted and others wandered through the CP taking photos and gathering their opinions from many persons with whom they talked.

(2) Recommendation. That arrangements be made for a liaison officer from higher headquarters to accompany the operating unit. It is recommended that this officer be aware of the Marine Corps policy in dealing with the press. He could further advise the subordinate units via the S-1 on the arrival of the newsmen in their area and what information they are authorized to receive.

2. S-2

a. Prisoner Collection Activity and ITT Operations.

(1) Comment. Arrangements were made to use the 4th Marines stockade at Chu Lai, as RLT-7 landed two days before the operation and had no stockade of its own. As the operation was extended so was the magnitude of the prisoner handling. In the absence of a central collecting point, control of prisoner collecting broke-down.

(2) Recommendation. That there must be established in the AOA a prisoner collecting point to which all prisoners must be sent without exception for initial interrogation by ITT. ITT results are then immediately available to local commanders.

b. Effective Utilization of Division Reconnaissance.

(1) Comment. The concept of Operation "STARLITE" precluded employing division reconnaissance in their doctrinate role.

(2) Recommendation. In rapid situations such as this, it is necessary to employ more unconventional concepts. Reconnaissance personnel's special skills can be more fully utilized by employing them in the search aspects of operations as often the infantry elements move through a hamlet under conditions which do not permit a complete search or neutralization of the area. Under these conditions reconnaissance teams can follow in trace and prevent enemy sniping from the rear and accomplish more thorough search and destroy missions. Reconnaissance units also have a demolition capability which can amplify the search and destroy capability of the infantry. Additionally, reconnaissance teams can be inserted into areas of likely enemy escape. With close coordination with the FSCC, fire power can be brought to bear on specific targets as the enemy attempts to escape.

3. S-3

a. Direct Air Support Center.

(1) Comment. Since the RLT-7 Headquarters landed in Viet Nam only two days prior to commencement of planning and was not established ashore, the division DASC had to be satellited on the 4th Marines FSCC, hence DASC was not in the AOA or under the operational control of the Landing Force Commander (LFC). However, the USS BAYFIELD (APA-53), which might have housed the DASC, was not assigned as flagship until late D-1. Since the DASC was established and the operation was to secure in two days, it was felt that a late shift would be inadvisable. While this was sufficient for the planned short term operation, it became unwieldy as Operation "STARLITE" was extended up to seven days.

(2) Recommendation. That the established doctrine of establishing DASC in the AOA under the LFC not be modified except in emergencies. In such cases, it may be advisable to make the AOA a restricted air space, and place aircraft in the air under control of the Landing Force Air Officer.

b. Tactical Situation.

(1) Comment. Due to the necessity of speed of execution for Operation "STARLITE," only local forces were available to be employed. The initial reserve, the SLF composed of BLT 3/7, could not arrive in the AOA until the afternoon of D-Day. As the enemy was trapped and forced to stand and fight on D-Day, all Marine units became quickly engaged. As a result, there were insufficient troops available to cover the RLT-7 zone of action to prevent all the enemy from escaping from the encirclement on the night of D-Day.

(2) Recommendation. Insert reconnaissance teams into areas of likely enemy escape. With close coordination with the FSCC, fire power can be brought to bear on the enemy as he attempts to escape from the battle area.

c. Destroy Operations.

(1) Comment. Although it was anticipated that there would be a requirement for demolitions in this search and destroy operation of the planned duration, the fortifications exceeded all expectations and emergency orders went back to Chu Lai for additional demolitions, and the remainder of the engineer company. As the problem was extended, even more fortifications were discovered, and due to time and personnel available, not all fortifications could be destroyed.

(2) Recommendation. That a destruction list be established much the same as a priority of targets list.

(3) Problem. Due to its high detonating velocity, TNT was only marginally satisfactory for destroying underground structures.

(4) Recommendation. That the more suitable cratering charges, shape charges and bangalore torpedoes be used to destroy underground structures.

[REDACTED]

Tank and LVT Employment

[REDACTED]

(1) Problem. The necessity of having elements of two different battalions resulted in the loss of the advantages of training together and working together. This was not unacceptable in planning, because the different tank elements were supporting a different battalions. However, when these two different tank elements were brought together under hostile fire, immediate coordination did not exist.

(2) Recommendation. That when it becomes necessary to employ combat support elements from different parent organizations, regardless of initial employment, that provisions be made for central control.

(3) Problem. In warfare such as this, where there are no front lines and no safe rear areas, encounter with the enemy must be expected at any time and any place.

(4) Recommendation. That units requesting non-air transportable support from the "rear" such as tracked and wheeled vehicles, provide the necessary guides and security for their movement to the requesting unit.

S-4.

a. Supply

(1) Comment. When orders were received for this operation, it was as has been mentioned previously, planned that it would last 24-48 hours. Supplies and equipment were ordered, issued and stockpiled on that basis, utilizing a safety factor of two days' extra supplies. As the original operation was so successful, it was decided to extend it for the purpose of making a detailed search of the area. Additional supplies and equipment were ordered from the Force Logistics Support Unit (FLSU) at Chu Lai on a daily basis.

(a) Methods of Supply.

1 Originally, plans were made to supply BLT 3/3, the surface lifted BLT, from the primary control ship (PCS) by means of helicopters and amphibian tractors. The helilifted battalion, BLT 2/4, was to be supplied entirely by helicopters from the battalion rear at Chu Lai. Supply from the PCS, wherein the TAC-LOG was embarked, worked smoothly and efficiently.

2 When the operation was extended, there was soon a shortage of helicopters as they had been only scheduled for the original short period. Consequently, BLT 2/4 could not be supported entirely by helicopters. The PCS then became the primary source of supply for both BLTs. Had the operation lasted as planned, helicopters would have been a feasible method of supply. Resulting from the extension of the operation and associated shortage of helicopters it became necessary to establish an RLT supply dump in the RLT-7 CP complex for all units. This dump then maintained a two day supply of MIC rations, Class V and as much water as could be stored. The BLTs were supplied from this dump by helicopters and LVT's. This establishment and use of this dump saved much time and effort since helicopters and tractors could be loaded faster from this dump than they could from the PCS.

[REDACTED]

ENCLOSURE (13)

[REDACTED]

b. Operation of the TAC-LOG.

Landing force supplies were located on the same ship as the TAC-LOG. The PCS, the USS Cabildo (LSD-16), was utilized so that helicopters could land on the superdeck and LVTs could swim aboard for supplies. This method of resupply proved to be extremely efficient. With supplies embarked on the LSD, less time was lost as in the usual method of landing supplies by small boat, despite the slower speed of the LVTs as the LVTs were moved inland to the RLT supply dump and frequently directly to the user.

(2) Recommendation.

- (a) That if the situation permits, embark landing force supplies on the PCS.
- (b) That the PCS be assigned as LVT haven.
- (c) That an LSD with a superdeck be utilized as PCS, and that its helo platform not be used for landing force supplies and equipment.

(3) Comment. The supply of water proved to be the largest logistics problem encountered. As there were not enough helicopters available to accomplish the supply missions, although there were more water cans than authorized by TE, there was still a shortage of water cans and this further complicated the problem. Units normally hold enough water cans to carry two gallons of water per man day. This is inadequate in this climate at this date on fast moving operations where trailers cannot be deployed. Another problem associated with water supply was collecting empty cans from the using units. Over 1500 gallons of water per day were supplied to units of the RLT. The PCS was used as the water point. For a considerable period of time during the seven days of the operation, the ship was forced to go on water hours because of the amount of water being furnished the RLT. Some water was resupplied by helicopter, but the bulk of it was resupplied by LVT. A very efficient method of water resupply was developed. The LVTs were floated into the well deck with empty cans loaded and open. A two-inch water hose was lowered into the tractor and the cans were filled in place without having to manhandle them, thus saving precious time and manpower.

(4) Recommendation.

- (a) That any unit coming into Viet Nam and particularly in operations outside an enclave, bring enough water cans to provide four gallons per man per day. This will allow the RLT dumps to stockpile water and cut down on shortages and avoid frantic resupply runs to water points.
- (b) That front line commanders be impressed with the fact that if empty cans are not collected and returned, that their units cannot be resupplied with water. Along this line, lister bags can be employed where the situation permits. The water cans can be emptied into the lister bags and returned in the same transportation that brought them.

b. Battery Charger for BB-451 Battery.

(5) Comment. Since the operation was expected to be of short duration, the battery charger for the BB-451 was not taken. As Operation "STARLITE" was extended communications suffered for lack of charged batteries.

(1) Re nda' on.

(a) That a battery charger for the BB-451 be taken on an operation regardless of its anticipated duration.

(b) That a pool of approximately 20-30 BB-451's be set up in the Chu Lai enclave. Under normal circumstances, the T/E allowance is adequate but when a heavy demand for information is placed on a unit conducting combat operations and the available helicopters are already overburdened with casualty evacuations and other priority missions, the normal supply of batteries becomes totally inadequate. Since it is not envisioned that continual operation would exist in the majority of operations conducted it is not considered to be economical to solve the problem by increasing the units' allowance of BB-451's.

c. PIQ5 Portable Public Address System.

(1) Comment. Each battalion rates two PIQ5 Portable Public Address Systems. It was found that this number is insufficient and there should be enough PIQ5's available for platoon search and clear operations. This will enable the searching units of platoon size to inform civilians of their intention to search houses and caves and further enable the platoon to advise the civilians of action to take. Moreover this unit has multiple usage and can be used in training, riot control, and in similar usages.

(2) Recommendation.

(a) To increase the infantry battalion allowance of PIQ5's to 12 or one per platoon.

(b) Recognizing that the availability of interpreters may not be that of the increased allowance, it is further recommended that prepared tapes be recorded to be used with the PIQ5 so that interpreters will not be required for each address system and thus enable the platoon to tell civilians that they will not be harmed, they will be fed, etc.

d. Smoke Grenades.

(1) Comment. Before the operation began the Force Logistic Support Unit (FLSU) at Chu Lai exhausted its supply of green and yellow smoke grenades, which are essential items in the employment of helicopters. By the end of the first day the supply was exhausted. A request to Logistic Support Group (LSG) brought sufficient supplies by the end of the second day.

(2) Recommendation. That larger stocks of these items be maintained at the FLSU in Chu Lai not only for operations such as Operation "STARLITE" but also for the use in defense of the enclave.

e. Flashlights.

(1) Comment. It was learned on Operation "STARLITE" that there were not nearly enough flashlights available in RLT allowance for searching caves and tunnels.

(2) Recommendation. That at least one flashlight per squad be made available for this purpose.

[REDACTED]

f. Medical Evacuation.

(1) Comment. Plans were to evacuate all minor casualties to the battalion aid station (BAS) and all major casualties to Company B, 3d Medical Battalion, since it had a complete surgical team. When the LPS arrived on station off the landing beach, serious casualties were to be evacuated to the LPH. Nevertheless, at one point when action was at its greatest there was a casualty overload at Company B because casualties were occurring so fast that all wounded, whether slight or serious, were taken to Company D. For a short period after this, all cases, both serious and slight, were sent to the BAS.

(2) Recommendation. That helicopter crew chiefs and all medical personnel be briefed on evacuation plans prior to the operation rather than rely completely on corporals and small unit leaders who may not be readily available to provide guidance at the time of the medical evacuation.

g. Transportation.

(1) Problem. Initially no organic transportation was taken on the operation. Reliance was placed on LVTs and helicopters. When the last ELT entered the operation, wheeled vehicles were brought in. Because of poor trafficability they were of negative value in that they presented a problem of having to be secured as well as prolonging embarkation.

(2) Recommendation. That a minimum of M-274 (mules) be taken for water resupply of companies and that a M-274 be used by the RLT supply camp for the staging of supplies in the helicopter landing zone.

h. Maintenance.

(1) Problem. Due to the planned short duration of the operation, no maintenance services were provided for, and all material casualties had to be evacuated to the PCS.

(2) Recommendation. That on prolonged and large size operations, contact repair teams in all commodity fields should be stationed aboard the PCS. For operations of short duration that a maintenance float be utilized.

5. Communications.

a. Division Communication SOP.

(1) Comment. The limited time available for planning resulted in a requirement for a great amount of improvising.

(2) Recommendation. That improvising could be facilitated in the future by the following change to the present 3d Marine Division communications operating procedures.

(a) Assign unit radio call signs in accordance with JANAP 119. Not all Naval units are in possession of the Comm-Elec Annex to Operation Order 321A-65, but they are in possession of JANAP's and ACPs.

(b) Use JANAP-195 circuit designators for assigned frequencies. The above comment applies to frequencies also.

b. LVTP-5 Command Tractor.

(1) Comment. The LVTP-5 Command tractor provides an excellent operating facility for operations of short duration where the terrain restricts the use of wheeled vehicles. However, it lacks the single side band capability.

(2) Recommendation. Install a SSB radio in the LVTP-5 command tractor to net with the AN/RRC-47 and AN/TRC-75.

6. Artillery.

a. Organization.

(1) Problem. Initially a certain amount of confusion and uncertainty in communications on the part of battalion liaison officers (LNO) and forward observers (FO) existed as a result of the changing battalions and having new LNOs and FOs from another artillery organization when the initial BLTs were relieved. Their normally assigned frequencies had to be changed in some cases at the last minute and there was timelost in promulgating this information to all the FOs. The fire support coordination center (FSCC) did it's best to rectify this situation when relief of BLTs passed through RLTF Headquarters.

(2) Recommendation. That the frequency assignments of the 7th Marines and 4th Marines be studied for possible reassignment or reconciliation.

b. Damage Assessment.

(1) Comment. Difficulty was experienced in receiving damage assessment reports after each fire mission. There seemed to be reluctance on the part of the battalion LNOs and/or FOs to estimate casualties. They often reported the target "well-covered" but would not state that casualties resulted because they could not see any.

(2) Recommendation. That instruction be given to LNOs and FOs on how to estimate casualties in damage assessment reports.

c. FSCC Operating Spaces

(1) Comment. On fast moving, short duration problems, a LVTP-5 command tractor is well suited for FSCC operations, especially due to the lack of time required to displace and its ability to function on the move, both on land and in the water.

(2) Recommendation. That on operation such as this, a LVTP-5 command tractor be made available for the FSCC.

d. Shackle Codes.

(1) Comment. RLTF-7 originated shackle codes for subordinate field units on Operation "STARLITE" out of necessity. It was necessary since PacFlt KAC-138 series were apparently not available for issue to RLTF-7. While this arrangement sufficed for field units, no provisions existed for communications between naval gunfire support ships until about D+4 (days), when the ships were issued our codes. As a result, many items of information had to be transmitted in the clear despite the security risks.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

(2) Recommendation. That should a similar situation exist in future operation not utilizing joint service shackle sheets, provisions be made for ensuring that NGF support ships that are assigned on short notice are provided same.

[REDACTED]

OPERATION STARLITE

1. Following units participated in Assault Phase of Operation Starlite:

a. Marine Corps:

(1) RLT 7 consisting of:

HqCo, 7thMar
Det, CoB, Rein 1stTkBn
Det, 3dBn(-) Rein, 11thMar
Det, CoA, 3dATBn
107MM Mortar Btry, 3dBn 12th Mar
Det, HqBn, 3d MarDiv
Det CoA, 3d Am TracBn

(2) BLT 2/4

H&S Co, 2dBn, 4th Mar
Co's E, G, H
2dPlt, Co C, 3d TkBn
2dPlt, Co B, 3dEngrBn
Det, 3dBn, 12thMar
Plt MPCo, 3dMarDiv

(3) BLT 3/3

H&S Co, 3dBn, 3dMar
Co's I, K, L, M
3dPlt, Co A, 3dTKBn
Plt, Co B, 3dATBn
3dPlt (Rein), Co A, 1stAmTracBn
3dPlt, Co B, 3dEngrBn
Det, 3dBn, 12thMar
Det, 1stBn, 12thMar
Det, ITT, 4thMar

(4) BLT 3/7

H&S Co, 3dBn, 7thMar
Co's L, M, I
Btry I, 3dBn, 11thMar
107mm Mortar Btry, 3dBn, 11thMar
3dPlt, Co C, 1stATBn
3dPlt, Co C, 1stEngrBn

*III Mar: Recommendation for PUC
Opn Starlite*

29 Nov 65

ENCLOSURE(1)
WORKING PAPERS
HISTORICAL DIVISION



2d Plt, Co A, 7th MT Bn
3d Plt, Co C, 1st Recon Bn
3d Plt, Co B, 1st Tk Bn
3d Plt, Co A, 3d AmTrac Bn
Det, 1st FSR
Det, Co C, 1st SP Bn
Det, EMU-1
Det, Co C, 1st Med Bn
Det, 1st For Recon Co

2. Following units supported assault:

a. Marine Air

MAG-11
VMFA-513
VMFA-542

MAG-12
VMA-311
VMA-225
VMA-214

MAG-16
HMM-361
HMM-261
VMO-2
HMM-161

SIF
HMM-163

VMCJ-1

b. Marine Ground in Support at CHU LAI

1st Plt, 3d 155 Gun Btry; 1st Plt, Btry K (SP), 4th Bn, 12th Mar;
FLSU #1. 1st Plt, 3d 8" How Btry (SP), FMF, Btry M 4th Bn, 11th Mar;
Btry C, 1st Bn, 12th Mar; Btry C, 3d Bn, 12th Mar

c. Army Aviation Units: 7th Airlift Plt I Corps Avn Co (Prov) with
UHLB; 220th Aviation Co with OLF.

d. Naval Gunfire: USS GALVESTON CLG 3, USS ORLECK DD 886, USS PRITCHETT
DD561.

e. Air Force Units: 311 Air Commando Squad (Flaeship).

f. ARVN: I Corps interrogation teams.

ENCLOSURE (1)

3. Following units joined during mop-up operations beginning 200800H:

a. Marine Corps:

Co K, 3d Bn, 7th Mar
BLT 1/7
H&S Co, 1st Bn, 7th Mar
Co's A, B, C, D
Det, Co C, 1st Med Bn
Co C (-) (Rein), 1st Engr Bn
Det, HqBn, 3d MarDiv
Co C (-) (Rein), 1st Recon Bn
Det, 1st Bn, 9th Mar
Det, 2d Bn, 9th Mar

b. ARVN Units:

3dVN Marine Bn
2d Bn, 51st Regt
Det, 3d Arm Pers Carrier Troop
Co 3d Bn, 5th Regt, 2d Div
1st Infantry Scout Dog Plt, I Corps
34th Art Bn, I Corps
21st Art Bn, 2d Div

4. Additional Marine units engaged in support of both assault and mop-up:

MACS-9
VMGR-152
Det, VMGR-352
ASRT (System-11)
HDC/DASC from MASS-2

5. U. S. NAVY in SLF:

USS IWO JIMA LPH-2
USS POINT DEFIANCE LSD 31
USS TALLADEGA APA 208

6. U. S. Navy which landed 7th Marines and BLT 3/3:

USS BAYFIELD APA 33
USS CABILDO LSD 16
USS VERNON COUNTY LST 1161
LCU 1482
LCU 1493

7. ARVN units blocking West of Highway one during operation:

PF units of BINH SON District, 698th RF Co.

ENCLOSURE(1)

Annex A (Task Organization) to Operation Order 323-65

Time Zone: H

RLT-7

Col PEATROSS

Det, Hq Co, 7th Marines
Co B (-) (Rein), 1st Tank Bn
Det, 3d Bn (-) (Rein), 11th Marines
Det, Co A, 3d Amtrac Bn

BLT 2/4

Lt Col FISHER

2d Bn, 4th Marines
2d Plt, Co C, 3d Tank Bn
2d Plt, Co B, 3d Engr Bn
Det, 3d Bn, 12th Marines

BLT 3/3

Lt Col MUIR

3d Bn, 3d Marines
3d Plt, Co A, 3d Tank Bn
3d Plt, Co B, 3d AT Bn
3d Plt (Rein), Co A, 1st Amtrac Bn
3d Plt, Co B, 3d Engr Bn
Det, 3d Bn, 12th Marines
Det, 1st Bn, 12th Marines
Det, ITT

BLT 3/7

Lt Col BODLEY

3d Bn, 7th Marines
Btry I, 3d Bn, 11th Marines
107mm Mort Btry, 3d Bn, 11th Marines
3d Plt, Co C, 1st AT Bn
3d Plt, Co C, 1st Engr Bn
2d Plt, Co A, 7th MT Bn
3d Plt, Co C, 1st Recon Bn
3d Plt, Co B, 1st Tank Bn
3d Plt, Co A, 3d AmTrac Bn
Det, Hq Co, 7th Marines
Det, 3d Dental Co, FMF
Det, 1st FSR
Det, Co C, 1st SP Bn
Det, EMU 1
Det, Coll Plt, Co C, 1st Med Bn
Det, 1st Force Recon Co, FMF

UNCLASSIFIED

RLT-7 AFTER ACTION REPORT (OPERATION STARLITE)

- Encl: (1) Concept of Operation Overlay
(2) D-Day Operations Ashore Overlay
(3) D+1 Operations Ashore Overlay
(4) D+2 Disposition of Units Overlay
(5) D+3 Disposition of Units Overlay
(6) D+4 Disposition of Units Overlay
(7) D+5 Disposition of Units Overlay
(8) Route of March 1st Bn, 7th Marines Overlay

1. Name of Operation. Operation Starlite. A search and clear operation in the VAN TUONG Village Complex.

2. Date of Operation. 171000H to 242100H August 1965.

3. Location. VAN TUONG Village Complex; BINH SON District; QUANG NGAI Province South of the CHU LAI Enclave in the vicinity of North of E-W Grid Line (BS 92), East of the N-S Grid Line (BS 67) and South of E-W Grid Line (BS 98).

4. Command Headquarters. Commanding Officer, 7th Marines.

5. Reporting Officer. Colonel O. F. PEATROSS, Commanding Officer, 7th Marines.

6. Task Organization.

a. Marine Corps Ground Units.

(1) RLT-7 consisting of:

HqCo, 7th Marines

Det, Co B (Rein), 1st Tank Bn

Det, 3d Bn (-) (Rein), 11th Marines

Det, Co A, 3d AT Bn

107mm Mortar Btry, 3d Bn, 12th Marines

Det, Hq Bn, 3d Marine Division

Det, Co A, 3d MaTrao Bn

(2) RLT 2/4

R&S Co, 2d Bn, 4th Marines

Co's E, G, H

2d Plt, Co C, 3d Tank Bn

2d Plt, Co B, 3d Engr Bn

Det, 3d Bn, 12th Marines

Plt MP Co, 3d Marine Division

(3) BLT 3/3

H&S Co, 3d Bn, 3d Marines

Co's I, K, L, M

3d Plt, Co A, 3d Tank Bn

Plt, Co B, 3d AT Bn

3d Plt (Rein), Co A, 1st Amphib Bn

3d Plt, Co B, 3d Engr Bn

Det, 3d Bn, 12th Marines

Det, 1st Bn, 12th Marines

Det, ITT, 4th Marines

(4) BLT 3/7

H&S Co, 3d Bn, 7th Marines

Co's L, M, I

Btry I, 3d Bn, 11th Marines

107mm Mortar Btry, 3d Bn, 11th Marines

3d Plt, Co C, 1st AT Bn

3d Plt, Co C, 1st Engr Bn

2d Plt, Co A, 7th MT Bn

3d Plt, Co C, 1st Recon Bn

3d Plt, Co B, 1st Tank Bn

[REDACTED]

3d Plt, Co A, 3d Amphib Bn

Det, 1st FSR

Det, Co C, 1st SP Bn

Det, BMU-1

Det, Co C, 1st Med Bn

Det, 1st Force Recon Co

7. Supporting Forces.

a. Following Units supported assault.

(1) Marine Air

MAG-11

VMFA-513

VMFA-542

MAG-12

VMA
VMFA-211

VMA-225

VMA-214

VMAG-16

HMM-361

HMM-261

VMO-2

HMM-161

SLF

HMM-163

VHCJ-1

(2) Marine Ground Units supporting the operation from within the
CHU LAI Enclave.

c/1/12
3d 155 Gun Btry (SP), FMF

7/4/11

1st 8" How Btry, FMF

[REDACTED]

Plt Btry K, 155 How (SP) Btry, 4th Bn, 12th Marines

FLSU #1

(3) Army Aviation Units.

7th Airlift Plt, I Corps Avn Co (Prov) with UH1B

220th Aviation Co with OHF

(4) Naval Gunfire.

USS GALVESTON CGO 3

USS ORLECK DD 886

USS PRITCHETT DD 561

(5) Air Force Units.

311 Air Commando Squad. (Flareship)

(6) ARVN.

I Corps Interrogation Teams

b. Following units joined during mop-up operations beginning 200800H.

(1) Marine Corps.

Co K, 3d Bn, 7th Marines

BLT 1/7

H&S Co, 1st Bn, 7th Marines

Co's A, B, C, D

Det, Hq Bn, 3d Marine Division

Co C (-) (Rein), 1st Engr Bn

(2) ARVN Units.

3d VN Marine Bn

2d Bn, 51st Regt

Det, 3d Arm Pers Carrier Troop

Co, 3d Bn, 5th Regt, 2d Division

1st Infantry Scout Dog Plt, I Corps

34th Arty Bn, I Corps

21st Arty Bn, 2d Division

- c. Additional Marine units engaged in support of both assault and mop-up.

MACS-9

VMGR-152

Det, VMGR-352

ASRT (System-11)

HDC/DASC from MASS-2

- d. U. S. Navy Amphibious Group, Initial Assault

USS BAYFIELD APA 33

USS CABILDO LSD 16

USS VERNON COUNTY LST 1161

LCU 1482

LCU 1493

- e. U. S. Navy in SLF:

USS IWO JIMA LPH-2

USS POINT DEFIANCE LSD 31

USS TALLADEGA APA 208

- f. ARVN units blocking West of Highway One during operation.

PF units of BINH SON District, 698th RF Co

- g. Task Forces.

TF 76

TF 78

TG 78.5

TO 76.0

TU 75.0.1

TO 76.2

TO 76.5

h. Employment of Supporting Arms.

(1) Artillery.

(a) Artillery consisted of the 107mm Mortar Battery, 3d Bn, 12th Marines, helilifted into a position vic (BS 682973) and Battery K (SP), 4th Bn, 12th Marines, located in an advanced position vic (BT 605018). Additional batteries providing fire from their firing positions within the CHU LAI enclave included Battery C, 1st Bn, 12th Marines, Battery M, 4th Bn, 11th Marines, the 3d 155 Gun Battery (SP), FMF, and the 1st platoon, 3d 8" Howitzer Battery (SP), FMF. The 3d Bn, 12th Marines controlled all artillery fires through an advanced FDC located in the vicinity of Battery K. The 107mm Mortar Battery made one displacement on 20 August 1965 to a firing position within the RLT-7 CP perimeter, vicinity (BS 705928). This displacement was necessary to support continued operations to the south and provide cover for the eventual retraction of units over the beach. Artillery was available throughout the operation.

(b) Artillery fired 192 missions as follows:

1. <u>Adjusted missions.</u>	98
a. Troops entrenched	8
b. Troops in open	10
c. Built up areas	7
d. Fortification	5
e. Weapons and Equipment	8
f. Suspected VC	20
2. Preparations	14
3. Harrassing and Interdiction	84
4. Marking concentrations	36

(c) Total number of rounds fired were 3,040, broken down by Battery as follows:

1. 107mm Mortar Battery, 3/12	757
2. Battery C, 3/12	176
3. Battery K, 4/12	1,719

4. Battery M, 4/11	190
5. 3d 155 Gun Btry (SP)	179
6. Plt, 1st 8" How Btry	19

(d) A summary of observed enemy casualties is as follows:

1. VC KIA	116
2. VC WIA	15

(2) Air.

(a) Air support for STARLITE began with landing zone preparation by A4-C's and E's, and F4B aircraft of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing from 0615 to 0730. Sixteen sorties delivered 13.5 tons of bombs, four tons of napalm and 1,600 rounds of 20mm in the vicinity of the landing zones prior to L-hour. Fixed wing support was provided throughout the day with seventy-eight sorties, and upon occasion strikes were called within fifty yards of friendly positions. Three Army UH1B armored helicopters also provided additional air cover on D-day. More than 500 helicopter sorties were flown in D-day support as 800 passengers and twenty tons of cargo were landed.

(b) Fixed wing cover was continuous throughout the operation from 17 August to 241200 August when the operation secured. Day and night F4B or A4 aircraft were on a constant airborne alert status, with fifteen and thirty minute strip alerts provided as a backup.

(c) On 20 August, Army AO-01F Mohawks began to provide infra-red coverage of the operation area during the hours of darkness, thus augmenting the VMO reconnaissance capability and providing twenty-four hour battlefield surveillance.

(3) Naval Gunfire.

(a) Naval gunfire support for Operation STARLITE was provided by one light cruiser (CLG) and two destroyers (DD). All ships remained on station throughout the operation. Two shore fire control parties were employed during the operation. The USS GALVESTON (CLG-3) was initially assigned in direct support of BLT 3/7 and the USS ORLECK (DD-886) provided support for BLT 3/3 and 1/7 after the former's relief. The USS PRICHETT (DD-561) was also available for direct support of either battalion. Ship assignments for units were changed daily to equalize ammunition consumption and to destroy or neutralize targets requiring the USS GALVESTON's 6"/47 battery.

(b) Fire support ship stations were also changed continuously throughout the operation to meet a variety of situations in relation to troop movements, target locations, and terrain features. Providing optimum gun target lines and occasional relief for re-arming and refueling were primary considerations and both were accomplished with minimum difficulty. At first

light on the 19th, the USS GALVESTON and the USS ORLECK had expended nearly their entire allowances of illumination projectiles. This resulted from the necessity of providing continuous illumination in the area of the disabled LVT's. The USS ORLECK also discouraged VC attempts to escape by sea, by reporting the action of five sampans and damaging two. All fires were delivered in an accurate, timely and effective manner for both close and deep support missions. Total naval gunfire ammunition expended on this operation is as follows:

1. 6"/47 High Capacity	563
2. 5"/38 AAG	446
3. Illumination	471
4. WP	82
Total rounds	1,562

8. Intelligence. Intelligence preceding Operation STARLITE indicated that a large Viet Cong force in the VAN TUONG Village complex was preparing to attack the CHU LAI enclave. From prior intelligence, this force was believed to include the First VC Regiment (Main Force) and a company from the 52d Battalion (local force). The 1st VC Regiment is composed of the 60th, 80th and 90th Battalions, however the 80th Battalion had not been confirmed as being in the area. The 40th and 45th Battalions were also believed to be in the area, as well as an unidentified heavy weapons company. The capabilities of this force, particularly when augmented by the heavy weapons company, were such a great and impending threat to the CHU LAI enclave that the Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF), directed that a combined amphibious and helicopter-borne attack be executed immediately in the VAN TUONG Village Complex to conduct a search and destroy operation against the Viet Cong.

9. Mission. To destroy Viet Cong Forces in the VAN TUONG Village Complex.

10. Concept of Operation.

a. To land by helicopter and/or amphibious means to block, fix and destroy Viet Cong forces in the area. Upon completion of this mission, re-tract by helicopter and/or amphibious means. Minimum prep fires will be conducted to protect the element of surprise. Operations will be conducted in three phases: (See enclosure (1) Concept of Operation Overlay to Operation STARLITE.)

- (1) Phase I - Initial Assaults.
- (2) Phase II - Operations Ashore.
- (3) Phase III - Retraction.

11. Execution.

a. RLT-7, consisting of BLT's 3/3, 2/4, with 3/7 available as a reserve afloat, and RLT-7 Headquarters, was activated and assigned the mission. On the evening of 16 August 1965 the participating units were alerted to Operation STARLITE. BLT 3/7, afloat as the Special Landing Force (SLF), was alerted by message to rendezvous in the Amphibious Objective Area (AOA) and assume the mission as RLT Reserve. Since RLT-7 Headquarters had landed administratively in Viet Nam only two days before, the facilities of the 4th Marines Headquarters were utilized for planning. The battalion and regimental staffs assembled with supporting arms representatives and on the morning of the 17th, the operation, administrative and embarkation orders were completed and distributed.

b. The operation commenced on D-1 at 171000H when M/3/3 departed the CHU LAI area by LVT for subsequent overland foot march to occupy a blocking position in the northern sector of the Amphibious Objective Area prior to H-hour and D-day at (BS 683971). At 171400H, RLT-7 Headquarters and BLT 3/3 commenced embarking aboard the following ships:

- (1) USS BAYFIELD (APA-33) - RLT-7 Headquarters
- (2) USS CABILDO (LSD-16) - BLT 3/3
- (3) USS VERNON COUNTY (LST-1169) - BLT 3/3

c. At 180600H, HMM-261, 361 and BLT 2/4, less Company F, which remained in position on the CHU LAI perimeter, were staged at the CHU LAI Airstrip. Prior to H-hour, two of the following fire support ships (FSS) arrived in the AOA and took station.

- (1) USS GALVESTON (CLG-6)
- (2) USS ORLECK (DD-886)
- (3) The USS PRICHARD (DD-531) arrived on D+1.

d. On the morning of D-day, at H-hour (190630), attack aircraft from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (FMAW) commenced preparation of landing zones RED, WHITE and BLUE while Companies I and K of BLT 3/3 landed abreast at GREEN Beach. (See enclosure (1) for the Concept of Operations Overlay.)

e. BLT 2/4 commenced landing as follows:

- (1) 1st Wave: LZ BLUE at L-hour (H+15)
- (2) 2d Wave: LZ WHITE at L+25
- (3) 3d Wave: LZ RED at L+50
- (4) 4th Wave: LZ WHITE at L+60

f. The original plan was to land as follows:

- (1) Company E in LZ WHITE at L-hour.
- (2) Company H in LZ BLUE at L-hour.
- (3) Company G in LZ RED at L+25.

g. The original plan was based on a helicopter availability of 40 UH-34's but alterations as shown above were necessary due to only 26 helicopters being available.

h. The command and control elements of the RLT-7 Headquarters landed at GREEN Beach at 180730H. By 1200 the CP was established at (BS 706925), and before the end of the day, housed not only the command post but the logistic support and resupply complex for the operation. (See enclosure (2), D-day Operations Ashore Overlay.) Additionally I/3/3 (in the adjacent Zone of Action on the right) encountered heavy fire from AN CUONG (2) and requested and received permission to cross over into the BLT 2/4 Zone of Action to secure the village. In the trace of these two incidents involving heavy casualties, five LVT's carrying supplies from the RLT-7 CP complex to BLT 3/3 were ambushed at 181255H in the vicinity of (BS 698932).

i. The five LVT's were accompanied by two flame tanks requested by the CO of BLT 3/3 for use by I/3/3. One of the flame tanks returned to the Regimental CP complex which was only a few hundred meters away, and reported the ambush.

j. A relief force, consisting of elements of BLT 3/3 rear CP, five LVT's, five Ontos and one gun tank set out to relieve the halted column, but encountered heavy fire prior to reaching their objective. One LVT was disabled and the gun tank did not fire because of friendly troops in the target area. This relief force, under the Executive Officer of BLT 3/3, was located in the RLT-7 CP complex. The XO of BLT 3/3 was directed to take I/3/3 to relieve the LVT column. This new relief force started at 181305, but became engaged in a heavy fire fight at (BS 703927) at 181400. The enemy's heavy weapons (3.5" RL, 57mm RR, and 81mm Mortars) firing across the open ground prevented I/3/3 from locating the relieving column, but it did locate the 3d Platoon of H/2/4 nearby.

k. These attacks resulted in the RLT Commander temporarily halting the attack and requesting the landing of BLT 3/7.

l. At 181600H, L/3/7 landed at (BS 708927) and was assigned the operational control of BLT 3/3. Reinforced with two tanks, L/3/7 was assigned the mission to juncture with I/3/3 at (BS 700930). Before effecting juncture with I/3/3, L/3/7 became engaged in a heavy fire fight at 181845H (BS 702926) in an attempt to cross the open ground. This situation prevented L/3/7 from reaching I/3/3. In this action L/3/7 received 4 KIA and 14 WIA. Although

[REDACTED]

juncture was not effected with I/3/3. L/3/7 located the LVT's and flame tank but could not advance to them. However, L/3/7 relieved sufficient pressure from I/3/3 to enable it to break contact. Since it was well after dark, L/3/7 was directed to move to the 3/3 CP and arrived at 190130H. I/3/3, and the 2d Platoon of H/2/4 returned to the RLT-7 CP complex, arriving at 190500H, and were assigned the mission to provide security for the Regimental CP complex and GREEN Beach respectively. I/3/7, which had been heli-lifted to the RLT-7 CP complex at dusk on the 18th to provide security was relieved of the security mission. At 190025H, M/3/7 landed at GREEN Beach.

m. On the morning of 19 August, BLT 3/3 resumed the attack to the north-east at 0700, and BLT 2/4, less H/2/4, attacked at 0800. At 0900, BLT 3/7 (-) composed of Companies I and H, attacked to the northwest near the center of RLT-7's Zone of Action and secured the area of the LVT/flame tank column. All personnel present were brought out and plans were executed to evacuate the LVT's and tanks. During the afternoon both BLT's 2/4 and 3/3 reached the coast. During this time escape by the VC to seaward had been blocked by the fire support ships. (See enclosure (3), D+1 Operations Ashore Overlay.)

n. On 20 August, BLT 2/4 was heli-lifted back into its normal position in the CHU LAI Enclave. The return trip of the helicopters from the CHU LAI Enclave was utilized to lift BLT 1/7 into the BLT 3/3 area at (BS 717942). BLT 1/7 relieved BLT 3/3, and BLT 3/3 was retracted by surface craft from GREEN Beach. (Upon retraction of BLT 3/3, L/3/7 was returned to BLT 3/7 control.) Companies A, B, D, the Battalion Command Group and 50% of Company C were heli-lifted into the area vic (BS 717942). The remainder of Company C was heli-lifted to the Regimental CP complex. The balance of the company moved over land close to the CP at 202100H. C/1/7 was to provide security not only for the logistics installations, helicopter landing zone and command post contained in the RLT-7 complex, but also security for GREEN Beach. Prior to completion of the heli-lifts, TAORs were assigned and both BLT 1/7 and 3/7 were assigned the mission to conduct search and clear operations within their TAORs to confirm the VC KIA count, collect any material of intelligence value and to eliminate VC resistance that might remain in the area. (See enclosure (4), D+2 Disposition of Units.)

o. On 21 August (D+3), BLT's 1/7 and 3/7, in execution of their missions, conducted battalion size search and clear missions. During the course of these operations, engineers were employed to destroy many of the caves, tunnels and fighting positions in the area. BLT 3/7 conducted its operations in the hamlet complex of AN THOI (1) and NAM YEN (3). Companies moved out on foot except for L/3/7 which was heli-lifted. M/3/7 received sporadic small arms fire, which was BLT 3/7's only contact with the VC. BLT 1/7 concentrated their efforts in the hamlet complex of VAN TUONG. A/3/7 moved out on foot to search and clear VAN TUONG (2), and D/1/7 to search and clear VAN TUONG (5). On the way to its objective, D/1/7 encountered sniper fire from vic (BS 715912) but received no casualties. None of the companies encountered organized resistance.

p. At 211800H, M/3/7 relieved C/1/7 as security for the RLT-7 CP complex and GREEN Beach. (See enclosure (5) for the D+3 Disposition of Units Overlay)

q. On 22 August, BLT 3/7 received a new mission to conduct a reconnaissance in force to determine the presence of organized VC and to destroy any VC encountered in line of hills from (BS 690905) to (BS 690870). To further support this mission K/3/7, the last unit of the landing force to come ashore, was landed from the SLF at 220630H. All companies moved out on foot in an approach march, I/3/7 on the right, L/3/7 on the left, with K/3/7 in reserve following in trace to (BS 690870), where BLT 3/7 established defensive positions for the night.

r. BLT 1/7 continued its operation in the VAN TUONG complex. All companies reported receiving sniper fire. B/1/7 fired on 3 VC at (BS 707937). One VC was wounded and evacuated to Company B, 3d Medical Bn. A/1/7 killed a VC at (BS 703937) while conducting its search and clear operation of VAN TUONG (3). (See enclosure (6) for the D+4 Disposition of Units Overlay.)

s. On D+5, 23 August, BLT 1/7 was alerted to conduct, on the 24th of August a reconnaissance in force across the TRUNG PHAN Peninsula. At 231200H, BLT 1/7 commenced moving all equipment that was not desired for the overland movement to GREEN Beach for subsequent embarkation and movement by ship. In continuing its search and clear operations, BLT 1/7 reported the search of VAN TUONG (4) had been completed. B/1/7 made contact with an unknown number of VC in caves (BS 698955) and three VCS were captured. At 231600H, BLT 1/7 secured their search and clear operations, commenced movement of all other remaining equipment to GREEN Beach and prepared for its new mission.

t. By 231800H RLT-7 Headquarters displaced from (BS 725928) to GREEN Beach and subsequently to the USS BAYFIELD (APA-33) by LVT's. Supporting arms representatives and the Regimental Communications Officer, in conjunction with the section of Amphibious Squadron 7 activated the Supporting Arms Control Center (SACC). (See enclosure (7) for the D+5 Disposition of Units Overlay.)

u. On 23, and the morning of 24 August, BLT 3/7 conducted search and clear operations in the previously mentioned line of hills. This operation was conducted by a series of ground sweeps supported by blocking companies which were heli-lifted into position 500 to 1,500 meters in advance of the sweeping companies. During the course of the sweep of this hill mass, over 80 VC were captured and 13 VC were killed in action. Numerous fortifications and training sites were destroyed, as well as VC equipment. At 241400H, BLT 3/7 was directed to cease search and clear operations and to return to GREEN Beach to reembark prior to dark. The last elements of BLT 3/7 were embarked by 241900H and the BLT resumed its mission as SLF.

v. On the morning of 24 August, BLT 1/7 began the overland march through the TRUNG PHAN Peninsula to destroy any enemy encountered. (See enclosure (8), Route of March of BLT 1/7.) During the march, the fire support ships

[REDACTED]

maintained station advancing at sea parallel to the advancing column to support the BLT with Naval Gun fire if necessary. Maintaining progress with the BLT ashore were two LCU's preloaded with tanks, to be landed if heavy enemy resistance was encountered. The USS BAYFIELD, with its SACC in full operation also sailed parallel to the advance of BLT 1/7. While on the march, BLT 1/7 was supported by helicopters that delivered water and rations, as well as evacuating heat casualties. At 241700H, BLT 1/7 reached its pickup point (BT 630021) near the mouth of the SONG TRA BONG and embarked aboard LVT's. Movement of the LVT's from CHU LAI was coordinated so as to arrive at the beach near the SONG TRA BONG with the arrival of the BLT. Upon return to its area in the CHU LAI Enclave, BLT 1/7 assumed the positions of the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines in the TAOR.

w. Operation STARLITE was completed when the last elements of RL7-7 Headquarters landed at CHU LAI at 241100H.

12. Results.

a. LOSSES.

USMC/USN

VC

KIA - 45

DOW - 6

WIA - 204

KIA - 688

WIA - 263 (Estimated)

VCC - 9

VCS - 25

WEAPONS - 109

13. Administrative Matters.

a. Supply.

(1) Comment. Supplies and equipment were ordered, issued and stockpiled for a planned operation of 24-48 hours. A safety factor of two days extra supplies were loaded as Landing Force Supplies. Additional supplies and equipment were ordered from the Force Logistics Support Unit (FLSU) at CHU LAI on a daily basis for the detailed search of the area.

(a) Methods of Supply.

1. Resupply of BLT 3/3, the surface lifted BLT, was from the primary control ship (PCS) by means of helicopters and amphibian tractors. The heli-lifted battalion, BLT 2/4, was resupplied by helicopters from the battalion rear at CHU LAI. Supply from the PCS, wherein the TAC-LOG was embarked, worked smoothly and efficiently.

2. When the operation was extended, the PCS then became the primary source of supply for both BLTs. Helicopters would have been a feasible method of supply had the operation lasted the planned 24-48 hours. The extension of the operation and the associated shortage of helicopters necessitated the establishment of an RL7 supply dump in the RL7-7 CP complex for all units. This dump maintained a two day supply of MCI rations, Class V and as

[REDACTED]

much water as could be stored. The BLTs were supplied rapidly from this dump by helicopters and LVTs.

(b) Operation of the TAC-LOG. The USS CABILDO (LSD-16) (PCS) was the source of resupply where helicopters could land on the superdeck and LVTs could swim aboard for supplies. This method of resupply proved to be extremely efficient, and less time was lost than when landing supplies by small boat, despite the slower speed of the LVTs. The LVTs were moved inland to the RLT supply dump and frequently directly to the user.

(2) Recommendation.

(a) That if the situation permits, embark landing force supplies on the PCS.

(b) That the PCS be assigned as LVT haven.

(c) That an LSD with a superdeck be utilized as PCS, and that its helo platform not be used for landing force supplies and equipment.

(3) Comment. The resupply of water proved to be the largest logistics problem encountered. Units normally hold enough water cans to carry two gallons of water per man per day. This is inadequate in this climate on fast moving operations. Some water was resupplied by helicopter, but the bulk of it was resupplied by LVT.

(4) Recommendation. That the various methods of transporting water (i.e. M-107 Trailer in LVT; inflatable water container in LVT; organic transportation; etc.) be explored in the planning phase and that several alternatives be available in the final plan draft.

b. Maintenance.

(1) Problem. Due to the planned short duration of the operation, no maintenance services were provided for, and all material casualties had to be evacuated to the PCS.

(2) Recommendation. Planning phase should include the various methods of providing repairs/replacements of major items of equipment (maintenance floats; repair teams; what level; location; etc.).

c. Medical Evacuation.

(1) Comment. Plans were made to evacuate all minor casualties to the battalion aid station (BAS) and all major casualties to Company B, 3d Medical Battalion, which has a complete surgical team. When the LPH arrived on station off the landing beach, serious casualties were to be evacuated to the LPH. When the action was at its greatest, there was a casualty overload at Company B because casualties were occurring rapidly.

(2) Recommendation. All personnel (including helicopter crew chief, small boat coxwains, corpsmen, small unit leaders, etc.) should be briefed on the procedures and methods of medical evacuation. WIA's must be moved to relatively secure areas for heli-evacuation. Plans should include alternate medical facilities, if available, to process the overload of casualties.

d. Transportation.

(1) Problem. Initially no organic transportation was taken on the operation. Reliance was placed on LVTs and helicopters. When the last BLT entered the operation, wheeled vehicles were brought in. They were of negative value because of poor trafficability.

e. Communications.

(1) Comment. The basic reference (Div Op Order 321A-65) was not distributed to all participating ships, aircraft and ground units. Communications personnel were obliged to improvise after execution commenced.

(2) Recommendation. All Naval, Air Force and Army units hold JANAP 119 and 195. These publications should be the guide for unit call signs and frequencies/designators.

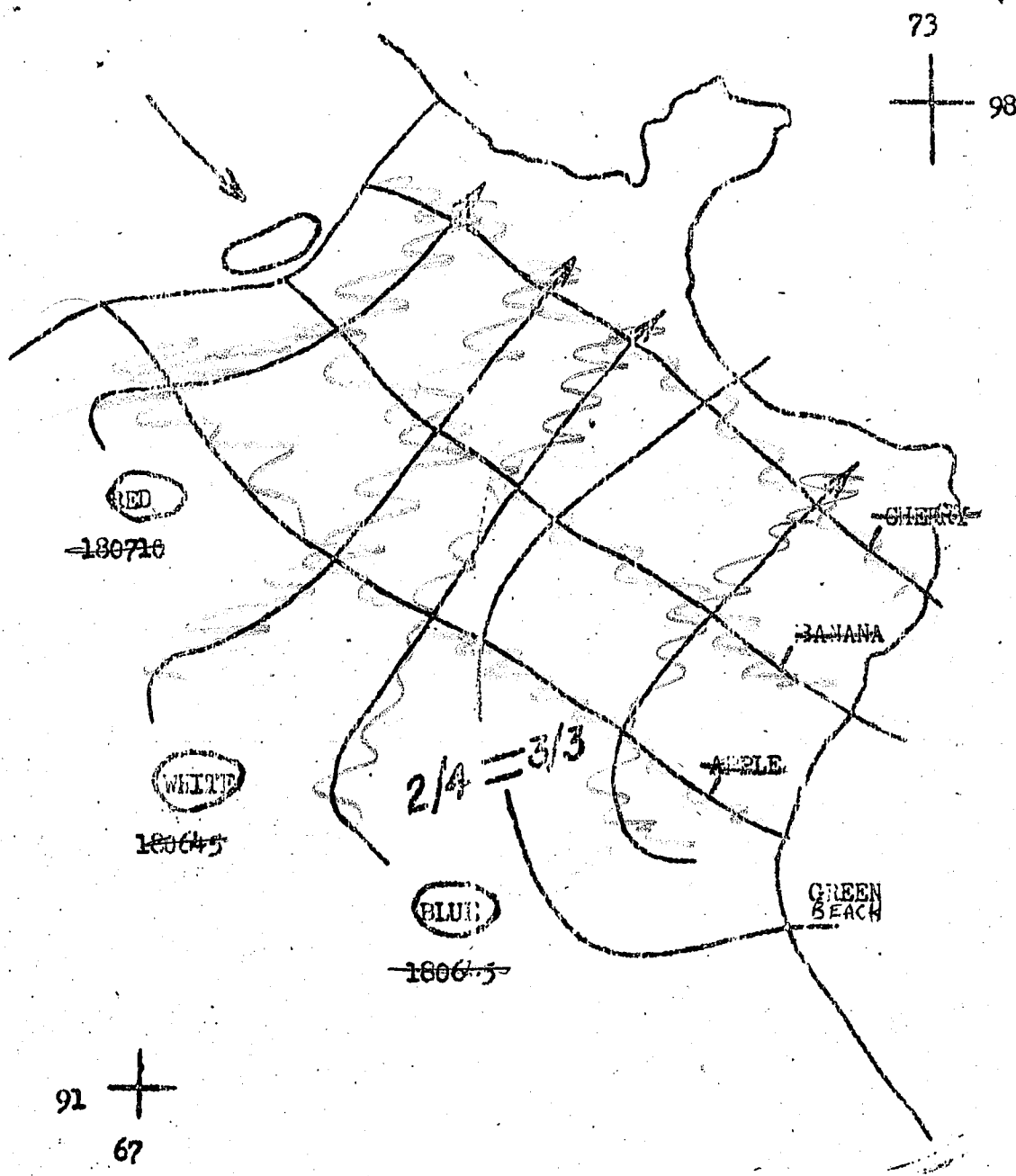
(3) Comment. The LVTP-5 command tractor does not have the capability to net with single side band equipment.

(4) Recommendation. Install a single side band radio capable of netting with the AN/PRC-47.

14. None.

15. None.

16. None.

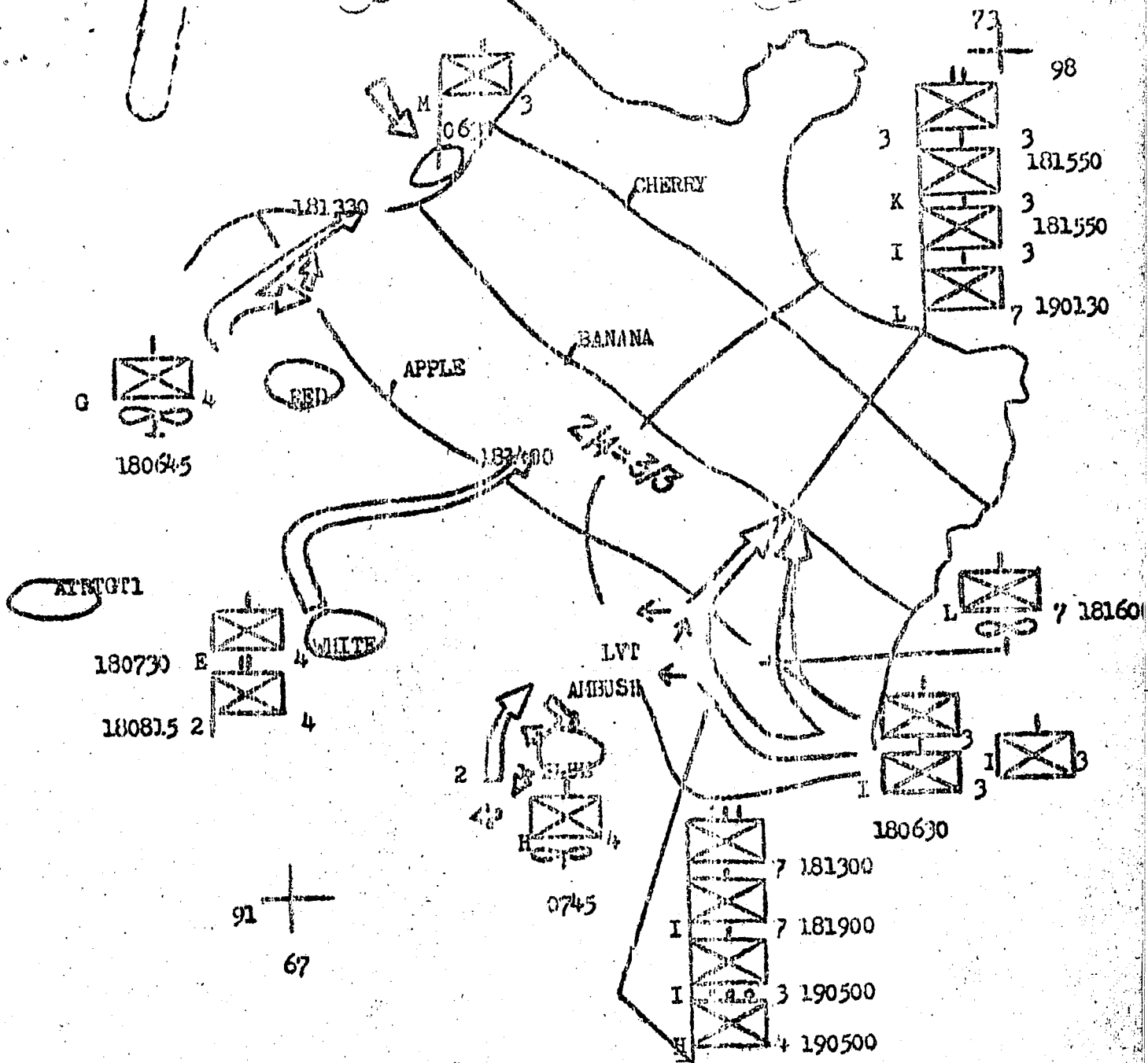


Maps: AMD L701 1:50,000 Sheets 6756 I, 6757 II, III

Enclosure (1) Concept of Operation Overlay to RLIF-7 After Action Report L-65
(Operation STARLITE)

Time Zone: Hotel

ENCLOSURE (1)



Maps: AMS L701 1:50,000 Sheets 6756 I, 6757 II, III

Time Zone: Hotel

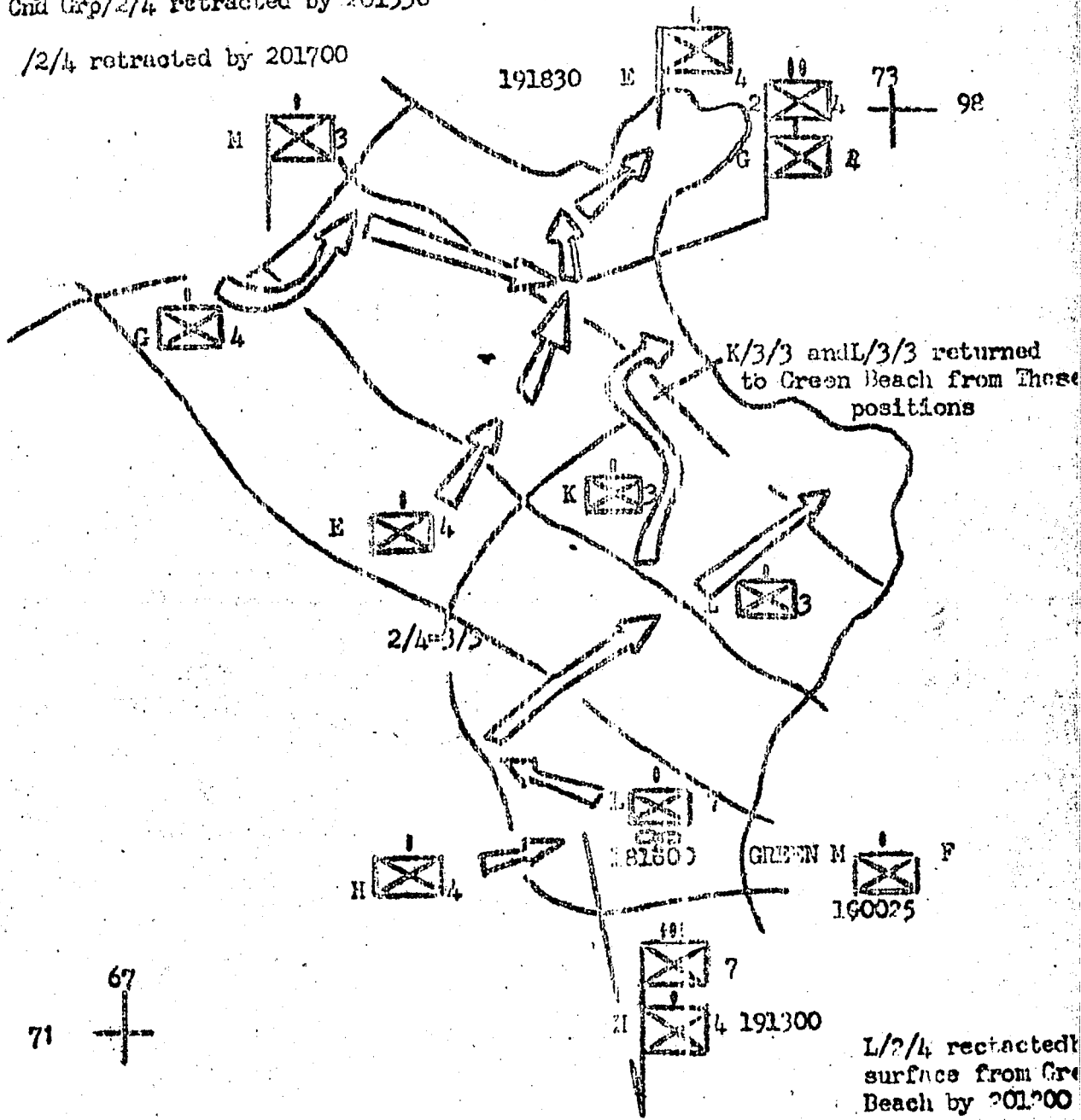
Enclosure (2) D-Day Operation Ashore Overlay to
RLT-7 After action Report 1-65 (Operation STARLITE)

ENCLOSURE (2)

W/2/4 retracted by 201230

Cnd Grp/2/4 retracted by 201530

/2/4 retracted by 201700



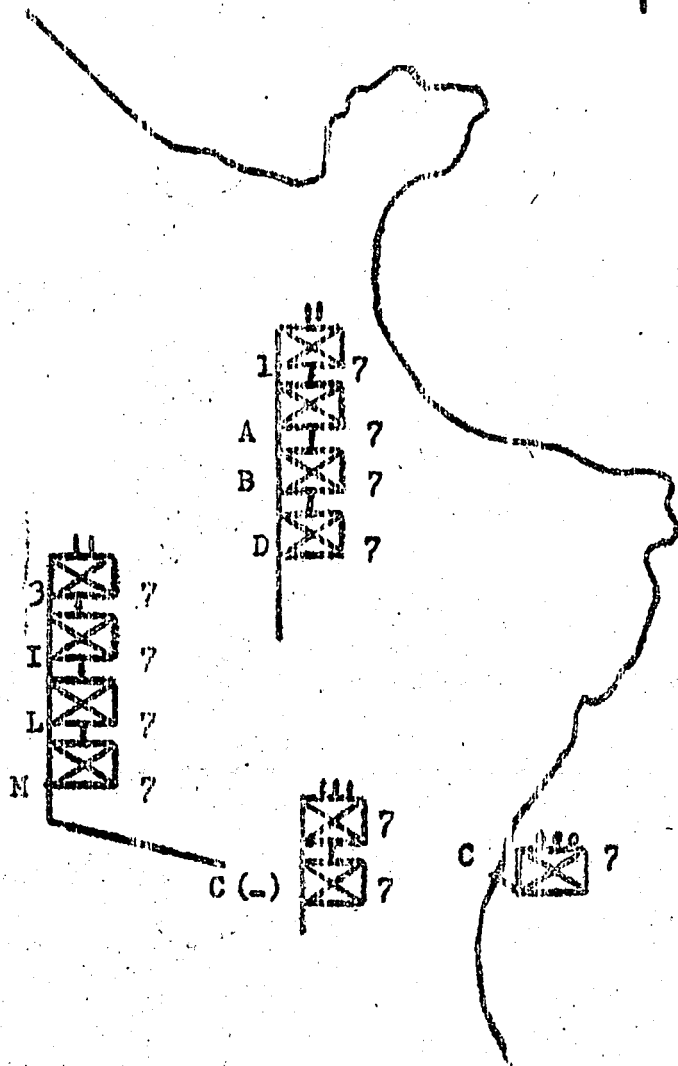
Maps: A MS 1701 1:50,000 Sheets 6756 I, 6757, III, II

This Zone : Hotel

Enclosure(5) D+1 Operations Ashore Overlay 20
ALP-7 After Action Report 1-65 (Operation STARLITE)

ENCLOSURE (3)

73
99



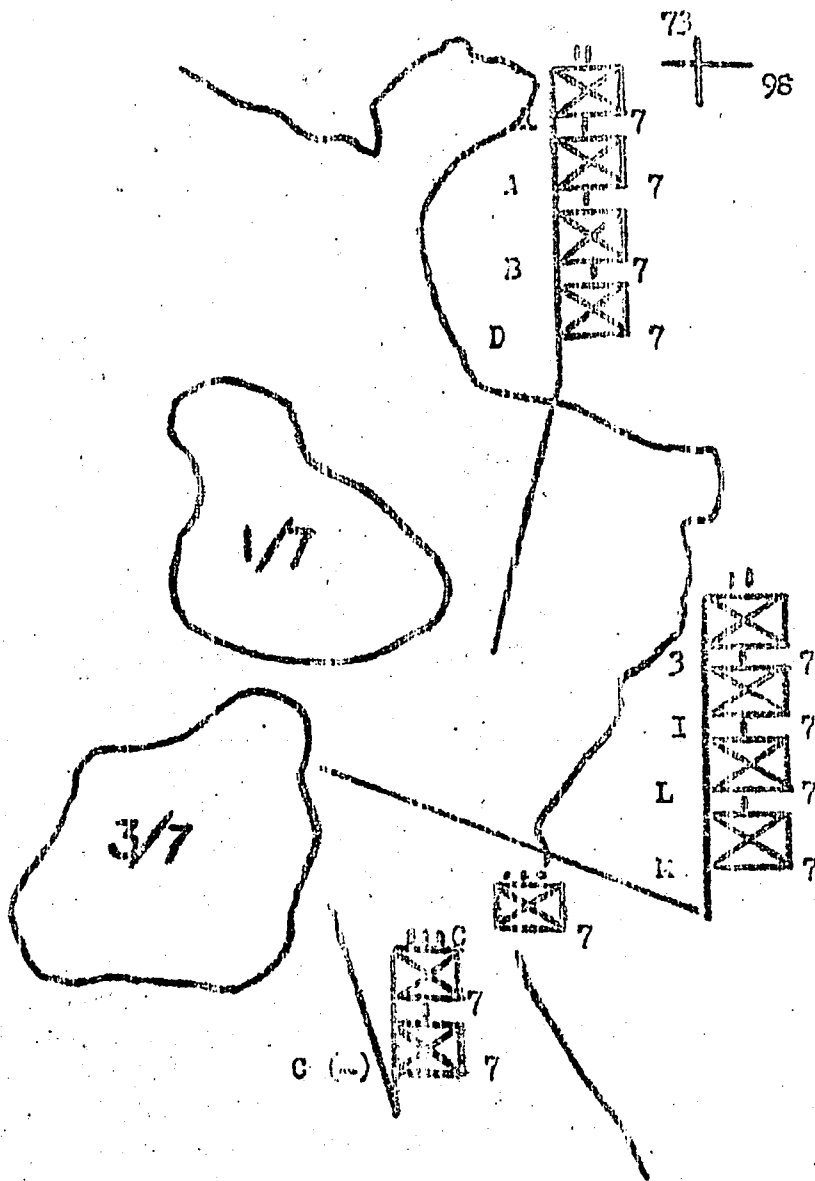
90
67

Maps: AMS L701 1:50,000 Sheets 5756 I, 6757 II, III

Time Zones: II

Enclosure (7) D-2 Disposition of Units Overlay to
RLT-7 After Action Report 1-65 to (Operation STARLITE)

ENCLOSURE (4)

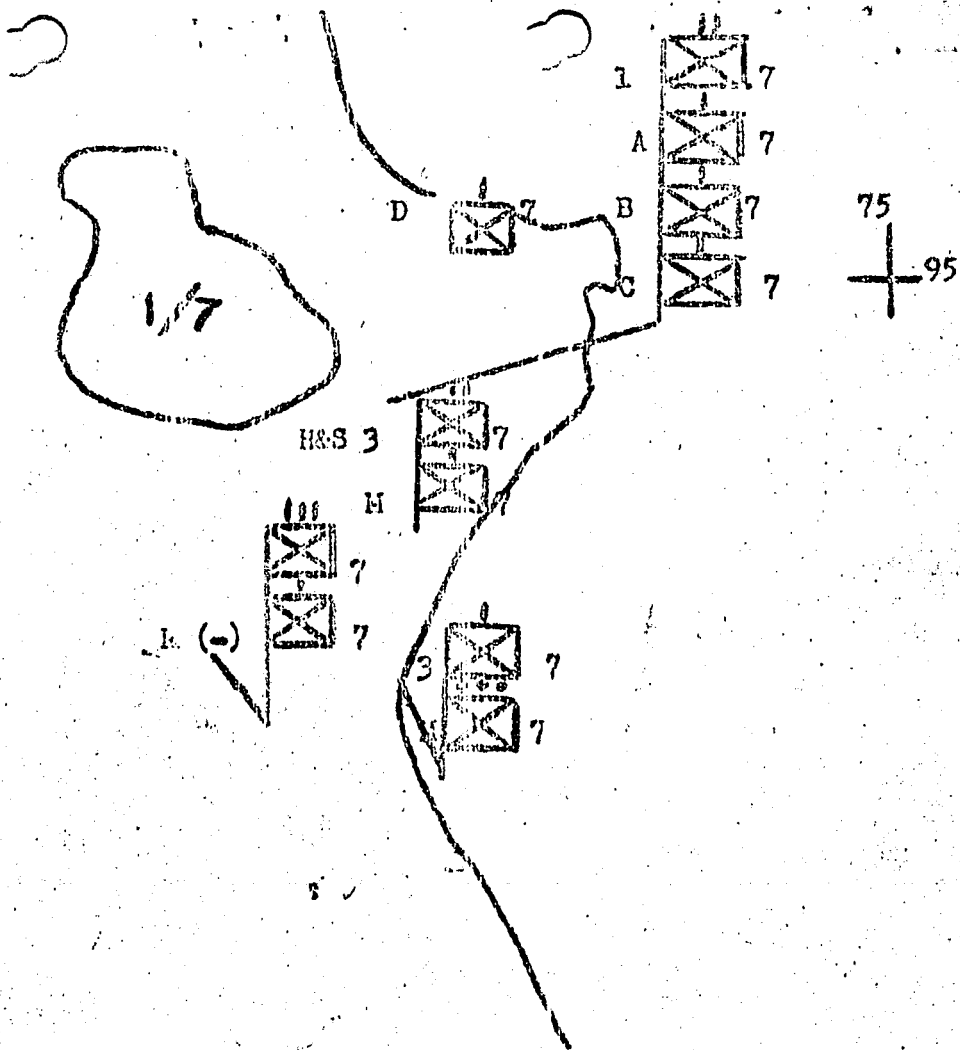


Maps: ALS L701 1:50,000 Sheets 6756 I, 6757 II, III

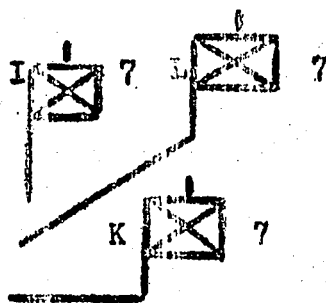
Title/Zone: Hotel

Enclosure (9) D-3 Disposition of Units Overlay to
 DMI-7 After Action Report 1-65 (Operation STABILITE)

ENCLOSURE (50)



88 +
68

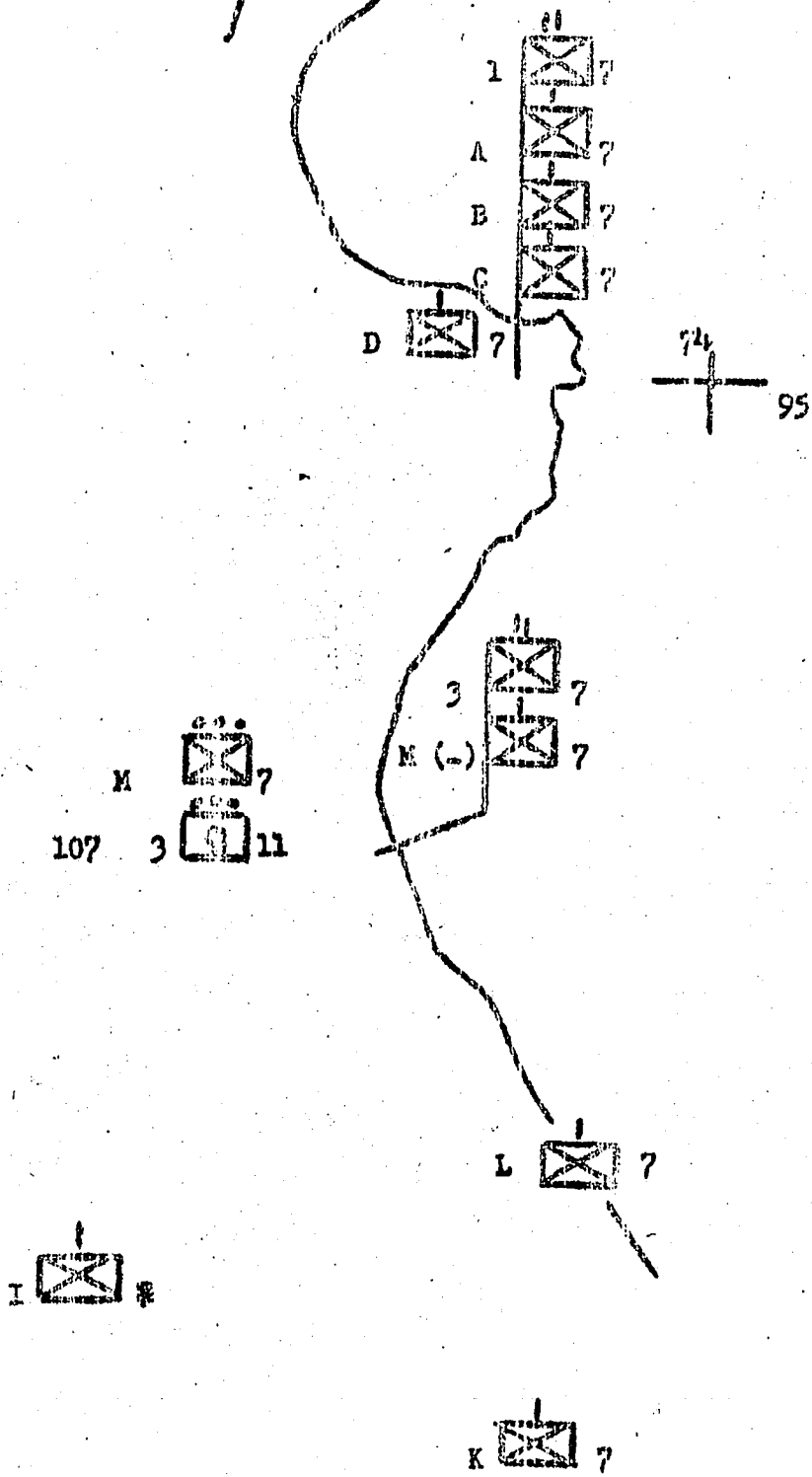


Maps: AMS L701 1:50,000 Sheets 6756, I 6757, II, III

Title Zone: Hotan

Enclosure (10) D+4 Disposition of Units Overlay to
RLI-7 After Action Report L-65 (Operation STABLETS)

ENCLOSURE (6)

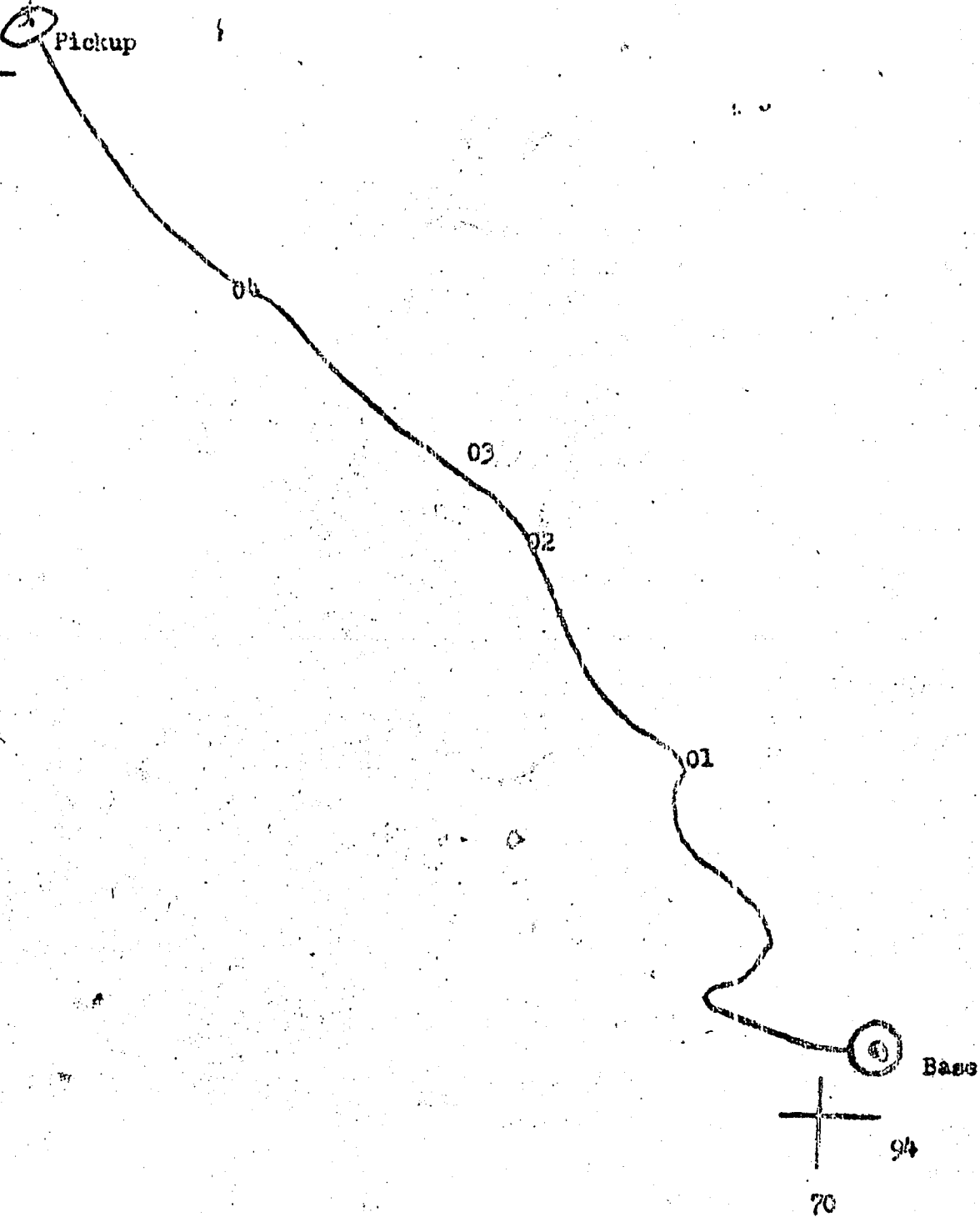


Maps: AMS 1:701 1:50,000 Sheets 6756 I, 6757 II, III
 Time Zone: H

Enclosure (11) D+5 Disposition of Units Overlay to
 RLT-7 After Action Report 1-65 (Operation STARLITE)

ENCLOSURE (7)

Pickup
02
63



Base
94
70

Maps: AMS L701 1:50,000 Sheets 6756 I, 6757II, III

Time Zone: Hotel

Enclosure (12) Route of March of BLT 1/7 Overlay to
BLT-7 After Action Report 1-65 (Operation STARLITE)

ENCLOSURE (8)