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1st Cav Div
Div Arty
Radcliff, Camp
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U.S. Army. 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)
After action report (3 Sept'66 attack
on Camp Radcliff) (U).
17 September 1966.

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HEADQUARTERS
3D BRIGADE
1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)
APO San Francisco, California 96490

AVDARD-O

17 September 1966

SUBJECT: After Action Report (3 Sep 66 Attack on Camp Radcliff) (U)

TO: Commanding General
1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)
ATTN: ACOFS, G3
APO San Francisco 96490

1 (C) GENERAL: Camp Radcliff was mortared on the night of 3 September 1966. The mortar fire was concentrated on the Golf Course, and damaged parked helicopters as well as inflicting personnel casualties. The camp was alerted and Division Artillery fired the planned countermortar program.

A small reconnaissance patrol outside of camp briefly contacted what is considered to have been the withdrawing enemy force which fired the mortars. The enemy force was estimated at one platoon. The patrol opened fire on and pursued the enemy with mortar and artillery fire. Based on this contact one company of the 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry landed by air assault at night and tried to intercept the enemy. They were unable to gain contact, and another company sent out by air assault after daylight was also unable to make contact. The search for the enemy continued for 48 hours and discovered the mortar firing positions, but the enemy force was not found.

2 (C) INTELLIGENCE:

a. Weather: On the night of 3 September 1966, sky conditions were 600 ft broken, 2,000 ft overcast, visibility 7 miles, wind calm. The moon was nearly full, having just begun to wane, and had risen at approximately 2104 hours. Temperature was in the high 70's.

b. Terrain: Terrain in the vicinity of the firing positions at RA 453491 is nearly flat with cleared ground between the barrier line and the enemy mortar firing position. The firing position was masked from the observation towers because it was located on the reverse slope of a gentle incline sloping toward the streamline. Heavier vegetation found near the streamline could have provided concealment for approaching and leaving the firing position.

c. Enemy Situations: No enemy forces were known to be in the immediate vicinity of Camp Radcliff prior to the attack. In interrogation report in 1st Cavalry Division Intelligence Flightlet dated 26

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August 1966 had identified the 407th Sapper Battalion, with mission of reconnaissance and destruction of New Fleiku and An Khe airfields, somewhere in the 3d District, Gia Lai Province. The battalion's 4th Company was reported to be an 82mm mortar company. No further information on this or any other mortar unit was received prior to the attack on Camp Redcliff.

3. (C) SUMMARY OF ACTION:

a. At 2150 hours the first of 119 82mm mortar rounds started falling on and around the Golf Course heliport at Camp Redcliff (Incl 2 photo of mortar strike area). The firing continued for about five minutes and simultaneously alerted the Division, Division Artillery, Third Brigade, and other major headquarters. During those first five minutes, the General Alert sirens were sounded and General Alert notification was passed on the 3d Brigade Base Defense Net. Division Artillery ordered the counter mortar program (Quick-Fire) to be fired and the two alert aerial rocket artillery helicopters to take off.

b. AF illumination was requested at 2205 and the first flame aircraft arrived at 2226.

c. At 2211 1-12 Cav (base defense battalion) reported that one of their patrols spotted an estimated enemy platoon at BR 437492, moving northwest.

d. At 2211, reports began arriving confirming that reinforcing units were arriving at the C and D Rings. See Incl 1 for unit closing times.

e. At 2213, Patrol #3, B/1-12, an eight man patrol, contacted the enemy unit at BR 435496 and opened fire with small arms, but contact was quickly broken by the enemy. Illumination of the area was requested. The patrol leader requested and adjusted mortar and artillery fire as the enemy retreated. (1-12 Cav)

f. At 2215, 3d Bde ordered 2-5 Cav to move their alert company (Co B) to the NE portion of the Golf Course for heli-lift to interdict the retreating enemy.

g. At 2215, a radio check was made with Vinh Thanh CIDG Camp, and a report of negative enemy contact in the area was received.

h. Division Artillery fire was shifted gradually at about 2215 from preplanned Quick Fire to observed fire missions.

i. At 2230, Bde notified 1-12 Cav to take OPCON of B Co, 2-5 Cav. The company, with Pathfinders, boarded helicopters. 1-12 Cav reported that the reaction force primary LZ was BR 409531 and the alternate LZ was BR 418522.

j. At 2259, B/2-12 Cav was alerted to replace B/2-5 Cav as reaction force for Vinh Thanh. (DIOC)

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k. At 2300, three rounds of small arms fire were reported vicinity towers 50 and 51. The target was engaged with small arms and mortar fire and activity ceased. (1-12 Cav)

l. At 2309, the C Ring defenses were manned and ready.

m. At 2325, two (2) F-100's flew an immediate skyspot using 500 lb GP bombs at BR 37855425, and at 2226 the "Spooky" illumination aircraft (flares and guns) arrived, replaced at 0045 hours by another "Spooky", who was later replaced by a "Smoky Bear" (flares only) that dropped illumination until daylight. (3d Bde ALO)

n. At 2325, B/2-12 Cav became reaction force for Vinh Thanh CIDG Camp. (DTOC)

o. At 2326, B/2-5 Cav reported to be airborne to the alternate LZ, assaulting at 2355 hours. Negative enemy contact. (1-12 Cav)

p. At 0009, A/1-12 Cav radar detected a small unit at BR 491-475. Confirmed not friendly, and engaged w/mortars. Nothing further reported.

q. "Cooked Fat" (with blackout until dawn) was received from Division Headquarters at 040050, off 040100, ending the General Alert. (DTOC)

r. Saturation squad-sized patrolling was continued outside the perimeter the remainder of the night, and at 0840, C/1-7 Cav air-assaulted to LZ OEL (BR 435554) and at 1530 hrs into LZ OUTCK (BR 432-578). A and B Co, 1-7 Cav reinforced 1-12 Cav foot patrols after daylight to search around the camp. Four 82mm mortar base plate impressions were found in the ground at BR 453491, just outside of the barrier wire northwest of Camp Radoliff. 27 plastic fuze wall covers and three unfired 82mm mortar rounds were lying nearby.

4. (C) SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

a. Personnel Casualties: Total 4 KIA and 76 MIA (4 KIA and 56 MIA from 15th TC Bn; 12 MIA from Division Artillery; and 8 from other units). (G-1)

b. Seventy-seven helicopters were damaged (one by direct hit).

c. Division Artillery fired 2398 rounds of 105mm, 400 rounds of 155mm, 11 rounds of 8", and one round of 175mm; total 2810 rounds. (Div Arty AA Rpt)

d. 1-12 Cav mortar platoon fired 144 rounds of HE and one round illuminating. (1-12 Cav)

e. Twenty-two aerial rocket artillery helicopters engaged ten suspect targets, expending 428 rockets (2.75"). (Div Arty AA Rpt)

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f. Two AC-47 aircraft (Spooky) fired 9,600 rounds of 7.62mm and illumination flares from 03226 until daylight. (Bde ALO)

g. Outside of the barrier at the time of the attack, there were eight platoons from the 1-12 Cav in ambush positions and on patrol; augmented by one platoon, plus two rifle companies after the attack. (Bde Journal Entries)

5. (C) CONCLUSIONS

a. With the difficulty of establishing a 100% effective defense against mortars well known, it is mandatory that maximum use of passive measures be applied.

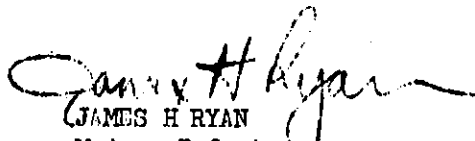
b. The Aerial Rocket Artillery airborne countermortar flights had established a pattern of not being airborne until 2200 hrs. This left about two hours of darkness without their surveillance, which somewhat lessened the enemy's problem.

6. (C) RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. That the dispersion of aircraft be expanded and the revetment building program be accelerated for both aircraft and personnel.

b. That paragraph 3b (3) to Incl 1 to Tab A to App 2 to Annex D to OPORD 6615 be changed from "Division Artillery will maintain aerial surveillance of the Division Base from 2200 to 0500 daily" to read "Division Artillery will maintain aerial surveillance of the Division Base from 2200 to 0500." (Bde ALO)

FOR THE COMMANDER:


JAMES H RYAN
Major, Infantry
Adjutant

3 Incls

- 1 Reinforcement Ready Times
- 2 Photo of Mortar Strike Area
- 3 Overlay of Action Area

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SUBJECT: After Action Report (Reinforcement of Barrier 3 Sep 66 Attack on Camp Radcliff).

1. (C) 70th Engr Reserve/Reaction force ready 2205
2. (C) C-Ring
 - a. 15th Admin 2220
 - b. 3d Bdo 2229
 - c. 13th Sig 2235
 - d. 2d Bdo 2245
 - e. Div Arty 2250
 - f. 1st Bdo 2309
3. (C) D-Ring
 - a. Spt Cnd 2215
 - b. 15th Admin 2220
 - c. 34th QM 2225
3. (C) A-Ring
 - a. Airfield Cnd 2230

Incl 1

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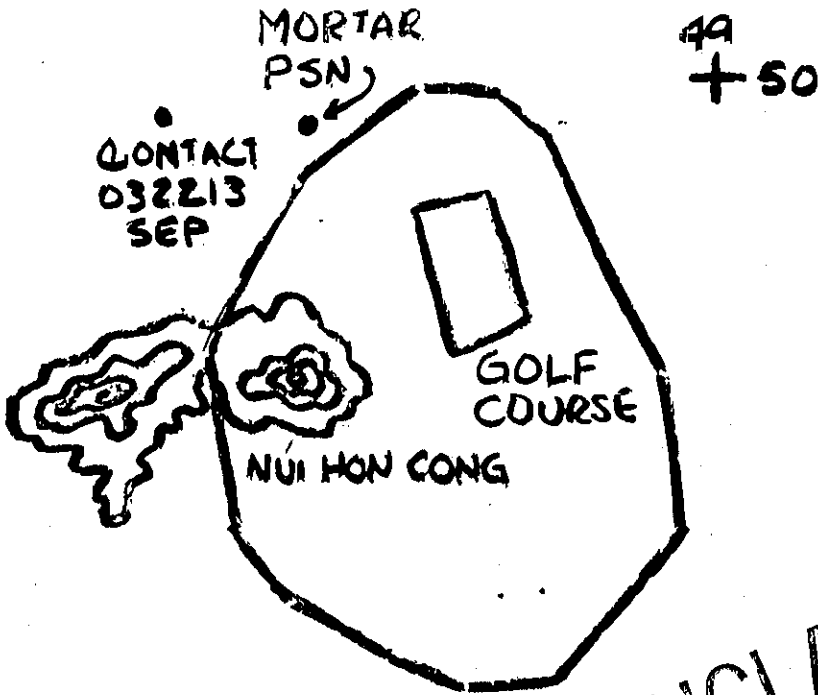
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INCL #3 TO REPORT ON 3 SEP 66
ATTACK ON CAMP RADCLIFFE

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SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS: MACV J3-32)

HEADQUARTERS, 1ST AIR CAVALRY DIVISION, APO 96490 27 SEP 1965

THRU: Commanding General, I Field Force Vietnam, ATTN: G-3, APO 96240

THRU: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, ATTN: G-3, APO 96307

TO: Commander US Military Assistance Command Vietnam, ATTN: J343, APO 96243

1. (U) The attached report is submitted in accordance with paragraph 5, MACV Directive 335-8.

2. (C) In addition to the facts presented at inclosure 1, the following additional information is considered pertinent:

a. One of the Division counter-mortar radars was oriented in the direction from which the attack was launched. This radar picked up the ascending leg of the trajectory of a round, and produced a set of coordinates for the location of the enemy mortar. These coordinates plotted within the barrier, and it was subsequently determined that crew error had caused the development of false data. By the time the error was located the attack had terminated. The radar did function correctly and produced data which, but for crew error, would have pinpointed the location of the mortar.

b. The H & I program included fires along avenues of approach leading to the enemy mortar position. The mortar position itself was in an area patrolled by the defense force. This area was not included in the H & I program due to patrol activity, however concentrations were planned in the area.

3. (C) Action taken to minimize enemy success in future mortar attacks on Camp Radcliff:

a. Ground patrolling has been increased.

b. Helicopter coverage of the base camp has been extended to new limits of BENT to BMNT.

c. A COPL has been established approximately 2000 meters forward of the perimeter of the barrier, and is designed to preclude successful enemy infiltration to within mortar range of critical installations at CAMP RADCLIFF.

d. The helicopter dispersal plan is implemented each night.

e. Construction of revetments for the Golf Course parking area has become a high priority project for all units at CAMP RADCLIFF.

4. (U) GP 4

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AVDAGT
SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (RCS: MACV J3-32) 27 SEP 1966

FOR THE COMMANDER:

1 Incl
as

DANIEL B. PLYLER
LTC. AGC
Adjutant General

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- 1 - CINCSARPAC, ATTN: GPOP-MH, APO 96558
- 1 - CG, USARV ATTN: AVC-Historical Division, APO 96307
- 4 - CG, I FORCEV ATTN: G3, APO 96240

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