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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 2D BATTALION (AIRBORNE) 502D INFANTRY
APO SF 96347

AVBD-C

12 August 1967

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Operation HOOD RIVER

TO: Commanding General
1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division
ATTN: AVAD-C
APO U.S. Forces 96347

1. General:

- a. Name of Operation: HOOD RIVER
- b. Date of Operation: 020700 AUG - 130900 AUG 1967
- c. Location: Quang Ngai Province
- d. Control Headquarters: 2D Battalion (Airborne) 502D Infantry
- e. Reporting Officer: LTC Ralph Puckett Jr.

2. Task Organization: Ref OPOD 31-67 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division

3. Supporting Forces:

a. Army Aviation was utilized for troop movement, resupply, command and control, gunship support, medical evacuation and refugee evacuation. During the initial assault into VEGHEL AO, 46 UH1D's and 4 CH-47's lifted the entire 2/502 in two lifts. The MIKE FORCE followed in 3 Chinooks. The Battalion (+) was deployed into VEGHEL AO from QUANG NGAI Airstrip in 1 hour 27 minutes. Altogether one Battalion size assault, four company size assaults and two platoon size assaults were conducted during Operation HOOD RIVER.

In the problem of refugee evacuation, Army Aviation again proved to be responsive and capable. The only shortcoming during this operation was the lack of Utility Aircraft for Administration and Logistics purposes.

b. Tactical Air Support was provided by the Air Force, and employed for LZ Preps, suspected enemy locations, and support of troops in contact. Strikes were pre-planned, requests went in through the Brigade Net. One pre-planned strike was diverted to the MIKE FORCE during contact. The following Airstrikes were conducted in support of the STRIKE FORCE during Operation HOOD RIVER:

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<u>DTG</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>MISSION</u>
020730	BS 415836	IZ Prep
020730	BS 428830	IZ Prep
031030	BS 367857	Suspected Enemy Location
031600	BS 348810	"
041230	BS 319831	"
050200	BS 337826	"
050930	BS 373859	"
061530	BS 485814	Troops in Contact
071030	BS 306819	Suspected Enemy Location
081030	BS 323844	"
101135	BS 318821	"
111045	BS 317821	"

g. C Battery 2/320th Artillery was employed in Direct Support of the STRIKE FORCE. Information on the number missions fired is not available.

d. Combat Engineer Teams from A Company 326th Engineer Battallion were employed for IZ clearing, TAC CP fortifications, and destruction of VC tunnel and bunker complexes. These teams were attached to the maneuver elements, both during the assault and throughout the operation.

e. A MIKE FORCE Company from HA THANH was attached to the 2/502, and operated as a separate maneuver unit during HOOD RIVER. The first element of the Battalion to engage the enemy in strength, the MIKE FORCE added to the body and weapons count for the operation.

f. Scout Dog Teams from the 42D Scout Dog Platoon were attached to two companies for Operation HOOD RIVER. Excessive heat and humidity, coupled with dry terrain, rendered the dogs less effective.

g. A squad of National Police assisted in the collection, sorting and evacuation of refugees during the second phase of HOOD RIVER. The lack of a qualified interpreter hindered their employment somewhat.

4. Intelligence:

On 2 August 1967 the 2/502 was deployed West of QUANG NGAI City in QUANG NGAI Province. Prior to entering the AO, it was reported that the following units were operating in the area: 409th Main Force Sapper Bn, 150th Main Force Engineer Bn and elements of the 1st VC Regiment. Reliable sources also indicated that the 5th, 8th, B1, and B2 Local Forces were active in the area.

During the first four days of operations, light contact with a small enemy group resulted in the capture of one Mosin Nagant rifle. 67 detainees were also taken, but no indications of any sizable enemy forces were found.

One camp consisting of 14 bunkers and 15 shelters was found at BS 420825. This base camp had not been occupied recently. A rice cache of 900 lbs was located and destroyed at BS 425850.

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The enemy encountered during Phase I of HOOD RIVER were members of local forces; it is doubtful that any of them belonged to sizable units. On 6 AUG the STRIKE FORCE moved east in its assigned AO, leaving the dry scurb-covered mountains and entering the more populous lowlands and rice paddy areas. The rainy season had not begun, and the paddies were hard. Cover was sparse. This move signified the start of Phase II.

During the 7 day period that followed contacts with small groups (1-5) of the enemy resulted in 27 VC KIA, 16 VCC, 105 detainees, and 8 weapons. Additional equipment captured consisted of 7 Chicom grenades, 1 IAW, small arms ammunition, documents, webbing, 3 butterfly mines, clothing, and medical supplies.

Seven major rice caches were extracted to District Headquarters at QUANG NGAI.

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
BS 458784	1500 lbs
BS 475735	15000 lbs
BS 485792	4000 lbs
BS 463735	6000 lbs
BS 485814	1500 lbs
BS 478723	12000 lbs

A rock salt cache of 6 tons was extracted from BS 431799.

The following significant base camps were discovered in the AO:

At BS 396830; consisting of 5 hootches, 60 bunkers, (half with overhead cover), and numerous spider-holes.

At BS 467796; a hospital complex with 3 large buildings, long tables, tunnel complex, and 30 bottles penicillin.

At BS 450758; a hospital complex with 4 small hootches and a storage area.

All the above-mentioned complexes were destroyed.

The enemy encountered during Phase II were similar to those found in Phase I; members of local forces operating in the area. There was no indication of large enemy units.

5. Mission: 2d Battalion (Airborne) 502d Infantry conducts operations to find, fix and destroy VC/NVA forces and to neutralize VC/NVA base camps in the northwest portion of VEGHEL AO commencing D-Day, H-Hour in coordination with 2/327, ARVN, ROK, and CIDG forces.

6. Concept of Operation:

a. Phase I: 2/502 conducts air-mobile assault into 3 LZ's in VEGHEL AO commencing D-Day, H-Hour (020800 AUG 67). LZ preps will consist of Tac Air followed by Artillery. C Co assaults LZ RED (BS 403839), A Co assaults LZ BLUE (BS 428830), ROK assaults LZ WHITE (BS 415836), B Co and MIKE force land on LZ WHITE, and the TAC CP is established on LZ WHITE. All units conduct search and destroy operations in assigned zone. See Sketch 1.

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b. Phase II: On D+4 2/502 repositions forces with Recondos extracting to Tac CP on D+3 and establishing stay-behind force until D+5, then continuing S&D to south. Co C conducts air-mobile assault on D+4 into LZ GREEN (BS 467813) and continues S&D to south in AREA 1 (see sketch 1). MIKE force conducts air-mobile assault on D+4 into LZ YELLOW (BS 478816) and conducts S&D in AREA 2. Co's A and B continue S&D to south in adjusted zones.

7. Execution:

On 1 August the 2/502 air-lifted by C-130 from CARENTAN Base Camp to QUANG NGAI City Airstrip. On 2 Aug, at 0745, the first lift of 46 slicks and 4 Chinooks took off with C Co and elements of A Co and Recondos in the assault of VEGHIL AO. All 3 LZ's were well-prepped, and negative contact was made as the maneuver elements completed the assault and began S&D operations in their assigned zones (see sketch 1). The TAC CP was secured by the mortar platoon.

For two days no enemy contact was made. On the evening of the 3rd, however, the Recondos were fired upon by a PF outpost on the border of the AO. They returned fire and called in Gunships and Artillery. A check fire was called, and it eventually came to light that we were engaged with friendlylies after the S-5 Overlay was examined (it showed a NO FIRE ZONE where the fire-fight was taking place) and radio contact established with TRA BONG.

At 051245H, vicinity BS 374814, B Co contacted 3 VC wearing black PJ's who were setting up an ambush. The 3 fled, leaving 1 Mosin Nagant rifle. That afternoon Recondos moved to the TAC CP to prepare for staybehind. Very few signs of enemy activity were found in this part of the AO, although Co A picked up 67 people, mostly women and children.

On 6 Aug MIKE force and Co C moved east by air assault, and B and A Co's continued S&D to the south. At 1455 MIKE force was engaged by 12 VC, some armed, in a village at BS 484814. Withdrawing to the west of the road outside the village, the MIKE's Leader called in Gunships and TAC Air with the help of Major Ferrine (Bn S-3) in the C&C ship. Before the day was over, the MIKE force picked up 5 VC and 2 weapons, the result of both ground and supporting forces. At BS 473794 260 refugees were collected by a patrol from the TAC CP, led by Capt. Anderson (Bn S-2). Capt. Anderson's element also uncovered several rice caches and killed 2 VC, capturing 1 weapon. That same evening Co A killed 2 VC in contacts near BS 442782. The VC were traveling in groups of 2-5, and wore pistol belts and canteens.

On 7 Aug A Co killed 3 VC and captured 2 weapons at BS 443784, near the location of the previous day's contacts. That evening Co A made several more contacts in the same general vicinity, resulting in 4 VC (BC), 1 weapon, and 26 detainees. Also on 7 Aug the MIKE force continued to attract Refugees, and other units made sporadic contacts resulting in several VC (BC) and 3 POW.

On 8 Aug A Co received small arms fire from a location in the 2/327 AO, resulting in 3 JS WHA. Permission was obtained from the 2/327 to engage the enemy with Artillery and Gunships, and after searching the area, A Co located 2 VC (BC) with 2 weapons.

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Units continued to search the area, making small contacts, discovering rice caches, and collecting refugees, until 12 Aug, when a stand-down was held in the AO. Units were resupplied in preparation for the next operation, which began on 13 Aug with an air-mobile assault to another AO further north.

8. Results:

VC KIA	27
VCC (CPT)	16
REFUGEES	1020
US WHA.	6

EQUIP CAPT FROM THE ENEMY: 1 Thomps SMG, 1 M-14, 4 Carbines, 1 Mosin Nagant, 1 M-1, 1 MAS-36, 7 Chicom Grenades, 1 72mm LAW, small arms ammo, 22.5 tons rice, 3 tons rock salt.

9. Administration and Logistics:

a. Supply: There were not enough items on hand at the FSP, and supplies of those items stocked there were insufficient. Class I ran out of paper plates on 9 Aug, making it impossible to feed hot meals to the companies in the field. Trays and mess kits were sent forward for use at the TAC CP and FSP. Class II & IV ran out of small sizes; mediums were issued in lieu of.

A mess hall and 1 3/4 ton truck were sent to the FSP. This worked fairly well, but required extra supervision at all levels. The mess hall fed the FSP, TAC CP, Bde elements at the FSP, and prepared hot meals for the maneuver elements on resupply days.

b. Personnel and casualty evacuation: With the establishment of the FSP direct coordination had to be established between S-1, S-4, and Bde Movement Control to transport replacements, etc. to the forward area and back to CARENTAN. Another difficulty encountered was the processing of medical evacuees. A number of evacuees went directly to CHU LAI from the field, and consequently no paperwork or information of any type was received by the S-1 on them.

c. Transportation: Due to the delays and rather hazy schedules involved with the fixed wing transport from DUC PHO to QUANG NGAI and CHU LAI, the Bn had to use the Utility and C&C ships for a number of missions to the rear. This put a drag on operations in the field. The overall problem was the distance between the rear and the 2 forward echelons. Because of the difficulties met with in the transportation and safe-guarding of paperwork, a courier service has been established for the next operation.

d. Communications: For the distances involved, commo was good overall. It has been suggested by the S-4 that a Radio-Teletype Net would provide more positive control over messages between Bde and Bn rear.

10. Civil Affairs: During Operation HOOD RIVER the following Civil Affairs/Civic Action and psychological warfare operations were performed by

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units and/or members of this Battalion.

a. A total of 1020 refugees (123 men, 355 women, 542 children) were evacuated from a VC dominated area to the refugee center at SON TINH District Headquarters.

1) The operation did not call for the mass movement of refugees, and only those people wishing to leave the area were taken out.

2) All civilians encountered were most anxious to leave, however, and came willingly with all their belongings into the hands of the advancing units.

3) Although no effort was made to pick up large numbers of people, groups would attach themselves to maneuver elements, asking to be taken to a safe area. This resulted in a slowing-down of the search of the area until evacuation could be effected.

4) The collection of these refugees was a two-step process. First, small groups would approach the soldiers. When they were not shot at or harmed in any way, larger groups came out of hiding and followed suit.

5) These people were highly cooperative, and answered questions freely on location of VC units, installations and storage facilities. Some of this questioning led to discovery of food caches.

6) The supporting Aviation units did an outstanding job in providing CH-47's for evacuation of these refugees on such short notice. Even though sniper fire was received on several occasions, the mission was completed with a minimum of delay.

b. Psy-war activities were focused mainly on the civilian population in the Bn AO. The people were informed by leaflets to stay in their homes during hours of darkness and not to travel unnecessarily around the countryside. Loudspeaker broadcasts told the people why we were in the area, and what to do if apprehended.

11. Commander's Analysis and Recommendations:

a. Planning and coordination is just as necessary for airmobile extraction as it is for air assault, and this includes the presence of an Aviation LNO (preferably the mission leader) at the TAC CP prior to the operation. Especially important is a reconnaissance of the PZ's and LZ's by the LNO and S-3 Air (or S-3). This goes a long way toward preventing slipups during the lift, and facilitates any last-minute changes that might be made.

Planning must also include the man on the ground; in the past there has been confusion on ACL, aircraft formation, loading procedures, etc. The need for a Unit Leader's SOP on PZ control has been recognized and met in the 2/502. The Bn will continue to work on improvement of air-mobile operations.

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b. Several times during HOOD RIVER problems were caused by the lack of sufficient liaison with adjacent units, and by inadequate information on control of fires. One incident involved a contact between the Recondo Force and a PF Unit operating out of TRA BONG. The location of this unit was not known to the STRIKE FORCE, and it was not confirmed until the next morning that the fire-fight had actually taken place with a friendly force. During the contact the Recondo's called for a fire mission, which was not cleared. This brought to light the fact that they were operating in a NO FIRE ZONES inside the 2/502 AO. This zone had appeared on the S-5 Overlay, but not on the Operations Overlay. It is recommended that in the future NO FIRE ZONE do not overlap the assigned AO, and that friendly units operating within small arms range of the border be kept well-informed concerning troop locations.

The 2/502 also experienced initial difficulty obtaining the unit locations of the 196th Bde, which was operating to the east.

c. Prior guidance concerning the disposition of detainees and refugees encountered in the AO is essential to smooth operations. When a maneuver element is compelled to wait for instructions from higher regarding large numbers of indigenous personnel in their custody, the mission suffers. When a decision has been made, the lack of aircraft to evacuate these people often causes further delay, and results in a security problem for the unit involved. If this type of situation is expected to occur, arrangements can and should be made in advance (in-so-far as this is possible) by Brigade Civil Affairs.

A similar problem arises when food caches are discovered. The unit generally has to call for instructions on whether to destroy or evacuate the cache. Then decisions must be made on laborers, bags, slings, and aircraft. Much of this detail could be decided upon in advance, and units given clear instructions, i.e. "All caches totaling 5 tons or more, and within 75 meters of a suitable LZ, will be evacuated immediately. Bags, slings, and laborers will be on 30 minute standby." This would allow the commander to plan his actions with a minimum of uncertainty as to how much force he must concentrate to secure the evacuation, and when he can continue the mission.

d. When the C&C or Utility ship are recalled for maintenance or disabled, which happens quite frequently, replacements should be made available. Back-up for this purpose does not seem to be provided for at present. During HOOD RIVER, S-4 at the FSP experienced some difficulty when the Utility was pulled without warning for unspecified periods of time. The result of this is that resupply schedules to the maneuver elements can not be met, and much operational time is lost to units waiting around LZ's for resupply. To keep the companies operational, S-4 must have as much latitude as possible in the logistics area; having a Utility craft on hand is a prerequisite.

e. Confusion on the rules of engagement of enemy forces (or any other groups, for that matter) creates a hazard for the troops. The problem centers around having thorough information about what types of indigenous people will be found in the area, and whether some of them are to be granted safe-conduct, captured, etc. Information on curfews is essential here, as well as the content of any psy-war messages instructing the people to cooperate.

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Methods of surrendering are as important to the troops accepting the surrender as they are to the people who are giving themselves up. Seldom in the past has the content of leaflets and broadcasts been made known to the troopers; this omission can only hinder the psy-war effort. It is suggested that Bde S-5 supply this type of information, prior to deployment and on a continuing basis during the operation.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



E.R. THROCKMORTON
1LT, Infantry
Adjutant

