

VN COLL  
AAR  
502nd Inf Rgt  
2nd Bn  
Wheeler  
c.1

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UNCLASSIFIED

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation  
Wheeler (U).

U.S. ARMY MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE

TO: Commanding General  
1st Bde 101st Abn Div  
ATTN: AVBD-C  
APO SF 96347

1. Name of Operation: Wheeler
2. Dates of Operation: 120658 Sep 67 through 231154 Nov 67.
3. Location: Thang Binh, Tam Ky, and Tien Phuoc Districts, Quang Tin Province (Maps: Vietnam 1:50,000 series L7014, sheets: 6639I,IV; 6640II,III; 6739I,IV; 6740III).
4. Control Headquarters: 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry
5. Reporting Officer: LTC Howard H. Danford
6. TASK ORGANIZATION:
  - a. Effective 12 September 1967:

A/2-502 Engr Clearing Tm Scout Dog Tm	Recondos/2-502 Engr Clearing Tm
B/2-502 Engr Clearing Tm Scout Dog Tm	Battalion Control HHC(-) Hvy Mortar Plt 3(-)/A/326 Engr
C/2-502 Engr Clearing Tm Scout Dog Tm	Mike Force Company (DS) Da Nang

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SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report,  
Operation Wheeler (U)

b. Effective 20 October 1967.

A/2-502	Recondos/2-502
Sqd(-), 3/A/326 Engr	Sqd(-), 3/A/326 Engr
PRU Tm, Quang Tin Province	Scout Dog Tm 42 IPSD
	PRU Tm, Quang Tin Province
B/2-502	Battalion Control
Sqd(-), 3/A/326 Engr	HHC(-)
PRU Tm, Quang Tin Province	Hvy Mortar Plt
	3(-)/A/326 Engr
C/2-502	IPW, 181 MI Det
Sqd(-), 3/A/326 Engr	Interrogator, 9th
PRU Tm, Quang Tin Province	ARVN MI Det

c. The task organization was changed 11 times during Operation Wheeler.

- (1) Mike Force Company was released from OPCON 2-5 2-502 021325 Oct 67.
- (2) Rcn Co/2d ARVN Div was employed in support of 2-502 on 22 Oct and was released from Direct Support on 7 Oct 67.
- (3) Security Plt came under OPCON 2-502 eff 11 Oct 67.
- (4) A/2-502 came under OPCON 1/35 Inf eff 141210 Oct 67.
- (5) Security Plt was released from OPCON 2-502 eff 16 Oct 67.
- (6) Task Organization listed in para 6 line b, became effective 20 Oct 67. A/2-502 was released from OPCON 1/35 effective 200600 Oct 67.
- (7) LRRP Plt came under OPCON 2-502 eff 21 Oct 67 and was released from OPCON 2-502 eff 16 Nov 67.
- (8) Security Plt came under OPCON 2-502 eff 1 Nov 67.
- (9) LRRP Plt came under OPCON 2-502 eff 5 Nov 67 and was released from OPCON 2-502 eff 061615 Nov 67.

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report  
Operation Wheeler (U)

(10) C/2-502 was released to OPCON 2-327 eff 071520 Nov 67 and was released from OPCON 2-327 and returned to 2-502 eff 161143 Nov 67.

(11) LRRP Plt released from OPCON 2-502 eff 16 Nov 67.

7. SUPPORTING FIRES.

- a. C/2-320 Arty, DS
- b. Btry, 3/16 Arty (155T) rein 2-320 Arty from Tien Phuoc.
- c. Army Aviation, Inclosure 6, Air Support.
- d. 7th US Air Force provided close air support. Inclosure 6 Air Support.
- e. 7th US Fleet provided naval gun support.
- f. Mike Force Company.

8. INTELLIGENCE. Inclosure 1 Intelligence

9. MISSION.

a. 2-502 Abn Inf conducted airmobile assaults on 12 Sep into NW portion of UDEN AO to establish blocking positions on suspected avenues of approach/egress and to conduct search and destroy operations.

b. 2-502 conducted search and destroy operations in assigned AO effective 200600 Oct 67. An implied mission was to disrupt the rice harvest in the area.

c. 2-502 moved to occupy the former AO of the 1/35 Inf and establish blocking positions to the west, effective 4 Nov 67.

10. CONCEPT OF OPERATION.

a. 2-502 began phase I of Operation Wheeler on 12 Sep with a heliborne assault on five landing zones in the NW portion of the UDEN AO, and moved into assigned blocking positions on routes of approach and egress, and conducted search and destroy operations beginning 13 Sep.

24 Nov 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report  
Operation Wheeler (U)

b. Phase II began on 20 Oct when 2-502, minus A/2-502, conducted airmobile assaults from Los Banos and Tam Ky, into two LZ's in assigned AO and conducted search and destroy operations. A/2-502 was released from OPCON 1/35 Inf and continued search and destroy operations in assigned AO.

c. Phase III began on 5 November 67 when 2-502 moved into the AO of the 1/35 Inf to assume blocking mission. The Tac CP was relocated on the old CP of the 1/35 at BT131203 and the companies were deployed into the AO.

d. Arty/Air preps on all unsecured LZ's were fired on known or suspected enemy locations. Daisy cutter bombs were employed to clear LZ's. Barrier fires were planned on avenues of approach and egress near LZ's. Priority of fires was to air assaulting elements until completion of the air assault, then units in contact.

#### 11. EXECUTION

a. 2-502 Abn Inf executed Op Wheeler in three phases.

(1) Phase I: 12-14 Sep 67. Search and destroy operations commenced with little significant contact. The battalion swept to the northern boundary of the AO without significant contact, then shifted towards the west of the AO. On 27 Sep, the 2-502 began to make significant contact. From this time to the end of the first phase contacts were characterized by late afternoon enemy offensive actions carrying on into the night. Maximum use was made of "Spooky" and gunships. Artillery defensive targets were plotted and fired in. The terrain over which operations were conducted included dense jungle covered mountains, rolling hills with tall elephant grass and flat valley areas with rice paddies. Heavy rains on occasion limited air support. On 9 Oct, A/2-502 was extracted to base camp for stand down, and, on 14 Oct, came under OPCON 1/35 Inf. On 16 Oct the remainder of 2-502 was extracted from the AO for stand down. This completed Phase I of Operation Wheeler for the 2-502.

(2) Phase II: 20 Oct - 4 Nov 67. A/2-502 was returned to 2-502 control and continued working in assigned AO. Action for the next fifteen days was generally limited to sniper fire. On 1 Nov 67 an airmobile raid was conducted in the vicinity of BT245165 by C/2-502, the LRRP Plt, and the Reconos/2-502.

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report  
Operation Wheeler (U)

The LRRP's and Recondos were employed as blocking forces and C/2-502 was the driving force. Following the raid, the LRRP's were extracted to the CP 1/35 Inf, and C 2-502 and Recondos returned to the Tac CP 2-502 in preparation for planned operations in the southern portion of the AO. These plans were changed in reaction to current intelligence reports.

(3) Phase III: 5-23 Nov 67. The 2-502 was given the mission of blocking in the old AO of the 1/35 Inf and moved to occupy the former Tac CP of the 1/35 on 4 Nov. The A, B, and Recondo elements of the 2-502 marshalled and were deployed from the new Tac CP. C Company was lifted from the old Tac CP to an LZ which was secured by C/1-35 Inf. The same helicopters subsequently extracted C/1-35 Inf. A/2-502 was airlifted to Tac CP 1-327 and moved into its AO from that location. B/2-502 was lifted into an LZ secured by A/2-502 and moved into its assigned AO from that LZ. On 7 Nov C/2-502, which had been designated Bde IAF, was airlifted from our AO and was released to OFCON 2-327.

b. The battalion continued search and destroy operations to the west with little hostile action. A psy-war effort was made and proved effective with local VC turning themselves in and leading our elements to other VC. On 15 Nov, 2-502 was directed to reorient to the northeast. B 2-502 was airlifted to the Tac CP for ground deployment into its new AO while Co A and the Recondos/2-502 began to move by foot to the new AO. C/2-502 was released from OFCON 2-327 and returned to 2-502 control effective upon airmobile insertion into an LZ secured by Recondos 2-502 on 161133H Nov 67.

c. The companies conducted operations in their AO's with negligible contact. On 18 Nov B/2-502 and the Recondos reacted to intelligence gained from a Hoi Chanh regarding a hospital installation in the 2-502 AO. The hospital was in the reported location and six enemy wounded were immediately captured. Psy-war and tracker teams were employed and in the next four days six additional prisoners were taken. As the Recondos moved to support the hospital effort, two large caches of crew served weapons and ammunition were found.

d. All 2-502 companies, the Tac CP, and the DS Arty Battery were extracted from the AO on 23 Nov and moved to Phan Rang for stand down and preparation for future operation.

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report  
Operation Wheeler (U)

e. Significant Actions:

(1) 270050H Sep 67 TAC CP/2-502 Inf vic BT074226 received 15-20 60mm mortar rounds, small arms fire, and grenade fire. 2VC penetrated inside the perimeter. Action continued until 0120H. Spooky and gunships were employed. Results: 12 WHA (minor), 7 WHA (medevac), enemy losses unknown.

(2) 271620H Sep 67 A/2-502 Inf vic BT047243 received automatic weapons fire from multiple directions. Initial distance was approximately 75 meters from front and 100 meters from flank. Forward elements withdrew under covering fire and a company perimeter was formed. As the company dug in, incoming mortar rounds were reported. Artillery, Spooky and gunships were employed throughout the night. Air support was restricted during the early part of the contact due to heavy rain. Contact continued through the day of the 28th with incoming sniper, automatic weapons and mortar fire. Co A was not able to clear the objective on the 28th. Again a perimeter was established and occupied for the night. On 29 Sep, the Recon/2-502 were air assaulted to dominant terrain and a coordinated assault was launched. The area was swept with light resistance. Results: 6NVA KIA (C), 16 rucksacks captured, 3 KHA, 24 WHA (medevac) (includes 8 WHA from friendly LZ prep conducted on 29 Sep).

(3) 021445H Oct 67 A/2-502 Inf vic BT025239 received automatic and .50 cal. machine gun fire. At 1920H A/2-502 was receiving mortar rounds and Spooky was employed. A second mortar attack came at 1945H. At 031015H A/2-502 received automatic weapons fire. At 031045H A/2-502 linked up with B/2-502. Results: 6 KHA, 17 WHA (medevac), enemy results unknown.

(4) 061305 Oct 67 C/2-502 Inf vic BT016216 engaged a platoon sized NVA unit. The action continued and moved to BT015215 and 061345H. Action resulted in 1 KHA, 11 WHA (medevac); 13 NVA KIA (C), 1 heavy machine gun barrel, assorted ammunition, 10 rucksacks, and 8 enemy weapons captured.

(5) 070245H Oct 67 A/2-502 vic BT034235, came under ground attack. Enemy strength was estimated as an NVA Company (reinforced). Hand to hand fighting occurred within the perimeter. At 070505H contact broke. Four airstrikes were employed but no evaluation of results was made. Spooky and gunships were employed.

AVBD-C

24 Nov 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report  
Operation Wheeler (U)

The company was set up in four mutually supporting platoon perimeters which were consolidated around the company CP under the force of the attack. Results: 7 KHA, 6 WHA, 18 NVA KIA (C) and evidence that many others had been dragged away. Captured were thirteen enemy individual weapons, two rocket launchers, and one Russian flame thrower.

(6) 241824H Oct 67 TAC CP/2-502 Inf vic BT239142 received mortar, rocket, and small arms fire. Hardest hit was the firebase collocated with the TAC CP. Results: 8 Arty WHA, 1 KHA, enemy casualties unknown.

(7) 010900H Nov 67 C/2-502, Recondo/2-502, and LRRP Plt vicinity BT245165 made an airmobile assault against two local force platoons. The raid was controlled by C/2-502. LRRP's and Recondos were used in blocking positions, C/2-502 landed on the dominant terrain and served as the driving force. Results: 1 KHA (LRRP's), 1 WHA (medevac), 14 VC KIA (C).

(8) 151530H Nov 67 A/2-502 vic BT022210 in the Nui Lon area detained eight VC Hoi Chans who responded to psy-war broadcasts. Seven of these were determined to be members of the local 12 man hamlet squad. This was the battalions first experience with a large number of Hoi Chans.

(9) 190930H Nov 67 2-502 was alerted by brigade that a Hoi Chanh was available with information on a hospital in the 2-502 AO. The Hoi Chanh was picked up and at 1205H B/2-502 was moved by air to positions around the suspected hospital area. The Recondos began movement to support this operation. Within two hours Co B located the hospital and captured eight wounded prisoners. As the Recondos moved they discovered a cave complex which housed an ammunition cache. Psy-war support in the form of ground speaker teams and airborne speaker broadcasts were requested and received. Two tracker teams were also employed. A detailed search of the area was directed and resulted in the discovery of another cache by the Recondos and in more enemy patients captured by Co B. Operations in this area continued for the next four days. Results: no friendly casualties, 12 enemy captured; large amounts of small arms, machine gun, recoilless rifle, mortar, and rocket ammunition captured and destroyed, two 7.62mm heavy machine guns, two 75mm recoilless rifles, one RPG rocket launcher, and assorted weapons parts and accessories captured. The main province hospital complex was destroyed.

(7)

AVBD-C

24 Nov 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report  
Operation Wheeler (U)

12. Results.

a. The 2nd Bn (Abn), 502 Inf eff accomplished its mission during Operation Wheeler. The enemy sustained significant losses in personnel, equipment and morale. His base areas were no longer safe. He lost valuable caches of weapons and ammunition and his main hospital complex was no longer available to treat his casualties.

b. Following losses were inflicted on the enemy:

(1) KIA (confirmed)	<u>228</u>
(2) KIA (probable)	<u>00</u>
(3) VCS (captured)	<u>34</u>
(4) NVA (captured)	<u>4</u>
(5) Crew Served Weapons Captured	<u>4</u>
(6) Individual Weapons Captured	<u>76</u>
(7) Tons of Rice Destroyed	<u>64</u>
(8) Base Camps Destroyed	<u>2</u>
(9) Hospital Complex	<u>1</u>

c. Friendly losses resulting from combat operations were:

(1) KHA	US <u>32</u>	MF <u>3</u>	ARVN <u>1</u>
(2) WHA	US <u>181</u>	MF <u>14</u>	ARVN <u>1</u>
(3) Equipment destroyed or lost			
(a)	5 PRC-25 Radios		
(b)	1 pr. Binoculars		
(c)	1 M-79 grenade launcher		
(d)	1 .45 cal. pistol		



24 Nov 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report  
Operation Wheeler (U)

## 13. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

- a. Supply: Inclosure 4 Supply.
- b. Personnel and Administration: Inclosure 3 Administration.
- c. Medical

(1) Hospitalization. All casualties were evacuated directly to Second Surgical Hospital at Chu Lai. An aid station was established at the TAC CP for treatment of minor injuries.

## (2) Medical Statistics:

	<u>HQ</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>
(a) Malaria	13	11	13	10
(b) Hepatitis	0	1	1	2
(c) Neuro Psychiatric	2	1	2	4
(d) Venereal Disease	1	0	0	0
(e) Diarrheal Disease	9	1	3	6
(f) Immersion Foot	0	1	1	0

## d. Signal.

(1) During the first half of Operation Wheeler, bad weather in the form of heavy rain degraded radio communications with brigade.

(2) Squad radios have been found useful but their use has been curtailed due to lack of batteries. Squad radios were introduced following the stand down ending 20 October 67.

(3) During Phase II of Operation Wheeler, a radio relay was established on the TAC CP of the 1/35 Inf. as a high piece of terrain was between the TAC CP/2-502 and B/2-502. The relay also was useful in maintaining communication with brigade as the TAC CP was being established.

AVBD-C

24 Nov 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report  
Operation Wheeler (U)

(4) Three PRC-25 radios for communication by the attalion commander while airborne were used in the command and control aircraft. A suitable way of switching and selecting between aircraft intercom and radios is needed.

#### 14. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT OR TECHNIQUES.

a. Sniper Activities: B/2-502 found the use of sniper weapons, both Winchester Model 70, 30.06, with a 4 power Weaver Scope and M-16 with scope, to be very effective. Effective shots were made from 100 to 1400 meters. The unit noticed that enemy sniper activity decreased when the friendly snipers were operating in the area.

b. Province Reconnaissance Units (PRU teams) were valuable to the small units because of their knowledge of the local populace. They could indicate abnormal amounts of rice and were useful in making initial evaluation of documents found and assisted in the initial interrogation of prisoners and detainees.

c. Psychological Warfare activities were conducted effectively in areas where contact had been light. A loudspeaker team with a tape recording capability was placed on the ground. It broadcasted tapes made by Hoi Chans from the area of operation. Tapes were also prepared for aircraft use but were not used because of weather. Brigade was able to have leaflets prepared to appeal to the specific area. The use of these three media provided thorough coverage.

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Enclosure 1 (Intelligence) to after action report operation  
WHEELER (U)

1. Weather: The weather predicted prior to the operation indicated that the NE Monsoon Season was beginning and that the battalion could expect the heaviest portion of the monsoon to occur during the operation. Though the monsoon was relatively mild during the operation, it did have an overall adverse affect on friendly operations. The heavy and frequent rainfall caused the rice paddies to fill and made the ground muddy enough to hamper troop movements. On one occasion, following a 48 hour period of rainfall, the rivers and streams overflowed their banks, causing the valleys to flood extensively and creating an unfordable obstacle to foot troops for a period of 36 hours following the rainfall. The soil in the highground portions of the AO became extremely muddy but retained sufficient stability for troops to maneuver. The 48 hour period of rainfall also caused a complete 48 hour halt in air operations. Two companies of the battalion went without rations for 24 hours, and artillery support had to be limited to contact missions due to lack of ammo resupply. Other than as mentioned above the weather did not seriously affect air operations, though it frequently limited air operations especially during the morning hours. The weather during the overall period of the operation was characterized by alternating 2-5 day periods of fair skies with scattered clouds and 2-5 day periods of overcast with frequent rains. The winds prevailed from the North and Northeast at 10-12 knots. No typhoons were experienced during the operation. Fog usually formed in the valleys at 0400H and burned off by 1000 hours. Elevations in excess of 400 meters were occasionally enveloped in thick fog during overcast days.

2. Terrain: The terrain within the AO consisted of extensively cultivated valleys and rolling coastal mountains. The mountains averaged 300 meters elevation with the highest single peak at 592 meters. The high ground varied from heavily populated in the South to sparsely populated in the North and West. Though many of the high mountains were steep and extremely difficult to maneuver on, none were impassable. Vegetation varied from dense mountain jungle with double canopy to open rice paddies. All rivers and streams were fordable except for 2-5 day periods following heavy rainfall. Forging locations on the Song Chang (same river: KHANG or BONG MIEU) had to be carefully selected but were generally plentiful.

### 3. Order of Battle

a. Prior to the operation, the following forces were believed to be in the AO:

(1) Main Force Units: 2d NVA Div Hqs (Forward and Main), 1st VC Regt, and 21st NVA Regt. The 3rd NVA Regt was plotted outside the AO (North) but within the battalions areas of influence and interest. The 2d Division was reported to be recently reinforced with replacements and weapons from North Vietnam. Marines operating North of the AO had reported heavy contacts with well armed and extremely aggressive elements of the 1st VC Regt.

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Enclosure 1 (Intelligence) to after action report operation  
WHEEL (U)

(2) Local Force Units: The 72d VCLF Battalion operated under the Quang Nam (Quang Tin) VC Province HQs; though it had been plotted recently in the AO, just prior to the operation it was believed to have moved East out of the battalion area of interest. Three similar VCLF district companies habitually operated in the AO, but generally were not plotted in the battalion area of influence: V-13, Tien Phuoc; V-14, Tam Ky; V-12, Que Son. All villages and hamlets in the area were believed to have organic platoons and squads, respectively. Though the local force companies were armed fairly well, they were believed poorly trained.

b. During the operation the following enemy elements were contacted:

(1) Main Force VC/NVA

(a) Contacts: 151117 Sep-C Co at BT110286 received heavy AW and AA fire while attempting to air assault a hilltop. Ordnance identified were 30cal. MG, 12.7mm HMG, and unknown size air burst AA rounds. A later sweep of the area revealed doughnut-shaped AA positions supported by individual defense fox holes. Though several aircraft received hits, there were no friendly or known enemy casualties.

190750H Sep-Mike Force at BT022211 received heavy SA and AW fire. The enemy maneuvered so he could place effective fire on the element from three sides. Despite several air strikes, gunship missions and continuous artillery fire, the enemy continued to deliver effective fire from dug in positions until the Mike Force disengaged at 1730 hours. The enemy was later identified as the 60th Bn, 1st VC Regt. Results: 2 MF KHA, 13 MF WHA, 3 US WHA, 5 VC/NVA KIA.

271620H Sep - A Co at BT047243 received a heavy volume of AW fire. The enemy force maneuvered so as to deliver fire on the element from three sides. Effective 60mm mortar, 82mm mortar, and RPG rocket fire was also placed on the element. Contact was broken at 1900 when A Co withdrew to a night position. The enemy was in heavily bunkered defensive positions on high ground. Results: 2 US KHA, 3 US WHA, 2 NVA KIA, captured 1 SKS carbine. (Enemy unit unidentified).

281100H Sep- A Co and B Co at BT046245 and BT053268, respectively, received heavy SA and AW fire. The enemy was in heavily fortified positions with overhead cover. Though both friendly units advanced during the day, the enemy utilized the dominating terrain to his advantage. Several air strikes failed to drive him from his bunkered positions. His defenses were in depth and he gave a minimal amount of ground during the day. Helicopter gunships were unable to operate in the area because of the intense AW and AA fire. Air Force fighter aircraft received AA fire while on their bomb runs. All of the enemy positions were connected by communication wire, and the bunkers were mutually supporting. The enemy fired 4 rounds of 82mm mortar fire during the late afternoon and broke contact after dark. Documents indicated the enemy unit was the 11th Bn, 21st NVA Regt. The AA fire was from the AA Co of the Regt's heavy weapons battalion. Results: 1 US KHA, 12 US WHA, 6 NVA KIA, captured 16 NVA rucksacks.

290830H Sep - C Co at BT034213 engaged at least two companies of the 40th Bn, 1st VC Regt. The enemy was dug in well, but was oriented towards the South and West. Co C attacked from the North

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Enclosure 1 (Intelligence) to after action report operation  
WHEELER

and assaulted through most of the positions. The enemy defense was well bunkered and in depth, but designed to delay rather than to defend for a long period of time. All positions were connected with communication wire. Documents captured indicated the enemy element had a mission two weeks prior to defend the area to the last man, but a more recent mission was to delay with one company and a 60mm mortar. Results: 2 US KHA, 6 US WHA, 16 VC/NVA KIA, captured 1RPD machinegun, 1RPG rocket launcher, 2 AK 47 automatic rifles, 1 60mm mortar bipod and baseplate.

291630H Sep - A Co at BT046242 engaged elements of the 11th Bn, 21st NVA Regt. The enemy was well bunkered in mutually supporting defense positions with overhead cover. One tunnel complex connecting a CP at the bottom of a hill and an OP at the top of a hill was 100 meters long and completely lined with tile. All positions were connected with communication wire to include positions that were across the river from each other. The enemy broke contact and vacated his positions after dark. Results: 4 NVA KIA, captured 1 RPG rocket launcher, 1 AK47 automatic rifle, 200lbs rice, 200 lbs marijuana, 5 tons of polished rice (destroyed).

301300H Sep - ARVN Reconnaissance Company at AT985250 engaged an NVA platoon moving East along a rice paddy. Results: 1 ARVN KHA, 13 NVA KIA, captured 3 AK47 automatic rifles, 2 M-1 carbines.

021100H Oct - A Co and B Co at BT025239 and BT985250, respectively received heavy SA and AW fire. A Co received EMG (50cal or 12.7mm) fire. B-Co spotted 6 NVA across the river assembling a HMG (50cal or 12.7mm). The enemy was dug in on the west bank of the river. Air force fighter aircraft received AW and AA fire on every bomb run. A Co received 82mm mortar fire at 1930 hours. Results 7 US KHA, 27 US WHA, 8 NVA KIA captured 1 AK47 automatic rifle.

061300H Oct - C Co at BT016216 and BT015215 engaged the 11th Bn, 21st NVA Regt. and the Regt AA Co. The enemy was in the process of digging in when Co C attacked. All of the NVA were wearing heavy camouflauge. All of the defensive positions were connected with communications wire. Results: 1 US KHA, 11 US WHA, 13 NVA KIA, captured 5 AK47 automatic rifles, 1RPD machinegun, 1 RPG rocket launcher, 1 K44 carbine, 1 12.7mm HMG barrel, 200rds HMG ammo, 19 rucksacks.

070245H Oct - A Co at BT034235 was attacked by the 22d Bn, 21st NVA Regt. The enemy moved by stealth to the perimeter and assaulted at two points. During the attack the enemy shouted US words such as "medic" and "strike force". At one point he thought he had gained initial success and displaced his aid station to his forward forces. He was not prepared for a defense in depth, however, and was soon repulsed. Results: 7 US KHA, 6 USWHA, 18 NVA KIA, captured 1 Russian flamethrower, 1 RPD machinegun, 2RPG rocket launchers, 12 AK47 automatic rifles.

(b) Of the ten contacts listed above, seven were fought completely on the enemy's terms. He had the choice to engage or avoid. He decided to engage and maintain the prerogative to continue the contact or disengage at a time of his choice. The other three contacts were US initiated and were characterized by

AVBD-C

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Enclosure 1 (Intelligence) to after action report operation  
WHEELER (U)

surprise in all three cases. The enemy was always aggressive and fought hard. He was well armed and seemed well trained. Documents indicated he had been recently reinforced by NVA personnel, arms, and equipment. During the initial contact he exhibited a high degree of professionalism and a will to fight. Subsequent documents and POW interrogations revealed that his morale became low due to the large amount of casualties suffered and poor living conditions. Air strikes and artillery had hurt him badly, and his casualty rates were higher than those reflected by US body counts. His weapons were new and in good condition (of special note is the flamethrower captured on 7 Oct; documents indicated two more were present at the battle). Ammunition seemed plentiful, though no large caches of RPG, RPD, AK47, or SKS ammunition were found. He made excellent use of the terrain and available supporting weapons. His defensive positions were effective against both ground and air fire. His tactics were conventional rather than guerrilla.

(c) Traits of NVA units (derived from contacts, documents, and interrogations).

(1) Movement: In order to move as clandestinely as possible, NVA units prefer to move during periods of limited visibility. The favorite periods are 0400-0700 hours and 1700-2100 hours as these are the hours where the least number of aircraft is flying. They will use open areas to move when necessary but prefer to use trails concealed by the canopy from aerial observation. Normal order of march is civilian guides - advance squad - advance company - second company - battalion headquarters - trail company (approximately 100 meters interval).

(2) Bivouac: The battalion is usually the smallest size element to bivouac alone. Populated areas are normally used unless a base camp is readily available. The battalion headquarters usually occupies the center of the bivouac site, and the companies occupy the perimeter. Movement to and from the bivouac is during the hours of darkness, or twilight.

(3) Attack: The favorite attack time is between the hours of 2400 and 0300, preferably as close to 0200 as possible. Late afternoon and early evening contacts are also desirable, as US units hesitate to advance after dark and usually will break contact to establish a night perimeter. This allows the NVA to police not only their own battlefield, but the US battlefield as well. The 21st NVA Regt consistently uses its 22d Bn to attack. The other two Bns are given missions to block likely routes of reinforcement, carry ammunition and wounded, or support the attack by fire and maneuver as appropriate. Frequently, the NVA will dig graves along the route of attack; thus, they can bury their dead as they withdraw. English words and phrases are taught to the troops on a regular basis. The intent is to use English to confuse US troops during the attack.

(4) Defense: Bunkers with overhead cover are always used by NVA units when conducting a deliberate defense.

AVBD-C

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Enclosure 1 (Intelligence) to after action report operation  
WHEELER (U)

constructed as protection from artillery and air strikes. The bunkers will be mutually supporting, oriented down hill, and are connected by wire communications whenever possible.

(5) Local Population: The unquestioning and complete support of the local population is expected. The NVA completely rely on the local population for all intelligence and logistics. Frequently, old men, women, and children are sent to wander near US units and then report their locations and strengths. They are also habitually used to precede NVA units as guides and scouts during movement.

(2) Local Force: Throughout the operation local force units avoided friendly elements. The enemy's activities were generally individual sniping, harrasing, and delaying, with a few smaller than squad size activities. During the initial phases of the operation the local VC hid in the mountains by day, though many returned to their homes after dark and departed again prior to sunrise. In the southern portion of the AO near TIEN PHUOC, the local guerrillas were very aggressive. Movement of friendly elements was hampered by numerous instances of sniper and harrasing fire. The local guerrillas were well armed and did not operate in larger than squad force. The VC infrastructure was extensive and extremely well organized. Every individual belonged to at least one of the various VC organizations. Most all of the villiages were fortified with bunkers, trenches, and tunnel complexes. Booby traps and mines were used frequently and caused several US casualties. Punji stakes were seen occasionally but caused no US casualties. During the initial stages of the operation, the effects of VC propagands were amply evident. All local Vietnamese, to include those not within the military age bracket, were given the mission of gathering information on US units. Even a seventy-year old women who appeared to be shelling beans in front of her house admitted she was counting the troops as they walked by. However, during the latter stages of the operation, families began offering information to US troops and requesting evacuation as refugees. The disruption of VC cadre and guerrillas became evident towards the end of the operation. Numerous interrogations indicated that the extensive US operations had eliminated over three fourths of the cadre and guerrillas in several hamlets. Over half of the VC in Phuoc Ha (V) Tien Phuoc (D) had either been killed, captured, or had Chu Hoi'ed. However, when the VC realized they were losing control they collected most of the local weapons; thus, few of the hoi Chanhs had weapons. Interrogations revealed that the major reason for the change in attitude of the population was that the US troops had been operating in the area for over two months, and the NVA had not returned since the initial contacts.

(3) Quang Nam (Quang Tin) VC Province Hospital was raided on 18 Nov. The location of the complex was given to US troops by a Hoi Chanh who had worked there as a cook. The complex consisted of 10 hootches: 1 operating room, 1 mess hall, 4 wards and 4 staff/cadre hootches. The wards were 20'X40' and capable

AVBD-C

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Enclosure 1 (Intelligence) to after action report operation  
~~WHEELER (U)~~

of holding 20 patients each. The operating room was 15'X30' and contained an operating table and a treatment table. The inside of the operating hootch was lined with white cloth apparently to reflect light and assist sanitation. Interrogation revealed that the population of the hospital was approximately 100, consisting of 60 patients, 20 staff, and 20 cadre. Twelve patients were captured: 6 Main Force VC/NVA and 6 Local Force VC. Numerous documents and medical supplies were also captured (see para 5 below). The hospital was identified as GK-140 and was the main VC hospital in Quang Tin Province.

#### 4. Killed And Captured Statistics

##### a. Body Count

52 NVA  
176 VC  
228 Total

##### b. Detainees

4 NVA  
34 VC  
26 Civil Defendants  
65 Innocent Civilians  
129 Total  
8 Of total were Hoi Chanh

##### c. Weapons (\*denotes cache)

2 75mm Chicom Recoilless Rifle\*  
2 7.62mm Soviet Heavy Machinegun\*  
1 Soviet Flame Thrower  
7 40mm RPG Chicom Rocket Launcher  
5 7.62 RPG Chicom Machinegun  
27 7.62mm AK47 Assault Rifle  
2 7.62mm SKS Rifle  
1 45cal. Thompson Sub-Machinegun  
1 30cal. Browning Automatic Rifle  
9 7.62mm K-44 Soviet Carbine  
1 45cal. French Sub-Machinegun  
10 30cal. M-1 Carbine  
1 Mauser  
1 MAS 36  
4 LAW  
5 30cal. M-1 Rifle  
1 K-50 Chicom Sub-Machinegun  
80 Total



AVBD-C

SUBJECT: Enclosure 1 (Intelligence) to after action report operation  
WHEELER (U)

24 November 1967

d. Equipment

- 48 rucksacks
- Assorted webbing (ammo pouches, belts, canteens, poncho's)
- 60 lbs of clothing
- 4 transistor radios
- 8 gas masks
- 10 NVA helmets
- 1 metal animal trap
- 4 machine gun barrels (2-12.7mm Chicom, 1-7.62mm  
US M-60, 1-7.62mm Soviet HMG)
- 2 82mm mortar bipods
- 2 82mm mortar base plates
- 2 82mm mortar sights
- 10 RPD ammo drums
- 2 82mm mortar night lights
- 45 AK 47 magazines
- 12 chicom grenade fuzes
- 1 MG carriage with wheels
- 1 MG operating spring

e. Miscellaneous

- 62 Tons Rice
- 200 lbs. Spice
- 200lbs Marijuana

f. Medical Supplies

- 50 Bottles of Penicillin
- 4-5# boxes gauze
- 20 syringes
- 25 packs of novocaine
- Surgical instruments
- 10 bottles of tablets (type unknown)
- 25 bottles (vitamin-B&C)
- 25 pairs of pajamas
- 5 gallons distilled water
- 50 sheets
- 50 thermoneters
- 2 stethoscope
- 15 bottles quinine
- 100 lbs of medical documents

g. Ammunition

<u>Rds</u>	<u>Type</u>
6	75mm RR
7	57mm RR
58	82mm Mortar

AVBD-C

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Enclosure 1 (Intelligence) to after action report operation  
WHEELER (U)

<u>Rds</u>	<u>Type</u>
120	60mm Mortar
8	82mm RPG
900	50cal. MG
53	Chicom Grenades
3	M-26 Grenades
7	M-79 Grenades
100	AK-47
200	5.56mm M-16
2550	9mm
150	45cal.
1150	7.62mm
250	30cal.
450	30cal. carbine
1610	Assorted SA
170lbs.	Explosives

h. Documents

2nd. NVA Div.  
40th Bn, 1st VC Regt.  
11th Bn, 21st NVA Regt.  
22nd Bn, 21st NVA Regt.  
GK-140 Province Hospital  
V-12 VCLF Co.  
V-13 VCLF Co.  
V-14 VCLF Co.  
Unit 107, Tien Phuoc VC Dist. HQ.  
Unit 109, Tam Ky VC Dist HQ.

5. Evaluation of Intelligence Sources

a. Red Haze provided significant locations on several occasions. Recommend that Red Haze be used more frequently and consistently.

b. People Sniffer, almost without exception, provided excellent intelligence each time it was used. It should be continually emphasized, however, that the mission commander, for obvious safety reasons, must maintain radio contact with the unit in whose AO he is working.

c. The PRU teams did an outstanding job. If PRU are not available for future operations, additional efforts should be used to obtain a similar substitute (National Police, Hoi Chanhs from the local area, ARVN interrogators at rifle company level, etc). PRU interrogations ranked second only to US contacts for reliable, essential intelligence.

AVBD-C

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Enclosure 1 (Intelligence) to after action report operation  
WHEELER (U)

d. The sufficient number of interpreters during the operation was of great assistance. If the ground commander cannot communicate with the local populace, he is only partially effective. Sufficient interpreters (at least five per ~~Bn.~~) should be a continuing item of emphasis.

e. Fort Benning-type photo maps are not available. All unit commanders have indicated a need for this item. Highly recommend that this item be made a priority subject for command emphasis.

AVBD-C

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Inclosure 2 (Small unit operations) to Combat Operation After Action Report, Operation WHEELER (U)

121305 H Sep 67 C/2-502 Inf vic BT 089225 found 1 KIA (C) in bunker, killed by air strike.

121325 H Sep 67 C/2-502 Inf vic BT 081221 engaged 1 VC resulting in 1 KIA (C).

121400 H Sep 67 C/2-502 Inf vic BT 081221 engaged 1 VC resulting in 1 KIA (C).

121630 H Sep C/2-502 Inf vic BT 090223 apprehended 2 detainees.

121645 H Sep 67 MF/2-502 Inf vic BT 093230 apprehended 6 detainees.

131200 H Sep 67 MF/2-502 Ing vic BT 088224 apprehended 5 detainees.

131420 H Sep 67 C/2-502 Inf vic BT 095225 apprehended 1 detainee.

141107 H Sep 67 MF/2-502 Inf vic BT 095230 apprehended 4 detainees.

141142 H Sep 67 Rcn/2-502 Inf vic BT 073017 apprehended 1 detainee w/handgrenade on LBE, small arms ammo, NVA documents, miscellaneous papers.

150940 H Sep 67 A/2-502 Inf vic BT 069231 apprehended 1 male approximately 20 years old; results: 1 detainee.

170900 H Sep 67 MF/2-502 Inf vic BT 099215 received small arms fire resulting in 1 WHA (medevac).

171510 H Sep 67 C/2-502 Inf vic BT 114249 engaged 1 VC resulting in 1 KIA (C).

180820 H Sep 67 C&C Ship/2-502 Inf vic BT 095225 received ground fire resulting in 1 UH-1D damaged (minor).

190600 H Sep 67 A/2-502 vic BT 099268 engaged 3 NVA results 1 Mosin-Nagant.

200810 H Sep 67 B/2-502 vic BT 065263 Sniper engaged 1 VC results: 1 KIA (C), 4 VC attempted to recover body, called in artillery and sniper fire resulting in an additional 2 KIA (C).

200920 H Sep 67 MF/2-502 vic BT 026243 engaged estimated NVA Platoon with artillery and gunships resulting in 2 KIA (C).

210200 H Sep 67 B/2-502 vic BT 065263 found one VC KIA (C) by sniper fire on 200810 H Sep 67.

210930 H Sep 67 Rcn/2-502 vic BT 020223 engaged 2 VC results were 2 KIA (C).

211020 H Sep 67 C/2-502 vic BT 117267 engaged 1 VC results were 1 KIA (C).

211230 H Sep 67 Rcn/2-502 vic BT 025225 apprehended 1 detainee.

211305 H Sep 67 B/2-502 vic BT 073286 engaged 1 VC resulting in 1 KIA.

AVBD-C

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Inclosure 2 (Small unit operations) to Combat Operation After Action Report, Operation WHEELER (U)

211330 H Sep 67 MF/2-502 vic BT 077234 apprehended 4 detainees.

211520 H Sep 67 TAC CP/2-502 vic BT 086207 engaged 20 VC with artillery resulting in 1 KIA (C)

221245 H Sep 67 A/2-502 vic BT 103291 apprehended 1 detainee.

221250 H Sep 67 MF/2-502 vic BT 1077240 engaged 1 VC in tunnel resulting in 1 VC KIA (C), found and destroyed 2 tons of rice and apprehended 3 detainees.

221445 H Sep 67 A/2-502 vic BT 100290 found and destroyed 2 tons of rice in a hut in a Bn. size AA position.

221550 H Sep 67 Rcn/2-502 vic BT 039234 engaged 4 VC resulting in 1 KIA (C), 1 RPD captured.

231310 H Sep Rcn/2-502 vic BT 039234 apprehended 1 detainee.

231610 H Sep A/2-502 vic BT 102270 apprehended 1 detainee.

240800 H Sep 67 Rcn/2-502 vic BT 043224 apprehended 1 detainee.

241000 H Sep 67 B/2-502 vic BT 087286 engaged one enemy resulting in 1 KIA (C)

251030 H Sep 67 C/2-502 vic BT 125272 engaged 2 enemy resulting in 2 VC KIA (C), 1 detainee, SA ammo captured.

251030 H Sep 67 B/2-502 vic BT 089296 engaged 1 enemy resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).

251630 H Sep 67 A/2-502 apprehended 1 detainee BT 089248.

252130 H Sep 67 Rcn/2-502 vic BT 040235 captured 1 detainee with documents.

260935 H Sep 67 MF/2-502 vic BT 064204 apprehended 1 detainee.

261020 H Sep 67 Rcn/2-502 vic BT 039231 individual set off M-14 mine resulting in 1 WHA (medevac).

261230 H Sep 67 B/2-502 vic BT 086295 engaged 3 enemy with small arms and artillery resulting in 3 VC KIA (C).

261500 H Sep 67 A/2-502 vic BT 055245 engaged 1 enemy with weapon resulting in 1 carbine and rucksack with documents captured.

261530 H Sep 67 B/2-502 vic BT 060290 engaged 1 enemy resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).

271010 H Sep 67 C/2-502 vic BT 094238 found and destroyed 2 tons of rice.

271125 H Sep 67 B/2-502 vic BT 069272 engaged 1 enemy resulting in 1 carbine captured.

271302 H Sep 67 C/2-502 vic BT 093257 received AW&SW fire resulting in 1 WHA (medevac).

271405 H Sep 67 B/2-502 vic BT 065269 engaged 2 enemy resulting in 1 VC KIA (C), and 1 Mauser captured.

AVBD-C

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Inclosure 2 (Small unit operations) to Combat Operation  
After Action Report, Operation WHEELER (U)

280855 H Sep 67 MF/2-502 BT 057213 found 1 SKS.  
280933 H Sep 67 A/2-502 BT 046243 found 1 NVA KIA (C); 1 SKS  
from action at 272040- 271645 Sep 67.  
281000 H Sep 67 B/2-502 BT 059267 engaged 1 enemy trail  
watcher resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).  
281140 H Sep 67 C/2-502 BT 042223 engaged 1 enemy resulting  
in 1 VC KIA (C), and found and destroyed 2 tons of rice.  
281150 H Sep 67 A/2-502 BT 046245 received AW fire resulting  
in 1 KIA, 4 WHA (medevac)  
291138 H Sep 67 B/2-502 BT 046263 engaged 1 enemy resulting  
in 1 VC KIA (C).  
010810 H Oct 67 MF/2-502 BT 072242 apprehended 3 detainees.  
011220 H Oct 67 TAC CP/2-502 BT 028219 found and destroyed  
15 tons of rice.  
020730 H Oct 67 B/2-502 BT 026251 found 2 enemy killed by  
artillery resulting in 2 NVA KIA (C).  
020940 H Oct 67 B/2-502 BT 028248 engaged 1 enemy with sniper  
resulting in 1 NVA KIA (C).  
021345 H Oct 67 C/2-502 BT 022223 engaged 1 enemy resulting  
in 1 VC KIA (C).  
030115 H Oct 67 C/2-502 BT 020225 engaged 1 enemy resulting  
in 1 VC KIA (C).  
050710 H Oct 67 B/2-502 BT 024246 found 2 graves containing  
2 NVA KIA (C), rucksacks, ammo, and documents.  
051345 H Oct 67 FAC/2-502 BT 029257 engaged unknown size enemy  
force with TAC air resulting in 3 VC KIA (C).  
051348 H Oct 67 Rcn/2-502 BT 097228 found a grave contain-  
ing 1 VC KIA (C).  
051645 H Oct 67 C.2-502 BT engaged 2 enemy resulting in 2  
VC KIA (C).  
080945 H Oct 67 Rcn/2-502 BT 093233 apprehended 3 detainees.  
091735 H Oct 67 C/2-502 BT 012220 engaged 1 VC with small arms  
resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).  
100655 H Oct C/2-502 BT 015219 engaged 1 enemy with rucksack  
in ambush resulting in 1 NVA KIA (C).  
111111 H Oct 67 B/2-502 BT 028239 engaged 1 enemy resulting  
in 1 VC KIA (C).  
220730 H Oct 67 C/2-502 BT 231160 received sniper fire and  
AW fire. Called in mortar fire and maneuvered resulting in 1 WHA  
(medevac), 2 VC KIA (C), also found and destroyed 2 tons of rice.  
221140 H Oct B/2-502 BT 203143 found and destroyed small  
base camp; found and extracted medical supply cache.  
221245 H Oct 67 B/2-502 Bt 203143 received sniper fire result-  
ing in 1 WHA (medevac).  
231007 H Oct 67 A/2-502 BT 182163 received AW fire result-  
ing in 1 WHA (minor), 2WHA (medevac).

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Inclosure 2 (Small unit operations) to Combat Operation After Action Report, Operation WHEELER (U).

231131 H Oct 67 C/2-502 BT221164 found and destroyed 1 t $\bar{a}$ n of rice.

231165 H Oct 67 C/2-502 BT 226165 found and destroyed 900 lbs rice and khaki uniforms

231240 H Oct 67 Rcn/2-502 BT 256126 engaged 1 enemy trail watcher in a tree. Surrounded, he would not surrender which resulted in 1 VC KIA (C).

241005 H Oct 67 Rcn/2-502 BT 244122 received SA fire resulting in 2 WHA (medevac).

241020 H Oct 67 C/2-502 BT 213158 found and destroyed 400 lbs of rice.

241345 H Oct 67 C/2-502 BT 212166 found and destroyed  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton of rice.

250850 H Oct 67 Utility/2-502 BT 198160 received fire resulting in minor damage to the aircraft and 1 WHA (medevac).

250920 H Oct 67 B/2-502 BT 198160 received sniper fire resulting in 2 WHA (medevac).

251105 H Oct 67 C/2-502 BT 207167 engaged 1 enemy resulting in 1 VC KIA (C) also captured miscellaneous documents.

251230 H Oct 67 A/2-502 BT 192165 found large tunnel complex containing 1 M-2 carbine and also apprehended 1 detainee.

251340 H Oct 67 B/2-502 BT 196158 engaged 6 enemy resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).

251610 H Oct 67 B/2-502 BT212160 engaged 1 enemy resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).

251610 H Oct 67 A/2-502 BT 195172 engaged 1 enemy resulting in 2 VC KIA (C); 1 weapon captured (type unknown) and 1 detainee apprehended.

251730 H Oct 67 B/2-502 BT 197153 engaged 1 enemy resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).

260830 H Oct 67 C/2-502 BT 205175 received AW and SA fire resulting in 1 WHA (medevac).

260025 H Oct 67 C/2-502 BT 112208 engaged 1 enemy resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).

261100 H Oct 67 B/2-502 BT 202166 engaged 2 enemy resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).

261115 H Oct 67 C/2-502 BT 205175 found and destroyed  $\frac{1}{4}$  ton of rice.

261130 H Oct 67 Rcn/2-502 BT 235114 found and destroyed  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton of rice.

261210 H Oct 67 C&C/2-502 BT 215172 received SA fire, engaged the enemy with the result of 1 VC KIA (C).

281220 H Oct 67 C&C/2-502 BT 185163 received hit from SA fire with the result of minor damaged UH-1D.

AVBD-C

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Inclosure 2 (Small unit operations) to Combat Operation after Action Report, Operation WHEELER (U)

281340 H Oct 67 C/20592 BT 202176 found and destroyed 1 ton of rice.

281620 H Oct 67 Rcn/2-502 BT 232118 observed 1 VC in hut and attempted to capture him but he fled south. Engagement resulted in 1 detainee.

021240 H Nov 67 C/2-502 BT 241103 engaged 1 VC resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).

061505 H Nov 67 C/2-502 BT 115226 engaged 1 VC resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).

061730 H Nov 67 C/2-502 BT 095224 engaged 2 VC resulting in 2 VC KIA (C).

091155 H Nov 67 B/2-502 BT 042204 apprehended 2 detainees.

091620 H Nov 67 B/2-502 BT 632202 found and destroyed 10 tons of unpolished rice.

101230 H Nov 67 B/2-502 BT 032202 received AW and SA fire from approximately 10 VC, called in artillery, engaged with the results of 1 KHA, 1WHA (medevac), 3 VC KIA (C), 2 Thompson Sub-Machinegun captured.

101835 H Nov 67 B/2-502 BT 025205 ambushed 1 VC resulting in 1 VC KIA (C), captured medical supplies and other unidentifiable items.

101833 H Nov 67 C/2-502 AT 983272 found 1 15AMP amplifier and mount; also found 30 feet electrical cord.

101945 H Nov 67 B/2-502 BT 025205 Ambushed 1 VC resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).

110505 H Nov 67 A/2-502 BT 027214 ambushed 1 VC resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).

111130 H Nov 67 A/2-502 BT 025210 detained 3 VC, 1 VC led unit to location where weapons were hidden; Results: 3 VC, 1 M-1 rifle and bayonet captured.

121230 H Nov 67 A/2-502 BT 020213 engaged 3 VC resulting in 2 VC captured, and 1 VC KIA.

121300 H N v 67 A/2-502 BT 051206 detained 1 VC, results; 1 VC captured.

121325 H Nov 67 B/2-502 BT 034204 found and destroyed 14 tons of rice.

121825 H Nov 67 B/2-502 BT 028203 engaged on VC POW attempting to escape; result 1 VC KIA (C)

130825 H Nov 67 Rcn/2-502 BT 050204 engaged 1 VC resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).

131040 H Nov 67 Rcn/2-502 BT063199 engaged 1 VC resulting in 1 VC KIA (C).

131330 H Nov 67 Rcn/2-502 BT063199 captured 1 VC.



AVBD-C

24 Nov 1967

SUBJECT: Inclosure 2 (Small unit operations) to Combat  
Operations After Action Report - Operation Wheeler (U)

141245H Nov 67 B/2-502 Inf vic BT995214 engaged and picked up  
4VC resulting in 1 VC KIA (C) and 3 VCS captured.

151300-1500H Nov 67 A/2-502 Inf vic BT022210 received 8 Hoi-Chans

150940H Nov 67 Rcn/2-502 vic BT069218 found and destroyed 1,000  
lbs. of rice.

181445H Nov 67 A/2-502 vic BT090223 found and destroyed 1.5  
tons unpolished rice.

181530H Nov 67 A/2-502 BT091224 found and destroyed 1.5 tons  
unpolished rice.

181540H Nov 67 A/2-502 BT082220 apprehended 2 detainees.

181603H Nov 67 Rcn/2-502 vic BT116245 found and destroyed  
ammunition cache consisting of the following: 5 Chicom grenades;  
30 60mm mortar rds; 10 81mm mortar rds; 4 82mm mortar rds; 5 57RR  
rds; 170lbs explosives; 7 M-79 rds; 900 .50 cal. rds; 300 rds misc.  
small arms ammo; 1 mortar base plate; 3 82mm mortar fuzes: Follow-  
ing items extracted: 1 M-60 MG barrel and 1 Hvy MG barrel (7.62mm)

191050H Nov 67 A/2-502 BT095216 engaged 2VC running from hut,  
resulting in 2 VC KIA (C), 1 M-26 grenade CIA.

191130H Nov 67 A/2-502 BT094225 found and destroyed 2 tons  
unpolished rice.

191145H Nov 67 Rcn/2-502 vic. BT094225 found weapons and ammo  
cache consisting of the following: 2 Hvy MG's; 2 75mm RR; 1 RPG  
rocket launcher; 2 M-72 LAW's; equipment for 82mm mortar; 2 sights,  
1 tripod, 2 night lights, 1 baseplate, and 8 82mm mortar rds; 18  
rds 60mm mortar ammo; 8 rds B-40; 1 MG carriage w/wheels; misc  
tools; 5 Chicom fuzes; 400 7.62 small arms rounds.

191200H Nov 67 A/2-502 BT087226 found and destroyed 1.5 tons  
unpolished rice.

191800H Nov 67 B/2-502 BT123252 found 1 won: M-1 carbine.

191815H Nov 67 A/2-502 BT107272 found and destroyed 5 tons  
unpolished rice.

200730H Nov 67 B/2-502 BT120251 captured 5 wounded enemy; re-  
sults 3 NVAC and 2 VCC.

210845H Nov 67 Rcn/2-502 BT105240 engaged 2 VC, 1 w/rucksack,  
resulting in 1VC KIA (C), misc documents CIA.

211015H Nov 67 Rcn/2-502 BT105240 found 2 rucksacks containing  
misc medical supplies, 1 US compass, office supplies.

AUBD-C

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Inclosure 3 (Administration) to Combat Operation  
Report, Operation WHEELER (U)

1. Unit Strengths:

a. Beginning of Operation WHEELER

(1) The Battalion personnel Strengths at the beginning of Operation WHEELER (12 Sep 67) were as follows:

Authorized (MTOE II-GO)	778
Assigned	793
Present for Duty	717
Not Present for Duty	76

(2) The assigned strength was 102% of the authorized strength. The present for duty strength was 92% of the authorized strength.

(3) Of the not present for duty strength, 5 were intransit, 25 were on TDY, 38 on leave, 1 in confinement, and 3 were AWOL.

b. Conclusion of Operation WHEELER

(1) The Battalion personnel strength at the conclusion of Operation WHEELER were as follows:

Authorized (MTOE II-GO)	778
Assigned	807
Present for Duty	759
Not Present for Duty	48

(2) The assigned strength was 103% of the authorized strength. The present for duty strength was 97% of the authorized strength.

(3) Of the not present for duty strength, 18 were TDY, 26 on leave, 1 in confinement, and 2 AWOL.

c. The increase in strength during Operation WHEELER was due to the arrival of 136 replacements.

AUBD-C

24 November 1967

SUBJECT: Inclosure 3 (Administration) to Combat Operation  
Report, Operation WHEELER (U)

2. Casualties:

a. Casualties for Operation WHEELER were as follows:

<u>Unit</u>	<u>WHA</u>	<u>KHA</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>DOW</u>
HHC	34	5	0	1
Co A	80	16	1	1
Co B	39	5	4	2
Co C	<u>28</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	181	32	5	4

b. Total Casualties from 29 July 1965

<u>KHA</u>	<u>WHA</u>	<u>MHA</u>
221	1059	1

3. Personnel Actions

a. During operation WHEELER, the 2-502 Abn. Inf. processed 308 valorous awards and 203 meritorious awards. Some of the valorous awards were for the operation before WHEELER.

b. During Operation WHEELER the Battalion prepared for an AGI. The AGI was conducted on 9 November 1967, and the Battalion received a Satisfactory.

AVBD-C

SUBJECT: Enclosure 4 (Supply) to Combat Operations  
After Action Report - Operation Wheeler (U)

24 Nov 1967

1. Organization for Support

a. At the onset of the operation a forward supply point was established at Tien Phuoc. It was used initially to supply Class I and Class V items.

b. The TAC CP was used as a forward supply point. Class I and V items were stocked and supplied from the TAC CP. This reduced the time required to resupply the maneuver elements.

c. A forward sling-out point was established at Tam Ky. Class I and V items were trucked daily to Tam Ky to be air lifted out to the TAC CP by CH-47 aircraft.

2. Materiel and Services

a. Supply

(1) Class I: "Meal, Combat, Individual" formed the bulk of all Class I consumed during the operation. "C" rations were supplemented with LRRP's, rice, and soup when these items were available. "A" ration meals were sent to maneuver elements whenever possible, usually on the day the element was resupplied. The battalion operated on a four (4) day resupply cycle.

(2) Class II and IV: The bulk of Class II and IV items used by the battalion was drawn and supplied from S-4 located at the base camp in Chu Lai. Problem areas were shortages of fatigues in small sizes, rucksacks, poncho liners, air mattresses, BA 30, and boots in sizes 8-9-10-11.

(3) Class III: The 221st Supply and Service Company provided all types of Class III in sufficient quantities to support logistical and tactical operations. No problems were encountered.

(4) Class V: The 205th Ammunition Platoon supplied the battalion with all Class V items. No problems were encountered on Class V resupply. However, there was a delay on emergency resupply in drawing ammunition from the Ammunition Supply Point (ASP) and in movement to the helipad. This was solved by stocking ammunition at the helipad at the TAC CP and Tam Ky. Tien Phuoc forward supply point was available for emergency ammunition resupply.

(5) Water: Potable water was available from two

AVBD-C

24 Nov 1967

SUBJECT: Inclosure 4 (Supply) to Combat Operations  
After Action Report - Operation Wheeler

points, Chu Lai and the water point established by Company A, 326 Engineer Battalion at Tam Ky. Water resupply by five (5) gallon cans proved inadequate due to the amount of water consumed and the distance from the water point to the AO. Water containers of 250 gallons were used to solve this problem.

b. Maintenance: Maintenance support was provided by the Brigade Forward Support Element located at Chu Lai.

c. Transportation:

(1) Vehicular: Vehicular support was furnished by the 163rd Transportation Company. This battalion seldom received the number of vehicles requested. This caused numerous problems. The battalion did not have sufficient vehicles and the distance between the companies and the S-4 compounded the existing problem of getting supplies from one area to the other.

(2) Air: Army UH-1D and CH-47 aircraft provided airlift support for the entire operation. CH-47 aircraft availability was limited. Aircraft support proved satisfactory. However, several times weekly these aircraft would go in for maintenance or for a Combat Assault. This, on occasion, hindered resupply operations.

AVBD-C

24 Nov 67

SUBJECT: Inclosure 5 (Civil Affairs) to Combat Operations  
After Action Report, Operation WHEELER (U)

1. During Wheeler the S-5 worked primarily at Tien Phuoc CIDG Camp in the Tin Quang Province.
2. MED-CAP: A total of 4631 Vietnamese were treated in the area of operation. Most of the medical supplies were drawn through Special Forces channels.
3. REFUGEES: throughout the operation 407 refugees were extracted from the AO to Tam Ky and were processed by a provincial Refugee Team. All refugees were extracted if they volunteered and if the extraction did not interfere with the tactical situation.
4. INNOCENT CIVILIANS: Innocent civilian are innocent people brought to the TAC-CP as VCS and determined by the MI team to be innocent. The Bn took 21 IC to Tien Phuoc, the district headquarters.
5. CIVIC ACTION:
  - a. The Bn S-5 started building a refugee camp at Tien Phuoc District Headquarters with support and cooperation of the Vietnamese and US Special Forces. The Material for the project was brought in through coordination with the Bde S-5. At the end of Operation Wheeler 30 houses were built in parts. Two houses were still without roofs, five had bamboo laced to the frame to start the walls and all the others had tin roofs and frames. The school, a three room building, had been started. the walls were two feet high and an area for the dispensary had been cleaned and leveled at the termination of the operation.
  - b. OTHER:
    - (1) 800 pounds of food, 55 pounds of candy and 30 pounds of soap were given to the 29th Civil Affairs team at Tam Ky to be distributed to the refugees.
    - (2) Operation Washout, conducted at Tien Phuoc, dealt with distribution of soap to the villagers. Each person would receive half a bar of soap if he went to the river to bathe. This program helped to reduce the number of skin disease.
6. All activities of the Bn S-5 were closely coordinated with the bde, Tam Ky Sector, and Tien Phuoc Special Forces by frequent visits.

AVBD-C

24 Nov 1967

SUBJECT: Inclosure 6 (Air Support) to Combat Operations  
After Action Report - Operation Wheeler (U)

## 1. Army Aviation

a. General: Extensive use of Army Aviation was made by the 2-502 Inf for tactical extractions and assaults and in its daily requirements for utility, cargo, and command and control helicopters. Aircraft support at the beginning of the operation was very responsive. With increasingly bad weather beginning at the end of September, support became less available. By the middle of October, even daily support became tight. It became a common occurrence to have the battalion's C&C and/or utility ship withdrawn in order to support other tactical requirements. When the battalion's ships were forced to return to base for maintenance there was often a considerable period when no replacement was available and the battalion was wholly without aviation support.

b. Gunships: Maneuver elements of the 2-502 made almost daily use of gunships whenever weather permitted. They were used not only as fire support to cover ground movement of troops and against known enemy locations and for escort for medevacs and utilities into "hot" landing zones, but they were found to be very responsive, averaging 20-30 minutes from request to on-station, and accurate. The close-in support which gunships can provide during tactical movements and contacts has placed them in high demand by leaders of 2-502 units.

c. Cargo Helicopters (CH-47): Given an adequate lead time CH-47 sorties were adequate though not abundant. CH-47's were used for carrying cargo from Chu Lai and Tam Ky to the TAC CP.

## 2. Tactical Air Support.

a. General: Tactical air support was received from USAF, USMC, and USN utilizing forward air controllers. The use of preplanned airstrikes was focused on landing zone constructions and preparations and on skyspots. Emphasis was placed on immediate requests.

b. Preplanned airstrikes. For the first two weeks of Operation Wheeler extensive use was made of preplanned airstrikes, which were often diverted to an alternate target. After the first two weeks a new policy was adopted prohibiting diverts except for troops in contact. As a result, the use of preplanned air strikes was reduced and full use was made of immediate requests.

AVBD-C

24 Nov 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report  
Operation Wheeler (U)

15. COMMANDER'S ANALYSIS

a. Conduct of Combat Operations.

(1) The operations of the battalion responded to the enemy situation. Initially, little contact was made and the unit was free to break down to platoon level and operate from dispersed locations.

(2) During the latter part of September and the first half of October, contact was made with NVA battalion sized units and the battalion was required to operate in company sized formations. Additionally, during the same period, the enemy used mortars frequently and units were required to dig in extensively.

(3) After the middle of October, the enemy was no longer massing battalion sized units, and therefore, the battalion was able to operate again from more dispersed locations. Towards the end of the operation the enemy was avoiding contact.

(4) A rifle company was able to successfully defend against an attack by any size of enemy element; the enemy on several occasions massed a battalion against a rifle company. With the fire support available, a company sized element is almost impossible to overrun with what the NVA in that portion of Viet Nam are willing attack with.

b. Fire Support

(1) Artillery

(a) The artillery was timely and accurate.

(b) On several occasions during the operation, artillery was check fired for aircraft in the area; several times this occurred while units were in contact. On the occasions that this occurred it happened no aircraft was in the Area of Operation or close to the gun-target line.

(2) Tac Air

(a) Tac Air was responsive and accurate.

(b) The brigade FAC assisted the battalion in controlling gunships and provided VR when needed.



AVBD-C

24 Nov 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report  
Operation Wheeler (U)

(3) Gunships

(a) Gunships were responsive and accurate.

(b) On occasion replacement gunships were not available to provide continuous target coverage.

c. Psychological Operations.

(1) Effective use was made of the psychological operations capability and resulted in VC becoming Hoi Chanh and passing instructions to the civilian populace.

(2) Ground psyops teams were effectively used on several occasions. A tape recorder capability was not available and is highly desirable for this type of operation; POW's or Hoi Chanh's statements can be recorded and used.

d. Logistics.

(1) Resupply of companies was adversely affected by the weather on numerous occasions. In order to resupply, a small FSP at the Tac CP was established to meet emergency resupply requirements. Even in the worst weather it was possible to get into every company at least once a day, if needed. During periods of adverse weather, the normal resupply procedures must be modified to accomplish the mission.

(2) In populated areas, where concealment and cover are limited, the enemy can monitor unit moves. Small unit commanders should make the best use of available cover and concealment in selecting available routes.

(3) When the necessity for clandestine operation does not exist, more frequent resupply can be accomplished and the load of the trooper reduced.

(4) In areas where accurate enemy fire against us is being received, every attempt must be made to select the best route possible into the resupply LZ. Loads should be concentrated at the Tac CP or a location close to the resupply LZ in order to reduce the aircraft exposure time. Once the resupply commences, it should be done as expeditiously as possible. A break should be established half way through to allow time to prepare all out going supplies from the company. After the break, the aircraft should concentrate on removing supplies from the LZ.

AVBD-C

24 Nov 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report  
Operation Wheeler (U)

16. RECOMMENDATIONS.

a. Resupply must be completed as rapidly as possible and the unit displaced to prevent effective use of enemy mortars. Flights in and out of the resupply areas should be minimized for conservation of aircraft.

b. Ridgelines and particularly obvious landing zones were often mined. Care must be taken to avoid them. Personnel should be on the look out for both old and new mines.

c. Additional fire power such as a .50 cal machine gun or a 106mm recoilless rifle can be brought in and used to great advantage when an element must maintain a precarious position.

e. In a defensive perimeter maximum use should be made of warning devices.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



E. R. THROCKMORTON  
1LT Infantry  
Adjutant