

c. Phase 3 (AO BONDI)

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (1) Remaining under comd          | - two combat engr teams<br>1 Fd Sqn. |
| (2) Remaining under op con        | - 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt              |
| (3) Under op con from 231200H May | - 1 Tp C Sqn 1 Armd Regt             |
| (4) Remaining in direct sp        | - 102 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt             |
| (5) Remaining in direct sp        | - one H 13, 161 (Indep)<br>Recce Flt |
| (6) In sp from 121000H May        | - 161 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt             |
| (7) In sp from 131100H May        | - A Bty 2/35 US Arty Bn              |

Supporting Forces

Artillery.

6. During the operation, the Battalion successfully used field, medium and heavy arty, both own and 3 RAR mortars, gunships and strike aircraft.

7. It is estimated that approximately 4000 rounds of field artillery were used on close targets.

8. Most of the gun and mortar fire was controlled by the FOs and MFCs. However, on many occasions, fire was controlled by platoons and sections, usually by sending their corrections on the company net to the FO and then back by normal gunner means. Whenever possible, either a MFC or FO accompanied a patrol.

9. Counter-mortar Fire. At least two enemy mortar positions were engaged successfully. Ptls found bodies on one and unexpended mor ammo on the other. Once the en mors had fired the initial mortreps from coys were extremely valuable. Once our own fire was put on the ground, mortreps became very difficult to produce but generally our own fire, even if not right on the en baseplate posns was enough to silence en fire. After en habits became known around FSPB CORAL suspected baseplate posns were engaged as soon as en fire was heard. This silenced the en fire.

Mors.

10. The 1 RAR Mor Pl fired approx 5000 rounds HE between 12 May - 6 Jun mainly in sp of sub unit contacts and during attacks on FSPB CORAL. In the counter-mortar role the pl proved very effective. There were no H and I tasks planned for the mors at 1 ATF, however harrassing fire was used by ni to engage likely targets selected by ground tps during their daylight activities.

11. When aval, mor APCs were continuously used, providing protection, good comms, flexibility and a firm baseplate.

Light Fire Teams.

12. As a very close fire support weapon the gunships are extremely good. However, if gunships are used, all arty and mor fire has to check fire. The gunships do not produce the casualties that guns and mors can produce. Consequently, gunships must be sent out of the immediate area as soon as their task is complete and allow guns and mors to recommence firing. Gunships should not be used for depth targets or when the en is breaking contact by ni.

13. Considerable difficulty was experienced indicating loc of own tps by ni to gunships. During the first attack on FSPB CORAL, LFTs were directed easily initially by using a large fire as a reference point. When the fire went out, the LFTs became ineffective for 45 minutes. All coys now have different coloured ac beacon lts which are placed in a central pit by ni, to indicate own locs.

Tanks.

14. Tanks proved their worth conclusively on this op, providing very heavy intimate fire sp to inf and killing many en. RPG 2s appeared ineffective against the Centurion tank.

15. Problems which occurred and were resolved by all coys in working in jungle with armoured vehicles were:

a. Sound of tanks moving and timber falling interfered with fwd scouts hearing. Tanks moving in bounds of 50 metres overcame this problem.

b. Tanks tended to form waggon-wheel harbour posns in the rain forest which involved too much mov off the tracks already cleared. On halting the best procedure was for turrets to be turned to cover all arcs and tanks remain in the mov formation.

c. Inf were frequently endangered by falling timber or the actual mov of the tanks. An inf guiding and navigation team with radio comm to the tanks was found to overcome this problem.

APCs

16. APC/inf groups were used extensively to cover clear areas of ground. APCs enabled a ready reaction force to be on standby at all times. It was found necessary to have APC/inf married up when on standby. The fire power of the APCs was very effective in the C Coy contact of 29 May.

Intelligence.

17. See Annex A.

Mission.

18. a. Phase 1 - To recce in force into the eastern sector of AO BELIZE, AO LAWSON and the western sector of AO TAUPO.
- b. Phase 2 - To deny the en access to ground, rkt and mor attack posns for ops against LONG BINH/BIEN HOA, in AO AYRE.
- c. Phase 3 - To recce in force in AO BONDI, with the aim of finding and denying the en rft or withdrawal routes from War Zone D to SAIGON.

Concept of Operations.

19. Phase 1 - AO BELIZE

There had been intensive activity in the North East of PHUOC TUY and the HAT DICH area by rear services elements over the two months prior to the op. It was thought that 274 Regt could be about to return to this area. The AO allotted to 1 RAR was divided into five areas and the bn was to sweep from North to South searching each area in turn, with 2 RAR on the West and 3 RAR on the East. The first area was still being searched when 1 ATF was ordered to AO COLUMBUS II.

20. Phase 2 - AO AYRE

Int reports indicated that a further VC/NVA offensive would shortly be commencing on SAIGON/BIEN HOA/LONG BINH similar to the Tet Offensive. 1 ATF was ordered to operate in AO COLUMBUS II with the aim of denying infiltration routes to the LONG BINH/BIEN HOA area to the en. 1 RAR was to operate in AO AYRE with fire sp provided from FSPB HARRISON YT 1716. Each coy was deployed to ensure that any en mov from the North and North East could be intercepted. Coy ambushes were occupied by ni while pls actively patrolled by day. As it became clear that the en was not present in str in the AO, pl ambushes were positioned by ni.

21. Phase 3 - AO BONDI.

It became evident that AO COLUMBUS II was not used by the en. Reports from SAIGON indicated that the offensive in that area was petering out. The en could either withdraw his damaged forces to War Zone D for regrouping or reinforce his SAIGON forces from 7 NVA Div, thought to be partly located in the East of AO SURFERS. 1 ATF was moved by air to AO SURFERS to recce in force in AO SURFERS and ambush en gps either withdrawing from SAIGON or reinforcing SAIGON. 1 RAR was allocated AO BONDI and coys were deployed into coy AOs on arrival in the area, with fire sp provided from FSPB CORAL. Coys occupied ambush posns astride tracks on their first ni in the AO (ni 12/13 May).

22. Following the bn size attack on FSPB CORAL on the ni 12/13 May, all coys were redeployed to defend the Fire Sp Base. Coys patrolled fwd by day and returned by ni to FSPB CORAL. Initially patrols were to provide security for FSPB CORAL rather than to recce in force. With the arrival of A Sqn 1 Armd Regt on 23 May, coys began recce in force ops by day, still returning to FSPB CORAL by ni. As soon as en base camps and instls were located, air strikes were called in to destroy them. Following air activity over several days, the areas were again visited by coy gps. Invariably, the en was forced to withdraw from his battered defs. Under pressure from constant ground, arty and air activity, the en appeared to withdraw completely from AO BONDI on 1 Jun. The 1 RAR Gp had successfully denied the en all routes and instls in the AO.

Execution.

23. See Annex B.

Results.

24. a. Own casualties. 16 KIA. 63 WIA.  
2 x 81 mm mors damaged. 1 x M60 damaged.
- b. En casualties. 163 en KIA, 33 en KIA (poss), 3 en WIA (poss), 4 en PW, 3 detainees. Details of en eqpt captured and destroyed is detailed in Annex A.

Lessons Learned.

25. Protection. When facing NVA or main force en, it is necessary to be well dug-in in all overnight posns. Coys must halt at least three hours before last lt to ensure proper coord of all def measures. Harboring on nightfall does not give sufficient security against main force units working in their own base areas.

26. Target/Own Forces Indication. Problems were encountered when trying to indicate our own posns to LFTs and strike ac by ni. The only satisfactory answer is for coys to each have their own electric ac beacon which can be switched on at the bottom of a rear pit. Beacons should be different colours for each coy. In addition, it is considered vital that all sects be issued with a "strobe" light to successfully indicate posns to ac at ni. As an emergency measure, large amounts of hexamine can be burned in the bottom of a pit. Torches proved ineffective. Once the ac have picked up own loc, direction of fire is easy using bearings in degrees or by compass points and distances.

27. Accurate indication of en posns by day to LFTs was also a problem. Smoke fired from the M79 provides the best solution when the target cannot be indicated by white phosphorus rounds. At present, M79 smoke is on restd issue in 1 ATF.

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28. Arty, LFTs and Airstrikes. Light Fire Teams provide excellent close sp neutralising fire. When fire units available are limited in relation to targets called for, such as on the ni attack on FSPB CORAL on 13 May, or when fast engagement of very close targets is 30 to 50 metres is required, LFTs are invaluable. However, the fire provided is very limited in its area effects and is not continuous. To completely neutralise the en and inflict en casualties, arty and mor fire produces better results, once the en has pulled back from our posns. If a combination of air and arty fire is used, the pilots must be fully briefed prior to commencing their strikes to enable the arty check fire to be as short as possible. A careful choice of orbit areas close to likely targets and outside of areas affected by guns and mors was found to assist greatly.

29. Fire Control. Fire control at sect level is necessary to achieve results against the en engaged while on the move or against the en during def. Fast and accurate return fire always silenced the en fire power. Small arms shooting must always be directed six inches above ground level, particularly at ni when the tendency is to fire too high. In close country, bursts of fire are essential to guarantee hits against fleeting targets.

30. Inf/Tank Cooperation. While nothing essentially new was learned by coys operating with tanks and APCs in thick rain forest, navigation, harbouring, and safety of own tps proved difficult. All coys provided a navigation/control team, usually the CSM or Coy 2IC, to work with the tp leader to overcome these problems. Marrying up at all levels was again shown to be necessary and must be carried out as early as possible by stand-by sub units.

31. Control Comms. Despite the existence of the command net, admin/air net, tac air net and arty and mor nets, comm channels were fully taxed during the two ni attacks on FSPB CORAL. Whenever possible, coys should control their own air strikes or LFT strikes to assist general control from the bn CP.

32. It was again found necessary in close country to have all supporting elms and neighbouring pls on the bn comd net when a pl ptl, away from its parent coy, was in contact. All friendly forces must be fully aware at all times of the whereabouts of all neighbouring elms.

33. LZ Control. When operating by hel to a bn LZ, all coys must be briefed on coy assembly areas adjacent to the LZ and preferably have some form of marking to identify their own area. Movement from the LZ requires close bn control. Coys must have definite routes from the LZ to their AOs.

34. Dust-off. Dust-off cooperation from the RAAF was good. However, two winches from RAAF helms broke during the op, confirming that Dust-off by winch should only occur in emergency. When at all possible, coys must clear pads for Dust-off or move to a pad at a winch site with the minimum tree height.

35. Junior Leadership. The necessity for good junior leadership was obvious in all aspects of def routine and particularly weapon cleaning and hygiene.

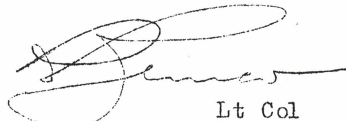
36. General. The value of trg received in Australia prior to arrival in VIETNAM was confirmed during this op. The only new aspects were working with tanks and LFTs and control of close arty fire by ni. These aspects should be introduced and studied as techniques prior to mov from Australia.

Conclusion.

37. 1 RAR Gp was severely tested in its first major op and proved equal to that test. While the soldiers of 1 RAR have a respect for the en, it has been shown that he can be beaten on his home ground. This knowledge together with the experience gained on the op will be of tremendous value to the Bn in the future.

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38. The en, although skilled in recce, well organised and heavily supported, with RPG and mors, was easily repulsed in two def battles by well coordinated air mor and arty sp and by the disciplined and aggressive def conducted by the sub units involved. This result was achieved although only limited wire obstacles had been constructed due to time and avail of wire and pickets.



Lt Col  
CO 1 RAR

<u>Distr</u>	<u>Copy No incl Annexes</u>
A Coy	1 - 2
B Coy	3 - 4
C Coy	5 - 6
D Coy	7 - 8
Sp Coy	9 - 10
Sig Pl	11
Mor Pl	12
Aslt Phr Pl	13
Atk Pl	14 -
Admin Coy	15 -16
CO	17
2IC	18
Ops Offr	19
BC	20
Adjt	21
IO	22
QM	23
AQM	24
RMO	25
RSM	26
HQ 1 ATF	27 - 31
A Sqn 1 Armd Regt	32
A Sqn 3 Cav Regt	33
12 Fd Regt RAA	34
1 Fd Sqn RAE	35
161 (Indep) Recce Flt	36
3 RAR	37
4 RAR	38
5 RAR	39 - 45
6 RAR	46 - 52
9 RAR	53 - 59
CP	60
Comds Diary	61 - 64
File	65
Spare	66 - 72

Annexes

- Annex A - Intelligence
- B - Execution - Sequence of Events
- C - A Coy Commanders Op Analysis
- D - B Coy Commanders Op Analysis
- E - C Coy Commanders Op Analysis
- F - D Coy Commanders Op Analysis

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Phase 1 -- AO BELIZE

1. The ground in the AO was basically flat and slightly undulating with secondary jungle. The area is crossed by trail clearing, the trails run basically North-South and East-West. The trails provide a natural access route for en and friendly movement. Some tracks were discovered during operations in the area, on an East-West axis.
2. It was expected the en in the area would be rear services. It was also possible that elms of D 445 Bn could have been operating in the area. During the 3 days of operations, no idents were made.

Phase 2 -- AO AYRE

3. On 5 May, operations were commenced in AO AYRE. To the South, the AO consisted of low undulating country covered with thick low scrub. To the North of this was a broad rice paddy valley. At the time of the op, it was firm and suitable for use with wheeled and tracked vehicles. However, with rain, it would become impassable. The growth in this area consisted of clumps of bamboo and along the creek banks heavy secondary growth. To the North of the AO was a hilly area covered with moderately heavy secondary growth.
4. The likely en threat was thought to be 274 VC Regt plus Engineer and Arty Bns. Their likely action was infiltration through the AO toward SAIGON or the LONG BINH, BIEN HOA complex.
5. The infiltration of the main force units did not occur during the 6 days of the operation. However A Coy did have two contacts which resulted in 4 VC dead, later identified as members of the local district VC unit, probably members of the Tax Cell. There was no identification of main force units.

Phase 3 -- AO BONDI

6. On 12 May, operations were commenced in AO BONDI. Ground in the AO was generally flat and undulating, a large area of it consisted of cleared rubber. The remainder consisted of overgrown rubber and low thick scrub.
7. Anticipated en within the AO were from 7th NVA Div HQ, thought to be in the East of the AO. It was also expected to meet elms of 84A NVA Arty Regt.
8. En reaction to the presence of 1 RAR in FSPB CORAL was rapid and violent, an attack being launched at about 0245 hrs on the morning of the 13th. The main axis of the attack was on to 102 Bty and the Mor Pl. The attacking unit was identified as 2 Bn 141 Regt.
9. A second attack was launched on the morning 16 Jun at 0230 hrs. This attack was preceded by a mor and rkt bombardment. The main attack then being launched against A Coy's posn. This contact was probably carried out by two Bns with a third carrying out battlefield recovery and removing the dead and the wounded.
10. The second attack was preceded on the fifteenth by constant probing by gps of up to squad size on the posn. There is also no doubt observation of the FSPB CORAL area had been carried out on the 14 Jun.
11. Subsequently the en attempted no further ground attacks on the posn. However, the base was subject to mortaring and rocket attacks. These attacks appeared to always originate from the same areas. The probable reason being the en had surveyed in base plate posns ensuring the accuracy of his attack.
12. On the 28 May, an attack was launched against 3 RAR at BALMORAL. At the same time, CORAL received mor and rkt fire. This was to divert arty sp from BALMORAL to counter-mor fire around CORAL.

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13. Attacks on FSPB CORAL took the following pattern:-

- a. Interrogation of prisoners revealed that an indirect approach is used from the base area to the FUP, to defeat air observation. Local guides are used extensively - no compasses were seen on en dead following the attacks on FSPB CORAL.
- b. Movement of large bodies of men takes place by day. When aircraft are sighted use of camouflage foliage is made. There is good cover in the area.
- c. On arrival at the Assy Area, usually 1000 metres from the objective the attacking force digs in; usually an individual circular hole about 2 feet deep. While the sp wps crews and main body dig in, recce and guide gps finalise routes to the FUP. Telephone wire is laid between Assy Area and FUP.
- d. Individual pits are also dug in the FUP which could be as close as 50 metres from the defence wire.
- e. Attacks on CORAL were preceded by rocket and mor attack. The initial fire did not exceed 5 minutes, due probably to ammunition limitations. There was a pause of 10 minutes before the ground attack was launched. The ground attack axis did not always follow natural cover; possibly the en preferred clear arcs of fire for RPGs.
- f. Attacks on CORAL commenced between 0200 and 0300 hrs. The attack in force was broken at about 0500 hrs. However a force of up to Coy size remained to press a renewed diversionary attack at about 0545. This was to cover final battlefield clearance teams and hamper any follow-up force.
- g. During the attack use is made of the 12.7mm HMG in the Anti Aircraft role against LFT's in the area.
- h. Effective use is made of the RPG 2 and RPG 7 Rocket launchers at all times. They are used as a personal wpn. Ammunition is carried by the remainder of the squad. Rockets are preferred to RPDs as the major section wpn.
- j. Once the main body breaks the attack as much produce, wounded and dead are removed and the main body disappears to prepared hides for the remainder of the day before moving out of the area completely.
- k. On the attack of the 16th use was made of a diversion at right angles to the main axis of attack.
- l. During the recce phase attempts are made by the en to mark machine gun pits. In this area a single stick was used. Recce of perimeter defences was effective and the main attack on the 16th was made at the junctions of coy locs.

9. All units identified were from 7 NVA Div. A number of new infiltration groups were identified. It would appear these had been used to reinforce units after losses received in other attacks. The en did not press home his infantry attacks, probably due to lack of co-ordination in his make shift units as well as friendly defensive fire.

10. Intelligence received gave no indication of the presence of 141 Regt or 165 Regt, although the presence of 7 NVA Div HQ had been mentioned.

Attachments.

- Appendix 1. En losses.
- Appendix 2. List of Contacts/Incidents
- Appendix 3. Trace showing Contacts/Incidents

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SUMMARY OF CONTACTS AND DESTRUCTION

The following is a summary of men, equipment, and installation casualties caused to the enemy during Operation TOAN THANG.

Enemy KIA .....	163
Enemy KIA (possible) .....	33
Enemy WIA (possible) .....	3
Enemy POW .....	4
Detainees .....	3
Coy size camps .....	7
Platoon size camps .....	9
Squad size camps .....	4
.45 cal pistols .....	1
7.62mm Chicom pistol .....	3
7.62mm P.P.S. SMG .....	1
M1 .....	1
M2 .....	2
AK 47 .....	33
SKS .....	1
RPD .....	5
RPG 2 .....	12
RPG 7 .....	5
M16 .....	1
.30 cal rounds .....	40
.38 cal rounds .....	10
7.62mm short .....	2500
7.62mm .....	14000
7.62mm linked .....	2000
.50 cal .....	100
Other and assorted .....	1000
7.62mm Pistol magazine .....	15
PPS magazine .....	2
M16 magazine .....	1
M1 carbine magazine .....	6
AK 47 magazine .....	110
RPD magazine .....	10
H.S. Walkie talkie set (SW) .....	1
Transistor radio .....	3
Documents	
Medical supplies	
Food	
Tobacco .....	20 lbs
Machetes .....	2
Belts and holsters .....	4

DESTROYED IN SIT

RPG 2 boosters .....	10
RPG 2 rounds .....	50
RPG 7 rounds complete .....	45
M 72 rocket launcher .....	1
Grenades .....	200
UXB .....	1
Bangalore torpedoes .....	20
Gas mask .....	4
Packs .....	100
Sets webbing .....	200
Entrenching tool .....	150
Water bottle .....	100
Shell dressing .....	90
Rice cooked .....	100 lbs
Rice polished .....	700 lbs
Sets of clothing .....	120
Assorted clothing .....	50

INCIDENTS ENCOUNTERED ON OP TOAN THANG

1. Base camp -- coy size.
2. Contact -- neg cas
3. Contact -- neg cas
4. Contact -- neg cas
5. UXB found
6. VC coy eng by arty
7. Large rocket sites
8. Bunker found
9. Contact -- 3 VC KIA
10. Found -- 3 x M26 grenades
11. Base camp found -- coy size
12. Found mortar site and container
13. Found bunker with arms cache and clothing
14. Found small arms cache
15. Base camp found
16. Found trenches and four bunkers
17. Contact -- 1 VC KIA
18. Contact -- 1 NVA KIA, 1 Aust WIA
19. Contact -- Neg cas
20. Contact -- Neg cas
21. Contact -- Ground attack with mortar and rockets. 55 NVA KIA, 1 NVA PW, 3 Detainees, 7 Aust KIA, 19 WIA Aust.
22. Found -- bunkers and tunnel
23. Contact -- 3 Aust WIA, 1 Aust KIA
24. Contact -- 2 VC WIA (poss)
25. Contact -- Neg cas
26. Contact -- 4 NVA KIA, 1 Aust KIA, 1 Aust WIA
27. Contact -- neg cas
28. Contact -- 1 VC KIA
29. Contact -- 2 Aust KIA
30. Contact -- 7 NVA KIA, 2 PW
31. Contact -- 2 Aust WIA
32. Contact -- 2 VC KIA (poss)
33. Base camp with HMG pits found
34. Contact -- Neg cas
35. VC camp found with 50 pits
36. Contact -- unknown results
37. FSPB CORAL attacked by estimated 3 Bns with RPG and mortar. 37 NVA KIA, 10 NVA KIA (poss), 7 Aust KIA, 17 Aust WIA.
38. Contact -- 1 NVA KIA
39. Found new pits 50 approx.
40. Base camp found
41. Contact -- 1 NVA PW
42. Found coy size camp
43. Contact -- 2 NVA KIA
44. Ammunition found -- 30 x 60mm mor bombs
45. 2 Coy size B/camps found
46. Contact -- 1 NVA KIA
47. Found mortar position
48. Found 40 pits
49. Contact -- Neg cas
50. Contact -- 1 NVA KIA
51. Contact -- 7 NVA KIA
52. Contact -- 1 NVA KIA, 1 NVA WIA (poss)
53. Contact -- 1 NVA KIA, 1 Aust WIA
54. Contact -- Neg cas
55. Contact -- Neg cas
56. Pits found
57. Coy size base camp found
58. Contact -- 24 NVA KIA, 21 en KIA (poss)
59. 24 pits found
60. Contact -- 1 NVA KIA
61. Found trenches and M60 recovered with 5 NVA bodies.

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Annex B: to  
After Action Report 2/68

EXECUTION - SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Phase 1

- 2 May 68 0930 CO's orders  
1400 LO visit from 1/35 AHC (US)  
1530 Air coord conference
- 3 May 68 0800 First elms left KANGAROO to fly in to FSPB WATTLE.  
1030 Coys commenced move into AOs. Delays caused by B coy and C Coy using same route.  
1235 Fly in of Bn complete.  
2045 Anti tk pl engaged 1 VC on perimeter of FSPB WATTLE with unknown results.  
Ni Locs: Bn HQ and A Coy FSPB WATTLE YS3591 : B Coy YS 337912 : C Coy YS 344908 : D Coy YS 346888.
- 4 May 68 0930 B Coy found females underwear and trousers recently abandoned at YS 333913. Captured documents showed they belonged to local VC who had been attending a political course at LONG KHANH  
1141 11 Pl sighted 1 VC at YS 341883.  
1156 10 Pl contacted 1 VC at YS 344884 with no results.  
1228 12 Pl contacted 3 VC at YS 350886 with no results.  
1900 Orders issued for redeployment to FSPB HARRISON and AO AYRE.  
Ni Locs: Bn HQ and A Coy FSPB WATTLE YS 3591 : B Coy YS 316895 : C Coy YS 343892 : D Coy YS 347868.

Phase 2

- 5 May 68 0730 Bn moved to AO AYRE by air less two pls of A Coy. A Coy moved with 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav to FSPB HARRISON on 5/6 May  
Ni Locs: A Coy (-) BLACK HORSE : B Coy YT 162168 : C Coy YT 144193 : Bn HQ, Sp Coy, D Coy and Pl A Coy - FSPB HARRISON YT 1716.
- 6 May 68 0800 C Coy commenced search of AO 2.  
1130 LP prepared by Aslt Pnr Pl at YT 152171. B Coy commenced search of AO 3, with Aslt Pnr Pl attached.  
1135 A Coy (-) and 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt arrive AO 4. APCs move to FSPB HARRISON.  
1400 Anti tk Pl and Bn HQ and sect Mor Pl move by heli to YT 152171.  
1430 Civilians moving west to east at YT 135190 driven off by POSSUM and Pl D Coy in APCs.  
Ni Locs: Bn HQ, Aslt Pnr Pl, Atk Pl, sect Mor Pl YT 152171 : A Coy YT 117204 : B Coy YT 137181 : C Coy YT 147195 : D Coy, sect mor pl, 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt, 102 Fd Bty FSPB HARRISON YT 1716.
- 7 May 68 0730 Civilians again moving into area from the West. Chased away by Possum.  
0907 LO with 3 Bde 101 AB Div (US) reports suspected two coy VC located at YT 126217. A Coy despatched to investigate. No results.  
1130 20-30 civilians in area YT 135188. C Coy pl despatched to investigate and check ID cards.  
1240 5 pl sighted 1 VC at YT 133167.  
1440 B Coy found a 122mm rocket site used approx 2-3 months previously.  
1937 Area to South of C Coy engaged by LFT and Snoopy, without 1 ATF approval.  
1945 LFT and Snoopy contacted through HQ 1 ATF and fire stops. No casualties.  
Ni Locs: Bn HQ, Aslt Pnr Pl, Atk Pl, sect Mor Pl YT 152170 : A Coy YT 125217 : B Coy YT 135155 : C Coy YT 156191 : D Coy, sect Mor Pl, 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt, 102 Fd Bty FSPB HARRISON YT 1716.

- 8 May 68 0615 2 Pl A Coy engaged 5 VC at YT 125217. 3 VC KIA, 1 pistol, 2 AK 47s captured. En were district tax collectors.
- 1100 4 pl B Coy found 3 M26 grenades at YT 133150. Coys continued searching in AOs 1,2,3 and 4. 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt searched in the clear ground in the SUOI RACH DONG Valley.
- Ni Locs: Bn HQ, Aslt Pnr Pl, Atk Pl, sect Mor Pl YT 152170 : A Coy YT 125217 : B Coy YT : C Coy YT : D Coy, sect Mor Pl, 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav, 102 Fd Bty FSPB HARRISON YT 1716.
- 9 May 68 All Coys searched in their AOs with no contact.
- Ni Locs: Bn HQ, Aslt Pnr Pl, Atk Pl, sect Mor Pl YT 152170 : A Coy YT 125217 : B Coy YT 146156 : C Coy YT 151203 : D Coy, sect Mor Pl, 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt, 102 Fd Bty FSPB HARRISON YT 1716.
- 10 May 68 Coys continued to search in their AOs.
- 1206 At YT 124216 1 Pl contacted 1 VC with the result 1 VC KIA (BC) and 1 Chicom pistol captured.
- Ni Locs: No change except B Coy at YT 140156
- 11 May 68 AM Orders received for redeployment to AO SURFERS (BIEN HOA Province) All coy move to vicinity FSPB HARRISON to enable rapid fly out to AO SURFERS ( 1 RAR AO - AO BONDI)
- 1300 Bn HQ gp commences move by air to FSPB HARRISON
- 1600 CO's Orders.
- Ni Locs: Bn HQ gp, D Coy, 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt, 102 Fd Bty FSPB HARRISON YT 1716 : A Coy YT 176177 : B Coy YT 151173 : C Coy YT 168178.
- Phase 3
- 12 May 68 0722 Bn recce party airborne to FSPB CORAL in AO BONDI.
- 0730-1610 Generally confused move to FSPB CORAL due to elms of 1 US Div engaged with VC in vicinity XT 9027 until 1300 hrs and the 3 RAR coy securing FSPB CORAL being heli landed in the wrong loc. US elms remained in 3 RAR's AO until 1500 hrs so 3 RAR remained in vicinity XT 930295 until then. 161 Bty was heli landed at XT 926284 and 102 bty at XT 936293.
- 1200 C Coy commenced move to Route 16 to proposed loc 944268 and commenced road clearance.
- 1330 B Coy commenced move to proposed loc XT 955283.
- 1610 All elms complete in AO BONDI. Bn HQ loc XT 938289. Aslt Pnr Pl XT 939289 : Atk Pl XT 938290 : Mor Pl XT 936293.
- 1620 A and D Coys moved to proposed ni locs XT 937290 and XT 933297 respectively.
- 1820 D Coy in contact with en squad at XT 939309 resulting in 1 VC KIA (BC) and 1 AK 47 captured. 1 own WIA evacuated.
- 1935 While harbouring 4 pl contacted 10 NVA at XT 964280 with unknown results.
- Ni Locs: A Coy XT 946303 : B Coy XT 964279 : C Coy XT 948263 : D Coy 940311.
- 13 May 68 0015 2 en approached Mor Pl at XT 936293 and were fired on with unknown results. This was a definite en probe into defences of FSPB CORAL.
- 0215 3 en were engaged by 12 Pl. They were apparently a scout elm for a NVA coy. The main body returned fire with RPGs. which fell in 11 Pl which suffered 1 KIA and 11 WIA.
- 0310 Dust-off from 11 pl complete.
- 0330 Heavy mortar and rocket fire at the Mor Pl, 102 Bty and 1 ATF elms preceded a ground attack by several NVA Coys from rubber at XT 935294 to the mor pl and 102 Fd Bty posn. Guns could not fire splintex because they were masked by the Mor Pl.
- 0345 En overran Mor Pl and penetrated the gun posn occupying No 6 gun. Fire sp from 161 Fd Bty and 3 RAR Mor Pl directed through 1 RAR FCC.

- 0355 En fanning out from the gun posn effectively engaged by 90mm RCL splintex from Atk Pl. 2IC Mor Pl directed fire of 3 RAR mortars and called for splintex to be fired onto his posn. En endeavoured to use 1 RAR mortars against 102 Fd Bty.
- 0400 LFT on station and was directed to fire at en to North East of 102 Fd Bty. A large fire was used to indicate own posns to the LFT. Snoopy dropped flares on en.
- 0402 A Coy received mor and RPG fire but no ground attack.
- 0425 Under fire from LFT and Snoopy the en attack faltered and en appeared to fall back into the rubber to the North East, leaving small elms behind. Gunners from 102 Fd Bty were able to engage en with HE and splintex rounds and fired over the Mor Pl posn.
- 0430-0500 Sporadic fighting only.
- 0500 The fire used to direct the fire of the LFTs went out. Despite flares from Snoopy accurate indication of fire from the LFTs was difficult until 0530. The en realised this and attacked again but with smaller forces. This time HE and splintex from 102 Fd Bty and splintex from the Atk Pl was very effective.
- 0512 En moving away from the action were engaged by A Coy - 1 en KIA. En main elms appeared to be withdrawing.
- 0530 LFT fire again effective. En began withdrawal of rearguard elm.
- 0543 B Coy under mor and RPG fire. 1 own KIA, 1 own WIA.
- 0545 First light. LFTs and 161 Fd Bty ordered to engage withdrawal routes to North and East and South East.
- 0555 Anti Tk Pl warned to carry out sweep fwd to 102 Fd Bty and mor pl posn.
- 0610 Atk Pl with RMOs party commenced sweep. Last en in loc 102 Fd Bty killed in No 6 Gun posn. LFT engaging en in rubber at XT 935294. 3 RAR Ptl with RMOs party clear from North.
- 0625 Atk Pl and Pl 3 RAR met in Mor Pl posn. FSPB CORAL clear of en.
- 0630 Dust-off commenced. LFT engaged en escape routes. Search of approaches to FSPB CORAL indicates NVA Bn attack.
- Results: Own B Coy 1 KIA 1 WIA  
 D Coy 1 KIA 11 WIA  
 Mor Pl 5 KIA 7 WIA 2 x 81mm mor damaged.  
En 56 NVA (BC), 1 PW, 3 RPG 7s, 2 SKS and 19 AK 47 captured. 2 detainees, 2 pistols.
- 0735 Relocation of 1 RAR into a def posn around FSPB CORAL ordered.
- 0930 D Coy contacted 5 NVA at XT 941309 resulting in 3 NVA KIA and 3 AK 47s captured.
- 1325 A Coy had badly wounded NVA soldier surrender.
- PM Search and occupation of def posn continued.
- Ni Locs: A Coy 939292; B Coy 938288; C Coy 935294; D Coy 932293; BnHQ gp 937295. These locs remained firm until 18 May.
- 14 May 68 AM One pl from each coy continued search of area up to 1000 metres from perimeter of FSPB CORAL. Coys improved fd defs.
- 0840 B Coy saw 1 en dressed in blue at XT 942283.
- 1202 12 Pl were ambushed by at least 3 NVA at XT 924307 with result 1 own KIA, 3 own WIA. En casualties unknown.
- 1253 5 Pl contacted 10 NVA at 200 metres range at XT 942282 with results 2 NVA WIA (poss).
- 1535 9 Pl found en camp at XT 924298 with docus and eqpt.
- 1615 2 Pl contacted 13 en at XT 947252 with no results. En split into two gps - one moved to South and other to North. Sect APCs sent from FSPB CORAL to follow up.
- 1700 Sect APCs directed by Possum pushed en in direction of 7 Pl at XT 942300. 7 Pl engaged with result own 1 KIA, 2 WIA, en 7 VC (BC), 2 VC PW, 1 M16 rifle, 1 pistol, 1 AK 47 captured.
- 1730 5 Pl B Coy ambushed by 4-6 VC when in open ground. Sect APCs sent to reinforce 5 Pl which was split into two groups.
- 1800 5 Pl contact complete with results: own 1 KIA, 1 WIA. En: 4 VC KIA (BC), 1 M16 rifle and 1 claymore captured by the en.
- 1801 Standing ptl from D Coy saw 1 en at 923997.
- 1807 A Coy engaged mov to their front - one en KIA with M72.

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- 1840 3 Pl received one incoming RPG round with result 2 own WIA. The area the RPG was fired from was engaged with MG and arty with unknown effect.
- 15 May 68 0340 2 Pl engaged 2 VC with unknown result.  
AM Clearing ptls and area search commenced.  
0800 10 Pl found bunker system with 12 bunkers, 3 HMG pits at XT 923297. A small amount of clothing and equipment was found in the camp.  
1208 1 Pl saw 5 VC at XT 948293. No result.  
2033 3 Pl A Coy saw mor to front - engaged with grenade - no result.
- 16 May 68 0230 Mor attack on FSPB CORAL. Main impact on HQ 1 ATF and TFMA.  
0235 Counter mor fire instituted through 1 RAR FCC. En mortar fire almost ceases. RPGs fired into D Coy from vicinity XT 932298. SA fire onto left and right flanks of A Coy. Small en probes engage perimeter of D, C and A Coys.  
0310 D Coy still receiving rockets from area MT 932298. C Coy under mor fire. Counter mor fire and defensive fire directed at XT 932258 and XT 949291 and all likely approach routes. LFT on call.  
0340 Main en attack launched at 1 Pl and 3 Pl on A Coy's flanks with B and C Coys respectively. Penetration into 3 Pl's locality. C Coy engages across A Coy front with MG fire. B Coy under light attack.  
0400 1 Pl and 3 Pl still being heavily engaged. En does not press on once he has opened gap in defensive wire. Arty engaging fwd of A and B Coys on close DFs.  
0430 Flares dropped from Spooky. LFT engages area fwd of A and B Coys. Arty fire resumed fwd of A and B Coys after LFT strike.  
0500 En attack halted. En signal flares seen evidently to indicate withdrawal. Ammo and 90mm RCL team moved fwd to A Coy from 1 RAR echelon and Atk Pl respectively.  
0530 FAC on station. LFTs continue to engage fwd of A, D and B Coys. Arty fire on suspected en mov posns and withdrawal routes. Difficulty encountered indicating own locs to LFTs during action. Ammo carried fwd to A Coy in APCs. APCs and A Coy elm counter attack into the sect posn of 3 Pl overrun earlier.  
0545 Airstrike brought in on XT 946294 on diggings seen by FAC.  
0555 En rearguard has final action with all coys prior to escaping. It is estimated that en attack was in regimental strength with one battalion plus moving against A Coy flanks and one battalion to North of D and C Coys. Probably a battalion minus uncommitted or used in battlefield clearance.  
0605 Last contact with D Coy.  
0615 All coys out of contact.  
0630 Initial clearing commenced.  
0700 All coys with APC elm (sect or tp HQ) given orders to commence sweep to depth of 1000 metres at 0730.  
0730 Sweep commences.  
0905 B Coy contact 1 NVA - result 1 NVA KIA (BC) 1 RPG 2 captured.  
0934 Possum sighted 200 pits im area XT 947234 - en FUP.  
0957 C Coy captured one NVA PW, and one AK 47.  
1440 Sniper fired into A Coy locality. Engaged with M79 - no results  
Results from the morning attack:  
Own 4 KIA 16 WIA  
En 38 NVA KIA (BC), 1 PW  
1500 Aslt Pnr Pl in new loc on A Coys left flank and under comd A Coy
- 17 May 0330 C Coy heard tapping on wire.  
0730 Coys strengthened defences and each sent one pl fwd to sweep area 1000 metres fwd of perimeter.  
0945 12 pl found 34 x 60mm bombs at XT 931297.  
0951 5 Pl found large bunder complex XT 940284 - not used for 6 months  
1255 5 Pl found a satchel containing 2 x B40 rockets and med supplies at XT 914280.  
1715 5Pl contacted 1 en at XT 938282. Result 1 NVA KIA (BC) man wounded two days previously.

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- 1800 12 Pl found 4 mor base plate posns at XT 930299. They had been used on ni 15/16 May and 23 x 60mm rds were destroyed. En had fired 2 x 82mm from this loc which had been hit by our own counter mor fire and evacuated.
- 1930 A Coy saw one en break timber line to their front did not fire..
- 18 May 68 0700-1730 B Coy, Atk Pl and Bn HQ redeployed inside FSPB CORAL. New locs B Coy XT 932290, Bn HQ 935294, Atk Pl XT 936294. 1 Pl A Coy now flanked by 102 Fd Bty. Areas fwd of A and B Coys cleared with bulldozers. Standing ptls only fwd during redeployment.
- 19 May 68 0730-1730 Each Coy had one pl fwd in ambush posns during the day.
- 0745 1 Pl engaged 3-5 en moving to the North East at XT 940292 with no result.
- 0927 11 Pl found 1 en body two days old at XT 927926, also 41 wpn pits running generally North East to South West. Docs and 1 X RPG 7 captured.
- 20 May 68 0730-1730 Each Coy had one pl fwd in ambush posns during the day.
- 0758 12 Pl sighted 1 en in creekline at XT 927297 and engaged with arty with unknown results.
- 0827 7 Pl found 1 NVA body 300 metres fwd of C Coy Loc.
- 21 May 68 0600 D Coy (-) began recce in force to the North.
- 0900 9 Pl found 40 wpn pits at XT 945294.
- 0937 12 Pl found toilet area in creek at XT 925300, and beginning of large bunker system.
- 1125 C Coy (-) found 1 body and a tunnel at XT 946295. 2 AK 47s recovered.
- 1505 D Coy (-) found large bunker system at XT 924306.
- 1810 4 VC in grey seen to follow D Coy on return to FSPB CORAL- engaged with mors with unknown results.
- 1900 A Coy engaged 2 en at XT 943297 with unknown results.
- 22 May 68 0300 20-30 mor rds landed in FSPB CORAL. No casualties. Counter mor fire bought down.
- 0730 C Coy (-) commenced recce to the North East.
- 0825 C Coy (-) found shirt with documents at XT 941294
- 0850 C Coy (-) found 30 x 60mm mor nose caps.
- 0930 5 Pl discovered VC OP at XT 925285.
- 1030 C Coy (-) found 1 body, 5 x 60mm mor bombs, 2 Chicom grenades and RPG 7 optical sight at XT 943294.
- 23 May 68 0600 D Coy (-) began recce in force to the North.
- 0940 12 Pl in contact with 1 en. Results unknown.
- 1200 1 Tp C Sqn 1 Armd Regt under op con following arrival at FSPB CORAL.
- 1535 10 Pl found 6 pits 3 days old at XT 921311.
- 24 May 68 One pl from each coy fwd in ambush posns during day.
- 25 May 68 0730 B Coy escort 3 Tp C Sqn 1 Armd Regt to FSPB BALMORAL to the North at XT 938338.
- 0817 8 Pl found en body 4-7 days old at XT 947300.
- 1152 B Coy and tanks in contact with 2 en (thought to be sentries) at XT 928310. Results unknown.
- 1155 B Coy hit en defended base area at XT 931311. Estimated en size pl (+). B Coy told to extricate themselves. Airstrike requested.
- 1249 Contact broken. Results 2 NVA KIA (BC). 1 own WIA dustoff.
- 1300 Airstrike on en camp controlled by B Coy.
- 1530 B Coy and tanks arrive FSPB BALMORAL and B Coy returns to FSPB CORAL by air.

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- 26 May 68 0025 10 Pl sentry fired at movement on the perimeter wire. Sentry was wounded by incoming grenade.  
0415-0430 FSPB CORAL came under sporadic mor and RPG fire, to draw away fire sp from FSPB BALMORAL which came under ground attack. No casualties.  
0600 D Coy and 1 Tp C Sqn moved to site of B Coy's contact on 25 May.  
0730-1730 Pls from A, B and C Coys carried out reces to East, North East and South of FSPB CORAL.  
1050 South of FSPB CORAL airstrike on XT 931312 prior to D Coy entering area.  
1227 10 Pl contacted by unknown number of en at XT 930310. Fire sp given by tanks of 1 Tp. Contact broken at 1315. Results during this contact 3 NVA KIA (BC).  
1420 10 Pl again engaged by en from well prepared bunker system at 930313. En engaged tanks with RPG 2s without success, 14 bunkers were destroyed by tanks and infantry using flame. Results 3 NVA KIA (BC) 3 NVA KIA (poss).  
1520 Contact broken. D Coy and 1 Tp commence return to FSPB CORAL  
1245-1600 2 Pl A Coy discovered 60mm mor base plate posn with 33 x 60mm bomb nose caps and 15 x 75mm RCL spent cases.
- 27 May 68 0730-1800 C Coy carried out recce in force to XT 9629. 3 Pl patrolled to South East to XT 9428 and 5 Pl patrolled to the West to XT 9129.  
1200 C Coy engaged 12 NVA with no result at MT 965299.  
1310 C Coy while sweeping area of last contact were fired on by NVA squad, with AK 47s and RPG 2. Results 3 own WIA and 1 NVA KIA (BC). 1 RPG 2 launcher (loaded) was captured and destroyed in situation.  
1341 Possum sighted recently used camp at XT 971307 and engaged with medium arty.  
2100 Movement on wire reported by C and D Coys.
- 28 May 68 0235 Bn stood to following ground attack on FSPB BALMORAL.  
0244 Mor and RPG fire incoming into FSPB CORAL, particularly at 102 Fd Bty, A 2/35 US Arty, and C Coy 1 RAR.  
0300 Mor fire ceased from en. Main purpose seems to have been to divert fire sp from FSPB BALMORAL to counter mor targets around FSPB CORAL. No ground attack but movement was sighted fwd of 1 Pl. No casualties.  
0700-1700 A Coy with 1 Tp C Sqn carried out recce in force to the area of XT 9361. Pls of B,C,D Coys patrolled to East, North East and North West respectively.  
0747 A Coy found badly decomposed body at XT 938295.  
0755 4 sticks were found fwd of D Coy marking main D Coy gun pits.  
1200 4 Pl found remains of 3 bodies at old mor base plate posn at XT 951291.  
1356 4 Pl discovered wpn pits and more produce.  
1530 3 Pl observed 3 VC at XT 968312. Engaged with no result.
- 29 May 68 0600-1700 D Coy (-) carried out recce in force in areas XT 9129 and XT 9130. B Coy plus 1 Tp C Sqn carried out recce in force in area XT 9128. 9 Pl and sect 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt patrolled to the south to XT 9426. 3 Pl patrolled to XT 9528.  
1010 B Coy discovered unoccupied bunker system of pl size at XT 964284. Posn had been used to mount attack on 13 May. Further bunkers were found to the South and North large enough to accommodate a complete coy.
- 30 May 68 0700-1800 C Coy carried out recce in force in area XT 9630 and local ptls were conducted by other coys.  
0838 At XT 963301 C Coy was engaged initially by 3 VC and then on deploying came under fire from a large bunker system containing an estimated NVA Coy (+). Between 0850-0300

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- mor fire fell on the rear elms of C coy. 7 Pl was pinned down by SA fire.
- 0915 C Coy requested reinforcement. LFT on station.
- 1000 1 Tp C Sqn plus 1 Tp A Sqn arrived and assaulted the en posn enabling 7 Pl to withdraw. At least 8 en bunkers were destroyed.
- 1120 C Coy again received mor fire. Arty and a LFT supported C Coy throughout the action.
- 1155 Contact broken. C Coy moved 500 metres to the West and airstrikes followed up immediately.
- 1215 Possum sighted 13 NVA in open clearing at XT 967297 and engaged with medium arty. Results: Own 1 KIA 7 WIA 1 x M 60 captured by en. En 24 NVA KIA (BC) 8 NVA KIA (poss) 13 NVA KBA (poss).
- 31 May 68 0208 RPG and mor fire fired South of FSPB CORAL - no casualties.
- 0700-1800 A Coy carried out recce in force to the South East in area XT 9726 and D Coy carried out recce in force to XT 9331 in vicinity of previously sited en camp. Other coys carried out local ptls.
- 1200 D Coy found en base area deserted and destroyed by airstrikes
- 1410 At XT 974271 3 Pl engaged 1 NVA with result 1 NVA KIA (BC).
- 2108 Report of mor bombs falling 500 metres fwd of B Coy.
- 2338 Suspected base plate posns engaged.
- 7 Pl heard noises on the wire and engaged with grenades.
- 1 Jun 68 0730-1730 B Coy carried out recce in force with 1 Tp C Sqn in area XT 9431 and XT 9531. Other coys carried out local patrolling
- 2 Jun 68 0730-1730 C Coy with 2 Tp C Sqn and 1 Tp A Sqn carried out recce in force in XT 9629. Other coys carried out local patrolling.
- 1200-1400 C Coy discovered, in the area of their contact of 30 May at XT 963291, 5 NVA bodies, 1 RPG 2 launcher with rocket, 1 x AK 50 and 1 x AK 47. The area had been hit heavily by air and arty and bunkers and tunnels were caved in. The M 60 lost in the 30 May contact was recovered.
- 3 Jun 68 0750-1800 1 Pl patrolled in area XT 4529. Other coys had pl size ptls out. No contacts.
- 4 Jun 68 0700-1800 Pl sized ptls operated to the North, East, South East and North West.
- 1130 Orders issued for abandonment of FSPB CORAL and return to NUI DAT.
- 5 Jun 68 0700-1800 Pl sized ptls operated to the North, East, South East and North West.
- 6 Jun 68 0800-1530 Air move by CH 47 of 1 RAR less B Coy to NUI DAT.
- 1400 B Coy escorts rear party road convoy to BEAR CAT.
- 7 Jun 68 1000 B Coy arrives at NUI DAT

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A COY AFTER ACTION REPORT  
3 MAY - 6 JUN 68

1. Contacts. These have been covered in detail by Pl Comd reports. Additional comments are more thought provoking than adequate conclusions in text. The enemy's intelligence system appears to be vastly over-rated; e.g. the four tax collectors killed despite the fact that we had been in the area for 48 hours and has used APC's and helms extensively. The group of 13 fired upon by 2 Pl north of CORAL can be disposed of similarly. The lone courier (?)/bushwalker (?) killed by 3 Pl just south of C Coy's contact 24 hours earlier was completely off guard.

The enemy appear unwilling to press the advantage. The Coy wire was blown in 7 different spots by bangalore on 16 May but I doubt whether more than 50 broke through. About 12 bodies were recovered inside the wire. I fully expected a 'banzai' type assault - he obviously had the number available and concentrated to put this into effect.

Six lengths of old signal cable, each about 350-400 metres long were discovered during the sweep on the morning of the 16 May. They all led to the enemy's SL in front of the Coy locality. It seems that they were laid by pathfinder groups who followed our clearing patrols in and were then used as guides for the main force.

The enemy is extremely silent in digging in. His nearest pits were only 40 metres from the Coy loc but no report was received of any digging noises.

It seems that his RPG gunners are accompanied by an ammo bearer. None were found but it is significant that of the large number of RPG gunners killed and recovered, none at all carried spare rounds.

It is quite apparent that the enemy recovers the brass, even when in close contact. Not one cartridge case was located by this Coy, despite intensive searches. This is not afterthought; the point was specifically mentioned to me by OC A Coy 7 RAR.

2. Supporting Arms. Difficulty was found in guiding tanks and APC's in close country. Our solution was to use the Coy 2IC to direct them but it was not really satisfactory. More discussion and practice on this point is required. Both tanks and APC's were found to be eager to the extreme to join in the fray and pressure had to be brought upon them to stay clear until the situation became clear. The danger of having troops crushed is a very real one.

The use of tac air sp gives us a tremendous advantage over the enemy but it can become two edged. More thought must be given to the co-ordination of arty check fire and the commencement of air strike. All too often the time gap was too long, allowing the enemy to recover his casualties and break contact.

Target indication is difficult at night and discussion with gunship pilots regarding this should take high priority. Tracer was used to great effect and coloured smoke can be detected in the light of illg flares but I believe these to be makeshift only.

3. Battle Intelligence. Most of this has been covered in para 1. It is significant to note that despite his lack of radio, the enemy is highly capable of concentrating his forces in minimum time. The forces struck by A, B and D Coys on the night of 13 May 68 were obviously called in to assist in the first assault on CORAL. Fleet footed courier is the only suggestion I can make.

None of the enemy carried packs and the paucity of documents was quite noticeable.

Whilst several of his weapons were amazingly new, the vast majority were extremely old and in poor condition. Oil would seem to be at a premium and the state of cleanliness left much to be desired.

4. Administration. Generally, the resupply, maintenance and evacuation system ran well but the following points were noted:

- a. Errors in transcription between 92 and 98E were frequent, despite 'Read back' by 92.
- b. The lack of variety in Aust ration packs.
- c. The lack of daily information on the condition and location of casualties initially. This was soon corrected by the issue of a daily casualty state to all sub units.
- d. Shortcomings in the commodity code. A recommended amendment is being prepared now.

5. Communications. These were most satisfactory. Coy HQ carried a 'squawk box' and it proved invaluable, particularly in defence. The requirement for a Bn controlled pool of spares is high. It is noted that they are unavailable at this moment but it is a pressing point. Listening posts must have a radio and the only current source at this stage is to take it from the platoon. This is not satisfactory.

Walkie-talkie down to sections are a must in defence. Valuable time is lost using runners.

6. Conclusions, Major Lessons and Recommendations.

Without being complacent, it is quite obvious that despite our shortcomings we are more than a match for the NVA soldier. Constant vigilance is essential and has been demonstrated.

Equally as important, a cut-off time must be given in the afternoon in order that adequate digging may take place.

C.J. ADAMSON Maj  
OC A Coy

1 PL AFTER ACTION REPORT

1. Contact 1. 1100 hrs 10 May 68, Grid Reference 126217.  
A voice heard cooeeing outside Coy perimeter. Investigated by 2 Sect, 1 Pl under Lcpl WHITESIDE. A wounded VC was found about 50 metres from the Coy loc. He was offered medical assistance and terms of surrender to Australians by the Sect Comd but made no reply. He was killed by an M60 burst fired from about 15 metres. (OC's comment - see contact 1 for 2 Pl).
2. Support Arms. Not employed. Contact extremely close to Coy perimeter.
3. Battle Int. Not decided in that loc. All captured items returned to BnHQ. Enemy contacted appeared to be fairly close to death from GSW but maintained a high degree of discipline.
4. Administration. Not applicable.
5. Communications. Highly important when working so close to a Coy perimeter. Use of a runner to inform all pits of the presence of sect outside the perimeter is essential.
6. Conclusions. In view of the enemy's willingness for self sacrifice, the system of offering him terms of surrender jeopardizes the section comds safety by revealing his exact location and approximate distance to him. (OC's comment - but must be done where possible).

1. Contact 2. 0510 13 May 68, Grid Reference 946305.  
All the platoon had been alerted by firing at D Coy and BnHQ locations. At the time stated a group of VC, approximately 10-12 in number, were seen moving on a N-S track. VC were alerted to our presence by flare lights reflecting off hutchies and began to disperse. They were engaged by M60 (40 rounds) M79 (approx 6 grenades) and M72.

A VC was highlighted by a close flare aiming an RPG 2 at the gun pit. He was engaged by M60 fire and disintegrated under the impact of his own weapon.

A search the next morning confirmed the location of this individual by a search blast mark and shortly after a VC with leg wounds was killed approx 100 metres from the Coy perimeter.

2. Support Arms. Not employed due to proximity to Coy perimeter.
3. Battle Int. The enemy seemed to carry a very small amount of ammo, considering he was carrying an AK47.
4. Administration. Not applicable.
5. Communications. Not applicable.
6. Conclusions. All hutchies should be erected to give a flat profile.

1. Contact 3. 1210 15 May 68, Grid Reference 947297.

Five enemy were seen moving on the edge of a woodline immediately following an airstrike approximately 500 metres N of a platoon ambush loc at 946296.

The enemy dispersed, but the final trace of movement seen was engaged by M72 fire. No result was gained.

2. Support Arms. Locstat of contact was passed but am unable to say if an artillery DF was laid on a point further south.
3. Battle Int. No information gained.
4. Administration. Not applicable.

5. Communications. Not applicable. All comms functioned well.
  6. Conclusions. Possibly advisable to plan DF's to cover routes for movement out of an airstrike loc. As the strike is planned on positive information, artillery DF's could give positive results.
1. Contact 4. 1510 16 May 68, Grid reference 943291.  
Sniper fire taken off right flank pits, by the time locations of nearby patrols were established, the situation had quietened and no further activity was reported.
  2. Support Arms. Not employed.
  3. Battle Int. None gained.
  4. Administration. Not applicable.
  5. Communications. Functioned satisfactorily.
  6. Conclusions. No positive lesson gained. (OC's comment. Not so. Location of friendlies was double stressed after this incident).

2 PL AFTER ACTION REPORT1. Contacts.Contact 1. 0615 8 May 68, Grid Reference 125217.

The Coy was harboured overnight on a track running through thick jungle. MG Nos of right fwd sect heard voices coming down track. The Coy was standing to at the time, there were no clearing patrols out. The gunner was well concealed and waited until the enemy was 5 metres from him before opening up. At the same time the sect 2IC discharged two M18 mines and then followed up with 4 rounds of splintex from the M79. The left fwd gunpit opened up and the enemy was caught in a cross-fire. The enemy was not expecting us to be there as they had wpms slung, and were talking to each other.

Results. En 3 KIA (BC) 2 WIA (Blood trails)

En did not return our fire.

Captured. 1 x AK50 - 1 x Garand

1 x M1 Carbine - 1 x PPS SMG

1 x 45 Pistol - Grenades

Docs, supplies, 3 x radios, 5 x packs.

Direction of en move. W to E.

Results own. No casualties.

Each MG initiated with min of 200 rds of 7.62 link.

2 x M18 fired, 4 x M79.

Contact 2. 1615 13 May 68, Grid Reference 948292.

The platoon was in ambush posn near a track junction. There was a large clearing to our S and SE. We were facing W. Visibility to our front was clear up to 25 metres, then patchy up to 50 metres. Left fwd pit of ambush reported movement on other side of clearing to our S. Pl Sgt investigated and counted 13 (9 male and 4 poss female) well camouflaged enemy moving in treeline 70 metres on far side of clearing travelling E to W. Order was given to hold fire until enemy intentions became clear. Enemy appeared to be collecting more camouflage and seemed to be waiting for someone. All enemy were armed. Two enemy actually moved into ambush to pick up more camouflage but were not fired upon. Clearance could not be obtained for a fire mission. After about 5 mins enemy started to move away to the SW. The left fwd pit, seeing this, opened fire with 7.62mm SLR and then GPMG M60. It was thought that two enemy were wounded. Contact lasted 30 secs, enemy did not return fire. It was thought that enemy broke into 2 gps, four enemy going to SW, nine enemy going to NW (verified later). A sweep of the area was done and a pack containing rice and tobacco was found.

Results. Enemy - unknown.

Captured - 1 pack containing 5lb rice, 2lb tobacco.

Own - no casualties.

50 rounds 7.62 link and 10 rounds 7.62 Bor were fired.

Contact 3. 0340 15 May 68, Grid Reference 940293.

Right fwd MG post heard noises to their front. Two enemy stood up about 15 metres fwd right of the pit. One of the picquets discharged an M18 mine but the mine did not cover directly the area the enemy were in. It is thought one of the enemy was wounded. A sweep of the area was done at first light and 2 sets of tracks, a canteen of water and a small pack of rice were found. The pl was not fired upon. It is most likely that the enemy was probing to find out the quality and placing of our defences.

Results. Enemy - unknown.

Captured - 1 x water canteen

1 x belt

1 x pack of rice 1lb

Own - no casualties

Ammo - 1 x M18 mine fired

1 x M26 thrown

2.

Contact 4. 1045 16 May 68, Grid reference 945297.

Pl was taking part on Coy sweep. Three sects up. Soldier in centre section came upon 1 VC lying apparently asleep on ground. Soldier challenged VC who awoke and made an attempt to fire an RPG 7 lying beside him. Soldier was forced to shoot VC for self protection.

There were several shell holes in the area so it is possible that enemy had been stunned by arty explosion during the night and was still suffering after effects.

Results. Enemy - 1 VC (NVA) KIA  
Captured - 1 x RPG 7, webbing  
Own - no casualties  
5 x 5.56 rounds fired.

Contact 5. 1500 hrs 16 May 68, Grid reference 947298.

Pl was clearing along a track with aid of sect of APCs. Formation two up, one back. Same formation for tracks, one behind each section. Scout of right fwd section spotted 2 enemy behind a large tree 20 metres to his front. Opened fire with SLR. M60 was brought up. 2 APC's also moved up to give fire support. Left fwd sect was brought up level with right fwd sect to join sweep. One M72 was fired at enemy. One enemy fled to the east. The pl moved through area, picked up one body at tree and picked up a second body 20 metres further back. No known shots were fired at pl. After re-org was complete movement was sighted ahead and on either side of the track from the pl. Fire was brought to bear but results unknown. A lead in to an enemy ambush was suspected so the pl pulled back and discontinued the task. Possum was in the air and gave invaluable assistance by telling us the actions of the VC who fled from the tree. Before he died he placed an instantaneous hand grenade beneath his wpn and one also beneath his body. This was spotted by possum.

Results. Enemy - 2 KIA (BC), one an NVA Officer.  
Captured - 1 x AK47, 1 x grenade, webbing, docus  
Own - No casualties  
200 x 7.62 link, 50 x 7.62 Bdr, 100 x 5.56,  
1 x M72, 10 x M79 were fired plus est 500 x 50 cal.

2. Supporting Arms.

Contact 1. Artillery was used on likely enemy escape routes with unknown results.

Contact 2. No clearance for Arty; friendly forces too close. APC's were later used to sweep the area but were not under control of the pl.

Contact 3. DF fired on possible enemy escape route. Results unknown.

Contact 4. No support required.

Contact 5. APC's were used in a close fire sp roll and the 50 cal MG's proved very effective in subduing the enemy. However, they seem to prevent an immediate action drill in that soldiers appear loath to move while the 50 cal's are firing. Possum was used also in this contact and proved effective in spotting enemy movement and giving directions.

3. Battle Int.

In all cases of the pl contacts, the enemy seemed sluggish in their reactions, surprised to find us in a position where we could hit them. Unwilling to return fire, and inclined to run rather than fight.

The enemy is a great digger of holes, and in most cases, will dig a new pit rather than go back into an old one. He can dig a fighting pit with OHP in a very short time (est 2-3 hrs). Generally only a spider hole.

The enemy goes to great lengths to camouflage himself, and in some cases I believe he thinks this makes him invulnerable and invincible. I say this because, after crawling 40 or 50 yards, he will suddenly stand up 10 yards from a pit. The enemy was also seen moving along in cover of trees and then to come out in the open and make like a tree. One group of 13 enemy sighted were actually carrying 4-5 ft trees and whenever a helicopter flew near, they would stop and hold the tree above their heads.

No enemy warning posts were discovered by the platoon.

4. Administration. Nothing to report.
5. Communications. Field telephones were used in FSPB CORAL. Several of these phones were faulty when first used and caused inconvenience for a few days. Possibly these phones were not checked before being brought on operations.

The pl had considerable use of two Walkie-Talkie radios, however, these proved more of a hindrance than an aid. Tuning was the major problem. Switches were easily knocked in the jungle causing noises that were loud and piercing. They were also used on ambush but too much noise was made speaking into them. (OC's comment - Agree to some extent but their good points are many).

6. Conclusions, Recommendations, Lessons. The enemy encountered by this platoon appeared to be well trained, however, I do not think their heart was in the job at hand, their morale appeared to be very low. They were well armed at all times and in most cases their weapons appeared to be kept clean. (OC's comment - Note conflicting comment made by OC A Coy). When forced with superior firepower, they used no immediate action drills that were noticeable except to drop their heavy equipment and run. They were experts in the field of camouflage and quiet movement at night.

I suggest that aerial photographs taken of the enemy pits in their FUP's would provide information as to their design and strength.

I also recommend that 200 rounds is the minimum a MG should initiate a contact with. (OC's comment - Coy SOP - it may be a case of overkill but certainly prevents en from recovering cas - shock effect is high).

Targets that are upwards of 50 metre distance should be treated as area targets to be fired at with M72, M79 and GPMG M60. A lesson learnt by this pl helps to substantiate this.

In contact No 2, the soldier who opened fire on the enemy had sufficient time to prepare an M72 and put the MG into position. Instead, he opened fire with an SLR but did not have enough fire power to cover the area. If he had have used the area wpns, I feel sure we would have had a positive result.

3 PL AFTER ACTION REPORTS

1. Contact 1. 1840 hrs 14 May 68, Grid reference 938294.
  - a. Description. While in FSPB CORAL, 7 Sect 3 Pl was just beginning to stand to when a burst of small arms fire opened up on them. The direction of the fire was unknown and our return fire failed to produce effects. The area was engaged with M79 fire and a close DF was brought in.  
Results. Friendly - 2 WIA  
Enemy - unknown.
  - b. Supporting Arms. The artillery covered the suspected area and proved to be very accurate. The enemy must have fled immediately.
  - c. Battle Int. Nothing was obtained about the enemy except he will "hit and run". Also he must use camouflage extensively as the opening fire was quite close.
  - d. Administration. The only administration involved was the dust-off, which proceeded very smoothly and quickly. Shell dressing must be carried in the correct position as this saved time and caused no panic with the medic.
  - e. Communications. We had no problems.
  - f. Recommendations. Our own defensive fire must be brought to bear immediately even if no definite enemy positions have been located.
2. Contact 2. 1740 hrs 17 May 68, Grid reference 938296.
  - a. Description. Our listening post observed the movement, from east to west, of 2 VC, approximately 500 metres to their front. They engaged with the hope that the VC would take cover, thus allowing artillery to be brought down. Artillery was fired but results are unknown.
  - b. Supporting Arms. The artillery came in quite quickly and after a while, it covered the suspected area. Owing to lack of training in voice procedure, members of the listening post took considerable time in adjusting the fire of the area where movement had been seen.
  - c. Battle Int. At such a distance, no intelligence about the enemy's mission or tactics was learnt.
  - d. Administration. No admin problems arose.
  - e. Communications. Nothing to report as all went well.
  - f. Recommendations. As any soldier could have to use the radio and call in arty fire, the coys should ensure that lectures be given on the fundamentals of voice procedure and the adjustment of arty fire. The lectures should be given by experienced members.
3. Contact 3. 1530 hrs 28 May 68, Grid reference 967313.
  - a. Description. While on a Coy patrol, 3 pl was moving out into a clearing. I had deployed the sections in a semi-circular position, on the verge of the clearing and was in the process of calling fwd the tanks to secure the clearing when the VC opened fire. It was only a short automatic burst of small arms fire about 400-500 metres to our front. I had my three gunners open up and spray the general area. The tanks came forward and using their own fall of shot, I directed their fire to the general area. Artillery was then called in. Results were unknown as we did not sweep across the road for fear of it being mined.

b. Supporting Arms. The tanks proved to be cumbersome and almost over-ran some of my men. As there was no return of fire, it was difficult to pin point actual enemy positions for the tanks to engage.

c. Battle Int. Again no enemy were killed or sighted so nothing was learnt about them.

d. Administration. There was no admin involved.

e. Communications. The Coy net was over crowded. Only the pl in contact plus the tanks should be on the net until the initiative was regained then the Coy could be notified. (OC's comment - The problem is noted but in this case not easy to rectify. Scrub was thick and Coy 2IC had to direct, by radio, the direction or mov of the tanks).

f. Recommendations. Tanks must be aware of every man's position and this creates a problem if they do not. (Men must move to escape being crushed, thus exposing themselves). The most successful way to get tanks firing into the correct area, is by means of having them shoot one round direct ahead and adjust their fire from there. This depends on vegetation and the location of the enemy. Tracer is not successful in daylight.

4. Contact 4. 1430 hrs 31 May 68, Grid reference 974271.

a. Description; While on a Coy patrol, my pl had discovered freshly used foot pads in grid square 9727. We had reached the end of our leg and we went into an all round defensive position on a track junction. We heard VC voices and a single VC, weaponless, came walking up the track. He was clad in shorts and boots **only**. When he was 15 metres away the lead corporal shot him and the gunners also added fire. I moved an extra gun forward then moved eight sections gun forward past the dead VC to cover the track while a sweep was made. Then by fire and movement I moved both guns and the search party back. I then called in artillery.

b. Supporting Arms. The arty took too long to come because of air clearances.

c. Battle Int. While near his camp this VC was over confident and unsuspecting. Also they use tracks and fail to search the scrub near the sides of the tracks.

d. Administration. Nothing to be reported.

e. Communications. No problems here.

f. Recommendations. Listening posts must be posted even in very short rests, when on a track system. (OC's comment - this is a MUST - constant vigilance by sentries will always pay off).

Tracks must be avoided. Long range patrols will find the VC relaxed and unguarded. (OC's comment - First statement is wrong. Contact will only be made by either:

(1) moving across country and "stumbling" into base camps.

(2) ambushing tracks or using them as an axis as occurred in this case.

The VC/NVA use tracks exclusively and this one of our greatest advantages over him. We are capable of moving undetected over large distances and surprising him continuously).

B COY AFTER ACTION REPORT  
3 MAY - 7 JUN 68

General

1. This report covers the contacts with the en at both Coy and Pl level. The reports of the Pl contacts are attached.

Contacts.

2. The Coy was involved in two contacts with the en, the relevant details follow.

Contact 1

3.
  - a. Description. On 12 May 68, B Coy were deployed by hel into the area of FSPB CORAL with the mission of securing and ambushing XT 965279 during the ni 12/13 May. Due to a delay in the airmobile phase, the Coy headed for its objective about two hrs behind schedule; and arrived in the gen area for the ni activity at 1830 hrs. Recce of the objective and the issue of orders delayed the move in a further forty-five minutes. At 1915 hrs, 4 Pl in the lead arrived in the ambush posn at the same time as a group of en of about squad str. 4 Pl opened fire with M60, no fire was returned. No further contact was made with this party. As the en were in the immediate area with the light completely faded the Coy did not dig, in an attempt to prevent undue noise. At 0410 three VC were engaged by 6 Pl and one VC was hit. At 0515 the en fired about twelve M79 rounds into the posn killing one soldier and wounding another. Arty was called in but the firing had ceased. At first lt, the Coy dug in. At 0815 hrs the en again engaged the posn with M79. This was immediately returned by the Coy using about four M79's. The en fire stopped after only one or two rounds. No further contact was made and at 0840 hrs the Coy withdrew to FSPB CORAL.
  - b. Supporting Arms. Arty was used each time the en fired though there was eventually a restriction due to the requirements at CORAL.
  - c. Lessons Learned.
    - (1) It is vital to the security of a unit that it has adequate time to deploy and prepare its posn for last lt. In this case, the Coy arrived too late.
    - (2) It is imperative to dig in even when in close proximity of the en.
    - (3) M79s should be used immediately against en light indirect wpsns e.g. 60mm mors, M79, even though arty has been called in.
  - d. Conclusion. Had the Coy stopped earlier, it would have been better prepared to ambush and withstand harrassment. Though the objective would not perhaps have been reached, alternative objectives were aval and should have been accepted by the Coy.

Contact 2

4.
  - a. Description. The Coy was ordered to escort 2 Tp C Sqn 1 Armd Regt from FSPB CORAL to FSPB BALMORAL. Due to the later requirement to fly back, the Coy was reduced to seventy which limited the str to two pls with a reduced Coy HQ. At 0745 hrs 25 May 68, the Coy moved from CORAL with the Tp tks. At 1058 hrs, the leading Pl (6 Pl) contacted two en when the forward scout fired at them as they lay in the open. The VC escaped north but were suspected of moving toward the east or left of axis. 6 Pl were ordered to secure the left flank of the axis of advance which was in jungle with 5 Pl guarding the right and rear and the tks move central. One VC attempted to close with the column from the jungle but was hit by a sect of 6 Pl who

then attempted to clear the area but were themselves engaged by a MG firing in depth. The tks were then deployed on the WEST flank giving left flank and covering fire to 6 Pl who were ordered to secure that flank. 6Pl advanced into the jungle to within twenty metres of the en who were in bunkers. One VC was killed by the Pl and one by the tks. 6 Pl were then subjected to fire from two or more MG's firing in depth. Covered by tks firing canister 6 Pl were then withdrawn to a posn where they commanded the left flank whilst the column by passed the posn to the EAST. Subsequently the posn was subjected to an airstrike as the Coy broke contact and continued to move to FSPB BALMORAL.

b. Supporting Arms.

(1) Arty and mors were used throughout this contact. They provided effective neutralizing fire for the aslt by 6 Pl who were able to close to within twenty metres of the en. Beforehand the VC had attempted firing as soon as our tps entered into the jungle edge.

(2) The tks proved most useful and it is felt that they could have been used more boldly in their sp of 6Pl however the effect of RPG fire on the tks was not them known and as the aim was to get the tks to BALMORAL it was considered an unnecessary risk to expose them to close atk rockets.

c. Battle Intelligence. The en reacted to the presence of the Coy force with automatic AK 47 fire, RPGs, RPDs and 60mm mors. In this case the jungle was sufficiently thinned out to allow him good fields of fire. Once Arty and mors were used all en fire ceased except for some spasmodic RPD fire.

d. Communications. As a result of the requirement to reduce a Coy strength to seventy no Coy 2IC was taken. It later occurred that the OC was arranging DUSTOFF, Python, keeping Bn informed and controlling the battle at the same time. Result was that some returns (eg Noticas) were not sent on time.

e. Lessons Learned.

(1) Inf/Tk cooperation on this and later occasions difficulty was experienced in maintaining the position of tks when moving with Inf in jungle. It is necessary that they be continually guided by the tps in front of them. Hence B Coy here use the air/admin radio to switch onto the Coy net and control the tks from immediately to their front. Though the noise of tk engines has surprisingly little effect on forward scouts when mov they do cause adverse conditions for listening by the falling and crashing of timber. It was found that by moving tks in bounds of fifty metres the noise problem was overcome and control of the movement of tks improved.

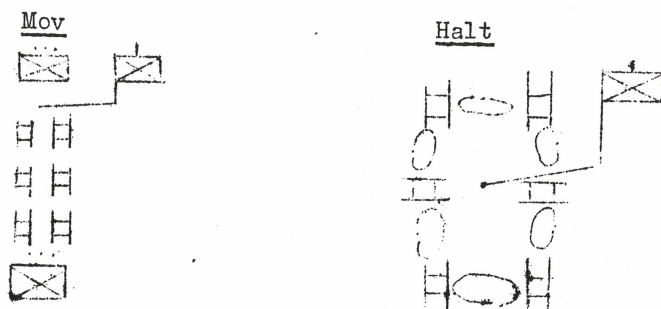
(2) Comd. Due to the difficulties mentioned in sub para 4. d. above there appears a definite requirement for a battle 2IC at all times. The FO cannot be considered as on these occasions he is naturally preoccupied. During mov of inf with Tks/APCs in thick

country and when close to on it was found best to use the fol system.

(a) One pl clear fwd to three hundred metres from the remainder of the Coy gp. The latter would then close up with one pl in front and one in rear of the AFVs.

(b) On reaching the leading pl, which immediately mov to the next bound, the Coy gp deployed as follows:-

(i) The AFVs, usually mov in open file, stop on reaching the second pl. The first two vehs, ideally 30 metres apart, remain facing along the axis. The remaining vehs close up, and except for the rear vehs, swing their barrels to face outwards. The infantry elms then merely mov to fill the gaps between the AFVs e.g.



(c) Should the halt become protracted this gives a good basis for a harbour posn.

(d) The advantages otherwise is that it demands the least manouvering of AFVs which can take some considerable time and make much noise if attempting to adopt a more formal form e.g. Waggon Wheel.

f. Conclusion. Prior planing between Inf and Tk can overcome most difficulties. When brought to the right posn tks are a most valuable source of direct and accurate fire and handsomely complement the fire sp of Arty and mors besides being able to provide the intimate high fire sp required by inf in these circumstances.

(R. HENNESSY)  
Capt  
OC B Coy

CONTACT REPORT 4 PL  
GR 964279

1. Description

En forces and own tps, both in single file, broke the jungle line at a similar time and proceeded to walk on a parallel axis through a clearing, the distance between the two opposing forces was about 30 yds. The time was approx 1920 and 4 Pl as part of B Coy were moving into the ni ambush posn. The second section opened fire first - they adopted the kneeling/lying posn having carried out an immediate ambush drill. The en, who were walking in a tight gp with rifles slung, were taken completely by surprise. However, on reflex action, they dived on the ground and were hidden by waist high undergrowth. The fire fight lasted about one minute owing to the failing light, by then almost totally dark. There was no follow up.

2. Conclusion

The en were apparently unaware of our presence in the area. However, he was obviously experienced in combat as his reactions were super quick.

3. Lessons Learnt

The leading sections reactions on seeing en forces was good. Hand signals motivated an almost instant reaction and these and more were passed throughout the Pl. However, there was no fire control after the initial burst of fire because the sect comd became directly involved in the fire fight. No area wpns, M72s, 79s, 26s were used - they would, because of the situation, have done more damage to the en than SA fire.

4. Recommendation

Although not clear from the contact report, the Pl moved into an ambush posn in the same vicinity as the contact. I think, if possible, an attempt ought to be made to move out of the area by at least 300 yds and then depending on the situation decide whether or not to carry out the original task in the new loc.

CONTACT REPORT 5 PL 14 MAY 68  
141250H XT 947285

1. Contact

- a. Pl was harboured with sentries out.
- b. Sentry fired on approx six bearers without spns who were protected by approx four VC.
- c. Two M60s and riflemen started firing as the VC broke from single file and fled after firing several bursts from AK 47s.
- d. VC protection party tried to outflank Pl, however, they were caught in a crossfire from M60 and M79s.
- e. Arty was brought down after which a search of the area was carried out.
- f. Results: 25 lb rice, cigarettes, bag of thongs. Marks indicating 2 VC suspected WIA (One of those confirmed in later contact and killed)

2. Sp Arms

Use of Arty - Arty rep handled, no problems. Must brief arty reps exactly where rounds must fall and where to correct to, depending on en mov.

3. En Tactics

En completely surprised. Tried to outflank Pl, however was stopped by M60 and M79 fire.

4. Resup NTR.

5. Comms.

Handset failed during contact - made use of arty net which relayed to Coy CP.

6. Lessons

- a. Sentries should carry automatic wpn and M79.
- b. Sentries must be dug in and well camouflaged.
- c. Flanks must be well protected - claymores were used and had en found our flanks these would have been of great use. Applies to flank protection during sweep after contact.

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CONTACT REPORT 5 PL 16 MAY 68  
160830H XT 943293

1. Contact
  - a. Pl engaged in sweep to look for dead VC after attack on 'CORAL'.
  - b. M60 gp came across six supposedly dead VC.
  - c. While deploying one of the VC, clutching a loaded RPG 2 moved.
  - d. The M60 fired two short bursts into the body and the area was then cleared.
  - e. Results 1 VC KIA (BC).
2. Sp Arms

No use of Sp Arms.
3. En Tactics.

En previously wounded and rather than surrender he tried to fight. Probably drugged as there were empty drug phails in the vicinity.
4. Admin. NTR
5. Comms. No problems.
6. Lesson
  - a. Never take anything for granted or being certain when dealing with this en.
  - b. Gun gp must be placed such that he able to take action instantly and all members of the gp are not looking at the same area.

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CONTACT REPORT 5 PL 17 MAY 68  
171717H XT 937284

1. Contact.
  - a. Pl moving back from ptl and nearing FSPB CORAL.
  - b. Rifleman noticed a green shirt on the ground in thick grass.
  - c. Rifleman covered area and called gun group fwd.
  - d. Gun gp noticed movt in the grass and fired in the area.
  - e. A search of the area was then made.
  - f. Results: 1 VC KIA (BC) - no wpn. VC previously wounded.
2. Sp Arms. No sp arms used.
3. Battle Int. NTR.
4. Admin NTR.
5. Comms. No problem.
6. Lessons.
  - a. Don't relax when nearing base etc, returning from the ptls is probably the most dangerous part of a ptl.
  - b. Even though no actual sighting of the en was made until he was dead it must be noted that anything suspicious should have fire brought to bear on it in certain circumstances.
  - c. Due to the proximity of a standing patrol, the Coy CP tried to halt the firing. A general direction of the firing by the Ptl, given to Coy would have negated this command.

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Appendix 3 to Annex D  
1 RAR After Action Report 2/68

AFTER ACTION REPORT 6 PL

Contact at Grid reference 932312 at 1058 hrs. Duration of contact 122 min.

1. Description.

a. Task - escort Tp tks North to 3 RAR at BALMORAL from CORAL FIRE SP BASE.

b. Fwd Sect (8 sect) (mov one up) contacted two en (dressed in greens and hats with cam on their hats and rifles) at 5 yds distance with a burst from his M16, going to ground and returning fire as the en withdrew North. Mors were called in due North to cut them off. Pl re orged with no further incident. Coy moved up and began Coy re-org.

c. 9 Sect, left flank sect Pl reorg fired on an en with AK 50 as he approached their posn (possibly checking on what was going on) and the sect received return fire. A sect sweep went in to clear the one en seen wounded - That sect then was fired on by LMG from 30 metres and one own wounded received as sect was pulled back.

d. A Pl sweep was ordered with tk fire sp from two sects and Pl HQ moved within 20 metres of some pits from which LMG fire was received. One en was shot (had been wounded before) and 1 AK 50 CIA - Pl was withdrawn and heavy Arty sp called in. Coy then had Dust-off for 1 WIA and moved out further North while A/S was called in.

2. Lessons Learnt.

Within the Pl when sweeping an en contact area when going is heavy, gun gps (with two sects up) are better controlled when closer to Pl Comd since noise drowns out orders to and from the flanks. Tks could have been manouvered to move on our flanks or in the centre for better fire control.

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C COY AFTER ACTION REPORT

1. C Coy 1 RAR was involved in the following contacts:

a. 14 May 68. At 942300 at 1700 hrs, 7 Pl contacted 9 VC who were fleeing westwards after contact with 'friendlies'. Result 7 VC KIA 2 VC POW. Own casualties 1 KIA, 2 WIA. In the middle of the contact the Pl was ordered to change frequencies to allow direct contact with Possum aircraft and APC's. Although necessary in this case, it was an additional difficulty to contend with. Subsequent patrols were better briefed. However where patrols are deployed in relatively close proximity it is considered desirable that they be controlled on the Bn Comd Net.

b. 16 May 68.

(1) At 0300 hrs during the attack on FSPB CORAL, a small group of enemy were engaged 15 metres from the Coy perimeter. Result 5 enemy KIA. This was probably designed to be a small, diversionary attack, as weapons recovered were 1 Bangalore torpedo, 1 RPG 2 plus rockets, 1 RPD and 3 AK47's. Little wire had been laid in front of the coy perimeter and there was no wire at the point of contact. The enemy were obviously unaware of the Coy locality which was in rubber and not observed easily by day. The lack of wire in this, by not marking the coy perimeter, was instrumental in achieving this result. Wire in many cases was too far forward of coy perimeters.

(2) A Coy sweep supported by APC's resulted in one enemy POW and one AK47. This POW may have been part of the group contacted as per b.(1). The necessity for tps to be alert, inquisitive and search thoroughly was brought out in this incident. Although the soldiers were moving only approx 15 metres apart, they failed to detect the enemy until he gave himself away by looking up when an APC approached very close to his position.

c. 27 May 68.

(1) At 1015 hrs at 968296, 9 Pl came under fire from an enemy standing patrol dug in posn. The en posn was located in the edge of a timber line overlooking a main track and an open area. Some difficulty was initially experienced by 9 Pl in returning fire as they were unsure of the location of 7 Pl, who had previously crossed the open area and were securing the same timber line.

The enemy (approx 12) withdrew when engaged with M60 and M79. No casualties were sustained and the coy deployed in a hasty defensive posn in the en loc. Following clearing ptls, 8 Pl were given a task to search due east for approx 300 metres. Shortly after their departure, the Coy was alerted by 9 Pl sentries, who sighted five enemy dressed in camouflage suits. The enemy split up and started firing into the coy posn.

An attempt by 9 Pl to clear in front of their loc met with RPG and RPD fire. The enemy were then engaged by arty and mor fire and a light fire team. 8 Pl then completed the task by sweeping back across the 9 Pl perimeter. Result 2 WIA 1 en KIA. Further weapon pits were discovered and it would appear that the coy had struck the outer defences of a larger en posn. Evac of three of the cas was effected whilst 8 Pl was clearing the southern perimeter and the light fire team covered the exposed western flank of the LP. A demolition of 2 RPG rockets which failed to detonate was not re-investigated as enemy were still suspected to be in the area and there was insufficient time to get further involved in contacts. The Coy then withdrew to RV with APC's. Arty and mor fire was called in on the en posn.

(2) Major Points.

(a) The initial coy obstacle crossing could have been handled better. In retrospect, the enemy in the general area appeared to sight positions overlooking major clearings and tracks.

(b) Reorganising in an enemy position has inherent dangers, however, it was done to get the coy into a secure posn and allow further searching of the area. It was apparent that the en was prep to harrass and re-occupy his dug in posns. Our requirement is to clear to greater depth ASP, maintain max security and to dig in.

(c) Evac of wounded was successfully carried out with the cooperation of the Dustoff helicopter.

(d) 30 May 68.

i. Coy task - recce in strength. At 0840 hrs at 963290 shortly after debussing from APC's, the lead Pl (9 Pl) was engaged by a dug in en force firing RPG's and RPD's. To relieve pressure on 9 Pl, 7 Pl was ordered to move round the left flank and clear in front of 9 Pl. In attempting this, 7 Pl was heavily engaged by other en also dug in. Both Pls were receiving fire from the front and their flanks. 8 Pl was then moved fwd to link with 7 Pl, Coy HQ and 9 Pl in an attempt to get all round def. Arty and mors were used but were not particularly effective at this stage, as the range of contacts was as close as 10-15 metres. En mors started firing into the fwd edge of the area of contact but caused no casualties and were quickly silenced by our own counter mor and arty fire. The en continued to attempt to probe or harrass round the flanks for the duration of the contact. Mor, arty and a light fire team gave good support on the flanks and in depth behind the main contact. With the arrival of a tp of tanks and a tp of APC's, the coy was able to regain the initiative. The tanks destroyed 8 en posns in 7 Pl's area of contact whilst the APC's gave effective fire sp to the flanks and fwd, and assisted in extricating the wounded.

At approx 1155 hrs the coy broke contact under covering fire of tanks, APC's, mor and arty and withdrew approx 500 metres. Further arty and air strikes were directed onto the posn including one by POSSUM who reported sighting 13 en moving away from the area of contact. On 2 Jun, the coy moved back to the area of contact. The en posn was designed for at least a coy and included bunkers, tunnels, zig zag communication trenches to standing patrol posns on all four corners of the main posn.

(3) Major Points.

(a) Tanks and APC's proved particularly effective in giving close direct fire sp in what was thick scrubby country. Using the coy net the tanks were directed fwd by 8 Pl and 7 Pl comds to where they were required. RPG's appeared to bounce off the tanks. One APC took one RPG rocket but no major damage was involved. RPG's appeared ineffective because of poor fields of fire. RPG's against infantry in close country, aprat from the initial shock effect, also proved ineffective.

3.

(b) Marking of targets in close country for light fire teams proved difficult. Initially, coloured smoke was used but the thrower was fired on with an RPG. To move the fire to the other flank a 'bold' correction of 400 metres was given. This was obviously not specific enough and resulted in 2 own troops WIA (remaining on duty). One solution is to use the M79 firing a smoke round. This used to be known as a 'practice' round, is available to SAS, but apparently not available to this unit.

2. Employment of Supporting Arms.

a. Tanks and APC's provided excellent offensive direct fire support in close country.

b. APC's tend to halt too close together when embussing or debussing troops. By so doing we present excellent targets to the enemy. If APC's break down troops should be debussed and deployed ASP.

c. Existing communications for infantry when mounted on APC's are inadequate due to lack of, or poor equipment.

d. As previously mentioned an alternative to hand thrown smoke grenades is required to mark locations for light fire teams. Suggest M79 firing smoke.

3. Battle Int.

a. En made good use of communication trenches for alternative fire posns. En posns appeared to overlook tracks and clearings, were well camouflaged from the air (incl tracks), were dug in with overhead protection and had communication trenches linking main posn and standing patrol posns.

b. En appeared prepared to probe and harrass round flanks and maintain contact. Two main contacts lasted 4-5 hours.

c. En RPG fire used freely certainly produced a shock effect but was ineffective in causing casualties.

4. Administration.

APC's proved quick and effective in casualty evacuation. In a heavy contact and in close country, evac by DUSTOFF can be extremely difficult and long.

5. Communications.

Only major comms breakdown occurred on coy net. This is attributable to operators not being able to hear over heavy volume of fire.

11 Jun 68

I.L.G. CAMPBELL Maj  
OC C Coy, 1 RAR

D COY AFTER ACTION REPORT  
OPERATION 3 MAY - 6 JUN 68

General

1. The following after action report covers the period of operations 3 May - 6 Jun 68 as follows:

- a. Operations in AO BELIZE 3 - 5 May 68.
- b. Operations from FSPB HARRISON 5 - 12 May 68.
- c. Operations from FSPB CORAL 12 May - 6 Jun 68.

Contacts and Incidents.

2. a. AO BELIZE 3 - 5 May 68.

(1) 041141H - Grid Reference 341883.

Fwd scout of 11 Pl sighted fleeting glimpse of one en moving EAST to WEST. Dressed in light brown or khaki. Engaged at 35 metres. Nil results.

Comment: Rapid and aggressive deployment failed to kill en. Pleasing aspect was positive but economical con of fire by sect cmd.

(2) 041156H - Grid Reference 344874.

Lead sect of 10 Pl engaged one en in thick primary jungle at 30 metres. Quick follow up failed to reveal any trace.

Comment: Again good fire con. Minimum of ammo used and highest bullet mark on trees was 2'6" above ground.

(3) 041228H - Grid Reference 350876.

Fwd scout 12 Pl sighted two en. Engaged en who returned two shots. Pl swept area and was fired on. Nil results.

Comment: Con of fire not good; too much ammo expended.

b. FSPB HARRISON 5 - 12 May 68.

(1) 081030H - Grid Reference 177166.

12 Pl investigated old allied def posn. Area in filthy state with litter, eqpt, ammo and docus in area.

(2) 081200H - Grid Reference 177162.

12 Pl loc old destroyed en coy size def posn. Well constructed, camouflaged, overhead cover, crawl trenches and well def. Evidence of 122mm rkts in area.

Comment: Contrast between allied and VC posn most marked. Believe area NOT used since Op COBURG.

c. FSPB CORAL 12 May - 6 Jun 68.

(1) 121800H - Grid Reference 939309.

Lead sect 12 Pl sighted 10 en on side of track at 25 metre range. Fired, killing one en, remainder returned SA fire incl RPG 2, then withdrew leaving 1 x AK 47 and webbing. Arty fire was brought to bear on withdrawal route at 600 metres range.

.../2.

One own tps wounded in head by arty shrapnel whilst in prone posn. En identified as NVA. One VC sighted wearing black uniform.

Comment: The en did not fire until we opened contact. Possibly confused by our uniform and head gear. The gp appeared to be using a local VC as a guide.

(2) 130225H - Grid Reference 939309.

Three en walked in front of 11 Pl in ambush. 12 Pl fired killing one en dressed in black and capturing one AK 47. The en withdrew and immediately from their rear, 3 x RPG 7 rkts were fired into 11 Pl posn killing one and wounding 11 own tps. 12 Pl reported a large gp of en of unknown size were to the rear of the "scout" gp. The cas were successfully evac by "Dustoff".

Comment: En were using local guide to lead them towards FSPB CORAL. Scout gp used by en.

(3) 130545H - Grid Reference 939309.

Six en passed 40 metres in front of 12 Pl moving WEST to EAST. Engaged by rfn killing one NVA capturing 1 x AK 47 and 1 x RPD MG and small amount of Cambodian money.

Comment: En were returning along same route after withdrawing from FSPB CORAL.

(4) 130924H - Grid Reference 939310.

12 Pl sighted 5 en moving across their front at 200 metre range. 12 Pl engaged the en who went to ground in bunkers. 12 Pl moved to intercept the en and came under automatic SA fire. Coy attack with LFT and arty sp cleared the area with 3 NVA KIA, numerous blood trails left and capturing 3 x AK 47 docus and grenades. Posn was capable of holding pl size force. En were not prep to surrender.

Comment: LFT provided only neutralizing fire and was not as effective as expected.

(5) 141200H - Grid Reference 924307.

12 Pl ambushed by 3 en who opened engagement with RPG 2. Pl was backtracking along own track to take up ambush posn. One own tps KIA, 4 WIA. Cas eventually evac after difficulty experienced with Dustoff winch.

Comment: Old lesson unfortunately relearnt. Laying of immediate ambush rear when on move could well pay results.

(6) 141400H - Grid Reference 923297.

10 Pl discovered camp complex along creek.

(7) 141750H - Grid Reference 923297.

Sect of 11 Pl sighted 2 local VC wearing black. Fired at 30 metres with nil result.

(8) 160240H - Grid Reference 930294.

En RPG, mor and SA fire despite tree bursts, only one soldier was slightly wounded. All pers were in fighting pits which gave adequate if not complete cover. M72 proved to be very effective against en MG and rkt posns.

(9) 230945H - Grid Reference 927301.

One en dressed in green appeared out of bushes alongside track. Machine gunner fired from the waist posn with nil results.

(10) 261227H - Grid Reference 940312.

Coy was conducting recce in force in thick primary jungle sp by one tp of tks. Leading sect of 10 Pl sighted and killed one NVA walking along path near bunker complex. En immediately returned SA and RPG fire from concealed bunker system at 25 metre range. Tanks were called fwd and proceeded to clear area with consistent APC BC and MG fire. One tank received 3 x RPG 2 direct hits with no noticeable effect on the tanks. A total of 14 bunkers were destroyed and 7 NVA bodies counted. Six bunkers were not searched due to lack of time and they were either burning from the flame throwers or had been crushed in by the tanks. The coy withdrew still in contact under the cover of accurate and close arty and mor fire. There were no cas own tps.

Comment: The armd sp was of great value and no doubt saved cas amongst own tps. They are an excellent wpn against bunkers and the en is apparently not yet familiar with our Inf/Armd tactics. Our tps were more than favourably impressed with the tanks. The flame thrower proved to be an excellent wpn to assist in the destruction of a bunker.

En Tactics.

3. a. Contact Drills.

The en initiates many contacts and ambushes with RPG 2 fire achieving considerable shock effect. Even in the open and against tanks, they fire high, possibly to achieve airburst effect or to neutralize the crew comd.

Comment: The use of the M72 in a similar or counter role has proved to be highly effective. An M72 is carried by the second scout as an auxiliary wpn.

b. Follow up Tactics.

The en does follow up our ptls and ambushes our trails.

Comments: (1) Immediate ambush rear may achieve results.

(2) The "book" is right.

(3) They also follow their own trails.

c. "Close Hug" Tactics.

They lie up close to FEBA in dead ground between grenade and mor/arty range.

d. Def Layout.

Their bunker systems are well sited with one bunker covered by two which in turn are covered by three or four. The bunkers are solidly constructed, well camouflaged, clean and concealed, often with escape tunnels at the rear. Their toilets are well constructed and are often outside the perimeter, giving early wng of their presence.

Comment: (1) They must have read Inf Trg Vol IV!!

(2) It's easy to be "sucked" in and to be suddenly engaged from the flanks as well as the front.

(3) What do they do with their spoil?

e. Ambush Sites.

A number of ambush sites were discovered astride tracks. The majority of pits were sited close to the track on both sides to cover the most likely approach. There was surprisingly little obvious flank or rear protection.

f. Claymores.

A number of claymores were turned around or had wires cut. The problem was overcome by burying the cables, camouflaging the mine and by shouting "Claymore" when firing, whereupon all heads were lowered below the parapet. In addition, white tape shows up effectively on a starlight scope and indicates if a mine has been turned.

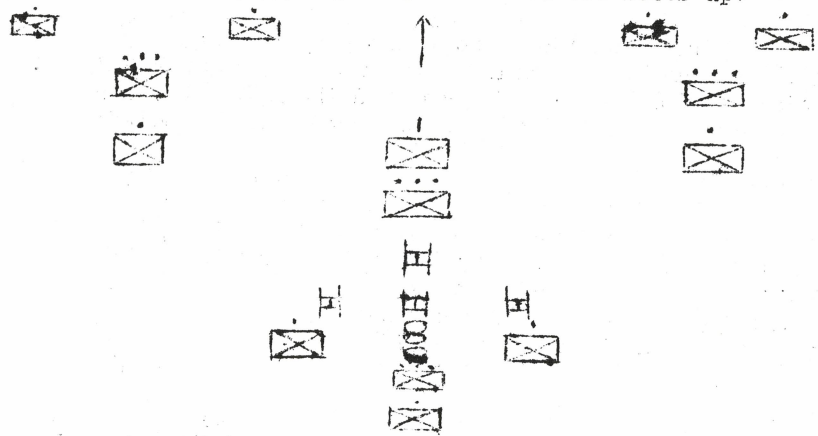
Employment of Sp Arms

4. a. Inf/Tk Cooperation in Jungle.

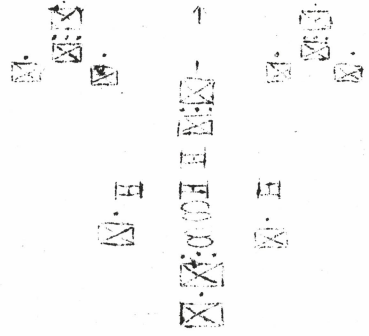
(1) Navigation: No real problem but tank compass similar to ac compass would assist in maintaining direction. The tp cmd kept fm with rear of sp sect. Change of direction imposes a delay while the tks manouvre.

(2) Fm: The tks moved in rear of Coy HQ and sp sect, thereby leaving the fwd Pl free to search the ground. The two types of fm successfully employed are shown below.

(a) Two pls up each with two sects up.



(b) Two pls up each with one sect up.



(3) Control. No difficulties were experienced. All tks were on the coy internal net using their B 47 radio. The tp cmd normally only came on the air with the remainder on listening watch. With the good comms, there was no requirement for a tk LO with the coy cmd. No control difficulties were experienced when the tks moved fwd and pl cmd spoke direct to the tk concerned.

(4) Tgt indication: The Pl Comd or Sgt talked the tk onto the tgt or used an M79 to mark. Often the crew comd could see the tgt before the ground tps. The "reference your barrel" was the most frequent method used. No problem was encountered in describing the fwd line of own tps.

(5) Use of Tks against Bunkers. Once the initial contact was made, the tks immediately moved fwd and once clear of own tps, they cleared the way ahead with canister, APC BC and MG fire. The tks keep moving fwd blasting with canister and the Infantry follow up clearing any uncrushed bunkers with grenades and flame throwers, canister and the mere presence of this had a devastating effect on the en. Canister cleared the front and we ensured flank and rear protection was maintained. The tks gave excellent protection to the infantry against SA fire.

(6) Noise. The noise level was very low and even when the tks were as close as 25 metres, it was exceedingly difficult to ascertain their posn, how many there were and which way they were travelling. The fwd scouts did not consider the noise to be a problem. The problem lay in keeping the crews quiet in a def/harbour posn.

(7) Comm. No difficulties were encountered provided radio op remembered to keep the AN PRC 25 set function on "ON" and not on "squelch". The tks were used on a number of occasions to relay msg to sect. The tk telephone was not used at any stage. Fd sig were also effective particularly to the drivers.

(8) Admin. The tks were a valuable source of additional water and they carried reserve ammo and eqpt.

(9) Marrying up/Prop. Essential but facilitated by route recce by air and joint planning.

b. Light Fire Team.

A light fire team was used in conjunction with a coy atk. The fire was purely suppressive but effectively neutralizing. The MFC was used to con the team while the FO con the arty/mor fire. Satisfactory identification of own tps was achieved by use of smoke.

Battle Int.

5. a. Routine.

The en apparently spends most of his time in a def posn in his bunker either building/improving or sleeping by day. They maintain maximum silence by day and apparently cook their meals the ni before it is consumed. Activity appears to commence at about 1630 hrs onwards.

b. Listening Posts/Early Wng.

It appears that a major complex has listening posts of up to squad str loc at a number of pts 1500 - 2000 metres out. The squad appears to have its own listening post a further 30-50 metres and on the most likely approach.

c. Markers.

(1) GPMG. Our own pits were marked on two occasions. Both times the markers were approx 100 metres out. The first marker was a 2'6" stake upright in the ground directly in front of the GPMG. The second marker was two parallel sticks 18" long placed lying on the ground pointing towards the gun.

6.

(2) Mines. They appeared to indicate their own mines by breaking three shrubs, saplings or small branches and having the three broken ends converging towards the mine.

(3) Wng shots. Three shots fired at a regular pattern appear to have some wng significance.

Additional Lessons Relearnt.

6. a. Tracer.

(1) A double edged wpn. The tracer was removed from belts used on tripod mounted GPMG on fixed lines to facilitate concealment.

(2) Loading tracer as the second last round in both SLR and M16 magazines proved to be a sound practice to indicate expenditure.

b. GPMG.

The continual cleaning of GPMG and spit polishing of link ammo coupled with crew cooperation resulted in a far less number of stoppages.

c. M79.

The M79 loaded with canister round is very effective at short ranges (less than 25 metres) in thick country.

d. Navigation.

(1) Accurate pacing plus correct compass bearings coupled with Data sheets equates to accurate and precise navigation verified by marked arty msns.

(2) Checking the loc of LZ on final approach is recommended.

Major Weaknesses.

7. a. Def Routine.

Pl and Sect comds needed to be reminded of the detailed routine and conduct of the formal def.

b. Fire Control.

Using too much ammo and not using fire to best effect. Keeping the M16 change lever off "automatic" assists.

A.W. HAMMETT Maj  
OC D Coy 1 RAR

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30 Jun 68

Distribution below

OPERATION TOAN THANG 3 MAY - 7 JUN 68  
COMBAT OPERATIONS AFTER ACTION REPORT 2/68

- References:
- A. 1 ATF SOP Annex A, Appendix 4.
  - B. 1 ATF OpO 19/68 of 22 Apr 68,  
and Frag Os 1-8 to OpO 19/68.
  - C. 1 RAR OpO 5/68 of 2 May 68.
  - D. Maps: Vietnam 1:50,000  
Sheet 6430 III  
Sheet 6430 IV  
Sheet 6431 III  
Sheet 6331 II  
Sheet 6330 I  
Sheet 6331 III.

Name and Type of Operation.

1. Operation TOAN THANG  
Phase 1 - Recce in force operation in AO BELIZE 3-4 May 68.  
Phase 2 - Route denial operation in AO AYRE 5-12 May 68.  
Phase 3 - Recce in force operation in AO BONDI 12-7 Jun 68.

Dates of Operation.

2. 030630H May 68 - 071100H Jun 68.

Location.

3. Phase 1 - AO BELIZE, centre of area YS 3290 near provincial border LONG KHANH/PHUOC TUY  
Phase 2 - AO AYRE, centre of area YT 1318, NW of TRANG BOM, BIEN HOA.  
Phase 3 - AO BONDI, centre of area XT 9328, north of TAN UYEN, BIEN HOA.

Command Headquarters.

4. HQ 1 RAR under command HQ 1 ATF.

Task Organisation.

5. a. Phase 1 (AO BELIZE)
- (1) Under comd from 030600H May - two combat engr teams  
1 Fd Sqn
  - (2) Remaining in direct sp - 102 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt
  - (3) In direct sp from 030600H May - one H 13, 161 (Indep)  
Recce Flt
  - (4) In sp - 108 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt
  - (5) In sp until FSPB WATTLE secure (031000H May) - elms 2 SAS Sqn.
- b. Phase 2 (AO AYRE)
- (1) Remaining under comd - two combat engr teams  
1 Fd Sqn
  - (2) Under op con from 060600H May - 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt
  - (3) Remaining in direct sp - 102 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt
  - (4) Remaining in direct sp - one H 13, 161 (Indep)  
Recce Flt
  - (5) Remaining in sp - 108 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt

c. Phase 3 (AO BONDI)

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (1) Remaining under comd          | - two combat engr teams<br>1 Fd Sqn. |
| (2) Remaining under op con        | - 1 Tp A Sqn 3 Cav Regt              |
| (3) Under op con from 231200H May | - 1 Tp C Sqn 1 Armd Regt             |
| (4) Remaining in direct sp        | - 102 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt             |
| (5) Remaining in direct sp        | - one H 13, 161 (Indep)<br>Recce Flt |
| (6) In sp from 121000H May        | - 161 Fd Bty, 12 Fd Regt             |
| (7) In sp from 131100H May        | - A Bty 2/35 US Arty Bn              |

Supporting Forces

Artillery.

6. During the operation, the Battalion successfully used field, medium and heavy arty, both own and 3 RAR mortars, gunships and strike aircraft.

7. It is estimated that approximately 4000 rounds of field artillery were used on close targets.

8. Most of the gun and mortar fire was controlled by the FOs and MFCs. However, on many occasions, fire was controlled by platoons and sections, usually by sending their corrections on the company net to the FO and then back by normal gunner means. Whenever possible, either a MFC or FO accompanied a patrol.

9. Counter-mortar Fire. At least two enemy mortar positions were engaged successfully. Ptls found bodies on one and unexpended mor ammo on the other. Once the en mors had fired the initial mortreps from coys were extremely valuable. Once our own fire was put on the ground, mortreps became very difficult to produce but generally our own fire, even if not right on the en baseplate posns was enough to silence en fire. After en habits became known around FSPB CORAL suspected baseplate posns were engaged as soon as en fire was heard. This silenced the en fire.

Mors.

10. The 1 RAR Mor Pl fired approx 5000 rounds HE between 12 May - 6 Jun mainly in sp of sub unit contacts and during attacks on FSPB CORAL. In the counter-mortar role the pl proved very effective. There were no H and I tasks planned for the mors at 1 ATF, however harrassing fire was used by ni to engage likely targets selected by ground tps during their daylight activities.

11. When aval, mor APCs were continuously used, providing protection, good comms, flexibility and a firm baseplate.

Light Fire Teams.

12. As a very close fire support weapon the gunships are extremely good. However, if gunships are used, all arty and mor fire has to check fire. The gunships do not produce the casualties that guns and mors can produce. Consequently, gunships must be sent out of the immediate area as soon as their task is complete and allow guns and mors to recommence firing. Gunships should not be used for depth targets or when the en is breaking contact by ni.

13. Considerable difficulty was experienced indicating loc of own tps by ni to gunships. During the first attack on FSPB CORAL, LFTs were directed easily initially by using a large fire as a reference point. When the fire went out, the LFTs became ineffective for 45 minutes. All coys now have different coloured ac beacon lts which are placed in a central pit by ni, to indicate own locs.