

1ST BATTALION, 3RD MARINES

OPERATIONS and INFORMATION

(Compiled by Ron Asher and Don Bumgarner C/1/3 1967-1968)

Republic of Vietnam

1965 thru 1969

1965

Overview: Elevated to the presidency after the assassination of John F. Kennedy in November 1963, Lyndon B. Johnson fought a bitter campaign during the summer and fall of 1964 to be elected in his own right. Regarding the building crisis in South Vietnam, he frequently stated his objections to sending “American boys to do what Asian boys should be doing...” Once elected and safely in office, Johnson wasted no time in committing U.S. forces to the war. Less than twelve hours after the Pleiku attack(7 February, 1965, Viet Cong infantry attacked two U.S. Army installations near Pleihu, in South Vietnam’s mountainous Central Highlands. The fifteen-minute ground assault left 8 Americans dead and more than 125 wounded), U.S. Naval fighter-bomber aircraft from the carriers Ranger, Hancock, and Coral Sea hit military targets near Dong Hoi, North Vietnam. The next day, in a second stage of Operation Flaming Dart, land-based U.S. Air Force F-100 Supersaber jet fighters launched from the Da Nang air base. They struck guerrilla staging and communications centers near Vinh Linh and Chap Le, just across the demilitarized zone. In a television speech that same evening, President Johnson announced the air raids to the American public, saying: “We have no choice but to clear the decks and make absolutely clear our continued determination to back South Vietnam.” The President further stated that he had ordered dependents of American servicemen stationed in South Vietnam to return home. He then declared, “I have ordered the deployment to South Vietnam of a Hawk air defense battalion. Other reinforcements, in units and individuals, may follow.” Though the logic of sending a surface-to-air guided missile weapons system to South Vietnam, which had never been threatened with air attacks, and never would, escaped many, nevertheless the orders went out. On Okinawa the Marines’ 1st Light Antiaircraft Missile (LAAM) Battalion got the nod. Battery “A”, 1st LAAM flew into Da Nang on the night of 8-9 February. The rest of the battalion, traveling by ship, arrived over the next week. By 16 February the five-hundred-plus Marines of the 1st LAAM occupied positions surrounding the Da Nang air base. America’s leaders were convinced that this show of force would persuade North Vietnam’s leaders to curtail terrorist attacks. On 10 February, the Viet Cong attacked a U.S. Army enlisted men’s barracks at the coastal Qui Nhon in Binh Dinh Province. Twenty-three American soldiers died; another twenty-two were wounded. President Johnson immediately ordered another round of air strikes. Naval warplanes from the carriers and ground-based aircraft from Da Nang headed north on 12 February under Operation Flaming Dart II. Significantly, President Johnson referred to these raids not as reprisals but as “air operations” provoked by “continued aggression.” The next day, heeding the recommendations of his key military advisers- Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff- Johnson opted to begin a program of “measured and limited air action jointly with South Vietnam against selected military targets in North Vietnam...” The air attacks would be regularly scheduled several times per week with two or three major targets on each operation. The new campaign was called Rolling Thunder. Though the first strikes had been scheduled for

20 February, renewed South Vietnamese political instability put Operation Rolling Thunder on hold. The day before, a military coup aimed at the current premier, Gen. Nguyen Khanh, failed. However, after a subsequent vote of no confidence from the Armed Forces Council, Khanh departed the country. The leadership of South Vietnam was again in doubt. Confronted with an unstable political situation just as a massive air campaign was commencing, Gen William C. Westmoreland, the new commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), had given reservations about the ability of the ARVN forces to protect the U.S. air base at Da Nang and the HAWK battalion. He ordered his deputy, Lt. Gen. John L. Throckmorton, to determine what level of U.S. ground forces would be needed for adequate security. Throckmorton responded within twenty-four hours. He recommended two battalions of Marines be deployed to guard the Da Nang complex. General Westmoreland concurred. He sent the request to his immediate superior, Adm. Ulysses S. Grant Sharp, Jr., commander in chief, Pacific, on 22 February. Admiral Sharp forwarded his positive endorsement of Westmoreland's request to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. However, in a separate, private, back-channel cable to President Johnson, the U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam, retired U.S. Army General Maxwell Taylor, expressed strong reservations about committing U.S. ground troops to South Vietnam. After the first contingent of American forces arrived, Taylor said, "It will be very difficult to hold the line" on further force commitments. Without a doubt, Taylor predicted, ARVN commanders would soon relinquish other "ground force tasks" to the Americans. These tasks were sure to escalate, the ambassador asserted, leading to his chief worry; "The white-faced soldier, armed, equipped, and trained as he is, is not a suitable guerrilla fighter for Asian forests and jungles. The French tried to adapt their forces to this mission and failed. I doubt that U.S. forces could do much better." Despite Taylor's prescient view, Washington cabled him on 27 February that the Marines would land. Taylor was to so inform the South Vietnamese government. On 1 March, the minister of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces, Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, and the Vietnamese chairman of the Joint General Staff, Gen. Tran Van Minh, approved the landing. Fearing opposition by some segments of the South Vietnamese population, Thieu and Minh requested that the landing of the Marines be accomplished as "inconspicuously as possible." Two battalions from the 3rd Marine Division's 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) had been aboard ships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet sailing off South Vietnam's coast since January. Several times the shipboard Marines had been within hours of hitting the beaches. Each time a cooling off of the crisis alleviated the landing. Now, however, word for the Marines to go ashore had come directly from Washington. There would be no last minute reversal of these orders. Brigadier General Frederick J. Karch, a dapper-looking, mustache-sporting veteran of two bloody World War II island campaigns, had taken command of the 9th MEB on 22 January, 1965. As the assistant division commander, Karch had made several visits to the country over the previous year. He did not like what he saw. In his opinion the ARVN were so weak that if Marines were to land in Vietnam he felt they should "make it North Vietnam, not South. If we go into Da Nang, we'll disappear into the countryside and never be heard from again." Nonetheless, when Karch got his orders he went to work. Spread aboard, the four ships of Naval Amphibious Task Force 76, were the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 9th Marines. (The Marine Corps does not use the traditional identifier "Infantry Regiment" or "Artillery Regiment" in referring to its units. Instead, it simply refers to a regiment with its numerical designator followed by "Marines." Thus, the 1st Marines is actually the 1st Marine Infantry Regiment.) The 2nd and 3rd Battalions served as the Battalion Landing Teams (BLT). (The BLT is a basic Marine unit in an assault landing. The team's core is an

infantry battalion reinforced by other mission-necessary combat and service units.) Karch selected BLT 3/9 to make an amphibious landing at Da Nang. The Marines would go ashore at Red Beach 2, north and west of the city. Once ashore, they would be carried by trucks to defensive positions at the air base. As a reserve, BLT 2/9 would remain aboard ship. The second of the two battalions would come directly from 3rd Marine Division units at Okinawa. The 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines would be airlifted directly to Da Nang soon after the arrival of BLT 3/9. After completing a flurry of activities ashore related to getting his units ready for the actual landing, General Karch returned to his command ship, the Mount McKinley, on the evening of 6 March. Late the next day Admiral Wulzen handed Karch a dispatch. "Close Da Nang, Land the landing force," the message read. Karch turned to Wulzen. "Don, do you think in Washington they know what time it is in Da Nang? This means a night landing if we close Da Nang at this point." Besides that, the task force was experiencing the worst weather it had yet encountered while traveling around the South China Sea. Waves were cresting at four feet in a strong wind. Visibility was limited to two hundred meters. Karch contacted his headquarters. The orders were modified; the landing would commence the next day. No enemy action awaited Corporal Powers. Instead, when he reached the top of the beach a South Vietnamese beauty queen placed a fragrant lei over his helmeted head. A short distance away a stone-faced, lei-draped General Karch watched as the four rifle companies of BLT 3/9 crossed the wet sand. Within thirty minutes Company "L" had boarded trucks and started for the airfield. It was soon followed by Companies "I" and "K"; Company "M" remained behind to provide security for the unloading of the battalion's equipment. As the Marines of BLT 3/9 began digging in at Da Nang air base, Air Force C-130's carrying members of 1/3 from Okinawa entered South Vietnamese airspace. The first planeload touched down at 1300. Enemy snipers on nearby hills fired numerous rounds at the planes during the landings, but there were no injuries. By late afternoon two Companies, "B" and "C", plus the battalion Headquarters had arrived. Company "A" arrived a few days later, and Company "D" was already in-country providing security for a Marine Helicopter Squadron. Though they did not know it at the time, the Marines of the 9th MEB had turned a corner in U.S. involvement in South Vietnam's internal conflict. Their arrival presaged a seven-year war that eventually called into question America's role in world affairs, divided America's citizenry like no issue since the Civil War, and cost the lives of nearly 55,000 members of the U.S. Armed Forces. Acclimating to their strange new surroundings occupied the Marines' first few weeks in South Vietnam. Few members of the expeditionary forces had ever experienced the enervating heat and humidity of this tropical country. The fetid odor of the human waste used as fertilizer in the surrounding rice paddies assaulted the senses. Throughout the day, peasants dressed in pajama-like clothing and sporting conical straw hats worked the paddies behind heaving water buffalo. Inside the air base's perimeter, ARVN soldiers lounged lazily as Marines worked under the debilitating sun to prepare their defensive bunkers. About the only time the South Vietnamese soldiers stirred was to beg for American cigarettes. If daytime scenes appeared bucolic, the arrival of sunset quickly changed that perception. Gunfire and explosions erupted at dusk. Marines nervously watched bright tracers cut colorful swaths across the night sky. From distant bamboo thickets, mortar shells flew skyward to crash in the paddies. The Marines were learning that the war in South Vietnam was unlike anything for which they'd been trained. Indeed, U.S. Marines were not trained for defensive roles. They were hard-charging warriors tasked with carrying the war to the enemy rather than waiting for the enemy to come to them. But their hands were tied. In their landing order of 7 March, the

Joint Chiefs of Staff had been clear: “The U.S Marine force will not, repeat will not, engage in day-to-day actions against the Viet Cong.” As General Westmoreland told General Karch, the Marines would protect the Da Nang airfield, but “overall responsibility for the defense of the Da Nang area remains an ARVN responsibility.” As a result of this restriction, the Marines’ tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) covered about eight square kilometers of relatively unpopulated terrain. It encompassed the airfield and the high ground to the west where the HAWK missile batteries were ensconced. Security of the area to the south and east of the air base remained the province of the ARVN. With the Marines straining at their shackles, General Westmoreland took up their cause with Washington. He strongly recommended that U. S. forces in South Vietnam be increased and their role enhanced. Only by adopting his suggestions, Westmoreland argued, could the Viet Cong be blunted and the resolve of the ARVN stiffened. President Johnson concurred. On 1 April, he approved a twenty-thousand-man increase in U.S. forces in South Vietnam, including additional Marines. More significantly, Johnson also authorized a change in the mission of the 9th MEB to allow them to participate in “active Combat,” under guidelines to be established by the Secretary of Defense. The Marines wasted no time in sending more troops to South Vietnam. On 10 April, BLT 2/3 landed across the beaches of Da Nang. Four days later BLT 3 / 4 began arriving. Two companies of 3 / 4 were immediately flown north to garrison the small airstrip at Phu Bia, about ten kilometers south of the old Imperial Capital of Hue. By the end of April the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade consisted of four infantry battalions and a four-squadron aircraft group, as well as artillery and support units. Total troop strength neared nine thousand. General Westmoreland clarified the President’s order on 14 April by providing the 9th MEB with a concept of operations divided into four areas. Then they would conduct deep reconnaissance patrols of the enemy’s avenues of approach. Third, they would undertake offensive action as a reaction force in coordination with the ARVN. Finally, the Marines would undertake an “intensifying program of offensive operations to fix and destroy the VC in the Da Nang area.” General Karch immediately tried to implement his new orders. Unfortunately, the local ARVN commander agreed to only a six-square-kilometer increase in the Marines’ TOAR. There was also a small increase in the defensive area for the 3 / 4 Companies at Phu Bia. On 20 April Marines at both locations began their patrol activities, extending out as far as ten kilometers. Two days later the Marines and the VC tangled for the first time. A patrol of men from Company “D”, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion and three dozen ARVN bumped into a VC force of more than one hundred men about thirteen kilometers southwest of Da Nang. After a flurry of small arms the patrol leader radioed for help. A company from 1/3, boarded helicopters and were choppered into the area. The combined force chased the VC for several kilometers, but the enemy disappeared into the heavily foliated countryside. In this precursor of tens of thousands of firefights, the Marines killed one VC while having one of their own wounded. The Phu Bia Marines had their first contact on 24 April. A small force of Viet Cong surprised a recon squad’s night defensive position on a hilltop two kilometers south of Phu Bia. The fight ended in minutes, but each side lost two men. While the Marines patrolled their new TAORs, a high level conference in Honolulu reached a major conclusion regarding U. S. efforts in South Vietnam. The conferees, led by Defense Secretary McNamara, agreed that the war was going to get worse before it got better. They thus authorized an increase of forty-two thousand troops for service to South Vietnam. Among them were five thousand additional Marines in three infantry battalions and three jet aircraft squadrons. These reinforcements would establish a new enclave at Chu Lai, seventy kilometers south of Da Nang in Quang Tin Province. The previous year Lt.

Gen. Victor H. Krulak, commander of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, had surveyed the coastal plain dividing the two southern provinces of I Corps, Quang Ngai and Quang Tin. (For command control purposes, the ARVN high command had divided South Vietnam into Four Corps Tactical Zones: I Corps, the northernmost, consisted of the country's five Northern Provinces.) Krulak selected the area as a future site of an airfield. Because the site was not marked on his map, Krulak dubbed it Chu Lai, the Mandarin Chinese characters for his name. The Marines planned to construct an air base there with an eight-thousand-foot by one-hundred-foot runway, as well as taxiways, parking, and maintenance facilities. Although the Marines initially expected the landing to be opposed, MACV assured them that the ARVN would secure the landing site. They were right. At 0730 on 7 May, transport ships off offshore disgorged their combat troop-laden amphibious vehicles. Thirty minutes later the first vehicle nudged onto the beach. As at Da Nang two months earlier, a group of South Vietnamese maidens passed out leis to the sweat-soaked Marines. As BLTs 1/4 and 2/4 came ashore, a cluster of dignitaries and members of the press watched from nearby. The riflemen ignored them. What they couldn't ignore was a large banner strung from trees behind the beach courtesy of the U.S. Army advisers assigned to the local ARVN forces. In huge letters no one could miss, the banner's greeting declared: "AHOY MARINES! WELCOME ABOARD! AREA SECURED." Pushing past the humiliating sign, the Marines moved inland to begin digging in. It was an uneventful landing. The only casualties were four men suffering from the effects of the high heat and humidity. By late afternoon the men of BLT 1/4 had set up several kilometers inland. Elements of the 3rd Recon Battalion had also arrived from Da Nang. They secured the beachhead's southern flank. The next day the advance party of the Navy's Mobile Construction Battalion 10, which would build the air base, arrived. The hard-working Seabees immediately went to work. A few days later BLT 3/3 arrived from Okinawa. The 3rd Recon Battalion then returned to Da Nang. With the arrival of 3/3, seven of the 3rd Marine Division's nine infantry battalions, and most of its artillery, and many support units were in South Vietnam. As a result, on 6 May, the 9th MEB became the III Marine Expeditionary Force. However, because the term "Expeditionary" had negative connotations for the Vietnamese dating back to the French Expeditionary Force of the early 1950s, General Westmoreland requested a name change. The Marines complied. On 7 May, they re-designated their troops, the III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF). At the same time, the headquarters of the 3rd Marine Division, under Maj. Gen. William R. Collins, opened in South Vietnam. General Karch returned to Okinawa. General Collin's stay in South Vietnam did not last long. On 5 June, Maj. Gen. Lewis W. Walt assumed command of both III MAF and the 3rd Marine Division. A stocky, rugged former college lineman (football), Walt was one of the Marine Corps' most decorated officers, holding two Navy Crosses and the Silver Star for combat service in World War II and Korea. He would bring high level of aggressiveness and experience to the Marines during their early years in South Vietnam. Almost immediately, General Walt pushed MACV for an expansion of his TAOR and a more aggressive role for his men. General Westmoreland agreed. On 15 June, he authorized the III MAF to commence independent search and destroy missions in their TAORs. The Marines wasted no time complying. Daily combat patrols set out from the enclaves at Phu Bai, Da Nang, and Chu Lai (where the airfield was completed on 1 June, testifying to the outstanding capabilities of the Seabees). Contact with the VC escalated. (Semper Fi Vietnam, pages 4 to 13). (WE can All verify the ESCALATION and Contact with the VC and NVA during Our Tours. Good and BAD days were had by All, Semper Fi MY Brothers!)

21Feb65: (KIA / Fallen) CAPT JORDAN, L. W. Co: "B"

07Mar65 to 12Mar65: DEPLOYMENT to VIETNAM

Province: Quang Nam

Units: 1st BN./ 3RD MARINES was ordered DEPLOYED by 9TH M.E.B. from OKINAWA to DA NANG, RVN. The first six C-130's carried members of Charlie Co., arriving in the morning hours of 08Mar65. C/1/3 was assigned defensive and perimeter guard at the Airbase of Da Nang. Deployment by 1/3 was completed on 12Mar65, with ARVN Compound-Da Nang and L/3/9 in the area(per CD Rom). (Per HAMMOND- Vietnam Conflict Map, indicates 8Mar65, First U.S. Combat Troops land in Vietnam as two Marine Battalions come ashore near Da Nang. Apparently those two Battalions were 1/3 and 3/9).

MEDAL: NATIONAL DEFENSE SERVICE MEDAL, issued to all Marines and Service Personnel who Enlisted or were Drafted during the Vietnam Era.

MEDAL: VIETNAM SERVICE MEDAL, issued to all Marines Going to Vietnam, ONE Star for each Combat Campaign/Period one participates in!!

MEDAL: COMBAT ACTION RIBBON, issued to ALL Marines that SERVED in Vietnam in Combat!

MEDAL: REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM MERRITORIOUS UNIT CITATION, (Civil Action Medal, First Class Color with Palm), issued to Third Marine Division, Unknown dates. 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Third Marine Division..

MEDAL: REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM CAMPAIGN MEDAL (with 1960 device), issued to all Marines Serving in Vietnam.

MEDAL: PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION, issued to the Third Marine Division, for the Task Force 79.4, from 08Mar65 to 15Sep67.

08Mar65: Vietnam Service MEDAL, start of Vietnam Defense Campaign, from 08Mar65 to 24Dec65.

17Mar65: 1/3 unk Company- Accidental Detonation of land mine/Friendly 1-WIA

07Apr65 to 30Apr65:

Province: Quang Nam

Units: 1ST BN./ 3RD MARINES, assumed defense of dominate terrain west of the Airfield at Da Nang, to include Hills 327, 268, 262- Complex. Also Hills 368, 312, and 278-Complex with B/1/3 and C/1/3 relieving I/3/9 and M/3/9 on 07Apr65(CD Rom).

12Apr65: 1/3- Member 106mm Recoilless Rifle platoon Injured when M-274 vehicle over turned on him 1-Injury.

16Apr65: 1/3- Recon Listening Post/Ambushed/5-VC/one member slightly injured around the eyes, by splinters, when a bullet struck a tree next to his face 1-WIA

22Apr65: 1/3- Recon patrol Ambushed/Company size VC unit 1-WIA

22Apr65: 1/3- Accidental Discharge Rifle in command post area/Friendly fire/one man slightly wounded 1-WIA(possibly)

26Apr65: 1/3- Accidental Discharge Pistol/Friendly fire/Corpsman shot self in his leg 1-WIA

27Apr65: Co. A- Combat patrol/Sniper fire/Booby Traps 2-casualties from mines, 1-casualty from Punji trap, and 1-small-arms fire 4-WIA

28Apr65: Co. C- 6-Heat Casualties evacuated, 6-Injuries

29Apr65: Co. B- Combat patrol/Sniper 1-WIA

30Apr65: Co. D- Corpsman sprained ankle evacuated, 1-Injury

20May65: (KIA / Fallen) PFC FERNANDEZ, R. S. Co: "D"

01Jun65: Co. A- Two US ARMY Helicopters(UH-1B) fired Rockets and Machine-Gun Fire at elements of the Company. They made three passes initially ignoring smoke and wave-off signals by the troops. Then departed, Luckily NO Casualties.(Investigation by Regimental S-3 Conducted).

03Jun65 to 05Jun65: **Operation Order 327-65**

Province: Quang Nam

Units: 1/3(HQ-Battalion Command Group, Co's A, C, and D).

Object: Three day search and destroy sweep near THIA LAI village on both sides of the SONG YEN river.

Cost: USMC - 3 KIA and 8 WIA with 57 ENEMY Captured, and unknown enemy KIA's and WIA's(CD Rom).

04Jun65: Co. A- Combat patrol/Sniper fire/3-5VC/automatic weapons 3-WIA's

04Jun65: Co. C- Sniper fire into position 1-WIA

04Jun65: Co. A- Sniper fire into position at dusk sustaining 3 wounded, 2-Died of Wounds after evacuation, 2-KIA's and 1-WIA

04Jun65: (KIA / Fallen) CPL BIERMAN, C. M. Jr. Co: "A"
LCPL STOKES, R. E. Co: "A"

05Jun65: Co. C- Patrol approaching Village Ambushed from 3-directions/Unk size enemy force wounding 4 Marines(1-DOW after being medivaced) Hill 22 area,1-KIA and 3-WIA's

05Jun65: (KIA / Fallen) SGT SULLIVAN, H. J. Jr. Co: "C"

09Jun65: Co. B- Tank hit a Mine 1-WIA

09Jun65: Co. B- Accidental Discharge M-26 Grenade/ inside the company compound while turning ammo/Friendly Fire incident 3-WIA's

11Jun65: 1/3 unk Company- Bobby Trapped Grenade 1-WIA

19Jun65: (KIA / Fallen) CPL LUCAS, D. G. Co: "A"

29Jun65: Co. D- 2nd Platoon with ARVN's/Mine Explosion possibly 81mm Mortar, 5-WIA's(also 2-ARVN WIA's)

30Jun65: 1/3 after arriving in Vietnam on 08Mar65, participated in many Patrols, Ambushes, Sweeps(company, platoon, and squad sizes) and one Battalion size Operation. As of 30Jun65, 1/3 had sustained the following casualties(Booby Traps, Mines, Punji Pits, Sniper Fire, SAF, and Accidental) 3 KIA, 30 WIA, with 7 Injuries. Also 1/3 captured 88 VCS, and had 4 confirmed VCS-KIA's with unknown other VCS KIA's and WIA's. There were no stats for the month of May,1965.

04Jul65: 1/3 unk Company(possibly A)- Booby Trapped Grenade trip wire, 1-WIA

07Jul65: 1/3 unk Company- Point fire team crossing a stream an explosive charge detonated(Mine) 1-KIA and 3-WIA's

07Jul65: (KIA / Fallen): PFC BURNS, J. P. Co: "B"

08Jul65: Co. A- Accidental discharge rifle/Foot injury 1-WIA

09Jul65: (KIA / Fallen) PFC HOLMAN, M. D. Co: "B"

11Jul65: Co. A- 2nd Squad, 2nd platoon en-route to night ambush site hit Mine, 2-KIA's and 4-WIA's

11Jul65: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL SEISSER, K. A. Co: "A"
CPL GAUTHIER, B. J. Co: "A" (Posthumously- NAVY CROSS)

(Citation) For extraordinary heroism while serving as a Marine Rifle Squad Leader with Company "A", First Battalion, Third Marines, Third Marine Division (Reinforced), in the Republic of Vietnam during the early morning of 11 July 1965. While moving to an ambush position eight miles southwest of Danang, Corporal Gauthier's squad suffered heavy casualties from the detonation of an enemy mine and subsequent secondary explosions. Shortly thereafter his unit came under Viet Cong fire from several directions. Although mortally wounded by the initial blast, he persistently refused medical aid until all of the casualties had been treated, meanwhile reorganizing his squad, establishing a defensive perimeter around the wounded, and directing fire against the enemy. During this time a helicopter attempted to evacuate the casualties but was driven off by intensive enemy machine gun fire. For a period of over two hours he continued to shout encouragement and direction to his men until he succumbed to his wounds. Corporal Gauthier's gallant leadership, indomitable fighting spirit, and inspiring devotion to duty reflected great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the cause of freedom. (The NAVY CROSS Vietnam, page 126)

12Jul65: Co. A- Mine explosion, 1-WIA

16Jul65: Co. D- Patrol Ambushed/1-rd 60mm mortar/small-arms 2-WIA's and one Marine with broken arm evacuated

17Jul65: Co. D- Patrol hit Mine(M16A1 US made) installed by enemy, 1-KIA and 3-WIA's

17Jul65: Co. D- Patrol hit another Mine/Attacked during Medivac small-arms additional wounded and a corpsman serving aboard the helicopter as a air evacuation medical assistant was killed, 1-KIA and 5-WIA's

17Jul65: **(KIA / Fallen)** LCPL ROSE, D. L. Co: "D"

23Jul65: Co. A- 3rd Platoon Patrol/Sniper fire 1-WIA

25Jul65: Co. D- Fire team patrol/Ambushed/3-VC 2-WIA's

30Jul65: Co. B- Mine explosion 2-KIA's and 1 WIA

30Jul65: **(KIA / Fallen)** CPL FELKINS, W. D. Co: "B"
LCPL JORDAN, L. W. Co: "B"

30Jul65: Co. C- a listening post was discovered with the occupants dead. Circumstances indicate the Marines died of electrical shock caused by Lightning 3-KIA's

30Jul65: **(KIA / Fallen)** PFC LOCKHART, C. Co: "C"
PFC MANNING, P. P. Co: "C"
LCPL SNOW, L. D. Co: "C"

31Jul65: For the month of July, 1/3 had encountered more enemy in Quang Nam Province in their TAOR, and sustained the following casualties 8 KIA and 28 WIA's. 1/3 also captured 22 VCS and had 10 VCS-KIA's.

02Aug65 to 31Aug65: [BLAST OUT I](#)

Province: Quang Nam

Units: 1/3

Object: Search and destroy sweeps north and west of Da Nang, unknown results(CD Rom).

14Aug65: Co. B- Booby Trapped gate 2-WIA's(1-Officer)

18Aug65: Co. A-Accidental Discharge Rifle/wound in leg 1-WIA

21Aug65: Co. A- Sniper fire into lines 1-KIA

24Aug65: Co. B- 2-Grenades into lines 1-WIA

24Aug65: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL **ARNOLD, M. Jr.** Co: "B"
LCPL **FANKHAUSER, C. E.** Co: "B"
PFC **GIVEN, F. A.** Co: "D"
SGT **HEINZE, K. K.** Co: "H&S"
SGT **JOHNSON, G. V.** Co: "D"
LCPL **JOSSENDAL, R. L.** Co: "H&S"
CPL **LAKE, J. W.** Co: "C"
PFC **LEAF, J. B.** Co: "C"
LCPL **McCARTNEY, H. C.** Co: "B"
CPL **MYERS, G. G.** Co: "A"
LCPL **PERRIS, F.** Co: "B"
LCPL **SANDERS, J. J.** Co: "A"
CPL **THOMPSON, O. T.** Co: "H&S"
LCPL **BERTOMEN, N. Jr.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
LCPL **BRUNELLE, J. E.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
LCPL **BURTON, C. W.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
PFC **CHASE, T. A.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
PFC **CROW, T. M.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
LCPL **DAVIS, R. L.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
LCPL **FORD, J. A. III** Co: "Unk 1/3"
CPL **GILFORD, J. A.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
PFC **HAMBLETON, B. N.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
PVT **MESA, R.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
LCPL **MONAHAN, E. J. Jr.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
PFC **PFEFFERLE, W. W.** Co: "Unk 1/3"

LCPL **POWELL, R. L.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
LCPL **RODRIQUEZ, F.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
LCPL **ROLAND, J. P.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
LCPL **VOTAVA, J. J. Jr.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
LCPL **WIEST, D. R.** Co: "Unk 1/3"
LCPL **WILLIS, R. A.** Co: "Unk 1/3"

(The WALL-USA the Deaths are described: "Non-Hostile, Fixed Wing-Non Crew AIR LOSS, Crash at Sea! Bodies recovered. Unknown what Type of Plane Crashed)

31Aug65: For the month of August, 1/3 was involved in operation of Blast Out I, and sustained 1 KIA and 4 WIA's. 1/3 captured 13 VCS and had 5 VCS-KIA's. On 31Aug65, 1/3 was relieved by 1/1, and boarded the U.S.S. BAYFIELD at Museum Beach for departure from the RVN. 1/3 possibly went back to Okinawa to re-group and re-train. The monthly stats for September, October, and November 1965 are not available. 1/3 returned to Vietnam for the month of December, 1965(CD Rom).

MEDAL: REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM MERITORIOUS UNIT CITATION, (Gallantry Cross Medal Color With palm), issued to First Battalion Third Marines for period of 18Nov65 to 13Feb67.

21Nov65: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL **FRANCIS, W. Jr.** Co: "C"

22Nov65: Co. D- Unknown Type Amtrac accident crossing a river with unknown men lost(Body of S/Sgt TABOR later recovered) at least 1-KIA

22Nov65: (KIA / Fallen) SSGT **TABOR, M. C.** Co: "D"
LCPL **BIGLEY, R. R.** Co: "D"
PFC **FREEMAN, D. G.** Co: "D"
CPL **HEDGE, B. W.** Co: "D"

23Nov65: (KIA / Fallen) 2LT **FIorentin, J. V.** Co: "D"

25Nov65: (KIA / Fallen) PFC **BOUINGTON, J. W.** Co: "B"

02Dec65: Co. A- Patrol member fell into ravine, medivaced 1-Injury

04Dec65: Co. A- One squad from Company provided cover for attempted recovery of Amtracs and bodies of USMC personnel lost in accident 11Nov65(Amtrac sinking at mouth of CA DE River) from 0700-1700 hrs

04Dec65: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL **TANNER, D. J.** Co: "B"

09Dec65 to 23Dec65: HARVEST MOON

Province: Quang Tin, 23 miles N/W of Chu Lia in Phuoc Ha and Que Son Valley Area.

Units: 3 rd Mar Div(HQ), 3rd, 9th, and 7th Marines

Object: D/1/3 assisted as reserve, and participated in operation.

Cost: Unknown cost to D/1/3(CD Rom).

21Dec65: A Badly decomposed body was found on the North bank of the CA DE River near NAM O Bridge. Body believed to be that of S/Sgt TABOR, D/1/3, missing since Amtrac accident on 22Nov65

24Dec65: Co. A- Night patrol/Ambushed 1-KIA and 1-WIA

24Dec65: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL STANCROFF, D. C. Co: "A"

25Dec65: (KIA / Fallen) PVT STEFFEN, C. R. Co: "C"

25Dec65: Vietnam Service MEDAL, start of Vietnamese Counteroffensive Campaign,from25Dec65 to 30Jun66.

30Dec65: Co. C- 2 Injuries medivaced(1-injured knee from patrol, -with snake bite) 2-Injured

31Dec65: 1/3 for the month of December, operated in the Da Nang area of Quang Nam Province. 1/3 sustained 1 KIA and 1 WIA for the month. 1/3 also captured 26 VCS during December. Unknown when 1/3 returned to Vietnam, but there was mention of a body of D/1/3 S/SGT who had been lost 22Nov65 in Amtrac accident while crossing a river.

1966

03Jan66 to 08Jan66: LONG LANCE

Province: Quang Nam

Units: 1/1, A/1/3

Object: A/1/3 assisted 1/1 on operation(CD Rom).

11Jan66 to 17Jan66: MALLARD

Province: Quang Nam

Units: 3rd Mar(HQ), 1/3, 3/7

Object: Search and Destroy operation, assisted by G/3/7, and D/1/1 took over defensive positions of 1/3. Per CD Rom operation started on the 10th of January.

Cost: 1/3 credited with 13 VCS-KIA and 4 VCS WIA. 1/3 had NO casualties for operation.

12Jan66: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL BROWN, R. E. Co: "D"

13Jan66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC JONES, W. I. Co: "C"

16Jan66: (KIA / Fallen) CPL UELI, P. Co: "C"

17Jan66: (KIA / Fallen) CPL FLEMING, L. Jr. Co: "B"

19Jan66: Co. D- A squad from the company being ferried across the Song Ca De River to a night ambush site on the north bank, a fire team at the time reported that the boat capsized, and sank after striking a sand bar. Two men were missing as a result of the accident. A search and rescue operation supported by LVT's and helicopters was unable to locate the 2 missing Marines. 2-MIA's (presumed drowned)

**19Jan66: (KIA / Fallen) CPL HERRINGTON, R. J. Co: "D"
PFC SPENCER, L. Jr. Co: "D"**

21Jan66: Company A/1/3 was transferred to 1/7 and re-designated as B/1/7. B/1/7 joined this Battalion and assumed A/1/3

21Jan66: Co. C- Squad night ambush/Ambushed/ small-arms 1-WIA

26Jan66: 1/3 unk Company- Two Vietnamese women rowed three Viet Cong dressed as farmers across the CA DE River from TRUNG DINH. The Viet Cong surprised a Marine outpost(checkpoint) and killed them (weapons missing-1-rifle and 1-pistol). The Viet Cong fled to the mountains west of the TAOR. The women were captured in a search of TRUNG DINH on the 28th of January 2-KIA's

26Jan66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC TATE, A. M. Co: "D"

27Jan66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC HENDERSON, H. Co: "D"

31Jan66: 1/3 for the month January, sustained 4 KIA, 11 WIA, and 2 Drowned. 1/3 also captured 7 VCS, with 13 VCS-KIA's, and 5 VCS-WIA's for the month (CD Rom).

01Feb66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC HAYNES, W. T. Co: "C"

05Feb66 to 06Feb66: ROUGH RIDER

Province: Quang Nam,Thau Thien

Unit: D/1/3

Object: Company D provided security and protection for Truck Convoy from Da Nang to Hue/ Phu Bia and return(CD Rom).

07Feb66: Co. D- Night patrol/fire-fight/3-VC (1-WIA medivaced Died of Wounds) 1-KIA

07Feb66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC OSBORNE, C. E. Co: "D"

09Feb66: Co. D- Night ambush/Crossing river on Amtrac/Ambushed/8-VC/small-arms 1-WIA(a LVT crewman also WIA)

14Feb66: Co.C- Lead Amtrac of 3 involved in transportation of elements involved in S&D operation at Truang Dinh hit a land Mine 5-KIA's, 21-WIA's, and 1-ARVN-KIA

14Feb66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC AVERY, A. J. Co: "C"
CPL GOGGAN, H. G. Co: "C"
PFC MARKS, R. E. Co: "C"
PFC NICHOLS, E. W. Co: "C"
LCPL WAYMAN, B. R. Co: "C"

15Feb66: (KIA / Fallen) PVT STEPHENSON, W. N. Co: "C"

16Feb66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC CRABBE, F. E. Co: "C"

17Feb66: ROUGH RIDER

Province: Quang Nam, Thau Thien

Unit: C/1/3

Object: Security for Truck Convoy to Hue/ Phu Bia and return(CD Rom)

22Feb66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC OLVERA, A. M. Co: "D"

23Feb66: (KIA / Fallen) CPL RABINOVITZ, J. Co: "C"

25Feb66: Co. D- Night squad ambush/Received 1-Grenade into their position from 1-VC 2-WIA's

26Feb66: Co. D- Patrol/Bobby Trap 1-WIA

28Feb66: Co. A- A squad patrol and a squad ambush, both from the Company, became disoriented and left their designated routes, and encountered each other. Both units opened fire/Friendly Fire incident 4-KIA's and 8-WIA's

28Feb66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC GILBERT, F. D. Co: "A"
PVT HUBISZ, J. F. Co: "A"

LCPL WOLCHESKI, R. J. Co: "A"

28Feb66: For the month of February 1/3 sustained 10 KIA and 18 WIA, from enemy contact in the TAOR. 3 men also died of unknown causes. Also 1/3 captured 3 VCS, with 3 VCS-KIA and 10 VCS-WIA's.

01Mar66: Co. B- A squad at an night ambush position, lost radio contact with its CP and commenced return to CP in accordance with instructions. On the way to the CP, this squad encountered another squad from the same platoon returning to the CP on its patrol route. The point of the patrol unit fired one round at the returning ambush unit/Friendly fire incident 1-KIA

01Mar66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC LOPEZ, R. Co: "B"

07Mar66: Co. D- platoon patrol/Booby Trapped Grenade 2-WIA's

30Mar66: Co. D- A squad on patrol opened fire on two members of the point element of the patrol who had lost the trail and had moved to the flank of the main body. 6-8 rounds fired/Friendly fire incident 1-WIA

31Mar66: For the month of March 1/3 sustained 1 KIA and 4 WIA's. 1/3 also captured 5 VCS, with 1 VCS-KIA and 3 VCS-WIA's in it's TAOR. D/1/1 was attached to 1/3 and assisted on three Rough Rider operations to Hue/ Phu Bia.

01Apr66 to 11Apr66: ORANGE

Province: Quang Nam

Unit: 1/3

Object: Search and destroy operation led by 1/3(HQ), and assisted by units D/1/1, I/3/3, H/3/3, C/1/4, and C/1/5. Credited with 57 VCS-KIA's and 35 VCS-WIA's-probable. USMC casualties for the operation 3 KIA's and 18WIA's assisting units per CD Rom.

02Apr66: (KIA / Fallen) SGT BURTON, D. R. Co: "B"
CPL COURCHANE, D. L. Co: "B"
CPL CUELLAR, J. C. Co: "B"
LCPL HAINES, P. A. Co: "B"
LCPL MENZIES, A. J. N. Co: "B"
PFC MOSS, W. D. Co: "B"
SSGT OWEN, T. W. Co: "B"
LCPL PIOTROWSKI, D. J. Co: "B"
LCPL RUSSELL, D. G. Co: "B"
PFC VILLA, F. Co: "B"
LCPL WILLIAMS, R. M. Co: "B"
PFC WRIGHT, R. H. Co: "B"

LCPL YOUNG, D. E. Co: "B"

02Apr66: AWARDED the NAVY CROSS-Co: "B" CPL Claude G. LEBAS

(Citation) For extraordinary heroism as a Rifleman with Company "B", First Battalion, Third Marines, Third Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force at Quang Nam Province, Vietnam, on 2 April 1966. When his platoon came under heavy automatic-weapons and mortar fire, Corporal Lebas, sighting the enemy mortar position, withdrew to the rear and retrieved three assault weapons. Returning alone through an open area covered by heavy fire from two directions, he single-handedly destroyed the enemy mortar position just as it was adjusting fire on the company command group. Upon returning to his platoon, it was discovered that a machine gunner had been killed and that he and his weapon were one hundred meters forward of the secured position. Even though his platoon was assuming a reserve position, Corporal Lebas turned and, while shouting for covering fire, rushed out to retrieve the weapon. The enemy fire was so intense that his covering force was driven back to a more secure area. With complete disregard for his own safety, Corporal Lebas grabbed the gun and returned to safety amid a hail of bullets. It was later learned that two enemy rounds were imbedded in his haversack, stopped only by the rations he was carrying. Corporal Lebas' actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. (The NAVY CROSS, pages 195 and 196).

02Apr66: AWARDED the NAVY CROSS-Co: "B" LT Willis C. WILSON

(Citation) For extraordinary heroism as a Platoon Commander with Company "B", First Battalion, Third Marines in connection with operations against communist forces in the Republic of Vietnam on 2 April 1966. During Operation ORANGE, Lieutenant Wilson's platoon became heavily engaged with the enemy near the hamlet of Lap Thuan. Intense enemy mortar fire, close-range small-arms fire, and barbed wire obstacles covered by automatic weapons prevented the forward movement of the platoon. Although painfully wounded during the initial mortar barrage, Lieutenant Wilson courageously moved up and down his platoon's positions, directing his men and judiciously ordering the deployed squads to bypass the barbed wire in an attempt to eliminate the Viet Cong threat. When his platoon sergeant was wounded and became entangled in the barbed wire, Lieutenant Wilson, with complete disregard for his own safety, started across seventy-five meters of open terrain in an attempt to retrieve the mortally wounded man, who was still being hit by small-arms fire. Before he could reach the sergeant's position, Lieutenant Wilson was caught in the hail of small-arms fire and seriously wounded in the shoulder. Although thwarted in the rescue effort, he competently resumed direction of the platoon and established a strong base of fire to provide cover for a deployed squad. When a radio operator was wounded in a sudden flurry of Viet Cong fire, Lieutenant Wilson again braved the withering fire to assist the man. For the third time, he was hit, sustaining a serious wound in the chest from small-arms fire. With extraordinary determination and presence of mind, he continued to maintain direction of his platoon. Increasing the rate of fire from his base squads, he launched an attack by the enveloping squad which finally silenced the Viet Cong fire. By his exceptional valor despite his suffering from multiple wounds, daring initiative and unswerving dedication to duty throughout, Lieutenant Wilson upheld the highest

traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. (The NAVY CROSS, page 348).

03Apr66: (KIA / Fallen) CPL NAIL, G. D. Co: "B"

06Apr66: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL Mc ELHANNON, J. P. Co: "D"

11Apr66: (KIA / Fallen) LORENZ, H. J. Co: "H&S"

17Apr66: Co. C- Night patrol detected 4-VC/Fire-fight/ squad reinforced with RF personnel/Grenade into group 4-WIA's and 3-RF forces-WIA's

17Apr66: Co. B- Early morning attack on out post and lines/2-squads VC/2 hour battle 1-WIA

22Apr66: Co. D- Night squad ambush going to site/Booby Trapped Grenade 1-WIA

24Apr66: Co.1/3 unk Company- Night fire-team ambush/Contact Fire-fight with 2-VC/Attacked by 5 additional VC/reinforced by squad 1-WIA

28Apr66: Co. D-Platoon patrol base being established/Ambushed/4-VC/ 10-15 Small-arms rounds 1-WIA(Platoon Commander)

31Apr66: 1/3 reported for the month of April sustaining 14 KIA's and 33 WIA's(possibly a lot assisting units on operation Orange included), with one man Died of unknown causes. 1/3 also had 19 VCS captured, 63 VCS-KIA's and 35 VCS-WIA's. D/1/1 still attached to 1/3 conducted three more Rough Rider operations to Hue/ Phu Bia and returned. 1/3 from log entries possibly only sustained 1 KIA and 8 WIA's for the month).

04May66 to 05May66: COUNTY FAIR

Province: Quang Nam

Unit: 1/3 unknown companies with possible ARVN unit.

Object: Psychological operations: Audio-Visual teams showed movies and handed out leaflets and pamphlets in conjunction with a "County Fair" in village of NIEU THACH SAN. No enemy contact.

11May66 to 19May66: CORMORANT 3-1

Province: Quang Nam

Units: D/1/3 and Recon 1/3

Object: Search and Destroy mission.

Cost: No USMC casualties, and 6VCS-KIA(CD Rom).

17May66: Co. C- Night squad patrol/Ambushed/3-VC 1-WIA

19May66: Co. B- Road Block/Fire-team/Ambushed/Unknown number of VC 2-KIA's, 2-WIA, and 3 M-14 rifles taken/stolen

19May66: **(KIA / Fallen)** LCPL JOZWIAK, R. E. Co: "B"
SGT KEEN, J. L. Co: "D"
PFC SUTHERLIN, W. R. Co: "B"

21May66: **(KIA / Fallen)** HM1 BISHOP, R. W. Co: "Unk 1/3"

22May66: Co. C- Squad patrol member stepped in a Bear Trap/Leg bruised unknown if 1-Injury or WIA

29May66: Co. D- Night patrol/Ambushed/Small-arms fire and Grenades 2-WIA's

31May66: For the month of May 1/3 sustained 2 KIA and 5 WIA's with one Died of disease. Also 1/3 captured 9 VCS, with 7 VCS-KIA's and 2 VCS-WIA's. D/1/1 still attached to 1/3 conducted a Rough Rider operation to Hue/Phu Bia and returned(CD Rom).

01Jun66 to 07Jun66: **CORMORANT 3-2**

Province: Quang Nam
Unit: C/1/3
Object: Search and Destroy mission.
Cost: No apparent casualties(CD Rom).

03Jun66: Co. B- Night squad ambush/prior to site/1-Grenade incoming 1-WIA

09Jun66: **(KIA / Fallen)** PFC WILLIAMS, R. G. Co: "D"

10Jun66 to 11Jun66: **COUNTY FAIR in AN DINH**

Province: Quang Nam
Units: D/1/3 and H&S/1/3
Object: Above units with District and Regional Forces conducted County Fair in An Dinh village.

13Jun66 to 16Jun66: **ROUGH RIDER**

Province: Quang Nam, Thau Thien
Unit: A/1/3
Object: Company A furnished protection to convoy to Phu Bia and back to Da Nang(CD Rom).

16Jun66 to 17Jun66: ROUGH RIDER-SOUTH

Province: Quang Nam, Quang Tin, Tam Ky

Unit: A/1/3-two platoons

Object: Provided security and protection for truck convoy from Da Nang to Tam Ky in connection with 1st Mar Division Operation "KANSAS", and return. Another platoon from A company provided security for a second truck convoy on 17Jun66 from Da Nang to Tam Ky and back.

Over-view: Operation LIBERTY- On 7 June, the new Operation Liberty began with the heavy crash of preparatory artillery fire. The shells blasted thirty-five target areas in the front, the renewed sweeps started. The enemy responded with nothing more than light small arms fire. In fact, most friendly casualties resulted from enemy-sewn mines and booby traps. By 15 June, the regimental realignment was complete. The 9th Marines had their TAOR reduced by nearly half, to just two hundred square kilometers, as the 3rd Marines moved to their west and the 1st Marines took over their eastern flank. With all the infantry regiments in their new positions, Operation Liberty continued through the end of June. Enemy resistance was light and scattered; the aggressive movement of the rifle companies prevented the VC from offering any major, organized resistance. At the end of Operation Liberty, the Marine commanders were confident that they could at last pacify the Da Nang enclave.(Semper Fi Vietnam, pg 71).

June 1966: LIBERTY

Province: Thau Thien On 19Jun66 after Battery W/1/13 received 6 rounds of 60mm mortar fire, companies A, C, and D of 1/3 supported by LVT's conducted a series of intensive search and clear operations held within the 1/3 TAOR in connection with Operation "LIBERTY". These operations are to be continued and intensified by means of a "ROUND UP" operation. These operations till 29Jun66 ended with 1/3 sustaining 8 WIA's, and capturing 42 VCS. Also 1 confirmed VCS-KIA and 10 probable KIA's.

27Jun66: Co. B- A 60mm mortar round being fired at a defensive position of the 3rd Platoon, detonated about 4 feet out of the tube/Friendly Fire incident/Accident 5-WIA's

28Jun66: 1/3- Two S-2 Scouts on the Battalion OP/Booby Trapped Grenade 2-WIA's

30Jun66: ROUNDUP

Province: Thau Thien

Units: 1/3(Companies A, C, and D), and Co A, 1st AmTrac Bn.

Object: Search and clearing operation in AP THUY TU village, attempting to capture wanted suspects.

Cost: There was NO enemy contacts, no casualties(CD Rom).

30Jun66: For the month of June 1/3 sustained 9 WIA's and 0 KIA's with 46 VCS captured, 11 VCS-KIA and 10 probable VCS-KIA's Operation "LIBERTY" totals included.

01Jul66: Vietnam Service MEDAL, Vietnamese Counteroffensive, Phase II, start 01Jul66 to 31May67.

03Jul66: Co. B- Night patrol/Ambushed/received 10 rounds Small-arms fire/9-10 VC fled area 1-WIA

Over-view: Operation MACON- The action heated up on 4 July when Company K, 3/9, was violently attacked three kilometers northeast of An Hoa. Assigned to protect the engineers working on the Liberty Road, which connected Da Nang and An Hoa, the company had patrolled the area for several days without finding any sign of the foe. Then, just before noon on that Independence Day, a flurry of Viet Cong rifle grenades suddenly dropped out of the blazing hot sky. The missiles exploded with violent effectiveness among the grunts. One of the amphibious tractors accompanying the weary column was knocked out immediately. As the frantic Marines scrambled to find cover, mortar shells erupted among them. Seconds later, repeated bursts of enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire tore into the men. The company was pinned down. Two companies were rushed to Company K's aid. For more than two hours the three units battled the well-armed VC. Finally, as night neared, the enemy commander pulled out his troops. In all, eight Marines died and sixteen were wounded in the ambush. Based on evidence found at the site, Marine intelligence identified the enemy unit as part of the Viet Cong R-20 Battalion. When this information reached General Walt, he immediately authorized the 3rd Marine Division to initiate Operation Macon, with five battalions. As planned, Operation Macon would begin with the rifle companies of 3/9 continuing to sweep around An Hoa. Two battalions of the 3rd Marines would then be helilifted into LZ's to the northeast. The 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines would then turn in that direction and push the VC into the waiting Marines. Early on the morning of 6 July, the artillery tubes of the 12th Marines pumped more than five hundred rounds of high explosives into the LZ's. Then CH-46's appeared on the horizon. Within minutes, they had settled in a cloud of dust and disgorged their cargo of infantrymen. The next day 3/9 headed northeast. Reinforced by fourteen tanks, the battalion reached the lines of 1/3 on 10 July. Only scattered handfuls of VC had been found along the way. The results of this phase of Operation Macon were isappointing. The following day the new commander of the 9th Marines, Col. Drew J. Barrett, opened phase three. The companies of 1/3 wheeled and swept east while 3/9 retraced its steps to the west. Neither battalion had any significant contact during this phase. The Marine riflemen continued crisscrossing the scrub-covered ground, splashing through rice paddies, and slowly working their way through thick tangles of undergrowth, but they found no VC. With the R-20 Battalion apparently out of the area, Colonel Barrett ordered Operation Macon closed out on 14 July. Later that same afternoon, a Marine recon patrol spotted four hundred VC assembling about ten kilometers east of An Hoa. The patrol immediately called for both artillery and air strikes. Within minutes the lethal shells and bombs slammed into the enemy formation. The barrage killed at least thirty-five but, more importantly, scattered the rest. Because of this reappearance of the R-20 Battalion, Colonel Barrett revived operation Macon. All activity in

the An Hoa AO would fall under its umbrella. Barrett, and General Kyle, wanted to maintain a strong presence in the region to not only keep the enemy off balance but also to guard the engineers while they finished the Liberty Road. As July turned into August, enemy contact decreased. Colonel Barrett reduced his operational force to just 3/9. The rest of the summer saw these Marines constantly patrolling the AO. Only occasionally did any significant contact develop. By the last week of October, enemy sightings were so rare that it was decided to end Operation Macon on the twenty-eighth. In the 117-day operation, 380 enemy were killed at a cost of 24 Marines dead and 172 wounded.(Semper Fi Vietnam, pgs 71-73).

04Jul66 to 14Jul66: MACON

Provinces: Quang Nam & Thua Thien (An Hoa Industrial Complex)

Units: 9th Mar(HQ), 3/9, 1/3, 3/3

Object: Operation to CLEAR the An Hoa area south of Da Nang. The main fighting ends on 14 July, but sweeps and patrols continue through 27Oct. Other participating units- 1/9, 2/9, and 2/3.

Cost: USMC- 24 KIA and 173 WIA. The Regiment kills roughly 380 ENEMY. Per 3rdmarines-operations lists 507 Enemy KIA. Per CD Rom, 1/3(Command Group, Companies A, D, and H&S) was attached to the 9th Marines for Operation "MACON" from the period 6-14Jul66. For the operation 1/3 reported capturing 23 VCS with 5 confirmed VCS-KIA's, 2 probable VCS-KIA's, and 1 probable VCS-WIA. No report of 1/3 casualties. Then the 1/3 Units were attached to TASK FORCE DELTA from the 15-31Jul66 for Operation "HASTINGS"

07Jul66: Co. C- Night/Early morning patrol/Booby Trapped Grenade/2-WIA's and RF-WIA

08Jul66: Co. B- Night ambush returning from ambush site/3-incoming Grenades 2-WIA's

11Jul66: Co. B- Patrol encountered 3-VC/small-arms and 2-Grenades 2-WIA's

Over-view: Operation HASTINGS- Brigadier General Lowell E. English, the 3rd Marine Division's assistant division commander, met with Maj. Gen. Ngo Quang Truong, the 1st ARVN Division commander, and Colonel Sherman in Hue on 11 July. The three commanders agreed that a Marine task force would conduct operations in northern Quang Tri Province just south of the DMZ. The insertion would be an extension of operation Hastings, the code name of the ongoing reconnaissance effort. The ARVN forces would operate to the south of the Marines. General Walt met with General Westmoreland in Hue the next day. After the command briefing that outlined the plan for Operation Hastings, Westmoreland not only approved it but authorized Walt to transfer up to an entire division to Quang Tri Province. Initially, though, Walt told General Kyle to just establish a forward headquarters for the 4th Marines at Dong Ha. Kyle then reactivated TF Delta, with General English as its commander. Four infantry battalions- 2/1, 1/3, 2/4, and 3/4 - plus an artillery battalion, 3/12, made up the task force. On 14 July, General English established his headquarters at Cam Lo. The terrain of

TD Delta's new operational area varied from coastal plain to steep, rugged, jungle-clad mountains. Around Cam Lo and Dong Ha, the ground is relatively flat. To the north, rolling hills begin. All are covered with dense scrub and elephant grass. Thick strands of trees fill many of the valleys. Villages and hamlets, many with masonry buildings, dot the countryside. Farther north and west, sharp ridges and steep hills climb to more than five hundred meters in height. The heavy jungle foliage covering the rough terrain made ground travel extremely difficult, if not impossible. And helicopter landing zones were few and far between. Based on intelligence reports, General English decided to seek the enemy in the Song Ngan Valley. This heavily forested area lay just two kilometers south of the DMZ. Hills 200 and 208 dominated the valley's southwestern end; Hill 100 guarded the northeast approaches. It was on Hill 208 that the 324B NVA Division was believed to have set up its command post. The plans called for 3/4, under Lt. Col. Sumner A. Vale, to land at LZ Crow, situated between Hills 200 and 208. Five kilometers to the northeast, 2/4, now commanded by Lt. Col. Arnold E. Bench, would come into LZ Dove, about one kilometer east of Hill 100. Bench's battalion would then push southwest toward Hill 208 and 3/4. The 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines (later replaced by 1/1) guarded Dong Ha; 1/3 protected General English's headquarters at Cam Lo. As a diversion, the SLF, 3/5, would make an amphibious assault along the coast northeast of Dong Ha. Once the SLF battalion was established ashore, its control would pass to General English. In the meantime, the 1st ARVN division would conduct operations north of Dong Ha and west of Route 1. At first light on 15 July, a flight of A-4's dropped out of the sky over the Song Ngan Valley. Hurling earthward, the screaming Skyhawks unleashed tons of bombs on the two LZs. As thick, dark clouds rose skyward, F-4 Phantoms raced in at treetop level. With pinpoint accuracy they dropped napalm-filled canisters on the target. Huge sheets of black-accented flames burst among the foliage, sucking up the oxygen and killing all living creatures. Once the jets had finished, the artillery tubes of 3/12 at Cam Lo opened fire. Beginning at 0725 and lasting twenty minutes, the howitzers poured hundreds of rounds of high-explosive shells on the LZs. As they finished, the staccato beat of helicopter rotors echoed over the valley. At 0745 the first wave of CH-46s carrying the Marines of 3/4 hovered over LZ Crow. Within minutes the troops were on the ground and fanning out around the LZ. The initial landings passed uneventfully. By the time the second wave dropped into the LZ, the NVA were ready to respond. Suddenly, enemy small arms fire filled the air. In taking evasive action, two CH-46's collided and fell earthward. A third helicopter, maneuvering to avoid the crashed pair, slammed into a tree. Two Marines died and seven were injured in the crashes. Later that day enemy fire hit another helicopter. Belching flame and smoke, it hit the ground near Lieutenant Colonel Vale's CP. Thirteen men died and another three were injured in this mishap. The sardonic Marines quickly dubbed the area "Helicopter Valley." Lieutenant Colonel Bench's Marines (2/4) began arriving at LZ Dove about 0935. Once on the ground the three companies (one company from each battalion had remained behind at Phu Bai) started advancing southwest toward 3/4. Though there was no enemy contact, the oppressive heat, high humidity, and difficult terrain greatly hampered the battalion's progress. Conditions were so bad that by mid-afternoon it had moved only three kilometers. It was another story at Vale's (3/4's) end of the valley. While Company "I" secured the LZ, Company "L" moved west to occupy Hill 200. No sooner had Company "L" left the perimeter than it was peppered with small arms fire. The company hit the ground. Vale sent Company "K" to the south to cross the Song Ngan, which ran between LZ Crow and Hill 208. It, too, started taking enemy fire almost as soon as it left the LZ. Just a few hundred meters to the south, members of Company "K" stumbled on a two-

hundred-bed hospital hidden deep in the dense foliage. After killing the four stay-behind guards, the Marines pressed on. The closer they came to the river, the heavier the enemy fire became. Each time they neared the bank, a wall of lead greeted them. Four times the company tried to ford the river. Four times deadly enemy fire lashing out of the nearly impenetrable jungle drove the men back. Company "K's" commander, Capt. Robert J. Modrzejewski, finally decided to pull back his company and form a tight, night defensive perimeter. They'd try again in the morning. While Modrzejewski's company dug in, enemy machinegun and mortar rounds suddenly raked Company "I" and the battalion CP. At 1930 Lieutenant Colonel Vale reported to General English that he was completely surrounded. But then, thirty minutes later, the enemy's fire slackened. Vale told English that he thought the enemy retreated. Then, at 2015, the NVA hit Modrzejewski's company (K). For the next three hours, Modrzejewski's company battled the determined foe. The pitch-black darkness hid the NVA from the Marines, who resorted to flinging hand grenades blindly into the jungle. Modrzejewski later said, "It was so dark we couldn't see our hands in front of our faces, so we threw our trip flares[into the jungle] and called for a flare plane. We could hear and smell and occasionally see the NVA after that. In the morning we found twenty-five bodies, some of them only five meters away, stacked on top of each other" Eventually the NVA slithered back into the jungle, but they still harassed a nervous Company "K" throughout the night. Realizing that he was badly outnumbered, Lieutenant Colonel Vale asked for help. General English immediately ordered 2/4 to abandon its mission and go directly to Vale's aid by moving along the easier terrain bordering the river. Early the next morning a heavy shower of enemy mortar rounds again fell on Vale's CP (3/4). While Marine jets and artillery blasted the suspected gun sites, Company "K" again tried to ford the Song Ngan(river). As before, heavy enemy small arms fire blasted the Marines. With his troops pinned down in the jungle, Modrzejewski called for air strikes. To the northeast, Bench's battalion (2/4) headed out shortly after dawn. Though the men fought the NVA on and off throughout the day, suffering nine casualties including two dead, they arrived at Vale's location by 1500. Though there were now six marine rifle companies facing them, the NVA did not back off. During the night of 16-17 July, they struck again. As before, the heaviest attacks tore into Company "K" (3/4). Modrzejewski's company, positioned about eight hundred meters south of the two battalion CP's, was hit about 1930. Screaming, yelling, and firing a variety of automatic weapons, and nearly invisible from more than two meters away, the NVA tore into all sides of Company "K's" thin perimeter. Over the next four hours the embattled Marines threw back three intense ground attacks, one of which was stopped just five meters from them. Modrzejewski displayed gallant leadership that night, but he credited accurate artillery fire, and a flare ship that stayed on station all night, with helping him hold back the NVA. In the morning his men found seventy-nine NVA bodies around their laager site. Combined with the twenty-five they had killed the night before, Company "K" had acquitted itself very well. Surprisingly, only one Company "K" Marine was killed; five were seriously wounded and forty were slightly wounded in the fight. On the morning of 17 July, Lieutenant Colonel Vale (3/4) abandoned any plans he still had to take Hills 200 and 208. Instead, he sent Company "L" to help Modrzejewski. That evening General English changed the plans of the two battalions. On 18 July, 2/4 would move out of the valley, heading northeast to a position about fifteen hundred meters south of the DMZ. Vale's 3/4, meanwhile, would stay behind to destroy the three downed helicopters and a cache of NVA ammo uncovered by Company "L". When that was done they would follow 2/4 to the northeast. In the meantime, 3/5, the SLF, which had successfully completed its amphibious landing on 16 July, would be airlifted into a parallel

valley about three kilometers to the south of Helicopter Valley. There the Marines would not only exploit a B-52 strike made on 17 July but act as a blocking force for any NVA escaping from the Song Ngan area. At midmorning on 18 July, 2/4 started its trek back to the northeast. The battalion moved without interference. By 1500 Bench's men had established a defensive perimeter at their new position. At 1400 Vale's battalion (3/4) began its movement to trace 2/4's steps out of the valley. Vale ordered Company "K" to remain behind to provide security for the engineers blowing the ammo and helicopters. At 1430, the NVA hit. Enemy mortar shells fell first, crashing down all across the LZ and the battalion area with thundering booms. Lieutenant Colonel Vale (3/4) and some of his headquarters staff were still at their CP. Because their fighting holes had already been filled in, all Vale and his staff could do was double-time to the east. They did. Company "K" wasn't so lucky. Pinned down by mortars, the men further immobilized by bursts of heavy automatic weapons fire blasting them from three sides. The 1st Platoon, led by SSgt John J. McGinty, was some distance from the rest of the company. Before Modrzejewski could get to the platoon, the attacking NVA had successfully isolated it. Wearing pith helmets and new green uniforms, and firing AK-47 semiautomatic rifles, scores of NVA infantry swarmed toward McGinty and his thirty men. Firing as fast as they could reload magazines, the trapped Marines killed dozens of the enemy, but still they kept coming. McGinty later said, "We just couldn't kill them fast enough." Unable to reach McGinty, Modrzejewski called for air and artillery support. Within minutes both were hitting as close as fifty meters from the lines. At one point in the fight some NVA swarmed over one of the nearby downed helicopters. Modrzejewski called in a jet. "Napalm got about twenty of them, and then another forty in the middle of the landing zone," he recalled. Lieutenant Colonel Vale rushed Company "L" back to the aid of Company "K", which was battling for its life. Not until just about 1700 were the relieving Marines able to break through. Laying down a heavy base of fire, they finally freed McGinty and his trapped men. Everyone then pulled back, bringing their wounded but leaving the dead in the tall elephant grass. A short time later two platoons from Company "I" arrived to help, too. With the enemy at last repulsed, the exhausted Marines formed a ragged column of walking wounded, wounded to be carried, and able-bodied men. They proceeded upstream. By 1900 the two battalions had again joined up. Casualties had been heavy. Company "K" alone suffered 14 dead and 49 wounded, out of a pre-battle strength of 130. The NVA casualties were estimated at 138 dead. Both Modrzejewski and McGinty would later be decorated with the Medal of Honor for their valor. The next day Company "K" was pulled from the field for rebuilding, but the rest of the two battalions remained in place. They spent the next two weeks crisscrossing the valley looking for the NVA. However, the elusive foe avoided contact. For all practical purposes the battle for Helicopter Valley was over. Heavy fighting did erupt to the south where 3/5 was operating. On 24 July, Lt. Col. Edward J. Bronars ordered his Company "I" to establish a radio relay station atop Hill 362, about seven kilometers southwest of Hill 200. Captain Samuel S. Glaize's company had no problems getting to the top of the hill. However, when Glaize sent his 2nd Platoon down the far side, the NVA suddenly opened fire. Blazing away with AK-47 and machine-gun fire from well-established fighting positions hidden deep within the heavy jungle, the NVA easily mowed down the Marines. Under covering fire from their buddies at the top of the hill, a few 2nd Platoon members at the rear of the column scrambled to safety. The NVA then crept out of the jungle and mercilessly murdered any living Marines. Only by playing dead did a few of them survive this brutal massacre. Next, four NVA mortars started dropping rounds across the top of the Hill 362. Because they had not been able to dig any holes, the members of Company "I" were ripped

apart by the shells. The pounding lasted for hours before a Marine helicopter gunship finally arrived and silenced the enemy weapons. As soon as he learned of Company "I's" ordeal, lieutenant Colonel Bronars ordered Company "K" to their relief. These fresh troops made it to within three hundred meters of Company "I's" position before renewed heavy enemy fire stopped them cold. Company "K" was forced to dig in for the night where it was. To add to the already bad situation, heavy rainsqualls that evening hampered evacuation of casualties. Only eleven wounded from Company "K" were pulled out before the medevac operation was called off. The sister companies spent a terror-filled night on Hill 362 as NVA mortar shells pounded them continually. Enemy soldiers probed the Marines' lines all night, appearing as shadowy ghosts in the misty jungle. One young Marine later said, "The Commies were so close we could hear them breathing." By dawn, however, the enemy was gone. Company "K" pushed forward and finally linked up with Glaize's company. It had been a tough fight. Company "I" alone suffered one hundred casualties- eighteen dead and eighty-two wounded. Marines policing the battlefield found only twenty-one enemy bodies in the nearby jungle. The fight for Hill 362 marked the end of large-scale action during operation Hastings. General Kyle met with General English on 26 July. After reviewing the situation, Kyle ordered the battalions withdrawn. Over the next few days the Marines departed their AOs. On 30 July, 3/5 returned to the control of the Seventh Fleet as the SLF. General English deactivated his task force headquarters on 1 August. Control of operation Hastings passed to the 4th Marines, now commanded by Col. Alexander D. Cereghino. The operation officially ended on 3 August. Marine intelligence believed that the 324B NVA Division had either moved north of the DMZ or slipped into the impenetrable jungle to the west. Westmoreland disagreed. Not only did he think that the 324B Division was still south of the DMZ, but his intelligence specialists reported that two more NVA divisions, the 304th and 341st, were preparing to cross the DMZ.(per Semper Fi Vietnam, pages 78 to 86).

15Jul66 to 03Aug66: HASTINGS

Province: Quang Tri- North of ROCKPILE B/T Route 9 and DMZ, Ngan Valley- "Helicopter Valley".

Units: 2/1, 1/3, 2/4, 3/4, and 3/5; Artillery Battalion 3/12.

Object: In the largest Marine operation to date in Vietnam FIVE BATTALIONS and ARTILLERY attack the NVA 324B Division, which has infiltrated across the DMZ. The main fighting 15 July to 3 Aug. area north of Rockpile. The operation had started 7 July with Task Force Delta 4th Mar(HQ), and other participating units 3/9, 1/1, 1st ARVN Division, and VMC. MAG-16 Helicopters flew 10,000 sorties and Attack Aircraft flew 1677 sorties (Stingray Tactics) during operation.

Cost: USMC- 126 KIA and 448 WIA, ARVN loses- 21 KIA and 40 WIA, and ENEMY dead 880-PAVN. Per 3rdmarines- operations 3rd Mar Div operation in Quang Tri Province against NVA 324B Division in area of DMZ with 882 Enemy KIA and 183 U.S. KIA. Per CD Rom, 1/3(Command Group Alpha, Companies A, B, D, and H&S) was attached to TASK FORCE DELTA from 15-31Jul66 for Operation "HASTINGS". No casualty or enemy stats.

15Jul66: (KIA / Fallen) CPL REID, J. M. Co: "B"

19Jul66: Co. C- Patrol night ambush crossing the CA DE River in an aluminum boat
Sank/Accident/3 rescued by LVT, unable to find others 3-Mia

19Jul66: **(KIA / Fallen)** LCPL **KEMPER, T. B.** Co: "C"
LCPL **MALBROUGH, C. R.** Co: "D"
PFC **Mc GUIRK, C. A.** Co: "C"
1LT **RATHE, P. H.** Co: "D"

20Jul66: Co. C- Recovered one body of Marine from boat accident prior night 1-KIA

21Jul66: 1/3- Recovered other 2 Marines bodies from boat accident of 19Jul66 2-KIA's

22Jul66: **(KIA / Fallen)** LCPL **BERRY, L. M.** Co: "B"

27Jul66: Co. C- Assisted unit E/2/3 on "County Fair- AN DINH" as blocking force

31Jul66: Company C remained in the 1/3 TAOR, and was assisted by units E/2/3, E/2/4, H/2/4,L/3/3, I/3/9 and L/3/9 through the month. 1/3 sustained 5 WIA's and 5 KIA's for the month of July. Also indicated captured 5 VCS, with 12 confirmed VCS-KIA's and 7 probable VCS-KIA's; and 2 probable VCS-WIA's. There were three "County Fairs" and two "Rough Rider" convoys to Phu Bia and one "Rough Rider" convoy to Operation "HASTINGS-2" handled by other different assisting units. The enemy stats from Operation "Macon" not included above. Updated 1/3 month totals inflicted on the Enemy was 17-C/KIA's(confirmed), 9-VC/KIA's (probable), 3-VC/WIA's(probable), and capturing 28-VCS .

01Aug66: 1/3 relieved from Operation Hastings by Task Force Delta and returned to assigned sector of Da Nang TAOR by choppers. The returning Companies relieved those units that had replaced them. Company C was moved to Battalion Reserve in the Bn. C.P. area,

Over-view: Operation PRAIRIE- To monitor NVA activities in Quang Tri Province, III MAF authorized Operation Prairie to commence on 3 August 1966. The original units participating in the operation included 2/4 at Dong Ha, a howitzer battery from 3/12, and a variety of supporting units, including a platoon of tanks, an antitank platoon, engineers, and logistical troops. The primary element of Operation Prairie, however, was the 1st Force Recon Company. The plan for Operation Prairie called for five-man recon teams to be inserted by helicopter along suspected enemy routes. If the teams found the NVA, they could call for artillery, helicopter gun-ships, or close air support to bombard them. If these weapons proved insufficient, rifle companies would be airlifted into the scene. Once again it didn't take long for the recon Marines to find the enemy. Operating four kilometers north of the Rockpile, a prominent terrain feature west of Cam Lo, a recon team spotted a good-sized NVA force on 6 August. After calling in artillery fire down on the enemy, the team suddenly found itself threatened by other NVA. A reaction platoon from Company "E", 2/4, was rushed into the area to help the recon Marines. By the time it arrived on the scene, though, the enemy had slipped

away. The combined force searched for two days but could not reestablish contact. On 8 August, the troops were being lifted out of a quiet LZ when the NVA suddenly opened fire on the helicopters from a nearby ridge. Then, without warning, the enemy soldiers poured out of the jungle, surrounding the twenty-five Marines still on the ground. The stranded men quickly set up a defensive perimeter. Within minutes the NVA killed the Company "E" lieutenant and his platoon sergeant. Command of the beleaguered unit passed to the recon team leader. He called for air strikes and artillery. Within minutes both were pounding the NVA back into the jungle. At Dong Ha the Company "E" commander, Capt. Howard V. Lee, rounded up seven volunteers as a relief force. Two UH-34 gun-ships flew alongside the troop-carrying helicopter. Deadly accurate enemy fire forced all three ships to land some distance from the trapped men. That didn't stop Lee, though. Disregarding the marauding enemy, and accompanied by just two other men, Lee broke through the jungle to join his isolated troops. For the rest of the night the stoic Marines, aided by artillery fire and helicopter gun-ships, fought off the NVA. At dawn on 9 August, Company "F", soon followed by the rest of Company "E", reached Lee and his men. As usual, the NVA had pulled out. Captain Lee received a well-deserved Medal of Honor for his brave actions. This fight convinced Colonel Cereghino that the enemy was indeed operating in strength in Quang Tri Province. On 13 August, he established a regimental forward CP at Dong ha and ordered 1/4 north from Phu Bai. Once the fresh battalion arrived, 2/4 headed west along Route 9 toward the Rockpile, about twenty kilometers away, on 17 August. The men made it about halfway before strong, enemy machine-gun fire from Hill 252, south of the road, forced them to a halt. Air and artillery support were called in, but neither could budge the well-dug-in enemy soldiers. Lieutenant Colonel Bench then brought up tanks from Cam Lo. When they arrived, the two M48 behemoths fired point-blank at the enemy positions. This support finally allowed the infantry to capture the hill the next day. The Marines then continued on and established a night defensive perimeter north of the Rockpile. During the next six days, 2/4's infantry companies fanned out and looked for the NVA in the dense jungle. They found them nearly everywhere. Hardly a day went by without some element of 2/4 making contact with the NVA. The clashes were always deadly but brief. Before artillery or air support could be brought to bear on the slippery enemy, they had pulled out, leaving the Marines to evacuate their wounded and dead before renewing the search. On 21 August, from the eastern slopes of a sharply contoured northwest-southeast-running hill mass just northwest of the Rockpile, the enemy began firing a 12.7mm machine gun at re-supply helicopters servicing the Marine recon team atop the Rockpile. Despite repeated air strikes and artillery missions, the automatic weapon kept firing away. Lieutenant Colonel Bench ordered Company "E" to find and destroy the NVA weapon. The sixty men of Company "E", still understrength from its fight on 9-10 August, jumped from helicopters east of the suspected enemy location on the newly named Razorback Ridge on the afternoon of 23 August. Fanning out across the steep hillside, the Marines immediately noticed numerous caves, some quite large. All appeared to be empty. About 1630, while preparing to end their search, the Marines heard voices coming from one of the caves. The new company commander, Capt. Edwin W. Besch, deployed his men around the cave's entrance in hopes of taking a prisoner. Suddenly, NVA hidden in nearby caves opened fire. The enemy's fire was so intense that the Marines were pinned down, unable to move, within minutes. Lieutenant Colonel Bench, advised of Company "E's" perilous situation, immediately formed a composite relief force, consisting of a platoon each from Companies "F" and "G" and his headquarters company. Led by the S-3, Capt. John J. W. Hilgers, the makeshift relief force landed at the base of the Razorback late that evening. Fighting uphill, the relieving

Marines reached the trapped men just after midnight. At daybreak the combined force repulsed a vicious ground attack from NVA streaming from the caves. By midmorning on 24 August, the fight for the Razorback was over. The Marines suffered twenty-one dead and ninety-nine wounded, but the NVA had lost a key position from which they could have captured the Rockpile. The rest of August and early September were relatively quiet in Quang Tri Province. Colonel Cereghino decided to expand his AO to include the Con Thien region, which lay due north of Cam Lo and just three kilometers south of the DMZ. He ordered Lieutenant Colonel Bench to take his battalion on a reconnaissance-in-force sweep of the area. Company "H", 2/4, and a platoon of tanks from Company "C", 3rd Tank Battalion headed north from Cam Lo early on 7 September. That afternoon helicopters carried the rest of the battalion northward to LZs spaced around Con Thien. The very next day Company "G" found a force of NVA about one kilometer northeast of Con Thien. The resulting firefight lasted three hours and cost five Marines their lives. On 9 September, Bench's Companies "E" and "F", supported by tanks, found a dug-in NVA company just south of the DMZ. From trenches extending deep into the DMZ, the enemy raked the Marines with heavy machine-gun fire. Only the direct fire from the tanks finally broke the enemy resistance. The Marines swept the area for several more days but found no more NVA. Bench's battalion returned to Cam Lo on the thirteenth. A few days later combat action intensified to the west. Acting on intelligence reports that NVA were establishing a stronghold on the Nui Cay Tre ridgeline in the rugged, jungle-covered mountains three kilometers north of the Rockpile, Colonel Cereghino ordered 1/4, under Lt. Col. Jack Westerman, to probe north. On 15 September, Companies "B" and "D" started through the dense, triple-canopied jungle. At noon the next day the NVA struck. The two companies were immediately surrounded by a full battalion of NVA. For the next two and a half days the battle flared. Marine air and artillery constantly pounded the NVA, but the enemy wouldn't give up. Not until elements of the reinforcing 2/7 reached the two encircled companies on the evening of 18 September did the NVA sneak away. In spite of the intensity and duration of the fight, friendly casualties were surprisingly light: only nine Marines were killed. Colonel Cereghino sent (1/4) back to the Rockpile on 19 September, and 2/7 continued on to the Nui Cay Tre area. The closer they moved to the ridgeline, the heavier the enemy fire became. After two days of this, Cereghino pulled 2/7 back to the Rockpile, too. He not only felt that Nui Cay Tre was too well defended for the forces he had, but the NVA had reoccupied the Razorback. Cereghino decided he had to clean out the Razorback before he could tackle Nui Cay tre. On 22 September, two companies of Lt. Col. John J. Roothoff's 2/7 attacked up the western slope of the Razorback. That day and the next passed uneventfully. Then, on the twenty-fourth, well-concealed NVA in mutually supporting bunkers unleashed a vicious sheet of automatic weapons fire on Company "G". Burdened with heavy casualties, the company could not withdraw. Lieutenant Colonel Roothoff ordered Company "F" to aid its embattled sister company. Company "F" made only a few hundred meters before it, too, was ambushed and pinned down. By the end of the day the two companies had suffered thirteen killed and forty-five wounded. Once again, Marine close air support prevented a larger disaster. Under this protective umbrella of high explosives, the two rifle companies recovered their casualties from the dense undergrowth and retreated to safety. The next day Colonel Cereghino sent Roothoff's mauled battalion back to its parent regiment at Chu Lai for rebuilding. It was replaced on the battlefield by 2/9. Stymied at the Razorback, Cereghino now decided to have another crack at Nui Cay Tre. He sent Lt. Col. William J. Masterpool's 3/4 against Nui Cay Tre from the east. Following a heavy artillery barrage on the morning of 22 September, CH-46s brought the

battalion into a LZ, about four kilometers east of the hill mass, just south of Hill 362. Starting forward, the Marines soon encountered the most difficult terrain they'd yet faced. A six-foot layer of tangled brush covered the ground. Trees up to eight foot thick had such a dense canopy of leaves that whatever sunlight penetrated cast an eerie, netherworld pall over the jungle. Forward movement was limited to mere meters per hour as the enervated Marines hacked through the thick jungle with machetes. Sometimes they had to wait for bombs or napalm to blast or burn the jungle ahead of them before they could move. Not until 26 September did Company "L", 3/4, secure Hill 400, the battalion's first objective. Along the way it became obvious that the Marines were deep in enemy territory. Company commander Capt. Roger K. Ryman said, "As we got closer to (Hill) 400 ... we saw more and more enemy positions, including enough huts in the ravines to harbor a regiment, and piles and piles of ammunition. NVA bodies lying around and hastily dug graves were signs we were moving right behind them." At 0730 the next day Company "K" pushed southwest from Hill 400 preparatory to the battalion's movement toward Hill 484, three kilometers to the west. The enemy soon hit them with such fury that by noon the company was surrounded, with eight dead and twenty-five wounded. Not until late that afternoon did the NVA break contact. Lieutenant Colonel Masterpool dispatched the rest of the battalion to link up with Company "K" and set up a multi-company night defensive position (NDP). At the crack of dawn the next morning, Company "K" started out of the NDP. Almost immediately the Marines ran into NVA in heavily reinforced bunkers. Captain James J. Carroll pulled back his men and called for artillery. As soon as the barrage ended, the NVA attacked. Heavily camouflaged, the enemy soldiers were barely visible as they poured out of the jungle. The fighting was so intense that one of Carroll's sergeants later said, "You couldn't tell who was firing, Charlie or us. They had everything- mortars, heavy weapons, and mines- and they even had ladders in trees for spotters to climb and direct fire." Elements of Companies "I" and "M" arrived just in time to help Captain Carroll's Marines throw back the enemy. The fighting raged until late on 28 September. The three companies then withdrew and consolidated back atop Hill 400. After being re-supplied, Lieutenant Colonel Masterpool continued his methodical movement toward Hill 484. By the evening of 3 October, the battalion was in position. The next morning, Company "M" sent a platoon against the bunkers guarding the hill. It was soon thrown back. Another platoon moved around the right flank. It, too, fell back under a barrage of NVA grenades. Unable to make any progress, Company "M" retreated. Then, Marine jets unleashed high explosives on the hill all the rest of the day and into the next morning. At 1000 on 5 October, Company "M" again charged forward. Resistance was tough, but by 1330 the Marines controlled Hill 484. The hard-won victory was tarnished by the friendly fire deaths of three Marines on Hill 400, including Capt. James Carroll. He was later posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for his valor during the fight for Hill 484. The artillery base on the plateau west of Cam Lo was renamed Camp Carroll in his honor. The 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines suffered twenty dead in taking Nui Cay Tre. More than fifty more were wounded. The enemy suffered at least one hundred dead. From then on Nui Cay tre would be known as "Mutter's Ridge" after Lieutenant Colonel Masterpool's radio call sign. This intense fighting raised General Westmoreland's concerns about the enemy's intentions for Quang Tri Province. He believed that the NVA would move more troops across the DMZ, increasing the pressure on III MAF. Even worse, he feared that the enemy might try to outflank the Marine strongholds at the Rockpile and Dong Ha by slipping troops into the province via the mountainous terrain of northwestern Quang Tri Province. To blunt these movements Westmoreland suggested General Walt put Marines at Khe Sanh.

General Walt resisted. His staff supported him, feeling that Khe Sanh had no military value. In fact, General English thought that the loss of Khe Sanh would have absolutely no effect on any operations in Quang Tri Province. "It's far away from anything," he said. "You could lose it and you really haven't lost a damn thing." The Marines' position was negated on 26 September when MACV intelligence pinpointed an NVA base camp just fourteen kilometers northeast of Khe Sanh. Rather than lose face by being ordered by MACV to reinforce Khe Sanh, General Walt issued the necessary orders himself. On 29 September, 1/3 was lifted by C-130 transport planes from Da Nang directly to Khe Sanh. The troops immediately began extensive patrolling of the rugged, inhospitable terrain surrounding the base. They occasionally saw the enemy but made no significant contact. At about this time, MACV intelligence received reports of a major buildup of enemy forces all along the DMZ. As a result, General Westmoreland became convinced that the North Vietnamese were preparing for a massive attack into Quang Tri Province. One intelligence analysis even predicted a three-division invasion in less than three days. Though that did not happen, IIIMAF reactivated Task Force Delta on 1 October. General English set up his command post at Dong Ha and assumed responsibility for Operation Prairie from Colonel Cereghino. General English had six infantry battalions (1/4, 3/4, 2/5, 1/3, 2/9, and 3/7) supported by artillery and other units in TF Delta when he took command. With all this increased activity in Quang Tri Province, General Walt ordered the 3rd Marine Division to move its headquarters north from Da Nang to Phu Bai. When General Kyle opened his new headquarters there on 6 October, he also deactivated TF Delta. In its place he established at Dong Ha a division forward headquarters under General English. At the same time, Operation Prairie transitioned from a specific operation to an area of operations. Also, responsibility for the important Da Nang TAOR transferred to the 1st Marine Division. The Marines were ready, but the expected NVA offensive never materialized. In fact, enemy contact dropped off sharply right after the fight for Mutter's Ridge. The III MAF continued to hear of large enemy formations around the DMZ, but if they were actually there they stayed hidden. By the end of 1966, III MAF reduced the force in Quang Tri Province to just one regiment, the 3rd Marines, operating with four infantry battalions. The 4th Marines moved south to participate in Operation Chinook near Hue. Operation Prairie, which would extend into 1967, had prevented the NVA from establishing a major base in Quang Tri Province. But the cost had been high; two hundred Marines were killed and more than one thousand were wounded. Reported enemy deaths were a little more than one thousand. And the shuffling and reshuffling of Marine units had adversely affected the ongoing pacification efforts favored by III MAF. As the Marines' second year in South Vietnam ended, General Walt felt that the North Vietnamese leaders were succeeding in their efforts to draw his troops away from the populous coastal plain into the rugged interior mountains, where the NVA could win a war of attrition. With III MAF strength at nearly seventy thousand men in two infantry divisions, a full air wing, and a logistical command, General Walt now commanded the largest force of the Marines deployed overseas since World War II. And the Marines were fighting two distinctly separate wars: the 3rd Marine Division conducted a more or less conventional ground campaign in northern I Corps, and the 1st Marine Division continued the combination of large unit operations with major pacification efforts in the south. This separation of effort would continue into 1967. (per Semper Fi Vietnam, pages 86 to 95).

03Aug66 to 29Sep66: PRAIRIE I

Province: Quang Tri- in Con Thien and Gio Linh areas of DMZ.

Units: 3rd Mar Div(HQ), 1/3, 2/3, 3/3, 1/4, 2/4, 3/4, 2/5, 2/7, 3/7, 2/9, 1/26, and 3/26.

Object: III MAF opens reconnaissance effort and uses Stingray Tactics in area south of DMZ. Continues through 13 Sept. as operation Prairie to STOP NVA Divisions penetration into Quang Tri Province. On 29Sep66 Marine KC-130's transports and land 1/3 and Artillery Battery 1/13 at the air field of KHE SANH, S/W of the Rockpile. C/1/3 is at Khe Sanh till operation Prairie ends 31Jan67.

Cost: USMC- 200 KIA and 1000 WIA and ENEMY dead 1397-PAVN. 1/3 was the Battalion in Reserve for Operation "Prairie I", while in it's TAOR in Da Nang area. 1/3 continued to be the Battalion in Reserve after it's move to Khe Sanh, and assisted as needed in the overall operational plans(CD Rom).

04Aug66 to 05Aug66: COUNTY FAIR 3-15

Province: Quang Nam

Unit: D/1/3

Object: Combined operation with ARVN Regional Forces in AP QUAN NAM village. There was no enemy contact(CD Rom).

06Aug66 to 07Aug66: ROUGH RIDER-North

Province: Quang Nam, Thau Thien

Unit: C/1/3

Object: Convoy security to Phu Bia and return(CD Rom).

14Aug66: 1/3 unk Company- Night Patrol(4-Marines and 4-ARVN RF)/Ambushed/received 4-Grenades 3-WIA's (4-WIA's also of ARVN-Ra's)

15Aug66 to 19Aug66: CORMORANT 3-3

Province: Quang Nam

Unit: C/1/3

Object: Search and Destroy mission. No enemy contact(CD Rom).

16Aug66: COUNTY FAIR 3-19

Province: Quang Nam

Unit: B/1/3

Object: Company B assisted by elements of H&S and Regional ARVN Forces conducted operation in village of THAN VIN. There was no enemy contact, and only one day operation(CD Rom).

19Aug66 to 30Aug66: ALLEGHENY

Province: Quang Nam

Units: 2/3, C/1/3

Object: Company C attached to 2/3 for the operation(CD Rom).

22Aug66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC BOORAS, P. W. Co: "H&S"

28Aug66: 1/3 unk Company- 3-Trucks from LAAM Battalion struck by fragments of Claymore type mine 3 WIA's

28Aug66: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL ROLLINS, A. Jr. Co: "D"

30Aug66: BLUE SPRINGS

Province: Quang Nam

Unit: C/1/3(one platoon)

Object: Drone Recovery, no enemy contact(CD Rom). Co. D- Two squads night patrols(PPB)/Engaged 3-5 VC/Area Illuminated/ one Marine injured by Artillery Illumination Canister 1-WIA

30Aug66: For the month of August 1/3 reported sustaining 3 WIA's and 1 KIA with one other enlisted Died-Unknown why. Also 1/3 captured 2 VCS, had 4 VCS-KIA, and 2 VCS-WIA probable. .

31Aug66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC COMSTOCK, A. E. Jr. Co: "C"

02Sep66 to 03Sep66: ROUGH RIDER-North

Province: Quang Nam, Thau Thien, Quang Tri

Unit: C/1/3

Object: Convoy security to Dong Ha and return(CD Rom).

03Sep66: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL GRINNELL, T. D. III Co: "H&S"

13Sep66: BLUE SPRINGS

Province: Quang Nam

Unit: D/1/3

Object: Security for drone recovery, no enemy contact(CD Rom).

13Sep66: 1/3 unk Company- Two Night squad patrols had an accidental encounter with each other/Friendly fire incident 2-KIA's and 2-WIA's

13Sep66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC ELLIS, C. P. Co: "D"
PFC EVANS, A. Co: "D"

14Sep66: Co. C- Attached platoon of ARVN-RF's/ Accidental Discharge Carbine rifle/
Friendly fire incident 1-KIA

14Sep66: (KIA / Fallen) PFC DINGELDEIN, D. G. Co: "C"

15Sep66: BLUE SPRINGS

Province: Quang Nam

Unit: C/1/3

Object: Provide security for photo drone recovery(CD Rom).

16Sep66: Co. A- Squad patrol/Booby Trap-unknown type/Detonated 1-WIA

17Sep66: Co. D- Early morning squad patrol/Booby Trap unknown type/Detonated 3-WIA's

18Sep66: BLUE SPRINGS

Province: Quang Nam

Unit: C/1/3

Object: Patrol from Company C provided security for drone recovery operation(CD Rom).

18Sep66: Co. D-Night squad patrol was attacked by a herd of Wild Pigs injuring 3-
Marines/Evacuated 3-Injuries/possible WIA's

21Sep66: Co. A- Squad in night defensive position near KIM LIEN/Attacked by 10-20 VC/Reinforced by squad from NAM-O Bridge on Amtrac's/1-VC KIA was found inside the squad's perimeter 4-KIA's and 1-WIA

21Sep66: (KIA / Fallen) PVT FREEMAN, J. O. Co: "A"
PFC HOYT, N. L. Co: "A"
PFC JOLLEY, J. W. Jr. Co: "A"
SGT KINDT, T. P. Co: "A"

22Sep66: Co. D- Night patrol/Booby Trap/Detonated 3-WIA's

22Sep66: (KIA /Fallen) PFC LAKEY, L. L. Co: "D"

23Sep66: Co. D- Squad patrol/Booby Trap/Grenade causing Mine detonation 5-WIA's

23Sep66 to 24Sep: BLUE SPRINGS

Province: Quang Nam

Unit: C/1/3(squad)

Object: Squad from Company C provided security for drone recovery, located but not removed, and relieved by Squad from H&S Company. The drone was recovered the next morning.

23Sep66 to 26Sep66: COUNTY FAIR 3-30

Province: Quang Nam

Unit: C/1/3,H&S/1/3

Object: Companies C and H&S with local Forces conducted the operation in the village of KIM LIEN, where Company A had been attacked a few days prior. The operation started the night of the 23rd, with the forces in place on the morning of the 24th. Then concluded two days later. Cost: No friendly casualties, and 10 VCS captured(CD Rom).

Over-view: First Battle of Khe Sanh- Marines who saw western Quang Tri Province for the first time were impressed with its beauty. Deep shades of green blanketed the numerous hills and low mountain peaks that dotted the area. The lush vegetation on the mountains included thick strands of vine-choked trees that stretched more than one hundred feet skyward. The lowlands were covered by fields of six- to eight-foot-high elephant grass and densely tangled bamboo thickets. Sparsely populated by nomadic bands of mountain tribes know as Bru, the jungle also served as home to a wide variety of wildlife, ranging from miniature deer to tigers. For years the North Vietnamese had operated in the region with bold impunity, using the area as one of its major infiltration routes into the south. The tall trees protected the enemy's trails from aerial observation. On the ground the dense grass limited ground visibility to mere meters. Only a handful of isolated U.S. Army Special Forces camps impeded the NVA's efforts. As

concern over the enemy's plans for an invasion of Quang Tri Province mounted in the fall of 1966, MACV pressured III MAF to garrison the small outpost at Khe Sanh. Although General Walt initially resisted these overtures because they were inconsistent with his strategy of controlling the populous coastal regions, he eventually relented. In the fall of 1966, III MAF garrisoned the old Special Forces base with 1/3 (1/3 flown into Khe Sanh by C-130's on 29 September from Da Nang) and a battery from 1/13. The Marines heavily patrolled to the north, where Hill 1015, about fifteen hundred meters away, dominated the area, and to the northwest, where Hills 861, 881N, and 881S, six kilometers from the combat base, overlooked the infiltration route from the northwest. The patrols found little evidence of an enemy presence in the jungle-covered hills. As a result, III MAF reduced operations around Khe Sanh to a reconnaissance effort. In early February 1967, a single company, Company "B", 1/9, supported by Battery "I", 12th Marines, defended the base. (per Semper Fi Vietnam, pages 135 and 136). (1/3 was transported back to Okinawa to Regroup and Retrain for SLF/BLT, per DJB).

30Sep66: 1/3 (Command Group Alpha and three Companies A, B, and D) were deployed from Da Nang TAOR to reinforce the US Army Special Forces Camp at KHE SANH per reactivated Task Force Delta. Company C was attached to Bravo Command Group temporarily. Units from 2/3 and H/2/26 relieved our old TAOR.

30Sep66: For the month of September 1/3 reported 9 WIA's and 9 KIA's. 1/3 also captured 22 VCS, with 1 VCS-KIA, and 2 VCS-WIA's probable. Per daily log entries 1/3 had 23 WIA's and 3 KIA's reported(CD Rom).

18Oct66: Co.C- Squad patrol/Booby Trap/Detonated 1-WIA

23Oct66: Co. A- Squad patrol/Sniper fire/unk VC 2-WIA's

24Oct66: Co. C- Listening Post/Attacked/Small-arms automatic fire 10 rounds 1-WIA

31Oct66: 1/3's mission for the month of October was to occupy and defend the area surrounding the Khe Sanh Special Forces Camp, and the Airfield Complex against mortar and ground attack; to coordinate all operations with ARVN and U.S. Forces in the area; to conduct operations to detect any enemy activity in the assigned sector; and to conduct a Civic Action Program within its capabilities. 1/3 sustained 4 WIA's and NO KIA's, while capturing 3 VCS and 2 VCS-WIA's probable for the month.

10Nov66: Co. H&S- Marine while checking suspicious person in front of perimeter shot by Sniper 1-WIA

30Nov66: 1/3 continued to occupy and defend Khe Sanh Special Forces Base and Airfield during the month of November. 1/3 also participated through out the month with Operation "Prairie". For the month 1/3 sustained 4 WIA's and NO KIA's with No VCS or kills,

03Dec66: Co. B- Night patrol/Noises heard/Fire-fight 1-WIA

09Dec66: Co. A- Patrol leader fell into Punji Trap 1-WIA

19Dec66: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL HERRINGTON, R. N. Co: "D"

31Dec66: 1/3 still at Khe Sanh occupying and defending, and still participating in Operation "Prairie" as needed. A Truce over Christmas and New Years continued light enemy contact. 1/3 sustained 3 WIA's and No KIA's with 2 VCS-KIA's probable and 1 VCS-WIA probable for the month of December.

1967

13Jan67: Co. A- Squad patrol/Enemy contact/6-VC/incoming Small-arms 2-WIA's

26Jan67: Co. A- Sparrow Hawk platoon inserted to rescue a Force Recon unit under Enemy fire with casualties, CH-46 Helicopter Down unknown why, during insertion of Company A. Air-strikes and Flare Ship on station through-out the night/Enemy contact light. Extraction successful the next morning !-KIA and 9-WIA's (Including 2-wounded Recon Marines)

27Jan67: (KIA / Fallen) PFC SRSEN, S. A. Co: "A" (NAVY CROSS Posthumousl)

(Citation) For extraordinary heroism as a Rifleman while serving with Company "A", First Battalion, Third Marines in the republic of Vietnam on 27 January 1967. Private First Class Srsen was with the First platoon, Company "A", when it was engaged in action as a reaction force assigned to link up with a reconnaissance patrol. Early the next morning following the linkup, Private First Class Srsen's squad came under heavy small-arms fire and grenade attack. When an enemy grenade landed in his squad's position, Private First Class Srsen warned three other members of the squad, allowing them to take cover and escape injury. Wounded in his right side and leg from the grenade, Private First Class Srsen, after being treated by a corpsman requested permission to return to his position in the perimeter. Approximately thirty minutes later another enemy grenade landed close to another Marine and Private First Class Srsen gallantly pushed him to the ground, thereby saving his life. Mortally wounded by the exploding grenade, Private First Class Srsen, by his dauntless courage and grave concern for another had risked his life to save that fellow Marine, thereby upholding the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country. (The NAVY CROSS Vietnam, page 309)

31Jan67: 1/3 continued to develop, maintain, and man perimeter defensive positions around Khe Sanh Airstrip and Facilities for the month. Twice during the month a thirty-man SPARROW HAWK was inserted to assist Force Reconnaissance Elements needing help. The end of the month was preparing for rotation to BLT and Deployment from Khe Sanh, to Da Nang, and out of RVN to OKINAWA. 1/3 sustained 17 WIA's and 1 KIA while the enemy count was 15 VCS-KIA's and 15 VCS-KIA's probable for the month of January.

31Jan67: The Battalion processed monthly Activity Reports from Dec 1965 (When the Battalion returned to Vietnam) till the end of Jan 1967. These reports show how busy the Battalion was for this 14 month period, and the following:

PATROLS(including Ambushes)

Squad size- 6314

Platoon size- 453

Company size- 12

Search and Destroy OPERATIONS

Platoon size- 18

Company size- 30

Battalion size- 8

Combined(with other Units)- 8

For the period, from landing in Vietnam(Mar 1965) to the end of Jan 1967, 1/3 had sustained 60-KIA's and 188-WIA's, with 3- who had Died. 1/3 also claimed 149-VC/KIA's(confirmed), 34-VC/KIA's(probable), 59-VC/WIA's(probable), and that 270 VCS had been captured(CD Rom).

Feb 67 to Apr 67: 1st Battalion 3rd Marines to OKINAWA and PHILIPPINES to REGROUP and RETRAIN as BLT-26, for assignment to SPECIAL LANDING FORCE - ALPHA.

The first part of the month of April was spent training for "Spec Ops" on Okinawa. The remainder of the month was devoted to Counter Guerrilla Warfare School, Demo-Land mine Training, and Jungle Lane/Trap line Indoctrination. The BLT then went to NB Subic Bay, Philippines for an additional three days training.

01Feb67: (KIA / Fallen) PFC RUSSELL, G. W. Co: "B"

28Feb67: 1/3(most of 1/3) transferred from Khe Sahn to Da Nang via fixed wing aircraft on the 1st and 2nd of February. Company B remained at Khe Sahn, and was flown to Da Nang on the 6th. 1/3 assisted 3/1 re: security of the Marble Mountain Complex, and on the 7th began loading(embarking) on ships for transfer to Okinawa. With Embarkation completed on the 8th, the ships(USS Carter Hall-LSD-3, USS Henrico-APA-45, and USS Washburn-AKA-108) headed for Okinawa. 1/3 was designated BLT-1/3 during it's transfer to Okinawa. Arriving and disembarking between the 13th and 16th of February at Okinawa, and was re-designated from BLT-1/3 back to 1/3. 1/3 was transported via trucks to Camp Schwab to Re-group and Re-train. 1/3 received many replacements; and was trained at the Counter Guerrilla Warfare School, the Demolition-Land mine Warfare School, and the Jungle Lane/Trap Lane Indoctrination School at NTA (Northern Training Area) till the end of February.

31Mar67: For the month of March 1/3 continued Training and receiving more replacements. Training was conducted at Squad, Platoon, Company, and Battalion levels; with emphasis placed on unit Tactics and Field Work. Continued training at the NTA

Schools, and 1/3 members were issued the M-16 Rifles on the 20th (supposedly the first Marines to be issued M-16's for Combat in Vietnam). 1/3 was also trained and indoctrinated in Helicopters (CH-34's), Tank Infantry Training, Wet NET, and LVT training through the end of March. 1/3 was re-designated BLT-1/3 OPCON 9th MAB. Command RLT-26 later to Special Landing Force-ALPHA. Capt. RECZEK was transferred from Battalion S-4 to Company Commander of CHARLIE Company. The Battalion was at almost full strength with 68-Officers(both USMC and USN) and 1750-Enlisted(both USMC and USN-Corpsmen).

MEDAL: REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM MERITORIOUS UNIT CITATION, (Gallantry Cross Medal Color With Palm), issued to First Battalion, Third Marines for period of 04Apr67 to 20Sep69.

06Apr67: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL GUTIERREZ, E. L. Co: "A"

07Apr67: (KIA / Fallen) SGT DUFF, J. C. Jr. Co: "H&S"

MEDAL: PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION, issued Fifth Marine Regiment (Reinforced), First Marine Division (Reinforced), for period of 25Apr67 to 05Jun67, First Battalion Third Marine Regiment, (SLF-A) from 25Apr67 to 17May67 (Operation Beaver Cage/UNION).

27Apr67: 1/3 continued training and started to embark on the ships of the SLF on the 3rd of April. Training continued on board the ships, with Special Operations Training for future RVN activity. A large Battalion Size- Learning Exercise(LEX) was conducted in the area of Kin Village(Camp Hansen), on the 6th and 7th, then BLT-1/3 back loaded on board the ships of TG 76.4.(USS Okinawa-LPH-3 with Squadron of Helicopters from HMM-263, USS Bayfield- APA-33, USS Point Defiance-LSD-31, and USS Seminole-AKA-104). BLT-1/3 continued to sail towards NB Subic Bay, Philippines for additional Spec. Ops. Training. The BLT was ordered to proceed to land further WEST of the Philippines, and entered the Combat Waters of RVN on then Two days later(the 19th), the BLT was headed back to NB Subic Bay, for additional training. From the 20th to the 23rd the BLT was at the SLF Camp, Subic Bay training. BLT 1/3 was back in the Territorial waters of the Republic of Vietnam on the 25th of April awaiting further orders, with Operation "BEAVER CAGE" to start on the 28th of April. Our prior two days in the Waters of Vietnam, could have been for the Battle of HILL 881 by Khe Sahn, which was being reported Heavily in the newspapers and TV at home in the States at that time. BLT-1/3 was at full strength with 68-officers and 1750- enlisted including Navy Doctors and Corpsmen.

Over-view: Operation UNION- As envisioned by the operations staff of the 1st Marines, Operation Union would begin as soon as Company F(2/1) made a significant contact with the enemy. Then, elements of the regiment's 3rd Battalion would be lifted in to reinforce the company(F/2/1). If a major battle broke out, other rifle companies from the 1st Battalion(1/1), as well as the opconned 3/5, could be flown in.Early on the hot, humid morning of 21 April,

Company F(2/1), commanded by Capt. Gene A. Deegan, left the Nui Loc Son outpost. As the Marines headed east across the wide valley floor, they occasionally fired on several small bands of NVA. Around 0700 the company's scouts spotted a large enemy force entering Binh Son (1), a hamlet four kilometers to their northwest. Deegan took his company after the NVA but was stopped by a vicious blast of enemy fire. The riflemen inched their way back to the safety of a tree line. At 0930 Deegan called for artillery and air strikes. Ninety minutes later Company F(2/1) again headed for Binh Son (1). The two lead platoons had barely crept past the hamlet's first few thatched huts when heavy enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire stopped them in their tracks. Artillery and air strikes again hit the enemy, but Deegan's platoons remained pinned down. By this time, Companies I and M, 3/1, as planned, had landed at a LZ fifteen hundred meters north of Binh Son (1). Unfortunately, the LZ was hotly contested. The fresh companies battled their way to Deegan, who by this time had been seriously wounded. Late in the afternoon the lead elements of 3/5 landed east of the fight, then headed west to link up with the embattled forces. After dark, 1/1 arrived at Nui Loc Son. Despite the darkness they immediately moved to the battle. The fighting raged on into the next day. The Marines finally cleared Binh Son (1), then chased the fleeing NVA to the north. While in retreat the enemy was repeatedly pounded by accurate artillery fire and air strikes. The chase continued for several more days, but the enemy got away. On 25 April, the 5th Marines took over the operation, permitting the 1st Marines to return to the Da Nang TOAR; Company F, 2/1, however, stayed at Nui Loc Son. The 5th Marines' units continued patrolling the area but found no major enemy formations. Despite this, Marine intelligence sources continued to report large numbers of the enemy in the area. To force the enemy's hand, Col. Kenneth J. Houghton, commander of the 5th Marines, decided to send Lt. Col. Peter L. Hilgartner's 1/5 into the mountains north of Hiep Duc. For the first few days after the 1 May landing, enemy contact was light. Then, the battalion continued west along the ridgeline, the contacts became more numerous and more intense. In the meantime, while 1/5 struggled through the mountainous terrain, SLF Alpha, BLT 1/3, under Lt. Col. Peter A. Wickwire, entered the Que Son Valley and began a sweep northwest of Que Son village. They, too, found the enemy resistance increasing as they neared the mountains. On 10 May, Hilgartner's Company C(1/5) came under heavy fire from a well-entrenched enemy force as it moved up the southwestern slope of Hill 110, four kilometers north of Que Son. Though they took the hill, Company C(1/5) then found itself pinned down by heavy machine-gun and rifle fire from the higher hill mass to the southeast. The company commander called for help. Companies B and C, 1/3, were the closest available reinforcements. They immediately moved toward the fighting, but they hadn't proceeded very far through the thick vegetation before determined enemy fire stopped them. Artillery fire and air support couldn't help them, because the foes were too close. These two companies now called for help, but only a single platoon of Company A made it into a nearby LZ before heavy fire drove off the succeeding helicopters. Then a UH-34 went down, closing the LZ. Lieutenant Colonel Hilgartner now ordered his Company A, operating about two kilometers to the east, to help the two 1/3 companies. As A, 1/5, neared the fight, it, too, came under heavy enemy fire. As the company commander was aggressively urging his men forward, four Marine F-4's dropped out of the sky. Mistaking Company A for NVA, the jets fired. Eight rockets burst on the hillside, filling the air with jagged chunks of red-hot metal. Five Marines died and twenty-four were wounded. Company A(1/5) wasn't going anywhere for the rest of the day. As the only remaining unengaged unit, Hilgartner's command group and his Company D(1/5) fought their way to a nearby hill overlooking the battlesite from the southeast.

The battalion mortar men immediately went to work dropping rounds onto the enemy's positions below them. At 1530, Company M, 3/5, landed at Hilgartner's position. Company D(1/5) then pushed forward and finally linked up with Company C(1/5). Together, they drove the enemy to the northwest. The two companies from the BLT 1/3 also pursued the NVA into the rugged hills but soon lost them. After the fight 116 enemy dead were found; 33 Marines were killed and another 135 were wounded. Though BLT 1/3 returned to SLF control on 12 May, the other three battalions-1/1, 1/5, and 3/5- remained in the AO. For the next five days the Marines stayed in nearly constant contact with the enemy. The generous use of artillery and air support killed dozens of enemy soldiers. The last significant contact occurred on 15 May when members of 1/5 stumbled on a sizable enemy bunker complex. After a heavy preparatory barrage of artillery fire, the marines attacked. Resistance was light- most of the NVA had already fled. On 16 May, 1/1 left the Que Son Valley to return to Da Nang. The next day Colonel Houghton officially closed down Operation UNION. In all, the twenty-seven day campaign had cost the Marines 110 dead and 473 wounded. A body count revealed 865 enemy dead.(per Semper Fi Vietnam, pgs 103-105).

27Apr67: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL BENTON, J. A. Co: "D"
SGT CASTRO, R. A. Co: "D"
LCPL DYER, B. C. Co: "D"
PFC OSBORNE, S. W. Jr. Co: "D"
LCPL PENNINGTON, R. K. Co: "D"

(Above Marines lost in Helicopter Accident while transferring Marines between Ships, the day before the start of Operation Beaver Cage, per CD Rom).

28Apr67 to 12May67: BEAVER CAGE (UNION)

Provinces: Quang Nam, Quang Tin and Tam Ky- Que Son Valley, 25 miles south of Da Nang, north of Chu Lia.(Also in Quan Que Son and Quan Thang Bin Provinces too).

Units: 1st Mar Div(HQ), 1/1, 2/1, 1/5, 3/5, and 1st ARVN Ranger Group. SLF-A 1/3(BLT-1/3)portion of operation Union called Beaver Cage.

Object: Three Marine and Three ARVN Battalions conduct SWEEPS 30 miles south of Da Nang- operation Union had started 20Apr67. SLF-ALPHA landing in Que Son Valley. BLT 1/3 and HMM 263 sweep area through 12 May. SLF Alpha's landing in April on operation BEAVER CAGE, signaled a drastic increase in the operational tempo. The combat days went from 12 per month, to 16.5 in April and to 22 in May. The remainder of the year reflected a much heavier reliance on the SLFs. Not only did the number of combat days increase, but the number of operations more than doubled. Que Son Valley. "C" company secured LZ Oriole at 0711 on the 28th. At 1435 3,000 pounds of rice were discovered and destroyed. At 1600 two VC were captured and an additional two at 1715. On the 30th at 1155 10 VC were spotted in a rice paddy and artillery was called in, 5 possible VC KIA. On the 30th C co Marines were airlifted to LZ Buzzard at 2200. The first two days heat caused more casualties than the enemy. On May 2nd C co Marines received sniper fire, fired on and killed a VC woman running from the advance party and an enemy force of at least a platoon attacked company "C" as it dug in for the night. The company came under 82mm Mortar, 57 recoilless rifle, and

automatic weapons and small arms fire. "Puff the Dragon" USAF AC-47 gunships and "Spooky" flare planes along with Marine Artillery, 105 and 107 mm, and the BLT's own supporting arms pounded the suspected communist positions, the enemy fled. The enemy fought back, and on the 5th hit BLT headquarters and support elements with mortar and small arms fire as they evacuated a landing zone. On the 5th, a huge tunnel complex was discovered by C company, lights and demo requested. On the 6th, two WIA from sniper fire, returned fire with 60mm mortars. On the 7th all personnel turned in flak jackets to decrease load. In-coming mortar fire was also received. On the 8th, 5 VC were detained by C company, and additional mortar fire was received. On the 9th, 1/5 and BLT joined in a sweep to the east. On the 10th companies "B" and "C" engaged the enemy in a day-long action, including the insertion of a 40 man "Sparrow Hawk" unit to attack a sizeable VC force. Additional units from 1/5 were moved in to help cut-off the enemies movement into or out of the battle area. Four air strikes by fixed wing and five by Klondike Gunships assisted the company. On the 10th, C company was pinned down by fire from a village., moved into trench line and are receiving heavy fire, pinned down again . Heavy contact continues. On May 12th, the LZ was secured by elements of 3/5 and C co Marines were extracted from LZ Magpie and Quail **

Cost: SLF-USMC- 55 KIA and 151 WIA. Enemy 181 communist KIA and 66 POW's.** (For operation Union total was USMC- 110 KIA and 473 WIA. Enemy total was 865 KIA with 173 Captured). Per 3rdmarines-operations 1st Mar Div operation with 965 Enemy KIA and U.S. 53 KIA. BLT-1/3 for the total Operation sustained 55-KIA's and 201-WIA's, with 5 additional Deaths due to loss of helicopter in transferring personnel between ships. Also 1/3 reported 181-VC/NVA KIA's (confirmed), 136-VC/NVA KIA's(probable), and captured and detained 66-VCS. Charlie Co. sustained 13-KIA's and 57-WIA's during this operation.

28Apr67: BLT-1/3 commenced Operation "Beaver Cage" on the 28th of April. The first four days were in support of Operation "Union". D Company with tanks made an Amphibious Landing on the beach area referred as Red Beach, and Companies A, B, and C with the BLT command element operated inland, approximately 27 miles SSE of Da Nang AB. During this time only light enemy contact was made, however the BLT suffered Heat Casualties and more than 100 personnel were medivaced during this period. The temperature during this operation was hot and humid with temperatures well over a 100 degrees during the day and approximately 75 degrees at night with only one day of rain. After four days the BLT shifted 5 miles north and set up Headquarters in vicinity of LZ Cardinal Que Son district. The Companies were assigned individual TAOR's and enemy contact began to increase in size and frequency.

30Apr67: Co. B- Receiving SAF during lift out from LZ in helicopters 1-WIA

02May67: Co. C- Attacked by estimated reinforced platoon of VC with 82mm mortars, 57mm Recoilless Rifle fire, Automatic and small arms fire while digging in for the night. Artillery, Air strikes, Huey Gunships, Flare ship, and PUFF assisted throughout the night. Med-Evac and Re-supply commenced at daybreak 0630 hrs on the 3rd) 4-KIA's and 20-WIA's

02May67: (KIA / Fallen) 2LT MALLON, T. W. Co: "C"

PFC MUNDAY, P. D. Co: "C"

PFC SIMMONS, C. J. Co: "C"

LCPL VAUGHN, G. Co: "H&S" (Possibly attached to C/1/3)

(As the company was digging in for the night on a hill top, dusk was upon us, and a group of guys were returning from a water-run WE were AMBUSHED by the NVA.57 recoilless rounds and small arms and machine gun fire, major confusion. After night long struggle, with assistance from PUFF and much ARTY support, the night ended. 2LT MALLON was discovered in front of the lines)

03May67: Co. A- Early evening WATER-RUN patrol contacted 2-VC then Attacked by unknown number of VC. Four squads committed to assist the water patrol ran into heavy automatic and small arms fire (ambushed), Artillery and Huey Gunships called in, with support immediately available and used it throughout the area. The men (patrols)outside the perimeter, returned with the WIA's, but 14 men were still cut off from the rest. The cut off squad returned with their WIA's. Artillery missions continued through the night. At first light, the squads returned to the battle area, observed 60-70 VC, and called in more Artillery. After everything secure, and the bodies recovered(morning of the 4th) 14KIA's and 9-WIA's

03May67: (KIA / Fallen) HN BALCH, J. I. Co: "A"

PFC BORAWSKI, J. D. Co: "A" (D-Btry, 2/11, 1st Mar Div att)

PFC BUTTON, M. D. Co: "A"

LCPL CARNLINE, T. M. Co: "A"

PFC DICKERSON, T. E. Co: "A"

PFC FALWELL, D. W. Co: "A"

PFC GILBERTSON, R. M. Co: "A"

PFC LA ROSE, J. R. Co: "A"

LCPL MURRY, E. Co: "A"

CPL PLESAKOV, L. P. Co: "A"

PFC ROSE, R. J. Co: "A"

LCPL SPICER, E. D. Co: "A"

PFC SWEESY, J. E. Co: "A"

CPL URICK, J. W. Co: "A"

PFC VERBILLA, D. Co: "A"

04May67: Co. D- 20 VC in village/firefight 1-WIA

04May67: Co. D- Receiving mortars and small arms fire 2-WIA's

04May67: Co. C- Sniper fire 1-WIA

04May67: Co. D- While crossing a valley east of Hill 65, encountered intensive enemy resistance and had elements pinned down by 50 VC in fortified positions. Air and Artillery called in and supported by Co. C which had moved to Hill 65. Heavy fighting ensued, fighting continued throughout the night. Company D elements in

contact with the enemy withdrew to Hill 65 under cover of darkness with all KIA's extracted from the Battle Zone at 2325 hrs. One M-60 MG with firing mechanism removed, one .45 Cal pistol, and one M-16 rifle lost in action. 11 KIA's and 26 WIA's all evacuated on morning of the 5th.

04May67: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL GOMEZ, J. M. Co: "D"
PFC HICKMAN, D. A. Co: "D"
PFC HOLLINGSWORTH, D. R. Co: "D"
CPL Mc MAHON, F. A. Co: "D"
CPL MINTON, D. W. Co: "D"
HM3 SOVEY, E. C. Jr. Co: "D"
LCPL ALLEN, M. L. Co: "D" (SILVER STAR Posthumously)

Citation: The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Silver Star Medal (Posthumously) to Melvin L. Allen (2232029), Lance Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps, for gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving with Battalion Landing Team 1/3 in the Republic of Vietnam on 4 May 1967. As a fire Team Leader with the Third Platoon, Company D, First Battalion, Third Marines, THIRD Marine Division, Lance Corporal Allen was on a search and destroy operation in Tinh Quang Nam Province during Operation BEAVER CAGE. The Third Platoon came upon an open area before reaching An Xuan village. The Third Squad, deployed on the right flank before moving to the village, was caught in the open and pinned down by heavy automatic weapons and accurate sniper fire from a numerically superior Viet Cong force of company size, and sustained several casualties. Lance Corporal Allen, with full knowledge of the hazards involved and with complete disregard for his own safety, repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire in an attempt to aid the wounded Marines. He was mortally wounded on his fourth attempt. Lance Corporal Allen's daring actions and loyal devotion to duty in the face of the enemy reflected great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps, and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

05May67: (KIA / Fallen) CPL CAVAZOS, M. Co: "D"
PFC HISSONG, H. L. Co: "D"
PFC MANNION, D. J. Co: "D"

05May67: Co. B- Booby Trap 1-WIA

06May67: Co. C- Sniper fire 2-WIA's

06May67: Co. B- Sniper fire/Small arms fire 2-WIA's

07May67: Co. D- Mortar attack 1-KIA and 6-WIA's

07May67: (KIA / Fallen) SGT HALL, M. L. Co: "D"

08May67: Co. D- Mortar attack 3-WIA's

08May67: Co. C- Mortar attack 3-KIA's and 10-WIA's

08May67: **(KIA / Fallen)** CPL LAKEY, J. E. Co: "H&S" (possibly attached to C/1/3)
PFC ROWELL, D. L. Co: "C"
CPL SHAW, W. M. Jr. Co: "C"

09May67: Co. C- Mortar attack 1-WIA

10May67: Co's. B, C, and D- Co's B and C sweeping east, with Co. D in trace moving down the center of the valley. Co. B received SAF and automatic weapons fire from Hill 110. Co. C mortars firing on Hill 110, Co. B reports 1-WIA and VC moving towards them, and requests Co C to check out and assist. Co. D reports C/1/5 is 300 meters west of Hill 110 moving east. Co. B reports taking Heavy Sniper fire and that 20 VC moving East. Co C moving 3rd Platoon to left flank of Co B. Co's B and C receiving mortar fire, Co. B pinned down by Heavy fire suffering unknown number KIA and WIA. Requesting Close Air Support, and Co C attempting to envelope with one platoon to stop enemy fire from the village. The enveloping platoon of Co C reports receiving mortars, and Co B requests Co's C and D to link up on left and right flanks respect fully. Co B reports one company of VC wearing green uniforms and helmets, well camouflaged and entrenched on Hill 110. C/1/5 to sweep area to east after Air strikes on Hill 110. Co C has one platoon Pinned Down by heavy fire from village and Air Strikes called in. Co C needs help on left flank, withdrawing platoon from right flank to assist pinned down platoon on left. Co C has VC in trench line directly in front of position delivering heavy fire, and units are still pinned down. Heavy contact continues, more air strikes called in. Co B reports approximately 6-KIA's and 23-WIA's, all friendly, in Co C's Zone. A SPARROW HAWK 40-man unit arrived in Zone at 1300 hrs, and almost immediately suffered 5-WIA's and were pinned down in the LZ area. Heavy contact with enemy continues, more air strikes, and contact finally started to lessen with enemy fleeing to east. Co's B, C, and D under command/control 1/5 established a perimeter for the night.

Causalities reported for the Day Long Battle of May 10th were 22-KIA's and 88-WIA's (Co C's included), and 86 VC/NVA KIA's confirmed. The Operation ended two days later, with no more enemy contact, and 1/3 being helicoptered back aboard the ships of BLT.

10May67: **(KIA / Fallen)** CPL TOLBERT, D. D. Co: "A"
PFC BERWEGER, A. F. Co: "B"
PFC FOY, T. L. Co: "B"
PFC GRUEBER, R. R. Co: "B"
PFC HEWITT, B. C. Co: "B"
SGT JACOBS, D. D. Co: "B"
PFC MC GEE, K. W. Co: "B"
PFC MILLER, R. P. Co: "B"
PFC PITTENGER, D. J. Co: "B"
PFC RILEY, J. C. Co: "B"

CPL WOODS, S. S. Co: "B"
LCPL BISHOP, J. M. Co: "C"
PVT BROWN, A. L. Co: "C"
PFC COOPER, J. R. Co: "C"
PFC DARLING, A. J. III Co: "C"
LCPL HART, D. M. Co: "C"
PFC CUOZZO, F. X. Co: "D"
HN CHAMBERS, S. D. Co: "H&S"
SSGT ARQUERO, E. A. Co: "B" (NAVY CROSS Posthumously)

(Citation) For extraordinary heroism as Platoon Sergeant, First Platoon, Company "B", Battalion Landing Team 1/3, in the Republic of Vietnam on 10 May 1967. While participating in Operation BEAVER CAGE in the Tinh Quang Nam Province, Staff Sergeant Arquero's platoon was lead unit, in a company search and destroy operation, when heavy contact was made with two companies of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese regular forces. His flank security began receiving heavy automatic weapons fire and sustained several casualties. He immediately made his way to its position through the hail of enemy fire and courageously directed effective return fire. In order to provide much needed time for his platoon to deploy, he organized an assault element from the remaining members of his flank security. By this time the enemy fire power had increased in severity and effectiveness, yet he daringly continued to expose himself. Without concern for his own safety, he rallied his brave assault force and charged directly into the entrenched enemy positions. This action, which cost him his life, halted the advance of the enemy long enough to allow his platoon time to extract its wounded and withdraw to a defensive position. As a result of his heroic conduct and fearless devotion to duty, Staff Sergeant Arquero undoubtedly saved the lives of many comrades, upholding the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country. (The NAVY CROSS Vietnam, page 16)

CPL REID, J. M. Co: "C" (NAVY CROSS Posthumously)

(Citation) For extraordinary heroism as a Rifle Squad Leader while serving with Company "C", Battalion Landing Team 1/3 in the Republic of Vietnam on 10 May 1967. While participating in Operation BEAVER CAGE, Corporal Reid's platoon became heavily engaged in combat with a Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troop unit and was receiving casualties from enemy automatic weapons, small arms and mortar fire. One machine gun team was placed completely out of action by enemy mortars. Seeing that enemy fire had his platoon pinned down in exposed positions, he unhesitatingly moved across open ground to the machine gun, seized it and advanced another 20 to 30 meters. Being forced down several times during this maneuver, he reached his new position and delivered a heavy volume of accurate fire on the enemy positions, temporarily halting their fire, which allowed six other members of his squad to gain a covered position. Corporal Reid continued firing the machine gun from the exposed position in the rice paddy to thwart the advance of enemy troops attempting to overrun his platoon and endanger the Company's flank. While in his exposed position, Corporal Reid was wounded in the leg by rifle fire and as he moved forward to gain cover, he was hit again and mortally wounded. By his daring action and devotion to duty, Corporal Reid gave his life to save those

of his fellow Marines, thereby upholding the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

CPL SANDERS, T. Co: "C" (NAVY CROSS Phosthumously)

(Citation) For extraordinary heroism as a Machine Gun Squad Leader with Company "C", Battalion Landing Team ONE THREE, in the Republic of Vietnam on 10 May 1967. While participating in Operation BEAVER CAGE, in Tinh Quang Nam Province, Corporal Sanders enabled his platoon to move from positions exposed to heavy automatic and small arms fire, to a protected trench line, by advancing himself to an exposed position with his squad's machine gun when all other members of the squad became casualties. He then placed a heavy volume of accurate fire on the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army troops causing them to cease fire. When the enemy troops advanced to the cover of the trench line, in which other members of his platoon were located, he placed himself between the enemy and friendly troops. As the enemy approached to within six meters in front of him, Corporal Sanders delivered machine gun fire down the long axis of the trench line killing approximately two of them and wounding three others before he was killed by enemy fire. As a result of his heroic conduct and fearless devotion to duty, his actions enabled nine Marines, some of whom were wounded, to gain cover in the trench line and to gain positions where grenades and M-79 fire could be delivered on the enemy. By his outstanding courage, exceptional fortitude and valiant fighting spirit, Corporal Sanders served to inspire all who observed him and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

Over-view: Operation HICKORY/BEAU CHARGER- The Beau Charger portion of the combined operation began early on 18 May. Fifteen UH-34's loaded with men from Company "A", 1/3, lifted off the deck of the USS Okinawa and headed inland. At 0800 they arrived at LZ Goose, which sat within small arms range of the north bank of the Ben Hai. As the first helicopter touched down, enemy machine-gun fire raked its entire length, killing one infantryman, wounding three crew members and three infantrymen, and destroying the craft's radio. Four other troop-carrying aircraft and two UH-1 gun-ships were also hit, but the entire wave got into the LZ. Within minutes the 2nd Platoon was spread out around LZ Goose. Based on the pilot's report, subsequent landings were diverted to LZ Owl, about eight hundred meters to the south. About this time, Company "D" successfully completed their amphibious landing. Ninety minutes later Company "B" came ashore. Both of these companies, plus the rest of Company "A", then double-timed toward LZ Goose, where the fighting still raged. Even after the forces linked up, the enemy wouldn't quit. Company "A" sent one of its platoons on a wide flanking maneuver around a tree line in an attempt to break the enemy's defenses. They were surprised by an NVA ambush. Only after a furious hand-to-hand fight were the grunts able to pull back to their perimeter. The skillful employment of gun-ships and air strikes eventually force the NVA to retreat, leaving sixty-seven of their comrades dead on the battlefield. Operation Hickory also began at 0800 on 18 May as Marines from 2/26 and 2/9, supported by tanks and ONTOs (tracked vehicles each mounting six 106mm recoilless rifles), headed north from Con Thien. At the same time, CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters carried 3/ 4 northwest of Con

Thien into an LZ actually within the DMZ. These Marines would act not only as a blocking force to prevent any NVA from escaping to the north, but also to prevent any reinforcements from heading south. Within three hours of jumping off, the lead elements of 2/26 made contact with what ultimately turned out to be two battalions of well-dug-in NVA. The fight developed quickly as more Marines pressed forward. Within minutes the air was filled with the pop-pop of rifles, the staccato report of machine guns, the heavy booms of the tank cannons and recoilless rifles, and the sharp explosions of mortar rounds. From their deep, well-prepared bunkers, the NVA poured a veritable hail of lead on the Marines. The battalion commander and his operations officer were wounded and evacuated. Soon, the attack ground to a halt as the riflemen sought cover. Late that afternoon, 2/9 maneuvered forward on 2/26's right flank, hoping to overrun the enemy. It didn't work. Heavy enemy fire forced them to halt, too. With no hope of breaking the enemy's resistance, the Marines pulled back, bringing 5 dead and 142 wounded with them. Throughout the night 75 radar-controlled air strikes blasted the NVA's positions. Starting at 0500 the next day, an intense artillery barrage pounded the enemy defenses. At 0700 the infantry started forward in the attack. Once again the supporting arms had done a masterful job; 2/26 had overran the enemy line by 1030. Only 34 enemy dead and 9 wounded were found. After policing the battlefield, the two battalions continued north against sporadic resistance. In the meantime, 3/4 headed southeast from its LZ, hoping to trap any NVA fleeing from its sister battalions. Though they experienced only light contact, they did find several enemy supply caches filled with vast quantities of rice and ammo, all of which was destroyed in place. The next two days of Operation Hickory passed quietly. Then on 20 May, Company "K", 3/9, working as a screening force to the southwest of the main forces, found the enemy emplaced in mutually supporting bunkers in a jungle-covered draw. The NVA fired first, pouring a steady stream of automatic weapons fire into the advancing troops. Because of the terrain Company "K" could not maneuver to get an advantage over the foe. Company "L" pushed forward to help them, but they, too, found they couldn't advance under the blistering NVA fire. Both companies dug in for the night, one on each side of the draw. Friendly artillery pounded the enemy throughout the night. The next morning Company "M" linked up with its two sister companies and took the lead in the renewed attack. Together, the three rifle companies finally cleared the area. Only thirty-one dead NVA were found. The Marines lost twenty-six killed and fifty-nine wounded in the action. That same day, SLF Bravo, BLT 2/3, joined the Hickory forces, landing by helicopter northwest of Gio Linh. They swept north, reaching the south bank of the Ben Hai River by midday on 22 May. Two days later the battalion turned south. It met no resistance during its movement but did uncover two extensive bunker complexes, including one made with steel-reinforced walls. The bunkers were filled with supplies; one contained more than one thousand 60mm mortar rounds. Two other battalions, 3/4 and 2/26, swept the DMZ to the southwest, toward the mountains west of Con Thien. At the same time the 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines moved northwest, sweeping through the DMZ. To the east the other Operation Hickory battalions resumed search and destroy operations south of the DMZ in Leatherneck Square. The last major contact in Operation Hickory came on 25 May at Hill 117, about five kilometers west of Con Thien. Early that morning, Company "H", 2/26, was hit by a blistering barrage of small arms fire from two enemy companies occupying mutually supporting bunkers. The fighting ragged at close quarters for more than an hour before the company pulled back, evacuate casualties, and call in supporting fire. While the jets and artillery bombarded the hill, Company "H" maneuvered to the north. There it linked up with Company "K", 3/4 (opconned to 2/26). Both companies then

attacked the hill but were soon pinned down by a vicious hail of fire. Unable to maneuver, the two battered companies set in for the night, protected by a constant barrage of artillery shells ringing them and pounding the NVA positions. The day's losses were fourteen Marines killed and ninety-two wounded. Early the next morning while re-conning the area, the UH-1E helicopter containing the battalion commander, his executive officer, and two company commanders was shot down. All four were wounded, but only the battalion commander and the commander of Company "K" had to be evacuated. The pending attack was delayed while the attack units were readjusted. On 27 May, Companies "E" and "F", 2/26, now opconned to (3/4), moved against Hill 117 behind a moving wall of artillery fire. They encountered only minimal resistance and secured the hill by 1600. The next day, the 3rd Battalion, 4th marines moved west of Hill 117, sweeping deeper into the mountainous area. They met no further resistance. On 29 May, they turned back toward Con Thien. Operation Hickory was the first large-scale allied foray into the DMZ. This effort changed the rules, signaling the NVA that they no longer had a sanctuary there. At the same time, the TAOR had been cleared of all civilians, giving the Marines complete freedom in the future use of supporting arms. The cost of these gains had been high. The Marines suffered 142 killed and 896 wounded. Enemy casualties were nearly 800 killed and 37 captured. In addition, several large stores of enemy supplies were captured, denying the NVA valuable food, ammunition, and medicine. When Operation Hickory ended on 28 May, all participating units became part of the ongoing Operation Prairie IV. They continued their search and destroy sweeps of Leatherneck square and the terrain southwest of Con Thien. (per Semper Fi Vietnam, pages 130 to 134).

18May67 to 26May67: HICKORY / BEAU CHARGER

Provinces: Tinh Quang and Quang Tri- just below the Ben Hoi river in southern half of DMZ.
Units: Hickory-3rd Mar Div(HQ), 1/9, 2/9, 3/9, 1/4, 3/4, 2/26; SLF-Alpha (BLT 1/3 and HMM-263 on operation Beau Charger); SLF-Bravo (BLT 2/3 and HMM-164 on operation Belt Tight);
and the 5th ARVN Regiment on operation Lam Son 54.

Object: Marine forces launch three simultaneous operations, first SWEEP through southern half of DMZ. SLF-A lands under code name Beau Charger, along the coast. 2/26, 2/9, 3/9, and 3/4 begin sweep around Con Thien under Hickory. Two days later SLF-B lands N/E of Con Thien under code name Belt Tight. The operation ends 26th of May. Hickory started 16May67 and ended 28th. Because of enemy buildup in the DMZ, General Westmoreland authorized the entry of forces into the DMZ just south of the Ben Hoi river. The first of these operations was named HICKORY for the 3rd Marine Division, BEAU CHARGER for SLF-Alpha, BELT TIGHT for SLF-Bravo, and LAM SON 54 for the South Vietnamese forces. The scheme of the operation was to get all units on the Ben Hoi river and sweep south destroying all enemy units and installations in their path. A free fire zone was established and the Vietnamese Police removed 10,000 non-combatants from the area. The first helo of the first wave, Co A, into the operation(Beau Charger) was raked with gunfire, the co-pilot, crew chief, gunner, and three grunts were all wounded. Another grunt fell out of the helo and was killed. Four other UH-34's two UH-1E's also suffered damage in the assault. Fighting was fierce, the Marines engaged the enemy in hand-to-hand fighting and eleven jets came in to provide close air support. On the

18th at 1430 C co landed at LZ Owl. At 1830, 43 non-combatants were removed from the DMZ and one VC was KIA by C co. On the 19th, 20 rounds of 82mm, 68 rounds 60mm, and 40 rounds of 85mm were incoming causing 4 C co WIA.. On the 26th all units were extracted from "White Beach".

Cost: USMC- 142 KIA and 896 WIA with 447 Enemy KIA.(this is for total of all three operations). Per 3rdmarines-operations operation Hickory I had 367 Enemy KIA and unknown U.S. losses.

BLT-1/3 for Operation Beau Charger sustained 23-KIA's and 99-WIA's, while inflicting on the enemy 85-VC/NVA KIA's (confirmed), 84-VC/NVA KIA's(probable), and capturing 6-VCS/POW's (one Died of Wounds). 1/3 also evacuated approximately 536 friendlies out of the DMZ.

18May67: From HAMMOND- Vietnam Conflict Map, states that U. S. Marines and ARVN units FIRST enter the DMZ. BLT 1/3 and the other Marine Battalions along with the ARVN units, participated the First Operations into the Southern half of the DMZ. Up to the Ben Hoi River and possibly across it. This may have been our first time in the DMZ, but WE will be back many more TIMES, in the future months and years.

18May67: Co. A-Assault elements landed at LZ Goose, and immediately came under intense enemy fire, while Co. D was making an amphibious landing with tanks at Green Beach. The second wave of Co. A via helicopters landed at LZ Owl, not under enemy fire. One platoon from Co D and a light section of Tanks, joined Co A at LZ Owl, followed by the rest of Co A and Co B too. Co A and Tanks linked up with elements of Co A at LZ Goose. Co's A and B involved in Heavy fighting with three reinforced enemy rifle companies near LZ Goose during the day. Co C landed at LZ Owl, after a Command Group had already arrived. A total of 43 non-combatants were evacuated from the DMZ this date. 1/3 (mainly Co A and B) sustained 19-KIA's and 43-WIA's from the heavy enemy contact this date.

18May67: **(KIA / Fallen)** PFC ANDERSON, C. L. Co: "B"
LCPL CHEEK, K. N. Co: "A"
PVT CHRISTENSEN, E. J. Co: "A"
PFC DALGLIESH, M. A. Co: "B"
1LT DOBBIN, L. D. II Co: "B"
LCPL DOYON, P. F. Co: "A"
CPL GODWIN, S. M. Co: "B"
LCPL HAZZARD, F. G. Co: "C"
PFC KRAMER, D. D. Co: "B"
CPL LAND, R. L. Co: "B"
CPL MACOMB, O. E. Jr. Co: "B"
ESN McCORMICK, J. W. Jr. Co: "B"
2LT McKEON, J. T. Jr. Co: "B"

CPL MITCHELL, C. U. Co: "B"
LCPL NEMCHIK, J. J. Jr. Co: "A"
HM3 SMITH, M. F. Co: "B"
PFC WILSON, J. T. Co: "A"
CPL KECK, R. F. Co: "A" (NAVY CROSS Posthumously)

(Citation) For extraordinary heroism while serving as a Machine Gun Squad Leader with Company "A", Battalion Landing Team 1/3, Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade, in the Republic of Vietnam on 18 May 1967. During Operation BEAU CHARGER, in Quang Tin Province, Corporal Heck's squad was landed by helicopter into a heavily defended enemy position. Due to the large volume of intense enemy ground fire, the helicopters were forced to disperse over a wide area, causing isolation of many small units. Finding himself, and his gun team separated from the main body of his company, Corporal Keck quickly placed his gun into action. Observing one machine gun within hand grenade range of the teeming enemy trench lines, he rushed to the aid of his men under vicious enemy fire, finding one lone survivor. He quickly evaluated the situation and decided to move the gun to a safer position to keep it in action. While breaking the gun down into two groups, he was wounded by an enemy grenade. Disregarding his painful wounds, he quickly killed the enemy soldier who had thrown the grenade with a accurate burst of machine gun fire. Realizing that only one man could possibly make it back across the deadly fire-swept terrain, Corporal Keck ordered his gunner to return, while he gave covering fire. During this unselfish action, he was mortally wounded. By his courageous actions, bold initiative, intrepid fighting spirit and sincere concern for others, Corporal Keck reflected great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps, and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

19May67: Co. D- With A/1/12 and W/1/12(Artillery Batteries), and BLT 1/3 Command elements at Green Beach received three volleys of 85mm fire(approximately 132 rounds total), which caused 3-KIA's and 8-WIA's.

19May67: (KIA / Fallen) PFC BROWN, W. L. Co: "D"
CPL FERNANDEZ, R. S. Co: "1/3" (C Co, 3rd AMTRAC)

19May67: Co's. B and C- Received approximately 20 rds 82mm mortars, 68 rds 60mm mortars, and 40 rds of 85mm fire, with 4-WIA's

19May67: (KIA / Fallen) CPL SARMENTO, H. M. Co: "B"
CPL STECKER, J. C. Co: "B"
PFC MITCHELL, W. J. Jr. Co: "C"

19May67: BLT-1/3- Evacuated a total of 274 non-combatants from the DMZ this date.

20May67: Co. D- An units at Green Beach received 30 rds of 85mm fire from North Vietnam, sustaining 1-KIA and 2-WIA's

20May67: (KIA / Fallen) PFC FLACK, R. Co: "D" (A Btry, 1/12)

20May67: BLT-1/3- Evacuated another 135 non-combatants from the DMZ this date.

21May67: BLT-1/3- Evacuated 84 non-combatants from DMZ

23May67: BLT-1/3- Units observed a twenty-four hour Truce in honor of Buddha's birthday, with NO incidents reported.

25May67: BLT-1/3- Prepared for Phase III of operation Buea Charger, the Amphibious Withdrawal from the DMZ. At 2000 hrs, the units started their movement to the coast at White Beach, stopping for periods of time, and moving at night. Co D was last to withdraw at 1010 hrs on the 26th, ending the operation.

27May67: Personnel, supplies, and equipment were transferred from the USS Bayfield-APA-33 which was relieved by the USS Duluth-LDP-6.

01Jun67: Vietnam Service MEDAL, Vietnamese Counteroffensive, Phase III, start 01Jun67 to 29Jan68.

02Jun67 to 05Jun67: BEAR BITE

Provinces: Thian Quang Tri & Tinh Thua Thien- 40 clicks south of DMZ, Street Without Joy area.

Unit: BLT-1/3

Object: Starting on the 2nd, BLT 1/3 spent 72 hours probing and destroying unoccupied enemy positions. Snipers and a stuck Marine tank were the only casualties on this operation. C co landed at LZ Starling with no contact. Bunkers and Punji pits were found and destroyed. Small arms fire was received with no casualties. Re-supply Helos received sniper fire, C co sent out patrols to engage. Two fire fights were fought on the 4th, with C co having 1 VC KIA, and one VC WIA. On the 5th the Battalion was airlifted 4th Mar area.

Cost: 2 communist KIA, 9 POW's.

This was an Amphibious and Heliborne assault in southern Quang Tri northern Thua Thien Province. BLT-1/3 sustained NO Casualties, but inflicted 2-KIA(confirmed), 9-KIA(probable), and captured 9-VCS on the enemy.

03Jun67: (KIA / Fallen) PFC TREMAINE, C. L. Co: "B"

07Jun67 to 11Jun67: COLGATE

Provinces: Quang Phu Vang & Thua Thien

Units: 4th Mar(HQ), BLT-1/3, 2/26, 3/26, 3/12-Artillery.

Object: Was to be a blocking force for Co B,D and A. Airlifted into LZ Eagle and Hawk. Two VC were captured hiding in the water, and 4 VC were engaged by C co and UH-1 helos. On the 11th the Battalion was airlifted to Phu Bai, and was trucked to 4th Mar area. Uneventful.. Company C was op-con to 4th Marines during the period 11-20 June on Operation CUMBERLAND. Helilifted into area 7 miles east of Phu Bia. The first day Co's A and B made heavy contact with an intense enemy force. The last four days were light contact. 1/3 sustained 3-KIA's and 29-WIA's, while inflicting 24-VC/KIA(confirmed), 15-VC/KIA's (probable), and capturing 58-VCS. Later a village Chief indicated the Enemy had suffered 125-150 KIA's that first day of the operation. 1/3 had control and command of operation, and were assisted by units H/2/26 and K/3/26.

07Jun67: Co. A- Armed Huey reported two VC in area. One squad sent to location, taken under fire immediately by small arms, and 9-12 rounds of 60mm mortar fire. Requested air, artillery, and 81mm mortar fire, on estimated one company of enemy in area well dug in. 2-KIA's, 12-WIA's and 1-ARVN-WIA

07Jun67: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL HALL, J. W. Co: "A"
LCPL WHIPS, F. D. Co: "A"

07Jun67: Co. B- Moving up in support of A Co., made heavy contact with enemy, received heavy small arms and 82mm mortar fire. 1-KIA and 1-WIA

07Jun67: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL BAIRD, J. R. Co: "B"

07Jun67: Co. B- Element moving to left flank of fortified position detonated a large mine or a 81mm mortar dud. 7-WIA's

08Jun67: Co. B- Night patrol made contact with enemy, fire fight ensued. 1-WIA

15Jun67 to 23Jun67: CHOCTAW

Provinces: Tinh Quang Tri & Tinh Thien

Units: 4th Mar(HQ), BLT-1/3, 1/4, 2/4, 3/12-Artillery.

Object: Search and destroy.Tedious sweeps west of Route 9, along the Thac Mai river. C co was returned to BLT 1/3 from Operation CUMBERLAND on the 20th. The operation was limited to sniper and small arms harassing fire. Co C uncovered 200# rice, ammo cans and ammo, flack jackets, detcord , medical supplies, comm wire, and 2 booby traps. A boat and tunnel were also found. VC were found in the tunnel, 2 VC KIA Punji pits and stakes were uncovered and destroyed. 2 VC and 3 VCs were apprehended.

Cost: USMC- 19 WIA, 9 communist KIA and 15 POW's. Choctaw initially consisted of several smaller unit missions and commitments assigned to the 4th Marines in the Three Rivers

Area, starting on the 13th of June. On the night of the 21st, a Battalion Sweep back in the "Bear Bite" area, characterized by a Night Foot movement to area to start sweep, ending with limited

action and enemy contact. BLT-1/3 sustained No KIA, and 17-WIA's while inflicting 9-VC/KIA's(confirmed), 20-VC/KIA's (probable), and capturing 15-VCS.

13Jun67: Co. A- Discovered 50 punji traps both foot and man size, well camouflaged. Two men fell into man size trap. 1-WIA

13Jun67: Co. A- Booby trap, 1-WIA

15Jun67: Co. A- While searching area one Marine stepped on mine, 2-WIA's

16Jun67: Co. A- Received 5 rounds 60mm mortars into LZ as three Helo's landing. No damage to Helo's, 2-WIA's

17Jun67: Co. A- Booby trap mine, 1-WIA

19Jun67: Co. C- Booby trapped grenade, 3-WIA's

21Jun67: Co. B- Enemy contact, Fire fight received automatic weapons fire, 2-WIA's

21Jun67: Co. C- Foot punji trap stepped into, 1-WIA

21Jun67: Co. B- Night patrol received small arms and grenades(possible M-79 rounds). 1-WIA

25Jun67 to 28Jun67: **MARYLAND**

Province: Thau Thien

Units: 4th Mar(HQ), BLT-1/3.

Object: Search and destroy.** C co found 2 VC in spider holes and were captured. 2 VC and 2 VCs females were also detained. The BLT killed 7 communist, took 35 prisoners, and salvaged almost 9 tons of rice at cost of 3 Marines wounded.

Cost: USMC- 3 WIA, Enemy 9 KIA and 35 POW's. BLT-1/3 back to Phu Bia, in command and control for operation Maryland, assisted by F/2/26.Helolifted back into area of prior "Colgate" operation, back into LZ's Hawk and Eagle. Search and Destroy forcing the VC into ARVN units. Light contact for us, but Heavy contact for ARVN units with enemy losses over 100 VC/KIA (confirmed). BLT-1/3 sustained No KIA and 4-WIA's while inflicting 7-VC/KIA's(confirmed), 5-VC/KIA's(probable), and capturing 35-VCS. After operation to COL CO Island and back aboard the ships of BLT.

26Jun67: Co. D- A 1st platoon night ambush received small arms fire from a hut in their vicinity. 2-WIA's

28Jun67: Co. D- Friendly fire incident, while walking his relief for a radio watch at night. 1-WIA

30Jun67: For the month of June BLT-1/3 had participated in four Operations, mostly operating in the 4th Marines area, and sustaining a total of 6-KIA's and 48-WIA's. During the month 1/3 was credited with 49-VC/KIA's(confirmed), 49-VC/KIA's(probable), and capturing 117-VCS.

(Over-view): **Operation BUFFALO-** On the morning of 2 July, Company "B", 1/9, now rebuilt after its fight near Khe Sanh and commanded by Capt. Sterling K. Coates, was sweeping north of the newly cleared trace about three kilometers northeast of Con Thien in conjunction with Company, "A", 1/9. Because the TAOR assigned to the regiment was so large, the time span between infantry sweeps of a given section sometimes exceeded two weeks. This lag did not go unnoticed by the NVA. The astute enemy began moving back into a given area as soon as the Marine rifle companies moved on. To counter this tactic, Col. George E. Jerue, the 9th Marines commander, ordered Lt. Col. Richard J. Schening to return to the same ground in which his 1st Battalion had operated less than a week earlier. As Company "B" moved north along Highway 561, actually a ten-foot-wide dirt road bordered by three-foot-high hedgerows, it came under sniper fire at about 0900. Capt. Coates maneuvered his command group and the 3rd Platoon out to the left to flank the enemy. Increasingly heavy fire halted that movement. Coates then ordered his 2nd Platoon to move to the right. To Coates's surprise it was driven back with high casualties before it had proceeded very far. As the 2nd Platoon moved back on the road, enemy artillery and mortar fire started falling in the area. Casualties began to build. A short distance to the west, Capt. Albert C. Slater turned his Company "A" to move to Coates's aid. The company made it less than one hundred meters before it ran into mines and small arms fire. Soon Slater had so many casualties that he couldn't move. In the meantime, the fighting around Company "B" grew more savage. The NVA cut off Coates and the 3rd Platoon. North Vietnamese soldiers then sneaked forward through the thick shrubbery and used flamethrowers to ignite the brush along the road. Marines fleeing the blaze were cut down by small arms fire or artillery bursts. Then, artillery fire dropped on the command group. Captain Coates, his radio telephone operator (RTO), two platoon leaders, the artillery forward observer (FO), and several others all died in the opening salvo. The forward air controller assumed command of the shattered company. From the rear, the 1st Platoon tried to move forward to help the others, but it was soon halted by brutal blasts of enemy fire from both flanks. The enemy seemed to be everywhere. The platoon commander, SSgt. Leon R. Burns, called for napalm strikes as close as twenty meters to his position in an effort to hold the enemy at bay. Under this protective cover, Burns slowly pushed forward until he linked up with the remnants of the 2nd Platoon. At about 1030 Lieutenant Colonel Schening, alerted to the battle, dispatched from Con Thien a rescue force composed of four M48 tanks accompanied by a rifle platoon from Company "D". He also asked Colonel Jerue for the release of Company "C" from security duty at the regimental CP at Dong Ha. The battalion S-3, Capt. Henry J. M. Radcliffe, and the S-2, 1st Lt. Gatlin J. Howell, led the reaction force out of the combat base. The small column moved down the trace without incident. As soon as they swung north on Route 561, however, they were hit by heavy enemy fire. About the same time, helicopters began landing Company "C" at an LZ right in front of the rescue column. Radcliffe ordered the platoon from Company "D" to secure

the LZ. Just then an enemy artillery barrage slammed into the area. Eleven Marines fell. Radcliffe gathered up a platoon from Company "C" and, with the tanks, pushed onward. About six hundred meters up the road he found Sergeant Burns. Looking at the handful of Marines around the setgeant, Radcliffe asked Burns where the rest of Company "B" was. "This is what's left of the company, sir," Burns replied. Radcliffe was too stunned to respond. After sending the 1st Platoon's wounded to the rear, the relief force, along with Sergeant Burns and his few remaining able-bodied men, pushed forward to recover the rest of Company "B's" casualties. They found so many bodies that there wasn't enough room for them on the tanks. Some had to be left behind. Lieutenant Howell was particularly bothered by the scene. He had only recently relinquished command of the 3rd Platoon after leading it for eight months. Determined not to leave any of his former comrades behind, he repeatedly exposed himself to carry wounded back to the tanks. Captain Radcliffe estimated that Lieutenant Howell helped bring no less than twenty-five wounded to safety. As the pathetic column started back to the LZ, it was hit by enemy artillery and mortar fire. Then, two tanks hit mines, causing more casualties and further slowing the withdrawal. As the gruesome parade finally reached Company "C's" LZ, more enemy artillery shells struck. Many of the earlier casualties still awaiting evacuation were hit again. Corpsmen who braved the flying metal, to rush, to help the wounded fell in the blasts. In the resulting confusion about fifty wounded started making their way down the trace toward Con Thien. When they were spotted, Lieutenant Colonel Schening sent out a party to meet them and assist in their evacuation. While all this was going on, Company "A" came under enemy attack, too. The first flight of medevac helicopters had just departed with some of the earlier casualties when NVA mortar shells fell on the LZ. Minutes later, enemy infantry attacked. One platoon was quickly cut off, it eventually fought its way through the enemy and joined Radcliffe's force. The remaining members of Company "A" fought the enemy to within fifty yards of its position before their furious fire, and supporting artillery, broke up the attack. At 1500 Lieutenant Colonel Schening advised regiment that he had all his units engaged and had no reserve. Based on this, Colonel Jerue ordered his 3rd Battalion into the fight. By 1800 three companies and the battalion command group from 3/9 were in position north of the trace. The 3rd Battalion took operational control of Companies "A" and "C", 1/9. The fresh Marines quickly attacked the NVA's left flank. This aggressive action forced the enemy back. A short time later, the survivors of Company "B" and the platoon from Company "D" pulled back to Con Thien. A head count the next day showed that 1/9 had suffered 84 dead, and 190 wounded, and 9 missing in the ambush. Most of the casualties had been from Company "B". In fact, only 27 Company "B" Marines remained on their feet. The heroic conduct that terrible day earned both Lieutenant Howell and Sergeant Burns a Navy Cross. On 3 July, BLT 1/3 from SLF Alpha joined with 3/9 for the attack north to recover the remaining Marine dead and drive the enemy out of the area. The two battalions started the attack before dawn on 4 July. Almost immediately the 3rd Battalion ran into heavy resistance from NVA dug in just south of Company "B's" battle site. The resulting fight, which lasted most of the day, involved tanks, artillery, and air support, as well as infantry. Not until 1830 did the Marines finally overrun the enemy's lines. Fifteen men died and 33 were wounded in the action. Because of the unexpected heavy resistance, BLT 2/3 from SLF Bravo was committed to the fight. Helicopters airlifted it into an LZ north of Cam Lo. From there it moved north toward Con Thien. The Marines spent 5 July recovering and evacuating Company "B's" dead. The next morning the rifle companies resumed their northward attack. The BLT 2/3 was hit first. Three kilometers south of Con Thien, a well-dug-in NVA force dropped a barrage of

mortar shells on the Marines. Attacking aggressively across the brush-clad terrain, the battalion lost 5 dead and 25 wounded before driving away the enemy. To the northeast of Con Thien, 1/3 and 3/9 were harassed by sporadic enemy artillery and mortar fire as they advanced toward the DMZ. At the zone's southern edge the two battalions halted to set up a night defensive position. Company "A", 1/9, and the survivors of Company "C" were sent about 1,500 meters to the northwest to guard the force's left flank. Once his men had dug in, Captain Slater sent a patrol north to the Ben Hai River to watch for any enemy activity. A short time later the patrol excitedly reported that they had spotted a force of more than 400 NVA fording the Ben Hai and heading right for Company "A". Slater hurriedly ordered the patrol back. He then passed the word to his Marines. Everyone dug deeper, checked and rechecked their weapons, and waited. About this time, a heavy and accurate artillery barrage ripped into the main force. The artillery shells fell like rain in a thunderstorm. In a relatively short period nearly 600 shells hit 3/9 and about 1,000 landed on 1/3. While the enemy artillery pounded the two battalions, the 400-man force of NVA of NVA infantry ran smack into Captain Slater's Marines. When they closed to 150 meters of his perimeter, Slater gave the order to open fire. The initial onslaught of heavy fire caught the NVA by surprise. They scattered, some running right into the Marines' lines. Soon, however, they reorganized themselves and swarmed all around Slater's position. Fire discipline born of intense training and their well-constructed bunkers gave the Marines the upper hand. The NVA probed from all directions but couldn't breach the company's perimeter. A few enemy soldiers crept close enough to heave grenades into the friendly lines, but individual Marines hunted down and killed these intruders. Slater also skillfully employed his artillery support, dropping shells to within 50 meters of his position. Faced with an impregnable position, the NVA began withdrawing just before midnight. Small arms fire and an occasional grenade harassed the Marines throughout the night, but they had held against a far superior force. When patrols left the perimeter at first light, they found 154 NVA bodies scattered around their position. Only 12 Company "A" Marines had been wounded. Captain Slater's gallant leadership that night earned him the Navy Cross. While Slater's company fought its lone battle, the rest of what was later identified as the 90th NVA Regiment hit the two battalions. Throughout the night of 6-7 July, NVA infantry assaulted the main force's positions. The Marines responded with every bit of supporting arms at their disposal, including flare ships, attack aircraft, helicopter gun-ships, naval gunfire, and all available artillery. Unable to penetrate the tightly defended perimeter, and repeatedly battered by the intense bombardment, the NVA began retreating at about 2130. The next morning the Marines policed the battlefield. Assessing the damage done to the NVA was extremely difficult due to the extensive destruction caused by the supporting fire. The enemy dead had been badly damaged by the high explosives. Only by counting canteens could an estimate be made. In all, the Marines claimed eight hundred dead NVA. Though they had suffered incredible losses, the NVA weren't defeated. All day on 7 July, NVA artillery and rockets pounded the Marine positions. Large-caliber, long-range artillery pummeled Con Thien. One shell tore into 1/9's command bunker. Among the eleven killed was Lieutenant Howell. Among the eighteen wounded was Lieutenant Colonel Schening. He had the dubious distinction of adding a fourth Purple Heart to the ones he'd already collected for wounds received in World War II and Korea. Enemy ordnance also rained on the Marine base at Dong Ha. So intense was the bombardment that the 9th Marines were forced to move their headquarters from Dong Ha to northeast of Cam Lo to escape the shelling. The last significant action on Operation Buffalo came on 8 July, southwest of Con Thien. After reaching the combat base following its northerly sweep, BLT 2/3 had turned west,

then south. Soon afterward Company "G" discovered an enemy bunker complex. After calling in air strikes and artillery, the Marines quickly overran the enemy, killing thirty-one NVA and losing two of their own. About a kilometer to the southwest, Company "F" engaged another enemy force that same afternoon. Initially, one of the company's patrols had had a brief fight with what appeared to be a small band of NVA stragglers. However, the enemy's firing continued to build. First Lieutenant Richard D. Koehler then led the rest of his company into the attack, thinking that his superior firepower would overwhelm the enemy. He was wrong. No sooner had he arrived on the scene than enemy 82mm mortar shells started dropping among the grunts. Koehler called for help. Once again the timely arrival of Marine close air support saved the day. When the fight was over, Company "F" counted 118 dead NVA on the battlefield. However, 14 Marines were killed and 43 were wounded in the fight. The Marines ended Operation Buffalo on 14 July. The NVA's plans, to capture Con Thien had failed, but it had been a vicious battle. Enemy losses were recorded as 1,290 killed against 159 Marines killed and 345 wounded. (per Semper Fi Vietnam, pages 147 to 153).

03Jul67 to 13Jul67: BEAR CLAW / BUFFALO

Province: Quang Tri- Op was initially set for this area but when 1/9 & 3/9 got ambushed it changed to the area around Con Thien. South of the DMZ.

Units: 3rd Mar(HQ), 3/3, 3/4, 1/9, 2/9, 3/9, SLF-A(BLT 1/3), SLF-B (BLT 2/3), 9th Mars(HQ).

Object: Major elements of the 304B NVA Battalion and the 90th NVA Regiment were in the area. 1/9 conducts sweep north of Con Thien and makes HEAVY contact. Both SLF-lpha(1/3), Bravo(2/3), and 3/9 move into reinforce. Battle dies out 14th July. B/1/9 acquired name "The Walking Dead". The original operation was called BEAR CLAW, but when 1/9 got into trouble when it encountered two battalions of the NVA 90th Regiment when they were sweeping around Con Thien. SLF-Alpha was committed to assist them on July 3rd. The first wave of helicopters landed 2,500 meters south of the designated LZ. By the time 1/3 had picked up its units and linked up with 3/9 on the right flank the fighting had waned. A UH-34 was "down" in the C co area, CH53 lifted it out two days later. The 5th of July opened with a mortar barrage on companies A and C. Exchanges of mortar and artillery punctuated the next day. On the 6th, Gas Agents were used against C co by the NVA, incoming mortar rounds also killed 4 and wounded 3 C co men. On July 7th a Marine tank was hit and the fighting was so savage that BLT 1/3 did not reach the tank to recover the bodies until the next day. Continues air strikes and artillery were fired, over 200 KIA NVA were spotted by aircraft, (this was in addition to the immediate battlefield KIAs C co Marines saw. On the morning of the 8th, 1/3 was ordered to withdraw. Complications were that it was daylight, 600 meters of open terrain had to be crossed, the battalion was in contact, two of the attached tanks were crippled, and the battalion had just received a much needed but cumbersome re-supply. The withdrawal was successful. The next four days, the battalion swept the perimeter of Con Thien, recovered the 11 bodies of 1/9, but paid in Marine casualties. With Buffalo nearing an end, MACV directed 1/3 join forces with 1/4 and do a southward sweep of the DMZ, operation HICKORY II was initiated.

Cost: SLF 424 communist confirmed KIA, 8 Marines KIA, 179 WIA. 1066 tons of bombs fell, 40,000 rounds of arty, 1,500 rounds of Naval 8" gun ammo fired. Total cost of operation including SLF, USMC- 159 KIA and 345 WIA. Enemy losses 1290 PAVN KIA. (This to defend Con Thien Combat Fire Base and search and destroy area). Per 3rdmarines-operations Bear Claw was 3rd Mar Div operation in Quang Tri Province vicinity of Con Thien, SLF part of operation Buffalo with 424 Enemy KIA and 29 U.S. KIA. Operation Buffalo, totals with SLF were 1281 Enemy KIA and U.S. 125 KIA. BLT-1/3 sustained 8-KIA's and 179-WIA's during the operation, while inflicting on the Enemy 424-NVA/KIA's(confirmed), 65- /KIA's(probable), and 2-POW/VCS.

03Jul67: Co. B- Contact with NVA, fire fight 1-WIA

04Jul67: Co. A- 20 Incoming Rockets 1-WIA, but were able to recover 3-USMC KIA from 1/9

04Jul67: Co. B- Received unknown number of Rocket rounds, 1-WIA

04Jul67: BLT-1/3 Alpha Command- Received 20 rds incoming Rockets 1-WIA

04Jul67: Co. A- Two Bombs, one a dud landed inside company position/Close Air Support/Friendly Fire incident, 9-WIA's

04Jul67: Co. C- CH34 Helicopter down inside company area, non -hostile, apparent echanical

05Jul67: Co. A- Received 100 rounds of incoming mortars, 60mm and 82mm, 5-WIA's

05Jul67: Co. C- Received additional 100 rounds of mortar fire at same time Co. A, 1-WIA

05Jul67: Co. A- Recovered 8-USMC KIA from 1/9, assisted by Tanks from Alpha Co/3rd Tank Bn, Bodies sent to rear on the tanks.

05Jul67: Co. A- Night patrol checking area of Artillery mission, contact 1-WIA

06Jul67: Co. C- Day Patrol received 10 rds of mortar fire and small arms fire. 4-KIA's and 3-WIA's.

06Jul67: **(KIA / Fallen)** SSGT CABALLERO, G. Jr. Co: "H&S"
PFC GREELEY, V. M. Co: "B"
HN MC CARTER, T. L. Co: "H&S"
SGT RUSSELL, R. K. Co: "H&S"

06Jul67: Co. A- Received incoming mortars(75 rounds throughout battalion area) 5-WIA's

06Jul67: Co. C- Involved in firefight. Believed to have 57mm Recoilless Rifle, LOST one Tank, two KIA's not recovered.

06Jul67: **(KIA / Fallen)** SSGT MALLOY, J. J. Co: "C"

SGT PIKE, D. C. Co: "C"

06Jul67: Co. B- Received unknown number of mortar rds, 2-WIA's

06Jul67: Co. B- Assisted by Companies A and D, and units from 3/9, approx. THREE NVA Companies of Infantry approaching from the north and east, reported to their front (some NVA wearing USMC uniforms including flack jackets and jungle boots), Heavy Incoming of Mortars and Rockets. Numerous Air and Artillery called in, also Klondikes on station. Co. B reports Tear Gas from mortar rounds, and the NVA infantry are repelled. Night illumination is up. All secure with tentative Casualty count 3-KIA's and 19-WIA's

07Jul67: Co. B- Patrol out searching for bodies not recovered from fire fight yesterday, reached the Burned out Tank. NO Bodies, but 1-M-60 MG and 1- M-16 Rifle recovered. Monitored AO Net, that 200 Dead NVA forward of our positions.

08Jul67: 1/3 Recon- Found missing KIA's, withdrawing, the area to be peppered with Air, Artillery, and then a platoon from Co. C will go in.

08Jul67: BLT-1/3- Ordered to withdraw from positions by 3/9, pulled back, and tied in with elements of 3/9, south of the Trace, for the night. The Missing KIA's have been recovered.

11Jul67: Co. B- Patrol located a NVA Base Camp previously used, and found approx. 200 Dead NVA, in area not previously reported by AO.

Over-view: Operation HICKORY II- Immediately following Operation Buffalo, III MAF ordered a sweep of the southern half of the DMZ. Dubbed Hickory II, the operation involved two Marine battalions and three ARVN battalions. There was little contact, and Hickory II ended on 16 July. (per Semper Fi Vietnam, page 153).

14Jul67 to 16July67: HICKORY II

Province: Quang Tri near DMZ.

Units: 9th Mar(HQ), BLT-1/3, 1/4.

Object: Search and Destroy op, that was really a time-distance rapid sweep maneuver. The BLT received orders to move approximately 1500 meters in a day. Although the battalion remained prepared to engage the enemy, the speed required to make the move prevented the battalion from making a detailed search of the area.

Cost: 17 communist POW's. BLT-1/3 sustained NO Casualties, and captured 17-VCS

16Jul67 to 18Jul67: KINGFISHER

Province: Quang Tri around Dong Ha and Cam Lo area.

Units: 9th Mar(HQ), BLT-1/3, 2/3, 3/3, 2/4, 3/4, 1/9, 2/9, 3/9, 3/26, 3rd Mar (HQ), 3/3, 1/9, 2/9, 3/9.

Object: SLF-Alpha only spent the first two days starting the operation, and moved on. Operation Kingfisher lasted through 31Oct67 with 9th and 3rd Marines doing sweeps around Dong Ha and Cam Lo.

Cost: Total operation USMC- 340 KIA and 1462 WIA. Enemy losses were 1117 PAVN KIA. Per 3rdmarines-operations 3rd Mar Div operation in DMZ with 1117 Enemy KIA and 955 U.S. KIA.

20Jul67: (KIA / Fallen) PFC BARCALOW, R. R. Co: "A"

21Jul67 to 30Jul67: BEACON GUIDE

Province: Thua Thien 18 miles S/E of Hue.

Unit: BLT-1/3

Object: Starting with surface and helicopter assault, BEACON GUIDE was a search and destroy operation. The sweep was part of III MAF's continuing plan to maintain pressure on the VC/NVA in the I Corps coastal area. C co came into LZ Quail at 0744. Company captured four VCs. An NVA base camp with ammo and other incidentals was uncovered. Lifted out from LZ Oriole on the 29th and into LZ Sparrow. This operation was conducted in three phases, Phase I- Amphibious and Heliborne Assault in Phu Loc District, assisted by G/2/26 as Blocking Force. Phase II- Heliborne Assault in Mountainous terrain with double canopy overhead in altitudes up to 482 meters. Phase III- Heliborne Assault from Mountains into Phu Tu Area to conduct thorough Search and Destroy operations. Light enemy contact. BLT-1/3 sustained only 5-WIA's, and had 3-VC KIA's(probable) while capturing 22-VCS.

23Jul67: Co. B- Found 10,000 lbs of rice, recovered.

25Jul67: Co. B and D- Re-supply Helicopter down, mechanical, no casualties. Recovered on the 27th.

28Jul67: Co. B- Patrol hit Booby Trap. 2-WIA's

28Jul67: Co. B- Patrol hit another Booby Trap. 1-WIA

29Jul67: Co. B- Platoon member stepped into Punji Foot Trap, 10 additional found and destroyed. 1-WIA

29Jul67: Co. A- Booby Trapped Grenade. 1-WIA

29Jul67: (KIA / Fallen) PFC DEWEY, E. M. Co: "A"

31Jul67: BLT-1/3 for the month of July participated in three Operations. Sustained 8-KIA's and 188-WIA's, while inflicting 424-VC/NVA KIA's (confirmed), 68-VC/NVA KIA's(probable), and capturing 41- VCS (POW) on the Enemy. Mostly during Operation Buffalo up at the DMZ.

07Aug67 to10Aug67: BEACON GATE

Provinces: Quang Tin & Quang Nam- S/E of Hoi An.

Unit: BLT-1/3

Object: This was our only Amphibious Landing, C co Marines were aboard the USS Duluth for this assault. C co Marines landed along the coast at Blue Beach. Intelligence reports fixed elements of the V25 Local Force Battalion and other smaller VC units in the area of operation. During the four-day sweep the Marines were under constant sniper fire, and numerous VC and VCs were detained. The UH-1E gunships were used extensively to suppress the snipers.

Cost: 12 communist KIA, 1 marine KIA, 10 WIA. BLT-1/3 sustained 1-KIA and 12-WIA's, while inflicting 12-VC KIA's(confirmed), 4-VC KIA's(probable), and capturing 26-VCS.

07Aug67: Co. B- Small arms fire two flanks, 2-WIA's

08Aug67: Co. C- Patrol received heavy Sniper fire, 2-WIA's

08Aug67: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL MORELAND, J. L. Co: "C"

09Aug67: Co. A- Received heavy sniper fire at night, 2-WIA's

09Aug67: Co. C- Spotted 2-VC on perimeter, SAF exchanged, 1-WIA (This was at night/early morning and probably when PFC J. P. Bradford was wounded).

09Aug67: Co. A- Marine stepped into Punji Pit, 1-WIA

10Aug67: Co. A- Sniper fire, 1-WIA

10Aug67: Co. B- Forward elements flushed 2-VC from tunnel complex, 1 VC threw Grenade, 2-WIA's

Over-view: Operation COCHISE- In late July word reached III MAF that the 3rd NVA Regiment and the 1st VC Regiment had entered the Que Son Valley east of Hiep Duc. On 9 August, General Robertson authorized TF X-ray to begin Operation Cochise to throw them out. The new assistant division commander, Brig. Gen. Foster C. LaHue, would control the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 5th Marines, and BLT 1/3 from the SLF, as the maneuver elements of TF

X-ray. On the morning of 11 August, 1/5 and 3/5 helicoptered into LZs south of Nui Loc Son, while BLT 1/3 took up blocking positions several kilometers to the east. Over the next three days there were frequent encounters with small bands of VC as the two maneuver battalions swept east. Twice on the night of 16 August the enemy attacked 1/3's defensive perimeter. With the help of accurate artillery fire, the grunts easily repulsed the enemy. As planned, phase one of the operation ended on 18 August, and 3/5 was pulled out of the AO. The two remaining battalions were helicoptered to Heip Duc; from there they moved northeast toward Que Son. Though intelligence had reported a sizable enemy force operating in the area, the Marines never found them. Operation Cochise officially ended on 28 August. Though this operation forced a major portion of the 2nd NVA Division to abandon the Que Son Valley, III MAF had no illusions that this was only temporary. The NVA would not easily relinquish the densely populated, rice-rich region. In fact, with South Vietnam's national elections scheduled for early September, the NVA planned to return to the Que Son Valley and disrupt the voting. The Marines reacted by stepping up their patrol activity. One of these patrols ended in an action that led to some of the heaviest fighting of the year for the 1st Marine Division. (per Semper Fi Vietnam, pages 109 and 110).

11Aug67 to 29Aug67: COCHISE

Province: Quang Tin- 7 miles east of Que Son.

Units: 1st Mar Div(HQ), Task Force X-ray, BLT-1/3, 1/5, 3/5, 2/11-Arty.

Object: This operation was approx 20 miles inland in the Que Son Mountains, to far inland for fixed Artillery or Naval Gunfire support. Two COMPANIES of Marines (1/3) were to be Helo'd in at the same time, with only Fixed Wing Aircraft and Helicopter Gunships (ALL available from Da Nang and Chu Lia) for support. To land on the Ho Chi Minh Trail at the 3rd NVA Regimental Headquarters. Once a perimeter was set, a 4.2" (four-duce) Mortar Battery was to be brought in for support. The Briefing the night before advised every time RECON went into area, they were chased out with a QUAD-50(four 50 Cal Machine guns mounted together). Also that the Enemy had every weapon C CO MARINES had, plus their own. The operation sounded very TUFF, and a lot of Short-timers were very NERVOUS about the pending operation. On August 11th, BLT 1/3 was put under operational control of TASK FORCE X-RAY. The battalion was put in place at LZ GROUSE and received sniper fire. C co Marines were a blocking force for the 5th Marines sweeping east. On the 16th during a sweep with elements of the 5th Marines, the BLT made HEAVY contact. Five Marine WIAs could not be medivaced out because of enemy fire. Arty and fixed wing came in to suppress. Four Marine KIA bodies could not be recovered for a day due to intense fire. When recovered the bodies were completely striped of gear and clothes. Tanks were used extensively. On the 19th the company was airlifted to LZ Hawk to continue the sweep. Two VC were taken prisoner at the LZ. An NVA Officer, captured by 1/5, was turned over to C co and led us to 2 tons of rice. One detainee escaped in the C co perimeter, and when he could not be caught, he was shot. The enemy broke off contact that night, and the next day was punctuated with sniper fire. The BLT continued the sweep from Hiep Duc to Que Son, uncovering rice caches and receiving continued sniper fire. On the 28th, with the conclusion of the operation C/1/3 was transported to Chu Lia for the night- and BEER.

Cost: SLF 9 Marines KIA and 51 WIA. 59 communist KIA, 65 POW. (SEE BOOK "PAYBACK" by Joe Klein, section payback-Operation Cochise-Que Son Valley-August 16, 1967. This is account of C/1/3 2nd Platoon and the described action that day). This operation consisted of three phases, Blocking Force, Helilifted inland, and Search and Destroy N/E from Hiep Duc to Que Son. BLT-1/3 sustained 8-KIA's and 39-WIA's, while inflicting 43- VC/NVA KIA's(confirmed), 76- VC/NVA KIA's(probable), and capturing 53- VCS/POW's.

12Aug67: Co. B- Called in Artillery Mission, Short Round, Friendly Fire Incident. 1-WIA

12Aug67: Co. B- Fire fight with 10 VC. 1-WIA

12Aug67: Co. B- Contact with night listening post, fire fight, rounds into perimeter of Company lines from VC. 1-KIA

12Aug67: **(KIA / Fallen)** LCPL LISTORTI, J. A. Co: "B"

16Aug67: Co. A- 20 2-lb sticks of TNT found and destroyed in tunnel. The Company Commander entered tunnel to check out the situation, and was over come by lack of oxygen. He was medivaced. 1-Injury(possibly).

16Aug67: Co. C- Squad Ambushed from Village and tree line, Heavy Fire Fight, Artillery and Air Strikes called in, too Hot for Medivac's, Continued for approx 6-7 hours(till darkness), a Patrol sent to Recover the bodies. 4-KIA's and 7-WIA's

16Aug67: **(KIA / Fallen)** PFC HARVEY, R. Co: "C"
PFC HAWTHORNE, M. D. Co: "C"
SGT JONES, J. H. Co: "C"

17Aug67: **(KIA / Fallen)** CPL WHITE, R. F. Co: "C"

17Aug67: Co. B- Night Outpost got hit hard by automatic weapons fire and infantry, and was partially Over-ran. Outpost regained, but two friendlies unaccounted for. Company Commander estimated Outpost attacked by probable Platoon size enemy force. Unknown number of wounded Medivaced during the night. At first light area of Outpost searched, All members accounted for, and had 13 NVA dead throughout, with numerous blood trails also. 1-KIA and 13-WIA's total for the night.

17Jul67: **(KIA / Fallen)** HN BURDEN, J. C. Co: "H&S"
LCPL CALABRIA, D. M. Co: "B"

20Aug67: Co. B- Booby Trap, 1-WIA

24Aug67: Co. B- Booby Trap, 1-WIA

24Aug67: **(KIA / Fallen)** LCPL PETRICK, F. E. Co: "A"

25Aug67: Co. A- Sniper fire, 1-WIA

26Aug67: Co. A- Sniper fire, 1-KIA

26Aug67: **(KIA / Fallen)** PFC SMITH, R. C. Co: "A"

26Aug67: Co. B- Sniper fire, 1-WIA

27Aug67: Co. C- Booby Trap, 1-WIA

31Aug67: BLT-1/3 participated in two Operations, and sustained 9-KIA's and 51-WIA's, while inflicting 55- VC/NVA KIA's(confirmed), 80- VC/NVA KIA's(probable), and capturing 79- VCS/POW's for the month of August.

01Sep67 to 05Sep67: **BEACON POINT**

Province: Thua Thien-Street without Joy again!

Units: 4th Marine Regiment, BLT-1/3

Object: On September 1st, SLF-Alpha landed in the Thua Thien Prov. for a southerly sweep of the by-now all too familiar "Street without Joy". Three airborne and one waterborne companies.

Snipers and booby traps were the only resistance encountered. C co Marines landed at LZ Sparrow. C co Marines lost 1 Marine to a booby trap and 5 WIA on the second day. A short round caused a Marine to be wounded on the 4th. Another was wounded by a booby trap, trip wire. On the 5th C co Marines conducted a foot movement to the Camp Evans area.

Cost: 2 Marine KIA, 34 WIA. 2 VC KIA, 25 POW. BLT-1/3 was slowed during the sweep south through the Street without Joy, having found a total of 71,500 lbs of RICE. 41,500 lbs of Rice was evacuated, and the remaining 30,000 lbs Destroyed. BLT-1/3 also sustained the cost above, with 1-VC KIA(probable).

01Sep67: Co. D- Sniper fire, 1-WIA

01Sep67: Co. D-Sniper fire again, 1-WIA

01Sep67: **(KIA / Fallen)** CPL KEENAN, D. W. Co: "B"

02Sep67: Co. D- Booby Trap, 2-WIA

02Sep67: Co. C- Booby Trapped M-16 AP Mine, 1-KIA and 6-WIA's

02Sep67: **(KIA / Fallen)** LCPL NORBUT, G. E. Co: "C"

02Sep67: Co. C- Another Booby Trap, 1-WIA

02Sep67: Co. H&S- Received 2 incoming 60mm Mortar rds, 4-WIA

03Sep67: Co. D- Night LP received Sniper and Automatic Weapons fire, 1-WIA

04Sep67: Co. C- Received one incoming friendly 105mm HE round, possible short round of H&I fire at night. Friendly Fire. 1-WIA

04Sep67: Co. D- Lead elements hit Booby Trap, 2-WIA's

04Sep67: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL **KELLEY, J. W.** Co: "D"

04Sep67: Co. D- Booby Trapped ChiCom Grenade, 1-WIA

04Sep67: Co. D- Another Booby Trapped Grenade, 1-WIA

04Sep67: Co. C- Booby Trap, 1-WIA

04Sep67: Co. A- Booby Trap, 1-WIA

05Sep67: Co. A- Night fire fight with 1-VC on lines, 1-WIA

06Sep67 to 09Sep67: **FREMONT**

Provinces: Quang Tri & Thua Thien- south of Quang Tri.

Units: 4th Mar, 3rd Mar Div(HQ), BLT-1/3, 2/3, 1/4, 2/4, 3/26.

Object: HMM163, and UH-34d squadron reported aboard the USS Okinawa. The SLF-Alpha battalion trucked into a blocking position for a sweep by the 4th Marines. Snipers were the only active resistance. C co Marines were transported by truck to our jump-off area. On the 5th, 35 VC were spotted and 99 rounds of 105mm and 38 rounds of 155mm were fired in support. On the 9th C co Marines were by trucked to COLCO RAMP for loading onto the ship. Operation Fremont had started the 7th of July and continued through October 31st for the 4th Marines and participating units. BLT-1/3 were blocking force south of Quang Tri. 1/3 sustained NO KIA's and 3-WIA's(Booby Traps), and did not make any contact with the enemy forces.

07Sep67: Co. B- Booby Trapped Grenade, 1-WIA

08Sep67: Co. B- Punji Stake, 1-WIA

08Sep67: Co. A- Booby Trapped Grenade, 1-WIA

14Sep67: (KIA / Fallen) PFC **DRAY, D. B.** Co: "A"

16Sep67 to 21Sep67: BALLISTIC CHARGE

Provinces: Quang Nam & Quang Tin- 4 miles S/W of Dai Loc.

Unit: BLT-1/3

Object: C co was helo'd into LZ GOOSE, one "Doc" got shot while in the helo. Three other companies made a waterborne assault. The operation consisted of a rapid sweep to the north followed by a detailed search and destroy sweep to the south of Hoi An. A lot of incoming sniper fire, 2 VCs were detained and 1,000 punji stakes and about 1,000 pounds of rice were uncovered and destroyed. On the 18th C co Marines spotted numerous VC and called in an Air AO. He called in arty when he was fired on, 135 probable KIA. On the 19th, VC were spotted carrying what appeared to be a mortar, NAVAL guns were called in with excellent coverage. Right after that the company was ambushed on three sides, arty was called in. Booby traps killed 1 from C co and 2 Engineers. On the 21st C co Marines were helo'd to 1st Marines area.

Cost: 3 gook POW, 25 KIA, , 55 detainees. 2 Marine KIA, 20 WIA BLT-1/3 sustained the cost above for this operation.

16Sep67: Co. C- Sniper fire into LZ into Helicopter, 1-WIA(Corpsman)

16Sep67: Co. C- Sniper fire, 1-WIA

16Sep67: Co. A- Sniper fire, 1-WIA

16Sep67: Co. C- Punji pit, 1-WIA

16Sep67: Co. B- Received unknown incoming rounds at night, large caliber 1-WIA

17Sep67: Co. A- Received unknown large caliber rounds, 2-WIA's

18Sep67: Co. D- Received incoming Mortar round, 2-WIA

18Sep67: Co. C- Night Listening Post received SAF, 1-WIA

19Sep67: Co. D- A Shrapnel injury(unknown type), 1-WIA

19Sep67: Co. C- Attacked at night on three sides by VC, unknown number, fire fight. 4-WIA's

19Sep67: BLT-1/3- Mortar Battery 2/12 attached to Alpha Command- HE round exploded seconds after leaving the tube due to faulty fuse. Friendly fire incident, possibly in support of Co. C being attacked above. 1-WIA

20Sep67: Co. C- Booby Trap, 1-WIA

20Sep67: 1/3- Recon- Fire fight with 3-VC, 1-WIA

21Sep67: BLT-1/3- LVT's attached to Battalion- Stray Sniper round, 1-WIA

21Sep67: Co. C- Booby Trap, 1-WIA

21Sep67: Co. C- Engineers attached to Company, probing a Mine with combat knives when it detonated. 2-KIA's

21Sep67: (KIA / Fallen) CPL KING, R. R. Co: "H&S"

LCPL WOODS, W. P. Co: "H&S"

22Sep67 to 28Sep67: **SHELBYVILLE**

Province: Quang Nam- 4 miles S/E of Dai Loc.

Units: 1st Mar(HQ), 2/1, BLT-1/3, 3/5, 1/11-Artillery.

Object: C co Marines were airlifted into LZ HAWK 4 miles SE of Dai Loc. 2/1 occupied a blocking force to the east, and 3/5 blocked to the south. BLT 1/3 sweep the operational area in an easterly direction. Sniper fire was the only enemy response. On the 20th 17 Vietnamese women and children were found in a village, most wounded. They stated the VC took them out of their bunker so the VC could use it and were hit by air strikes. 5 were KIA. They were medivaced for treatment. Significant contact was made on the 26th by a VC company. Air and arty were called in with a number of VC KIA. On the 28th C co Marines foot marched to LIBERTY BRIDGE for loading back aboard ship.

Cost: 10 VC KIA, 7 poss KIA. 4 USMC KIA, 28 WIA, 13 WIA ne. BLT-1/3 sustained the above cost for the operation. 1/3 also captured 28-VCS

22Sep67: Co. D- Punji Trap, 1-WIA

22Sep67: Co. D- Punji Trap, again, 1-WIA

22Sep67: Co. A- Punji Trap, 1-WIA

23Sep67: Co. D- Incoming SAF into company lines during early morning hours, 1-WIA

23Sep67: Co. D- Anti-personnel Mine detonated, 3-WIA's

23Sep67: Co. A- Punji Trap with steel spike, 1-WIA

23Sep67: Co. A- Punji Trap again, 2-WIA's

23Sep67: Co. A- Night Listening Post received 15 rounds of automatic weapons fire, 1-KIA

23Sep67: (KIA / Fallen) PFC BUSH, O. L. Co: "A"

24Sep67: Co. H&S- Corpsman stepped into Punji Trap, 1-WIA

26Sep67: Co. C- Booby Trapped Chicom Grenade, 4-WIA's

26Sep67: Co. D- Incoming Mortar rounds, 2-WIA's

26Sep67: BLT-1/3- Alpha Command Group- Received 20 rounds of 81mm Mortar Fire Incoming, 1-KIA and 1-WIA's(including one corpsman).

26Sep67: (KIA / Fallen) HN HILL, P. W. Co: "H&S"
CPL JACKOWIAK, H. P. Co: "H&S"

26Sep67: Co. D- More Incoming Mortar rounds, 3-WIA's

26Sep67: Co. A- While assisting Company B, who was under heavy enemy fire, Attacked by the enemy with SAF and AWF, 4-WIA's

26Sep67: Co. C- Booby Trapped Grenade, 3-WIA's

28Sep67: Co. A- Booby Trap, 1-KIA and 4-WIA's

28Sep67: (KIA / Fallen) CPL WOOD, D. R. Co: "A"

30Sep67: BLT-1/3 participated in four Operations for the month of September, sustaining 6-KIA's and 107-WIA's. 1/3 also inflicted 26- VC/KIA's (confirmed), 19- VC/KIA's(probable), and captured total of 111-VCS/POW's for the month.NOTE: Beach Party at CHINA BEACH btwn 1-9 Oct.

Over-view: **Operation MEDINA**- Not all of the 3rd Marine Division's activities took place along the DMZ. Because it lacked the manpower to effectively operate throughout its TAOR, the division had been forced to ignore several enemy base areas in the southern portion of Quang Tri Province. In the fall, though, III MAF ordered General Hockmuth to clear one of these neglected areas, the Hai Lang Forest south of Quang Tri City. To clear this home of the 5th and 6th NVA Regiments, General Hockmuth selected the two battalions of the 1st Marines, which had recently been opconned to his division. Operation Medina began on 11 October, when UH-34Ds carried the men of 1/1 and 2/1 into clearings deep in the thick forest. After sweeping the area around their LZs, the two battalions started moving northeast toward where the SLF, BLT 1/3, held blocking positions. Company "C" of BLT 1/3 had actually been the first to come in contact with the enemy during this operation. Helicopters had carried the SLF to its blocking position on the afternoon of 10 October. After digging in, the riflemen settled down to wait for the enemy to be driven into them. They didn't wait very long. At 0330 on 11 October, the NVA launched a ground assault against the company's night perimeter. Nearly two hours of heavy, close-quarters fighting passed before the NVA withdrew (C/1/3 sustained 8 Marines dead, and 16 wounded from a portion of the Lines, being Over-ran that morning,

DJB). At 1500 the next day, Company "C", 1/1, was pushing through the dense foliage when its point element bumped into a ten-man NVA squad. In the initial exchange of rifle fire, several Marines were wounded. The casualties were pulled back to a small clearing where the rest of the company had already set up defensive positions. Just after the casualties had been evacuated, three full NVA companies suddenly slammed into Company "C" (1/1) from two directions. The fighting raged at close quarters all across the clearing. Hand grenades flew back and forth as the adversaries battled at arm's length. One NVA grenade landed among members of the command group who were clustered behind a fallen log. Corporal William T Perkins, a combat photographer attached to Company "C", shouted, "Grenade!" and flung himself on the missile. The ensuing blast killed him, but those around him survived. Perkins was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, the only combat photographer ever to be so honored. The fighting around the clearing continued until dusk, when Company "D" (1/1) arrived to help. Together, the two companies finally scattered the attackers. Eight Marines were killed and thirty-nine were wounded in the fight. The Marines later found the bodies of forty NVA in the jungle surrounding the clearing. The NVA avoided a further contact after this fight. In their subsequent sweeps the Marines found and destroyed several abandoned base camps. Operation Medina ended on 20 October, when BLT 1/3 returned to the control of the SLF. The two 1st Marine battalions remained in the Hai Lang Forest on Operation Osceola, continuing their search for the elusive NVA. (per Semper Fi Vietnam, pages 160 and 161).

10Oct67 to 20Oct67: BASTION HILL / MEDINA

Provinces: Quang Tri & Thau Thien- in the Hai Lang National Forest.

Units: 1st Mar(HQ), 1/1, 2/1, BLT-1/3, 1/4, 1/11(1/3 Bastion Hill).

Object: C/1/3 with battalion had went into area to set up a blocking force in the mountains on October 10th, the day before the operation was to start. At approx. 0400 hours on the 11th, C/1/3 was OVER-RUN with lots of casualties including the Captain and XO both KIA.(Captain survived-WIA). SLF-Alpha's mission in the operation was to serve as a blocking force for the 1st Marines, on the eastern edge of the operational area. The Hai Lang forest contained the communist base Area 101, and elements of the 5th and 6th NVA Regiments. Except for a fierce action between company C and a company of NVA early on the 11th, the battalion's contact with the enemy involved scattered firefights, incoming mortar rounds, and booby traps. On the 11th , C co was attacked by 40 to 50 man NVA force. An LP received an incoming satchel charge as well as grenades an additional satchel charges on elements of C co. On the 14th, C co
Marines observed 7 VC dressed in helmets and flack jackets moving towards there area. 81's were called in, during the fight a green cluster was fired, no friendly troops were in the area. On the 17th 12 to 15 VC were spotted through the STARLIGHT scope, 60mm mortars were fired. On the 19th C co Marines moved by trucked to another area to start a sweep.

Cost: 35 Marine KIA and 174 WIA. 64 communist KIA.The operation started with a heliborne assault into the area, and moving into the blocking positions. BLT-1/3 sustained 10-KIA's and 48-WIA's while inflicting 8-VC/NVA KIA's(confirmed), 25-VC/NVA KIA's(probable), and capturing 8-VCS/POW's on the enemy.

10Oct67: Co. D- Booby Trap, 1-WIA

10Oct67: BLT-1/3- Attached Btry A/1/12- Booby Trapped Mine, 1-WIA

11Oct67: Co. C- Early morning incoming Artillery rounds, believed Friendly Fire(possible H&I fire-Short rounds), 2-WIA's

11Oct67: Co. C- Lines attacked and left flank OVER-RAN by estimated 25 to 50 man enemy force at approx.0400 hrs, 7-KIA's and 18-WIA's(including Captain-WIA and XO-KIA).

11Oct67: **(KIA / Fallen)** LCPL FLICKINGER, J. E. Co: "C"
PFC HARTMAN, V. L. Jr. Co: "C"
CPL JONES, R. A. Co: "C"
CAPT NEUSS, W. H. Co: "C"
CPL PENNY, W. V. Co: "C"
LCPL UCKER, D. J. Co: "C"
LCPL VARNER, J. D. Co: "C"
2LT WELKER, A. J. Co: "C"

(That morning we were OVER-RAN by the NVA, once past the lines inside our perimeter, the NVA set up a MACHINE GUN. They fired from the hill top into the company CP area. As the mortar section was pulling back, the machine gun shifted and sprayed the area around us. After two more moves with more machine gunfire at us and the company CP, we were able to fight back. 1st Lt. Nuess was the Company XO, in the process of being promoted to Captain, and was a casualty in the CP area. Per Kevin Brooks, the Arty FO, Lt. Nuess was TALL, actually 6' 8", and was awarded the SILVER STAR PH for his actions against the NVA.

11Oct67: Co. A- Patrol while searching area after C Co. Over-ran, fire fight, received SAF and Grenades, 2-WIA's

11Oct67: Co. D- Patrol received Sniper fire, 1-WIA

11Oct67: Co. D- Incoming Grenade on lines, 1-WIA

11Oct67: Co. C- Night Listening Post, incoming grenade or small satchel charge, 3-WIA's and a radio damaged.

12Oct67: Co. D- Patrol Ambushed, received AWF, 1-KIA and 2-WIA's sustained.

12Oct67: **(KIA / Fallen)** CPL HOLSOMBACK, F. N. Co: "D"

12Oct67: Co. D- Booby Trap, 1-WIA

12Oct67: Co. D- Night Ambush received AWF, 1-WIA.

13Oct67: Co. D- Booby Trapped Grenade, 1-WIA

15Oct67: Co. C- Night Listening post heard movement, and they an outpost from Company A threw Grenades and fired M-79 rounds, possible Friendly Fire incident, 3-WIA's.

15Oct67: Co. D- Booby Trapped Grenade, 1-WIA.

15Oct67: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL DOYLE, P. L. Co: "D"

15Oct67: Co. C- Listening Post(early evening) received an incoming Grenade, 2-WIA's.

16Oct67: Co. B- Night 81mm Mortar H&I Short round inside company perimeter, Friendly fire incident, 5-WIA's.

17Oct67: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL PENFOLD, P. A. Co: "1/3"

18Oct67: Co. D- Early morning patrol, detonated Booby Trapped grenade, 1-WIA.

18Oct67: Co. A- Accident, when the safety pin slipped from a grenade being set as a booby trap, Friendly fire incident. 1-WIA.

20Oct67 to 23Oct67: LIBERTY II / FREMONT

Province: Tinh Quang Tri, Quan Hai Lang sector.

Units: 4th Mar(HQ), BLT-1/3

Object: BLT moved by truck to a new blocking position west of Route 1 and the railroad between Hai Lang and Phong Dien. This operation was intended to prevent the Communist from disrupting the South Vietnamese National Assembly elections. BLT activity during the next 3 days involved squad and fire team patrols and encounters with the enemy. BLT 1/3 was trucked to Camp EVANS to await the next assignment. One of the major logistical considerations during this period was to get the Marines of 1/3 an extra poncho and liner, winter had come to Vietnam. BLT-1/3 sustained No KIA's and only 3-WIA's, while inflicting 1-VC KIA(confirmed), 1-VC KIA(probable), and capturing 10-VCS/POW's during operation.

20Oct67: Co. B- Night Ambush, contact with unknown number of VC with light MG or BAR, Fire fight, 1-WIA.

20Oct67: Co. C- Booby Trapped Grenade, 1-WIA.

23Oct67: Co. D- Booby Trapped Chicom Grenade, 1-WIA.

26Oct67 to 04Nov67: GRANITE

Province: Tinh Thua Thien- Hai Lang forest again.

Units: 4th Mar(HQ), BLT-1/3, 1/4, ARVN

Object: A dawn helicopter assault into the Hai Lang forest started the operation for BLT 1/3. The operation was a two battalion sweep into communist Base 114. 1/4 and BLT were under the operational control of the 4th Marines. The enemy consistently harassed the BLT, staying within a few hundred meters, and making night probes with a consistency not normally experienced. A friendly fire air strike wounded two marines, a "short" 60mm mortar round wounded another, and an artillery round wounded yet another. The operation appeared jinxed. The Base Camp 114, was never located. The BLT returned to Camp Evans.

Cost: SLF-17 communist KIA. 3 Marines KIA and 17 WIA. 652 arty missions called, 59 F4 sorties. BLT-1/3 sustained 3-KIA's and 24-WIA's while inflicting 17-NVA /VC KIA's (confirmed) and 28-NVA/VC KIA's(probable) on the enemy during this operation.

27Oct67: BLT-1/3 Recon- Patrol received SAF, 1-WIA.

28Oct67: Co. D- Platoon Ambushed with AWF, 1-KIA and 6-WIA's.

28Oct67: (KIA / Fallen) CPL HISAW, T. L. Jr. Co: "D"

29Oct67: Co. B- Received AWF, 2-WIA's.

29Oct67: Co. D- Fire fight with 10-VC, 2-WIA's.

30Oct67: Co. A- Patrol in Fire fight with 4-VC, 1-KIA.

30Oct67: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL RENSHAW, R. F. Co: "A"

30Oct67: BLT-1/3- In other Actions, the BLT sustained 3-WIA's. One of the wounded was from Company B, when a Friendly Aircraft was making a strafing run on a hill across the valley from BLT positions, and was struck by one of many falling shell casings (20mm Cannon Fire Casing) and his injury was non-emergency WIA. I also was close to the falling Casings, almost got hit too, and did pick up one HOT one as a souvenir(still have it-Don B C/1/3).

31Oct67: Co. A- Received AWF, 2-WIA's.

31Oct67: Co. D- Ambushed, received AWF, 2-WIA's.

31Oct67: Co. D- Incoming 60mm Mortars, SAF, 1-WIA.

31Oct67: Co. B- Contact with NVA patrol, Fire fight SAF, 4-WIA's.

31Oct67: Operation "Granite" was still in progress at the end of reporting period, which included two other Operations. BLT-1/3 sustained 14-KIA's and 70-WIA's while inflicting 11-NVA/VC KIA's (confirmed), 24-NVA/VC KIA's(probable), 1-NVA/VC WIA (probable), and capturing 14-VCS/POW's for the month of October.

02Nov67: Co. B- Received 8 rounds of 60mm Mortar fire, 1-WIA.

03Nov67: BLT-1/3 Recon- Patrol screening the rear of BLT, was hit with AWF, 1-KIA.

03Nov67: (**KIA / Fallen**) CPL PALCZEWSKI, E. L. Co: "H&S"

MEDAL: MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION, issued to the First Amphibian Tractor Battalion, Third Marine Division (Reinforced) Fleet Marine Force, for period of 05Nov67 to 27Jan68, Company "C", 1st Bn. 3rd Marines (Reinforced), from 16Dec67 to 27Jan68 (C-4 Area).

06Nov67 to 16Nov67: **KENTUCKY**

Province: Quang Tri- Con Thien area of DMZ.

Units: 3rd Mar Div(HQ), 1/1, 2/1, BLT-1/3, 2/3, 3/3, 1/4, 2/4, 3/4, 1/9, 2/9, 3/9, 1/26, 2/26, 3rd Tank battalion, 1st Brig 5th Infantry (US Army).

Object: C co helo'd into CAM LO, sniper and mortar rounds were incoming into the company area. On the 10th C co Marines moved out into the field to act as blocking force for 9th Mar.

On the 12th C co Marines walked into C3 and then helo'd to Dong Ha. Though BLT-1/3 only participated in operation for 10 days, the original start of the operation was November 1st,1967 and went till February 28, 1969. Operation KENTUCKY included the area between Cam Lo, Dong ha, and Con Thien.

Cost: 14 VC KIA, 7 KIA pos, 1 NVA POW. 3 Marines KIA, 12 WIA, 4 WIA ne. Total operation-USMC-52 KIA and 3079 WIA. Enemy losses 3921 KIA. Per 3rdmarines-operations lists 107 U.S. KIA (Marines). BLT-1/3 was in defensive positions in the vicinity of C-3 from the 6th-9th of November, assisting the 9th Marines in Phase II of Operation "Kentucky". On the 10th, the Battalion moved north to attack positions just short of the Trace, and began Attack north of the Trace on the 11th to seize different objectives. Once the objectives were searched, units returned to C-3, and onto Dong Ha. On the 14th of November, Phase III of Operation "Kentucky" had started, with the Battalion being the 3rd Marine Division RESERVE unit, at Dong Ha. BLT-1/3 sustained 3-KIA's and 16-WIA's, while inflicting 14-VC/NVA KIA's(confirmed), 7-VC/NVA KIA's (probable), and capturing 1-NVA-POW on the enemy during the Operation.

10Nov67: Co. A- Incoming Short round of Artillery, Friendly fire incident, 1-WIA.

11Nov67: Co. D- Company while attacking regimental objective-B was taken under heavy fire at point blank range by automatic and semi-automatic SAF. The NVA were in well concealed bunkers and numbered approximately one platoon. Elements of the company returned fire on the enemy. 1-KIA and 15-WIA's.

11Nov67: Co. D- Company while attacking through objective-D made contact with an estimated squad of NVA well dug in. Elements physically assaulted the NVA positions. 1-KIA and 1-WIA.

11Nov67: **(KIA / Fallen)** PFC ODELL, D. L. Co: "D"
LCPL YARTYMYK, M. H. Co: "D"
PFC DAVIDSON, W. G. Co: "D"

24Nov67 to 27Nov67: **BALLISTIC ARCH**

Province: Quang Tri- 7 clicks from the DMZ.

Unit: BLT-1/3

Object: The operation was a combined helicopter and surface assault of the Viet Cong held villages on the northern coast of Quang Tri. The operation targeted Communist sympathizers around the village of Mai Xa Thi . The expected contact did not occur, due to what was determined to be "poor intelligence". C co Marines landed at LZ ROBIN at 0700. After sweeping the AO, taking a little sniper fire, C co Marines went to the North of the Cua Viet river and an amphibious withdrawal from WHITE BEACH to Dong Ha.

Cost: 1 VC POW. BLT-1/3 made limited contact with the enemy during the operation. There were no mining incidents or the enemy harassing activities, as the enemy chose to avoid contact and apparently moved out of the area. No fighting holes, bunkers, or fortifications of any kind were uncovered during the operation. The Battalion did not sustain any casualties, and captured 1-VC/POW.

24Nov67: Co's. B or A- During the Amphibious Assault on Green Beach the seas were rough(surf conditions were considered hazardous), and water was knee deep in some of the LVT's. Two Marines were sweep from the top on one of the LVT's into the sea. Fortunately they were RESCUED.

MEDAL: MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION, issued to the Ninth Marine Regiment (Reinforced), Third Marine Division (Reinforced), for the period of 29Nov67 to 12Jan68, First Battalion, Third Marine Regiment, from 29Nov67 to 29Dec67 (A-3 Area).

30Nov67: BLT-1/3 participated in three Operations(continued and finished Granite, both Phases II and III of Kentucky, and started Operation "Kentucky V") during the month of November. BLT-1/3 sustained 4-KIA's and 17-WIA's while inflicting 25-

VC/NVA KIA's(confirmed), 23-VC/NVA KIA's(probable), and capturing 2-POW's on the enemy.

29Nov67 to 29Dec67: KENTUCKY V

Province: Quang Tri- Between Con Thien and Gio Linh at A-3 fire base.

Unit: BLT-1/3.

Object: BLT-1/3 provided security at the NEW Fire Base A-3, as Marine Engineers built the bunkers and command post. Artillery three times daily, 0800 hrs, 1200 hrs, and 1600 hrs- set your watch to it. Rain and MUD. On the 17th of December C/1/3 went to C-4 Fire Base, and had a major fight with the enemy north of C-4. That day a lot of our friends were burned with Napalm (our Napalm- friendly fire accident). C/1/3 was assigned to C-4 the remainder of the year, and till after TET was over. BLT-1/3 while providing security for the Engineers to build A-3, had very little contact with the enemy. The Battalion was Not to penetrate grid square 1770 to the south, due to a large concentration of Mines and Booby Traps. Between the 3rd and 19th of December, the Enemy employed 85mm and 130mm Artillery, 102mm and 140mm Rockets, 82mm Mortars, and 57mm Recoilless Rifle Fire while Firing 578 Rounds into the A-3 area. 2 additional rounds were received at A-3 on the 27th. On the 29th, the operation ended with combined tactical Foot and Motor March to the Quang Tri Airfield Complex.

02Dec67: KIA / Fallen LCPL WILLIAMS, L. G. Co: "C"

04Dec67: (KIA / Fallen) CPL RIGGS, D. S. Co: "D"

05Dec67: (KIA / Fallen) CPL BILLINGSLEA, D. E. Co: "D"

06Dec67: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL PASTVA, M. J. Co: "C"

09Dec67: (KIA / Fallen) MAJOR DUFFY, P. E. Co: "H&S"

10Dec67: (KIA / Fallen) CPL BIRCH, L. W. Co: "H&S"
HM3 HOWARD, B. L. Co: "H&S"

11Dec67: Co. C- On patrol south of A-3, the Company walked into a Mine Field. After hitting the 3rd Mine(apparent AP Mine), the Company backtracked out of the mine field, and returned to A-3. 1-KIA and 9-WIA's.

11Dec67: (KIA / Fallen) CPL STEVENS, D. M. Co: "C"

11Dec67: (KIA / Fallen) CPL GRAY, S. Co: "D"

16Dec67: Co. C- The Company was ordered OPCON to the 1st AMTRAC BN., to C-4 Complex.

17Dec67: Co. C- Moving to and patrolling north of C-4, made heavy contact with the NVA. During the Fire fight unknown number of friendly casualties(at least 1-KIA, and approximately 8-9 injured/wounded /burned by Napalm from Friendly Aircraft).

17Dec67: (KIA / Fallen) CPL SMITH, M. Co: "C"

20Dec7: Co. A- The Company was ordered OPCON to the 1st Amtrac Bn., and returned back to BLT-1/3 on 01Jan68.

22Dec67: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL MUELLER, S. W. Co: "H&S"

31Dec67: BLT-1/3 sustained 10-KIA's and 70-WIA's, while inflicting 2-VC/NVA KIA's(confirmed), and 12-VC/NVA KIA's(probable) on the enemy during the month of December. Unknown if "C" Company's casualties at C-4 area included.

1968

30Dec67 to 12Feb68: NAPOLEON

Province: Quang Tri- Mouth of Cua Viet river, south of C-4.

Units: 3/1, BLT-1/3(C/1/3).

Object: Operation NAPOLEON was 3/1's in the area of Cua Viet river, which had started 04Nov67 and ran till 28Feb68. C/1/3 assisted numerous times while also stationed at C-4. On the 19th of January, a platoon from company C, 1/3, patrolling the sand dunes along the coast north of the A-1 strong point, ran into a company from the communist K-400 Main Force Battalion. Cpl. Ronald Asher, the acting weapons platoon Sergeant, remembered that he and two of his machine gun teams accompanied the platoon. According to Asher, the lead squad walked right into the NVA positions, and that "within seconds" the unmistakable sound of AK47s and M16s could be heard with the unmistakable cough of the M60 machinegun was earth shattering. For a few chaotic hours the platoon took cover as best it could and attempted to recover its casualties. Cpl Asher recalls that he and another squad leader assumed control of the platoon, after the platoon leader and Sergeant were incapacitated. By 1500 after the arrival of the LVTs from Cua Viet, both sides broke contact. 3 Marine KIA, 33 WIA. 23 communist KIA. **TET**, the official communist New Year opened early with attacks on all the major cities, and American and South Vietnamese bases. C/1/3 of BLT-1/3 could have participated in this operation. C/1/3 was Opcon 1st Amtrac Bn. at C-4 area till after TET.

01Jan68 to 20Jan68: OSCEOLA

Province: Quang Tri

Units: 1st Marines, BLT-1/3(excluding C/1/3)

Object: BLT-1/3 assumed the mission of defending the Quang Tri Airfield Complex. Offensive action was limited to squad and platoon patrolling west of the Airfield complex, with light contact with the enemy(CD Rom).

05Jan68: BLT-1/3 deactivated from 9th MAB/SLF, re-designated as 1/3, and assigned back to 3rd Marine Division(1/3 assumed 2/4's place, and 2/4 went to SLF/on Float).

08Jan68: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL FOX, R. L. Co: "D"

10Jan68: (KIA / Fallen) SGT FALEAFINE, S. Co: "B"

13Jan68: (KIA / Fallen) CPL BAGNALL, R. S. Co: "B"

18Jan68: KIA / Fallen) PFC DOMINGUEZ, J. R. Co: "C"

19Jan68: Co. C- Platoon patrol Ambushed north of C-4, Day long Fire fight, Re-enforcements called in. 3-KIA's and 33-WIA's.(mentioned above in Operation Napoleon).

**19Jan68: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL BENEDICT, J. W. Co: "C"
LCPL BURGOON, W. P. Co: "C"
LCPL MORRIS, M. E. Co: "C"**

21Jan68 to 31Jan68: OSCEOLA II

Province: Quang Tri

Units: 3rd Mar Div(HQ), 1/3(excluding C/1/3)

Object: 1/3 at the Quang Tri Airfield Complex continued to provide for the defense of the Airfield Complex, continued to conduct offensive operations to the west of the Complex, and was the Reserve for the Division in case needed somewhere else. The enemy contact was characterized as only sporadic(CD Rom).

**24Jan68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC AUGE, D. C. Co: "B"
PFC FAULK, T. A. Co: "B"**

26Jan68: KIA / Fallen) CPL SIMONS, R. O. Jr. Co: "C"

30Jan68: Vietnam Service MEDAL, TET Counteroffensive, start 30Jan68 to 01Apr68.

31Jan68: 1/3 sustained 4-Kai's and 26-WIA's while inflicting 1-NVA KIA for the month of January.

13Feb68 to 16Feb68: OSCEOLA II

Province: Quang Tri

Units: 3rd Mar(HQ), 1/1, 1/3.

Object: Operation OSCEOLA II was the 3rd Marines operation in Quang Tri, which had started 21Jan68 to February 16th. C/1/3 assisted the last 4 days of the operation. C co was helo'd into Quang Tri on the 15th from C4. 1/3 apparently continued Operation "Osceola II" from 31Jan68, till the end of the operation. There were NO stats in the CD Rom for the month of February for 1/3. C/1/3 members would show this "Osceola II" entry in their Military Records.

14Feb68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC BAKER, R. E. Co: "D"

17Feb68 to 29Feb68: JEB STUART

Province: Quang Tri & Thua Thien.

Units: 1st Cav Div(HQ), 1-101, 2-101, C/1/3.

Object: 1st Air Cav was at Quang Tri, and handling operation JEB STUART in both Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces. The operation had started in January 1968(21st), and would run until March 31st. The 1st Cav Div was to reinforce the III MAF in area between Quang Tri and Hue and Phu Bia. C/1/3 was assigned to the 1st Air Cav and assisted in there operation.

Cost: Per Vietnam archives/ operations, 3268 Enemy KIA. No other losses listed for Army or Marines. Per 3rdmarines-operations, U.S. losses were 127 KIA.

18Feb68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC DEVOS, W. M. Co: "C"
(attached to the U. S. ARMY 1ST AIR CAV- assisting out of Quang Tri Area)

25Feb68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC SHELLEY, S. A. Co: "H&S"

28Feb68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC MILLER, J. E. Co: "D"

29Feb68: 1/3 did not have any stats in the CD Rom for the month of February.

01Mar68 to 03Jun68: NAPOLEON / SALINE

Province: Quang Tri- Cua Viet river, Dong Ha area.

Units: 3 Mar Div(HQ), 2/1, 3/1, 1/3, 2/3, 3/3, 2/4, 1/9, 2/9, 2/26, 2nd Brig 1st Cav Div(US Army), 1st Brig 5th Inf Div(US Army), 3rd Bat 21st Inf 196th Inf Brig(US Army).

Object: Operation by 3rd Marine Division which started on February 28th and ran through 09Dec68. Search and destroy missions around Dong Ha and the Cua Viet river areas (N/E quadrant of Quang Tri Province) using many Marine units and also US Army units.

Cost: Total Operation (13 month of search and destroy missions) USMC-395 KIA and 2134 WIA. Enemy losses 3495 KIA and 106 Captured. Unknown if US ARMY losses are included in the Marines total. Per 3rdmarines-operations operation Napoleon/Saline started 29Feb68 and ran to 12Sep68 along Cua Viet River with 3495 Enemy KIA and U.S. losses 117 KIA. 1/3 remained at the Quang Tri Airfield Complex, and participated in Operation "Napoleon/Saline" with the mission to deny the enemy access to the river area and ensure uninterrupted traffic there on. Company and platoon size Search and Destroy operations along the south bank of the river. 1/3 was also the Reserve for the Division, to assist in the western and southern portions of the AO. This to deny enemy capability to deliver indirect fire against River Traffic, Dong Ha, Cu Viet, and Quang Tri.

MEDAL: NAVY UNIT CITATION, issued to BLT Second Battalion, Fourth Marines (Reinforced), from 5Mar68 to 31May68, 1st Bn. 3rd Marines supporting Unit (Cua Viet River south of Dong Ha, possibly Battle of Dai Do), unknown dates!!

05Mar68: 1/3(unknown Companies), while north of the river had organized NVA contact at DAI DO.

05Mar68: **(KIA / Fallen)** PFC BANNER, S. A. Co: "A"
LCPL BANNING, J. H. Jr. Co: "A"
CPL BATH, E. J. Co: "A"
LCPL GARCIA, S. B. Co: "A"
PFC LITTON, G. W. Co: "H&S"
LCPL TALLEY, G. L. Co: "A"

07Mar68: 1/3(unknown Companies), Still north of the river, more NVA contact at the village of Phu Tai.

07Mar68: **(KIA / Fallen)** PFC BERG, R. R. Co: "D"
PFC CASILLO, C. Co: "A"
LCPL COOK, L. Co: "A"
LCPL DERRYBERRY, A. R. III Co: "H&S"
LCPL GINAL, P. A. Co: "A"
PFC HALL, R. D. Co: "D"
LCPL HAMMEL, R. L. Co: "A"
LCPL HATHAWAY, S. W. Co: "H&S"
PFC HOOVER, E. L. Co: "A"
PFC JOHNSON, S. P. Co: "A"
PFC LAMBERTON, G. M. II Co: "A"
LCPL MULDOVAN, W. J. Co: "A"
CPL WHITEHEAD, E. Jr. Co: "D"

07Mar68: AWARDED the NAVY CROSS-Co: "A" CPL William H. YOUNG

(Citation) For extraordinary heroism while serving as a Radio Operator with Company "A", First Battalion, Third Marines, Third Marine Division in connection with combat operations

against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. On the afternoon of 7 March 1968, while advancing toward the village of Phu Tai in Quang Tri Province, Company "A" came under intense automatic weapons and mortar fire from a numerically superior North Vietnamese Army force concealed in fortified bunkers. Although the Marines were pinned down in an open rice paddy, where any movement away from the protection afforded by the small dikes might mean almost certain death or serious injury, Corporal Young ignored the rounds impacting near him and fearlessly moved to positions from which he could effectively control air strikes on the enemy emplacements. When friendly casualties increased, he again disregarded his own safety as he unhesitatingly maneuvered forward and directed the evacuation of the wounded to a helicopter landing zone which he had established. During a subsequent assault on the village, he repeatedly exposed himself to intense hostile fire in order to coordinate and control the fire of supporting helicopter gunships. As the Marines moved through the hazardous area, an enemy soldier suddenly ran out of a nearby bunker and prepared to fire directly at the advancing command group. Shouting a warning to his comrades, Corporal Young boldly assaulted the North Vietnamese, killing him with accurate pistol fire. Although he was later wounded in the chest and leg by sniper fire and moved to a covered position, he ignored his painful injuries and continued to coordinate vital air support for approximately three hours. His heroic intrepid fighting spirit, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of great personal danger, Corporal Young contributed immeasurably to the defeat of the enemy and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. (The NAVY CROSS, pages 354 and 355).

31Mar68: 1/3 had one Company Opcon to 1st Amtrac Bn. at C-4 Area (unknown Company). 1/3 also sustained 18-KIA's and 95-WIA's while inflicting 36-VC/NVA KIA's(confirmed) and capturing 7-POW's on the enemy during the month while participating on the operation. For the month of March, 1/3 rotated 5-Officers and 162- Enlisted to GO HOME(this included Ron Asher, Richie Huffman, Larry Hargrave, Lee Levesque, and me-Don Bumgarner plus many of our other friend's).

02Apr68: Vietnam Service MEDAL, Vietnamese Counteroffensive, Phase IV, start 02Apr68 to 30Jun68.

03Apr68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC CARTER, G. M. Co: "B"
(B Co, 3rd AMTRACS assigned to B/1/3)

17Apr68: (KIA / Fallen) HM3 BANDELIER, H. W. Co: "H&S"
PFC FREEMAN, E. L. Jr. Co: "A"
LCPL GARCIA, J. F. Co: "A"
CPL LAMBERT, J. E. Co: "A"
PFC O'FARRELL, W. P. Co: "A"
LCPL SUTTON, J. T. Co: "A"
PFC WESTBROOK, D. F. Co: "A"
PFC WINSLOW, W. D. Co: "A"
PFC WYRICK, D. K. Co: "A"

18Apr68: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL CHALMERS, D. Jr. Co: "H&S"

LCPL SPENCER, P. M. Co: "H&S"

25Apr68: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL JAYNES, J. O. Co: "C"

29Apr68: (KIA / Fallen) CPL DODD, J. W. Co: "B"

Over-view: Battle for Dong Ha- The opening contact with the 320th NVA Division came early on 29 April. Two battalions of the 2nd Regiment, 1st ARVN Infantry Division bumped into the NVA seven kilometers north of Dong Ha. As the fight raged on and it began to look as if the ARVN were beaten, General Tompkins dispatched part of his division reserve from Cam Lo, ten kilometers to the west, to help them. Task Force Robbie, consisting of a rifle company from 1/9 and a tank company from the 3rd Tank Battalion made it just three kilometers east of Cam Lo before being ambushed by a strong NVA force. After losing eleven dead, twenty-nine wounded, and four tanks, TF Robbie limped back to Cam Lo. Surprised at the viciousness of the ambush, General Tompkins ordered 3/9 to counterattack the next day, 30 April. To Backstop the ARVN still engaged along Route 1, Tompkins ordered the 3rd Marines to send a rifle company to guard a bridge on Route 1 a few kilometers north of Dong Ha. Colonel Milton A. Hull, 3rd Marines commander, currently had three battalions opconned to his regiment: the 1st Amphibious Tractor Battalion, which operated just inland of the South China Sea on the north side of the Cua Viet; 1/3, which was operating south of the river; and BLT 2/4, SLF Alpha, which operated north of the Cua Viet between the 1st Amphibious Tractors and the 2nd ARVN Regiment to the west. Colonel Hull ordered Capt. James E. Livingston to take his Company "E", 2/4, to the bridge from its position in Nhi Ha, a deserted hamlet about four kilometers north of the Cua Viet. Livingston and his men were carried by UH-34 helicopters to their new position north of the bridge on the afternoon of 29 April. Early the next morning, Company "H", 2/4, while on routine patrol, was surprised to find NVA in the village of Dong Huan, a small hamlet set on an unnamed tributary of the Cue viet where it turned south, and less than one kilometer above the Bo Dien. The NVA were already much farther south than was originally thought. A brief firefight erupted, with both sides exchanging short bursts of fire. Then, as the Marines watched, other NVA fired a 57mm recoilless rifle at two U.S. Navy utility landing craft (LCUs) moving on the Bo Dieu. An instant later, the lead boat rocked as two shells ripped through its thin sides. The boats whipped into a U-turn and sped back to Dong Ha. As soon as he got this news, battalion commander Lt. Col. William Weise ordered Company "H" to attack Dong Huan from its position in the hamlet of Bac Vong to the north. At about

the same time, the U.S. Navy halted all further river traffic between Camp KIAtler, Dong Ha, and Quang Tri City. The enemy had achieved his objective with just a few well-placed shots. The little peninsula between the Bo Dieu and the unnamed tributary to the north contained five hamlets laid out along an extended "V". At the upper end of the right arm was Dong Huan. Roughly five hundred meters south, at the tip of the "V" and on the north bank of the Bo Dieu, sat An Lac. Five hundred meters up the left arm was the largest of the five hamlets, Dai Do. A few hundred meters farther northwest was Dinh To, and just past that hamlet was Thuong Do. Given the NVA's propensity for setting up situations where they were dug in and their foe was in the open, Weise realized that he had to secure Dai Do, directly to the west. He thus ordered Company "F" to maneuver on Company "H's" right flank. Its objective was a cemetery just east of Dai Do. Even though Company "F" hadn't yet moved into position, Company "H"

nonetheless launched its attack at about 1400 on 30 April. As the last pair of F-4 Phantom jets unleashed their five-hundred-pound bombs and napalm canisters on Dong Huan, a supporting artillery fired its final salvo, the company arose and, advancing on line, headed for the hamlet. Enemy resistance was immediate, fierce, and at close range. Advancing through thick vegetation crisscrossed by hedges more than three meters high, the Marines were fired on by NVA from only two meters away. The crackling of Ak-47s built slowly to a crescendo as enemy soldiers recovered from the bombardment. Popping up from spider holes hidden in the hedgerows, the NVA fired left and right. Hand-to-hand fighting erupted as NVA soldiers grappled with surprised Marines. Grenades tossed by both sides exploded in thundering crashes, felling Marines and killing NVA trapped in their holes. In the opening minutes of the attack the company commander, Capt. James L. Williams, went down with shrapnel wounds. As he lay bleeding in the dirt, his executive officer quickly assumed command. Despite the heavy resistance, Company "H" pressed on. The fighting was at close quarters and deadly, but by 1430 the Marines had advanced through Dong Huan. Exhausted but pumped with adrenaline,

they gazed across open paddies at An Lac to the south and Dai Do to the west. With some thirty dead NVA behind them, Lieutenant Colonel Weise gave Company "H" permission to return to its jumping off point. There the Marines set up a night defensive position and evacuated their casualties. At about the same time that Company "H" reached Dong Huan, Company "F" finally started moving toward Dai Do. The company commander, Capt. James Butler, had been delayed because he'd been trying to get a smoke screen laid around Dai Do. Because Company "H" had priority on the available artillery, his company would have to move across the five

hundred meters of open ground completely exposed. Riding atop four amtracs, the Marines were hit as they neared the hamlet. At about 1430 RPG's flashed out from Dai Do, crashing into the amtracs, their explosions spilling Marines into the tall grass. This first barrage of RPG's damaged two amtracs and caused a number of casualties. After finally getting some artillery to fire on the hamlet, Butler sent two platoons forward. As they neared the first hedgerow, located about one hundred meters east of Dai Do, the enemy infantry let loose. The sudden roar of AK-47 fire drowned out the artillery explosions. The deadly sheet of automatic weapons fire dropped men all along the line. Those who could help the wounded pull back to the rest of the company, now clustered around the amtracs. After another artillery barrage tore into the hamlet, Company "F's" Marines rushed forward again. This time their tenacity allowed them to secure a tenuous toehold in northwest Dai Do. Determined to maintain that position, Weise wanted Company "G" to reinforce Company "F". Colonel Hull told him there weren't enough helicopters available to transport them in time. Weise then appealed for the return of Company "E" from division control. Hull responded that not only was he working on that, he was also giving Weise Company "B", 1/3. Weise ordered Company "B" to attack and secure An Lac. From its position south of the Cua Viet near Camp KIAtrler, Company "B", 1/3, boarded amtracs for the trip up river. At about 1615 the vessels neared the beaches fronting An Lac along the Bo Dieu. In a scene resembling a World War II island beachhead assault, a withering hail of enemy fire raked Company "B" as its members poured out of the amtracs. The company commander died in the flurry of AK-47 fire just minutes after stepping ashore. A platoon leader and platoon sergeant died, too. In the first five minutes ashore, seven marines were killed and fourteen were seriously wounded, including the company gunnery sergeant. Weise had had no idea that the NVA had that much strength in

An Lac. Using F-4 Phantoms from both the Marine Corps and Air Force, naval gunfire, and artillery, Weise pounded An Lac for the next thirty minutes. Only then could Company "B", with just one surviving officer, secure its beachhead. Weise then ordered the company to dig in for the night, evacuate its wounded, and carry out a re-supply. In the meantime, Captain Butler (F/2/4), concerned about a counterattack against his company's weak positions in Dai Do, radioed Weise to request permission to pull back and link up with Company "H" for the night. Although Weise hated to give up hard-won ground, he gave his okay. It took until dark to complete the retrograde movement, but Company "F" finally staggered into Dong Huan with just fifty-five effectives (men). Together with Company "H", they spent the night of 30 April-1 May secure behind a wall of artillery and mortar fire. Company "B", 1/3, spent a similar night at An Lac. Because of the beating that Company "B", 1/3, had taken that day, Lieutenant Colonel Weise decided to commit his Company "G" to the fight. From its position ten kilometers northeast of the battleground, Company "G" was ordered to proceed immediately to An Lac, move through Company "B", and attack Dai Do in the predawn darkness. Adequate transportation still could not be secured, so Company "G" did not arrive at An Lac until about 0945 on 1 May. When all its men were ashore, Weise ordered the company commander, Capt. Jay R. Vargas, to move his Marines around Company "B" to the right, then attack northwest toward Dai Do across seven hundred meters of open ground. Companies "F" and "H" would support Vargas from Dong Huan as he drove into the hamlet. While Vargas prepared his company for the attack, Dai Do was pounded with napalm and bombs from Marine Phantoms and Skyhawks. At the same time, NVA artillery batteries north of the DMZ were blasting Dong Huan and An Lac. The noise was tremendous with all the explosions and the screams of low-flying jets. Men had to shout at one another to be heard above the din. Supported by two tanks, Company "G" jumped off at about 1300. Advancing with two platoons forward, the company made it about one third of the way across the open ground before the NVA opened fire. The 3rd Platoon, on the left, was particularly hard hit. A 12.7mm machine gun played havoc with the advancing Marines. Its deadly rounds cut men down like an invisible scythe. Just then, enemy mortar and artillery rounds tore into the area, throwing towering geysers of dirt skyward. Ignoring the lethal danger, Vargas boldly ran to the stalled platoon. Under his urging the advance resumed. By 1500 Company "G" was in Dai Do. Heavy, close-quarters fighting raged as the Marines moved through the hamlet. Enemy soldiers seemed to be everywhere, popping up from spider holes, from under haystacks, from trench lines behind hedgerows, and from inside the abandoned huts. But Vargas's men routed them out one by one with ruthless efficiency. Company "G" had just barely reached the far side of Dai Do when the NVA counterattacked. Aerial observers excitedly reported scores of enemy soldiers pouring out of Dinh To and headed right toward Dai Do. Though supporting fire blasted the enemy formations, by 1630 they were seriously pressing Vargas's company. He had no choice. He ordered a withdrawal. As the Marines retreated they couldn't believe what they were experiencing. The NVA were so close that they were being killed at pistol range and in hand-to-hand combat. Some North Vietnamese soldiers were so pumped up that they actually ran right past the withdrawing Americans. Vargas and about forty-five of his men dropped into a deep drainage ditch that ran along Dai Do's northeastern edge. The heavy volume of fire that the small but determined force put out finally halted the enemy's momentum. At the same time the forward artillery controllers were on their radios desperately calling for more supporting fire. Within minutes their pleas were answered. The heavy 105mm shells were soon crashing down less than fifty meters from the ditch. Now, greatly concerned for Company "G's"

survival, Lieutenant Colonel Weise ordered Company "B", 1/3, into the fight. Mounted on amtracs, what remained of the battered company started for Dai Do about 1730. At the same time, Company "E", 2/4, was finally released from division control. Captain Livingston immediately started his men on the two-kilometer march to An Lac. Along the way marauding bands of NVA scouts repeatedly fired on them, killing several Marines. But by 1900, Company "E" was in An Lac. At 1745, while still less than halfway to Dai Do, Company "B"(1/3) was blasted off its amtracs by RPG's and automatic weapons fire. Among those grievously wounded was the new company commander, who'd taken command but a few hours earlier. Unable to proceed, with tracer rounds snapping just inches over their heads, the survivors of Company "B" began pulling back to An Lac. They dragged their wounded with them; the dead stayed in the field. Four hundred meters to the north, Captain Vargas and his forty-five surviving Marines dug in for the night. Besides their own weapons, they had the support of artillery to hold the determined NVA at bay. Before first light on 2 May, Company "E" (2/4) was up and ready to go. Captain Livingston ordered, "Fixed bayonets." It was very satisfying to him to hear the distinct click of the edged weapons locking into place on 150 rifles. Because of the communication problem, Company "E" moved toward Dai Do without the benefit of a rolling barrage of artillery to keep down the enemy's heads. Still, only occasional pops from a sniper's rifle interrupted the advance. Then, in a blur of confusion, the NVA let loose with everything they had when the Marines were just 150 meters short of the hamlet. From the hedgerows along Dai Do's south edge, small arms, automatic rifle, and RPG fire slammed into Company "E". Livingston and his command group dove behind one of the numerous burial mounds dotting the open area. Eighteen RPG's exploded around them in the next few minutes. Company "E" was pinned down. From his position on the northeast edge of Dai Do, Captain Vargas tried to relieve the pressure on Company "E" by leading his forty-five men in a attack through the hamlet. Soon, the NVA shifted their fire to meet the new threat. With less fire coming his way, Captain Livingston then rallied his men and led them forward to the hamlet's edge. Dead NVA littered the ground everywhere, but there were plenty of live ones left and they weren't giving up easily. Marines used grenades and M-79 grenade launchers, to clear enemy positions. The fighting was brutal but the Marines pressed forward, meter by bloody meter. At 0914 Captain Vargas advised Lieutenant Colonel Weise that he had linked up with Livingston. They were digging in on Dai Do's northwestern edge. Before Weise could respond, NVA mortar shells fired from Dinh To began dropping among the Marines. During the fifteen-minute barrage, Weise was ordered by Colonel Hull to continue the ground attack into Dinh To. Weise was incredulous but had no choice. Realizing that Companies "E" (2/4) and "G" (2/4) were in no shape to launch another full-scale attack, Lieutenant Colonel Weise turned to Company "H" (2/4). Just before 1000, Company "H" left its positions in Dong Huan and moved through Dai Do's western edge. Using fire and maneuver tactics, two of its platoons made it into Dinh To under relatively light enemy fire. As the two platoons started through the hamlet, the NVA suddenly counterattacked. Within minutes Company "H" was in serious trouble. Seconds later Captain Livingston, who'd been monitoring Company "H's" progress on the radio, called Weise: "I'm going to help Hotel (Company "H"). They're really fixing to get in trouble. I'll go get 'em." Without waiting for a response, Captain Livingston took seventy able-bodied men left in his company on the attack. Charging through the enemy fire, Livingston led his men right

through clusters of NVA bypassed by Company "H". They were killing the enemy on the run. Some NVA fled, actually trotting along with Livingston's Marines before they were shot down. Once Company "E" tied in with Company "H", the two companies resumed the attack on Dinh To. Initially, they made good progress, but then the NVA counterattacked yet again. A sudden increase in enemy fire signaled their intention. From as close as twenty-five meters the NVA cut loose with an awesome display of firepower. The noise rose to an ear-shattering roar as weapons of every caliber spewed hot lead. Under tremendous pressure the Marines were forced back. Bravely defying the enemy's onslaught, Livingston stood in the open, firing a rifle at the crew with a 12.7mm machine gun. The NVA got lucky before Livingston did. A heavy slug from the automatic weapon tore into his thigh, sending him sprawling. As two other wounded men helped him to safety, he turned over command of Company "E" to a rookie lieutenant. The two battered companies retreated all the way back to Dai Do. There they evacuated their seriously wounded and loaded up on more ammo. At this time Lieutenant Colonel Weise arrived in Dai Do with more orders from Colonel Hull. Impossible as it seemed, 2/4 was to immediately launch yet another attack into Dinh To. Calling upon what remained of Companies "F" and "G", Weise ordered them to clear Dinh To. The renewed assault kicked off at 1550. It was a bloody failure. Through a misunderstanding of orders, Company "F" did not provide Vargas's company with adequate support. Rather than advance in trail behind Company "G", from where it could pass through Vargas's company to exploit any weak spots, Company "F" moved on their right flank, in the open fields east of the hamlet. As a result, the entrenched

NVA easily flanked the two companies. Then, at 1645 the NVA, displaying incredible reserve strength, counterattacked once again. To the shock of the Marines, the NVA seemed to be everywhere. Dozens of enemy soldiers poured out of the nearby brush. Wearing pith helmets and firing their AK-47s from their hips, they raced forward. Vargas's depleted platoons retreated right past the ditch he was using as a command post. Lieutenant Colonel Weise and his command group, who'd joined Vargas just a few minutes earlier, fought as riflemen. Weise blazed away with an M16, picking off enemy soldiers as easily as hitting targets on a firing range. Then, the attacking enemy soldiers were alongside the ditch. In rapid succession Weise was hit by enemy rifle fire, and the battalion sergeant major was killed by the shrapnel from an exploding RPG. Intent on saving his commander, Captain Vargas valiantly risked his own life to carry Weise rearward to an evacuation point. Vargas then returned to his embattled company. Using an AK-47, he fired away at the enemy while he helped the wounded rearward. An RPG explosion knocked him down as it tore a chunk of flesh from his leg. Still, he fought on and got his casualties headed to safety. All around him Marines and North Vietnamese soldiers grappled in death struggles. Vargas himself killed an enemy soldier with his knife. Despite these heroics, the Marines were forced back. By 1800 Companies "F" and "G" were in Dai Do. All four companies of 2/4 dug in there for the night. The Marines spent a nervous night as the NVA probed their positions throughout the dark hours. More than a dozen enemy soldiers were killed as they sneaked forward to try to throw grenades into the friendly positions. It had been a brutal three-day fight for 2/4. At the end of 2 May, Company "E" had forty-five men left, Company "F" fifty-two, Company "G" thirty-five, and Company "H" sixty-four. That night, Colonel Hull ordered the rest of 1/3 to land at An Lac on the afternoon of 3 May. They would then renew the attack through Dinh To and into Thuong Do, the next village north. The new attack went off as planned. By 1500 two companies of 1/3 had entered Dinh To. Although

they encountered some resistance, it was apparent that the NVA had pulled out pulled out the night before. By 1800, 1/3 had swept through Thuong Do. All that remained was to tally up the losses. The BLT 2/4 was credited with 537 enemy dead. The battalion suffered 81 dead and 397 wounded. For that, they had prevented the 320th NVA Division from attacking the Dong Ha combat base. For their incredible heroism during the violent three-day fight, Captain Vargas and Livingston were awarded the Medal of Honor. Lieutenant Colonel Weise received a Navy Cross. Through battered, the 320th NVA Division was not down. Pursued by 1/3, on 5 May, the NVA stood and fought at Som Soi, one kilometer north of Thuong Do. The Marines lost fifteen killed and sixty-four wounded before the NVA broke contact. The next day the division re-crossed the DMZ into North Vietnam to lick it's wounds. (This was referred to as **The BATTLE of DAI DO** by many!) (per Semper Fi Vietnam, pages 188 to 198).

30Apr68: (KIA / Fallen) 1LT NORRIS, G. C. Co: "B"
2LT O'DELL, J. M. Co: "B"
SGT VIERHELLER, H. J. Jr. Co: "B"
CPL WARD, A. C. Co: "B"

30Apr68: 1/3 for the month April continued participating in Operation "Napoleon/Saline" within the Cua Viet River Area, to deny enemy access to the River area and ensure uninterrupted traffic thereon. Mainly on the south side of the river. 1/3 sustained 15 KIA's and 54 WIA's for the month, while inflicting 69 VC/NVA KIA's (CD Rom).

01May68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC CAPPARELLI, G. G. Co: "B"
LCPL CRIDER, R. D. Co: "B"
CPL GENERAL, L. N. Co: "B"
PFC HARDIN, D. I. Co: "B"
PFC HERNANDEZ, R. C. Jr. Co: "B"
PVT ISER, K. E. Co: "B"
CPL JONES, D. A. Co: "B"
PFC MOORE, T. E. Co: "B"

02May68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC IDLE, T. G. "Tommy" Co: "B"
PFC REAMER, C. B. Jr. Co: "B"

03May68: 1/3 still participating in Operation "Napoleon/Saline" moved NORTH of the Cua Viet River to the villages of DAI DO, THUONG DO, and TRUC KINH. Heavy Enemy contact was encountered at DAI DO. The battle of Dai Do was from May 3rd to May 9th, and units I/3/4 and M/3/4 assisted. The Fierce fighting ended with 1/3 inflicting 338 VC/NVA KIA's on the Enemy and capturing 6 POW's.(CD Rom).

03May68: (KIA / Fallen) CPL GAMBLE, R. R. Co: "B"

04May68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC MOBLEY, L. Co: "C"

05May68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC BEASLEY, J. H. Co: "D"
PFC DEAN, T. N. Co: "D"

CPL DOLEN, J. A. Co: "D"
HM3 GRAY, H. D. Co: "H&S"
PFC GREKELA, W. E. Co: "H&S"
PFC HAGEL, R. W. Co: "D"
PFC HITCHCOCK, R. J. Co: "D"
HN HOLLEY, P. R. Co: "H&S"
LCPL INDRECC, G. T. Co: "D"
PFC JANEWAY, J. L. Co: "D"
LCPL JOHNSON, M. L. Co: "D"
CPL KNIGHT, A. C. Co: "D"
PFC MADISON, R. C. Co: "C"
LCPL PIERCE, J. R. C. Co: "D"
PFC SHASTEEN, K. P. Co: "D"
CPL TAYLOR, T. L. Co: "D"
PFC TURCOTTE, P. R. Co: "D"

08May68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC GARLEY, F E. Co: "C"

**17May68: (KIA / Fallen) HN DELGADO-CLASS, L. Co: "H&S"
LCPL SMITH, J. C. Co: "H&S"**

25May68: 1/3 still operating North of Cua Viet river, made Heavy contact with the Enemy again in the villages of THANH HOI and LIA AN. 1/3 assisted by units F/2/4 and A/1/9 were engaged in battle from May 25th to the 31st. During this second battle of the month, 1/3 inflicted 78 NVA KIA's on the Enemy and captured 6 more POW's(CD Rom).

**27May68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC DAVILA, A. Co: "A"
LCPL FREEMAN, W. L. Co: "A"
2LT GORTON, R. S. III Co: "D"
PFC SALTER, S. B. Co: "D"
PFC SCOTT, G. J. Co: "D"
LCPL SHAFER, G. C. Co: "A"
CPL TREWEEK, C. J. Co: "D"**

**29May68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC BRECK, G. A. Co: "D"
LCPL COLE, M. E. Co: "A"
LCPL GRANT, G. T. Co: "D"
LCPL HAYES, B. R. Co: "A"
PFC HIPPIE, B. J. F. Co: "D"
CPL JOHNSON, J. M. Co: "D"
LCPL LATHAM, M. T. Co: "D"
PFC PALMORE, D. S. Co: "D"
LCPL ROKASKI, M. C. Co: "A"
LCPL SEGINE, R. E. Co: "A"**

CPL SIMON, V. Co: "A"

30May68: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL DRAEMER, C. E. Co: "A"

31May68: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL ALAIMO, H. J. Co: "D"

31May68: For the month of May, 1/3 sustained a total of 48 KIA's and 223 WIA's. Also 1/3 claimed 421 VC/NVA KIA's and a total of 12 POW's. Lots of enemy equipment and weapons were captured during the month(CD Rom).

04Jun68 to 16Jun68: KENTUCKY

Province: Quang Tri-Area around Con Thien

Units: 3rd Mar Div, and other Marine units.

Object: Return to operation Kentucky, started 01Nov67 by 3rd Marine Division in area between Cam Lo, Dong Ha, and Con Thien.

04Jun68: (KIA / Fallen) CPL McDORMAN, D. K. Co: "C"

15Jun68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC HEBERT, R. D. Co: "D"

17Jun to 26Jun68: LANCASTER II

Province: Quang Tri

Units: 3rd Mar Div(HQ), 1/1, 1/3, 2/3, 3/3, 1/4, 2/4, 3/4, 1/9, 2/9, 3/9, 2/26.

Object: 3rd Marine Division operations in area of Quang Tri. Operations in area started 20Jan68 and run through 23Nov68. Numerous Marine Units are used at different times during the total operation.

Cost: Per 3rdmarnes-operations 1801 Enemy KIA, unknown USMC Losses (KIA and WOUNDED).

29Jun68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC RUIZ, P. G. Co: "A"
LCPL THORNTON, L. L. Co: "B"

30Jun68: There were no stats for the month of June for 1/3.

01Jul68: Vietnam Service MEDAL, Vietnamese Counteroffensive, Phase V, 01Jul68 to 01Nov68.

Over-view: Heavy enemy shelling of both Camp KIA tler and Dong Ha during June resulted in the launching of **Operation THOR** on 1 July. This operation was unusual because it was

designed to destroy the enemy artillery positions in the southern portion of the DMZ by a massive application of aerial bombs and artillery. Infantry units would then follow up. Marine, Navy, and Air Force aircraft-including B-52 bombers from Guam, 2 U.S. Navy cruisers and 6 destroyers, and 118 pieces of Army and Marine artillery-poured thousands of tons of high explosives into the target area over a seven-day period. It was one of the largest and most concentrated bombardments of the entire war. As the eastern infantry arm of Operation Thor, Colonel Hull sent his 3rd Marines attacking north from the Cua Viet on 5 July. Enemy contact developed almost immediately as 1/3 fought the NVA at Lia An, a hamlet ten kilometers north of Dong Ha. Over the next few days, the grunts found the NVA in nearly every hamlet they entered. To the west, in the Operation Kentucky AO, elements of the 9th Marines aggressively patrolled the area north and east of Con Thien. The Marines and NVA clashed every day in sharp, but short, engagements. On 17 July, the 3rd Marines, 9th Marines, and 2nd ARVN Regiment were helicoptered into LZs along the southern edge of the DMZ. Then, in a movement reminiscent of Operation Hickory (Beau Charger 1/3's portion of Hickory) in 1967, they attacked to the south, their objective being to clear the land of the enemy all the way to Route 9. Faced with this formidable onslaught, the NVA simply disappeared into the rugged terrain. The most significant action of the operation came on the first day, when 3/9 fought a well-entrenched NVA company on the ridgeline about ten kilometers northwest of Camp Carroll. Working with close air support from A-4s and F-4s, the infantrymen overran the enemy position by nightfall. On 31 July, Operation Thor ended. The month-long campaign resulted in the destruction of dozens of enemy fortifications and the capture of significant quantities of supplies. (per Semper Fi Vietnam, pages 200-201).

04Jul68 to 08Jul68: JONES CREEK AREA, THIRD MARINES

Province: Quang Tri

Unit: 3rd Mar(HQ), 1/3, ??.(C/1/3-there) 1/3 was back in Operation "Napoleon/Saline" A.O. from the 1st to the 8th of July for Operation JONES CREEK. During this operation, 1/3 fought elements of the 138th Independent Regiment and 48th Reg/320 Division NVA. Heavy fighting ensued with 1/3 inflicting 151 NVA/KIA's and capturing 6 POW's, while sustaining 5 KIA's and 58 WIA's. 1/3 was moved to Quang Tri Combat Base for a one day Refitting/Re-supply of all units referred to as Operation "SURE" on the 8th of July. (CD Rom).

04Jul68: Co. C- ambushed/platoon of enemy/firefight/small-arms and automatic weapons fire
1-KIA, 2-WIA's

04Jul68: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL SHEARER, D. T. Co: "C"

04Jul68: Co. B- small-arms/12 Rds 82mm mortars 6-WIA's

05Jul68: Co. C- small-arms/11 Rds incoming 60mm mortars 2-KIA's and 3-WIA's

05Jul68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC ECTOR, J. Co: "C"
CPL GARCIA, J. G. Co: "C"

05Jul68: 1/3- 25-30 Rds 82mm mortars/small-arms/RPG/57mm Recoilless Rifle fire 5-WIA's and 1-damaged USMC tank

05Jul68: Co. C- Tank hit mine 2-WIA's

05Jul68: **(KIA / Fallen)** GYSGT AUSMUS, R. A. Co: "H&S"

06Jul68: Co. B- Booby-Trap Explosion 1-WIA

06Jul68: 1/3- 40-45 Rds 130mm Artillery incoming 1-KIA

06Jul68: Co. C- Claymore type mine 1-WIA

06Jul68: 1/3- 25-30 Rds 130mm Artillery incoming 22-WIA's

07Jul68: 1/3- 40-45 Rds 130mm Artillery incoming 7-WIA's

07Jul68: 1/3- 75-80 Rds 85mm Artillery/mortars/ heavy firefight during assault, Co.'s A & B assisted coordinated assault using tanks and artillery 1-KIA, 9-WIA's

07Jul68: **(KIA / Fallen)** 1LT KEPPEN, T. R. Co: "B"

09Jul68 to 16Jul68: SCOTLAND II

Province: Quang Tri- area around Khe Sanh.

Units: 3rd Mar Div (HQ), 1/1, 2/1, 1/3, 2/3, 3/3, 1/4, 2/4, 3/4, 1/9, 2/9, 3/9, 1/26, 2/26, 3/26, 2nd Brig 1st Cav Div(US Army).

Object: 3rd Marine Division Operations around KHE SANH. Operations started 14Apr68 and ran through 28Feb69, using numerous Marine Units and some US Army units also. Search and destroys missions.

Cost: Total operation USMC- 463 KIA and 2555 WIA(most battles after Siege). Enemy had 3311 KIA. (The listed Cost per Vietnam Archives/Operations was USMC- 435 KIA, 2395 WIA, and 32 Missing in Action. Enemy KIA 3311 PAVN). Per 3rdmarines- operations 1st Mar Div operations around Khe Sanh with 3311 Enemy KIA and 270 U.S. KIA. 1/3 with Bravo Command Group, D/1/4, G/2/4, and L/3/4 were assigned security and protection of Camp Carrol, Khe Gio Bridge, and Route #9 area during this operation. (CD Rom).

17Jul68 to 16Aug68: LANCASTER II

Province: Quang Tri

Units: C/1/3 back on operations in area of Quang Tri, for 3rd Marine Division. This operation will run till 23Nov68. C co Marines will be back later. 1/3 was in the MUTTERS RIDGE Area

to secure and construct LZ's and River Off Loading Zones. Between the 27th to 31st of July, 1/3 was in the Hayride Valley near Stuarts Rock area. This per the CD Rom.

17Jul68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC ROWLETT, G. P. Co: "B"

29Jul68: Co. A- 5-10 rds small-arms fire incoming 2-WIA's

31Jul68: 1/3 for the month of July sustained 5 KIA's and 97 WIA's, while inflicting 167 NVA KIA's and 11 POW's(CD Rom).

02Aug68: (KIA / Fallen) CPL TAYLOR, B. J. Co: "C"

6Aug68 to 24Aug68: LANCASTER II / JUPITER

Province: Quang Tri

Units: 3rd Mar Div(HQ), C/1/3, and other unknown units.

Object: Search and destroy missions in area.1/3 with Company C leading air assault into DMZ, landed and the Enemy launched mortar attack on landing zone causing many casualties with 150 rounds 60 mm mortar incoming. 1/3 continued the Search and Destroy operation, capturing tons on enemy gear/rounds, and destroying numerous bunkers. 1/3 sustained 7 KIA's and 99 WIA's for this operation per the CD Rom.

08Aug68: (KIA / Fallen) HN WILDMAN, S. E. Co: "H&S"

16Aug68: Co. C- air assault LZ received 50 Rds 60mm mortars/Recoilless Rifle Fire 18 WIA's

16Aug68: 1/3- air assault LZ received 100 Rds 60mm mortars attack 4-KIA's, 72 WIA's

**16Aug68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC BANNA, W. T. Jr. Co: "D"
PFC MUNOZ, R. O. II Co: "A"
LCPL MUSICK, T. W. Co: "D"
CPL ROE, J. E. Co: "D"**

18Aug68: Co. D- Contact/Firefight/Platoon of enemy 3-KIA's and 9-WIA's

**18Aug68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC HARMS, L. Co: "D"
PFC HEETER, J. R. Co: "D"
SGT VICKERY, F. M. III Co: "D"**

25Aug68 to 28Aug68: KENTUCKY

Province: Quang Tri- Operations in Leatherneck Square(this is area between Con Thien, Cam Lo, and Dong Ha).

Units: 3rd Marine Division, C/1/3,and other marine units.

Object: Return to Leatherneck Square(N/E quadrant of Quang Tri Province), for more search and destroy missions. The Operation-Kentucky will continue till 28Feb69. 1/3 conducted operations in Leatherneck Square with the 1st Marines. Later 1/3 was passed from 1st Marines to the 1st Bde 5th Inf Div(Mechanical) US Army(CD Rom).

27Aug68: Co. C Grenade/friendly to close 1-WIA

29Aug68 to 31Aug68: **LANCASTER II / JUPITER**

Province: Quang Tri

Units: 3rd Mar Div(HQ), C/1/3, and other units.

Object: More search and destroy missions in area. 1/3 conducted a supporting arms/PSYOPS operation in the vicinity of the RAZOR BACK on the 30th of August; with Artillery, air support, tanks, twin 40mm M42, ONTOS, and all organic infantry weapons coordinated their fires on enemy forces in the area. Attached Psyops teams broadcast Cheui Hoi propaganda throughout the day. Air Observers reported numerous secondary explosions from air and artillery in the area(CD Rom).

30Aug68: Co. B- Booby-Trap Explosive 1-WIA

30Aug68: 1/3- received 30-35 Rds light Artillery/Rockets 4-WIA's

31Aug68: 1/3 for the month of August sustained 7 KIA's and 114 WIA's with 40 NVA/KIA's and 1 POW(CD Rom).

01Sep68 to 05Nov68: **LANCASTER II**

Province: Quang Tri

Units: 3rd Marine Division, C/1/3, and other Marine units.

Object: Search and destroy missions in area of Quang Tri. This operation will end 23Nov68

Over-view: Action then shifted back to the Mutter's Ridge as 3/3 slammed into the 52nd NVA Regiment north of the Razorback on 3 September. Both 1/3 and 2/3 were rushed into positions to the north and west to block the enemy's escape routes. In a series of sharp engagements over the next week, the Marines of 1/3 killed 48 enemy soldiers. The riflemen of 2/3 made major discoveries of enemy supply caches during their patrols. Among their finds were 390,000 rounds of ammo, 4,000 pounds of TNT, and 3,400 mortar rounds. To the west, the members of 3/9 killed 209 NVA during the second week of September and uncovered a regimental supply area. They captured 10,000 mortar rounds, 13,000 hand grenades, and hundreds of 107mm, 122mm, and 140mm rockets.(per Semper Fi Vietnam, page 203).

03Sep68: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL DACY, J. W. Co: "C"
LCPL GROSS, R. A. Co: "C"

08Sep68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC CLARKSON, G. J. Co: "A"
LCPL DE WATER, P. L. Co: "A"
LCPL GLEGG, J. E. Co: "A"
SGT LAIR, E. E. Co: "D"
PFC RAMBERT, F. Co: "A"

09Sep68: (KIA / Fallen) CPL CAMPBELL, D. A. Co: "B"
PFC GRAVELINE, R. P. Co: "B"
PFC REA, B. M. Co: "A"
PFC TREZEK, J. A. Co: "H&S"
LCPL TYSON, D. L. Co: "B"

09Sep68: AWARDED the NAVY CROSS-Co: "B" PO Alan C. JAMES

(Citation) For extraordinary heroism on 9 September 1968 while serving as Senior Corpsman with Company "B", First Battalion, Third Marines, Third Marine Division, in connection with operations against enemy aggressor forces in the Republic of Vietnam. Company "B" commenced an aggressive assault against a North Vietnamese Army battalion occupying well-fortified emplacements in the Mutter's Ridge area of Quang Tri Province. During the ensuing three-day engagement which culminated in a decisive rout of the numerically-superior enemy force, Petty Officer James personally organized the company aid stations and casualty clearing points, and attended each of the numerous casualties sustained by the company, continually exposing himself to intense artillery and mortar fire in order to maneuver across hazardous terrain and treat his injured companions. On several occasions, Petty Officer James protected wounded Marines from further injury by shielding them with his own body. During one intense artillery attack, he rushed outside the defensive perimeter to aid a seriously-wounded Marine, and calmly rendered first aid before carrying the man to a medical evacuation helicopter. Petty Officer James demonstrated a sincere concern for the welfare of his comrades throughout this fierce battle, repeatedly refusing rest or protective cover in order to ensure the proper treatment and expeditious evacuation of his patients. His heroic actions and extraordinary professional skill undoubtedly saved the lives of several Marines and inspired all who observed him. By his courage, resolute determination, and selfless devotion to duty, Petty Officer James upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. (The NAVY CROSS, page 171).

10Sep68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC DRIVERE, R. J. Co: "B"
PFC NUNN, S. J. Co: "B"
PFC PORRAS, J. Co: "B"
LCPL ROBERTSON, M. E. Co: "B"
LCPL STEWART, P. J. Co: "B"

11Sep68: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL CHRISTOPHER, W. E. Co: "B"
PFC RUCHTI, H. Co: "B"
PFC TINES, F. Co: "B"

CPL CISNEROS, R. Co: "B"
(Posthumously Awarded **NAVY CROSS**)

(Citation) For extraordinary heroism while serving as a Squad Leader with Company "B, First Battalion, Third Marines, Third Marine Division in the Republic of Vietnam on 11 September 1968. While conducting a reconnaissance in force, Company "B" came under intense small arms and automatic weapons fire from a North Vietnamese Army company occupying fortified positions on Hill 461 in Quang Tri Province. During the ensuing fire fight, Corporal Cisneros skillfully maneuvered his squad across the hazardous terrain and, directing the fire of his men with devastating accuracy, was instrumental in the destruction of three enemy bunkers. When his men were pinned down by a heavy volume of fire from a fourth emplacement, he boldly advanced and singlehandedly attempted to destroy the enemy position. After firing a light antitank assault weapon into the bunker, he fearlessly hurled hand grenades at the defenders as he aggressively continued his assault. Disregarding his own safety, he commenced firing his rifle and was delivering effective fire upon the North Vietnamese emplacements, when he was mortally wounded by enemy fire. His resolute determination and intrepid fighting spirit inspired all who observed him and were instrumental in his unit accounting for 45 North Vietnamese soldiers confirmed killed. By his courage, aggressive leadership and selfless devotion to duty, Corporal Cisneros upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country. (The NAVY CROSS Vietnam, page 65).

27Sep68: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL MILES, B. S. Jr. Co: "D"

30Sep68: 1/3 maintained security for Camp Carrol, Convoy Escort for Dong Ha Mtn OP, Khe Gio Bridge, Route #9, and provided Sparrow Hawk for other units in the area. Rao Vinh River Valley, Kentucky AO, Lancaster AO east and west, and C-1 to Gio Linh on Route #1 area after the 21st of September. NO Casualties were reported for the month(CD Rom).

09Oct68: Co. C- received 10 rds 6mm mortars 9-WIA's

09Oct68: Co. D- received 14 rds 60mm mortars 2-KIA's, 10-WIA's

09Oct68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC GRIFFITH, R. O. Co: "D"
PFC HIBBARD, R. E. Co: "D"

10Oct68: Co. A- received 12 rds 60mm mortars 4-WIA's

Over-view: Because of the needs elsewhere, the Special Landing Force, 2/26, was pulled out of the DMZ on 16 October. The 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines continued the mission but had no better luck. By 26 October, all units were pulled out of the DMZ, and operations against the 320th NVA Division were terminated. For the third time since April, the enemy division had failed to achieve a victory against the 3rd Marine Division. Enemy losses were put at 1,585 killed. The various Marine units, involved in the operations had 182 killed while turning back the division. (per Semper Fi Vietnam, page 205).

20Oct68: Co. D- received 24 rds 130mm Artillery 1-WIA

22Oct68: 1/3 and Co. D- received 10 rds 130mm Artillery 1-KIA, and 3-WIA's

22Oct68: (KIA / Fallen) CPL BACH, C. J. Co: "H&S"

26Oct68: Co. D- round in trash fire-M79 exploded 1-WIA

31Oct68: 1/3 provided security for Thon Son Lam, Khe Gio Bridge, Route #9, FSB Catapult, and FSB Winchester during the month of October. Between the 8th and 22nd of October 1/3 entered the DMZ to the Ben Hai River in the northern and western sections of Lancaster II AO. 1/3 sustained 3 KIA's and 25 WIA's for the month, with 18 NVA/KIA's(CD Rom).

02Nov68: Vietnamese Service MEDAL, Vietnam Counteroffensive Operation, Phase VI, start 02Nov68 to 22Feb69.

12Nov68: Co. B- small-arms/2 rds 60mm mortars 1-WIA

13Nov68: Co. A- accidental Grenade incident 1-KIA, 3-WIA's

13Nov68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC TRUELOVE, J. A. Co: "A"

14Nov68: Co. A- LZ Sierra ambush/platoon size enemy force/Directional lines/Grenades/small-arms/automatic weapons/60mm mortars 7-KIA's, 23-WIA's, and 1-Scout DOG-KIA

14Nov68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC BUCHANAN, J. L. Co: "A"
PFC FLETCHER, J. E. Co: "A"
LCPL HERRADA, G. Co: "A"
LCPL PASCHAL, L. C. Jr. Co: "A"
PVT SHELLEY, D. Co: "A"
PFC WEBER, K. E. Co: "A"

15Nov68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC JOHNSON, S. E. Co: "A"

16Nov68: Co. C- Directional mines detonated 1-WIA

19Nov68: Co. C- 30-60 60mm and 82mm mortar attack 1-KIA

20Nov68: Co. D- Mine hit during road sweep 1-KIA, 1-WIA

20Nov68: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL PRISET, J. F. Co: "D"

30Nov68: 1/3 continued providing security during the month of November for Camp Carrol, Dong Ha Mtn OP, Khe Gio Bridge and Route #9 in the AO. Convoy escorts and Road Sweeps too. 1st to 11th of November in Lancaster II AO, 11th and 12th in Lancaster II Cam Lo area,

12th to 21st in Lancaster/Kentucky AO, and 21st to 30th in Lancaster(East Quang Tri Province) Gio Linh area. 1/3 sustained 8 KIA's and 41 WIA's with 8 NVA/KIA's and 1 POW for November(CD Rom).

Over-view: Operation TAYLOR COMMON- Of particular concern to both MACV and III MAF in late 1968 was a major NVA staging area identified as Base Area 112. Located in the rugged mountains southwest of An Hoa, BA 112 provided training and logistical facilities for the NVA forces threatening the area between Da Nang and Tam Ky. Among the enemy units that intelligence sources identified as occupying part of BA 112 were the Front 4 Headquarters and Headquarters Military region 5, which controlled NVA and VC activities in Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai Provinces, plus the 21st Regiment, 2nd NVA Division, and the 141st NVA Regiment. Faced with this lucrative target, MACV urged III MAF to conduct an operation in the area. Accordingly, the 1st Marine Division activated Task Force Yankee under assistant division commander Brig. Gen. Ross T. Dwyer, Jr., on 4 December. As planned, Operation Taylor Common would have three phases. First, elements of TF Yankee, in conjunction with ARVN units, would conduct clearing operations from the Liberty Bridge south to An Hoa. Next, a series of fire support bases would be opened southwest of An Hoa along the approaches to BA 112, leading to the penetration of the base area by the infantry elements. Finally, once the base area was cleared, task force units would conduct recon operations farther west in order to interdict enemy infiltration routes, from Laos. The deep roar of CH-46 helicopter rotors echoed over the rice paddies north of An Hoa as all four companies of BLT 2/7 headed for their LZ in the Arizona Territory on the morning of 7 December. In short order the four rifle companies were spreading out from the landing zone, ever alert for any sign of the enemy. Fortunately, there was none. Once established on the ground, the battalion headed northeast. Across swollen streams, and mucky rice paddies, and through thick tree lines, the riflemen advanced, searching for the foe. Meanwhile, elements of the 5th Marines started their search and clear sweeps from the Liberty Bridge to An Hoa. Although enemy contact was light and sporadic during this phase, the Marines did take casualties. A number came from booby traps, but more, including five deaths, came from friendly fire. Regrettably, this problem would plague the maneuver elements throughout the operation. On 9 December, TF Yankee was augmented by the 1st and 3rd Battalions, 3rd Marines, on loan from the 3rd Marine Division. General Davis had made the battalions available because Operation Taylor Common was the 1st Marine Division's first "high-mobility" operation-a concept developed and fostered by General Davis- and he thought that Simpson's division would benefit by having some experienced battalions around. Phase Two of Taylor Common opened on 11 December, when 3/5 landed on Hill 575, about ten kilometers southwest of An Hoa, and established FSB Lance. Once the supporting artillery battery was in place, the rifle companies of 3/5 fanned out from the fire support base in clearing operations. Over the next week, this pattern was repeated as other TF Yankee units established FSB Pike (2/5), two kilometers northwest of Lance, and FSBs Spear (1/3) and Mace (3/3) to the southwest. With four rifle battalions now on the ground along the eastern edge of BA 112, the search and destroy operations began in earnest. Although actual contact with enemy forces over the next two weeks was sparse, the Marines did uncover and destroy a number of enemy base camps, hospitals, supply facilities, and even an enemy POW camp. All of the facilities were unoccupied, because the enemy had fled westward. For the men of the 1st Marine Division, this campaign in the mountains was vastly different from what they had experienced so far in the

war. Most of the men had not operated in the mountainous, triple-canopied jungle. One rifleman later noted, "the density of the woods, the vines, the jungle; it's really thick and it's nagging and tiresome to work in, and everything is against you." The final phase of Operation Taylor Common began on New Year's Day 1969, when 3/5 established Combat Operations Base (COB) Javelin about seven kilometers west of FSB Mace, at the western edge of BA 112. (A combat operations base was similar to a fire support base but did not include artillery). Two weeks later, 1/3 secured Hill 508, six kilometers north of COB Javelin, and set up FSB Maxwell. Using helicopters to drop into select LZs, the infantry companies fanned out on search missions from their bases. From COB Javelin 3/5 advanced generally southward, leapfrogging from one new combat operations base to another. At the same time, the rifle companies of 1/3 advanced on a parallel axis north and west of Maxwell. As before, any actual contact with the enemy was light. Most of the time, the action involved a platoon or less of fleeing NVA, holding rearguard positions. However, several large arms caches were found, including one that contained several dozen 122mm rockets, thousands of mortar rounds, and several dozen smaller rockets. While the mountains west of An Hoa were being prowled, other units swept the eastern area of the Taylor Common AO. On 10 February, BLT 3/26, Special Landing Force Bravo, was deployed to the Arizona Territory, relieving an ARVN ranger group. From the time those seaborne Marines touched down, they were tracked and pursued by relentless NVA snipers. Any halt in their march resulted in sniper rounds and an occasional rifle grenade shattering the quiet. Not until 26 February were they able to extract some revenge. Company "L", 3/26, cornered a platoon of NVA in a abandoned hamlet. Though the enemy force peppered the Marines with fire from two .50-caliber machine guns, high-explosive bombs from supporting Marine F-4B Phantom jets blew the NVA to pieces. The grunts advanced, easily overrunning the remaining defenders. Seventy-five NVA bodies were found scattered throughout the area. By mid-February, BA 112 had effectively been neutralized. Brigadier General Samuel Jaskilka, who had replaced General Dwyer as commander of TF Yankee on 14 February, ordered all Taylor Common forces except Companies "L" and "M", 3/5, to return to An Hoa by 16 February. Because of increased enemy activity along the DMZ, both battalions of the 3rd Marines immediately returned to Dong Ha. No sooner had the rifle companies returned to the An Hoa area than the enemy attacked it. In the early-morning darkness of 23 February, a barrage of enemy mortar rounds slammed into the base's northeast corner. This was followed by a ground assault that penetrated the base's perimeter defenses. Once inside the base, the sappers used long bamboo poles to fling explosive charges into the ammunition dump. A series of sharp explosions destroyed most of the dump and threw hot rounds for hundreds of meters. While some Marines ignored the danger to battle the fires, others chased the intruders. Not until well after dawn was the last sapper hunted down and killed. To prevent any future attacks on An Hoa, 2/5 was deployed to Liberty Bridge. There its rifle companies took up positions that screened the base. To the west, enemy pressure against the two companies remaining in BA 112 increased in late February. Almost nightly, Companies "L" and "M" were hit by mortar barrages and ground assaults. In the pitch-black darkness just after midnight on 1 March, FSB Tomahawk, the westernmost base, was attacked. Four Marines in a listening post first heard the enemy moving toward them in the thick jungle. As they radioed a warning to the fire support base, a satchel charge flew out of the jungle toward their position. Private First Class Daniel D. Bruce, a mortar man from the headquarters and Service Company, 3/5, caught the explosive device in mid-air, then shouted a warning to his buddies as he leaped from the bunker. Intent only on protecting his fellow Marines, Bruce held the device to his

body as he ran into the jungle. Before he could dispose of the charge, it exploded. Bruce absorbed the full and deadly blast, but his buddies survived to fight off their attackers. Bruce would receive a posthumous Medal of Honor for his valor. As a result of these frequent attacks, the rest of 3/5 returned to the western region of BA 112 on 28 February. It had been there but a few days when General Jaskilka, reacting to the continued pressure against An Hoa, ordered the battalion to withdraw. Planned as a one-day operation, the withdrawal turned into a three-day fighting disengagement. Late on 3 March, Company "M", while on a final patrol northeast of FSB Tomahawk, was suddenly hit by a heavy blast of small arms and automatic weapons fire from a well-entrenched enemy force. Three Marines died in the opening seconds. The bodies of two of them could not be recovered due to the intensity of enemy fire. The company commander called for artillery fire and air support. The jets managed to drop a few bombs before darkness forced the aircraft to depart. The artillery pounded the enemy positions throughout the night. The next day one body was retrieved, but surprisingly intense enemy fire prevented Company "M" from recovering the remaining corpse. A third recovery attempt was made on 5 March; however, after losing two more men whose bodies also could not be recovered, Company "M" pulled back into defensive positions. At the same time, operations were under way to close FSBs Tomahawk and Maxwell. Helicopters extracted the artillery from Tomahawk and, late on 5 March, the last of the infantry. Low clouds, however, delayed the closing of Maxwell. On 6 March, Company "M" made another attempt to recover its dead. Despite the hundreds of artillery rounds that had pounded the enemy, once again their fire proved too intense. Rather than risk more casualties, Company "M" finally withdrew. (Sometime later a force recon patrol recovered the three bodies). The rugged terrain, bad weather, enemy fire, and the burden of carrying their wounded slowed the company. They didn't reach FSB Maxwell until well after dark, too late to be airlifted to An Hoa. After enduring frequent probes throughout the night, the weary Marines of Company "M" were finally pulled out on 7 March, still under sporadic sniper and mortar fire. The next day Operation Taylor Common was closed down. The three-month operation cost the Marines 183 killed and 1,487 wounded. Of these casualties, 27 dead and 386 wounded were the results of booby traps; 26 were killed and 103 were wounded by errant friendly fire. Enemy casualties exceeded 500 dead. Although the Marines captured huge quantities of enemy arms and supplies, forcing the NVA out of Base Area 112, as soon as they departed the AO, the enemy began returning. Such was the war in South Vietnam. (per Semper Fi Vietnam, pages 255 to 260).

06Dec68 to 08Mar69: TAYLOR COMMON

Province: Quang Nam- area S/W of An Hoa

Units: 1st Mar Div(HQ), 1/3, 3/3, 1/5, 2/5, 3/5, 2/7, 2/26, 3/26.

Object: 1st Marine Division search and destroy missions in area S/W of An Hoa. C/1/3 assisted with numerous other Marine units.

Cost: USMC- 156 KIA and 1327 WIA. Marine battalions killed 1398 enemy and captured 610. Per 3rdmarines-operations Enemy losses were 1299 KIA and unknown U.S. losses.

08Dec68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC GERTZEN, F. Co: "C"
SGT HARTMAN, M. L. Co: "C"
PFC OWENS, J. L. Co: "C"

19Dec68: (KIA / Fallen) CPL MAXWELL, D. R. Co: "H&S"

23Dec68: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL GONZALES, G. H. Co: "D"

24Dec68: (KIA / Fallen) CPL RICHARDS, J. L. Co: "D"

26Dec68: (KIA / Fallen) PFC WALKER, I. Co: "A"

31Dec68: 1/3 continued Civil Action Operations in the Gio Linh area with the 2nd ARVN Regiment- Kentucky AO. From the 7th thru the 10th assisted in Blocking Forces in Operations "NOMAD II" and "NOMAD III". From the 10th to 13th prepared for and Refitting/Re-supply for attachment to 1st Marine Division in the An Hoa area for Operation "Taylor Common". 1/3 was airlifted on the 13th in helicopter borne assault and establish FSB 558. 1/3 also established Regimental Relay on Hill 1050, and conducted search and destroy missions the remainder of the month of December. 1/3 sustained 4 KIA's only, and had 14 VC/NVA KIA's for the month.

1969

02Jan69 Co. B- Booby Trapped Mine 5-WIA's

14Jan69 Co. C- Fire-fight/8-NVA/ automatic weapons 3-WIA's and
1-Scout DOG-KIA

14Jan69 Co. C- at LZ Arlene 12 rds 60mm mortars 1-WIA

15Jan69 1/3- Huey carrying Col. SPARK and others SHOT DOWN
8-KIA's(All on the chopper)

15Jan69: (KIA / Fallen) COL SPARK, M. M. Co: 3rd MAR Posthumously-NAVY CROSS

(Colonel SPARK, Commander of 3rd Marines, Killed while directing 1/3 and other units on Operation TAYLOR COMMON. The Colonel was in a Helicopter which was SHOT DOWN by Enemy Fire killing ALL on board-eight total.

Citation: For extraordinary heroism while serving as Commanding Officer, Third Marines, Third Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in connection with operations against enemy forces in the Republic of Vietnam on 15 January 1969. During a multi-battalion search and clear operation in the vicinity of An Hoa, Colonel Spark exhibited outstanding courage and presence of mind in the midst of violent combat action. While commanding a bold, highly imaginative, mobile operation in the mountainous terrain, Colonel Spark directed an assault against heavily fortified enemy positions. After ensuring that his men were properly positioned, Colonel Spark went airborne, by the use of a helicopter, to observe and direct the operation.

During the process of the operation, it was necessary for the helicopter to descend, and as the helicopter hovered over the landing zone, which had been hastily cut out of the jungle, the enemy took the aircraft under automatic-weapons fire. Despite the enemy fire, he defiantly continued the personal direction of his men until finally the helicopter was hit and crashed. As the helicopter impacted, the enemy continued firing upon it, killing all the occupants. Throughout the entire operation, Colonel Spark placed requirements for full and direct support of his combat elements above any concern for his own personal safety. He spent the majority of his time with his forward-most units in order to effectively control the action. This enabled him to maximize exploitation of many situations, and serve as an inspiration to the officers and enlisted Marines of his command. By his intrepid fighting spirit, daring initiative, and unswerving dedication to duty, Colonel Spark upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country. (The NAVY CROSS Vietnam, pages 306 and 307).

18Jan69: Co. B- ambushed/small-arms/grenade 1-WIA

21Jan69: 1/3- Friendly Fire-Artillery from FSB Pike-6 RDS 3-KIA's and 16-WIA's

21Jan69: Co. B- 2-Booby Trapped ChiCom Grenades 4-WIA's

22Jan69: Co. A- Fire-fight/CH-46 DOWN Mechanical/ Sparrow Hawk/Contact again 3-KIA's and 2-WIA's

22Jan69: **(KIA / Fallen)** PFC FARRELL, W. D. Co: "A"
PFC ST JOHN, W. L. Co: "A"
PFC TAYLOR, M. A. Co: "A"

22Jan69: 1/3- Downed CH-46/mechanical failure above 3-WIA's(non hostile)

22Jan69: Co. B- Patrol Ambushed/3-NVA 3-WIA's

22Jan69: Co. B- Perimeter Attacked/4-6 NVA/Grenades/Small-arms/Automatic weapons 4-WIA's

23Jan69: Co. B- Patrol ambushed/2-NVA/small-arms 1-WIA

23Jan69: Co. D- Perimeter 2-in-coming Grenades 2-WIA's

25Jan69: Co. B- Ambush/10-12 NVA/2-30 cal MG's/AK47's/from Bunkers 1-KIA and 4-WIA's

25Jan69: **(KIA / Fallen)** PFC JORDAN, S. E. Co: "B"

25Jan69: Co. A- Fire-Fight/Ambush/7-NVA 1-WIA

25Jan69: Co. B- 2-Chi Coms/small-arms/into lines 2-WIA's

26Jan69: Co. A- Fire-Fight/Ambush/7-NVA 4-WIA's

27Jan69: Co. A- Fire-Fight/1-NVA 1-WIA

27Jan69: Co. A- Fire-Fight/Ambush/7-NVA 3-WIA's

27Jan69: Co. C- Fire-Fight/4-NVA 2-WIA's

27Jan69: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL PURVIS, B. G. Co: "A"

28Jan69: Co. C- Fire-Fight/4-6 NVA/machine gun 2-WIA's

29Jan69: Co. B- Perimeter Attacked/6-8 NVA/10-RPG's/4-Gernades/Small-arms 1-KIA and 6-WIA's

29Jan69: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL DALEY, W. Co: "B"

29Jan69: Co. D- Ambush/Fire-Fight/3-NVA 1-WIA

30Jan69: Co. D- 3-4 Snipers/Ambushed 1-KIA and 4-WIA's During pull back due to darkness the KIA was left(1-KIA/MIA)

30Jan69: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL MOORE, R. A. Co: "D"
PFC WEST, H. Co: "D"

31Jan69: Co. D- Body Recovery/Body MISSING/Sniper 1-WIA

31Jan69: Co. C- Bunker Complex/Ambushed/small-arms/ MG 5-KIA's and 5-WIA's

31Jan69: (KIA / Fallen) PFC BURGETT, B. D. Co: "C"
LCPL DAVIS, T. R. Co: "C"
PFC HOYLE, W. R. Co: "C"
PFC TELLES, P. G. Co: "C"
CPL WHALEN, G. G. Co: "C"

31Jan69: 1/3 for the month of January continued search and destroy missions in the An Hoa Area with HEAVY Enemy contact and lots of Enemy equipment captured. 1/3 sustained 24 KIA's and 83 WIA's, with 66 NVA/KIA's and 1 POW for the month of January(CD Rom).

02Feb69: Co. D- Contact/2-Snipers 2-WIA's

02Feb69: (KIA / Fallen) PFC SABIN, R. Co: "B"

03Feb69: Co. B- Bunkers/Ambushed/4-NVA/small-arms 1-KIA, and 2-WIA's

03Feb69: Co. B- Point man Assisting Platoon to Ambush above/Mistaken for
Enemy/Friendly-Fire 1-KIA

03Feb69: **(KIA / Fallen)** LCPL ANDRADE, R. Co: "B"
PFC BAUGHMAN, R. G. Co: "B"
PFC MASSONE, M. S. Co: "B"

03Feb69: Co. D- Combat Patrol/Approaching Platoon lines/Mistaken for Enemy/Friendly-Fire
1-KIA

03Feb69: **(KIA / Fallen)** PFC HOLMES, L. H. Co: "D"

06Feb69: Co. B- Contact 6-NVA/Fire-Fight/AK's/Small-arms/Grenades 2-WIA's

06Feb69: Co. D- RECOVERED Body of KIA/MIA from 30Jan69 Ambush in Shallow
GRAVE

07Feb69: Co. B- Contact 8-NVA/Fire-Fight/AK's 1-WIA

07Feb69: **(KIA / Fallen)** LCPL COLEMAN, L. H. Co: "B"

14Feb69: Co. D- Contact 5-NVA/Bunkers/Grenades 2-WIA's

23Feb69: Vietnam Service MEDAL, TET 69 Counteroffensive, start 23Feb69 to 08Jun69.

28Feb69: 1/3 continued participating in Operation "Taylor Common" in the An Hoa/ Antenna
Valley area for Task Force YANKEE, 1st Mar Div from the 1st to the 15th of
February. 1/3 moved to Hill 55 from the 15th to the 21st. On the 21st was air lifted
back to Quang Tri/Dong Ha and back to the "Rockpile" area till the end of the
month. 1/3 sustained 3 KIA's and 11 WIA's with 7 NVA/KIA's for the month(CD
Rom).

Over-view: **Operation MAINE CRAIG-** While the 4th Marines were engaged in the far
northwestern reaches of Quang Tri Province, the 3rd Marines opened a campaign in the area
south of Khe Sanh known as the Vietnam Salient. Just west of the Dewey Canyon AO, the
Vietnam Salient poked south into Laos for twenty kilometers. Intelligence sources reported that
the NVA, after being halted along Route 922, were using the area to penetrate Quang Tri
Province. Marines had entered the salient twice before, in June and September 1968. This time
the 3rd Marines, recently returned to Quang Tri Province after fighting in Operation Taylor
Common with the 1st Marine Division, were tapped to clear the salient. The tactics of this
operation, named "Maine Craig," would follow the pattern of Dewey Canyon. First, fire
support bases reaching successively deeper into the salient would be established. Then, infantry
patrols would clear the area around each fire support base before leapfrogging farther south.
This time, though, the Marines would be supported by a U.S. Army task force and an ARVN
regiment. In preparation for the operation, 2/3, airlifted into FSB Hawk; just south of Route 9
and about halfway between the Vandegrift Combat Base and Khe Sanh, on 10 March. That

same night they began a rare overland trek to FSB Snapper, seven kilometers to the southwest. “It was a moonless night,” recalled battalion commander Lt. Col. James J. McMonagle. “There were quite [a few] streams to cross and a heck of a lot of elephant grass. It was really amazing how they [the point company] were able to find this place going through elephant grass at that time of evening.” The next morning, McMonagle’s men searched the nearby area but found no sign of the enemy. Operation Maine Craig officially began on 15 March when 2/3 started an overland push from Route 9 south into the salient all the way to FSB Saigon, which overlooked Route 616. For the first few days, the Marines encountered only occasional snipers. Then, on 18 March, a patrol from Company “G” ambushed a convoy of enemy trucks moving along Highway 616. The next day the company ambushed seven NVA soldiers sent out to check on the convoy. On 20 March, three companies of 1/3 heli-lifted into FSB Saigon. These fresh Marines headed southwest to block Route 616 to the west of 2/3. McMonagle’s battalion then worked its way eastward along the road. On the twenty-first, Company “H” uncovered a large cache of foodstuffs, including more than 350 tons of rice. This proved to be the only major success of the operation. Through the maneuver elements of Operation Maine Craig thoroughly searched their AO, and even extended eastward into the old Operation Dewey Canyon AO, enemy contact was limited to occasional sniper rounds and a few mortar shells fired from Laos. Several more supply caches were uncovered and the foodstuffs extracted. By the end of April, the 3rd Marines had been relocated to the central portion of Quang Tri Province, where they took up positions below the DMZ to begin Operation Virginia Ridge. (per Semper Fi Vietnam, pages 304 and 305).

15Mar69 to 02May69: MAINE CRAIG

Province: Quang Tri- Laotian Border w/of Khe Sanh.

Units: 1st Brig 5th Inf Div(HQ-US Army), 1/3, 2/3, 3/3, 1/12.

Object: Third Marines assisting US Army in search and destroy missions south of Khe Sanh area .Marines end operation 29Apr69.

Cost: USMC- 21 KIA and 134 WIA. Enemy losses 157 KIA. Unknown US Army losses for operation.

15Mar69: Co. B- Accidental Detonation of M-33 Frag Grenade at Vandegrift CB/Friendly 2-KIA's and 20-WIA's

15Mar69: (KIA / Fallen) SGT ALARCON, A. F. Co: “B”

20Mar69: Co. A- Platoon Ambush/3-NVA/Fire-Fight 1-WIA

20Mar69: (KIA / Fallen) PFC MAUTHE, W. H. Co: “D”

21Mar69: (KIA / Fallen) PFC MORTON, M. T. Co: “D”

23Mar69: Co. A- Man accidentally stabbed himself in leg with Knife/Friendly 1-Injury(WIA)

31Mar69: 1/3 operated in the Vandegrift Combat Base, Thon Son Lam, Route #9 area providing security with Task Force HOTEL, 3rd Mar Div from the 1st till the 18th of March. On the 19th till end of month 1/3 participated in Operation "Maine Craig" along Route #926 to the Laotian Boarder. 1/3 reported NO Casualties with 7 NVA/KIA's and 2 POW's for the month of March. 1/3 did sustain numerous casualties(2-KIA's and 22-WIA's) mostly accidental(CD Rom).

07Apr69: Co. C and Bn Command- at FSB Sparks/Incoming 8-10 Rds 122mm Rockets 1-WIA

07Apr69: (KIA / Fallen) PFC KINNEY, D. M. Co: "C"

12Apr69: Co. C- Squad Combat Patrol/Dense Foliage/ Two members observed/encountered 4-personnel in draw, three appeared to be Orientals, the fourth was wearing a Marine cover, had BLONDE hair and Blond Beard, wore green trouser and wore a wide Black Leather Belt with a bright Red cloth hanging from the left side. They did not fire due to possible friendlies in the Area, pulled back and reported to the unit leader. No Friendlies in Area, area fired into and air-strike, with negative results

13Apr69: Co. C- Squad patrol/Contact 6-NVA/Fire-Fight 1-WIA

13Apr69: Co. A- Platoon Night Ambush/Ambushed/2-3 NVA/Automatic Weapons Fire 2-WIA's

25Apr69: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL PATRONE, J. T. Co: "A"

30Apr69: 1/3 continued missions along Route #926 with units E/2/3 and F/2/3 attached to them from the 1st till the 18th of April on Operation "Maine Craig". On the 19th 1/3 was moved to Vandegrift CB, to Dong Ha, to Cua Viet, and had In-Country R&R at Cua Viet from the 22nd to the 27th. The 29th and 30th 1/3 moved to LZ Sparrow for preparation to start Operation "Virginia Ridge". 1/3 sustained 1 KIA and 13 WIA's with 72 NVA/KIA's and 3 POW's for the month. The assisting units sustained casualties(5-KIA's and 18-WIA's) while with 1/3 on Operation "Maine Craig"(CD Rom).

Over-view: Operation VIRGINIA RIDGE- As July began, the 3rd Marines were engaged in Operation Virginia Ridge in the area northwest of Dong Ha and below the DMZ. The rifle companies of 1/3 concentrated their efforts around Mutter's Ridge and in the Helicopter Valley area. To the southwest, 2/3 was spread thin covering the Khe Gio Bridge outside Dong Ha, protecting Route 9, and patrolling southwest of Dong Ha. The northern portion of the Virginia Ridge TAOR was the responsibility of the regiment's 3rd Battalion. These Marines held the fixed positions from Alpha 4 to Cam Lo. Combat action during Operation Virginia Ridge was mostly limited to brief encounters with small bands of NVA infiltrating south from the DMZ. Increased use of several types of new seismic intrusion devices planted along likely routes provided the Marines with an early warning system. Once the devices were activated, artillery barrages could be called in on pre-selected target areas. Often, too, CS gas crystals were sown

along these routes to deny their use to the enemy. When the 9th Marines redeployed, the operational area of the 3rd Marines was extended westward. Regimental commander Col. Wilbur F. Simlik ended Operation Virginia Ridge on 16 July and immediately replaced it with Operation Idaho Canyon to include the new TAOR. (per Semper Fi Vietnam, pages 310 and 311).

30Apr69 to 16Jul69: VIRGINIA RIDGE

Province: Quang Tri- along the DMZ.

Units: 3rd Mar(HQ), 1/3, 2/3, 3/3, 9th Mar, 1st Brig 5th Inf Div(US Army).

Object: Third Marines search and destroy missions north of the Rockpile, assisted by other Marines and US Army.

Cost: USMC- 108 KIA, 490 WIA and 1 Missing. Enemy losses 560 KIA. Operation "Virginia Ridge" was a Search and Destroy operation in the Cam Lo, Huong Hoa, and Gio Linh area of Quang Tri Province. During this operation a NEW TACTIC was to be attempted. Platoon size or smaller Patrols moving at least every 24 hours or less. This Tactic kept everyone on the move, and attempted to confuse the Enemy. For the total operation 1/3 sustained 45 KIA's, 121 WIA's, and 1 MIA. 1/3 was credited with 84 NVA/KIA's and 2 POW's for the entire operation

01May69: Co. D- Platoon initial contact with 2-NVA, followed/Ambushed by unk size Emery force/2-Machine Gun's from Bunkers 9-KIA's and 15-WIA's

01May69: (KIA / Fallen) HM3 BAILEY, A. W. Jr. Co: "D"
LCPL FOLEY, M. F. Co: "D"
PFC HATFIELD, J. F. Co: "D"
PFC HORN, E. A. Jr. Co: "D"
PFC LAVEROCK, P. S. Co: "D"
PFC PARO, R. C. Co: "D"
PFC SALAS, F. J. Co: "D"
PFC TORRES-RODRIGUEZ, J. R. Co: "D"
PFC VANDEVENTER, J. C. Co: "D"

01May69: (KIA / Fallen) PFC PARRANTO, L. W. Jr. Co: "C"

02May69: Co. C- 1-Grenade into lines 1-WIA

03May69: Co. D- Out Post contact 3-NVA/Fire-Fight/ Small-arms/Grenades 1-WIA

05May69: Co. A- Explosion of M-26 Grenade/Accidental/Friendly inside perimeter 6-WIA's

05May69: Co. A- Later Accidental Discharge M-16 Rifle/Friendly-Fire 1-WIA

08May69: Co. C- Point Squad Contact 10-12 NVA dug in/Ambushed/Fire-fight/Small-arms/Machine guns 2-KIA's and 7-WIA's

08May69: (KIA / Fallen) PFC BORGES, J. W. Co: "C"

09May69: Co. D- Platoon/Ambushed/Camouflaged Bunker 1-NVA observed 1-WIA

10May69: Co. D and Yankee Command- Perimeter Attacked by a platoon size Enemy force at LZ/Small-arms/RPG's/Chi Com Grenades 5-KIA's and 8-WIA's

10May69: (KIA / Fallen) SSGT BELL, S. W. Co: "D"
LCPL DOBYNS, R. M. Jr. Co: "D"
LCPL HANSEN, R. W. Co: "D"
PFC HEISE, T. H. Co: "D"
PFC PASSERELLO, A. J. Co: "D"
LCPL WRIGHT, D. P. Co: "D"
CPL KELLER, R. D. Co: "H&S"

12May69: Co. D and Yankee Command- LZ Iron side/Mortar Attack/24 Rds 82mm mortars 10-WIA's

12May69: Co. A- On move to new position/Mortar Attack/27 Rds 82mm mortars 6-WIA's

15May69: (KIA / Fallen) CPL CANCELLIERE, F. A. Co: "B"

18May69: Co. C- Listening Post Observed 10-12 NVA/Opened fire/Returned to company lines/Lines received Small-arms/3-RPG's/ 10-ChiCom Grenades 2-WIA's

18May69: Co. C- Ambushed from 3-NVA in Bunkers 1-WIA

18May69: Co. B- Assisted by Tanks/Tank hit Mine by company command post 5-WIA's

18May69: Co. C- Night Listening Post Heard and Saw 10-NVA's/Opened Fire and returned to company lines/Lines attacked/Small-arms/15-ChiCom Grenades into lines 3-WIA's

19May69: Co. A- Mortar Attack/25 Rds 82mm mortars incoming 4-KIA's and 17-WIA/s

19May69: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL HOFFMAN, T. M. Co: "A"
SGT SCORSONE, D. F. Co: "A"
LCPL WHALEY, W. E. III Co: "A"

19May69: (KIA / Fallen) 2LT COCKERL, J. C. Co: "B"

20May69: Co. C- Night(early morning) Perimeter Attacked by 60-70 NVA/Small-arms/Machine-guns/ChiCom Grenades/3-RPG's 3-KIA's and 13-WIA's

20May69: (KIA / Fallen) CPL JENKINS, J. A. Co: "C"
PVT TAYLOR, J. S. Co: "C"
PFC WRIGHT, T. D. Co: "C"

21May69: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL MODDERMAN, P. J. Co: "H&S"

22May69: Co. D and Yankee Command- 5 Hour Mortar Attack/120 Rds 82mm mortars 4-KIA's and 9-WIA's

22May69: (KIA / Fallen) PFC BEECHING, E. P. Co: "H&S"
PFC CROY, J. L. Co: "H&S"
PFC JACKSON, R. J. Co: "H&S"
CPL SPEAKS, P. E. Co: "H&S"

24May69: Co. C- Mortar Attack/30-35 Rds 60mm mortars inside perimeter 10-WIA's

24May69: Co. C- Second Mortar Attack later in day/15 Rds 60mm mortars 1-WIA

25May69: Co. B- Operating Special Operations "Centepede" with Recon Teams was north of DMZ/Mortar Attack/10 Rds 82mm mortars /Operation "PINK PANTHER" 2-WIA's

25May69: Co. C- Mortar Attack/Operation "PINK PANTHER"/15 Rds 82mm mortars 1-WIA

25May69: Co. B- Mortar Attack/82mm mortars/one round into the increments pit of the Companies 81mm Mortars, setting them on fire, fire spread to the 81mm ammo in the ammo pit, this started the 81mm ammo going off, and the fire spread to a pallet of 81mm ammo near the position, causing it to EXPLODE. Marines attempting to put out the fire before the Explosion got to close. The explosion caused lots of Casualties, forced the Company to move off the hill, and prevented any Medivacs that night. Company B sustained 8-KIA's, 29-WIA's and had 2-MIA's from this Accident/Friendly Fire incident.

25May69: (KIA / Fallen) 1LT ABBOTT, J. W. Co: "B"
CPL CARTER, G. D. Co: "B"
PFC CHURCH, J. K. Co: "B"
PFC KAHLSTORF, K. A. Co: "B"
PVT MELTON, G. C. Co: "B"
PFC O'DONOVAN, E. T. Co: "B"
2LT O'NEILL, T. M. Co: "B"
LCPL POWELL, M. A. Co: "B"
CPL RAUSCHKOLB, J. Co: "B"
CPL SKAGGS, W. F. Co: "B"
PFC WALTERS, J. J. Co: "B"
PFC WILLIAMS, L. C. Co: "B"
LCPL WINTERS, J. Co: "B"

25May69: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL GRAFF, P. A. Co: "H&S"

27May69: Co. C- Mortar Attack/82mm mortars 1-KIA and 2-WIA's

27May69: (KIA / Fallen) CPL GUEST, G. R. Co: "C"

27May69: Co. C- Another Mortar Attack/15 -20 rds 120mm Mortars 1-KIA and 5-WIA's

28May69: Co. A- Night Ambush/Fired on/6-shots possible M-16/Fire-fight M-79 rds fired at enemy 1-WIA

29May69: Co. D- Mortar Attack/6-8 rds 60mm mortars 2-WIA's

31May69: For the month of May 1/3 phased out of Operation "Maine Craig" into Operation "Virginia Ridge" North of Route #9 from the 1st till the 23rd. Between the 24th to the 28th, 1/3 participated in Operation "PINK PANTHER" to assist RECON Special patrols in the northern section of the DMZ, and across the Ben Hoi River. 1/3 then moved south and continued Operation "Virginia Ridge" the last couple of days of the month. 1/3 made Heavy Contact with the Enemy during May, sustaining 43 KIA's and 160 WIA's while inflicting 77 NVA/KIA's and 2 POW's on the Enemy(CD Rom).

01Jun69: Co. B- Road Sweep/2-anti-tank Mines hit by personnel 2-KIA's and 1-WIA

01Jun69: (KIA / Fallen) SSGT GOODLIN, J. L. Co: "B"
PFC HOPKINS, D. L. Co: "B"

02Jun69: (KIA / Fallen) CPL PUCCI, D. L. Co: "B"

09Jun69: Vietnam Service MEDAL, Vietnam Summer-Fall Campaign 1969, Start 09Jun69 to 31Oct69.

27Jun69: Co. A- Received 2-Rds believed to be Friendly 105mm Artillery within 100 meter of perimeter 1-Injury(dislocated shoulder)

27Jun69: (KIA / Fallen) SSGT MADDEN, L. S. Co: "1/3" F Btry 2/12

30Jun69: From the 1st to the 24th of June, 1/3 provided security at A-4, C-2, C-3 Bridge, Cam Lo District Headquarters, and Khe Gio Bridge. These were more static positions with Light Enemy Contact, but still part of Operation "Virginia Ridge". The 25th to the 30th the Battalion moved to a new AO, west of Con Thien and C-2 and north of Dong Ha Mnt FSB. For the month of June 1/3 sustained 2 KIA's and 1WIA, with 6 NVA/KIA's and 3 POW's(CD Rom).

03Jul69: Co. D- Night Ambush approached LP outside company lines/Noise heard/Fired one round/Friendly fire incident 1-KIA

03Jul69: (KIA / Fallen) PFC WORKMAN, G. R. Co: "D"

03Jul69: Co. C- During a search/found body of Friendly shot in head/ apparent sniper from hill top area !-KIA(unknown)

03Jul69: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL SONNEBERGER, R. G. Co: "C"

06Jul69: Co. A- Fire inside perimeter caused the detonation of either a LAAW or Claymore mine 2-Casualties(WIA's)

07Jul69: Co. C- Booby Trap/Tree mounted explosive device, possible ChiCom Grenade 7 feet off the ground 2-WIA's

10Jul69: Co. A- Booby Trap/Small Explosive device/Platoon commander 2nd Plt injured, 1-WIA

15Jul69: Co. D- Accidental Discharge M-16/During smoke break/Striking Marine in head/Friendly Fire incident 1-KIA

15Jul69: (KIA / Fallen) PFC McGUIRE, R. H. Co: "D"

Over-view: Operation IDAHO CANYON- During the beginning stages of Operation Idaho Canyon, enemy activity continued to be small in scale and brief in duration. However, toward the end of July, the NVA became much bolder. On 25 July, Company "I", 3/3, was suddenly bombarded with 60mm mortar rounds, RPGs, and small arms fire as it patrolled a few kilometers west of Charlie 2. Responding with artillery and air strikes, the Marines killed more than twenty NVA. Two days later, in what might have been a retaliatory attack for the beating, it took at the hands of Company "I", the enemy hit the night laager site of Company "K". The platoon of NVA damaged the three tanks that had been operating with Company "K" and killed three Marines before being driven off. At first light, only two enemy bodies were found, though a large number of blood trails and drag marks disappeared into the nearby brush. The action then shifted westward. While patrolling about seven kilometers north of the Rockpile on 7 August, Company "F", 2/3, came upon two well-dug-in NVA companies. Though supported by air and artillery, Company "F's" repeated attacks against the enemy's positions were unsuccessful. Suffering six killed and more than twenty wounded, Company "F" was reinforced at dusk by a platoon from Company "A", 1/3. The next morning, the combined unit resumed the attack. Meeting only light resistance, it took the enemy's position. The defenders had fled, leaving behind the bodies of forty-six of their comrades. Quiet reigned over the area for the next two days, then the enemy hit Company "E's" 3rd Platoon, which was protecting the battalion's 81mm mortar platoon at a position several kilometers to the northwest of Company "F's" fight. Attacking with grenades, satchel charges, and small arms fire, the fanatical NVA swarmed over the NDP(Night Defensive Position). They immediately focused on the command post, peppering it with a multitude of explosives charges. As a result, communication with the beleaguered force was lost for more than an hour, forcing the supporting artillery to cease firing its barrages. Though the enemy was finally driven off, the attack cost the Marines thirteen dead and fifty-eight wounded; the enemy lost seventeen. Simultaneously, Company "E's" 1st

Platoon, dug in less than a kilometer to the south, was struck by a heavy ground and mortar attack. Barely able to hang on, the Marines were able to beat back their attackers only with the timely arrival of air support. Nineteen enemy bodies were later found; the 1st Platoon suffered six killed and seventeen wounded. As a result of this battering, Company "E" was pulled out of the field for rest and rebuilding; Company "A", 1/3, replaced it. Also, Colonel Simlik issued orders for his regiment that prohibited all but company-sized NDPs within five kilometers of the DMZ; individual platoons were forbidden to establish night laager sites within that zone. General Jones thought that this was such an effective way to reduce unnecessary casualties that he extended the order division-wide. To keep the NVA from pinpointing a unit's position, Jones further ordered units to move at least one kilometer per day. Though this order immediately became unpopular, it did help keep down the casualty rate during the division's final months in South Vietnam. General Jones also banned all independent platoon operations. Following Company "E's" ordeal, another lull of several weeks occurred before activity in the AO increased again. On 28 August, Company "B", 1/3, began a five-day-long series of engagements as it moved toward Mutter's Ridge. Early that morning, despite taking all the necessary and required precautions, the company was hit by a particularly violent RPG, hand grenade, and small arms attack. When the NVA sappers killed a platoon leader and breached the perimeter, Capt. Gerald H. Sampson raced through heavy enemy fire to rally the battered grunts. Leading them in a counterattack, he restored the torn perimeter. He was killed a short time later. Sampson's gallantry resulted in the award of a posthumous Navy Cross, the last for the 3rd Division Marine. Over the next few days, Company "B" fought a number of short but sharp fights with enemy troops trying to block their progress to Mutter's Ridge. The last engagement came on 1 September as the company finally crested the long-fought-over ridge. Four enemy snipers were killed before the Marines took the top of the hill. This pattern of quiet followed by a flurry of enemy attacks continued for the next several weeks. Nearly every company of the regiment was hit at least once. Planning for more aggressive operations against the enemy was under way when, on 19 September, division headquarters ordered the 3rd Marines to cease all further offensive operations and prepare for redeployment from South Vietnam. As a result, Operation Idaho Canyon ended that same day. Unlike the 9th Marines, who moved to Okinawa, the 3rd Marine regiment would be returning directly to the United States. On 6 October 1969, the 3rd Marines departed South Vietnam for Camp Pendleton in California. An interesting episode occurred during the regiment's redeployment that clearly illustrated the frustration of fighting a political war. Because it was reported that President Nixon desired to greet the returning Marines at El Toro Marine Corps Air Station in southern California, Colonel Simlik was ordered to personally lead a contingent of his men back to the States. "We wiped the mud off our boots and took one hundred fifty men down to the air base at Da Nang," Simlik said. Somehow the supply people rounded up new helmets, starched fatigues, and spit-shined boots. Simlik recalled, "We practiced getting on and off a 707 for three days so we would look sharp for the president. And so we flew back to the States, changing into our new uniforms fifteen minutes from El Toro. Of course, the president was not there; Undersecretary of the Navy John Warner was. It was a strange war indeed." Because Colonel Simlik had not completed his tour, he reboarded the 707 for a return trip to Dong Ha. (per Sempr Fi Vietnam, pages 310 to 314).

17Jul69 to 27Sep69: IDAHO CANYON

Province: Quang Tri- area S/W of Con Thien.

Units: 3rd Mar(HQ), 1/3, 2/3, 3/3.

Object: Third Marines search and destroy missions S/W of Con Thien.

Cost: USMC- 95 KIA and 450 WIA. Enemy 565 KIA. Per 3rdmarines- operations operation Idaho Canyon was a 1st Mar Div and 101st Airborne operation west of Tam Ky in Quang Tin Province with 565 Enemy KIA and U.S. losses 159 KIA.

26Jul69: Co. A- Air strike in area, off course landing within 150 meters of the company, with one man hit in back by flying rocks from bomb blast 1-Injured(unknown if WIA)

27Jul69: (KIA / Fallen) LCPL BALLEW, H. Jr. Co: "A"

31Jul69: 1/3 continued on Operation "Virginia Ridge" from the 1st to the 8th of July. The 9th to the 22nd, 1/3 moved to a new AO by Hill 37 and a portion of Route #9. Convoy security was assumed at the end of this period. Between the 23rd and the 27th, 1/3 operated in the "Denial Zone" at the west end of Route #9 where CS GAS was used to impede movement into the area. Operation "Virginia Ridge" ended and Operation "Idaho Canyon" started in the same general area. For the month of July, 1/3 sustained 3 KIA's, 1 WIA, and 1 MIA with 40 NVA/KIA's(CD Rom).

10Aug69: (KIA / Fallen) SGT ANZALDUA, A. T. Co: "A"

25Aug69: Co. A- Patrol Ambush/Contact with 2-4 NVA/Fire-fight/Small- arms fire 1-WIA

27Aug69: Co. B- Night perimeter Attacked by Enemy Sapper Platoon. A vicious Grenade and Small-arms battle ensued, and the enemy attack was repulsed. The action resulted in the death of three Marines(including the company commander and the 2nd platoon commander). Numerous Medivac attempts by Helicopter in the LZ were forced off by RPG fire. Finally after enemy fire suppressed one helicopter was able to extract casualties out of the rear wheels only LZ. 3-KIA's and 9-WIA's

28Aug69: (KIA / Fallen) 2LT HAMMERBECK, E. C. Co: "B"

LCPL SCHAFFER, D. T. Co: "B"

CAPT SAMPSON, G. H. Co: "B" (Posthumously-NAVY CROSS)

(Citation) For extraordinary heroism while serving as Commanding Officer of Company "B", First Battalion, Third Marines, Third Marine Division in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. In the early morning hours of 28 August 1969, Company "B", occupying a night defensive position deep in hostile territory northwest of Cam lo, was assaulted by a large North Vietnamese Army force employing automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades. In the initial onslaught, the second platoon commander was wounded and his sector of the perimeter was in grave danger of being breached by the enemy. With complete disregard for his own safety, Captain Sampson moved across the fire-swept

terrain to the point of heaviest contact, rallied the beleaguered Marines, and began to direct their fire against the advancing North Vietnamese. During the fierce fire fight, he continually moved from one fighting position to another, instructing and encouraging his men and ensuring that the wounded received immediate treatment. While maneuvering across an exposed area on the foremost edge of the perimeter, Captain Sampson was mortally wounded by enemy fire. His unflagging determination and bold fighting spirit inspired his men to heroic efforts and were instrumental in turning a critical situation into an overwhelming Marine victory. By his leadership, extraordinary courage and selfless devotion to duty, Captain Sampson upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service. (The NAVY CROSS Vietnam, pages 287 and 288).

30Aug69: 1/3 continued missions in the "Idaho Canyon" Operations AO. Also provided Mobile Blocking Forces, for 2/3 and the 1st Bn. 11th Regiment(Mechanical) US Army in the northern and western portions of the AO. 1/3 sustained 5 KIA's and 23 WIA's, with 54 NVA/KIA's for the month of August(CD Rom).

21Sep69: 1/3 continued operating in Operation "Idaho Canyon" from the 1st to the 21st of September in the Mutters Ridge/ Helicopter Valley area, and provided security for that section of Route #9 inside the AO. On the 21st, 1/3 received ORDERS to STAND DOWN from ALL OPERATIONS. 1/3 was airlifted from LZ Fuller to Vandegrift CB, with the 4th Marines assuming their duties. During the subsequent Truck Convoy from VCB to Quang Tri an aerial observer was overhead as security escort. 1/3's COMBAT role, in Viet Nam had come to an END. 1/3 had sustained just 5 WIA's and NO KIA's while inflicting 22 NVA/KIA's during its last few weeks of Combat. 1/3 began departing from the Republic of Viet Nam, with the last elements leaving apparently on October 6th, 1969(CD Rom).