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Title: Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

Author: U.S. Army, 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne (Airmobile) Division

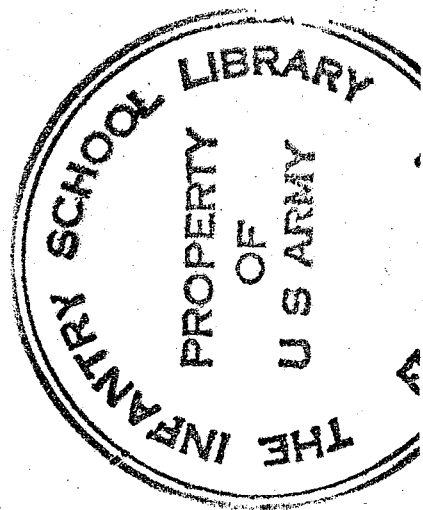
Abstract: Report includes name and dates of operation, command/control headquarters, reporting officer, task organization, supporting forces, operation discussions, enemy losses, terrain, and lessons learned.

Number of pages: 44

Notes: From the MCoE HQ Donovan Research Library, Fort Benning, GA.
documents collection #: DS 556.52 101st (10/3/68)

Classification: Unclassified; Approved for public release

DS 556.52 COMBAT OPERATIONS AFTER ACTION
101st du REPORT, OPERATION VINH LOC.
(10/3/68) 3 OCT 68.



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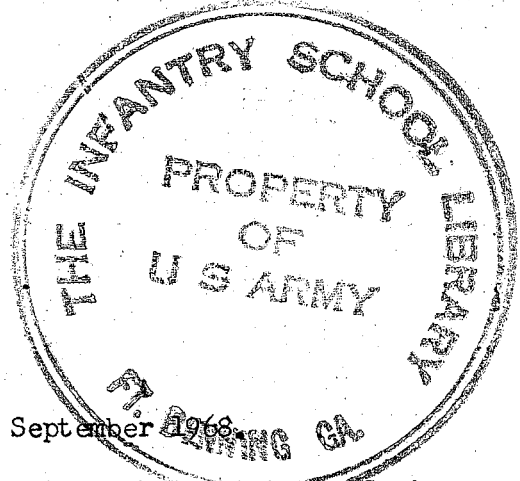
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters 2d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)
APO San Francisco 96383

AVDG-BA-C

3 October 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

Commanding General
101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)
ATTN: AVDG-GC-(Historian Officer)
APO 96383



1. Name of Operation: Operation VINH LOC.
2. Dates of Operation: 10 September 1968 - 20 September 1968.
3. Location: THUA THIEN Province, VINH LOC District. Map, Vietnam, Series L 7014, Scale 1:50,000, Sheets 6541 I, 6541 IV, 6542 III.
4. Control/Command Headquarters: Hqs, 2d Bde, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile).
5. Reporting Officer: Col John A Hoefling.
6. Task Organization:
2d Bde Combined TF (Operation VINH LOC).

TF 1-501 Inf

A/1-501 Abn Inf
B/1-501 Abn Inf
D/1-501 Abn Inf

54th ARVN Regt

7th ARVN Cav Sqdn
3/7th ARVN Cav Trp
1/54th ARVN Bn
2/54 ARVN Bn
3/54 ARVN Bn

VINH LOC Regional Forces

922 RF Co
955 RF Co

Bde Con

No change from Operation
NEVADA EAGLE

7. Supporting Forces:

- a. Organic Forces: Same as Task Organization, Bde Control.

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b. Indigenous Forces:

(1) 54th ARVN Regt:

(a) 1/54 under OPCON of 7th ARVN Cav Sqdn: Combat assaulted into 3 Landing Zones to search and clear their area of operations.

(b) 2/54 and 3/54 acted as a blocking force from vic YD940204 to ZD026110.

(2) Regional Forces (RF): The RF's in VINH LOC were assigned their own tactical area of operations which they conducted recon in force operations.

(3) Popular Forces (PF): 1 platoon of PF's was attached to each tactical unit, company level during the VINH LOC operation. The PF's were utilized for their knowledge of the area and local people.

(4) National Police (NP): 20 NP were utilized in the VINH LOC operation. 6 NP were attached to the US Naval patrol boats and 14 NP were assigned as security and for handling of POW's and detainees under control of the District Chief.

(5) Police Field Force (PFF): There were 100 PFF utilized in the VINH LOC operation; 50 with the 1-501 Inf down to company level and 50 were utilized by the ARVN forces. The PFF made the initial screening, interrogation and tagging of detainees.

(6) Police Special Branch (PSB): There were 34 special police utilized in the VINH LOC (D) and 17 from the Province Office. 12 to the ARVN units and 10 remained at the POW compound. There was at least 1 member of the SP with each tactical company to utilize the blacklist for identification of VC infrastructure. The 10 SP's at the POW compound made further interrogations for exploitable information.

(7) Census Grievance (CG): There were 8 cadre in the field during the VINH LOC operation, 7 were with the tactical units and the senior cadre worked at the POW compound. The CG cadre in the field identified enemy KIA and detainees as being VC or VC infrastructure. The senior cadre did the same at the POW compound.

(8) 12th and 13th Coastal Groups: During the VINH LOC operation, 13th Coastal Group maintained a blockade south of VINH LOC on the waterways running from east to west preventing the enemy from utilizing this avenue of escape. The Coastal Groups also laid night ambushes at points along the southern beaches of VINH LOC. The 12th Coastal Group screened the northwest portion of the waterways.

(9) Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU): PRU's were very effective in gathering intelligence for all forces. They work especially well when given a

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particular target and thorough briefings on the type of information desired.

(10) Revolutionary Development Cadre (RDC): ~~Two~~ RDC teams have been sent into VINH LOC at the conclusion of the operation there. The operation eliminated enough enemy to allow these teams to be utilized in that area.

c. Supporting Forces - Other Services:

(1) US Naval River Security Group (Pistol Pete): The group linked up with the 12th and 13th Coastal Groups to participate in the blockade of VINH LOC. This unit was also successful in conducting Psy Ops broadcasts in the same area.

(2) Coastal Division 17, US Navy Patrol Air Cushion Vehicles (PACV): The PACV's were used successfully in the inland water blockade of VINH LOC preventing the enemy's escape and also conducted successful Psy Ops missions along the coast.

(3) US Navy Swiftboats: In the VINH LOC operation the swift boats provided the seaward blockade forces utilizing their large area radar coverage. Psy Ops were also utilized by this unit.

8. Intelligence: Prior to the operation, the intelligence picture for VINH LOC (D) was nebulous due to a lack of FVMAF operations in the recent past. Based on reports from Provincial Reconnaissance Teams and District Forces in the area, it was felt that there were approximately two companies of local force guerrillas operating in VINH LOC (D). The number of hamlet guerrillas and VCI was unknown; however, it was expected to be large as the majority of the inland was dominated by the enemy. Because of ARVN operations in PHU THU (D) and the advent of Typhoon Bess prior to the operation it was believed that many LF VC and guerrillas had infiltrated into VINH LOC (D) from the inundated lowlands. A more detailed intelligence situation can be found in Inclosure 1.

9. Mission: 2d Bde TF continues current mission (Operation NEVADA EAGLE) and in conjunction with the 54th ARVN Regt and VINH LOC RF/PF forces conducts combat assaults at 110715 Sep 68 on the VINH LOC island to find and destroy the enemy, his supplies and installations.

10. Concept of Operation:

a. Phase I (D-1): Blocking forces were to be emplaced in such a manner as to appear to be an extension of normal operations. Co D/1-501 was to conduct operations in grid YD9424 to force the enemy southeast along the island into VINH LOC District). Concurrently, 2/54th ARVN and the 3/54th ARVN were to move into blocking positions along the northeast shore of PHU VANG District to drive the enemy across the water into VINH LOC.

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b. Phase II (D-day): Naval forces were to be in their blocking positions at first light. At 110600 Sep 68, 3/7 Cav (ARVN) was to RIF from vicinity COL CO Beach southeast into VINH LOC District to deny the enemy movement to the northwest and to force him to withdraw into the cordon. Task Force 1-501 Abn Inf and the 1/54 ARVN were to combat assault into 6 LZ's along the northeastern shore of the island and swiftly conduct RIF toward the southwest into the blocks formed by the Naval Forces and the 54th Regt. The 2 Regional Force Company's from positions on the northwestern shore of the island were to RIF to the southwest with a like mission. The first night was to consist of illumination and the engagement of enemy trying to flee VINH LOC District through the water.

c. Phase III (D+1 until completion): Ground forces were to continue RIF operations in their assigned AO stressing combat patrolling, RIF, Eagle Flights and night ambushes to conduct a methodical search and exploit combat intelligence.

11. Execution:

a. Methods of Operation: The operation was characterized by the following considerations:

(1) Surprise: The date was selected as the 11th of September, but forces involved were notified at last possible moment that would allow them to react. The District Chief was not notified until the evening of the 10th. Reconnaissance was limited. CP's and supporting artillery were moved into position after H-hour.

(2) Isolation of the battlefield: It was decided to cordon the entire District without alerting the enemy.

(3) Speed of execution: Maneuver forces were to be landed on the ocean side of the island and had to drive straight through to the inland side during the first day. This would fragment enemy forces; disrupt communications; and deny the normal avenues of escape to the enemy.

(4) Minimize destruction: Preparatory fires were limited to rather barren ground around the LZ's and supporting fires were to be used only in the case of organized resistance, which was not encountered. The concept of minimum destruction alleviated the problem of additional refugees and unnecessary suffering on the part of the populace. As nearly as can be determined, 3 houses were burned down and one civilian was wounded by artillery.

(5) Population control: Every unit was to have GVN personnel to question and control the populace. Orders were issued to detain everyone of fighting age regardless of credentials. All province forces in the maneuver elements were completely integrated into the ARVN and US forces except the 2 RF companies who had their own AO's. A platoon of PF worked with each US company. The 100

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NPFF were split among all combat elements. The 30 Armed Propaganda Team members, the 8 Census Grievance and the 17 Special Branch Police were spread to the units and used where needed. As a result there was always VN personnel with vanguard of all units. This eliminated misunderstandings with detained persons. It allowed a meaningful initial screening and reassured the people of the District.

(6) Self Defense units were included when possible, in the search of their villages. In fact, in one village, 20 self defense cadre and 10 US troopers, combat assaulted in reaction to intelligence information.

(7) Detailed search with rapid exploitation of intelligence: After the initial rapid thrust all units were to search their AO's in detail. Utilizing all local and GVN resources plus immediate exploitation of intelligence information generated by civilians, POW's, Chieu Hoi's and anyone else. The Combined Interrogation Center was extremely effective. Initial screening and interrogation generated information that could be utilized within minutes after the arrival of a group of prisoners. This effort was well organized and imaginatively conducted. As an example, a CH-34 lift of 215 suspects was conducted between 0100 and 0230 hrs on the 12th. The landing zone was dusty, noisy and the suspects were quite confused. As the planes unloaded the police directed "All members of the K-4 Battalion over here, C-118 over here" etc. Sixty three of the suspects lined up as directed and proved to be POW's from those units.

b. Operations Narrative: (Inclosure 2, Operations Overlay).

10 September 1968. Phase I was executed as planned with all blocking forces moving into position as explained in Concept of Operations.

11 September 1968. Co A 1-501 at 0732 hrs conducted a combat assault from PZ vic YD865233 to LZ vic ZD080130, closed LZ at 0811 hrs. Conducted RIF southeast to vic ZD093098. B/1-501 at 0947 hrs conducted a combat assault from PZ vic YD869245 to LZ vic ZD071130, closed LZ at 1037 hrs. Conducted RIF southeast to vic ZD078107. D/1-501 at 0849 hrs conducted a combat assault from PZ vic YD 909274 to LZ vic ZD048153, closed LZ at 0950 hrs. Conducted RIF to vic ZD062 113. Concurrently 1/54 ARVN, OPCOM to 7th Cav Sqdn ARVN, combat assaulted into 3 LZ's in their AO. Contact was sporadic as VC tried to hide with the local populace. Combined forces in the 1-501 AO accounted for 1 VC KIA (BC), 2 AK-47's, and 108 detainees (11 classified as VC, the remainder unclassified). The ARVN forces accounted for 13 VC KIA (BC), 10 individual weapons and 205 detainees.

12 September 1968. 1-501 Inf continued extensive RIF operations and saturation patrols within their AO. Contact was sporadic with enemy assessment as 6 VC KIA (BC), 9 indiv weapons captured (5 SKS, 1 AK-47, 2 M1 carbines, 1 CHICOM pistol). The ARVN Task Force accounted for 21 VC KIA (BC), and 16 individual weapons captured. In addition combined US/GVN forces accounted for 119 detainees. The Coastal Groups accounted for 6 VC KIA (BC).

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13 September 1968. 1-501 Inf continued to conduct saturation patrols and RIF operations in their AO. A/1-501 in a series of contacts with the C-3 Co killed 23 VC (BC) and captured 27 individual weapons (10 SKS, 10 AK-47, 4 M1 carbines, 1 M1 rifle, 1 K-44, and 1 CHICOM pistol). The 1-501 accounted for a total of 36 VC KIA (BC), 30 individual weapons captured, and 97 detainees. The ARVN Forces accounted for 64 detainees and 6 individual weapons captured. The Coastal Groups accounted for 7 VC KIA (BC).

14 September 1968. 1-501 Inf continued saturation patrolling and RIF operations in their AO with sporadic contact as the enemy continued to evade. 1-501 Inf accounted for 1 VC KIA (BC), 2 Chieu Hoi, and 3 weapons captured including a 60mm mortar. ARVN forces accounted for 9 VC KIA (BC), and 18 IWC.

15 September 1968. 1-501 Inf continued to conduct RIF operations and saturation patrolling in their AO with D Co making a combat assault at 1455 hrs from PZ vic ZD050154 to LZ vic ZD019169 closing at 1527 hrs. 1-501 Inf accounted for 2 VC KIA (BC), 2 Chieu Hoi, 2 AK-47's, 1 SKS and 2 M1 carbines. The ARVN TF continued operations in their AO with 10 VC KIA (BC), 10 Chieu Hoi's and 31 IWC. The Coastal Groups accounted for 3 VC KIA (BC) and 2 IWC.

16 September 1968. 1-501 Inf continued operations in AO accounting for 4 VC (BC), 2 Chieu Hoi's, 7 IWC (6 SKS and 1 M2 carbine) and an ammo cache (10 RPG-2 rds, 700 rds SA ammo, 13 M79 rds, 50 blasting caps and 60mm mortar sights). The ARVN TF continued operations resulting in 4 VC (BC), 10 Chieu Hoi, 5 IWC, 1 60mm mortar.

17 September 1968. 1-501 Inf continued saturation patrolling in AO. B/1-501 conducted RIF to VINH LOC and conducted heliborne movement at 1040 hrs to LZ vic YD822226, closing at 1155 hrs. Results for day's operations were 2 VC KIA (BC), 1 Chieu Hoi, and 1 K-44. ARVN TF accounted for 5 VC (BC), 4 Chieu Hoi and 3 IWC. The VINH LOC PF captured 1 IWC.

18 September 1968. A/1-501 at 0824 hrs conducted a heliborne movement from PZ vic ZD095117 to FSB SANDY closing at 0947 hrs. D/1-501 and ARVN TF continued saturation patrolling with the ARVN TF accounting for 11 VC KIA (BC) and 4 IWC.

19 September 1968. D/1-501 and ARVN TF conducted saturation patrolling in their AO's with the ARVN TF accounting for 3 VC KIA (BC) and 2 IWC. The Coastal Groups accounted for 10 VC KIA (BC) and 7 IWC.

20 September 1968. D/1-501 and ARVN TF continued saturation patrolling in AO's with 1 M1 carbine captured by D/1-501 and 13 IWC and 1 CSWC.

12. Results:

a. The operation was humanely executed, used all available resources and was eminently successful.

b. Enemy Losses:

(1) KIA (BC) 154

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(2) KBAA (BC) 0

(3) KBA (BC) 0

(4) Captured:

(a) PW 370

(b) Chieu Hoi 56

(c) Civil Defendant 58

(d) Indiv weapons 176

(e) Crew served 3

c. Friendly Losses:

(1) US WHA 2

(2) ARVN KHA 2

(3) ARVN WHA 7

d. Body to Weapons ratio: 154/129

e. Enemy to friendly killed ratio: 154/2

13. Commander's Analysis:

a. Lessons Learned:

(1) Item: Use of Sector Forces:

DISCUSSION: The many local resources available at sector level can be used in almost any type of combat operations in populated areas. Each of the elements has a particular area in which they are highly qualified and when employed at the lowest level possible produce results which are unobtainable to US units operating alone. Maximum results are obtained by employing the indigenous forces at the squad, platoon and company level. In this manner they are at critical areas at all times and save a great deal of time and effort and misunderstanding with the local people.

SOLUTION: Employ Sector Forces at the squad, platoon and company level to obtain maximum benefit from these specialists.

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(2) Item: Coordination meetings:

DISCUSSION: The most essential element of a successful joint/combined operation is close coordination that must take place prior to and during the conduct of operations. Prior to the operation the senior force commanders (Sector Chief, US Bn Commander, senior naval representatives, etc.) must be told of the part they will play and to insure there is mutual understanding of the mission and that the required resources will be available. Approximately 2 days before the operation the force commanders, trusted commanders and staff members must be brought together in a final coordination meeting where the order is issued, questions are answered and any problems are identified and solved. The senior commanders must leave this meeting with a clear understanding of the overall operation and specifically their parts.

SOLUTION: Close and continuous coordination will be conducted during the planning stages with a final coordination meeting taking place approximately 48 hrs prior to D-day.

(3) Item: Joint Command Posts:

DISCUSSION: When forces from several units are involved in an operation a unity of command and effort must be established. This is best accomplished by the establishment of a joint CP where a lateral flow of information can be passed between S2/S3/Arty elements of forces involved. By these elements working in close proximity to each other, orders, intelligence, support requests, etc., can be handled in an expeditious manner and problems can be solved on the spot. Mutual confidence, respect and cooperation develops as the personnel work together.

SOLUTION: In any combined/joint operations where allied units of Bn size or larger are employed, a joint TOC will be established.

(4) Item: POW Collection Point:

DISCUSSION: A centralized POW Collection Point offers certain advantages that were not apparent prior to this operation. By keeping all of the various agencies interested in screening personnel at one point a person can be processed through all agencies and questioned for information. Each of the various agencies has different areas of interest and an IPW team frequently will miss a person on the black list of the PRU etc. By pooling the efforts of all agencies at one point, a 24 hour operation can take place and classification can be continuous. One problem that did occur was transporting the suspects and POW's from the field location to the collection point. Also when information is gained at the collection point transportation is necessary to exploit the intelligence leads.

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SOLUTION: In any operation when large scale collection is anticipated a centralized forward POW Collection Point will be established. Interrogation from all agencies will be employed at this collection point and transportation will be laid on to move POW's from the field location to the collection point and to exploit information gained during questioning.


b. Commander's Note: The VINH LOC operation was the first operation which used every type of force available in a typical sector in Vietnam. It was a well coordinated, well timed operation which was a complete success. In my opinion, the success was caused by the detailed daily contacts that were made prior to the operation in the course of working on a continued basis with all Vietnamese Forces. The operation was well coordinated because everyone knew each other and the capabilities of each unit. It was well executed because everyone made the effort to cooperate and see that the mission was accomplished.

14. Recommendations: None.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

7 Incl.

1. Intelligence
2. Operations Overlay
3. Personnel and Administration
4. Civil Affairs
5. Psychological Operations
6. Communications
7. Artillery


JERRY P ALLEN
Major, Inf
Adjutant

Inclosure 1 (Intelligence) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. Terrain: The island which encompasses VINH LOC District extends approximately 38 km in a northwest and southeasterly direction and varies in width from 800 meters to 4.5 km, and in elevation from sea level to an average of 6-8 meters. VINH LOC (D), the area of operations, includes the land mass from the southeastern tip to a point approximately 25 km to the northwest. VINH LOC District is comprised primarily of sandy areas, moderately vegetated, with numerous canals and streams scattered throughout the area. The entire area has an extensive drainage system being made up of canals, streams, a major river on the inland side, and the South China Sea on the eastern side. Vegetation in the area is sparse with scattered shrubs. The areas along the canals and around and within the villages are the most densely vegetated and there are numerous hedgerows throughout the built up areas. The beach areas consist mainly of sand, have very little vegetation, if any. Main avenues of approach into VINH LOC (D) are by way of the inland waterway running NW and SE, paralleled to the inland, and the Cau Hai Bay at the southern end of the island. One of the main routes by the enemy was from the southeast tip of VINH LOC, across the numerous fishing weirs in the bay, to the northwest coast of PHU LOC (D). Trafficability to foot troops and vehicular traffic was generally good as most of the inland canals were fordable and the sand seldom provided obstacles to the APC's used.

2. Weather: The weather throughout the operation was generally good and did not hamper friendly operations. Ceilings averaged above 8,000 feet with visibilities to 6 miles during the days. Temperatures ranged from the high 70's to the low 90's throughout the period. Relative humidity varied from 50 - 100%. During the days, aerial reconnaissance was unlimited and during the nights, ground surveillance was fair, aided by some illumination from the moon.

3. Enemy activities:

a. As stated in para 8 of the basic report, the enemy situation in VINH LOC (D) was unknown. Agents reported that the enemy forces in VINH LOC (D) could be as large as two battalions; however, all these reports were unconfirmed. The enemy forces had moved freely throughout the District conducting standoff attacks and attacks by fire almost at will. The District Hqs and RF/PF outposts continually received harassing mortar and RPG rounds. No identifications of the enemy units operating in VINH LOC (D) were known prior to the operation.

b. Enemy actions during the operation were completely defensive, characterized by evasive tactics. The enemy, after hiding their weapons, attempted to evade the friendly forces by mixing with the local populace, especially the farmers in the rice paddies. On numerous occasions the enemy fled to the flooded rice paddies and was discovered submerged in the water, breathing through bamboo straws. Many VC were found hiding in bunkers and spider holes that existed throughout the area. Contacts by fire throughout the operation were sporadic and scattered as the enemy attempted to evade rather than defend from prepared positions. At night, the enemy made numerous attempts to exfiltrate the island.

Inclosure 1 (Intelligence) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC (continued)

c. Elements of many enemy units were identified during the operations. The majority of the enemy killed and captured were identified as local VC, VCI, and hamlet guerrillas. The largest unit contacted was the C-3 Company. The specific units identified are shown in the detainee breakdown in Tab A as follows:

(1) The C117 LF Company normally operated in the PHU VANG District; however, due to severe floods and heavy allied pressure, elements of this unit recently moved to VINH LOC. At the present it has a strength of approximately 30 - 50 men, with the mission to engage the enemy in PHU THU (D) and PHU VANG (D). The unit's base areas are BA LONG (H) YD908224, LE XA DONG (H) YD881232, DONG GI TAY (C) YD835217, VINH TRINH (H) YD919205. It's organization is 3 Infantry platoons and 1 60mm mortar platoon. The reports from 15 POW's stated morale was low due to constant allied sweeps, lack of food and ammo, and fear of fighting for a lost cause. Personalities are CO - THAI (KIA), XO - QUYNH (KIA), PO - THUONG, QUYNH.

(2) The C118 LF Company normally operates in PHU THU District, with the mission to defend in their operational areas. The organization is 3 Infantry platoons (3 squads each) and 1 60mm mortar squad. The unit has 2 60mm mortars and 1 MG. The 15 POW's captured at VINH LOC report that morale is low because they were poorly trained and had been defeated as a fighting unit. Unit's base areas are TANG VIEN (H) YD920213, TRUNG HA (H) YD974165, and the surrounding areas. At the present, it has a strength of 25 - 30 men. Personalities are CO - TU, XO - LONG, PO - QUANG LOI THUONG.

(3) The C119 LF Company normally operates in VINH LOC District. The organization is 3 Infantry squads. Two POW's report that morale is low because of lack of food and training. Unit's base areas are DIEN LOC (H) YD949243, and an AO extending from vic YD864299 to vic YD986197. At the present it has a strength of 36 men. Personalities are CO - BO DIO, XO - CUONG, PO - BO DIO. There appears to be an attempt to refurbish the C119 LF Company. This is the Brigades first contact with this unit in over six months.

(4) The C-3 Independent Company normally operates in VINH LOC (D), with the mission to destroy PF and ARVN forces, but avoid contact with US troops. The organization is 1st plat (3 infantry squads); 2d plat (3 infantry squads); 3d plat (2 60mm mortar squads) and 4th plat (2 recon squads). The 32 POW's captured report that the morale is low because they were forced to join the VC and because of the lack of food and proper training. The POW's also reported 2 other Companies in the same Bn as the C-1 in the TRUOI Mountains and C-2 vic ZD1506. One POW report stated that 35 men were killed and 35 captured while 30 escaped from VINH LOC. Three POW's said their parent Bn is the K4. The C-3's base areas are VINH HO Church, NGHI GIANG (H) ZD072105, MY LOI (H) ZD052128, NAM TRUONG (H) ZD081099, MY A (H) ZD090116 and MY A (H) ZD090116. At the present it has a strength of 30 - 40 men. Personalities are CO - THOA, XO - NGOT (Poss CIA), PO - VY.

Inclosure 1 (Intelligence) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC (continued)

4. Intelligence Operations:

a. A complete photo mosaic of VINH LOC (D) was utilized prior to and during the operation. Red Haze was used; however, no action was taken due to a large number of civilians in the areas. Aerial reconnaissance missions were flown throughout the operation.

b. Personnel Detectors were not utilized during the operation since civilians living throughout the District would almost automatically invalidate the readings received as being strictly enemy.

c. LRP's were not utilized prior or during the operation.

Tab A (Detainee Breakdown) to Inclosure 1 (Intelligence) to Combat Operations
After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. The following is a breakdown of the 970 detainees processed during the operation:

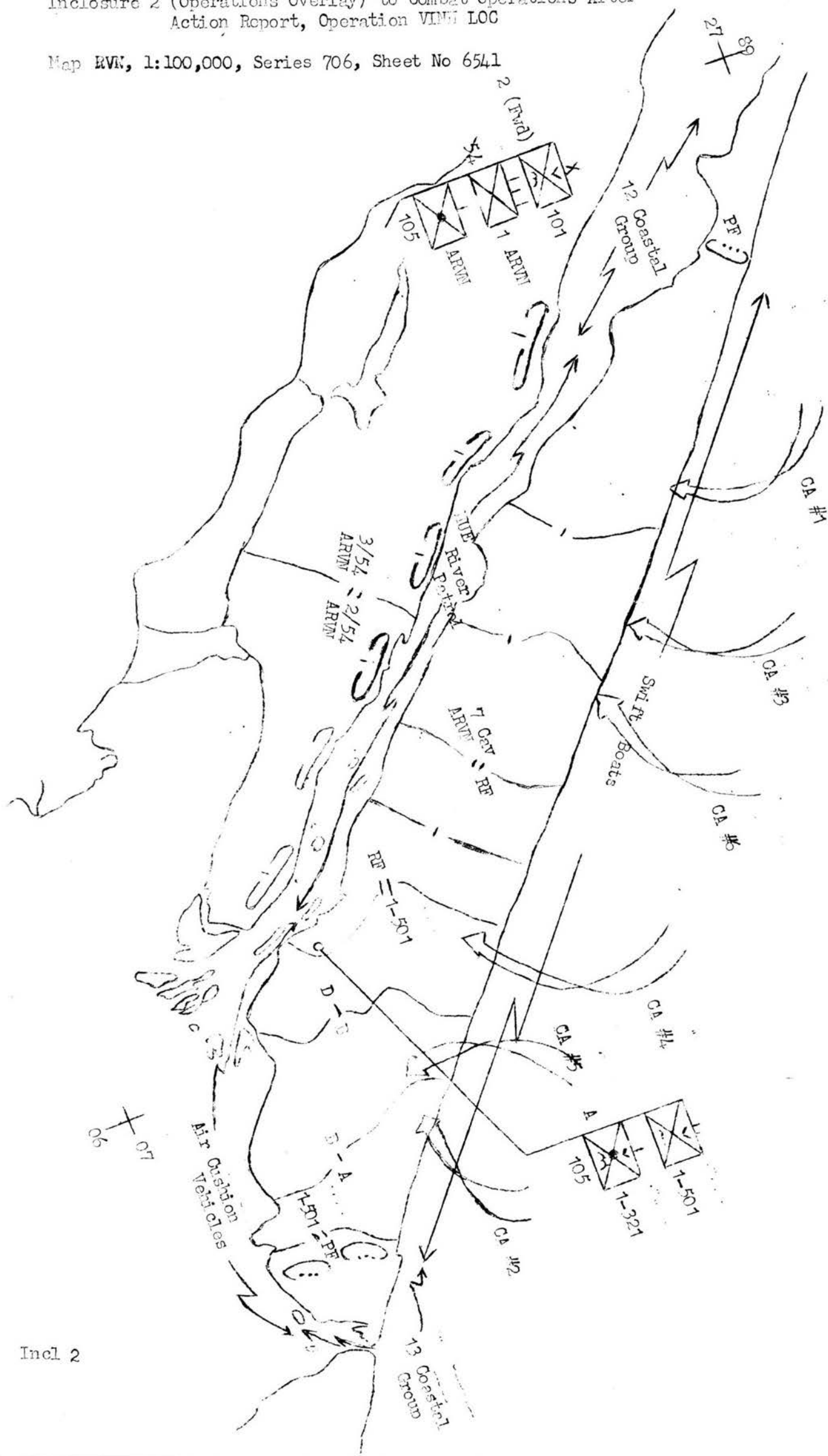
POW	370
IC	263
CD	58
Chieu Hoi	56
Mil Age Males (sent to HUE)	139
Unclassified (19 medevaced)	74
ARVN Deserters	10
Total Processed	970

2. The following is a breakdown by number and unit of the 370 POW's captured during the operation:

- 126 VCI from VINH LOC, PHU LOC, PHU THU, PHU VANG (D)
- 104 VC Guerrillas from VINH LOC (D)
- 16 VCI/guerrillas from PHU THU (D)
- 25 VCI/guerrillas from PHU VANG (D)
- 10 VCI/guerrillas, (D) unknown
- 68 LF VC
 - 15 C117 LF Co
 - 15 C118 LF Co
 - 2 C119 LF Co
 - 32 C-1 Co
 - 4 Unknown unit
- 21 MF POW
 - 14 K4 and K4A Bns
 - 1 HUE Special Unit
 - 1 NVA Dr
 - 1 K-2
 - 1 K-3
 - 3 K-10 (2 were nurses)
- 370 Total POW's

Inclosure 2 (Operations Overlay) to Combat Operations After
Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

Map RVN, 1:100,000, Series 706, Sheet No 6541



Inclosure 3 (Personnel and Administration) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. Unit Strength:

a. Rifle companies of the 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne Infantry were operating at 90 percent of authorized strength at the beginning of the VINH LOC Operation. Average rifle company foxhole strength during the operation was 110. Due to a lack of attrition through battle casualties, unit strengths had no significant decrease during the operation. Assigned strength of the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry on 11 September was:

Officer	Warrant Officer	Enlisted
36	2	758

At the termination of the operation on 20 September assigned strength was:

Officer	Warrant Officer	Enlisted
37	2	794

b. Replacements: Two officers and 35 enlisted men were received as replacements by the 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne Infantry during the operation.

c. The number of personnel on leave and R&R did not significantly effect the strength of the 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne Infantry.

2. Other aspects:

a. AG Functions: N/A

b. PMO: N/A

c. Finance: N/A

d. Chaplain: Religious services during the operation were provided by the 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne Infantry Chaplain (Protestant) and the Assistant Brigade Chaplain (Catholic).

Inclosure 4 (Civil Affairs) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. General: In support of the military operation in VINH LOC District, THUA THIEN Province, there were two MEDCAPS conducted. The MEDCAP team came from 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry (Abn), and consisted of the battalion surgeon and his medics. They were assisted on one MEDCAP by two Vietnamese doctors from the city of HUE. The first MEDCAP was conducted vicinity VINH LOC District Hqs, ZDO39123, the second near VINH HIEN, ZDLO3091.
2. Statistics: Total number of people treated at the two MEDCAP's was 329. The first saw 171 people; the second 158. In addition, over 300 bars of soap were distributed, primarily to mothers and children.
3. Analysis: The MEDCAPS in VINH LOC again demonstrated that Medical Civic Action Program is the most effective program of a short range, high impact nature. It is especially effective when Vietnamese assist in the conduct of a MEDCAP as it projects the GVN image of caring for their own people. The MEDCAP's also emphasized the need for continued emphasis and education on personal hygiene and public health in the Republic of Vietnam.

Inclosure 5 (Psy Ops) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. Psy Ops was utilized throughout the ten day joint operation. Two (2) HB loudspeaker teams were combat assaulted into the AO with the ground troops involved and remained there until the operation was completed. Aerial loudspeaker missions were flown both day and night. Numerous leaflet drops were made throughout the operation.

2. Initially the people were told not to fear the ARVN and Allied offensive and not to run from the troops.

After the first day a theme exemplifying the hopelessness of the enemy positions was initiated. Both messages were used throughout the operation.

The Chieu Hoi Program was exploited from start to finish on a daily basis.

3. Results:

a. The civilians, VC and NVA were attacked as targets. The civilians because the FVMAF did not want any unnecessary harm to come to the innocent people involved. The VC/NVA because their positions were, in fact, hopeless and it was appropriate to provide the necessary alternative to dying.

b. N/A

c. N/A

4. Generally the Psy Ops program for the VINH LOC campaign was adequately effective. Although Chieu Hoi and POW read outs continued to register complaints in reference to the loudspeaker broadcasts made by the fixed wing aircraft of the 9 ACS, DaNang. The reports stated that the planes flew too high and too fast, thereby rendering the transmission inaudible.

A number of the 56 Chieu Hoi's to rally during the VINH LOC Operation stated that they heard and understood the helicopter broadcasts, and that these provided them with the alternative they needed.

Some stated that the Chieu Hoi leaflets were influential in their decision to rally.

Inclosure 6 (Communications) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. General: The following communications were installed during the operation:

a. Radio Net:

- (1) Division Command (FM) non secure.
- (2) Division Command (FM) secure.
- (3) Brigade Command (FM) non secure.
- (4) Brigade Command (FM) secure.
- (5) Brigade Intell (FM) non secure.

b. Power:

- (1) Two (2) 10 KW generators.
- (2) One (1) PP 1451 battery charge.
- (3) Two (2) heavy duty storage batteries.

2. Problems: One problem was encountered during this operation. The Brigade Command Net (FM) secure was ineffective between the Brigades Forward TOC at PHU THU and Brigade Main LZ SALLY. The two stations were within planning distance of the radios used plus the equipment used on this net could net with stations at Camp EAGLE, FSB SANDY and VINH LOC. HUE was in direct line between the Brigade Forward TOC and Brigade Main. Since all equipment was operational, it is felt that the problem was some type of electrical interference in the HUE area.

Inclosure 7 (Artillery) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. Operation VINH LOC.
2. 10 - 20 September 1968.
3. VINH LOC Island located east of HUE.
4. 2d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile).
5. Organization for Combat:
 - a. Battery A, 1st Battalion, 321st Artillery DS 1st Bn, 501st Infantry
 - b. Battery F, 16th Artillery R 1-321
 - c. Battery K, 4th Battalion 16th Marines R 1-321
6. Supporting Units:
 - a. Battery A, 1st Battalion, 83d Artillery
 - b. Naval Rocket (5") Ship
 - c. Naval Destroyer (5"38)
7. Mission: To support the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry with artillery and Naval gun fire in the initial combat assault on the island and provide close artillery support for units in contact.
8. The concept was to fire a short, violent, and intense artillery and Naval gun fire preparation on selected landing zones. The direct support (DS) battery (A/1-321) would occupy a firing position vic ZDO415 immediately after preparation fires were initiated. This battery was to provide close fire support for elements in contact.
9. Executed as Planned.
10. During Operation VINH LOC, 437 rounds of light artillery, 107 rounds of medium artillery, and 710 5" Naval rockets were fired in support of 1-501 elements. The combined operation of US/ARVN forces yielded the following results: KIA's 154, POW's 370, VC suspects 55, Civil Defendants 58, Chieu Hoi's 56, individual weapons 126, and crew served weapons 3.
11. Administration:
 - a. Initial supply and resupply were conducted entirely by air. Favorable flying weather and a UH-1D on call insured adequate resupply throughout the operation.

Inclosure 7 (Artillery) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH
LOC (continued)

- b. No significant maintenance problems were encountered.
- c. N/A
- d. N/A
- e. A radio relay was established at PHU THU District Headquarters for continuous communications.

12. Commanders Comments:

- a. A joint headquarters under the control of a single commander should be established to facilitate coordination between maneuver elements and clearance of supporting fires.
- b. Time permitting, a coordination meeting between aviation lift elements and infantry and artillery assault elements should take place. At this time final coordination can be made with reference to PZ/LZ location and ground contact, critical times, proposed flight paths, and artillery air advisory.
- c. Light artillery should definitely be available for all preparations. It is unwise to depend entirely on NGF to provide the volume of fire necessary for an adequate LZ preparation.

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Tab A (Detainee Breakdown) to Inclosure 1 (Intelligence) to Combat Operations
After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. The following is a breakdown of the 970 detainees processed during the operation:

POW	370
IC	263
CD	58
Chieu Hoi	56
Mil Age Males (sent to HUE)	139
Unclassified (19 medevaced)	74
ARVN Deserters	10
Total Processed	970

2. The following is a breakdown by number and unit of the 370 POW's captured during the operation:

- 126 VCI from VINH LOC, PHU LOC, PHU THU, PHU VANG (D)
- 104 VC Guerrillas from VINH LOC (D)
- 16 VCI/guerrillas from PHU THU (D)
- 25 VCI/guerrillas from PHU VANG (D)
- 10 VCI/guerrillas, (D) unknown
- 68 LF VC
 - 15 C117 LF Co
 - 15 C118 LF Co
 - 2 C119 LF Co
 - 32 C-1 Co
 - 4 Unknown unit
- 21 MF POW
 - 14 K4 and K4A Bns
 - 1 HUE Special Unit
 - 1 NVA Dr
 - 1 K-2
 - 1 K-3
 - 3 K-10 (2 were nurses)
- 370 Total POW's

Tab A

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(10/3/68)

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Tab A (Detainee Breakdown) to Inclosure 1 (Intelligence) to Combat Operations
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Tab A

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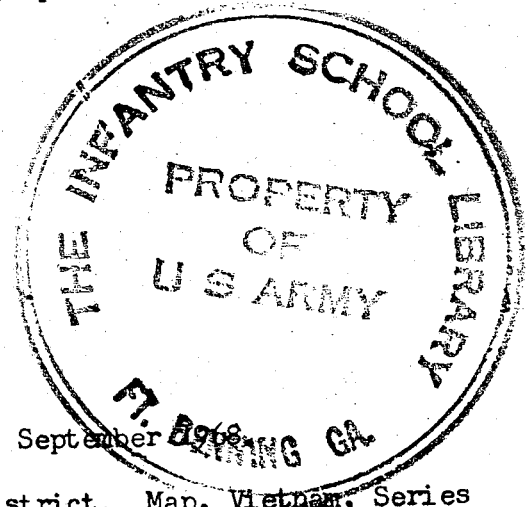
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters 2d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)
APO San Francisco 96383

AVDG-BA-C

3 October 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

Commanding General
101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)
ATTN: AVDG-GC-(Historian Officer)
APO 96383



1. Name of Operation: Operation VINH LOC.
2. Dates of Operation: 10 September 1968 - 20 September 1968.
3. Location: THUA THIEN Province, VINH LOC District. Map, Vietnam, Series L 7014, Scale 1:50,000, Sheets 6541 I, 6541 IV, 6542 III.
4. Control/Command Headquarters: Hqs, 2d Bde, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile).
5. Reporting Officer: Col John A Hoefling.
6. Task Organization:

2d Bde Combined TF (Operation VINH LOC).

TF 1-501 Inf

A/1-501 Abn Inf
B/1-501 Abn Inf
D/1-501 Abn Inf

54th ARVN Regt

7th ARVN Cav Sqdn
3/7th ARVN Cav Trp
1/54th ARVN Bn
2/54 ARVN Bn
3/54 ARVN Bn

VINH LOC Regional Forces

922 RF Co
955 RF Co

Bde Con

No change from Operation
NEVADA EAGLE

7. Supporting Forces:

- a. Organic Forces: Same as Task Organization, Bde Control.

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SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC (continued)

b. Indigenous Forces:

(1) 54th ARVN Regt:

(a) 1/54 under OPCON of 7th ARVN Cav Sqdn: Combat assaulted into 3 Landing Zones to search and clear their area of operations.

(b) 2/54 and 3/54 acted as a blocking force from vic YD940204 to ZDO26110.

(2) Regional Forces (RF): The RF's in VINH LOC were assigned their own tactical area of operations which they conducted recon in force operations.

(3) Popular Forces (PF): 1 platoon of PF's was attached to each tactical unit, company level during the VINH LOC operation. The PF's were utilized for their knowledge of the area and local people.

(4) National Police (NP): 20 NP were utilized in the VINH LOC operation. 6 NP were attached to the US Naval patrol boats and 14 NP were assigned as security and for handling of POW's and detainees under control of the District Chief.

(5) Police Field Force (PFF): There were 100 PFF utilized in the VINH LOC operation; 50 with the 1-501 Inf down to company level and 50 were utilized by the ARVN forces. The PFF made the initial screening, interrogation and tagging of detainees.

(6) Police Special Branch (PSB): There were 34 special police utilized in the VINH LOC (D) and 17 from the Province Office. 12 to the ARVN units and 10 remained at the POW compound. There was at least 1 member of the SP with each tactical company to utilize the blacklist for identification of VC infrastructure. The 10 SP's at the POW compound made further interrogations for exploitable information.

(7) Census Grievance (CG): There were 8 cadre in the field during the VINH LOC operation, 7 were with the tactical units and the senior cadre worked at the POW compound. The CG cadre in the field identified enemy KIA and detainees as being VC or VC infrastructure. The senior cadre did the same at the POW compound.

(8) 12th and 13th Coastal Groups: During the VINH LOC operation, 13th Coastal Group maintained a blockade south of VINH LOC on the waterways running from east to west preventing the enemy from utilizing this avenue of escape. The Coastal Groups also laid night ambushes at points along the southern beaches of VINH LOC. The 12th Coastal Group screened the northwest portion of the waterways.

(9) Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU): PRU's were very effective in gathering intelligence for all forces. They work especially well when given a

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particular target and thorough briefings on the type of information desired.

(10) Revolutionary Development Cadre (RDC): ~~Two~~ RDC teams have been sent into VINH LOC at the conclusion of the operation there. The operation eliminated enough enemy to allow these teams to be utilized in that area.

c. Supporting Forces - Other Services:

(1) US Naval River Security Group (Pistol Pete): The group linked up with the 12th and 13th Coastal Groups to participate in the blockade of VINH LOC. This unit was also successful in conducting Psy Ops broadcasts in the same area.

(2) Coastal Division 17, US Navy Patrol Air Cushion Vehicles (PACV): The PACV's were used successfully in the inland water blockade of VINH LOC preventing the enemy's escape and also conducted successful Psy Ops missions along the coast.

(3) US Navy Swiftboats: In the VINH LOC operation the swift boats provided the seaward blockade forces utilizing their large area radar coverage. Psy Ops were also utilized by this unit.

8. Intelligence: Prior to the operation, the intelligence picture for VINH LOC (D) was nebulous due to a lack of FVMAF operations in the recent past. Based on reports from Provincial Reconnaissance Teams and District Forces in the area, it was felt that there were approximately two companies of local force guerrillas operating in VINH LOC (D). The number of hamlet guerrillas and VCI was unknown; however, it was expected to be large as the majority of the inland was dominated by the enemy. Because of ARVN operations in PHU THU (D) and the advent of Typhoon Bess prior to the operation it was believed that many LF VC and guerrillas had infiltrated into VINH LOC (D) from the inundated lowlands. A more detailed intelligence situation can be found in Inclosure 1.

9. Mission: 2d Bde TF continues current mission (Operation NEVADA EAGLE) and in conjunction with the 54th ARVN Regt and VINH LOC RF/PF forces conducts combat assaults at 110715 Sep 68 on the VINH LOC island to find and destroy the enemy, his supplies and installations.

10. Concept of Operation:

a. Phase I (D-1): Blocking forces were to be emplaced in such a manner as to appear to be an extension of normal operations. Co D/1-501 was to conduct operations in grid YD9424 to force the enemy southeast along the island into VINH LOC District). Concurrently, 2/54th ARVN and the 3/54th ARVN were to move into blocking positions along the northeast shore of PHU VANG District to drive the enemy across the water into VINH LOC.

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SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC (continued)

b. Phase II (D-day): Naval forces were to be in their blocking positions at first light. At 110600 Sep 68, 3/7 Cav (ARVN) was to RIF from vicinity COL CO Beach southeast into VINH LOC District to deny the enemy movement to the northwest and to force him to withdraw into the cordon. Task Force 1-501 Abn Inf and the 1/54 ARVN were to combat assault into 6 LZ's along the northeastern shore of the island and swiftly conduct RIF toward the southwest into the blocks formed by the Naval Forces and the 54th Regt. The 2 Regional Force Company's from positions on the northwestern shore of the island were to RIF to the southwest with a like mission. The first night was to consist of illumination and the engagement of enemy trying to flee VINH LOC District through the water.

c. Phase III (D+1 until completion): Ground forces were to continue RIF operations in their assigned AO stressing combat patrolling, RIF, Eagle Flights and night ambushes to conduct a methodical search and exploit combat intelligence.

11. Execution:

a. Methods of Operation: The operation was characterized by the following considerations:

(1) Surprise: The date was selected as the 11th of September, but forces involved were notified at last possible moment that would allow them to react. The District Chief was not notified until the evening of the 10th. Reconnaissance was limited. CP's and supporting artillery were moved into position after H-hour.

(2) Isolation of the battlefield: It was decided to cordon the entire District without alerting the enemy.

(3) Speed of execution: Maneuver forces were to be landed on the ocean side of the island and had to drive straight through to the inland side during the first day. This would fragment enemy forces; disrupt communications; and deny the normal avenues of escape to the enemy.

(4) Minimize destruction: Preparatory fires were limited to rather barren ground around the LZ's and supporting fires were to be used only in the case of organized resistance, which was not encountered. The concept of minimum destruction alleviated the problem of additional refugees and unnecessary suffering on the part of the populace. As nearly as can be determined, 3 houses were burned down and one civilian was wounded by artillery.

(5) Population control: Every unit was to have GVN personnel to question and control the populace. Orders were issued to detain everyone of fighting age regardless of credentials. All province forces in the maneuver elements were completely integrated into the ARVN and US forces except the 2 RF companies who had their own AO's. A platoon of PF worked with each US company. The 100

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NPFF were split among all combat elements. The 30 Armed Propaganda Team members, the 8 Census Grievance and the 17 Special Branch Police were spread to the units and used where needed. As a result there was always VN personnel with vanguard of all units. This eliminated misunderstandings with detained persons. It allowed a meaningful initial screening and reassured the people of the District.

(6) Self Defense units were included when possible, in the search of their villages. In fact, in one village, 20 self defense cadre and 10 US troopers, combat assaulted in reaction to intelligence information.

(7) Detailed search with rapid exploitation of intelligence: After the initial rapid thrust all units were to search their AO's in detail. Utilizing all local and GVN resources plus immediate exploitation of intelligence information generated by civilians, POW's, Chieu Hoi's and anyone else. The Combined Interrogation Center was extremely effective. Initial screening and interrogation generated information that could be utilized within minutes after the arrival of a group of prisoners. This effort was well organized and imaginatively conducted. As an example, a CH-34 lift of 215 suspects was conducted between 0100 and 0230 hrs on the 12th. The landing zone was dusty, noisy and the suspects were quite confused. As the planes unloaded the police directed "All members of the K-4 Battalion over here, C-118 over here" etc. Sixty three of the suspects lined up as directed and proved to be POW's from those units.

b. Operations Narrative: (Inclosure 2, Operations Overlay).

10 September 1968. Phase I was executed as planned with all blocking forces moving into position as explained in Concept of Operations.

11 September 1968. Co A 1-501 at 0732 hrs conducted a combat assault from PZ vic YD865233 to LZ vic ZD080130, closed LZ at 0811 hrs. Conducted RIF south-east to vic ZD093098. B/1-501 at 0947 hrs conducted a combat assault from PZ vic YD869245 to LZ vic ZD071130, closed LZ at 1037 hrs. Conducted RIF southeast to vic ZD078107. D/1-501 at 0849 hrs conducted a combat assault from PZ vic YD 909274 to LZ vic ZD048153, closed LZ at 0950 hrs. Conducted RIF to vic ZD062 113. Concurrently 1/54 ARVN, OPCON to 7th Cav Sqdn ARVN, combat assaulted into 3 LZ's in their AO. Contact was sporadic as VC tried to hide with the local populace. Combined forces in the 1-501 AO accounted for 1 VC KIA (BC), 2 AK-47's, and 108 detainees (11 classified as VC, the remainder unclassified). The ARVN forces accounted for 13 VC KIA (BC), 10 individual weapons and 205 detainees.

12 September 1968. 1-501 Inf continued extensive RIF operations and saturation patrols within their AO. Contact was sporadic with enemy assessment as 6 VC KIA (BC), 9 indiv weapons captured (5 SKS, 1 AK-47, 2 M1 carbines, 1 CHICOM pistol). The ARVN Task Force accounted for 21 VC KIA (BC), and 16 individual weapons captured. In addition combined US/GVN forces accounted for 119 detainees. The Coastal Groups accounted for 6 VC KIA (BC).

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13 September 1968. 1-501 Inf continued to conduct saturation patrols and RIF operations in their AO. A/1-501 in a series of contacts with the C-3 Co killed 23 VC (BC) and captured 27 individual weapons (10 SKS, 10 AK-47, 4 M1 carbines, 1 M1 rifle, 1 K-44, and 1 CHICOM pistol). The 1-501 accounted for a total of 36 VC KIA (BC), 30 individual weapons captured, and 97 detainees. The ARVN Forces accounted for 64 detainees and 6 individual weapons captured. The Coastal Groups accounted for 7 VC KIA (BC).

14 September 1968. 1-501 Inf continued saturation patrolling and RIF operations in their AO with sporadic contact as the enemy continued to evade. 1-501 Inf accounted for 1 VC KIA (BC), 2 Chieu Hoi, and 3 weapons captured including a 60mm mortar. ARVN forces accounted for 9 VC KIA (BC), and 18 IWC.

15 September 1968. 1-501 Inf continued to conduct RIF operations and saturation patrolling in their AO with D Co making a combat assault at 1455 hrs from PZ vic ZD050154 to LZ vic ZD019169 closing at 1527 hrs. 1-501 Inf accounted for 2 VC KIA (BC), 2 Chieu Hoi, 2 AK-47's, 1 SKS and 2 M1 carbines. The ARVN TF continued operations in their AO with 10 VC KIA (BC), 10 Chieu Hoi's and 31 IWC. The Coastal Groups accounted for 3 VC KIA (BC) and 2 IWC.

16 September 1968. 1-501 Inf continued operations in AO accounting for 4 VC (BC), 2 Chieu Hoi's, 7 IWC (6 SKS and 1 M2 carbine) and an ammo cache (10 RPG-2 rds, 700 rds SA ammo, 13 M79 rds, 50 blasting caps and 60mm mortar sights). The ARVN TF continued operations resulting in 4 VC (BC), 10 Chieu Hoi, 5 IWC, 1 60mm mortar.

17 September 1968. 1-501 Inf continued saturation patrolling in AO. B/1-501 conducted RIF to VINH LOC and conducted heliborne movement at 1040 hrs to LZ vic YD822226, closing at 1155 hrs. Results for day's operations were 2 VC KIA (BC), 1 Chieu Hoi, and 1 K-44. ARVN TF accounted for 5 VC (BC), 4 Chieu Hoi and 3 IWC. The VINH LOC PF captured 1 IWC.

18 September 1968. A/1-501 at 0824 hrs conducted a heliborne movement from PZ vic ZD095117 to FSB SANDY closing at 0947 hrs. D/1-501 and ARVN TF continued saturation patrolling with the ARVN TF accounting for 11 VC KIA (BC) and 4 IWC.

19 September 1968. D/1-501 and ARVN TF conducted saturation patrolling in their AO's with the ARVN TF accounting for 3 VC KIA (BC) and 2 IWC. The Coastal Groups accounted for 10 VC KIA (BC) and 7 IWC.

20 September 1968. D/1-501 and ARVN TF continued saturation patrolling in AO's with 1 M1 carbine captured by D/1-501 and 13 IWC and 1 CSWC.

12. Results:

a. The operation was humanely executed, used all available resources and was eminently successful.

b. Enemy Losses:

(1) KIA (BC)

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(2) KBAA (BC) 0

(3) KBA (BC) 0

(4) Captured:

(a) PW 370

(b) Chieu Hoi 56

(c) Civil Defendant 58

(d) Indiv weapons 176

(e) Crew served 3

c. Friendly Losses:

(1) US WHA 2

(2) ARVN KHA 2

(3) ARVN WHA 7

d. Body to Weapons ratio: 154/129

e. Enemy to friendly killed ratio: 154/2

13. Commander's Analysis:

a. Lessons Learned:

(1) Item: Use of Sector Forces:

DISCUSSION: The many local resources available at sector level can be used in almost any type of combat operations in populated areas. Each of the elements has a particular area in which they are highly qualified and when employed at the lowest level possible produce results which are unobtainable to US units operating alone. Maximum results are obtained by employing the indigenous forces at the squad, platoon and company level. In this manner they are at critical areas at all times and save a great deal of time and effort and misunderstanding with the local people.

SOLUTION: Employ Sector Forces at the squad, platoon and company level to obtain maximum benefit from these specialists.

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SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC (continued)

(2) Item: Coordination meetings:

DISCUSSION: The most essential element of a successful joint/combined operation is close coordination that must take place prior to and during the conduct of operations. Prior to the operation the senior force commanders (Sector Chief, US Bn Commander, senior naval representatives, etc.) must be told of the part they will play and to insure there is mutual understanding of the mission and that the required resources will be available. Approximately 2 days before the operation the force commanders, trusted commanders and staff members must be brought together in a final coordination meeting where the order is issued, questions are answered and any problems are identified and solved. The senior commanders must leave this meeting with a clear understanding of the overall operation and specifically their parts.

SOLUTION: Close and continuous coordination will be conducted during the planning stages with a final coordination meeting taking place approximately 48 hrs prior to D-day.

(3) Item: Joint Command Posts:

DISCUSSION: When forces from several units are involved in an operation a unity of command and effort must be established. This is best accomplished by the establishment of a joint CP where a lateral flow of information can be passed between S2/S3/Arty elements of forces involved. By these elements working in close proximity to each other, orders, intelligence, support requests, etc., can be handled in an expeditious manner and problems can be solved on the spot. Mutual confidence, respect and cooperation develops as the personnel work together.

SOLUTION: In any combined/joint operations where allied units of Bn size or larger are employed, a joint TOC will be established.

(4) Item: POW Collection Point:

DISCUSSION: A centralized POW Collection Point offers certain advantages that were not apparent prior to this operation. By keeping all of the various agencies interested in screening personnel at one point a person can be processed through all agencies and questioned for information. Each of the various agencies has different areas of interest and an IPW team frequently will miss a person on the black list of the PRU etc. By pooling the efforts of all agencies at one point, a 24 hour operation can take place and classification can be continuous. One problem that did occur was transporting the suspects and POW's from the field location to the collection point. Also when information is gained at the collection point transportation is necessary to exploit the intelligence leads.

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SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC (continued)

SOLUTION: In any operation when large scale collection is anticipated a centralized forward POW Collection Point will be established. Interrogation from all agencies will be employed at this collection point and transportation will be laid on to move POW's from the field location to the collection point and to exploit information gained during questioning.


b. Commander's Note: The VINH LOC operation was the first operation which used every type of force available in a typical sector in Vietnam. It was a well coordinated, well timed operation which was a complete success. In my opinion, the success was caused by the detailed daily contacts that were made prior to the operation in the course of working on a continued basis with all Vietnamese Forces. The operation was well coordinated because everyone knew each other and the capabilities of each unit. It was well executed because everyone made the effort to cooperate and see that the mission was accomplished.

14. Recommendations: None.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

7 Incl.

1. Intelligence
2. Operations Overlay
3. Personnel and Administration
4. Civil Affairs
5. Psychological Operations
6. Communications
7. Artillery


JERRY P ALLEN
Major, Inf
Adjutant

Inclosure 1 (Intelligence) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. Terrain: The island which encompasses VINH LOC District extends approximately 38 km in a northwest and southeasterly direction and varies in width from 800 meters to 4.5 km, and in elevation from sea level to an average of 6-8 meters. VINH LOC (D), the area of operations, includes the land mass from the southeastern tip to a point approximately 25 km to the northwest. VINH LOC District is comprised primarily of sandy areas, moderately vegetated, with numerous canals and streams scattered throughout the area. The entire area has an extensive drainage system being made up of canals, streams, a major river on the inland side, and the South China Sea on the eastern side. Vegetation in the area is sparse with scattered shrubs. The areas along the canals and around and within the villages are the most densely vegetated and there are numerous hedgerows throughout the built up areas. The beach areas consist mainly of sand, have very little vegetation, if any. Main avenues of approach into VINH LOC (D) are by way of the inland waterway running NW and SE, paralleled to the inland, and the Cau Hai Bay at the southern end of the island. One of the main routes by the enemy was from the southeast tip of VINH LOC, across the numerous fishing weirs in the bay, to the northwest coast of PHU LOC (D). Trafficability to foot troops and vehicular traffic was generally good as most of the inland canals were fordable and the sand seldom provided obstacles to the APC's used.

2. Weather: The weather throughout the operation was generally good and did not hamper friendly operations. Ceilings averaged above 8,000 feet with visibilities to 6 miles during the days. Temperatures ranged from the high 70's to the low 90's throughout the period. Relative humidity varied from 50 - 100%. During the days, aerial reconnaissance was unlimited and during the nights, ground surveillance was fair, aided by some illumination from the moon.

3. Enemy activities:

a. As stated in para 8 of the basic report, the enemy situation in VINH LOC (D) was unknown. Agents reported that the enemy forces in VINH LOC (D) could be as large as two battalions; however, all these reports were unconfirmed. The enemy forces had moved freely throughout the District conducting standoff attacks and attacks by fire almost at will. The District Hqs and RF/PF outposts continually received harassing mortar and RPG rounds. No identifications of the enemy units operating in VINH LOC (D) were known prior to the operation.

b. Enemy actions during the operation were completely defensive, characterized by evasive tactics. The enemy, after hiding their weapons, attempted to evade the friendly forces by mixing with the local populace, especially the farmers in the rice paddies. On numerous occasions the enemy fled to the flooded rice paddies and was discovered submerged in the water, breathing through bamboo straws. Many VC were found hiding in bunkers and spider holes that existed throughout the area. Contacts by fire throughout the operation were sporadic and scattered as the enemy attempted to evade rather than defend from prepared positions. At night, the enemy made numerous attempts to exfiltrate the island.

Incl 1

Inclosure 1 (Intelligence) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC (continued)

c. Elements of many enemy units were identified during the operations. The majority of the enemy killed and captured were identified as local VC, VCI, and hamlet guerrillas. The largest unit contacted was the C-3 Company. The specific units identified are shown in the detainee breakdown in Tab A as follows:

(1) The C117 LF Company normally operated in the PHU VANG District; however, due to severe floods and heavy allied pressure, elements of this unit recently moved to VINH LOC. At the present it has a strength of approximately 30 - 50 men, with the mission to engage the enemy in PHU THU (D) and PHU VANG (D). The unit's base areas are BA LONG (H) YD908224, LE XA DONG (H) YD881232, DONG GI TAY (C) YD835217, VINH TRINH (H) YD91925. Its organization is 3 Infantry platoons and 1 60mm mortar platoon. The reports from 15 POW's stated morale was low due to constant allied sweeps, lack of food and ammo, and fear of fighting for a lost cause. Personalities are CO - THAI (KIA), XO - QUYNH (KIA), PO - THUONG, QUYNH.

(2) The C118 LF Company normally operates in PHU THU District, with the mission to defend in their operational areas. The organization is 3 Infantry platoons (3 squads each) and 1 60mm mortar squad. The unit has 2 60mm mortars and 1 MG. The 15 POW's captured at VINH LOC report that morale is low because they were poorly trained and had been defeated as a fighting unit. Unit's base areas are TANG VIEN (H) YD920213, TRUNG HA (H) YD974165, and the surrounding areas. At the present, it has a strength of 25 - 30 men. Personalities are CO - TU, XO - LONG, PO - QUANG LOI THUONG.

(3) The C119 LF Company normally operates in VINH LOC District. The organization is 3 Infantry squads. Two POW's report that morale is low because of lack of food and training. Unit's base areas are DIEN LOC (H) YD949243, and an AO extending from vic YD864299 to vic YD986197. At the present it has a strength of 36 men. Personalities are CO - BO DIO, XO - CUONG, PO - BO DIO. There appears to be an attempt to refurbish the C119 LF Company. This is the Brigades first contact with this unit in over six months.

(4) The C-3 Independent Company normally operates in VINH LOC (D), with the mission to destroy PF and ARVN forces, but avoid contact with US troops. The organization is 1st plat (3 infantry squads); 2d plat (3 infantry squads); 3d plat (2 60mm mortar squads) and 4th plat (2 recon squads). The 32 POW's captured report that the morale is low because they were forced to join the VC and because of the lack of food and proper training. The POW's also reported 2 other Companies in the same Bn as the C-1 in the THUOI Mountains and C-2 vic ZD1506. One POW report stated that 35 men were killed and 35 captured while 30 escaped from VINH LOC. Three POW's said their parent Bn is the K4. The C-3's base areas are VINH HO Church, NGHI GIANG (H) ZD072105, MY LUJ (H) ZD052128, NAM TRUONG (H) ZD081099, MY A (H) ZD090116 and MY A (H) ZD090116. At the present it has a strength of 30 - 40 men. Personalities are CO - THOA, XO - NGOT (Poss CIA), PO - VY.

Inclosure 1 (Intelligence) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC (continued)

4. Intelligence Operations:

a. A complete photo mosaic of VINH LOC (D) was utilized prior to and during the operation. Red Haze was used; however, no action was taken due to a large number of civilians in the areas. Aerial reconnaissance missions were flown throughout the operation.

b. Personnel Detectors were not utilized during the operation since civilians living throughout the District would almost automatically invalidate the readings received as being strictly enemy.

c. LRP's were not utilized prior or during the operation.

Tab A (Detainee Breakdown) to Inclosure 1 (Intelligence) to Combat Operations
After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. The following is a breakdown of the 970 detainees processed during the operation:

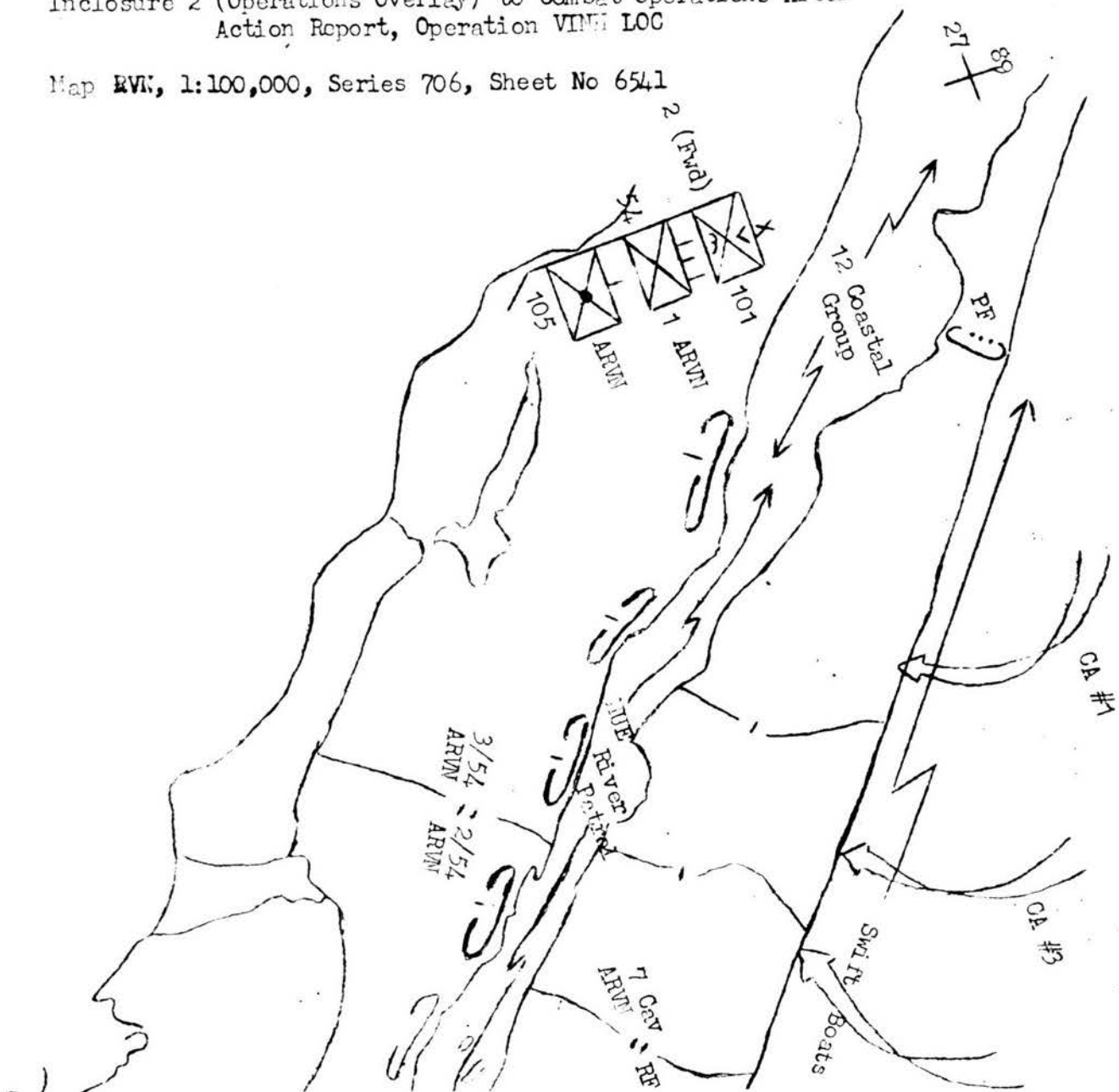
POW	370
IC	263
CD	58
Chieu Hoi	56
Mil Age Males (sent to HUE)	139
Unclassified (19 medevaced)	74
ARVN Deserters	10
Total Processed	970

2. The following is a breakdown by number and unit of the 370 POW's captured during the operation:

- 126 VCI from VINH LOC, PHU LOC, PHU THU, PHU VANG (D)
- 104 VC Guerrillas from VINH LOC (D)
- 16 VCI/guerrillas from PHU THU (D)
- 25 VCI/guerrillas from PHU VANG (D)
- 10 VCI/guerrillas, (D) unknown
- 68 LF VC
 - 15 C117 LF Co
 - 15 C118 LF Co
 - 2 C119 LF Co
 - 32 C-1 Co
 - 4 Unknown unit
- 21 MF POW
 - 14 K4 and K4A Bns
 - 1 HUE Special Unit
 - 1 NVH Dr
 - 1 K-2
 - 1 K-3
 - 3 K-10 (2 were nurses)
- 370 Total POW's

Inclosure 2 (Operations Overlay) to Combat Operations After
Action Report, Operation VINE LOC

Map EVK, 1:100,000, Series 706, Sheet No 6541



Inclosure 3 (Personnel and Administration) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. Unit Strength:

a. Rifle companies of the 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne Infantry were operating at 90 percent of authorized strength at the beginning of the VINH LOC Operation. Average rifle company foxhole strength during the operation was 110. Due to a lack of attrition through battle casualties, unit strengths had no significant decrease during the operation. Assigned strength of the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry on 11 September was:

Officer	Warrant Officer	Enlisted
36	2	758

At the termination of the operation on 20 September assigned strength was:

Officer	Warrant Officer	Enlisted
37	2	794

b. Replacements: Two officers and 35 enlisted men were received as replacements by the 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne Infantry during the operation.

c. The number of personnel on leave and R&R did not significantly effect the strength of the 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne Infantry.

2. Other aspects:

a. AG Functions: N/A

b. PMO: N/A

c. Finance: N/A

d. Chaplain: Religious services during the operation were provided by the 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne Infantry Chaplain (Protestant) and the Assistant Brigade Chaplain (Catholic).

Inclosure 4 (Civil Affairs) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. General: In support of the military operation in VINH LOC District, THUA THIEN Province, there were two MEDCAPS conducted. The MEDCAP team came from 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry (Abn), and consisted of the battalion surgeon and his medics. They were assisted on one MEDCAP by two Vietnamese doctors from the city of HUE. The first MEDCAP was conducted vicinity VINH LOC District Hqs, ZDO39123, the second near VINH HIEN, ZDLO3091.
2. Statistics: Total number of people treated at the two MEDCAP's was 329. The first saw 171 people; the second 158. In addition, over 300 bars of soap were distributed, primarily to mothers and children.
3. Analysis: The MEDCAPS in VINH LOC again demonstrated that Medical Civic Action Program is the most effective program of a short range, high impact nature. It is especially effective when Vietnamese assist in the conduct of a MEDCAP as it projects the GVN image of caring for their own people. The MEDCAP's also emphasized the need for continued emphasis and education on personal hygiene and public health in the Republic of Vietnam.

Inclosure 5 (Psy Ops) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. Psy Ops was utilized throughout the ten day joint operation. Two (2) HB loudspeaker teams were combat assaulted into the AO with the ground troops involved and remained there until the operation was completed. Aerial loudspeaker missions were flown both day and night. Numerous leaflet drops were made throughout the operation.

2. Initially the people were told not to fear the ARVN and Allied offensive and not to run from the troops.

After the first day a theme exemplifying the hopelessness of the enemy positions was initiated. Both messages were used throughout the operation.

The Chieu Hoi Program was exploited from start to finish on a daily basis.

3. Results:

a. The civilians, VC and NVA were attacked as targets. The civilians because the FWIAF did not want any unnecessary harm to come to the innocent people involved. The VC/NVA because their positions were, in fact, hopeless and it was appropriate to provide the necessary alternative to dying.

b. N/A

c. N/A

4. Generally the Psy Ops program for the VINH LOC campaign was adequately effective. Although Chieu Hoi and POW read outs continued to register complaints in reference to the loudspeaker broadcasts made by the fixed wing aircraft of the 9 ACS, DaNang. The reports stated that the planes flew too high and too fast, thereby rendering the transmission inaudible.

A number of the 56 Chieu Hoi's to rally during the VINH LOC Operation stated that they heard and understood the helicopter broadcasts, and that these provided them with the alternative they needed.

Some stated that the Chieu Hoi leaflets were influential in their decision to rally.

Inclosure 6 (Communications) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. General: The following communications were installed during the operation:

a. Radio Net:

- (1) Division Command (FM) non secure.
- (2) Division Command (FM) secure.
- (3) Brigade Command (FM) non secure.
- (4) Brigade Command (FM) secure.
- (5) Brigade Intell (FM) non secure.

b. Power:

- (1) Two (2) 10 KW generators.
- (2) One (1) PP 1451 battery charged.
- (3) Two (2) heavy duty storage batteries.

2. Problems: One problem was encountered during this operation. The Brigade Command Net (FM) secure was ineffective between the Brigades Forward TOC at PHU THU and Brigade Main LZ SALLY. The two stations were within planning distance of the radios used plus the equipment used on this net could not connect with stations at Camp EAGLE, FSB SANDY and VINH LOC. HUE was in direct line between the Brigade Forward TOC and Brigade Main. Since all equipment was operational, it is felt that the problem was some type of electrical interference in the HUE area.

Inclosure 7 (Artillery) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH LOC

1. Operation VINH LOC.
2. 10 - 20 September 1968.
3. VINH LOC Island located east of HUE.
4. 2d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile).
5. Organization for Combat:
 - a. Battery A, 1st Battalion, 321st Artillery DS 1st Bn, 501st Infantry
 - b. Battery F, 16th Artillery R 1-321
 - c. Battery K, 4th Battalion 16th Marines R 1-321
6. Supporting Units:
 - a. Battery A, 1st Battalion, 83d Artillery
 - b. Naval Rocket (5") Ship
 - c. Naval Destroyer (5"38)
7. Mission: To support the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry with artillery and Naval gun fire in the initial combat assault on the island and provide close artillery support for units in contact.
8. The concept was to fire a short, violent, and intense artillery and Naval gun fire preparation on selected landing zones. The direct support (DS) battery (A/1-321) would occupy a firing position vic ZDO415 immediately after preparation fires were initiated. This battery was to provide close fire support for elements in contact.
9. Executed as Planned.
10. During Operation VINH LOC, 437 rounds of light artillery, 107 rounds of medium artillery, and 710 5" Naval rockets were fired in support of 1-501 elements. The combined operation of US/ARVN forces yielded the following results: KIA's 154, POW's 370, VC suspects 55, Civil Defendants 58, Chieu Hoi's 56, individual weapons 126, and crew served weapons 3.
11. Administration:
 - a. Initial supply and resupply were conducted entirely by air. Favorable flying weather and a UH-1D on call insured adequate resupply throughout the operation.

Inclosure 7 (Artillery) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation VINH
LOC (continued)

- b. No significant maintenance problems were encountered.
- c. N/A
- d. N/A
- e. A radio relay was established at PHU THU District Headquarters for continuous communications.

12. Commanders Comments:

a. A joint headquarters under the control of a single commander should be established to facilitate coordination between maneuver elements and clearance of supporting fires.

b. Time permitting, a coordination meeting between aviation lift elements and infantry and artillery assault elements should take place. At this time final coordination can be made with reference to PZ/LZ location and ground contact, critical times, proposed flight paths, and artillery air advisory.

c. Light artillery should definitely be available for all preparations. It is unwise to depend entirely on NGF to provide the volume of fire necessary for an adequate LZ preparation.

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