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2ND REGIMENT HEADQUARTERS
ADVISORY TEAM 4
APO 96269

MACTN-HU2R

13 Sept 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report Lam Son 250

THRU: Command Channels

TO: Commander
US Military Assistance Command, VN
APO 96222

1. (U) Name and Type of Operation: Lam Son 250
2. (C) Dates of Operation: 8 Aug 1968 - 25 Aug 1968
3. (C) Location: YD 1975 - 2579 - 2771 - 1960
4. (C) Control or Command Headquarters: 2nd ARVN Regiment
5. (C) Reporting Officers: Senior Regt Advisor - LTC Parsons
Senior Advisor 1/2 Bn - CPT Wallace
" " 2/2 Bn - CPT Bates
" " 3/2 Bn - CPT Whorten
" " 5/2 Bn - CPT Williams
" " 11th Cav - CPT Vaughn
" " 103d Eng Bn - CPT Viani

The advisory effort in the planning phase was oriented toward obtaining engineer materials for construction of a bridge and outpost. During the execution phase, advisory effort was primarily coordination with U.S. units and use of supporting arms. Advice was readily accepted and used.

6. (C) Task Organization:
 - a. Control Headquarters: 2nd Regiment, 1st ARVN Infantry Division
 - b. Organic elements: 1/2 Bn, 2/2 Bn, 3/2 Bn, 5/2 Bn, 2nd ARVN Regiment C
 - c. Attached elements: 11th Cavalry Regiment (-)
2/7 Cav Troop
One Tank Platoon 1/7 Cav

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7. (C) Supporting forces: 62d Arty Bn
Two platoons, 3d USMC
Tank Bn
108th Arty Group (U.S)

a. Artillery support was excellent throughout the operation. ARVN artillery was the primary means of fire support for maneuver units, while 108th Artillery Group fired counter-battery into the DMZ and North Vietnam.

b. USAF and VNAF was utilized throughout the operation and was very effective, with the exception of poor air-ground communication with VNAF.

8. (C) Intelligence: The 138th NVA independent regiment was known to be operating in the operational area. The enemy occupied the best defensive terrain in the area. The terrain is generally flat and sandy with some rice paddies, and is generally trafficable to tracked vehicles.

9. (C) Mission:

- a. To clear the area of enemy forces.
- b. To construct a bridge over the Ben Ngu river at YD 250720.
- c. To construct a company outpost at YD 251719.
- d. To repair the road from A-1 to A-2 outposts.

10. (C) Concept of Operation: The Regiment was to clear the area of enemy forces and provide security for the 103d Engineer Battalion for the time necessary to complete road repairs, bridge construction and outpost construction. Offensive operations were to be conducted concurrently as the opportunity to do so was presented. The entire operation was envisioned as a 15 day effort, dependent on engineer construction progress.

11. (C) Execution: The execution of the assigned missions will be discussed by phases; security, construction, and offensive actions.

a. Security: On D-Day (8 Aug 68) three battalions were assigned missions to secure area for subsequent employment of engineers (see overlay 1). 1/2 Bn with one tank platoon attached crossed its' line of departure at 0600H as scheduled and secured objectives A, B, & C without opposition. 5/2 Bn and 2/2 Bn with 1/11 Cav deployed at 0900H. 5/2 and 2/2 secured objectives D & E and H & G respectively without opposition. AT 1225 hours, while approaching objective F, 2/2 Bn came under small arms fire and the forward air controller observed dug in enemy in the vicinity of objective F. All available supporting fire, artillery, mortar, gunships, and airstrikes were employed against the enemy force while 2/2 Bn and 1/11 Cav prepared to assault. At approximately 1500, with gunships covering, 1/11 Cav, with the infantry mounted, assaulted the enemy position. After reaching the objective, the infantry dismounted and covered by the APC's began a bunker to bunker search of the enemy position.

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Prior to darkness, the objective area was secured. Losses for the day were: Friendly 7 KIA, 41 WIA; Enemy 57 Body count, estimated 70 additional KBA. Sporadic enemy artillery fire was received throughout the day totaling 148 rounds. From D+1 to D+7 the units actively patrolled and provided security to engineer elements with only light and sporadic contact.

b. Construction: The 103d Engineer Bn with one platoon, 127th Float Bridge company, moved to the bridge site at YD 250720 on D-Day. The bridge was installed by 1500 hours in D+1. Road clearance and maintenance from the bridge to A-1 outpost was begun on D+1. The construction of the outpost was begun on D+2 and the site was completed on D+17 (25 Aug 68). Rain hampered construction causing work to be delayed resulting in the two day extension of the projected time.

c. Offensive action: Two significant offensive action were undertaken in Lam Son 250: (1) a thrust into the southern portion of the DMZ and (2) an attack against an NVA company which had infiltrated to the southern portion of the Regiment's area of responsibility.

(1) Intelligence reports indicated that the enemy had deployed the 1st Bn, 138th Regiment in the area of Cam Pho (YD 2376) and Thuy Khe (YD 2478). Plans were made for an armored thrust into the DMZ to eliminate this enemy force. CG, 1st ARVN Infantry Division approved the plan and ordered execution on D+7 (15 Aug). Coordination was made with 1st ARVN Division for the attachment of one APC troop and one tank platoon and with 3d Marine Division for attachment of two USMC tank platoons. The plan called for a diversionary effort by 5/2 Bn in the vicinity of A-2 outpost on 14 Aug and a pre-dawn move of the armored task force on 15 Aug (see overlay #2 for scheme of maneuver and task organization).

The task force crossed the Line of Departure at 0400 and moved without incident to the assault line. No difficulty was encountered in seizing checkpoint 8, but while closing on objective 21 one tank and three APC's struck mines and were disabled. On securing the high ground overlooking objectives 21 & 22 at 0645 the USMC tanks observed and took under fire a large number of NVA in the open preparing the morning meal. The unit commander later described the action as "a turkey shoot" and estimated 189 enemy killed. Terrain, however, prevented entry into the area for a body count. At 0700 1/11 Cav passed through the tank units as planned, but soon became bogged down in the soft terrain. Air and gunships were employed to cover 1/11 Cav in efforts to find a route to the objective. At approximately 0800, units came under heavy artillery fire from the north. It became apparent that the plan could not be followed and fragmentary orders were issued to the unit commanders. 2/7 Cav and USMC tanks were to move south through checkpoints 16, 15, and 14 while 1/11 Cav and ARVN tanks, after the vehicles were extruded they were to move south along the earlier axis of advance. The APC and Infantry elements were to return to the original LD and prepare to assault from south to north. This move was accomplished and objectives 14 and 24 were secured by 1200 hours. Heavy contact was made in the vicinity of objective 13 at 1400 hours. Air, artillery and gunships were employed as the APC's and infantry maneuvered against the enemy. The APC infantry fought through objective 13 with contact

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termination at approximately 1700 hours. Friendly elements then withdrew to the south of the DMZ. Results of the days activity were: Friendly 3 KIA, 50 WIA, 1 tank destroyed, 1 tank recovery vehicle destroyed; Enemy (not including 189 estimate above) 165 KIA.

(2) At 0930, 21 August, an element of 1/2 Bn while engaged in security operations in the vicinity of YD 223656, came under mortar fire. Orders were issued to 1/2 Bn and 1/11 Cav to sweep an area bounded by coordinates YD 1966 - 1962 - 2362 - 2366 to locate and destroy the enemy mortar positions. The units moved at 1300 without contact untill reaching YD 225642 at approximately 1600 hours, where contact was made with an NVA company. Artillery was fired on the enemy and the APC's and infantry closed on the enemy position and overran it. Contact terminated at darkness. Results of the contact: Friendly 9 KIA, 20 WIA; Enemy 61 KIA, 1 VCC. The unit was identified as a company of the 6th Bn, 270th Brigade.

12. (C) Results:

Friendly:

32 KIA
158 WIA

Enemy:

421 KIA
1 VCC
69 Ind Wpns captured
33 C/S Wpns captured

13. (U) Administration matters: Administration and logistics were satisfactory.

14. (C) Advisor Analysis: All phases of the operation were well planned and executed. The responsiveness and aggressiveness of the 11th Cavalry was particularly noteworthy. Infantry leaders and troops lack experience in working with armor and did not take full advantage of available mobility and shock effect, but improved noticeably during the operation.

Ground commanders do not have adequate control of VNAF airstrikes. On one occasion a flight of two VNAF fighters expended their ordnance in an open field while two kilometers away ground units were in contact with the enemy. Communications with the aircraft could not be established to divert them to the target. On a second occasion a VNAF strike impacted in a friendly held area and approximately 10 minutes passed before the strike could be stopped. Ten troops were wounded.

16. (C) Recommendations: That VNAF forward air controllers not be authorized to direct fighters on targets untill communications with the ground commander is established and friendly elements have been clearly identified.

Inclosures:

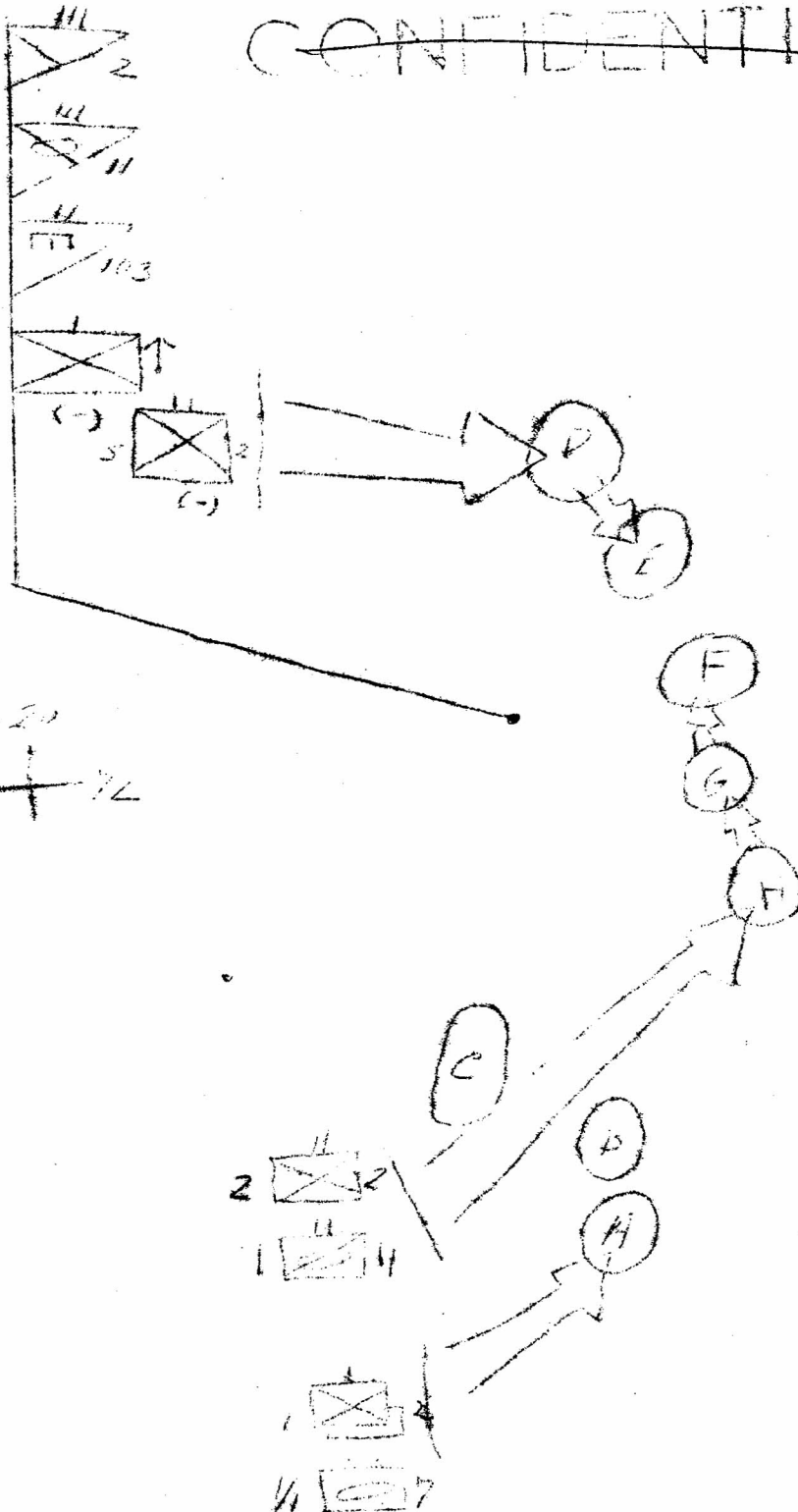
1. Overlay #1
2. Overlay #2

for Leon Montano
DONALD E. PARSONS
LTC, ARMOR
SA, 2ND ARVN REGT

ARMY INF

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OVERLAY #1

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