

Bn After Action Report
OP BEAUREGARD

6/23 - 7/15/66

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Authority 073541

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 2D BATTALION (AIRBORNE), 502D INFANTRY
APO SF 96347

AVADC-C

19 July 1966

SUBJECT: After Action Report, Operation BEAUREGARD

TO: Commanding General
First Brigade, 101st Airborne Division
ATTN: AVAD-C
APO SF 96347

1. GENERAL:

- a. Name of Operation: BEAUREGARD.
- b. Dates of Operation: 232100 June 1966 - 152400 July 1966.
- c. Location: DAK PO KO RIVER ALLEY.
- d. Control Hq: Hq, 2d Bn (Abn, 502d Infantry.
- e. Reporting Officer: HENRY E EMERSON, Lt Col, Infantry.

2. TASK ORGANIZATION: The task organization is listed in FRAGORDS 48-66, 49-66, OPORD 50-66 and FRAGORD 51-66.

3. SUPPORTING FORCES:

a. Army air support was requested and utilized daily. Requests for air support were made for immediate needs and changes in the tactical situation. At all times our air support was outstanding with requests honored immediately. Pilots were required to negotiate small and difficult LZ's in mountainous terrain. This was accomplished with the highest degree of professional competence and skill. Worthy of special note is the increase in quality of support rendered.

b. Engineer support in the form of LZ/Demo Teams was used in all phases of the operation. This support proved most useful.

c. TAC air was requested and utilized once for LZ preparation. TAC air was completely responsive to the tactical situation.

4. INTELLIGENCE:

a. Based on contact made by LRRP with possible NVA Troops, the 2/502 Infantry was committed via DAK SUT. No contact was made during the operation.

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b. Large size (50 or larger) base camps, unused for at least three months were found at YB 955516, and YB 990968. Large trails not recently used but heavily covered with Fungi-Sticks were found at YB 955516 and YB 985537.

c. One VC KIA was found via YB 955516, with a pack containing training material, Japanese made radio and Lactian money.

d. Numerous anti-aircraft incidents were reported. Based on one such incident, elements of A and C Co's were committed at YB 918478. They found expended 7.92 cartridges at that location, numerous trails and tunnels, but negative contact.

5. MISSION: During the first phase of Operation BEAUREGARD, 2/502 accomplished the following missions in the DAK TO area, search and destroy operations by REGONDO CHECKERBOARD, close-in training, and occupation of 11 Combat Outposts. During the subsequent phases of Operation BEAUREGARD, 2/502 accomplished the mission of conducting search and destroy operations by REGONDO CHECKERBOARD in an area 30 - 40 KM Northeast of DAK TO.

6. CONCEPT OF OPERATION: The concept of brigade operations was to conduct S/D operations North and West of DAK TO commencing 232100 June 1966, to locate, fix, and destroy remnants of PAVN units engaged in Operation HAWTHORNE and destroy their supply caches.

7. EXECUTION: Operation BEAUREGARD, 232100 June 1966 through 152400 July 1966, was conducted in the DAK TO area and an area approximately 30 - 40 KM to the North.

From 232000 June 1966 through 070830 July 1966, 2/502 conducted, in the DAK TO area, REGONDO CHECKERBOARD operations, close-in training, and named 11 Combat Outposts. This was accomplished by mission rotation of the three rifle companies at (5) day intervals. The company conducting close-in training was also the Battalion Ready Reaction Force. Although no enemy contact was made during this period, 2 rice caches totalling 7 1/2 tons were discovered and destroyed.

On the evening of 6 July 1966, 2/502 was notified that a LRRP Team made an enemy contact in the QUAN DAK SUT area. The LRRP Team was extracted immediately after contact was made. Because of this extraction, contact with the enemy was not maintained. As a result of the LRRP contact, 2/502 was ordered to conduct an airmobile assault on the QUAN DAK SUT area at dawn on 7 July 1966.

On 7 July 1966, after being delayed for several hours because of ground fog, 2/502 conducted a heliborne assault on the QUAN DAK SUT area where Companies A and C began REGONDO CHECKERBOARD operations to the Northeast on parallel axes.

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After the lead element of Company A landed on its designated LZ, one soldier was wounded by a land mine. In the process of carrying the wounded man to the evacuation helicopter, one of the rescue party detonated a second mine. The results of this mine detonation were six casualties (5 KIA and 1 MIA). After the second mine was detonated it became apparent that the LZ was adjacent to a minefield. It was also apparent that the first rescue party, in its disorganized effort to conduct the rescue, failed to exit the minefield by the same route the minefield was entered. Rescue efforts were then carefully organized and further casualties were prevented. It was later learned that the selected LZ was a former Special Forces outpost, the perimeter of which was an unrecorded mine field.

During the initial day of this phase of the operation, communications with higher headquarters were maintained only through the use of an airborne relay and the C & C helicopter. During periods when both aircraft were on the ground, communications with higher headquarters was lost. A ground relay was established on 8 July. Communications with higher headquarters was maintained through this relay for the remainder of the operation.

On 8 July 1966, Company A discovered and destroyed 3 rice caches totaling 11½ tons. Reconno Platoon was given an axis of advance parallel to and half-way between Companies A and C.

On 9 July 1966, Company B conducted a helicopter assault with the mission of establishing a blocking position to the Northeast. The TAC CP was displaced to the Northeast.

On 10 July 1966, one platoon of Company A conducted a heliborne assault to the Northwest to secure an LZ for the remainder of the battalion movement the next day.

On 11 July 1966, TF 2/502 (-) conducted a heliborne assault to the Northwest and initiated RECONNO CHECKERBOARD operations to the South with the 3rd Platoon, Company C returning to DAK TO to provide a quick reaction capability for reinforcing LERP's.

On 13 July 1966, enemy automatic weapons fire was received by a helicopter from the village at YB 917477. Company C (-) and 1 platoon of Company A were deployed to the village within 45 minutes but were unable to make contact with the enemy force that had fired at the helicopter. After the village and surrounding area had been thoroughly searched, it was decided that a stay behind force would be left. This was the first time that 2/502 had exploited this tactic. One platoon was left in an ambush position near the village until 140910 July 1966, but no enemy contact was made. The force was left in event the enemy decided to move back into the area. Had this happened, the stay behind force would have been able to maintain contact with the enemy force until reinforcements arrived.

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On 14 July 1966, TF 2/502 commenced air movement to TUY HOA South Airfield for future operations. At the end of Operation BEAUREGARD this move was still in progress.

8. RESULTS:	<u>Friendly Losses</u>	<u>Enemy Losses</u>
	KIA: 6	VC KIA (BC): 1
	WIA: 13	VC KIA (EST): 0
		VCC: 0
		Wpns/Equip:
		1 gas mask
		1 commercial radio
		1 ruck sack
		18½ tons rice

9. AVIATION:

a. The CAC helicopter and the two utility helicopters in DS greatly facilitated control, maintenance of communications, unit supply deliveries and airdrops. The utility helicopters also assisted in the execution of emergency requests, i.e., delivery of demolitions, rations and ammunition, LZ clearing equipment, etc.

b. Medical care and Evacuation:

(1) Among the casualties incurred in the minefield were 4 medical aid men (2 KIA and 2 WIA). The courage and devotion to duty of these aid men is most commendable; however, 4 highly trained men were lost in so doing. While the aidmen must attend to the needs of the wounded, they should also be cautioned against hasty movement toward wounded in a known or suspected mined area.

(2) Extraction of the wounded from the minefield was accomplished expeditiously due to the magnificent cooperation of several of the troop-lift pilots.

10. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES: None.

11. COMMANDERS ANALYSIS:

a. If the LRRP Team that made contact with the enemy on 6 July 1966 had maintained contact instead of being immediately extracted, it is quite possible that sufficient forces could have been sent to assist the LRRP Team. But when the LRRP Team broke contact, the enemy forces had sufficient time to move from the area or conceal itself well enough to keep from being detected by any force entering the area.

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b. In spite of the deep concern the rescue party had for the land-mine victims, their heroic acts resulted in additional unnecessary casualties because of the unorganized attempt of the rescue party to aid the victims. Even though the victim may have detonated an isolated mine, which it was not, the members of the rescue party should have immediately suspected that the victim had entered a minefield. Having established this, the route taken to retrieve the victim should have been retraced step by step. Had this been done, there would not have been further casualties. Further, a list of former Special Forces outposts should have been available, with information on whether or not these outposts had been mined. If a list of this nature had been available this particular LZ may not have been selected.

c. During the planning phase of the operation, it should have been recognized that a radio relay might be needed. When communications broke down the radio relay should have been established.

d. Leaving a stay-behind force could possibly have succeeded in making contact with an enemy attempting to re-enter an area. A stay behind force of sufficient size would be able to maintain contact with the enemy until reinforcements could assist, or perhaps, through the use of a well prepared ambush, could even destroy the returning enemy unit.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. LRRP Teams should maintain all enemy contacts. A ready reaction force should be readily available to immediately go to the aid of a LRRP if the team makes contact.

b. Troops should be indoctrinated that detonation of a mine usually signifies a mine field. They should be further taught how to enter and exit a suspected mine field.

c. Plans to establish a radio relay should be incorporated as SOP for any tactical operation in order that continuous communications are maintained.

d. Stay-behind forces should be employed whenever it is suspected that the enemy might attempt to re-enter an area after the major portion of friendly forces have been extracted.

HENRY E. EMERSON
Lt Col, Infantry
Commanding