

BN After Action Report

OP JEB STUART / CARENAN

3/7 - 4/16/68

Jeb Stuart 3/7 - 3/18

Carentan 3/18 - 4/16

See background for the merger
of The 2 OPNS.

a. Background - Operation CARENTAN II is a continuation of Operation JED STUART between which there was no time lapse. This was due to the termination of operational control of the brigade to the 1st Cavalry Division (AM). In view of the preceding the brigade missions for Operation CARENTAN II were actually assigned during Operation JED STUART. To facilitate a better understanding of the brigade's concept of operation for the mission which remained to be accomplished during Operation CARENTAN II the brigade's posture at the initiation of CARENTAN II will be briefly discussed. On 180800H March the brigade terminated OPCON to the 1st Cavalry Division (AM) and reverted to the control of its parent division, the 101st Airborne. At that time the 1st Battalion (Airborne) 327th Infantry had established a medium firebase astride Hwy 547 (FIREBASE BIRMINGHAM vicinity YD707102) which was accessible by road. That portion of Hwy 547 from the brigade eastern boundary west to FIREBASE BIRMINGHAM had been cleared and a total of seven (7) resupply convoys had been run without incident. Detailed plans were being developed to seize BASTOGNE and establish a heavy firebase at that location, the only mission remaining to be accomplished. (The rock crusher site was being secured by the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry). All maneuver elements were generally located in eastern AO LEE

(see INCL 1, Operation sketch). The 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry was operating in an area north of Hwy 547, west of the SONG HUONG River and attacking on an axis of the SONG HUONG River oriented west-northwest. The 2d Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry was operating in an area south of Hwy 547, west of the SONG HUONG River and attacking west on an axis of Hwy 547. All elements of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry were attacking north-northeast of FIREBASE BIRMINGHAM.

b. Establishment of FIREBASE BASTOGNE:

The concept of operation to establish heavy FIREBASE BASTOGNE was to deploy the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry overland into southwestern AO LEE to establish a firebase vicinity YD687093 from which the battalion would launch an attack west, south of Hwy 547 to seize and secure the critical terrain vicinity of BASTOGNE. The 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry would be directed to be prepared to reorient and attack west from present positions on an axis of Hwy 547 north of Hwy 547 to seize selected objectives vicinity of BASTOGNE on order. Upon seizure of BASTOGNE and surrounding terrain the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry would air assault into BASTOGNE (see inclosure 1), select, establish and secure the firebase. See INCL 3, for concept of Artillery Support.

Background info

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 2nd BATTALION (AIRBORNE), 502nd INFANTRY
APO SF 96383

AVBD-C

25 April 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Report, Operation JEB STRUART/CARENTAN
(U).

TO: Commanding Officer
1st Bde 101st Abn Div
ATTN: AWBD-C
APO SF 96383

1. Name of Operation; JEB STRUART/CARENTAN
2. Dates of Operation; 070800 Mar 68 through 160001 Apr 68
3. Location; Nam Hoa Province, RVN, (Maps: Vietnam 1:50,000 series L7014 sheets: 6541 IV, 6441 I.
4. Control Headquarters: 2nd Bn (Abn) 502nd Inf.
5. Reporting Officer: LTC Howard H. Danford
6. TASK ORGANIZATION:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>a.</p> <p>Co. A
Engr Clr Tm</p> <p>Co. B
Engr Clr Tm</p> <p>Co. C
Engr Clr Tm</p> | <p>Recondo
Engr Clr Tm</p> <p>Bn Control
3(-)/A/326 Engr
6/2/320 Arty (105)</p> <p>Mort Plat (DS)
IPW, 181 MI Detch.</p> |
|--|--|

b. The following changes were made in the task organization during the operation:

- CAV (1) 1st ~~Brigade~~ assumed OPCON 2/502 effective 080001 Mar & released OPCON 181800 Mar 68.
- (2) 2/502 assumed OPCON C/1/327 effective 091415 Mar & released OPCON 11135 Mar.
- (3) 2/502 assumed OPCON LRRP Team from Div effective 161300 Mar & released 280800 Mar.
- (4) 2/327 assumed OPCON A Co. effective 231025 Mar & released 280800 Mar.

file
GROUP 4
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS,
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2-65

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- (5) 2/327 assumed OPCON B Co. effective 271025 Mar & released 280800 Apr 68.
 (6) 2/502 assumed OPCON 1 Plt A/3-5 Cavalry effective 280800 Mar & released 160001 Apr 68.
 (7) 2/502 assumed OPCON B 1/502 effective 151510 Apr 68 & retained control over it at the end of the operation.
 (8) 2/502 assumed OPCON A 2/327 effective 1515 Apr 68 & released OPCON effective 160001 Apr 68.

7(9) SUPPORTING FORCES:

- a. 7th USAF provided close air support.
- b. C/3/320 Arty (DS) fired artillery for the battalion, including H&I and contact missions.
- c. B/2/11 Arty (155T) (GS) fired artillery for the battalion, including H&I and Contact missions.
- d. 3/A/326 Engr (DS) provided engr tms to each element for LZ construction and EOD missions. The platoon reinforced by other elements of A/326 provided road sweep teams and assistance in FSB BASTOGNE.
- e. B/9 Engr 1 Marine Div provided construction teams to help build FSB BASTOGNE.
- f. Army Aviation, see Inclosure 5

8(9) INTELLIGENCE- See Inclosure 1 Intelligence

9(9) MISSION:

- a. Phase I- H hour D day 2/502 deploys by vehicle to assigned AO conduct combat operations in zone, be prepared for further employment west on order.
- b. Phase II- 2/502 established and secured FSD BASTOGNE vic of YD 6109 to accommodate one btry each light, medium and heavy artillery.

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10. (C) CONCEPT OF OPERATION:

a. 2/502 was to begin phase I of Operation JEB STUART / CARENTAN on 8 Mar with B Co. and Mortar plt moving into the rock crusher site and adjacent AO to relieve the USMC and establish minifirebase vic YD 7413. The following day A Co., C Co. and Recon were to move into respective AO's orientating to NE to conduct combat operations with Recon conducting mainly an observation mission from the high ground in the northern portion of 2/502 AO. Upon reaching the northern boundary 2/502 was to re-orient and attack SW against a block established by 1/327.

11. (C) EXECUTION:

a. 2/502 executed Operation JEB STUART/CARENTAN in 2 phases

(1) Phase I: 7-28 Mar 68. During this phase 2/502 maintained security of the rock crusher site/TAC-CP by rotating the companies into the TAC-CP. On 10 Mar the first significant contact was made involving A, C, Recon. From this time to the end of phase I significant contacts were made by B Co. and C Co. on combat operations against enemy in bunker positions. Artillery DT's and H&I were used extensively, however gunships were seldom used due to scarcity in the Division. The terrain was mountainous with thick jungle and tall canopy on the western portion of the AO. In the north there were high barren mountain ridges. On 23 Mar A Co. came under OPCON 2/327. B Co. was also put under OPCON 2/327 on 27 Mar. Phase I ended on 28 Mar when the 2/502 minus A and B Co. were heliborne into FSB BASTOGNE and A and B Co. were returned to 2/502 control.

(2) Phase II: 28 Mar- The 2/502 had to devote most of its effort in preparation of FSB BASTOGNE. Initially C Co. and Recon were sent out into assigned AO's with both making daily small contacts with the enemy. The remainder of the 2/502 concentrated on building the defenses of FSB BASTOGNE and providing security for the three different sized artillery units. C Co. was replaced by A Co. in the SE and made the first major contact with enemy, drawing B Co. to its aid.

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Afterwards A Co. returned to the TAC-CP and B Co. continued combat operations in the AO. C Co. replaced B Co. in the AO orientated to the W and continued combat operations until the end of Phase II. All companies were given convoy; security missions along Hwy 547 into BASTOGNE, with C Co. springing an enemy ambush. Convoys were made to BASTOGNE mainly to bring in the heavy artillery pieces and the heavy engineer equipment. Additional units of communications and artillery were deployed to BASTOGNE eventually doubling the size of the FSB. Phase II ended on 160001 Apr 68 when the 1/101 Abn Div began Operation DELAWARE.

(b) During phase I extensive combat operations were conducted by all the maneuver elements, with only several major contacts. During phase II only limited combat operations could be conducted, because the FSB had to be constructed. Also due to its size it took two companies to secure it however more major contacts were made with the enemy during phase II. During Phase II all the companies securing Hwy 547 for convoys, had the use of the platoon from A/3/5 Cavalry thus greatly increasing their firepower and mobility. The Cavalry platoon was also used to reinforce the Reconos once and B Co. once during their major engagements.

(c) Although 2/502 continued to operate from FSB BASTOGNE Operation JEB STUART/CARENTAN terminated 152400H Apr 68 and the battalion began Operation DELAWARE.

1209 SIGNIFICANT ACTIONS:

(1) 10144H Mar 68 Reconos vic YD 741272 saw 2 VC running from a hooch, fired them up with negative results. At 101515 vic YD 735175 Reconos recieved machine gun and small arms fire from an estimated company sized force. Reconos maneuvered and began to recieve mortar and suspected .50 cal fire. Called in 4 gunships strikes and artillery. At 101625H A Co. began to move to relieve Reconos and recieved machine gun, mortar, SA and grenades vic YD 734173 from estimated company size elements dug in. At 101800H C Co. was air assaulted from AO to vic YD 735172 to assist A Co. and Reconos. Effected link-up with Alpha and Reconos at 101850H. All units contacts broken at 101945H. On 11 Mar 68 A Co., Reconos and C Co. swept area of previous days contacts. Results: 4 US KHA, 32 US WHA, 6 NVA KIA 1 Detainee. CIA 1 RPD, 1 RPG, 2 AK 47, 2 SKS CIA .

(2) 201130H Mar 68 C Co. engaged estimated squad sized force with 2 plts, maneuvered elements and then engaged estimated plt size force in bunkers. Line of bunkers extended from YD 683122-682132-677125. Results: 7 US WHA, 1 NVA KIA, Captured 1 RPD.

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- (3) 201115 Mar 68 B Co. patrol vic YD 668130 sighted 4-5 NVA. B Co. maneuvered to contact vic YD 671126 where it ran into a built-up earth complex and came under intense AW & SA fire. Also received approximately 30 82mm mortar rounds plus RPG and rifle grenades. B Co. continued to maneuver on enemy but had to break contact at 1615 for preparation of night defense position. Results: 1 US KHA, 15 US WHA, 11 VC KIA.
- (4) 310905H Mar 68 C Co. vic YD 607086, 3rd Plt engaged squad sized enemy force. Results 4 US WHA, 7 NVA KIA, captured, 1 RPG, 2 AK-47, 2 SKS and documents.
- (5) 021115H Apr 68 Recondos vic YD 620087, engaged unknown sized enemy force in 2 bunkers. Also received sporadic SA fire from SW. Reinforced Recondos was with 3/5 Cav. plt and a plt from B Co. These elements maneuvered up the hill against enemy bunker positions, overrunning the bunkers. Results: 6 US WHA, 2 NVA KIA, captured 1 AK-47.
- (6) 060705H Apr 68, A Co, vic YD 633074 began a two day long contact with a major sized NVA force. Initially, 2 NVA were engaged while reconning the well-used trail found the previous evening. At 1337H vic YD 627077 lead plt moving W-SW down a finger came in behind an enemy ambush of about 20-30 NVA in 2 locations. Engaged enemy with SA while enemy returned fire with AW, SA grenades, and HMG. At 1540H in same area a medevac chopper was shot down by enemy rockets while conducting a hoist dustoff for A Co. On the following day 0655H vic YD 629076 A Co. received SA fire while conducting a "mag. minute" to expand the perimeter. Throughout this day A Co. continued to receive sniper and AW fire, RPG and 82mm mortar fire. B Co. departed TAC-CP 061725H B Co. moved to reinforce A Co. During this day it had 7 separate contacts on trails leading into A Co. perimeter. B Co. closed with A Co. late that afternoon and formed a joint perimeter for the night. On 8 Apr the two companies expanded the perimeter and completed the medevac, then moved back to the TAC-CP. Results: 2 US KHA, 30 US WHA, 21 NVA KIA, captured 3 AK-47, 2 SKS.
- (7) 101015H Apr 68 C Co. vic YD 639098 with the 3/5 Cavalry plt on a convoy security mission on Hwy 547, received AW and RPG from an unknown size enemy force in the tree line on the north side. Engaged the enemy with SA, AW, arty, mortars, fire power from the Cavalry Plt and Light Fire Teams. Continued to receive enemy SA and RPG fire. Also several rounds of mortars-unknown size. C Co. with Cavalry Plt assaulted and took the treeline. Later the enemy tried a counter-attack but was beaten back. Results: 3 US WHA. 9 NVA KIA, captured: 1 RPG, 1 RPD, 3 AK-47, 2 SKS.

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(8) 111045H B Co. vic YD 614080 spotted 2 NVA in green uniforms moving along Hwy 547. They engaged the enemy with SA, AW and M-79 but with negative results. At 1155H B Co. heard digging. While B Co. (-) was moving up to contact area they came under mortar fire at 1230H from YD 597078. Counter mortar fire was placed on this grid by artillery and mortars. Also, an immediate airstrike was called, with two flights put in at this location. At 1340H the platoon from A/3/5 Calvary was dispatched to aid B Co. Contact continued until 1610H with the enemy in the treeline firing SA, AW, and RPG's. At 1530H B Co. found 2 fresh graves vic YD 605080, with NVA killed by artillery. Results: 16 US WHA, 3 NVA KIA (2 Arty).

12⁰ Results:

a. 2/502 effectively accomplished its mission during Operation JEB STUART/CARENTAN. It secured the rock crusher site and made significant contacts with the enemy forcing him to sustain significant losses in personnel, and weapons. He was forced to move his base area to avoid contact. 2/502 managed to establish heavy FSB BASTOGNE, in the desired time limit.

b. The following losses were inflicted in the enemy:

(1) KIA (Confirmed)	<u>74</u>
(2) KIA (Probable)	<u>0</u>
(3) VCS (Captured)	<u>0</u>
(4) NVA (Captures)	<u>0</u>
(5) Crew served weapons captured	<u>0</u>
(6) Individual weapons captured	<u>47</u>
(7) Rice destroyed	<u>250 lbs</u>

c. Friendly losses resulting from combat operation:

(1) KHA US	<u>11</u>	
(2) WHA US	<u>113</u>	(122 Medivac)
(3) Equipment destroyed or lost		<u>NONE</u>

13⁰ ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

a. Supply: Inclosure 3 Supply

b. Personnel and Administrative: Inclosure 2 Administration.

c. Medical: Below are the medical statistics for Operation JEB STUART/CARENTAN, from 8 Mar 1968 to 16 Apr 1968.

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(Operations Sketch) to Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation
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SCALE 1:100,000

