

BN After Action Report

OP KLAMATH FALLS

12/1/67 - 1/7/68

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

AVBD-C

11 Jan 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation Klamath Falls (U).

TO: Commanding General
1st Bde. 101st Abn Div
ATTN: AVBD-C
APO SF 96347

- 1. (U) Name of Operation: Klamath Falls
- 2. (C) Dates of Operation: 1 Dec 67 through 7 Jan 68
- 3. (C) Location: Lam Dong and Binh Thuan Provinces. Maps: series L7014, sheets 6631I, II, III, IV and 6531I, II, III, IV.
- 4. (C) Control Headquarters: 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry.
- 5. (U) Reporting Officer: LTC Howard H. Danford.
- 6. (C) Task Organization:

- a. Co A
 - Scout dog tm
 - Engr clr tm
 - Recondos
 - Engr clr tm
- Co B
 - Scout dog tm
 - Engr clr tm
 - Battalion control
 - 3(-)/A/326 Engr
 - C/2-320 Arty (DS)
 - Mortar Plat (DS)
 - IPW, 181 MI Detch
- Co C
 - Scout dog tm
 - Engr clr tm

b. The following three changes were made in the task organization during Operation Klamath Falls.

- (1) ARVN interpreters joined the battalion and were assigned one to each company after the operation began.
- (2) 1-327 Inf assumed OPCON A/2-502 eff 091400H Dec and released OPCON of A/2-502 to 2-502 eff 111030H Dec.

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GROUP-4
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
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(3) 1-327 Inf assigned GPOC 2-502 on 141159H Dec
and released GPOC on 2-502 to 2-502 on 13 Dec.

7.(U) Supporting forces.

- a. Seventh U.S. Air Force provided close air support. Tac Air was used extensively in LZ construction and preparation. No sky spots were employed. Support ordnance from defoliant missions was expended on likely enemy positions in the battalion AO on two occasions.
- b. C Btry/ 2-320 Arty (DS) fired all arty missions for the battalion including LZ preps, illumination and contact missions.
- c. 3 Plat/A/326 Engr (DS) provided an engr tm to each company and Recondos for landing zone clearing operations, EOD missions, mine clearing and enemy complex destruction.
- d. 42d Inf Plat (Scout Dog) provided scout dog tms to the Bn. Because of difficult terrain the teams usefulness was limited.
- e. A combat tracker team section was positioned at the TAC CP 2-502 for rapid deployment at the beginning of the operation. They were relocated for the last 2/3rds of the operation and were not available when requested at the end of the operation.
- f. 10th Army Aviation Bn provided lift and gunship support.

8.(U) Intelligence

- a. Intelligence indicated that MR-6 was situated in the vicinity of ZT2545. Its strength, to include the Political, Military and security elements was estimated at from 300 to 500 personnel. The enemy could be expected to occupy sophisticated base camps employing wire communications networks.
- b. The enemy avoided contact and broke down into small elements to facilitate the escape and evasion tactics they used. These tactics were employed throughout the operation.
- c. The terrain was ideally suited to the enemy. The heavy canopy and dense foliage coupled with the numerous draws and gullies enabled the enemy to hide and evade with little trouble.
- d. A list of enemy installations discovered during the operation is attached as Incl 1.
- e. The destruction of said installations denied their use to the enemy. Much will be required to reestablish the bases that were found and destroyed.

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9.(U) Mission. The 2d Bn (Abn), 502d Inf conducted airmobile assaults from Bao Loc into SW portion of assigned AO and prepared to conduct airmobile assaults and subsequent S&D opns to locate and destroy the 145th, 186th, or 482d VC Bns and the MR-6 headquarters.

10.(U) Concept of Operation.

a. Phase I; Beginning 100830H Dec 67, 2-502 air assaulted into multiple LZ's and conducted operations to search for and destroy enemy installations and forces, initially in the SW portion of the assigned AO. Emphasis was placed on careful search of all likely sites, particularly draws. Initial air assaults were preceded only by Tac Air and gunship preps.

b. Phase II: The battalion's orientation was directed to the south on as wide a front as possible eff 5 Dec. The TAC CP/2-502 was displaced to the south eff 09 Dec to support the companies' push south against the 1-327 Inf elements in an attempt to squeeze the enemy in between.

c. Phase III: The battalion was displaced to the NE in an air assault on multiple landing zones with the companies oriented mainly on terrain rather than on specific intelligence of enemy units. Emphasis was placed on thorough search with the companies broken into sub-elements.

d. Phase IV: The battalion was reoriented to the west eff 19 Dec. In response to intelligence developed by IFFV LRRPS, the TAC CP moved to occupy the former TAC CP site of the 2-327 Inf. Two companies were deployed by foot into the new AO, Co B in the north and Co A in the south. The Recondos and Co C air lifted to the TAC CP and were subsequently inserted into the AO, Co C by air into a secured landing zone and Recondos by foot to the north. The three line companies moved to converge on suspected enemy locations on high ground in the NW portion of the AO.

11.(U) Execution.

a. The air assault of the battalion began at 010830H Dec. The TAC CP location was changed after initial CP elements were on the ground because of unsuitability of terrain for Arty. The new TAC CP area was closed 011745H Dec. The entire insertion was unopposed.

b. Co A vic AN752502 at 021540H Dec engaged 8VC in black pajamas with wpns. The action resulted in 6VC KIA (C), 2VCS and 2 individual wpns captured with no friendly casualties.

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d. Eff 051000H Dec, Co B and Co C reoriented to the south to cut trails and streams on as wide a front as possible in reaction to intelligence indicating this area as a route of egress.

e. On 08 Dec Co A was air assaulted into an AO in the SE portion of the Bn AO. The TAC CP was relocated by air on Co A's LZ on 09 Dec. The southern boundary was extended in coordination with 1-327 Inf. Co A was detached and 1-327 Inf assumed OPCON. All landings were unopposed and no contact was made.

f. Co A was returned to 2-502 control on the morning of 11 Dec and on the afternoon of 11 Dec was again released to 1-327 Inf OPCON.

g. The battalion was air assaulted into the new AO to the NE on 13 Dec. Four LZ's were used. Recondos received several rounds of automatic weapons fire on their initial insertion but no casualties were taken and no subsequent contact was made. Co A began working from the high ground west into the valley area. Co B moved east towards the valley and Co C maintained the initial LZ with patrols working out from a base.

h. Co A was air assaulted to the west of the AO and began search and destroy operations to the south on 18 Dec. The assault was unopposed.

i. One element of the Recondos was air lifted to secure a downed aircraft for salvage operations on 18 Dec. The mission was accomplished and the element was returned by air to the parent unit.

j. The battalion was alerted and the TAC CP moved to the west to occupy the former CP site of 2-327 Inf on 19 Dec. Reorientation of the companies also began as Co A secured the new CP site for the insertion and then moved south and then north to hook into suspected enemy locations. Co B was ordered to move west into their new AO. Co C and the Recondos were extracted on the morning of 20 Dec and brought to the new CP for future deployment.

k. Co C, on 21 Dec, was inserted into an LZ secured by Co A and from there moved west into assigned AO. Recondos moved north by foot into assigned AO.

l. Co B was extracted on 23 Dec and brought to the TAC CP for deployment after 25 Dec. Recondos closed into the TAC CP eff 24 Dec for deployment after 25 Dec.

m. Co A on 21 Dec found a recently used base camp. On 22 Dec Co A found another recently used camp. On 24 Dec Co A suffered 1US KHA and 3US WHA as a result of a command detonated claymore.

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n. The 24 hour Christmas truce was spent with Co A and Co C in company perimeters around landing zones. Co B and Recondos spent the truce at the Tac CP.

o. On 26 Dec Recondos moved by foot NW into assigned AO. Co B moved south on a 2 day mission to check out suspected VC locations. The company was scheduled to return to the TAC CP for deployment by air into the NW portion of the AO.

p. Co A made contact at 271150H Dec when one platoon walked into an estimated 5 man "L" shaped ambush. This action resulted in 2 US KHA and 4US WHA. As the company continued moving north towards the high ground, fresh base areas were found. On 28 Dec, as two elements of Co A deployed on a group of suspected enemy hootches, 2 more US WHA were sustained as the element took fire from the hootches. Neither action resulted in known enemy losses.

q. Co B was air assaulted from the TAC CP to their new AO on 28 Dec and commenced S&D opns to the SE.

r. Artillery area fires were plotted and fired on suspected VC locations based on people sniffer readings and likely egress routes. These fires were employed periodically during the nights and days from 27 to 30 Dec. Results of fires remain unknown, however, on three occasions after the H&I program began, bloody bandages were discovered in hootches on the high ground.

s. The New Year truce began at 311800H Dec and ended at 020600H Jan 68. All elements spent truce period in defensive ambush positions in their respective AO's. No incidents occurred.

t. Eff 021200H Jan Co A was instructed to work from the high ground to the low ground while Co B, Co C and Recondos blocked likely egress routes from the high ground in their AO's. This orientation was continued through 05 Jan with Co A working the fingers and draws to their AO boundary. The result was the destruction of a rice cache of approximately 12 tons of unpolished rice.

u. On 06 Jan, the elements oriented on extraction pick up zones.

v. On 07 Jan all elements of the battalion and the direct support Arty Btry were extracted by air to Bao Loc for stand-down activities.

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12.(C) Results:

a. The mission of finding and destroying the 145th, 186th, 482nd VC battalions and the MR-6 political headquarters was not accomplished though extensive search and destroy operations were conducted. Base areas were found and destroyed but no enemy unit designations were determined and no significant enemy forces were engaged.

b. Statistics.

(1) US

KHA	3
DOW	2
WHA	24
KIA	2
WIA	3

(2) Enemy

VC KIA (C)	8
VC POW	1
Wpns Ind	6
Rice dest.	12 tons
Base Inst. dest	12
Hospital Complex dest.	1

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