

1ST BATTALION 9TH MARINES

COMMAND DIARY/CHRONOLOGY

MARCH 1967

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NO S-1, S-2, S3 JOURNALS

NO FILE NOT INCLUDED

AAR OPERATION PRAIRIE II

AAR OPERATION PRAIRIE III

HEADQUARTERS
1st Battalion, 9th Marines
3d Marine Division (Rein), FMF
APO San Francisco 96602

3/RCM/tjl
005750
9 Apr 67

UNCLASSIFIED

~~00110~~ 00110-67 2 of 15 SER. No. 0013-67

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code A03D)
Via: Commanding General, 3rd Marine Division (Rein), FMF

Subj: Command Chronology for period 1 March to 31 March 1967.

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.2
(b) FMFPAC 5750.8

Encl: (1) 1st Battalion, 9th Marines Command Chronology

1. In accordance with the provisions of reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.

F. D. Mitchell Jr
HEADQUARTERS
1st Battalion, 9th Marines
3d Marine Division (Rein), FMF
APO San Francisco 96602
By direction

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1ST BN/9TH MAR

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1st Battalion, 9th Marines
3d Marine Division (Rein), FMF
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COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

1 March 1967 to 31 March 1967

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PART I

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA1. DESIGNATIONCOMMANDER

1st Battalion, 9th Marines

Major J. L. DAY
1 Mar to 17 Mar 1967
Major D. J. FULHAM
18 Mar to 31 Mar 1967SUBORDINATE UNITS

H&S Company

1st Lt THOMSEN
1 Mar to 31 Mar 1967

Company "A"

Captain FESTA
1 Mar to 25 Mar 1967
Capt SLATER
26 Mar to 31 Mar 1967

Company "B"

Captain SAYERS
1 Mar to 31 Mar 1967

Company "C"

Captain CURD
1 Mar to 25 Mar 1967
Captain REED
26 Mar to 31 Mar 1967

Company "D"

Captain KEYS
1 Mar to 8 Mar 1967
Captain SEAW
9 Mar to 31 Mar 1967ATTACHED UNITS

NONE

2. LOCATION

From 1 March to 6 March the battalion CP moved with the companies in the AO near the DMZ. From 7 March to 15 March the battalion CP was located at Dong Ha Combat Base, RVN. Commencing 15 March to 28 March the CP was again moving with the companies in the AO near the DMZ. From 28 March to the end of the reporting period the CP was located at Camp Carroll, RVN.

3. STAFF OFFICERS

Executive Officer

Major VON HARTEN
1 Mar to 31 Mar 1967

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2nd Lt RAMIREZ
1 Mar to 31 Mar 1967

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2nd Lt YAGGY
1 Mar to 31 Mar 1967

S-3

Major BEANS
1 Mar to 31 Mar 1967

S-4

Captain REED
1 Mar to 26 Mar 1967
Captain MANNING
27 Mar to 31 Mar 1967

4. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

<u>USMC</u>		<u>USN</u>	
<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>
41	1181	3	54

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PART II

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

During the month of March the 1st Bn, 9th Marines was engaged in fighting VC and NVA forces in four distinctive operational periods. From 1 March to 6 March offensive operations were conducted just south of the DMZ near YD 080670. From 7 March to 15 March responsibility for the Dong Ha Combat Base Defenses was assumed by the battalion. On 16 March offensive combat operations were started for the second time during the reporting period and continued until 28 March when the battalion moved to Camp Carroll where it took over the camp defenses. The month ended with the battalion at Camp Carroll.

From 1 to 6 March the 1st Bn, 9th Marines was sent northwest of the Dong Ha area in pursuit of a NVA force which had engaged elements of the 2nd Bn, 3rd Marines. A helicopter assault was made at YD 070635 from where search and destroy operations were conducted north and then east. Contact was made on 2 March and continued through the 6th of March. The battalion was mortared 14 times during the period and engaged NVA units up to company size. Casualties sustained were medium to heavy on occasion but were far less than those inflicted on the enemy. On 6 March the battalion, having fought from the original LZ to YD 070653 through the village complex at YD 117683 to the village of Phu An (YD 137658), commenced a tactical foot march out of the area of operations which ended in a motor march to Dong Ha.

On 7 March 1st Bn, 9th Marines relieved 3rd Bn, 4th Marines of responsibility for the Dong Ha Combat Base Defenses. The battalion was considerably split up due to the large distances between defensive positions. Very little in the way of offensive operations transpired, only a few search and clear operations were attempted. Contact for the period was minimal and of virtually no significance. The time was spent largely in coordinating defenses and attending to administrative matters. On 15 March 3rd Bn, 4th Marines returned to Dong Ha relieving 1st Bn, 9th Marines of all base defense activities.

Offensive operations were commenced for the second time during the month when, on the afternoon of 15 March, the battalion went to the field. For the next 13 days operations were conducted in the same general area that had been worked during the 1st of the month. Rather than pursuing a force thought to be in the area, this operation was to be a recon in force. Little contact was made on the first search and destroy operation which was made. The area covered extended from YD 086590 northwest to YD 046636 and into "Helicopter Valley" (YD 030640). The battalion was mortared once during the sweep sustaining casualties from well directed enemy 82mm mortars. On the second search and destroy during the period contact with the enemy was made in the village of Phu An. Heavy casualties were sustained on both sides but the marines took the village with the aid of artillery and air support. The search and destroy continued as far north as YD 125715 with no more significant contact. At the conclusion of the sweep the battalion marched south to the vicinity of the

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Cam Lo Bridge, on 28 March, and was trucked to Camp Carroll.

At Camp Carroll 1st Bn, 9th Marines assumed responsibility for camp defense. Patrols were run from the camp but no contact was made. The month ended with the battalion at Camp Carroll preparing for future offensive operations.

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PART III

SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1. FMF Organizations committed to Combat and the SLF.

a. Combat mission assigned. The battalion was employed in Prairie II in three different periods each with a specific mission.

(1) Period I

(a) Land the battalion by helicopter assault in the vicinity of YD 070635, consolidate the position and conduct search and destroy operations in accordance with 3rd Marines Frag Orders.

(2) Period II

(a) Assume base defense of the Dong Ha Combat Base. Coordinate and provide security for the Dong Ha Combat Base.

(3) Period III

(a) Conduct a reconnaissance in force operation through objectives 1, 2, and 3. After securing objective 3 conduct a detailed search of hill complex formed by objectives 4, 5, 6, and "Helicopter Valley" vicinity of GS YD 0364 (enclosure #4).

Operation Prairie III commenced on 19 March from battalion position in the vicinity of objective #3 (enclosure #5) the battalion was to conduct a detailed search of the hill complex formed by objectives 4, 5, and 6 and "Helicopter Valley" vicinity of GS YD0364. An additional mission to search "Mutter Valley" and the area between YD 075605 and 051605 was assigned. Upon completion of the aforementioned missions the battalion established a new position and received a concomitant mission to attack to the north and to seize objectives "A" and "B" (enclosure #5). The battalion was to be prepared to continue the attack to the north or east. Search and destroy operations were to be carried out in the ZOA and patrol activities to the southwest. The final mission for the battalion was to move to Camp Carroll and assume duty as base defense battalion.

Company "B", (-)(Rein) assigned separate combat mission under OPCON 3RD MARDIV/IIIIMAFREP, KHE SANH.

b. Significant operations conducted. The battalion (-) participated in Prairie II from 1 March through 18 March and in Prairie III from 19 March until the end of the reporting period.

c. Casualties inflicted on the enemy.

	<u>possible</u>	<u>body count</u>
WIA	29	2 (captives)
KIA	104	278
Enemy captives	5	

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1. Intelligence. During the reporting period the battalion was engaged almost exclusively, with NVA units, what specific units of the NVA is not known. On three different occasions what appeared to be reinforced NVA companies were engaged. The contacts took place in the vicinity of Phu An (YD 135673) and territory immediately north of the village. The enemy demonstrated a highly refined ability to ambush from strong, fortified positions within the village. Just north of the village the NVA executed an extremely successful well planned delaying action. It is believed that the delaying action, executed on March 5, was to cover some sort of withdrawal but no concrete proof of the theory was found. Through out operations in the western part of the battalion AO heavy enemy mortar fire was encountered (Area from YD 070630 to 070660 and west). Four 82mm mortars and 1 60mm mortar captured in the area indicated that the battalion was in contact with some sort of NVA mortar unit. The NVA appeared to have an inexhaustable supply of ammunition. Only one mine, command detonated, was discovered in the area of operations. Of particular interest was a NVA rocket site discovered at YD 073617 on 21 March. Four rockets were also found at the launch position.

m. Communications. Radio and telephone communications were employed throughout the month in support of all operations without difficulty.

n. Weather. In the early part of the month weather was characteristically poor, with early morning ground fog and mist. These conditions deteriorated further to a cold rain accompanied by chilly winds. The limited visibility created hazardous conditions for helicopter operations and the rain filled ground depressions which created obstacles for tracked vehicles. In the last half of the month the weather was typically warm and sunny with some overcast in the early morning hours.

o. Fire Support. Artillery was employed during the month on targets of opportunity in counter mortar fire and in grid saturations. Harassing and interdicting fire was conducted both day and night. On 3 March artillery fire was called on an enemy column in the open with highly successful results. Counter mortar fires were very effective. Forward observers were positioned to watch for muzzle flashes and any other signs of incoming mortars. Preparatory fires and reconnaissance by fire were used to support attacks and sweeps in the AO. H&I fires were very satisfactory in intercepting enemy movement and protecting the battalion perimeter from probing attacks. H&I fire was placed close to the perimeter at frequent intervals.

p. Air Support. Marine air was used extensively during the reporting period. Helicopters were used for troop lifts, medevacs and resupply. All were carried out in the fashion which has become routine in Vietnam. Close air support was used to a very large degree during the month. A three hour air strike was flown upon a large NVA column on 3 March 1967 resulting in a large number of NVA kills. Later in the month a large air strike was directed against the NVA by heavily engaged 1st Bn, 9th Marines company. Marine air was also used to prep suspected enemy positions when possible. The third facet of the air support provided the battalion consisted of

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airborne observers. The air strike on 3 March was directed by an AO and artillery missions throughout the month were controlled by AO's. At times AO's became eyes and navigator for the battalion. In foul weather one AO led medevac helicopters into the battalion LZ to extract critically wounded marines. Fixed wing air support throughout the period was uniformly outstanding.

q. Activation/Deactivation/Redesignation. Nothing significant

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d. Casualties sustained.

USMC		USN	
WIA	227	WIA	11
KIA	39	KIA	0

e. New techniques employed. None

f. Command relations. The 1st Battalion, 9th Marines chopped OpCon to 3rd Marine Division Forward 011245H March 1967, Chopped OpCon to 3rd Marine Regiment 011600H March 1967, Chopped OpCon to 3rd Marine Division Forward 061850H March 1967, Chopped OpCon to 3rd Marine Regiment 151000H March 1967 and remained until the end of the reporting period.

g. Equipment. M-16 rifles were issued to the battalion on 29 March 1967.

h. Logistics. During the reporting period logistic support of combat operations was conducted through the LSA. Resupply was by helicopter and motor transport. Weather sometimes hindered resupply by air but did not affect the accomplishment of the combat mission.

During the period of base defense responsibilities logistic matters were handled in a routine manner.

i. Civic Action. No civic action was undertaken in this reporting period.

j. Administration. Nothing significant

k. Personnel. The following personnel were drop transferred by SR from this Command.

<u>USMC</u>		<u>USN</u>	
<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>
1	155	1	7

The following personnel were joined to this Command.

<u>USMC</u>		<u>USN</u>	
<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>
7	182	1	7

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