

1ST BATTALION 9TH MARINES

COMMAND DIARY/CHRONOLOGY

DECEMBER 1967

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

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8 Jan 1967
SER NO:00LA1068

From: Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code AO 3D)
Via: (1) Commanding General, 3d Marine Division (Rein), FMF
(2) Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force
(3) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Pacific
Subj: Command Chronology for period 1 December - 31 December 1967

Ref: (a) MCO 5750.2A
(b) FMFPacO 5750.8
(c) DivO 5750.1A

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

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

J. F. Mitchell
J. F. MITCHELL

1ST BATTALION

COMMAND CHRON

DEC 1967

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PART IORGANIZATIONAL DATA1. DESIGNATION

1st Battalion, 9th Marines

"H&S" Company

Company "A"

Company "B"

Company "C"

Company "D"

COMMANDERSLtCol. J. F. MITCHELL
1 December-31 December 19671st Lt. R. A. CROWE
1 December-6 December 1967
Capt. J. W. CARGILE
7 December-31 December 1967Capt. H. J. M. RADCLIFFE
1 December-31 December 1967Capt. R. T. BRUNER
1 December-31 December 1967Capt. C. B. HARTZELL
1 December-31 December 1967Capt. F. L. SCHAFER
1 December-31 December 1967

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2. The Battalion was located at Camp Evans from 1-31 December 1967.

3. STAFF OFFICERS

Executive Officer	Major J. A. DONNELLY 1 December-31 December 1967
S-1	1st Lt. P. A. WOOG 1 December-31 December 1967
S-2	1st Lt. R. J. ARBOLEDA 1 December-31 December 1967
S-3	Major J. J. PAGANELLI 1 December-31 December 1967
S-4	1st Lt. J. M. GEORGI 1 December-31 December 1967
S-5	1st Lt. R. J. ARBOLEDA 1 December-31 December 1967

4. Average Monthly Strength.

<u>USMC</u>		<u>USN</u>	
<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENE</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>
42	1147	2	64

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PAGE 11NARRATIVE SUMMARY

During the period 1-31 December 1967 the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines was located at Camp Evans, RVN as the Resident Infantry Battalion. The mission of the Battalion was to provide for the security of Camp Evans and its ancillary facilities at PK-17 (YD652280), an ARVN Artillery Position; Hill #51 (YD549281), a Rifle Platoon (Rein) strong point; and Hill #674 (YD516219), a Rifle Platoon (Rein) strongpoint/ Radio Relay Station. In addition to the defense of Camp Evans and its ancillary facilities, the Battalion was also required to place one Rifle Company (Rein) under operational control of the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines as security for a "Rock Crusher" operated by the Seabees at Nam Hoa (YD744133). The Battalion was further required to provide available personnel for saturation patrolling and ambushing in known avenues of approach within 5000 meters of the Camp Evans perimeter. Various additional commitments within the 4th Marines AO were also assigned to the Battalion during the period 1-31 December 1967.

On 1 December the Battalion was located at Camp Evans participating in Operation Neosho. At this time the Battalion Command Group, the Battalion Rear, H&S Company, Company "A" and Company "C" were located within the Camp Evans perimeter. Company "B" was located at Nam Hoa (YD744133) under operational control of the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines and Company "D" was occupying three Platoon (Rein) strongpoints at PK-17 (YD652280), Hill #51 (YD549281) and Hill #674 (YD516219). The companies located within Camp Evans perimeter were required to provide personnel to stand lines, conduct patrols, ambushes and listening posts and to meet additional manpower needs as they arose.

From 1-4 December there was no significant occurrence within the 4th Marines AO. Units from the battalion conducted routine daylight and night activities to include patrols, ambushes and listening posts in the Camp Evans vicinity.

On 5 December a daylight OP at YD513282 observed approximately fifteen VC at YD503277. The personnel of the OP took the VC under fire. A sweep of the area later revealed three VC KIA (Conf), and four VC KIA (Prob). Assorted equipment was found during the search of the area. The equipment was forwarded to the Battalion S-2.

On 6 December a Platoon (Rein) from Company "D" at Hill #51 (YD513282) received one Vietnamese male under the Chieu Hoi Program. The individual concerned turned himself in under a white flag. The Chieu Hoi carried assorted equipment and wore green shorts and shirt. The Chieu Hoi and equipment were forwarded to the Battalion S-2.

At 1840H on 6 December Company "B" at Nam Hoa (YD744133) received approximately thirty-five rounds of enemy 82mm mortar fire. All the rounds landed within the Company's perimeter causing six WIA and eight KIA (one KIA was a Kit Carson Scout). Counter mortar fire was fired with 81mm mortars, with unobserved results.

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The period 7-13 December was uneventful with no significant occurrence for the Battalion. During this period routine daylight and night activities to include patrols, ambushes, OP's and LP's were conducted by the battalion.

On 14 December Company "B" (Rein) and Company "D" (Rein) switched AO's using motor vehicles and helicopter transportation. The new locations of the Companies placed Company "D" (Rein) at Nam Hoa (YD744133) under the operational control of the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines while Company "B" (Rein) occupied the three platoon (Rein) strongpoints at PK-17 (YD652280), Hill #51 (YD549281) and Hill #674 (YD516219).

On 15 December a platoon (Rein) patrol from Company "A" received two rounds of friendly artillery fire at YD508302. The incoming rounds inflicted four casualties on the patrol of which three required medical evacuation. One of the evacuated casualties later died as a result of his wounds.

During the period 16-17 December the Battalion employed its routine daylight and night activities to include patrols, ambushes, OP's and LP's. There were no significant occurrences within the 4th Marines AO.

On 18 December Company "C" moved to the vicinity of YD485415 to establish a blocking position in connection with a joint Marine/ARVN Airborne Operation in the area of the "Street Without Joy". Company "C" departed Camp Evans on 18 December and moved via motorized march to the vicinity of YD460400 where they disembarked from vehicles and set out by foot on the north side of the Thoc Ma River. At the same time two "Boston Whaler" type boats with outboard motors moved up the Thoc Ma River, abreast of Company "C". In the vicinity of YD473417, Company "C" using their boats, crossed the river to their assigned blocking position in the vicinity of YD485415.

At 1745H on 18 December Company "C" received two rounds of 60mm mortar fire from an enemy position at YD482423. Due to the proximity of the enemy position, M-79 grenade launchers were used to counter the enemy fires. At 2245H on 18 December a squad (rein) ambush from Company "C" made contact with four VC in the vicinity of YD477422. Upon springing their ambush, the squad (rein) began receiving automatic weapons fire from four different enemy positions around the ambush site. The squad (rein) broke contact with the enemy and returned to the company's perimeter. The action resulted in one VC-KIA (Prob).

On 19 December Company "C" maintained their blocking position, conducting patrols, ambushes and LP's. At 1145H on 19 December one member of a patrol from Company "C" detonated a surprise explosive device while entering a gate into a small hamlet at YD477427. The resulting explosion caused one USMC casualty who was evacuated. At 2010H on 19 December Company "C" received three rounds of 60mm mortar fire from an enemy position at YD480430. The incoming rounds caused three USMC casualties, all minor. Counter mortar fire was shot with artillery.

On 20 December Company "C" departed its blocking position in conjunction with the completion of the operation. As the company was crossing the Thoc Ma River at YD473417, one boat began taking water and capsized.

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All personnel made it safely to the shore but considerable equipment was lost. The boat was uprighted and brought ashore. At this time, the second boat was dispatched to pick up a Recon/Scuba Team at the My Chanh Bridge where the Thoc Ma River meets National Highway #1. When the divers returned to the area, security was set up on both sides of the river and the last equipment was recovered. Just as the divers had recovered the last of the equipment, they began receiving heavy automatic weapons fire. The security forces returned fire and reported observing two VC fall resulting in two VC KIA (Prob). A squad was dispatched to search the enemy firing positions but again, automatic weapons fire began, prohibiting the search force from completing their mission. As the firing ceased, the remainder of Company "C", the retrieved equipment, the Scuba Team and the boats began their movement southwest to reach National Highway #1. In the vicinity of Ap Phuoc Phu, the company again was taken under heavy automatic weapons fire. The company immediately returned fire until the enemy broke contact. The contact resulted in six VC KIA (Prob). The remainder of Company "C"'s movement to National Highway #1 was secure. Upon reaching the highway, the company returned to Camp Evans via motorized march. The remainder of the Battalion reported no significant occurrence during the period 18-20 December.

The period 21-22 December showed the 4th Marines AO to be quiet with no significant occurrences. Routine daylight and night activities were conducted by the battalion.

On 23 December in the vicinity of YD582298, a Platoon (Rein) patrol from Company "A" received approximately forty rounds of friendly artillery fire on their defensive perimeter. The Platoon (Rein) was set in for the night when the rounds, with no prior warning, began falling near their perimeter. The incident resulted in two USMC casualties, both evacuated by helicopter on 24 December.

On 24 December a large artillery mission was fired on VC in the open in the vicinity of YD525246. On 25 December Company "C" was helilifted to the above coordinates to conduct a search of the area in hopes of finding evidence of enemy activity in the area. The search disclosed no evidence of enemy activity in the area and Company "C" returned to Camp Evans late in the afternoon on 25 December.

On 26 December Company "A" was helilifted into a landing zone at YD515424 in the vicinity of the "Street Without Joy". Their mission was to occupy a blocking position at YD508442 in conjunction with an amphibious operation being conducted by the SLF. Upon occupying the landing zone, suspected enemy movement was observed in the area. Search of a swamp adjacent to the landing zone resulted in the capture of one VC (Conf). As the company swept north from the landing zone to the blocking position, steady enemy resistance in the form of sniper fire developed into small fire fights but the enemy consistently broke contact to avoid a full engagement. At nightfall Company "A" assumed their defensive position at YD5088442.

On 27 December Company "A" conducted search and destroy operations in the vicinity of their blocking position. Enemy sniper fire was encountered throughout the day but major fire fights failed to develop. The search of numerous hamlets in the area turned up many bunkers and fighting holes, some of which required the use of demolition to destroy.

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At nightfall Company "A" returned to its blocking position in the vicinity of YD508442.

On 28 December Company "A" continued search and destroy operations in the vicinity of their blocking position. Platoons (Rein) were employed as blocking and sweeping forces as the area was systematically searched. Once again, numerous bunkers and fighting positions were found throughout the hamlets in the area. Enemy sniper fire continued during the day. An air observer on station assisted the ground forces in locating an enemy position at YD334440. Fixed wing air strikes and artillery were fired at the enemy position. Late in the afternoon on 28 December, Company "D" 1st Battalion, 1st Marines came under the operational control of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines and was helilifted into the vicinity of YD520450 to reinforce Company "A". The evening of 28 December found Company "A" and Company "D" occupying defensive positions in the vicinity of the original blocking position. Company "A" received three rounds of 60mm mortar fire within their defensive position during the night. Counter battery was fired.

On 29 December both Companies held their blocking positions and conducted squad (rein) and Platoon (Rein) patrols in the area.

On 30 December in conjunction with their return to Camp Evans, Company "D" established a blocking position at YD510430 while Company "A", located at YD513449, swept southeast into the blocking position. Heavy sniper fire was encountered, developing into several fire fights. The enemy also employed 60mm mortars against both Companies. At 1100H on 30 December an armored convoy of seven Otters and fourteen Armored Personnel Carriers left Camp Evans to rendezvous with the two companies. Since time was of the essence the armored convoy moved to YD513425 to expedite the movement of the two Companies and at the same time support them if necessary. At approximately 1400H, Company "A" passed through Company "D"'s blocking position, was loaded and dispatched to Camp Evans. Company "D" then withdrew from their blocking position, in trace of the vehicles, and established a strongpoint at YD538408 to await the return of the armored vehicles. At 1630H the armored vehicles, after shuttling Company "A" to Camp Evans, returned to the strongpoint, picked up Company "D" and returned to Camp Evans.

The entire operation from 26-31 December resulted in fourteen VC-KIA (Conf), seventeen VC KIA (Prob) and one POW. Friendly casualties amounted to three KIA of which one was a Kit Carson Scout and twenty WIA. The remainder of the Battalion conducted routine daylight and night activities during the period 26-31 December.

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PART IIISEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS1. FMF Organizations committed to combat and the SLF.

A. Combat Missions Assigned. The Battalion (-) was employed in Operation Neosho during the entire period which included Company size Search and Destroy Operations.

(1) Operation Neosho. 1st Battalion, 9th Marines directs and coordinates, at Camp Evans, all missions to be accomplished for security of the Camp Evans perimeter and its ancillary facilities by establishing ambush sites in known avenues of approach and aggressive daylight patrolling out to 5000 meters with maximum forces available.

B. Significant Operations Conducted. The Battalion continued to carry out its primary mission of defending Camp Evans and its ancillary facilities as a part of Operation Neosho. In addition, the Battalion participated in a joint ARVN Airborne/Marine Search and Destroy Operation in the vicinity of the "Street Without Joy". Also, from 26-31 December 1967 the Battalion participated in a Search and Destroy Operation with the SLF, again in the area of the "Street Without Joy".

C. Casualties Inflicted on the Enemy.

<u>KIA (Confirmed)</u>	<u>KIA (Probable)</u>	<u>POW</u>
17 VC	26 VC	2 VC

D. Casualties Sustained:

USMC KIA 9	USN KIA 1
USMC WIA 27	USN WIA 1

E. New Techniques Employed: None

F. Command Relations. During the period 1-31 December 1967 the Battalion less one Rifle Company (Rein) was under operational control of the 4th Marines. From 1-14 December Company "B" (Rein) was under operational control of the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines. On 14 December Company "B" (Rein) was relieved by Company "D" (Rein) who then came under operational control of the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines.

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G. Equipment. During this reporting period organic motor transport has been engaged in household, administration and supply runs for the Battalion.

The motor transport situation has improved slightly in the case of the M422A1. The lack of M422A1's is still serious (six on hand out of a T/E of twenty) but the 3d and 4th echelon service organizations are showing complete cooperation in the rapid repair/replacement of these vehicles.

The M274A2 has become the principle means of motor transport in the Battalion due to the lack of M422A1's, and is substituting quite well for household/resupply runs.

H. Logistics. Logistic activities for the entire reporting period centered on maintaining a minimum of twenty days and a maximum of thirty days of Class I, II, III and V supplies at Hill #51 and Hill #674.

H-138 and H-139 handsets are still in short supply although thirty-four H-189 handsets were force fed to the Battalion. In order to equip each AN/PRC-25 radio and associated equipment with handsets, eleven more are needed. Because of the critical shortage of AN/PRC-25 radios, sixteen have been put on Red Ball requisition in accordance with FMFPacO 4400.7B.

I. Civic Action. The only Civic Action Project during December was a self help project in which the Vietnamese refugees filled sandbags for the Marine positions at Camp Evans. The Vietnamese were paid in commodities which amounted to 350 Piastras for every 400 sandbags filled and loaded on trucks.

J. Administration. Nothing Significant to report.

K. Personnel. The following personnel were transferred from this Command.

<u>USMC</u>		<u>USN</u>	
<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>ENL</u>
5	16	1	1

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>
6	251	1	13

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L. Intelligence. The Northern Front Headquarters and the 6th NVA Regiment were assigned the mission of keeping the supply routes open and providing security for transportation units moving from the rich rice growing coastal lowlands to Base Area 114. The 6th NVA Regiment has attempted to accomplish their mission by employing surprise explosive devices, mines, and occasionally sniping at patrols. Saturation patrolling up to 5000 meters outside the Camp Evans Perimeter by platoon size patrols has restricted enemy movement and reduced immeasurably the number of enemy explosive devices/mines that could be deployed. The saturation patrolling has uncovered thirty-four surprise explosive devices with only two WIA's. Most of the surprise explosive devices were M-26 grenades rigged with a trip wire. A few 105mm artillery rounds and TNT charges were found rigged with a detonator and trip wire. Most of the explosive devices were placed on trails or along avenues of approach.

The S-2 Rewards Program expended 25,930 Vietnamese dollars during December. Ordnance turned in by the civilians at Phong Dien included small arms ammunition, grenades, mortar rounds and TNT.

M. Weather. Heavy rainfall was received in the Camp Evans area during the first two weeks of December, causing limited visibility. During the last two weeks of December almost no rainfall was received and skies were mainly clear with good visibility. Temperatures ranged from the mid-70's during the day to the mid-50's at night. During the first half of the month temperatures were somewhat cooler than the latter half.

N. Communication. Communications for the month of December were reliable with only minor problems encountered. During the rainy spells it was necessary to wipe off daily the internal parts of the individual phones in order to keep the condensation within the phones at a minimum and the reception clear. Maximum water proofing was given to the switchboard and terminal boards in order to keep cross talk at a minimum. Two incidents of frequency interferences were encountered during the month. One incident of interference was due to atmospheric conditions on the Artillery Conduct of Fire Net. This interference lasted three hours and caused no significant problems. The other incident of interference lasted twenty-four hours and was due to a five hundredth megacycle frequency separation of a friendly unit operating in our AO. Although this made communications difficult for that day, the frequencies were still useable.

O. Artillery. Artillery was fired on enemy sightings, suspected troop locations and active motars. A total of two hundred and forty-one (105mm) rounds were fired (204 HE, 28 WP, 6 Propaganda & 3 Illumination). A total of one hundred and twenty-nine (155mm) rounds were fired (112 HE, & 17 WP). As part of the Battalion Operation Order 1-67 (Defense for Camp Evans), the FSOC wrote the Fire Support Plan to include a defensive fire plan for artillery, 81mm mortars and direct fire weapons. Finally, as a result of the heavy helicopter traffic in the Camp Evans area, a helicopter watch was established at a location where all landing zones could be observed.

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Radio communication from the watch to the 81mm mortar FDC was set up resulting in increased aircraft safety and more rapid clearances.

P. Air Support. Helicopters were used extensively for troop lifts, resupply and medical evacuation during the period 1-31 December 1967. One fixed wing air strike was conducted by the Battalion TACP using an A.O. in the vicinity of the "Street Without Joy". On 14 December, CH-46 Helicopters were used to effect an interchange of positions between Company "B" (Rein) at Nam Hoa and Company "D" (Rein) at the three Platoon (Rein) strongpoints. The tactical helilift of Company "A" (Rein) to the area of the "Street Without Joy" was completed by CH-46 Helicopters. Twenty-nine medical evacuation requests were completed for the Battalion during this reporting period.

Q. Activation/Deactivation/Redesignations. None

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