

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
Headquarters 2d Battalion (AM) 501st Abn Infantry  
2d Brigade 101st Airborne Division  
APO San Francisco 96383  
"DRIVE ON"

AVDG-BC-A

22 June 1969

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report, Operation Apache  
Snow

Commanding Officer  
3d Bde, 101st Airborne Division  
AFIN: S-3  
APO San Francisco 96383

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED BY  
AUTHORITY OF DOD DIR. 5200.1 R  
BY TRAKERS ON 11 May 99

1. Name or Identity and type of Operation: Apache Snow/ Search.  
and Destroy.
2. Dates of Operation: 101000 May 1969 - 090920 June 1969.
3. Location: Ap Laibang. Map, Vietnam, Series L7014 & L7015,  
1:50,000, Sheets 6441 I, II, III, IV.
4. Control or Command Headquarters: 3d Brigade.
5. Reporting Officer: Battalion Commander: LTC Robert L. German.
6. Task Organization: 2d Battalion, 501st Inf OPCON to 3d Bde,  
101st Airborne Div. Organization for Combat of 2-501st Inf, as  
follows:

A Co

Mortar Squad

B Co

C Co

Mortar Squad

D Co

Mortar Squad

TN Geronimo

HQ Co (-)  
E Co (-)

Bn Con

Mortar Platoon (-)  
Radar Section

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## 7. Supporting Forces:

a. Combat and Combat Service Support. See 3d Bde task organization - POE missions.

b. Intelligence: Annex A (Intelligence) to Frag Order 6-69 (Apache Snow) to OPORD 3-69 (Kentucky Jumper) 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div.

c. Mission: 2-501 Inf on order conducts airmobile assault on D-Day to locate and destroy enemy forces, caches and locations in assigned AO; provides security for FSB Airborne and FSB Eagles Nest.

10. Concept of the Operation: 2-501 Inf conducts heliborne assault into LZ Green YD296017 on D-Day to locate enemy forces, caches, and locations. Elements of 2-501 provide security for FSB Airborne and FSB Eagles Nest. 2-501 will be prepared to continue operations to the east or to the northeast within assigned AO on order. The operation will be conducted in three phases, as follows:

a. Phase I - Establishment of FSB Airborne and marshalling of units at FSB Blaze prior to airmobile assault.

b. Phase II - Combat assault of 2-501 (-) into LZ Green at coordinates YD296017. Then locates and destroy enemy forces, caches, and LOC's. Elements of 2-501 Inf provide security for FSB Airborne and FSB Eagles Nest.

c. Phase III (on order) - Prepare to conduct RIF operations to the north & east in the Ale Ninh (YD323013) and the Ale Niph (1) area YD344003.

## 11. Execution:

a. Method of Operation: Standard doctrine of 101st Abn Div.

b. Operations Narrative: Operation Apache Snow commenced on 8 May 1969. The 2d Bn, 501 Inf moved from an AO surrounding fire support base whip to a new AO adjacent to and overlooking the northern A Chau Valley. The Battalion Command Post was located on FSB Airborne. After the initial combat assault of the Bn (-) into LZ Green at YD296017 on 10 May 1969, each of the three assaulting companies moved out to assigned objectives.

c. Subsequent RIF operations saw the three maneuvering companies close to objectives in the vicinity of YD264031 and then conducting a battalion size RIF operation toward the northwest. When all elements were clear of their objectives, each company continued to conduct RIF and search and destroy operations within the assigned AO.

d. As the AO assigned to the 2-501 expanded, each company was assigned an area to search. The preponderance of contacts during the entire operation

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was with small local security forces of 4-5 personnel or with trail watcher. Only two contacts involved larger than squad size elements. The first contact occurred the morning of the 13th of May at FSB Airborne in the vicinity of YD355070. At 0330 hours FSB Airborne came under very heavy mortar fire of 82mm, 60mm, and RPG fire. Approximately two reinforced infantry and sapper companies assaulted the perimeter from the northeast and northwest. Alpha Company repelled the attack which lasted two hours. Conventional artillery direct fire was employed along with "Spooky" and 81mm mortar fire resulting in 32 NVA KIA (BC) US casualties were 13 US KIA and 16 US WIA.

e. On the morning of 23 May in the vicinity of YC320988, Delta Company was conducting a RIF operation in its assigned AO. As the lead element began to move to high ground in the vicinity of the coordinates above, they encountered a heavy volume of small arms, RPG, satchel charges, and grenade fire. Gunships from a cavalry team and artillery were immediately employed and Delta Company moved in to search the area. This search of the immediate area indicated a dug-in platoon size position with 3 NVA KIA (BC). Friendly casualties were 1 US KIA and 8 US WIA. Terrain was typical of the entire AO, the low ground had heavy underbrush with patches of trees and small streams running throughout the area. The high ground was covered with double and triple jungle canopy.

f. In both contacts mentioned above, the reaction time for artillery was about 5 minutes, "Spooky" was on station within 60 minutes of the time requested and the Cav team and ARA arrived on station about 15 minutes after their request.

## 12. Results:

a. All units accomplished their assigned missions.

b. Enemy losses, categorized as follows:

(1) KIA (BC)	64
(2) KIA (BC)	0
(3) KIA	0
(4) Captured	2

c. Friendly losses.

(1) US KIA	18
(2) US WIA	55

d. Body to weapons ratio (enemy) - 3:2

e. Enemy to friendly ratio - 3.5:1

13. Administration:

a. Unit Strength:

HHC	Start of Operation			End of Operation		
	OFF	WC	EM	OFF	WC	EM
	12	1	196	13	2	178
A	6		114	3		108
B	3		114	4		119
C	5		119	4		113
D	4		118	4		119
E	3		95	2		89
TOTAL:	33	1	756	30	2	726

b. This battalion received the following replacements during the operation:

HHC	5/36
A	2/37
B	2/28
C	0/16
D	1/20
E	0/E
Total:	10/145

c. The breakdown of R&R's is as follows:

HHC	7/11
A	0/5
B	0/11
C	0/8
D	0/11
E	0/9
Total:	7/53

d. Breakdown of casualties:

	OFF	EM	TOTAL
WIA	6	117	123
KIA	1	18	19

e. There were no problems experienced in the area of Finance, Chaplain activities, or any related activities.

14. Logistics:

a. Concept of Support

(1) External support came from the 3d Bde FSSE which was located at Camp Evans.

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(2) Battalion supply points were set up at Camp Evans, LZ Sally, FSB Airborne and Curahoe on removal from Airborne. From Camp Evans, supplies were shipped in bulk by CH-47 helicopters to FSB Airborne and later to FSB Curahoe. Miscellaneous supplies were shipped by UH-1D helicopters to the forward supply points from LZ Sally.

b. Material and Services

(1) All Class I supplies were shipped from Camp Evans. Class II supplies were shipped by UH-1D helicopters from LZ Sally to the forward supply point. Class III was shipped in 55 gallon drums from LZ Sally to the forward firebase. All class IV & V materials were shipped by CH-47 helicopters from Camp Evans. A basic load of Class V was maintained at the forward supply point.

(2) Water was shipped via CH-47 helicopters in 500 gallon collapsible containers to the forward fire base.

c. Maintenance: Vehicles and generators in need of repair were back-hauled to LZ Sally.

d. Transportation: Vehicular transportation from Camp Evans to LZ Sally was accomplished by organic 2½ ton trucks. Air transportation was by UH-1D and CH-47 helicopters. UH-1D support was required for an average of 5 hours per day. Averages of 2 CH-47 sorties per day were required for Class I, IV, and V.

e. Medical Services:

(1) Medical support during operation Apache Snow: The forward aid station was operating at FSB Airborne, where minor casualties and illnesses were treated. Battalion medical supply operated from LZ Sally with no problems. Battalion medical supply was further supported by a forward medical clearing station at FSB Blaze operated by C Company 326th Med. Each medical element involved was essential and proved to be very effective.

(2) Casualties: Following statistical data on casualties during the operation 8 May thru 10 Jun 69 are as follows:

a. Casualties	OFF	EM
KIA	1	18
WIA	6	117

(3) Most of the injuries were minor. Only personnel requiring further or follow-up medical treatment were evacuated to LZ Sally.

15. Chemical: N/A

16. Civil Affairs: N/A

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17. Psychological Operations: N/A

18. Communications:

a. General: AN/PRC radios were employed throughout the operation. At the Bn OP, RC-292 antennas were utilized for communications with the rear (when operational).

Problems: No major problems were encountered.

19. Engineer: N/A

20. Artillery:

a. Mission

B/2/319 Arty: DS 2/501 Inf  
 C/2/319 Arty: DS 2/501 Inf  
 A/2/319 Arty: DS 2/501 Inf  
 B/2/11th Arty: GS-R 319 Arty  
 C/2/11th Arty: GS-R 319 Arty  
 A/1/83 Arty: GS, 3d Bde, 101 Abn Div  
 B/1/83 Arty: GS, 3d Bde, 101 Abn Div

b. Concept of Operation:

Establish Fire Support Bases to provide continuous, maximum artillery support.

c. Execution:

All operations were conducted within range of light and medium artillery.

d. Analysis: Artillery support was quick, variable and accurate.

21. No special equipment or other techniques were employed.

22. Commander's analysis

a. LOCh Communications (limitation)

(1) The intercom system between the front and rear seats of the LOCh is unsatisfactory. When the Bn CO and S-3 were airborne in the LOCh, the CO could usually transmit to the S-3, but the S-3 was unable to transmit to the CO.

(2) The solution to the problem was to modify the standard aircraft headset so that one ear phone was plugged into LOCh intercom while the second

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one was attached to an AN/PRC-25 carried by the S-3. In this way the S-3 had communications with the Bn CO and could also monitor the command net when the CO switched to another FM net, or switch to another net when the CO directed.

b. LZ preparation and selection:

(1) Resupply and extraction of elements operating under the dense jungle canopy proved difficult and more rapid LZ clearing techniques need to be developed.

(2) It was found that selection of pre-planned air strikes along the planned route of advance of the companies aided in LZ preparation. In addition each company carried additional demolitions.

25. Recommendations:

a. The Battalion Commander frequently controls his battalion in a LOH. There is only one FM set, three jacks for intercom and no rear selection box. Currently, LOH's do not report with headsets for the present inadequate system. Recommend LOH be modified to include a radio system which will provide two FM sets with forward and aft selection capabilities and a complete system for all occupants for the aircraft.

b. A means to mark targets from a LOH, similar to the system employed by FAC aircraft, is needed. Current procedures to mark targets are not accurate and take too much to penetrate the thick jungle canopy. WP grenades are not authorized due to safety factors. Recommend a WP grenade launcher be mounted on LOH similar to the FAC aircraft.

3 Incl:

- 1 - Prog O 3 to OPORD 3-69
- 2 - Annex A (OP Overlay) to OPORD 3-69
- 3 - Annex B (OP Overlay) to OPORD 3-69

ROBERT L. GERMAN  
LTC, Infantry  
Commanding

OFFICIAL:

  
E. HANSEN  
S-3