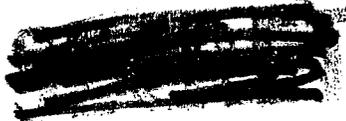


HEADQUARTERS 5TH MARINES
1st Marine Division (Rein), Fleet Marine Force
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California 96602

3/ECC/lch
5750
13 October 1967



UNCLASSIFIED

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, First Marine Division (Rein), FMF
Subj: Command Chronology for Period 1 September to 30 September 1967

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

Encl: (1) Fifth Marines Command Chronology
(2) Headquarters Company, Fifth Marines Command Chronology
(3) First Battalion, Fifth Marines Command Chronology
(4) Second Battalion, Fifth Marines Command Chronology
(5) Third Battalion, Fifth Marines Command Chronology
(6) Combat After Action Report Operation SWIFT
Filed w/ and chron

5th Marine

1. In accordance with the provisions of reference (a), (b) and (c) enclosures (1) through (6) are submitted.

S & C FILES
HEADQUARTERS
1ST MARINE DIVISION, FMF
67 4200
Copy 1 of 5 copies

[Signature]
S. DAVIS

5TH MAR S&C FILES

001094-67
COPY NO. 1 OF 6

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

UNCLASSIFIED



1-11-1967

5750
13 October 1967

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

COMMAND CHRONOLOGY

1 September 1967 TO 30 September 1967

INDEX

- PART I - ORGANIZATIONAL DATA
- PART II - NARRATIVE SUMMARY
- PART III - SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS
- PART IV - SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

UNCLASSIFIED

5750
13 October 1967

UNCLASSIFIED
PART I

UNCLASSIFIED

ORGANIZATIONAL DATA

1. DESIGNATION

5th Marine Regiment (-) (Rein) Colonel S. DAVIS

SUBORDINATE UNITS

Headquarters Co., 5th Marines	Capt R. J. SALVATI
1st Battalion, 5th Marines	LtCol P. L. HILGARTNER (1 Sept to 19 Sept)
	LtCol O. W. VAN DENBERG (20 Sept to 30 Sept)
2nd Battalion, 5th Marines	LtCol G. C. McNAUGHTON
3rd Battalion, 5th Marines	LtCol C. B. WEBSTER (1 Sept to 6 Sept)
	LtCol W. K. ROCKEY (7 Sept to 30 Sept)

ATTACHED UNITS

NONE

2. LOCATION

QUANG NAM Province, RVN 1 September to 30 September 1967

3. STAFF OFFICERS

Executive Officer	LtCol J. S. HECKER
S-1	Capt B. J. MULHERIN
S-2	Maj D. A. SAYE
S-3	Maj R. J. ALGER (1 Sept to 10 Sept)
	Maj R.C. WISE (11 Sept to 30 Sept)
S-4	Maj C. E. CAUDILL
S-5	Capt W. F. BELL
CommO	Maj E. R. PIERCE
MTO	1stLt R. E. BLACK
SupplyO	Capt S. THOMPSON
Regimental Chaplain	LtCdr E. TAKESIAN CHC USN

UNCLASSIFIED

SECRET

5750
13 October 1967

Regimental Surgeon
Regimental Dental Officer

Lt T. E. BRUNNELL MC USNR
Lt S. J. WILSON DC USNR

4. AVERAGE MONTHLY STRENGTH

<u>USMC</u>		<u>USN</u>	
<u>Off</u>	<u>Enl</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>Enl</u>
127	3456	11	163

PART II

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

2nd Battalion, Fifth Marines continues under operational control of First Marine Division. From 1 to 15 September Company "A", 1st Battalion, Fifth Marines and Company "K", 3rd Battalion, Fifth Marines were chopped to 7th Marines in preparation for Operation YAZOO.

4 September Operation SWIFT was initiated by elements of the 2nd NVA Division. Operation SWIFT was terminated on 15 September.

22 September the 3rd Battalion, Fifth Marines was chopped to the First Marine Regiment to participate in Operation SHELBYVILLE. This operation terminated 28 September.

Work and planning continued on both combat bases and the LSA for the pending monsoon season.

30 September Fifth Marine Regiment was ordered to occupy First Marine Regiment TAOR.

PART III

SEQUENTIAL LISTING OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1. Personnel and Administration. This command has experienced a large input of newly joined personnel, (11 officers and 408 enlisted), from CONUS however, it is anticipated that approximately 10 officers and 400 enlisted will be rotated to CONUS during the months of October and November 1967.

Casualties for the month of September are as follows:

	<u>KIA</u>	<u>DOW</u>	<u>WIANE</u>	<u>WIAE</u>	<u>NBC</u>
HqCo	1	0	0	3	0
1/5	59	2	67	129	6
2/5	12	0	8	31	30
3/5	<u>51</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>146</u>	<u>32</u>
	123	2	101	309	68

SECRET

5750

13 October 1967

2. Intelligence

a. Enemy. During Operation SWIFT, one of the first notable characteristics of enemy morale and discipline was revealed by an analysis of captured equipment. Uniformity of contents of enemy packs indicated well disciplined, regular army forces. The condition of the web equipment and contents was new, indicating recent resupply, probably for the entire unit.

Interrogation of enemy prisoners indicated that some units had recently been issued new gas masks. Those captured and forwarded were of two piece construction, including glasses similar to those worn by underwater swimmers. Analysis by the Regimental NBC NCO revealed that the lower portion, or filter, was no better or worse than previously captured Chinese and Russian masks, but was a marked improvement over the homemade masks of the VC. (cloth, acetate, and a charcoal filter pouch.)

Training appears to have been conducted on the battalion level and varied from unit to unit. One prisoner stated his unit was frightened of dying from gas poisoning. Their training directed them to withdraw 1000 meters, wait until the gas dispersed and then to resume the battle. Another prisoner, from the 1st VC Regiment, said his battalion commander conducted continuous training in the use of the masks; they were not afraid of gas attacks; their reaction was to don masks, hug the ground for several minutes until the gas dissipated, and then to resume the attack; still a third prisoner stated his company were all equipped with the new masks, but had been ordered to stage their packs and equipment several kilometers from the battlefield in unidentified sub-hamlet.

Some home-made VC gas masks were also captured, indicating possible intergration of local force units into NVA elements as the battle progressed and casualties mounted.

Significant enemy documents captured included "Preplanned Countersweep Operations Planned, 1st and 3rd Regts, 2nd NVA Division." This document discussed NVA action for several contingencies in the event of Marine Corps activities east of Que Son. There is a possibility that the operation precipitated by D-1-5 actions may have again spoiled the timetable for the 2nd NVA Division's plans for a major ground effort against Que Son.

Other documents showed overlays of several enemy company, platoon, reserve company and OP locations; transportation and disposition routes for enemy casualties.

SECRET

5750
13 October 1967

Marines control at 0700H 28 September 1967.

5. Fire Support. During the month of September the 2nd Battalion, Eleventh Marines continued in direct support of the Fifth Marines. The following missions were fired in support of the Regiment.

<u>OBS</u>	<u>UNOB</u>	<u>H&I</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>TYPE OF WPN</u>	<u>TYPE & NR RDS EXPENDED</u>
521	723	2171	3415	105MM	HE 20302 ILLUM 384 WP 1023 OTHER 25 <hr/> TOTAL.....21734
157	223	264	644	155MM HOW	HE 6477 ILLUM 112 WP 547 <hr/> TOTAL.....7136
147	214	8	1166	4.2" MORT	HE 7090 ILLUM 540 WP 77 OTHER --- <hr/> TOTAL.....7707
10	5	26	41	155MM GUN	HE 259

6. Air Support. During September, 1,152,000 pounds of all classes of supply and 630 troops were helo-lifted in support of the 5th Marine Regiment. These totals do not include airlifts scheduled by the G-4, 1st Marine Division, or troops and re-supply lifted by the UH34B's assigned to the HST on a daily basis.

Exclusive of Operation SWIFT, the Regimental S-2 commenced a systematic program of daily targetting of enemy fortifications, automatic weapons positions, bunkers, caves and troop concentrations. From 16 to 30 September, an average of ten flights of fixed wing aircraft per day were utilized. Target evaluation and fixed wing control was accomplished by scheduling UH1B gunships (TAC(A)'s on station from 0800 -1800 daily. When not actually controlling fixed wing flights these TAC(A)'s were utilized as , convoy escorts, and "on station" infantry fire support.

SECRET

5750

13 October 1967

7. Logistics. On 2 September all CH-46 helicopters were grounded. This made resupply of out-lying units and the LSA at Hill 63 very difficult due to the limited availability of CH-53 helicopters and the smaller capacity of the UH-34's.

On 5 September the LZ at the LSA on Hill 63 Combat Base was graded for asphaltting and steel matting. On 12 September the steel matting was completed at this LZ.

On 20 September work was started on ammunition berms at the LSA to improve storage capacity and ammunition protection.

Bunker material for 18 fighting bunkers was delivered on 24 September to the 3rd Battalion, Fifth Marines.

On 30 September orders were received to move from Que Son and Hill 63 to the First Marines TAOR.

8. Civil Affairs/Civic Action. On 2 September all civilian areas were put off limits to Marine personnel for three days due to National Elections.

On September 9 CAO presented Que Son, Nui Lac Son area briefing to new Commanding Officer of 1st Battalion, Fifth Marines.

On 18 September the Regimental CAO attended the annual childrens festival in Phyl Huong Village. Cookies were provided by 3rd Bn., Fifth Marines and 5th Marines Mess Hall. About 600 children were in attendance.

Area PsyOps Conference held by the Regimental CAO to discuss PsyOps within area of operation. USMC, Vietnamese, U.S.

Army Advisor and CORDS PsyOps personnel attended.

9. Medical. The following number of patients were seen during the reporting period 1 - 30 September 1967:

HQ CO	29	(22%)
OTHER	102	(78%)
	131	(100%)

A total of 192 immunizations were administered during the month of September 1967.

On 1 September a 12 year old Vietnamese boy who had sustained 2nd and 3rd degree burns of the face (Napalm) was evacuated to the civilian hospital in DaNang for further treatment.

On 4 September during the initial phase of Operation SWIFT, the HqCompany Regimental Aid Station functioned in the capacity as a Collecting and Clearing Station in the treatment and evacuation of mass casualties. The medical personnel of Hq

SECRET

5750

13 October 1967

Company were assisted by the Medical Officers and Hospital Corpsmen from BAS 3/5 and BAS 2/11. Approximately 50 WIA's were processed through the Hq Company Regimental Aid Station on 4 Sep 1967.

On the evening of 6 September notification was received that over 100 WIA casualties were expected to be evacuated from the field to the Hq Co Regimental Aid Station. An urgent call was made to the Division Surgeon, 1st Marine Division, requesting medical support. The Medical Support Team from the 1st Medical Battalion arrived at Hill 63 on the evening of 6 September. A complete Collecting and Clearing Station was established at the Hq Company Regimental Aid Station. Early on the morning of 7 September the WIA casualties were brought in from the field by helicopter. Following emergency treatment, the serious and critical casualties were medevaced by helicopter to either NSA DaNang, 1st Medical Battalion DaNang, 1st Hospital Company Chu Lai, or USS REPOSE (AH-16). Approximately 200 WIA's were treated and processed through the combined Regimental Aid Station/Collecting and Clearing Company on 7 September 1967.

On the afternoon of 13 September the Regimental Surgeon was called away to the camp of an ARVN Ranger unit for the purpose of investigating a sudden outbreak of skin rash amongst a group of ARVN Rangers following exposure to CS gas. After thorough examination and investigation the Regimental Surgeon concluded that the skin rash was a contact dermatitis due to some topically applied irritant; i.e., poison ivy, and that it was highly unlikely that the cause was due to exposure to CS gas. While there on the evening of 13 September the ARVN Ranger camp was attacked by hostile mortar and rocket fire, and the Regimental Surgeon was unable to return to Hq Co until late the following day. The Regimental Surgeon treated several during the attack.

On the afternoon of 22 September a civilian bus detonated an unknown type mine. The Hq Co ambulance and two corpsmen were sent to the scene. There was one female survivor. The other eight civilians on the bus were dead. The lone survivor was treated at the Regimental Collecting and Clearing Station, and evaced to District Hq.

On 27 September three casualties attached to 1st Tank Battalion

SECRET

5750
13 October 1967

were treated at the RAS after sustaining injuries when the truck in which they were riding struck a mine. All were returned to duty.

On 28 September three casualties attached to 9th Engineer Bn were treated at the RAS after sustaining injuries when the truck in which they were riding struck a mine. All were returned to duty.

10. Dental. During the reporting period two trips were made to Que Son, 1st Battalion, Fifth Marines. A total of 96 patients were seen on the two trips.

Dental was closed on 7 September for use of C&C Company at the beginning of Operation SWIFT.

16 and 17 September were spent in DaNang drawing supplies and verifying records.

A total of 290 patients were seen during the reporting period, they were from the following units:

HQ CO	20%
1/5	41%
3/5	1%
1/1	1%
2/11	19%
LSA	7%
HST	1%
9th ENGR	4%
1st ENGR	3%
1st TK	2%
AT	1%
	<u>100%</u>

11. Chaplain. During the month of September the Regimental Chaplain held a total of 22 services at the Hill 63 complex with a total of 860 men attending. 450 men received the sacrament of Holy Communion.

On 4 September Lt Vincent Robert Capodanno, CHC, USNR, Chaplain to 3rd Battalion, Fifth Marines was killed in action during Operation SWIFT.

PART IV

CHRONOLOGY OF SUBORDINATE COMMANDS
AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. ENCLOSURE (2) HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, 5TH MARINES COMMAND
CHRONOLOGY

SECRET

5750

13 October 1967

✓(3) 1ST BATTALION, 5TH MARINES COMMAND CHRONOLOGY
✓(4) 2ND BATTALION, 5TH MARINES COMMAND CHRONOLOGY
✓(5) 3RD BATTALION, 5TH MARINES COMMAND CHRONOLOGY
✓(6) 5TH MARINES COMBAT AFTER ACTION REPORT
OPERATION SWIFT

UNCLASSIFIED

HEADQUARTERS
1st Marine Division (Rein), Fleet Marine Force
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California 96602

5TH MAR S&C FILES

3/RW/lch
003100
11 Oct 1967

001087-67

COPY NO. 11 OF 12

From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding General, First Marine Division (Rein), FMP
(Attn: Task Force X-Ray)

Subj: Combat After Action Report

- Ref: (a) 1stMarDivO 3840.1A
- (b) CG, 1stMarDiv msg 071445Z Sep67
- (c) Task Force X-Ray FragO 24-67 (Operation SWIFT)

- Encl: (1) First Battalion, Fifth Marines Combat After Action Report.
- (2) Third Battalion, Fifth Marines Combat After Action Report.
- (3) Dislodge X-Ray Combat After Action Report.

1. Code Name. Operation SWIFT. Search and Destroy.
2. Dates of Operation. 040500H to 151600H September 1967.
3. Location. Quang Tin Province, Republic of Vietnam.
4. Command Headquarters.

a. Fifth Marines (-) (Rein), Col. S. DAVIS from 040500H to 071159H September 1967.

b. Task Force X-Ray, First Marine Division, BGen F. C. LAHUE from 071200H to 151600H September 1967.

5. Task Organization.

Fifth Marines (-) (Rein)
Fifth Marines (-)

Col S. DAVIS

Headquarters Company
1st Battalion, Fifth Marines (-) (Rein)
3rd Battalion, Fifth Marines (-) (Rein)
Dislodge X-Ray (-)

Capt R.J. SALVATI
LtCol F.L. HILGARTNER
LtCol C.B. WEBSTER
Maj R.C. CHEATHAM JR.

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

(encl(6))

Co B (-), 1st Engineer Bn
 Co B, 1st Shore Party Bn
 Co A (-), 1st Tank Bn

Co B (-), 1st AT Bn
 Collecting and Clearing Platoon

LtCol W.K. ROCKEY
 (From 071400H Sep67)
 Capt H.A. MORGAN III
 Capt R.R. O'NEILL
 Capt W.J. BRITTON
 Capt R.W. MADDOX
 (From 060800H Sep67)
 Capt A.R. GREEN
 Lt K.L. SACK USNR (MC)

6. Supporting Forces.

a. Artillery.

(1) The Second Battalion, Eleventh Marines (-) (Rein) fired 1,203 missions utilizing rounds in Operation SWIFT. Battery displacements were made to THANG BINH and Hill 29 during the operation. Rapid positioning and maneuvering of the First and Third Battalions of the Fifth Marines necessitated several shifts in mission assignments for batteries. Displacements and reassignments were accomplished without significant effect on the support rendered to infantry units.

(2) An apparent map discrepancy between adjoining sheets created range errors of from 400 to 600 meters on occasion. The Third Battalion, Fifth Marines suffered three WIA when friendly units were on the gun target line. Batteries compensated for the remainder of the operation. Accurate survey data is being applied 30 September 1967 to preclude this problem.

b. Air.

(1) Save for the exceptions noted below, the air support provided to the Fifth Marines was considered adequate overall and excellent with respect to fixed wing support. The following types of aircraft were utilized for the purposes indicated:

(a) Rotary Wing:

UH 34 -- Medevac and resupply.
 CH 46 -- Emergency troop lift.
 CH 53 -- Resupply and troop lift.
 UH1B -- TAC(A), medevac escort, visual reconnaissance, and delivery of CS.

(b) Fixed Wing:

UNCLASSIFIED

F8, FA, AC and LA - DAF - DAF
 01 - AO (USMC, USA and USAF)
 C130 & C117 - Flareships
 C117 - Spooky gunships
 A4 - Micro-pulverized CS delivery
 02 - Psywar broadcasts

(2) As indicated in enclosure (2) medevac missions were not always completed in an acceptable period of time. This was primarily due to the grounding of CH 46 helicopters and the resultant requirement for UH 34 assets to fill the void. No medevac helicopters were available at the Hill 63 combat base for rapid response medevac missions. This necessitated the use of resupply helicopters assigned to the HST. Resupply aircraft were often unavailable due to mechanical difficulties and battle damage, thus compounding medevac delays.

(3) The aerial delivery of CS proved to be an extremely effective tactic; however the planning and requested employment of RCA was greatly curtailed for the following reasons:

(a) Insufficient quantities of micro-pulverized CS were available for napalm tank and/or smoke-spray tank delivery.

(b) The First MAW withdrew the M158 and M159 CS clusters from tactical use because of missing fuzes. The lack of fuzes necessitated low altitude (600-700ft) drops causing extensive exposure of delivery aircraft to ground fire.

(c) When other means of dispersing CS were unavailable, the Fifth Marines requested the drop of CS grenades from UH 34 helicopters and volunteered to do the dropping. The First MAW would not authorize such a drop below 2,500 feet; too high to be effective. It is believed that a drop altitude of 1500 feet would provide adequate aircraft safety, particularly at night, and also permit the effective utilization of the CS grenades.

(4) Separate TACP frequencies were used by each battalion, resulting in lower density voice traffic and more efficient air operations. The Regimental TACP monitored both frequencies in order to respond to battalion air support requirements. Suspected NVA electronic jamming and/or interference necessitated numerous frequency changes during the operation, but did not disrupt communications to any significant extent.

(5) The mini-DASC was colocated with the Fifth Marines CP. It proved most helpful in providing rapid response air support, and

handling all sav-a-plane information, thus relieving much of the congestion normally present on TACP (local) FM frequencies.

(6) TAC(A) support, in the form of UHLB gunships, proved its value throughout the operation. The TAC(A)'s were briefed and debriefed by the Regimental S-2 and ALO, providing invaluable intelligence information and gaining more information on friendly troop positions, enemy situation, etc., than is normally possible using radio communications only. This personal contact allowed the UHLB pilots to perform their missions much more effectively as TAC(A)'s and as on station gunships. The TAC(A)'s were used extensively throughout the operation to control and direct pre-planned fixed wing air strikes at enemy fortifications, emplacements, routes of egress, and harbor sites.

7. Intelligence.

a. Usually reliable sources had identified major elements of the 2d NVA Division moving within the Hiep Duc - Que Son - Thang Binh - Tam Ky triangle. These elements had been identified as Hq and Fwd CP's of the 2d NVA Division; 1st VC Regt, 3d NVA Regt, and 21st NVA Regt. In addition, the 70th Independent Bn, 72nd Provincial Bn, Quang Nam Provincial Unit Hq and lesser, Provincial and District level forces were suspected of operating therein. Presence of these major elements were continuously reported by G-2, 2d ARVN Division, BICGS Thang Binh, Que Son District Intel O., Quang Tin Intelligence Agencies (both US and ARVN), as well as higher USMC headquarters.

b. Total VC/NVA strength encountered during Operation SWIFT is estimated at between 5500 and 6000 troops. Units definitely identified by PW's and captured documents included 40th, 60th and 90th Bn's, 1st VC Regt; 2nd and 3rd Bn's 3rd NVA Regt; 2nd Bn, 21st NVA Regt; 70th Independent Bn and 72nd Bn, Quang Nam Provincial Unit.

c. Dispositions were generally as reported. Specific dispositions of the 1st and 3rd Regiments were confirmed by the capture and translation of their battle plans.

d. Operation SWIFT again demonstrated the urgent need for qualified Interpreters and Interrogation-Translation Sub-Teams in the field with Marines Infantry Battalions. Their presense is considered mandatory for tactical exploitation of captured personnel and material. The transportation problem emphasized in the 1st Bn report is amplified when addressed to intelligence exploitation. The battle plans previously mentioned had been captured on 4 September, evacuated to Division on the 5th, translated and disseminated on the 6th. When received at the Battalion level, friendly elements were within 500 meters of, and heavily engaged with enemy forces whose exact dispositions were described in the battle plans captured two days before.

UNCLASSIFIED

8. Mission. Fifth Marines (-) (Rein) continues the defense of combat bases, provides security for engineer efforts in AO, gains and maintains contact with enemy forces in the Que Son Valley and attacks to destroy the personnel, equipment, facilities and caches of the 2nd NVA Division and its supporting forces.

9. Concept of Operation.

a. Commencing at 040500H September 1967 (D-DAY & H-HOUR) with the heavy engagement of one rifle company (-), the Fifth Marines (-) (Rein) moves one rifle company by foot and two companies and a battalion command group via helicopter into the attack to relieve pressure on the initially engaged unit.

b. On D+1, the Fifth Marines (-) (Rein) conducts a deliberate search of the battle field with two battalions.

c. Commencing on D+2, the Fifth Marines (-) (Rein) attacks to the southeast, then east with two battalion abreast to seize, occupy and defend objectives Sierra and X-Ray.

d. Commencing on D+3, the Fifth Marines (-) (Rein with two battalions abreast conducts a deliberate search and destroy operation to the east while TF X-Ray repositions friendly forces.

e. Commencing on D+8 the Fifth Marines (-) (Rein) attacks to the east with two battalions abreast to seize, occupy and defend Task Force Objectives One and Two.

f. Commencing on the night of D+9, the Fifth Marines (-) (Rein) helilifts two battalion to the northwest and attacks to the southwest to relive pressure on an ARVN Ranger Task Group.

10. Execution.

a. See enclosures (1), (2), and (3).

b. Operation SWIFT began with an NVA initiated engagement with Delta Company (-), First Battalion, Fifth Marines before dawn on 4 September. As the intensity of the contact increased, two medevac helicopters were downed by NVA ground fire, forcing Co D (-) to form a perimeter around the aircraft. Co B, First Battalion, Fifth Marines was sent overland from Que Son to reinforce Co D. Before Co B could reach the Co D positions, it became heavily engaged with a second NVA unit. In the meantime, Companies K and M of the Third Battalion together with the First Battalion Command Group were helilifted to a

landing zone northeast of the two First Battalion Companies and ordered to attack to the southwest toward the previously engaged companies. By late afternoon, all four rifle companies were heavily engaged with NVA elements estimated to be at least three battalions. By nightfall all units of the Fifth Marines had consolidated their positions and supporting arms, which had been utilized extensively throughout the day, continued to be heavily employed against the NVA forces. Company I of the Third Battalion, the Regimental Reserve, was committed during the night and moved via motor and foot march from Hill 63 to the battlefield where it was placed under the operational control of the First Battalion. The Fifth Marines had received opcon of Company D, First Battalion, First Marines. That unit, together with the Third Bn, Fifth Marines Command Group was helilifted to Que Son. These units departed Que Son by foot during the night, arriving in the battle area just after dawn on 5 September. The 3/5 Command Group took opcon of Companies B and D of the First Battalion. The task organization of infantry units on the morning of 5 September was:

- (1) 1/5 Command Group
 - Co I 3/5
 - Co K 3/5
 - Co M 3/5
- (2) 3/5 Command Group
 - Co B 1/5
 - Co D 1/5
 - Co D 1/1

c. Contact was broken on 5 September and both battalions spent the day policing the battlefield and accomplishing remaining medevac and resupply.

d. The Battalion Command Group exchanged opcon of their respective companies and the Fifth Marines continued the attack to the southeast. By midafternoon, both battalions were heavily engaged; the First Battalion with the First NVA Regiment and the Third Battalion with an NVA force estimated as at least a reinforced battalion and possible two battalions. While supporting arms were employed to the maximum all evening and night, the issue was only resolved in the area of the southern (First) battalion by prolonged close contact ranging from 100 meters to hand-to-hand combat. In the Area of the Third (northern) Battalion, the Deciding element was the aerial delivery CS which caused the NVA forces to rapidly and immediately withdraw from contact. During the night of 6 September, Dislodge X-Ray was activated and moved to the battle area with three rifle companies and a heavy section of

UNCLASSIFIED

tanks. This Task Force was comprised of all remaining tactical units then available to the Fifth Marines. See enclosure (3). A Regimental Reserve was reconstituted from headquarters, combat support and combat service support personnel remaining at Hill 63.

e. Resupply, medevac and police of the battlefield was again the order of the day on 7 September. Minor contacts were made on 8 September as the battalions prepared to conduct a deliberate search and destroy operation to the east on the following day. Also on 8 September Dislodge X-Ray was deactivated and its companies chopped to the battalions. The Task organization of the battalion was then:

(1) First Battalion, Fifth Marines
 Co A 1/5
 Co C 1/5
 Co D 1/5
 Co D 1/1
 Co I 3/1
 Co B 1/5 Bn Reserve (with Bn rear)

(2) Third Battalion, Fifth Marines
 Co I 3/5
 Co K 3/5
 Co L 3/5
 Co M 3/5
 Co H 2/5

f. The 9th of September was characterized by slow movement and thorough, productive searching. The First Battalion uncovered three ammunition caches which yielded over two tons of rocket, mortar and small arms ammunition as well as grenades.

g. The next four days (10-13 September) saw both battalions continue their deliberate move to the east with light contact and heavy use of air and artillery preparations ahead of advancing troops.

h. When the ARVN Ranger Group was attacked on the night of the 13th, the Fifth Marines helilifted both battalions to a secure LZ northeast of the Rangers. The battalions then attacked to the south southwest to relieve pressure on the Rangers. The mere presence of USMC units apparently had the desired effect since the attacking NVA units broke contact and withdrew. Light contact was received on the 14th.

i. Operation SWIFT was terminated at 151600H September.

DECLASSIFIED

j. Civil Affairs. No refugees were evacuated during Operation SWIFT. No commodities were evacuated. Civil affairs activities consisted of rendering advice to S-3 and FSCC personnel concerning location of friendly activities (RD teams etc), assisting in return of innocent civilian detainees to their homes and assisting in medical evacuation of civilians from the operating area. Six such detainees were returned to their homes by S-5 personnel and seven civilian med-evacs were processed through the Regimental collection and clearing unit. None of these medevacs resulted from USMC ordnance and no Serious Incident Reports were submitted concerning them. However, one serious incident report was submitted by 3/5 via the 5th Marine Regiment concerning an aged innocent civilian who was needlessly beaten by two Marines (see 1st Mar Div msg 140047Z Sept67).

k. Psychological operations.

(1) Leaflet drops (note: quantities unavailable).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Theme</u>
6 Sept	Special Leaflet - exploitation of initial action during SWIFT.
7 Sept	Safe Conduct Pass, Chieu Hoi.
9 Sept	Demoralization Leaflet, Chieu Hoi, Safe Conduct Pass.
10 Sept	Special Leaflet - exploitation of results of 1st weeks action during SWIFT.
12 Sept	Chieu Hoi, Why U.S. in Vietnam, special leaflet exploiting 1st weeks action during SWIFT.
13 Sept	Same as above.
14 Sept	Chieu Hoi, Rewards for Mines, Booby Traps and information, Don't Harbor VC, Special leaflet exploiting 1st weeks action during SWIFT, Do Not Run from Marines.
15 Sept	Exploitation of Bombings, Special leaflet exploiting 1st weeks action during SWIFT.

(2) Aerial broadcasts (Note: hours unavailable).

<u>Date</u>	<u>Theme</u>
6 Sept	Chieu Hoi, special tape - exploitation of initial action during SWIFT.
7 Sept	Special tape - exploitation of initial action during SWIFT.
11 Sept	Special tape - appeal from NVA prisoner captured during SWIFT.

UNCLASSIFIED

11. Results.

a. Friendly Personnel.

KIA	138
WIAE	368
WIANE	30
MIA	---
NBC	38

b. Friendly Weapons and Equipment.

7 PRC 25 radios
 1 60mm mortar
 5 M79 grenade launchers
 2 M60 machineguns
 4 M16 rifles

c. Enemy personnel.

KIA (confirmed)	540
KIA (probable)	691
Detainees	47
PWs	7

d. Enemy Weapons.

Individual	70
Crew served	15

e. Enemy Ammunition and Equipment:

(1) See enclosures (1) and (2).

12. Administration Matters.

a. Supply.

(1) All classes of supply were furnished by the Hill 63 LSA and controlled by the HST.

(2) There were no critical shortages.

(3) The delivery of sufficient weapon cleaning materials to units in the field was timely, but this was due to reshuffling of unit assets rather than LSA stockage.

(4) The shortage of helicopters (see paragraph 6. a.) was

UNCLASSIFIED

reflected in delays in resupply and in the evacuation of captured material.

b. Maintenance: no maintenance problems were encountered.

c. Treatment of casualties and evacuation and hospitalization.

(1) Casualty evacuation was hindered by two factors; the aforementioned helicopter shortage and the intensity of the conflict itself.

(a) On the nights of 4 and 6 September, battalions were so heavily engaged that some of the dead could not be brought within friendly perimeters without risking the loss of the battalions themselves. In some instances this resulted in bodies being stripped of valuables and identification by the NVA. This, of course, complicated the problem of identifying the remains upon recovery.

(b) Because of the number of casualties and the difficulty in securing LZ's while in heavy contact, some WIA's were not evacuated for almost 24 hours and some KIA's for 36 hours.

(2) KIA's were brought from the field to the Hill 63 LZ for identification. Battalion representatives were present at the LZ to speed the identification process.

(3) The Fifth Marines Medical Section functioned on two occasions as a collecting and clearing for the treatment of mass casualties.

(a) The majority of casualties received on 4 September were treated at the Regimental Aid Station. Many of these were serious and required further helicopter evacuation to the Division Hospital or NSA Hospital in Da Nang. However, many of the walking wounded were, upon receipt at the RAS, further transferred to the BAS at 3rd Battalion, Fifth Marines, where they were treated by the Assistant Battalion Surgeon and several hospital corpsmen of that units. Most of these casualties were not of a serious nature, and did not require further medical evacuation following emergency treatment. Approximately 50 WIA casualties were processed through the Regimental Aid Station on 4 September. The remains of the KIA casualties were brought in to the LSA LZ later in the afternoon of 4 September.

(b) On the second occasion the Hq Company Medical section was notified early in the evening of 6 September that heavy casualties would probably be evacuated from the field to

UNCLASSIFIED

the RAS commencing on that night. Again an urgent call was made to BAS 3rd Battalion, Eleventh Marines and BAS 3rd Battalion, Fifth Marines requesting the assistance of the medical officers and hospital corpsmen from those units. Also outstanding support was rendered by Hq Company. Available personnel were assigned as stretcher bearers and casualty recorders. Vehicles were made available and standing by to be utilized as needed. Hq Company erected two fly tents by the RAS, and electrical lighting was installed.

1 Upon the receipt of a subsequent report that well over 100 WIA's were expected to be brought in to the RAS, it was obvious that additional medical support would be needed from Division. The Regimental Surgeon placed an urgent call to the 1st Marine Division Surgeon to notify him of the situation. Within approximately one hour from the time the 1st Division Surgeon was notified, the Medical Support Team from the 1st Medical Battalion arrived at Hill 63 by helicopter with medical personnel, supplies and equipment. A complete collecting and clearing station was then established at the Regimental Aid Station.

2 There were no casualties received during the night of 6 September. Early on the morning of 7 September the WIA's were brought in from the field by helicopter. There were many critical and serious cases among them. Following emergency treatment these patients were further evacuated by helicopter to NSA Da Nang, 1st Medical Battalion Da Nang, 1st Hospital Company Chu Lai, or the USS REPOSE (AH-16). Close to 200 WIA's were treated and processed through the combined Regimental Aid Station/Collecting and Clearing Company on 7 September. KIA's were brought to Regimental LZ late that afternoon and the following day.

d. Transportation. All tactical transportation was helicopter. The effects of the helicopter shortage were previously reported.

e. Communications.

(1) Communications for Operation SWIFT were satisfactory. AN/PRC-25 radios were used exclusively for intra-Regimental communications. Some difficulties encountered were:

UNCLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

(a) Mutual interference from friendly units operating in the AO of SWIFT. This interference consisted of frequency blocking, override, and sharing. To counter this problem, antennas were relocated and coordination was affected with the interfering station's organization. It is considered mandatory that a block of spare frequencies be maintained at Division level and be provided to regiments prior to conducting operations.

(b) Apparent jamming was reported in various instances, and, it is considered probable that some was caused by enemy teams. In all cases, changing frequencies limited the effectiveness of jamming. Interference, originally considered as jamming was discovered. Examples of this were; a faulty handset keeping and AN/PRC-25 keyed, and atmospherics combined with antenna masking giving the indications of noise jamming.

(2) The availability of only one generator for radio relay equipment AN/TRC-97 was caused for concern when it became inoperative. To circumvent this problem, two radio relay sets, AN/MRC-62, were activated between 1st Marine Division and Hill 63. A second generator, AN/PU-386 will be provided for use with the AN/TRC-97 in the future.

(3) Due to the rapidity of developments during Operation SWIFT, this organization found itself entangled in communication problems of Task Force X-Ray, DASC, SLE, and various army liaison teams. It is considered necessary that future operation preclude, if possible, satelliting of command and coordination agencies upon a Regimental CP.

13. Special Equipment and Techniques.

a. The extensive and intensive use of CS is covered in paragraph 13 of enclosure (1) and paragraph 6. a. herein.

b. The extreme flexibility of the Marine Air-Ground Team was again demonstrated on the night of 13 September when the pickup zone for the Third Battalion, Fifth Marines became untenable for CH 53 helicopters. The pickup zone and the transported battalion were literally shifted in mid-air. The First Battalion, Fifth Marines took over the mission assigned to the Third Battalion with little or no confusion or time loss. See enclosures (1) and (2).

c. The repeated use of a tank infantry team to secure and illuminate zones for night helilifts proved to be both feasible and efficient. The use of two tank searchlights from the positions 90 degrees apart on the perimeter of the landing zone allowed the center of the zone to be easily identified from aloft. The lights were pointed at the ground and marked the spot for the pilots, and provided adequate, but not blinding, LZ illumination as well.

UNCLASSIFIED

14. Commander's Analysis.

a. At the start of September it had become increasingly apparent that NVA/VC forces were building up in the Que Son - Heip Duc Valley. This build up was the result of the reduced tempo of our operations within the valley area. During the month of August, 1st Marine Division units, ARVN forces and an SLF had conducted Operation COCHISE. This operation was in an area south and southwest of the Que Son Valley but resulted in little or no damage to elements of the 2d NT Division. Prior to and after COCHISE, 5th Marine elements were assigned upon of other 1st Marine Division units for operations outside our area of operation. This greatly reduced our troop density and limited the amount of out patrolling and other offensive action. The lessening of pressure permitted the build-up of VC/NVA forces in the valley area.

b. It had been anticipated that the NVA/VC would attempt to increase their strength in this area during this time frame since it corresponded to the period of GVN elections and preparations for the fall rice harvest within the valley. By the end of August, intelligence reports indicated that elements of all three regiments of the 2nd NT Division were located within the area. There were increasing indications from intelligence sources that NVA forces were planning offensive action within the Que Son District.

c. During late August and early September, extensive patrolling by company (minus) and smaller units was instituted on order to regain the initiative, vis the enemy location and attempt to drive him further back from the combat bases. This activity was hampered by the fact that 3 of our 8 rifle companies were assigned upon to another 1st Marine Division unit for Operation YAZOO and combat bases at Hill 63, Que Son and Nui Lac Son had to be provided security. Operation SWIFT commenced where Co D, 1/5 made contact with NVA forces on 4 September 1967 while conducting a company (minus) search and destroy operation.

d. The employment of an unshielded strobe light to assist friendly aircraft in locating the position of Co D, 1/5, pinpointed their position to the enemy and resulted in increased casualties within the company.

e. During the contact on the morning of 4 September 1967, a pilot of a downed helicopter called and controlled airstrikes without knowing the location of friendly elements. Disaster was narrowly averted by the intervention of ground elements. This situation however caused confusion in the employment of supporting air and lessened its effectiveness.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

f. The use of aerial delivered CS on the morning of 4 September 1967 disrupted the enemy forces and forced their withdrawal. This allowed friendly units to overrun the area and recover enemy dead and equipment.

g. By nightfall on 4 September, it was apparent that our 4 company battalion was fighting a numerically superior force of approximately regimental strength. The 3/5 command group, Co D 1/1 and Co I 3/5 (which had just been returned to our opoon from Operation YAZOO) were committed. The lack of available CH 46 and UH34 aircraft prohibited introduction of these forces to the immediate vicinity of the conflict. As a result, response time was greatly lengthened since troop elements had to move a considerable distance by foot.

h. Riot control agents again proved their value on the evening of 4 September. An enemy attack, of approximately battalion strength, had practically overrun a platoon of Co M 3/5 and was putting great pressure on the remainder of the company. The aerial CS dropped resulted in withdrawal of the enemy force and immediate lessening of the pressure.

i. Throughout Operation SWIFT, operations were curtailed by the lack of an adequate reserve. All elements of the 5th Marines were committed and the commitments of the 1st Marine Division were such that no forces, beyond those already assigned to the 5th Marines (Co D 1/1, Co I 3/1 and Co H 2/5), could be assigned without jeopardizing the vital area.

j. Riot control agents again proved very effective on the night of 6 September 1967 in assisting both battalions to break contact. Their employment in the 3/5 area resulted in immediate withdrawal of a portion of the enemy forces and a reduction in fire elsewhere. Extensive drops in 1/5 area forced withdrawal of some enemy troops and a reduction in the volume of fire being received. It should be noted that a POW that was taken from a unit in the vicinity stated the CS had little effect on him since he had a mask available and his battalion had received quite a bit of training in chemical warfare. Another prisoner from a unit in the 3/5 area stated most of his unit broke and ran about 1000 meters to the rear.

k. Some of the effectiveness of the CS drop on 6 September was lost because of the long delay between the time CS was requested by this headquarters and the time it was on station.

1. By 6 September 1967 it was apparent that the bulk of the 3 regiments of the 2nd NT Division were assembled within an area with a radius of 7 kilometers. This assemblage was the most profitable target ever presented in this area. The comparison strength of friendly and enemy force necessitated an increase in friendly forces prior to continuing the attack. This build-up required 5 days and in that period, the enemy forces slipped out of the area.

15. Recommendations.

a. That the strength of friendly forces in the Que Son Valley be increased to the extent that they are not numerically inferior to the enemy forces.

b. That the forces assigned to an area be sufficient to accomplish the multitude of missions that are assigned to the unit operating in that area without degradation of any mission or portion thereof.

c. That sufficient forces be assigned within the Division area to provide a reserve that will be readily responsive to the tactical situation without degradation of a mission elsewhere.

d. That additional helicopters assets be obtained to provide needed mobility for tactical units and rapid, responsive resupply and evacuation of casualties.

e. That additional emphasis be planned on the employment of riot control agents to include:

- (1) All units carry and maintain field protective masks.
- (2) Field protective masks and filter be stocked by LSA.
- (3) FLC provide contact teams in LSA to change filters in field protective masks.
- (4) That fuses for M158 and M159 clusters be obtained and maintained in readiness for rapid employment.
- (5) That the stock of M158 and M159 CS clusters be greatly increased.
- (6) That smoke-spzay tanks be preloaded with micro-pulverized CS and maintained so they can be rapidly mounted in steep alert aircraft.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

(7) That chemical munitions (riot control agents) for artillery be stocked in counting ready for immediate use.

(8) That the use of BZ agents be considered in this counter insurgency environment.

f. That the LSA stock spare parts and cleaning gear for individual and crew served weapons.

g. That the supported unit be consulted by the DASC when determining the relative priority of tasks for helicopter assets.

h. That spare blocks of frequencies be maintained at Division level for emergency allocation during operations.

i. That more rapid processing of captured documents and personnel be undertaken by higher headquarters in order to provide for timely exploitation.



S. DAVIS