

Department of the Army  
Headquarters, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
APO San Francisco 96265

AVDDA-BRC

30 April 1969

**SUBJECT:** Combat Operations After Action Report for Operation Wayne Grey

Commanding General  
4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division  
ATTN: AVDDH-CC-MH  
APO 96262

1. Name of Operation: Operation Wayne Grey
2. Date of Operation: 1 March 1969 - 14 April 1969
3. Location: Plei Trap, Kontum Province, RVN.
4. Command and Control Headquarters: Headquarters, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division
5. Reporting Officer: COL Hale H. Knight  
Commanding Officer  
1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division
6. Task Organization: Annex A.
7. Supporting Forces:
  - a. 6-29<sup>TH</sup> Arty (DS)
  - b. C/1-92 Arty (GS)
  - c. 1 plat C/6-14 (175MM) (GS)
  - d. 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force
  - e. B/4<sup>th</sup> Eng (DS)
  - f. 4<sup>th</sup> Avn Battalion
  - g. 52<sup>nd</sup> Combat Aviation Battalion
  - h. 7-17<sup>th</sup> Cavalry ( )
  - i. D/1-10 Cavalry
8. Intelligence:
  - a. Intelligence indicated the 66<sup>th</sup> NVA Regiment and the 24<sup>th</sup> NVA Regiment with supporting artillery elements from the 40<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment along with sapper units were staging for attacks against Kontum City, Polei Kleng Special Forces Camp, fire support bases west of Polei Kleng and probable interdiction of the LOC's from Pleiku north to Kontum, Dak to and west from Kontum to Polei Kleng.
  - b. The 66<sup>th</sup> NVA Regiment moved north in late January and February, skirting the contacts between the 24<sup>th</sup> NVA Regiment and FVMAF in the Chu Pa Mountain area (YA9568). In late February, captured "Red" Documents, POW Interrogation Reports, and aerial reconnaissance of the Polei Kleng area and firebases west of Polei Kleng, indicating plans for offensive operations in the area. The K25 Engineer Battalion was identified in documents directing coordination with the 40<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment for construction of a road from Plei Moi (YA8493). The enemy's efforts to construct roads deep into the mountain range east of the Plei Trap, continued improvement of trails and roads from the Cambodian Border into the Chu Mom Ray area and signs of vehicular traffic in the northern Plei Trap and to the east indicating heavy supply activity and probable use of artillery or even tanks in the planned attacks.
  - c. Suspected enemy strengths and probable locations were:

Unit	Strength	Location
66 <sup>th</sup> NVA REGT	1275	VIC YA 8182
HQ & Support Units	550	
7 <sup>th</sup> BN	240	
8 <sup>th</sup> BN	250	
9 <sup>th</sup> BN	235	
40 <sup>th</sup> NVA REGT	UNK	Tri Border Area
K25 Engr BN/B3 Front	250	YA 8493
H67 Dispensary	UNK	YA 8381

d. **Enemy Forces Encountered.** When a 3-12<sup>th</sup> Infantry combat assaulted into key terrain (YA8396) to secure IZ Swinger as a firebase to support the assaults of the 3-12<sup>th</sup> and 1-8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalions, the company was in immediate contact with NVA in bunkers. Fighting to secure the base, they killed 30 NVA and captured an NVA WIA, a 12.7 AAMG, LMGs, other small arms, and antihelicopter mines. The enemy element was apparently prepared to ambush a helicopter assault on the abandoned firebase. Documents taken from the KIA and statements from the POW identified the unit as the K25B Engineer/Sapper Bn. The AA MG also indicated at least a small supporting artillery element.

1. **1-8<sup>th</sup> Inf Area of Operations:** On 2 March, A/7-17 Cav, screening the combat assault of 1-8<sup>th</sup> Inf swept the area capturing the two Russian two ton trucks and 61 rounds of Chicom 105 Howitzer ammunition. One of the trucks and ammunition were evacuated. On 5 March, at YB819019, an ambush killed 4 NVA and captured one NVA who later died of wounds. The POW and documents captured identified the personnel as a recon element of the C-10 Co, K9 Bn, 66<sup>th</sup> NVA Regt and that the element was performing a route and position reconnaissance from the northern Plei Trap to the east of Chu Mom Ray (Hill 1773) and south toward Polei Kleng Special Forces Camp. As action continued in the area south of FB 20, LZ Swinger received incoming 105-mm artillery fire with suspected enemy locations to the NW near the location of the captured vehicles. Subsequent search of the area by the Air Cav, Cider RACs, and ground elements resulting in destruction of six additional trucks and the capture of two 105mm howitzers at YB779028 on 7 March. The howitzers were old US weapons used by the enemy. Significant ground contacts were made by A and C/1-8<sup>th</sup> Infantry on 12 March, vicinity YB8500. Small element contacts continued throughout the month of March, with no new unit identifications made. In the 1-8<sup>th</sup> Inf area of operations, ground contacts, the 7-17 Air Cav, airstrikes and artillery fires resulted in 125 confirmed NVA KIA and 2 POWs. In late March, prior to evacuation of FSB 20 and TF A loc (YB804034), the positions received heavy 105 mm fire for several days from locations near the Cambodian Border vicinity YB724061. Artillery and airstrikes destroyed one of the weapons and possibly destroyed 2 or 3 additional weapons. On 27 March, at YB830992, C/7-17 av observed what appeared to be a camouflaged vehicle park. The ARP was inserted and checked the area finding 3 rounds and 60 expended shell casings of 85 mm assault gun ammunition. The 3 rounds were evacuated.

2. **3-8 Infantry Area of Operations:** A, C, and D Companies of the 3-8 Inf combat assaulted into

LZs south of LZ Mary (YA784916) and moved towards the enemy's rear and the suspected location of the H67 Dispensary (YA830815). On 3 March, vic YA808879, 3-8 Inf made contact with an estimated NVA Bn in well-constructed bunkers. Fierce fighting followed with D Company moving from the southwest to secure Hill 947 (YA813864) and B and C Companies combat assaulting on the ridge south of A company's contact and moving south along the ridge. In this battle, confirmed NVA KIA and captured several weapons. Documents captured in the contacts identified the K8 Bn, 66<sup>th</sup> NVA Regt, and the 25B Engineer Bn B3 Front. The enemy's determination to hold the ridgeline, and other intelligence later developed, indicate a control headquarters was located south of the contact area. Although not confirmed, an NVA B3 Front Forward CP may have been in the area. Enemy activity in the 3-8<sup>th</sup> Inf area of operations remained extremely light for the remainder of the operation except for the harassing fires against LZ Swinger.

3. 3-12<sup>th</sup> Inf area of operations: Following A Company's assault on LZ Swinger, elements of the 3-12<sup>th</sup> Inf combat assaulted into the Plei Trap. In reaction to the 3-8<sup>th</sup> Inf action, TF Swift (B, D, and Tcn/3-12) moved to the southeast to assist in sweeping the area and to attack south into Cu Don (YA8081). In scattered contacts throughout the area 3-12<sup>th</sup> Inf elements killed 114 NVA. Major contacts were made at YA818840, YA820855, and YA828811, on 20, 29, and 30 March respectively. In all contacts except the 29 March sapper attack at LZ D-HANDLE, the enemy was well dug in and protected by the dense jungle and heavy overhead cover. In the 29 March contact, the enemy employed an 82-mm mortar preparation followed by a company sized attack of sappers using B40 rockets and satchel charges. The enemy attack was repelled resulting in 26 NVA KIA. Documents captured in the contacts identified elements of the NVA 66<sup>th</sup> Regt and K25B Bn and B3 Front. A document captured by D/3-12 on 26 March at YA808852 indicated an infiltration route running from SW vicinity YA7683, toward Plei Kleng.

e. Significant Intelligence: Captured documents, POWs, captured weapons, vehicles, and munitions confirmed the accuracy of intelligence information available prior to and throughout the operations. POWs and documents identified the 66<sup>th</sup> NVA Regt with the K7, K8, and K9 Bns, the K25B Engineer Battalion and elements of the 40<sup>th</sup> NVA Artillery Regiment. Observation of improved roads by aerial surveillance and ground reconnaissance along with the capture and destruction of Russian trucks, 105 mm howitzers, 105 mm and 85 mm Chicom ammunition confirmed the enemy's capabilities to provide logistical and fire support for attacks deep into South Vietnam.

f. Terrain: Throughout the area of operation, the terrain consisted of steep slopes and deep valleys. The jungle canopy was triple layered with 150' high trees in many areas.

1. Observation: The dense jungle greatly reduced observation from the air and ground and prevented long range observation of likely avenues of enemy movement.

2. Fields of fire. The dense jungle severely restricted employment of flat trajectory weapons except at very close ranges or with extensive clearing of firing lanes.

3. Cover. The steep hill masses, deep ravines and dense vegetation provided good cover throughout the area of operations, except along the Plei Trap Valley floor and in the relatively flat terrain leading from the Northern Plei Trap to the east and the north of Chu Mom Ray, (Hill 1773). Even in these areas, the cover was fair.

4. Concealment. Throughout the area, dense jungle and broken terrain provided excellent concealment against ground the air observation, often completely hiding hardened positions and trail networks that were later found when artillery, air strikes or chemical defoliation destroyed the canopy.

5. Obstacles. The steep slopes and dense jungle were obstacles to any type vehicular movement and hinder foot movement in the steepest areas. Steep banks make most streams obstacles unless extensive work was done to provide a fording site.

6. Avenues of movement. Routes of movement generally follow the valley areas and

cross the hill masses in the saddles. Major avenues in the area extended from the Cambodian Border (Northern Plei Trap to the south along the Plei Trap Valley and to the east along the valley floor south of FSB 20 (YB8208) and north of Chu Mom Ray).

- g. **Weather:** Throughout the operation, the weather was clear and permitted effective use of air assets except for ground haze that occasionally limited visibility and two severe thunderstorms accompanied by rain and high winds that disrupted aerial support. The heavy rains that delayed the final extraction from FSB 20 would have been a critical factor had they continued throughout the late afternoon and prevented completion of the extraction.
9. **Mission:** 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade conducts offensive operations in Plei Trap area to destroy enemy forces, prevent reinforcement and supply of the 66<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> NVA Regiments from Cambodia, and prevent their withdrawal into Cambodia.
10. **Concept of Operations:**

- a. **Phase I.** The 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade conducted offensive operations with its three associated battalions: 1-8<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 3-8<sup>th</sup> Infantry and 3-12<sup>th</sup> Infantry and its direct support artillery battalion. 6-29<sup>th</sup> Artillery. Initially, the battalions conducted combat assaults into previously used firebases on the eastern Plei Trap to establish adequate artillery fire support positions. With artillery support established, rifle companies combat assaulted into the western Plei Trap behind main enemy forces and on his infiltration routes. Upon landing, the companies moved eastward quickly in reconnaissance in force operations into base areas and ambushed known enemy lines of communication. Maximum use was made of artillery and air strikes to interdict enemy interdict enemy movement of logistics. Once maneuver elements fixed enemy forces, all available firepower was brought to bear upon him (Overlay 1)
- b. **Phase II.** The 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade continued offensive operations by establishing company size blocking positions astride access routes to interdict enemy withdrawal. Ambushes and short range patrols were placed on enemy routes of withdrawal. Artillery fire programs and chemical drops covered routes of egress not under observation of ground troops. Enemy troop units, which concentrated, were struck by B-52 bombers. Air Cavalry screened the western AO to detect and interdict enemy movement in or out of the area. Artillery was used to a maximum on all suspected and confirmed enemy locations. Air strikes were used to destroy enemy bunker complexes, and saturation bombing was used on enemy troops concentrated in the Cu Don. Once enemy resistance was broken, US Infantry swept the area in clean up operations. (Overlay 2)

11. **Execution:**

- a. **General:** On 27 February, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade received the mission to deploy to Polei Kleng for staging an assault into the northern Plei Trap area. Reliable intelligence indicated that two regiments were staging for an attack on Polei Kleng and Kontum. The Brigade mission to prevent the withdrawal of the 24<sup>th</sup> and 66<sup>th</sup> NVA Regiments into Cambodia and to cut their lines of communication. On 28 February, all battalions were marshaled for deployment to Plei Trap. 1-8<sup>th</sup> Inf and 3-8<sup>th</sup> Inf convoyed to Polei Kleng while 3-12<sup>th</sup> Inf extracted to Plei Mrong.
- b. **Initial assaults.** On 1 March, the move into the Plei Trap began with A/3-12<sup>th</sup> Inf combat assaulting into FB Swinger from Plei Mrong. The firebase was occupied by enemy troops who had prepared positions and anti-helicopter mines on the LZ. The artillery prep destroyed a 12.7 mm AA position and the assault went as planned. After a three-hour battle, bunker to bunker, the FB was secured and C/1-92<sup>nd</sup> Arty (155) was moved in. Enemy losses were 30 KIA and 1 POW. US casualties were 1 KIA and 13 WIA. Combat assaults were then conducted by B/1-8<sup>th</sup>

Inf into FSB 20 an C/3-8<sup>th</sup> Inf into Firebase Pause followed by A/6-29<sup>th</sup> Arty and C/6-29<sup>th</sup> Arty respectively. At the end of the day, the fire support bases were established for troop assaults the following day.

On 2 March, simultaneous combat assaults were conducted by the 1-8<sup>th</sup> Inf and the 3-8<sup>th</sup> Inf. D/18<sup>th</sup> and C/18<sup>th</sup> assaulted into LZ Susan and began RIF operations along the enemy roads in the area. A/1-8<sup>th</sup> Inf combat assaulted into LZ Turkey to establish a blocking position and conduct ambush operations along routes of egress. A, B, and D/3-8<sup>th</sup> Inf combat assaulted to LZ Mary to establish a firebase. C and B/3/12 combat assaulted to YA734953 and YA743974 respectively to RIF east. The initial positioning was completed on 3 March with the combat assault of D/3-12<sup>th</sup> to YA 747923.

- c. Plei Trap Road 1-16 March: With intelligence pointing to increased road activity in the northern Plei Trap, C/1/8<sup>th</sup> Inf and D/1-8<sup>th</sup> Inf were assigned missions of conduction RIF operations east along the roads from LZ Susan (YA742032). A/1-8<sup>th</sup> Inf and Rcn/1-8<sup>th</sup> Inf were put in a blocking position at LZ Turkey (YB 805015). During the combat assault of C and D/1-8<sup>th</sup> on 2 March, ground fire was received by a gunship just north of LZ Susan. A/7-17<sup>th</sup> Cav was committed to the area to screen the eastward movement of the rifle companies. At YB 765032, a scout observed two enemy trucks with ammunition. The LOH received fire from the area and an air strike was employed resulting in two trucks destroyed, 6 NVA KIA, and 8 secondary explosions. C/1-8<sup>th</sup> swept the area and found the Russian made 1 1/2 ton trucks, 61 rounds of 105 mm ammunition, and 1200 lbs. of rice. At 1850 hrs an ambush patrol from A/1-8 Inf made contact with 2 NVA with a LMG at YB820015. Small arms fire was exchanged and during the sweep by 4A/1-8 contact was made with a dug in force. Small arms fire and artillery were employed resulting in 2 NVA KIA and 1 US WIA. On 3 March C/1-8 Inf continued the RIF along the southern road while 1 platoon assisted the evacuation of the captured truck. Contact was made with an unknown size force at YB 756036. A/7-17 Cav, screening the area, located and engaged the enemy resulting in 4 NVA KIA and 1 US WIA. D/1-8 Inf continued the RIF along the northern road with negative results.

On 4 March the RIF continued along the southern road to locate the enemy artillery battery known to be in the area. That afternoon the 3-12<sup>th</sup> Inf CP at FB Swinger received incoming 105 mm. A/7-17 Cav was sent to recon the suspected firing positions. Counterbattery fire was employed by the artillery with unknown results. C/1-8 Inf captured another truck vic YB777025. It was driven to an LZ but was destroyed due to lack of air assets for evacuation. On 5 March at YB 819019 an ambush patrol from A/1-8 Inf killed 2 NVA. While moving back to the company location, 2 more NVA were seen and engaged, resulting in 1 NVA WIA/CIA. An ambush from C/1-8 killed 1 NVA at YB813022. After the ambush was sprung, the US troops received fire from the rear resulting in 2 US WIA. Artillery was employed with unknown results. At 1500 hours as C/1-8 continued the RIF along the southern road, heavy contact was made vic YA 807025. The order was given to break contact due to the heavy engagement in the 3-8<sup>th</sup> AO. Contact was broken and C/1-8 withdrew to an LZ and was extracted to A/1-8 location (YB822032). Results of the contact were 7 NVA KIA, 3 US KIA, and 11 US WIA.

On 7 March, A/7-17 Cav, searching in area of suspected enemy 105 locations, found 2 105 mm howitzers at YB779028. Airstrikes and gunships were employed resulting in 1 artillery piece destroyed and 1 possibly destroyed. On 8 March, A/7-17<sup>th</sup> found a truck at YB 778018. An airstrike uncovered another truck, which was also destroyed by artillery and gunships. At YB 780002, A/7-17 found a third truck, which they destroyed with artillery and gunships. On 10 March D/1-8 combat assaulted to YB 770026 with the mission to extract the 2 105-mm howitzers. At YB 777018, contact was made by the point element with 1 NVA. The NVA was killed and an SKS captured. In the immediate area of the howitzers, 2 disabled trucks were destroyed w/thermite

grenades. Another truck was uncovered and also destroyed by thermite grenades. Thirty (30) rounds of Chicom 105-mm ammunition were destroyed in place. The howitzers were extracted to Polei Kleng.

On 9-10 March, 3 B-52 strikes were employed on the area to the north of FB Swinger. A/1-8 and C/1-8 were given the mission to make a bomb contact with an estimated NVA company dug in bunkers. C/1-8 Inf, working squad at YB 847006. A/7-17 Cav screened during the battle. Tracer 5, forced to escape and evade that night. Results of the battle were 33 NVA KIA, 2 US KIA, 13 WIA, and 4 US MIA. From 13-15 March, A and C/1-8 followed up in the contact area to recover MIAs. On 13 March at YB 852011 contact was made by A Co. resulting in 4 NVA KIA. That night, A and companies were mortared at their night location with no casualties suffered. On 15 March A and C/1-8 again received 8 rounds of mortar fire in their base resulting in 2 WIA. Three of the 4 US MIA returned to the patrol base that afternoon.

A/7-17 Cav screened in support of 1-8<sup>th</sup> operations throughout this time. On 15 March they found 1 enemy platoon at YA 861986. Gunships expended resulting in 10 NVA KIA. From a BDA of an airstrike at YA 855955, the scout section found 1 12.7 AA weapon destroyed and 5 NVA KBA. Another airstrike at YA 854977 destroyed 6 bunkers and killed 9 NVA.

The Plei Trap Road operation was significant in interdicting an enemy main supply route. The destruction of 6 trucks and 2 howitzers curtailed movement of enemy artillery toward Polei Kleng and stopped the flow of supplies to the 40<sup>th</sup> NVA Artillery Regiment. With a US battalion astride its line of communication, the enemy was forced to decide on a new course of action rather than support an attack on Polei Kleng.

- d. LZ BRACE 3-7 March: At 1530 hours, 3 March 69, A/3-8<sup>th</sup> Inf closed into what was believed to be their NL at YA 803879. A security patrol was sent out from the perimeter and found 2 NVA fleeing east from the perimeter toward the top of the hill. A platoon pursued and became engaged. The remainder of the company reinforced and made contact with an estimated battalion perimeter. After a 1 1/2 hour firefight, the company, after sustaining several casualties and mission, withdrew into a perimeter and contact was broken. Gunships, AC-47 Spooky, and artillery were employed throughout the night, around the perimeter. At 0950 4 Mar, A3-8<sup>th</sup> sent a patrol to check the area of the previous contact and locate the missing personnel. Contact was made almost immediately and the patrol withdrew to the perimeter. The enemy then launched an attack w/grenades and B-40 rockets. A/3-8<sup>th</sup> Inf was forced to fight a retrograde movement to an LZ at YA 790885 and was extracted to Firebase Pause at 1500 hours.

At 1125 hours, 4 March, B/3-8<sup>th</sup> Inf attempted a combat assault to YA828899 with the mission of moving down the ridgeline to reinforce A/3-8<sup>th</sup> Inf. The assault was postponed because automatic weapons fire was encountered on the LZ. A second attempt was made at 1328 and again fire was received. After a preparation by air strike and screening by A/7-17<sup>th</sup>, B/3-8<sup>th</sup> was inserted at 1540 hours and moved south, joining Rcn/3-8<sup>th</sup> at YA 825890 for their night defensive location.

D/3-8<sup>th</sup> continued to move up the ridge from YA800856 to establish a block and prevent enemy withdrawal to the south. While moving to Hill 947 (YA14869), the company found a well used trail with telephone wire laid along side the military symbols carved in the trees. Hill 947 was reached without opposition. As the company moved further north, contact was made with an unknown site force, resulting in 4 NVA KIA and 1 US recaptured. The returned US soldier revealed the presence of a larger enemy force to the north. D Co was then ordered to reoccupy Hill 947 and prepare a defensive position to block enemy withdrawal from the area. At 1640, D Co received a probe from an estimated two enemy

squads. Throughout the night of 405 March, D/3-8<sup>th</sup> had heavy movement and probes by sapper units. Enemy attempts to neutralize outposts were thwarted. At 0750, 5 March, an estimated two enemy companies reinforced with sappers launched an attack against D Company's east side. The attack was preceded by mortars, B-40 rockets, and CS; however, it was broken by artillery and gunships. At 0825, D Co successfully counterattacked to retake OP's. For the rest of the morning, D Co received probes and sniper fire. At 1340, the enemy attacked again with 1 company on the east and 1 company on the west. Again the attack was preceded by a mortar barrage. A FAC spotted the enemy mortars and destroyed them with an air strike. The ground attack was repelled in fifteen minutes of fierce fighting. Enemy probes continued for the remainder of the day including sapper attacks on the first platoon perimeter. Spooky and artillery were employed around the perimeter and in enemy assembly areas.

B/3-8 continued its attack south on 5 March with Rcn/3-8 attached. A/1-35 was OPCON to 3-8<sup>th</sup> Infantry after being lifted to LZ Pause. C/3-8 was then combat assaulted to YA828899 at 1035 hrs. The lead aircraft received fire and the assault was postponed. Also B/3-8 began receiving fire from the hill at YA828880 (BRACE) and employed artillery. At 1320, C/3-8 again attempted a combat assault to YA828899 and was successful. The company then moved south to reinforce B/3-8 and Rcn/3-8. The two companies linked just prior to darkness.

As the major enemy force had been located in the Plei Trap, the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade consolidated forces throughout the area of operations to prepare to meet any new threat. In the 3-12 Inf AO, B/3-12 and D/3-12 were moved to LZ Mary. C/3-12 was extracted to FSR Swinger. In the 1-8 Inf AO, D/1-8 was ordered to contact, and was extracted to LZ Turkey. 1-35 Inf (-) CHOP 1<sup>st</sup> Bde and began moving to Polei Kleng.

On 6 March, B and C/3-8 began a coordinated assault on BRACE. B Co moved within 150 meters of the top when they received heavy AW fire. An attempt by B Co to maneuver east and C Co to maneuver west were unsuccessful. Artillery fire with delay fuses were employed without success. The companies withdrew part way down the hill and airstrikes w/750 lb delay fused bombs were employed. At 1700 the attack commenced again. At 1720 C Co secured the top of the hill and B Co joined shortly thereafter to consolidate a defensive position.

D/3-8 on Hill 947 repelled a ground attack at 0700 on 6 March. The attack was preceded by a mortar preparation, to include CS rounds. Again scouts and gunships from A/7-17 Cav were used to neutralize the enemy mortars. After 20 minutes the enemy was driven off. After a perimeter sweep, D Co then made preparations for resupply and evacuation of the wounded.

In order to block enemy withdrawal to the west from BRACE, the 3-12 Inf formed Task Force Swift (B, D, Rcn/3-12). TF Swift moved overland from LZ Mary on 6 March to the southeast to block or destroy enemy forces in the area.

On 6 March, the 1<sup>st</sup> Bde continued the attack on 7 March by airlifting C/3-12 from FB Swinger to Hill 947 to reinforce D/3-8. TF Swift was extracted from YA788883 to BRACE. The task force attacked and secured the middle hill (YA815872) on 7 March without contact. 1-35 Inf(-) was airlifted from Polei Kleng to LZ Mary to conduct search and destroy operations and block enemy withdrawal to the west of BRACE. On 8 March Task Force Swift attacked south and linked with D/3-8 and C/3-12. No further contact was made. Results of the entire action were 241 NVA KIA, 32 US KIA, 125 US WIA, and 1 US MIA. LZ BRACE was the most significant battle of Operation Wayne Grey. The 3-8 Infantry engaged reserve elements of the 66<sup>th</sup> NVA Regiment and rendered them ineffective. The losses

sustained by the enemy by body count alone prohibited further employment of that unit. Also, the 3-8 Infantry had fought and defeated the enemy in a conventional battle through proper employment of fire support and maneuver. The steadfastness and determination of the fighting man on the ground was the key to success in this battle.

- e. **Task Force Swift 10-14 March:** After consolidation on Hill 947, TF Swift received the mission to make bomb damage assessment of 3 B52 strikes which would be made to the south of Hill 947. On 11 March, the task force received mortar fire and countered with airstrikes and artillery. At 1145 hrs at YA817861, a SRP from C/3-12 round 4 NVA bodies and fresh blood trails. A platoon was sent to sweep the area. At 1420 hours the platoon made contact with an unknown size force at YA 818858 and received mortar fire. C Co moved to reinforce, and B Co moved to secure a withdrawal route. Contact was made with an estimated enemy company. Due to the proximity of a B52 strike, the companies broke contact and withdrew to the task force perimeter. On 12 March TF Swift attacked again and secured the objective at YA818956. Once there, they received mortar and small arms fire resulting in 15 US WIA. Airstrikes and artillery were employed with unknown results. Results of the action were 5 NVA KIA, 10 US KIA, and 56 US WIA.

On March 15, the 1<sup>st</sup> Bde began a new phase of operations, moving into company-sized blocking positions and using ambush operations, artillery, airstrikes, B52 strikes, and chemical munitions to block and interdict enemy withdrawal. In the 3-12<sup>th</sup> Inf, A/3-12 was moved to LZ Mary on 13 March prior to a combat assault to a new LZ (LZ CIDER) YA829799. The assault was made the following day unopposed and was followed by C/3-12, Hq/3-12, and B/6-29 Arty. B/3-12 and D/3-12 moved overland to vic YA808856 LZ D-HANDLE. After A/3-12 assaulted to LZ CIDER. C and D/3-8 constructed a firebase at BRACE. On 16 March, Hq/3-8 and A/3-8 and C/6-29 Arty moved to BRACE from LZ PAUSE. In the 1-8<sup>th</sup> Inf AO, D/1-8 closed into FB 20. A and C/1-8 moved to Hill 467 YB803034 and were constituted into Task Force Alpha.

- f. **Plei Trap Road Interdiction 16-30 March:** As the 1<sup>st</sup> Bde began its second phase of operations, the 1-8<sup>th</sup> Infantry was assigned the mission of interdicting the Plei Trap Road so as to prevent enemy vehicular movement in the area through the monsoon. The mission was to be accomplished by running road interdiction to the east from FB 20 and interdiction on the south from Hill 467 (YA803035). A and C/1-8 on 16 March began moving from YB847003 to Hill 467. A/7-17 Cav. Screening their move, located an NVA truck vic YB838068 and destroyed Hill 467. On 19 March an ambush of A/1-8 made contact with a dug in force at YB805053 resulting in 1 US KIA and 1 US WIA. The ambush pulled back and employed artillery. On 20 March A Co swept the contact area again making contact with an unknown sized force resulting in 4 NVA KIA, 1 US KIA, and 11 US WIA. On 21 March, A/1-8 was airlifted to FB 20 and B/1-8 was moved to Hill 467.

From 21-23 March ambushes and road interdiction were continued around the area. Contacts were small resulting in 5 NVA KIA, 1 US KIA, and 9 US WIA.

On 23 March activity increased with enemy attacks by fire. FB 20 received seven 105 WP rounds, twenty 105 HE, and various mortars and RR rounds. On 24 March, FB 20 again received an undetermined number of 105 rounds. Hill 467 received indirect fires, sniper fire and B40 rockets on its east and west perimeter. Security sweeps of the area resulted in 1 NVA KIA. On 25 March, B/1-8(-) returning from a road interdiction mission, made contact with an estimated platoon of NVA at YB795020. Contact was broken at 1230 and reinitiated at 1413 resulting in 5 NVA KIA, 2 US KIA, 11 US WIA, and 6 US MIA. Simultaneously, Task Force Alpha came under attack with B40 and small arms. The attack was repelled resulting in 5 NVA KIA, 1 US KIA, and 13 US WIA. The task force continued to receive sporadic 60mm and 82mm fire.



On 26 March FB 20 again received incoming 105mm during the afternoon. A total of 20 rounds impacted in and around the firebase resulting in 3 US KIA and 8 US WIA. Also B/1-8 (-) linked with D/1-8 and moved back to Hill 467. Four MIA from B/1-8 rejoined the unit at that time. Shortly thereafter, Task Force Alpha began receiving incoming small arms and B40, 82mm mortar, and 105mm artillery. No casualties were suffered. On 27 March FB 20 received 19 rounds of 105mm resulting in 2 US WIA. Airstrikes and artillery were employed in counterbattery. Task Force Alpha received sporadic sniper and B40 rounds, especially during the airlift of D/1-8 to FB 27. C/1-8 was sent to sweep the perimeter but was forced to return when they received incoming 105mm artillery. A total of 15 105 rounds impacted including one propaganda round with leaflets exhorting the US soldiers to surrender. No US casualties were suffered. On 28 March Task Force Alpha had several sightings and movement. Mortars and artillery were employed with unknown results. Also they received 120 rounds of incoming 105 mm resulting in 1 US KIA and 4 US WIA. D/1-8 reported a convoy of NVA trucks north of FB 27. Artillery and mortars were employed with unobserved results. On 29 March, FB 20 received a total of 16 rounds of 105 with no casualties suffered. Artillery and airstrikes were again employed on suspected firing positions. At Task Force Alpha sporadic sniper and B40 fire were received. Small arms, mortar, and artillery were employed, resulting in 5 NVA KIA and 1 US WIA. On 30 March, 1-8<sup>th</sup> Inf began a tactical withdrawal from their AO. Task Force Alpha was evacuated with aircraft and ground troops receiving small arms and B40 fire. No casualties were suffered. In the evacuation of FB 20, the enemy fired a total of 40 rounds at the firebase. An Air Force smoke screen was used to cover the move with the extraction being completed at 1830 hours. D/1-8 was extracted to Plei Kleng from FB 27 without incident.

The enemy action in the 1-8<sup>th</sup> AO had twofold significance. First, the intensity of the attacks by fire indicated the enemy intention of inflicting casualties and damage on American firebases and preventing resupply. Second, the enemy ground activity around Task Force Alpha was designed to contain American forces while enemy equipment was withdrawn or hidden in the area. No major attacks was ever launched against the patrol base; however, the harassment to cover movement from the area as evidenced by repair work on the craters and abatis made by the 1-8<sup>th</sup> Infantry on the Plei Trap road.

- g. On 15 March - 14 April: The Cu Don is a mountain on an extension of the ridge south of BRACE. It was a known enemy base area and suspected to be on the withdrawal route of the 66<sup>th</sup> NVA Regiment. As the first Bde entered Phase II of Operation Wayne Grey, the 3-12 Inf received the mission of establishing blocking positions and interdicting enemy movement through the area. On 14 March, A, Rcn, and C/3-12 combat assaulted to LZ CIDER (YA829799) to establish a firebase. The following day, B/6-29 Arty moved to LZ CIDER. B/3-12 moved to a patrol base at YA818856, and D/3-12 established a firebase for the 4.2 mortars at LZ D-HANDLE (YA821853).

On 18 March, 3D/3-12 on a RIF became heavily engaged at YA817839. 2D/3-12 was sent to reinforce and made contact with an NVA force, which came between the two platoons. With support from airstrikes, artillery, and gunships, the platoons were able to link and break contact. Results were 7 NVA KIA, 4 US KIA, 19 US WIA, and 3 US MIA. On 19 March, the bunker complex at YA8178839 was attacked by airstrikes all day. That evening LZ CIDER was probed with small arms and M79 fire resulting in no friendly casualties and 1 NVA KIA.

On 20 March, D/3-12 attacked south to capture the bunker complex on Hill 800 (YA817839). The attack was supported by airstrikes, artillery, and gunships. Enemy forces held the position, but 2 MIA were recovered. D Co withdrew to LZ D-HANDLE/ From 1845-2315 hours, LZ CIDER received a heavy weapons attack from 82-mm mortars and 75 mm RR. There were no casualties and only slight equipment damage.

D/3-12 attacked Hill 800 again on 22 March after heavy air and artillery bombardment. The hill was seized without opposition and all US MIA were recovered. 4 NVA KBA were found in the bunker complex. From 23-26 March 3-12 Inf units conducted patrols and ambushes throughout the area of operations.

On 27 March, 3A/3-12 on a local security patrol, made contact with 4 NVA at YA826811, killing 2. The platoon was then engaged by automatic weapons and B40 rockets. They withdrew 200 meters and sent the WIA back to LZ CIDER. A/3-12 moved from LZ CIDER, linked with the platoon, and moved into the contact area after an artillery preparation. Again automatic weapons fire was received. The company withdrew to LZ CIDER leaving 8 MIA in the area of contact.

On 28 March A/3-12 again moved to vic YA826811 to recover the MIA. As the company entered the contact area, they received small arms fire from an estimated 2 platoons. Contact was broken and artillery and mortars were employed. As the company withdrew, they received 60 rounds of 82 mm and 60-mm mortar fire. No casualties were suffered.

At 2245 on 28 March, SRP 43 at YA812845 near LZ D-HANDLE reported observing 9 NVA. Mortars were employed to force the NVA toward B/3-12 ambush. The NVA, however, moved toward SRP 43 and claymores were employed resulting in 4 NVA KIA. At 2900600, the ambush platoon from B/3-12 observed 3-5 NVA at YA823858. As they waited for the enemy to enter the killing zone, they received 3 rds B40 resulting in 4 US WIA. The platoon then observed 15-20 NVA moving N carrying 3 NVA. The unit engaged with small arms and artillery resulting in 5 NVA KIA and possible 10 NVA killed by artillery. Also at 0600, at LZ D-HANDLE, the enemy launched a sapper attack under cover of a weapons attack. B and D/3-12 received 50 rounds of 82-mm mortar and sappers destroyed two bunkers with B40 rockets. The attack was repelled by small arms and artillery. A patrol from B/3-12 later killed another 2 NVA during a sweep of the area. Results of the entire action were 27 NVA KIA, 2 US KIA, and 28 US WIA.

On 30 March, A/3-12 moved to recover the MIA from the contact of 27 March. The bodies were found vic YA826811, but the enemy again attacked with small arms and mortars. The company was ordered to withdraw and did so fighting its way back up the hill to YA834814. C/3-12(-) was dispatched to help secure the night location. Contact was broken at 1900 hrs and C Co linked with A Co at 2000 hrs. At 310035 March, A and C(-)/3-12 received small arms and 150 rounds of 82 mm, 60 mm, and 75 mm RR from vic YA830815. Artillery, mortars, and Spooky were employed. There were no US casualties.

In reaction to the locating of a large enemy force in the vicinity of the Cu Don and the enemy's willingness to remain in fight, five B52 strikes were struck in the area to prepare for the combat assault of 1-22 Infantry. On 2 April 1-22 Inf CHOP 1<sup>st</sup> Bde. A and C/1-22 AL to LZ CIDER and moved overland to YA821795. B, D, and Rcn/1-22 combat assaulted to YA806827.

On 3 April, the 1-22 Inf attacked toward Objective Red (YA8280). 2C/1-22 made contact with an unknown size enemy force at YA816795. The platoon was reinforced by C/1-22(-) and ordered to withdraw. Results were 1 NVA KIA, 1 US KIA, and 14 US WIA. B/1-22 made contact with an unknown size force at YA805818 resulting in 1 KCS WIA. The company withdrew to its NL vic YA808822.

On 5 April C/3-8 AL from YA826906 to Hill 871 (YA806825 CHOP 1-22 Inf. 1-22 Inf moved recon patrols to objective areas to establish blocking positions. 1D/1-22 on recon observed 4 NVA in bunkers vic YA813823. The platoon withdrew and airstrikes and artillery were employed. The platoon sent recon patrols in the afternoon into the area and found an

extensive bunker complex. As the unit reconnoitered the hill by fire, the enemy suddenly attacked from bunkers on top of the hill and from the flanks with small arms and B40 rockets. 2D/1-22 was dispatched to assist in the evacuation of casualties and also made contact with a flanking enemy force. Contact was broken at 1620 resulting in 23 NVA KIA, 20 possible NVA KIA, 1 US KIA, 5 US KIA (MIA), and 17 US WIA.

From 6-9 April, the objective area was saturated with airstrikes and artillery. LRPs were employed to recon the area for evidence of enemy forces in strength. On 10 April, D/1-22 moved to YA815824 and recovered 4 MIA. L1B found 9 MIA from A/3-12 Inf. On 11 April D/1-22 recovered 1 MIA and C/3-12 recovered 2 additional MIA. All were evacuated.

On 13 April 1-22<sup>nd</sup> Inf was final extracted from the Cu Don to Polei Kleng and CHOP 2d Bde. A, C, and Rcn/3-8 Inf were also extracted and CHOP 2d Bde. On 14 April 3-12 Inf(-) and 3-8 Inf(-) were extracted to Mary Lou. 3-12 Inf prepared for deployment to Camp Radcliff. 3-8 Inf(-) CHOP 2d Bde.

The battles in the Cu Don are significant in the fact that an enemy base area was disrupted. The tenacity with which the enemy defended the area gave evidence that he had something to protect. His attacks by fire and harassing sniper fires were designed to hold US forces until he could evacuate or hide his equipment. When US forces came close to his base, his defenses were organized as ambushes. Despite these designs, the 3-12<sup>th</sup> Inf and the 1-22<sup>nd</sup> Inf were successful in inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. An unknown number of enemy were undoubtedly killed in the heavy air and artillery bombardment. As the operation concluded, indications were that the enemy had retreated toward Cambodia.

- h. **FB SWINGER:** Throughout Operation Wayne Grey, FB Swinger was subjected to sporadic attacks by fire. This fire was primarily 82 mm mortar and 75mm recoilless rifle directed at aircraft and at the 155mm artillery battery. Artillery and mortars were always employed in counter battery fire. Air cavalry screened the area northwest and northeast of the firebase, but never detected the firing positions. Airstrikes were employed on several suspected locations with no observed results. B52 strikes were employed on five occasions when intelligence indicated a troop concentration in the area, however, the enemy persisted in directing harassing fires at the firebases.

## 12 RESULTS

### a. Enemy Losses:

KIA - 575  
POW - 4

### b. Enemy equipment captured or destroyed.

AK-47- 57  
SKS - 13  
CHICOM rifles - 3  
CHICOM assault rifle 1  
SOVIET Carbine 1  
RPD IMG 9  
M60 MG 2  
M16 rifle 3  
RPG Rocket launcher 5  
.50 cal MG (dest) 1  
12.7 AA (dest) 1

12.7AA - 1  
60mm mortar 1  
60mm Mortar (dest) 1  
105mm howitzer 2  
105mm howitzer (dest) 1  
Soviet trucks (dest) 6  
Soviet trucks 1  
CHICOM AM/FM radio 1  
6560 rds 7.62mm  
256 rds 12.7mm  
25 rds 60mm  
51 rds 82mm  
3 rds 85mm  
4 rds 75mm  
91 rds 105mm  
22 rds B40 rocket  
110 CHICOM grenades  
50 booby traps  
35 lbs TNT

c. Friendly Losses:

US KIA - 106  
US WIA - 437  
US MIA - 8

d. Friendly Equipment Losses and Damage:

M16 59  
M16 (damaged) 1  
M79 4  
M60 5  
PRC 25 radio 18  
PRC 25 radio (damaged) 2  
PRC 27 radio 2  
KY 38 (X-Mode) 1  
Starlight scopes 2  
Starlight scopes (dest) 1

13 ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

- a. Supply: Battalion trains were based at Mary Lou. Resupply was accomplished by conveying items to Polei Kleng and airlifting them to forward firebases. The LOC at Polei Kleng was subjected to 12-mm rocket and 75mm RR attacks which disrupted resupply activities for 2 weeks. However, a sufficient amount of all classes of supply were delivered without extensive delay. Combat loads, ammunition, and weapons were adequate for performance of the mission.
- b. Maintenance: Maintenance was performed by elements of 704<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Battalion at Mary Lou.
- c. Treatment of Casualties: All casualties were evacuated by air in MEDEVAC helicopters or resupply helicopters directly to the medical clearing company at Mary Lou. This evacuation was normally timely and effective, however, the tactical situation at time s prevented a rapid response.
- d. Transportation: helicopters were the primary mode of transportation during the operation. Support rendered by the 52<sup>nd</sup> Combat Aviation Bn was outstanding,

especially on mission requiring much courage and skill from the pilots. The major problem area was the inadequate refueling facility at Polei Kleng. An excessive loss of blade time was experienced especially for CH47 aircraft, which had to refuel at Kontum or Mary Lou.

- e. Communications: The Brigade maintained four FM nets (Command, Intel, Aviation, and Secure Voice) for command and control of the operation. Also 8 VHF circuits were used for hot lines to Division and for common user circuits. Radio teletype worked on the Division Special Purpose Net.

14. **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES:** LRRPs were employed in Operation Wayne Grey in a unique fashion. Rather than use them to develop intelligence by locating the enemy, they were inserted into an area where the enemy location was confirmed. Since combat troops experienced difficulty in scouting this type of situation, LRRPs with their special training in jungle movement, camouflage and concealment, were employed to detect enemy strength in the area. In this mission in the Cu Don LRRPs were successful in locating eleven US MIAs and clearing an area for employment of combat troops. Once their reconnaissance role was completed, they were withdrawn from the area.

15. **COMMANDERS ANALYSIS:**

- a. Operation Wayne Grey was planned as a spoiling attack to disrupt the enemy post-Tet offensive against Kontum by severing his line of communication into a sanctuary. This purpose was accomplished as evidenced by the lack of major enemy offensive action in the vicinity of Kontum City. The initial combat assaults into the Plei Trap surprised the enemy and caused him to deal with an unexpected threat to his rear. The battle of LZ Brace was an encounter with reserve elements of the 66<sup>th</sup> NVA Regiment. Losses sustained by the enemy in that action undoubtedly forced him to reverse his course of action. The reconnaissance in force along the Plei Trap Road, the capture and destruction of 2 enemy howitzers, and 7 enemy trucks prevented further commitment of the NVA 40<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment. With an American battalion astride its principal line of communication further offensive action endangered enemy maneuverability. In total the enemy timetable for a post Tet Offensive was disrupted, and he was forced back to sanctuary.
- b. Operation Wayne Grey is an example of conventional warfare in an unconventional war. The enemy used artillery in support of his operation to include CS and white phosphorous rounds. Anti-aircraft weapons were employed to counter American air mobility. Enemy troops were well equipped. Almost every battle involved an infantry assault on an enemy fortified position. The assault was preceded by airstrikes and artillery and was continued with these assets in close support. The enemy defended his position tenaciously making heavy use of mortars and rockets. Enemy attacks were mainly by fire to include attacks by fire on the Brigade Tactical Command Post and logistical helipads at Polei Kleng.
- c. The Air Cavalry proved to be the most versatile force available to the Brigade Commander. Due to its capability to react in short time to any situation, it was most valuable in the shift of combat assets from one AO to another. In the execution of the normal reconnaissance role, the air cavalry was responsible for the aerial interdiction of enemy troop and logistical moves. It located and helped destroy 2 105mm howitzers and seven enemy trucks. While working in support of ground engagements, the screening of flanks and engagement of enemy indirect fire weapons saved many lives and contributed to the success of infantry attacks. The courage, aggressiveness, and flexibility of the air cavalry made it a very valuable asset.
- d. Air power played a key role in the fire support scheme of Operation Wayne Grey. Fighter sorties were used mainly in support of troop assaults and in the destruction of enemy bunker complexes. Fighters also interdicted enemy lines of communications with road cratering missions and by destroying enemy trucks and 3 artillery pieces. B52 strikes interdicted large troop concentrations and routes of withdrawal. Smoke screens

