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AGO ltr 29 Apr 1980 ; AGO ltr 29 Apr 1980

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)
APO San Francisco 96250

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WDE-SC

15 September 1966

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report

THRU: Commanding General ⁶⁶⁰⁰⁰
II FFORCEV
ATTN: G-3 D & T
APO 96227

TO: Assistant Chief of
Staff for Force
Development
Department of the Army
Washington D.C. 20310

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The following report is submitted in accordance with MACV Directive
Number 335-8.

1. Operation: "DEXTER".
2. Type Operation: Search and Destroy.
3. Date: 4 - 6 May 66.
4. Location: Phuoc Thanh (XT 918244), Phuoc Thanh Province, RVN.
5. Command Headquarters: 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE).
6. Reporting Officer: Brigadier General PAUL F. SMITH
7. Task Organization:
TF 1/503d, LTC TYLER, Commanding
1/503d Inf
Sqd, 173d Engr Co

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RRU Team
FAC Team
National Police

TF SUTTON, Maj Sutton, Commanding

E/17th Cavalry
D/16th Armor
Prince of Wales Light Horse
RRU Team
4.2 Mortar Platoon 1/503d Inf
4.2 Mortar Platoon 2/503d Inf

TF 2/503, LTC Walsh, Commanding

2/503d Inf (-)
Sqd 173d Engr Co
RRU Team
FAC Team
National Police

TF 3/319, Maj Ryder, Commanding

A Btry 3/319th Arty
RAA
173d Engr Co (-)
RRU Team

Brigade Control

A/82nd Aviation Battalion
1/RAR (-)
Bde Spt Elements

8. Intelligence:

a. General: The area of interest was west of the Song Dong Nai River and located in the northwest part of Bien Hoa Province, encompassing a small portion of Binh Duong Province as well. The area of operation was to the west of War Zone "D", a long-established VC base area and a known rest and transit area for what were at least company-sized VC main forces and guerrilla units.

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b. **Terrain:** The area is gently rolling with some small scattered hills. It is predominantly covered by primary jungle, with trees up to 100 feet in height and a double canopy, but also includes patches of rubber trees. Two small streams, the Suoi Ong Dong and the Suoi Vinh Lai, flow southwest through the area.

9. **Mission:** The 173d Abn Bde (Sep) conducted airmobile assaults in AO GEORGE to locate and destroy VC forces and installations, beginning 040800H May 66 and terminating on or about 6 May 66.

10. **Concept of Operation:**

Maneuver: The 173d Abn Bde (Sep) employed TF 1/503 and TF E/17th Cav in blocking on southeast and northeast portions of AO GEORGE, respectively, while TF 2/503 conducted search and destroy operations in the zone.

The operation was conducted in four phases:

Phase I. Movement of fire support elements by road to set up a Fire Support Base.

Phase II. LZ was prepared for air assault by TAC Air, artillery, and gunships.

Phase III. Continuation of the preparation of LZ by TAC Air and artillery together with gunships.

Phase IV. Extraction of TF's from LZ by helicopter, beginning 061415H May 66.

11. **Execution:**

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D-Day (4 May 66)

a. Operational Summary: The 173d Abn Bde (Sep) commenced operation "DEXTER" at 0600 hrs. 1/503d Inf conducted a heliborne assault on LZ DIAMOND at 0804 hrs and on LZ CLUB at 0857 hrs. 1/503d Inf secured Positions SPADE and HEART. 2/503d Inf conducted an airmobile assault on LZ JOKER at 0947 hrs. 2/503d Inf reconnoitered the area in the vicinity of Objective JACK, secured Objectives QUEEN and KING. E/17th Cav moved by road convoy to AO GEORGE and searched Objective MINK. E/17th Cav occupied Objective MOUSE. Battery D/16th Armor was attached to E/17th Cav. 3/319th Arty (-) continued to support Operation "BIRMINGHAM". A/3/319th Arty moved by road convoy to Position BOOT to support Operation "DEXTER".

Civic Action and Psychological Operations: Three (3) MEDCAP teams treated 182 patients.

D + 1 (5 May 66)

b. Operational Summary: Operation "DEXTER" continued with light contact with VC forces, mines and booby traps. 1/503d Inf continued to block Positions SPADE and HEART while 2/503d Inf conducted search and destroy operations in the zone. TF SUTTON continued to screen and block along the NE portion of AO GEORGE. 3/319th Arty (-) continued in Operation "BIRMINGHAM". The Reconnaissance Platoon of 1/503d Inf remained at the RMK Rock Quarry (TAOR).

Civic Action and Psychological Operations: Loudspeaker and

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leaflet mission was flown in the AO between 2000 and 2100 hrs. Twenty-five thousand leaflets were dropped. Four MEDCAP teams treated 238 persons. Projects in the Bien Hoa area continued.

D + 2 (6 May 1966)

c. Operational Summary: Operation "DEXTER" terminated with the extraction of both Infantry battalions by helilift and the withdrawal of TF SUTTON and the Fire Support Base. The 1/503d Inf was extracted beginning at 0930 hrs and concluding at 1033 hrs. The extraction of 2/503d Inf began at 1130 hrs and concluded at 1355 hrs. After the departure of the 2/503d Inf, TF SUTTON commenced road movement, reaching Tan Uyen at 1433 hrs. When rear elements of TF SUTTON cleared, the Fire Support Base closed stations and conducted a motor march back to Bien Hoa. All elements closed at 1600 hrs, officially terminating Operation "DEXTER".

The 3/319th Arty continued participation in Operation "BIRMINGHAM".

The Prince of Wales Light Horse Troop and the 105 Fld Btry RAA concluded participation in Operation "DEXTER" as elements of the Bde, respectively, closed into the base camp. 1/RAR continued security operations in the Bde TAOR and provided II FFV and MACV Reserve.

12. Supporting Forces:

a. Units firing in support of the operation were the RAA and 3/319th Arty (-).

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b. TAC Air support was used during the operation. Strikes were preplanned; the Bde net artillery and TAC Air was employed in preparation of LZ's.

c. Artillery:

Artillery and mortar fire was used to harass the enemy and for protection of the defensive area.

Statistical Breakdown: A total of 125 missions were fired in support of the operation expending a total of 2,488 artillery and 4.2 mortar rounds.

13. Combat Services Logistical and/or Administrative

General: The support on this operation continued to rely heavily on Air Lines of Communication. The support of the Bde was excellent for all classes of supply, transportation, maintenance and medical supply.

Operation "DEXTER" was supported from the Bde Helipad with the exception of one (1) road convoy.

14. Results of Operation "DEXTER":

<u>VC Losses</u>	<u>US Losses</u>
KIA <u>1</u> (BC)	KIA <u>1</u>
KIA <u>4</u> (est)	WIA <u>15</u>
VCC <u>0</u>	MIA <u>1</u>
VCS <u>6</u>	

VC Equipment Losses

Weapons None

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VC Equipment Losses:

Ammunition

s/a rounds 93
120mm mortar rounds 2

Others

VC Claymore mine 1
Uniforms 20
Shirt 1
Trousers 1 pr
Rice 15.9 tons
Documents 47

15. Commander's Analysis: The operation proved to be a valuable training vehicle in preparing recent arrivals for forthcoming operations. Enemy resistance was light; thus, the men received practical training with a minimum of casualties.

16. Lessons Learned: The concept of each rifleman carrying a Burlap bag for hauling rice from caches proved useful during the operation .

FOR THE COMMANDER:

E. B. ROBERSON

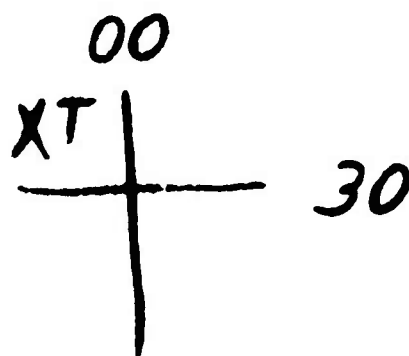
E. B. ROBERSON
1LT, AGC
Asst AG

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ANNEX A TO OPORD 6-66
(OPN DEXTER)
REF: SAME AS OPORD 6-66



COPY NO
HQ 173^D ABN BDE (SEP)
BIEN HOA RVN
02 1300H MAY 66
WHI



80
XT
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X1/503

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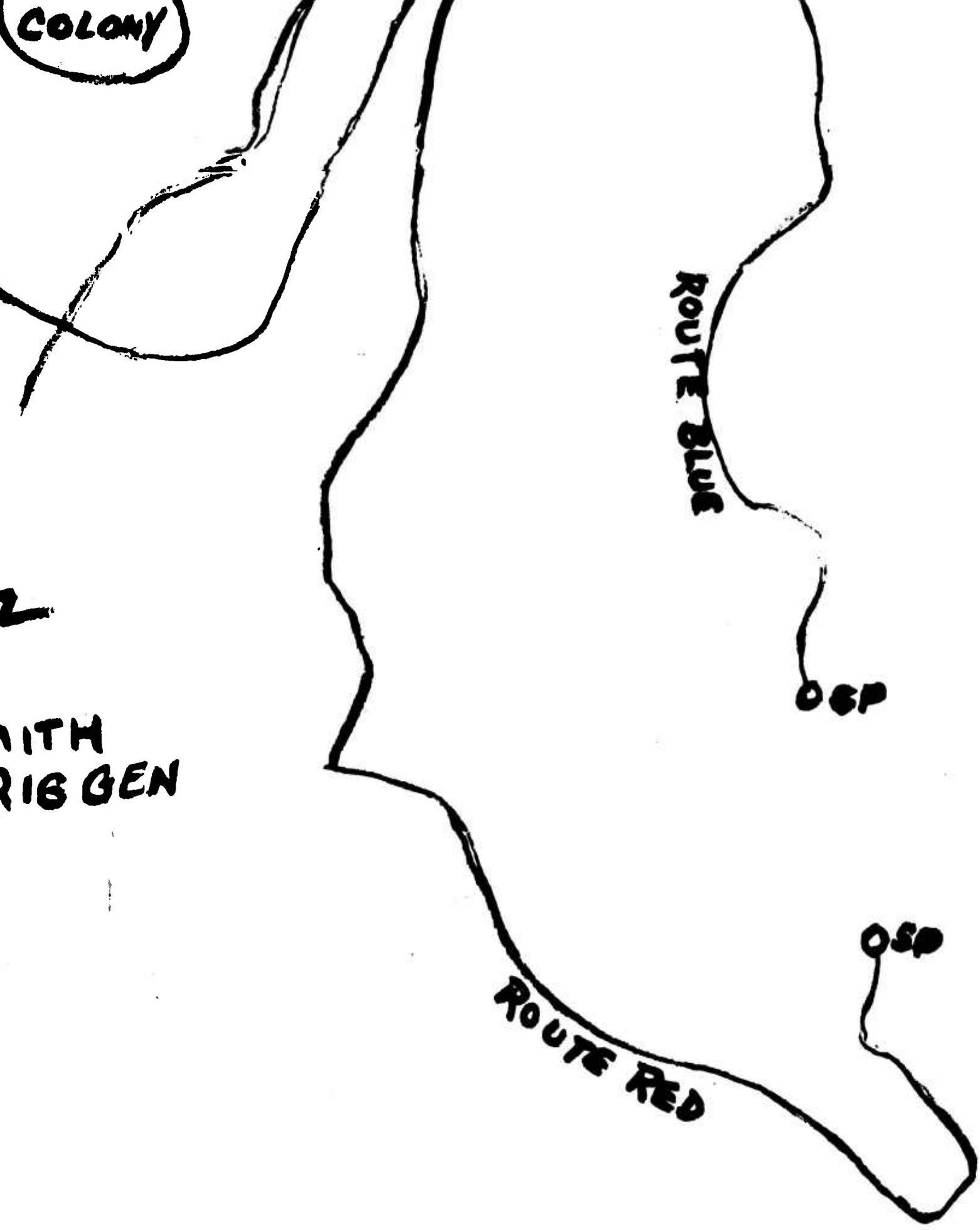
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