

MACAG-PD (11 Nov 72) 4th Ind

SUBJECT: Appropriate Unit Award for the Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9,
III Marine Amphibious Force

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM,
APO 96222 2 MAR 1973

TO: Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, FPO 96610

Basic communication complied with.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

6 Incl

Added 1 Incl

6. Ambassadorial Concurrence

JOSEPH D. LLOYD

MAJ, AGC

Asst AG

Saigon, Vietnam
March 16, 1973

MEMORANDUM

TO : General Fred C. Weyand
COMUSMACV

SUBJECT : Unit Award

I concur in MACV's recommendation that the Navy Unit Commendation be awarded to the following units of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces which supported the Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9:

Detachment, Binh Son District Headquarters,
Republic of Vietnam.
Regional Force Company #228, Binh Son District,
Republic of Vietnam.
Regional Force Company #986, Binh Son District,
Republic of Vietnam.
Popular Force Platoon #17.
Popular Force Platoon #189.
Revolutionary Development Cadre Platoon #73.

Ellsworth Bunker
Ambassador

Encl: Recommendation for award.

MACAG-PD (29 Sep 72) 3rd Ind

SUBJECT: Recommendation for Meritorious Unit Commendation

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM,
APO 96222

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, FPO 96610

1. Recommend approval.
2. Request this headquarters (ATTN: MACAG-PD) be advised when final action has been taken.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

11 Incl
nc

JAMES C. GRIFFITH
COL, USA
Adjutant General

4

1590

DISPOSITION FORM

For use of this form, see AR 340-15; the proponent agency is The Adjutant General's Office.

REFERENCE OR OFFICE SYMBOL	SUBJECT
MACAG-PD	Unit Award
THRU <u>MACDP</u> <i>aws</i> TO <u>MACCS</u>	FROM MACAG
	DATE <u>11 MAR 1973</u> CMT 1 MAJ Lloyd/lgb/2274

1. PURPOSE. To obtain the signature of COMUSMACV on the memorandum at Tab A requesting concurrence of the American Ambassador in the recommendation for award of the Navy Unit Commendation (NUC) to the Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9, III Marine Amphibious Force which lists several Republic of Vietnam units as participating in the action.

2. DISCUSSION.

a. At Tab B is a recommendation for award of the Navy Unit Commendation to the Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9, III Marine Amphibious Force and designated supporting units for heroism and outstanding achievement on 13 September 1969. The recommendation includes several Vietnamese units that supported the Combined Action Platoon.

b. The recommendation has been reviewed by the USMACV Joint Command Awards Board which determined that the units fulfilled the criteria prescribed for award of the NUC for the period 13 September 1969.

c. U.S. Mission policy requires Ambassadorial concurrence in the recommendation for award of U.S. decorations to RVNAF units. At Tab A is a memorandum requesting the concurrence of Ambassador Bunker in the proposed award.

3. RECOMMENDATION.

a. That COMUSMACV sign the memorandum at Tab A and that it be returned to this office for dispatch.

b. No historical interest; unit award action within established policy.

2 Incl
as

James C. Griffith
JAMES C. GRIFFITH
COL, USA
Adjutant General

	NOTED	APPVD	SIGNED
COMUS		X	X
DEPCOMUS			
DEPCORDS			
COFS	X		
SJS	X		
ASJS	X		
DTG	131415H MAR 72		

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96222



13 MAR 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE HONORABLE ELLSWORTH BUNKER
AMERICAN AMBASSADOR
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
SAIGON, VIETNAM

SUBJECT: Unit Award

1. Attached is a recommendation for award of the Navy Unit Commendation to the Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9, III Marine Amphibious Force, and designated supporting units for heroism and outstanding achievement on 13 September 1969.
2. This headquarters proposes to recommend that the Navy Unit Commendation be awarded to the following units of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces which supported the Combined Action Platoon:

Detachment, Binh Son District Headquarters, Republic of Vietnam
Regional Force Company #228, Binh Son District, Republic of Vietnam
Regional Force Company #986, Binh Son District, Republic of Vietnam
Popular Force Platoon #17
Popular Force Platoon #189
Revolutionary Development Cadre Platoon #73

3. Request your concurrence in the proposed award.

1 Incl
as

Fred C. Weyand
FRED C. WEYAND
General, USA
Commanding

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7/twb
1650
11 NOV 1972

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CMC ltr DLA-sro of 24 Oct 1972

From: Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force, FMF
To: Commander in Chief, Pacific, FPO, San Francisco 96610
Via: (1) Commander, United States Military Assistance Com-
mand, Vietnam
(2) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
(3) Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet (FF1-1)

Subj: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon
1-3-9 III Marine Amphibious Force involving combat
action on 13 September 1969; recommendation for

Encl: (4) CMC ltr DL-ral of 31 Oct 1972

1. Forwarded.

2. The records held by this Command do not provide information to substantiate the combat action of Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9 on 13 September 1969 in AN PHONG village. However, III Marine Amphibious Force Command Chronology for period 1 September 1969 through 30 September 1969 does state in part "In the heaviest contact, an attack on the AN PHONG village complex and the AN HOA Refugee Camp, friendly forces killed 116 members of the 6th Battalion, 21st NVA Regiment."

3. It is recommended that an appropriate award be authorized provided no other award for the same act or service has been awarded.

4. As requested by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, enclosure (4) has been included as part of the basic correspondence.


LOUIS METZGER

Copy to:
CMC (Code DLA)

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MARINE AIR RESERVE TRAINING UNIT
Marine Air Reserve Training Command
Marine Corps Reserve Training Center
Naval Base
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19112

From: Lieutenant Colonel J. E. HENNEGAN, 214 22 6807, USMC
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code DL), Headquarters, U. S.
Marine Corps, Washington, D. C. 20380
Via: (1) Commandant, United States
dEH:cet
1650
12 Sep 1972

Subject: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9 III
Marine Amphibious Force involving combat action on 13 September
1969; recommendation for award 1969

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 1650.1D of 31 Oct 1968

Encl: (1) Summary of action
(2) Proposed Citation

1. An informal inquiry has revealed that no current unit recommendation can be found that is presently pending concerning the subject unit for action in the village of An Phong, Quang Ngai Province, Republic of Vietnam on 13 September 1969.
2. The undersigned served as commanding officer of the 1st Combined Action Group, III Marine Amphibious Force from April through October 1969. During that time my command received at least two Unit Commendations to be presented to CAP units of the 1st Combined Action Group that had been earned by them for previous actions. I am of the opinion that the accomplishments of Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9 on 13 September 1969 were particularly extraordinary and as noteworthy as the awards referred to in the aforementioned sentence, if not considerably more so. Because of this, and due to the apparent fact that previous requests were either misplaced or inadvertently overlooked, I am submitting this letter as a request and/or recommendation that the subject unit be awarded the Navy Unit Commendation or such other award as is appropriate for the subject action of 13 September 1969, to include the attached units that were involved in that significantly unique and successful encounter. I state this particularly because the results of that action were a classic example of the ultimate accomplishment of the Combined Action Program, wherein the villagers rose to a man with their CAP in the face of the seemingly overwhelming odds of a North Vietnamese Regular Infantry Battalion and were not only successful but defeated them decisively.
3. I am including as enclosures (1) and (2) a summary of the action and proposed citation, the facts of which can be substantiated by operational reports of the 1st Combined Action Group, the Americal

ENCLOSURE (1)

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SUMMARY OF ACTION UPON WHICH IS BASED A RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARD OF AN APPROPRIATE UNIT CITATION TO COMBINED ACTION PLATOON 1-3-9, 1ST COMBINED ACTION GROUP, III MARINE AMPHIBIOUS FORCE, FLEET MARINE FORCE, PACIFIC AND SUPPORTING UNITS.

MISSION:

Protect the village of An Phong (1) and surrounding hamlets in assigned Tactical Area of Coordination and eliminate the Viet Cong and Viet Cong Infrastructure therein.

CONCEPT OF OPERATION:

Maintain the presence of Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9 in the assigned area and accomplish their mission by conducting aggressive small unit activities consisting of patrols and ambushes throughout their assigned Tactical Area of Coordination.

EXECUTION:

On the night of 12 September 1969, recommendation for action on 13 September 1969, the platoon had established an ambush north of the village, a liaison team with the Popular Forces Platoon on OP GEORGE and a roving platoon OP to provide security for the village. At approximately 2030 the villagers passed the word that a large number of NVA soldiers had entered the western section of the village. The platoon CP dispatched a small force, consisting of two Marines, a Navy Corpsman and an interpreter to investigate. They moved to the school yard in the western end of the village where they found the NVA directing the villagers away from the area. The small force was taken under heavy automatic weapons fire resulting in the wounding of the interpreter in the leg. The Marines killed the NVA that had initiated the firefight and began fighting their way back to the platoon CP. The Corpsman while assisting the wounded interpreter away from the pursuing enemy was mortally wounded.

At the same time the firefight in the village began, OP GEORGE overlooking the village, came under a heavy ground attack by approximately thirty sappers using satchel charges, grenades and automatic weapons. The enemy succeeded in breaching the perimeter of the outnumbered defenders and furious hand to hand combat ensued. Through their determined and tenacious fighting the small force succeeded in driving the enemy from their positions at a loss of six Popular Force soldiers killed and one Marine wounded. The next morning numerous enemy dead were found in and around the positions on OP GEORGE, some having been killed by knives.

While the battle raged on OP GEORGE the contact in the village increased in intensity. The platoon headquarters was joined by personnel pulled in from the ambush site, the RD Cadre and Popular Self Defense Forces within the village. The Marines repulsed the probes by the NVA and the Popular Forces drove a small number of the enemy who attempted to enter the village from the east behind the friendly forces, from the village, killing several of them in the contact.

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The Marines called in artillery and helicopter gunships throughout the night, often within fifty meters of their positions. At first light a small reaction force consisting of the Combined Action Company executive officer, supply sergeant, an ARVN lieutenant and a Navy Corpsman arrived by helicopter. Once on the ground the Company Executive Officer quickly assessed the situation and formed two small attack forces of five Marines and several PF's, leading one himself and putting the other under the command of the supply sergeant. They then launched a two pronged attack against the numerically superior enemy. They immediately came under intense automatic weapons and RPG fire but they continued to advance, firing from the hip and meeting the enemy face to face as they moved from hut to hut. At this time a reaction force consisting of a small detachment from the Combined Action Group Headquarters led by the Commanding Officer and two Regional Force companies led by the District Chief accompanied by a small detachment of U. S. Army Advisory Team #17 from Binh Son District landed by helicopter to the west of the village. The reaction force immediately came under mortar and small arms fire and engaged remnants of the enemy battalion trying to escape to the west. They killed several along the edge of the village and directed airstrikes on the remaining enemy as he withdrew to the west.

At approximately 1130 the reaction force moved into the village and linked up with CAP 1-3-9. A count of the enemy dead totalled one hundred sixteen. Sixty-eight individual and two crew served weapons were captured and one POW was captured. The POW confirmed the unit as the 6th Battalion, 21st Regiment, 2nd NVA Division and stated that only the mortar platoon which never entered the village and the battalion headquarters section escaped alive. This action cost one Marine and one Navy Corpsman killed, four Marines and one Navy Corpsman wounded and eight PF's killed, with an undetermined number wounded. By their conspicuous display of phenomenal courage, and steadfast devotion to duty in the face of seemingly unsurmountable odds, Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9 succeeded in bringing about the destruction of a battalion of North Vietnamese regulars and made a significant contribution toward the objectives of the Free World Forces in the Republic of Vietnam. The performance of their fellow Marines, U. S. Army elements of the Americal Division and of their Vietnamese comrades in arms was also in keeping with the highest traditions of the military services. The facts contained in the proposed citation attached and this summary are a matter of record.

SUPPORTING UNITS

example of the actions of the Combined Action Group, wherein the village was taken to a man with their CAP in the face of an
 Detachment, 1st Combined Action Group
 Detachment, U. S. Army Advisory Team #17, Binh Son District, RVN
 176th Assault Helicopter Company, 14th Aviation Battalion, Americal Division, USA
 Detachment, Binh Son District Headquarters, RVN
 Regional Force Company #228, Binh Son District, RVN
 Regional Force Company #986, Binh Son District, RVN
 Popular Force Platoon #17
 Popular Force Platoon #189
 Revolutionary Development Cadre Platoon #73

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PROPOSED CITATIONCOMBINED ACTION PLATOON 1-3-9, 1ST COMBINED ACTION GROUP & SUPPORTING UNITS

for services as set forth in the following:

"For extraordinary heroism in action against enemy North Vietnamese Army forces during the battle of An Phong (1) on 13 September 1969. Acting on information passed by the people of the village that an NVA battalion had infiltrated into the western portion of An Phong (1) CAP 1-3-9 immediately dispatched a four man force to locate the enemy; contact was made with the enemy forces in the village at 0340 and the small group of Marines and Popular Forces soldiers came under intense automatic weapons and RPG fire; at the same time the small force of two Marines and seventeen Popular Forces soldiers manning the observation post known as OP GEORGE, which overlooked the village, came under a heavy ground attack by enemy sappers using stachel charges, grenades and automatic weapons. The defenders on OP GEORGE met the enemy at close quarters and furious hand to hand combat ensued. The enemy was physically ejected from the position. Although vastly outnumbered the Marines and Popular Forces soldiers in the village continued to hold their positions and launch aggressive counter attacks, with as few as eight personnel throughout the night. Undaunted by the heavy enemy fire and superior numbers, the Combined Action Platoon directed airstrikes by helicopter gunships and fixed wing aircraft and called artillery fire missions within fifty meters of their position with devastating effect on the enemy. With the arrival of the company executive officer and supply sergeant by helicopter at dawn, the small unit again launched a two pronged attack against the determined enemy, inflicting heavy casualties and driving the remainder of the enemy from the village. The men of Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9, by their steadfast devotion to duty and complete disregard for their own personal safety in the face of overwhelming odds, were able to prevent the enemy from seizing the village of An Phong (1) and also inflict devastating casualties resulting in the decimation of the 6th Battalion, 21st Regiment, 2nd Division, NVA. This display of professionalism, determination and unparalleled aggressiveness by this small unit resulted in the ultimate death of one hundred sixteen North Vietnamese soldiers, the capture of sixty-eight individual, two crew served weapons, and the capture of a NVA POW while sustaining the loss of only one Marine, one Navy Corpsman and eight Popular Forces soldiers killed. This commendable action represents an extraordinary contribution toward the achievement of the objectives of Free World Forces in the Republic of Vietnam and was in keeping with the very highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

Enclosure (2)

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Washington, D.C. 20456

[illegible]

From: Lieutenant General Herman Nickerson, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps (Ret)
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code DL), Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C. 20380
Subject: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9 III
from First Marine Amphibious Force involving combat action on 13 Sep 1969
The reaction force immediately came under mortar and small arms fire and
engaged the enemy. Lt Col J.E. Hennegan, USMC, MARFU, MARFC, Philadelphia, Pa.,
They killed 1600 enemy over 1650 of 12 Sep 1972, same subject airstrike
on the remaining enemy as he withdrew to the west.

1. I am personally knowledgeable regarding the subject combat action of A1 CAP 1-3-9 as set forth in enclosure (1) to reference (a), and I enthusiastically support the proposed unit citation. I visited the site of the action ~~immediately~~ shortly after the event and talked to the troopers. I would consider the ~~my~~ failure to award this unit citation to be a grave injustice to all the brave men involved. ~~As~~ ~~the~~ ~~1st~~ ~~Marine~~ ~~Division~~ and stated that only the mortar platoon which never entered the village and the battalion head. I had the pleasure of decorating several of the CAP leaders shortly ~~on~~ after this battle. If further documentation is needed, I suggest the ~~and~~ Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, be contacted as he acted on my message request for the individual decorations mentioned above.

By their conspicuous display of phenomenal courage, and steadfast devotion to duty in the face of seemingly unsurmountable odds, Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9 succeeded in bringing about the destruction of a battalion of North Vietnamese regulars. HERMAN NICKERSON, Jr., a contributing factor toward the objectives of the Free World Forces in the Republic of Vietnam. The performance of their fellow Marines, U. S. Army elements of Copy to: Lt Col J. E. Hennegan their Vietnamese comrades in arms was also in keeping with the highest traditions of the military services. The facts contained in the proposed citation attached and this summary are a matter of record.

SUPPORTING UNITS

Detachment, 1st Combined Action Group
Detachment, U. S. Army Advisory Team #17, Binh Son District, RVN
176th Assault Helicopter Company, 14th Aviation Battalion, Americal Division, USA
Detachment, Binh Son District Headquarters, RVN
Regional Force Company #228, Binh Son District, RVN
Regional Force Company #986, Binh Son District, RVN
Popular Force Platoon #17
Popular Force Platoon #189
Revolutionary Development Cadre Platoon

ENCLOSURE (2)

ENCLOSURE (2)

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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
HEADQUARTERS, 2D MARINE DIVISION F.M.F.
CAMP LEJEUNE, NORTH CAROLINA 28542

IN REPLY REFER TO
5/CRB/pmc
10 Oct 1972

From: Colonel Charles R. BURROUGHS, 323 14 22 39
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code DL), Headquarters,
U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D. C. 20380

Subj: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon
1-3-9, III Marine Amphibious Force involving combat
action on 13 September 1969; recommendation for
Marines and several other Forces

Ref: (a) Lieutenant Colonel HENNEGAN's ltr JEH:cet over
heavy ground 12 Sep 72
and automatic defenders on 07

close Reference (a) forwarded Lieutenant Colonel HENNEGAN's
recommendation for an appropriate award for Combined Action
Platoon 1-3-9, III Marine Amphibious Force. In addition,
reference (a) identified the undersigned as Director Combined
Action Program, III MAF during the period.

2. My memory of the described action is in fact most vivid
and has been accurately portrayed by Lieutenant Colonel
HENNEGAN. I am in complete concurrence with his recommen-

dation. The action at dawn, the two platoons of the 6th
infantry, and the remaining men of Company 1, 1st Battalion
2d Infantry, 1st Marine Division, were able to

face of over 100 enemy, were able to hold the
village of (C) and also inflict considerable damage
resulting in the capture of the 6th platoon.

Division, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Division,
unparalleled courage shown by this small unit. It is a tribute
to the death of one of our own North Vietnamese.

of sixty-eight enemy, the creek served as a natural barrier
and night. The loss of only one of our own soldiers killed.

represents an extraordinary contribution to the defense of
objectives of the 1st Marine Division in the Vietnam War.

acknowledging with the highest traditions of the United States
Marine Corps and the United States Marine Corps.

3. The undersigned is in complete concurrence with the recommendation
and request for the award of the United States Marine Corps.

ENCLOSURE (3)

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20380

IN REPLY REFER TO
DL-ral

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Commander in Chief, Pacific, FPO, San Francisco 96610
Via: (1) Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force
(2) Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
(3) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
(4) Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet (FF1-1)
Subj: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9, III Marine Amphibious Force involving combat action on 13 September 1969; recommendation for
Ref: (a) CMC ltr DLA-sro of 24Oct72, same subject
Encl: (1) MajGen Lloyd B. RAMSEY's ltr DAPM-ZA of 26Oct72
1. Enclosure (1) is forwarded for inclusion in reference (a) for consideration of an appropriate unit award for Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9, III Marine Amphibious Force

By their conspicuous display of gallantry and courage, these men refused to cower in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. **Copy to:** **LtCol J. E. HENNEGAN** regularly and made a significant contribution to **MARTU, MARTC, MCRTC** as well as his forces in the Republic of **NB, Philadelphia, Pa.** their fellow Marines, U. S. Army elements of the **19112** Division and to their Vietnamese comrades in arms for their keeping with the highest traditions of the military service. The force committed in the proposed operation attacked and this scenario was a result of record.

Abstract

Detachment, 1st Combined Airborne Group
Detachment, U. S. Army Advisory Team #17, Binh Son District, RVN
17th Assault Helicopter Company, 1st Aviation Battalion, Americal
Corps, Binh Tan District Headquarters, RVN
Regional Police Training AHS, Binh Son District, RVN
Regional Border Security AHS, Binh Son District, RVN
Regional Joint Forces HQ
Regional Police Training AHS
Regional Police Training AHS

ENCLOSURE (4)

ENCLOSURE (4)

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314

DAPM-ZA

26 October 1972

SUBJECT: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon
CAP 1-3-9, III Marine Amphibian Force Involving Combat, 1969
Action on 13 Sep 69; Recommendation for

Via: (1) Commanding General, III Marine Amphibian Force
Commandant of the Marine Corps, U.S. Marine Corps (Act)
(Code DL) and Commanding General, U.S. Marine Corps
HQ, U.S. Marine Corps, Fleet Marine Force
Washington, D.C. 20380

Subj: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon
CAP 1-3-9, III Marine Amphibian Force Involving Combat, 1969

Ref: (1) Letter from LTC Gen E. Hennegan, U.S. Marine Corps, 12 Sep 72, subject as above.

1. Reference is made to letter from LTC Gen E. Hennegan, U.S. Marine Corps, 12 Sep 72, subject as above. On 13 Sep 69, the date of the combat action of Combined Action Platoon (CAP) 1-3-9, I was the Commanding General of the United States Army 23d Infantry Division (Americal) in the village of An Phong, where the action took place, was in the Americal Division Tactical Area of Responsibility.

2. I am well acquainted with the combat action as described in the inclosure to subject letter. When Colonel Hennegan called me regarding my indorsing this action, I believe he acted was surprised of the knowledge I had concerning the events that took place on 13 Sep 69. The CAP 1-3-9 performed in such an outstanding manner that I can vividly recall their heroic efforts. Following this action Colonel Hennegan gave a briefing at my Division Headquarters in which he explained, in detail, the events that transpired. As I recall, I asked Colonel Hennegan if the Marine chain of command would submit a recommendation for an award for CAP 1-3-9. He indicated that he was sure they would. I offered to make such a recommendation through Army channels if it would be helpful. Since Colonel Hennegan and I worked in very close coordination and he never mentioned the subject again, I assumed the proposed award was well on its way, and I did not submit a recommendation through Army channels.

4. It is with great personal and professional military pride that I indorse a recommendation for a unit citation to CAP

ENCLOSURE (1)

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DAPM-ZA 26 October 1972
 SUBJECT: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon
 1-3-9 III Marine Amphibian Force Involving Combat
 Action on 13 Sep 69; Recommendation for

1-3-9 and its supporting units for their outstanding and heroic
 action on 13 Sep 69. In my opinion, it would be an injustice
 not to recognize those brave Marines involved in this action.

5. If additional information on details are desired, I would
 be happy to provide whatever is needed based on my recollection
 of the incident.

Lloyd B. Ramsey
 LOYD B. RAMSEY

Major General, USA
 The Provost Marshal General

LTC J. E. Hennegan

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7/twb
1650
11 NOV 1972

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CMC ltr DLA-sro of 24 Oct 1972

From: Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force, FMF
To: Commander in Chief, Pacific, FPO, San Francisco 96610
Via: (1) Commander, United States Military Assistance Com-
mand, Vietnam
(2) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
(3) Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet (FF1-1)

Subj: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon
1-3-9 III Marine Amphibious Force involving combat
action on 13 September 1969; recommendation for

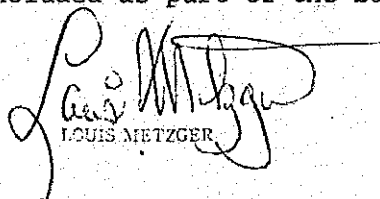
Encl: (4) CMC ltr DL-ral of 31 Oct 1972

1. Forwarded.

2. The records held by this Command do not provide informa-
tion to substantiate the combat action of Combined Action
Platoon 1-3-9 on 13 September 1969 in AN PHONG village.
However, III Marine Amphibious Force Command Chronology for
period 1 September 1969 through 30 September 1969 does state
in part "In the heaviest contact, an attack on the AN PHONG
village complex and the AN HOA Refugee Camp, friendly forces
killed 116 members of the 6th Battalion, 21st NVA Regiment."

3. It is recommended that an appropriate award be authorized
provided no other award for the same act or service has been
awarded.

4. As requested by the Commandant of the Marine Corps,
enclosure (4) has been included as part of the basic corre-
spondence.


LOUIS METZGER

Copy to:
CMC (Code DIA)



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20380

IN REPLY REFER TO
DLA-sro
24 OCT 1972

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Commander in Chief, Pacific, FPO, San Francisco
96610
Via: (1) Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious
Force
(2) Commander, United States Military Assistance
Command, Vietnam
(3) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
(4) Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet (FF1-1)
Subj: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon
1-3-9 III Marine Amphibious Force involving combat
action on 13 September 1969; recommendation for
Encl: (1) LtCol J. E. HENNEGAN's ltr JEH; cet 1650 of
12Sep72 with enclosures thereto
(2) LtGen H. NICKERSON, Jr's ltr A/HNjr:dmb of
6Oct72
(3) Col C. R. BURROUGHS' ltr 5/CRB/pmc of 10Oct72

1. Enclosures (1) through (3) are forwarded for comment
and recommendation.

E. W. Sackley
E. W. SACKLEY
By direction

MARINE AIR RESERVE TRAINING UNIT
Marine Air Reserve Training Command
Marine Corps Reserve Training Center
Naval Base
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19112

JEH:cet
1650
12 Sep 1972

From: Lieutenant Colonel J. E. HENNEGAN, 214 22 6807, USMC
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code DL), Headquarters, U. S.
Marine Corps, Washington, D. C. 20380

Subj: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9 III
Marine Amphibious Force involving combat action on 13 September
1969; recommendation for

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 1650.1D

Encl: (1) Summary of action
(2) Proposed Citation

1. An informal inquiry has revealed that no current unit recommendation can be found that is presently pending concerning the subject unit for action in the village of An Phong, Quang Ngai Province, Republic of Vietnam on 13 September 1969.

2. The undersigned served as commanding officer of the 1st Combined Action Group, III Marine Amphibious Force from April through October 1969. During that time my command received at least two Unit Commendations to be presented to CAP units of the 1st Combined Action Group that had been earned by them for previous actions. I am of the opinion that the accomplishments of Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9 on 13 September 1969 were particularly extraordinary and as noteworthy as the awards referred to in the aforementioned sentence, if not considerably more so. Because of this, and due to the apparent fact that previous requests were either misplaced or inadvertently overlooked, I am submitting this letter as a request and/or recommendation that the subject unit be awarded the Navy Unit Commendation or such other award as is appropriate for the subject action of 13 September 1969, to include the attached units that were involved in that significantly unique and successful encounter. I state this particularly because the results of that action were a classic example of the ultimate accomplishment of the Combined Action Program, wherein the villagers rose to a man with their CAP in the face of the seemingly overwhelming odds of a North Vietnamese Regular Infantry Battalion and were not only successful but defeated them decidedly.

3. I am including as enclosures (1) and (2) a summary of the action and proposed citation, the facts of which can be substantiated by operational reports of the 1st Combined Action Group, the Americal

ENCLOSURE (/)

Divison and the III Marine Amphibious Force.

4. Furthermore, conversations with LtGen Herman Nickerson Jr., USMC (Ret) (CG III MAF at the time), MajGen Lloyd B. Ramsey, USA (CG Americal Division at the time) and Colonel Charles R. Burroughs, USMC (Director of the Combined Action Program for III MAF at the time) all of whom have a vivid memory of this particular action, have indicated that they would endorse this recommendation by separate correspondence upon receipt of a copy of this letter. This letter is being forwarded directly to ensure compliance with the three year limitation established as a guideline in reference (a).

J. E. Hennegan
J. E. HENNEGAN

SUMMARY OF ACTION UPON WHICH IS BASED A RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARD OF AN APPROPRIATE UNIT CITATION TO COMBINED ACTION PLATOON 1-3-9, 1ST COMBINED ACTION GROUP, III MARINE AMPHIBIOUS FORCE, FLEET MARINE FORCE, PACIFIC AND SUPPORTING UNITS.

MISSION:

Protect the village of An Phong (1) and surrounding hamlets in assigned Tactical Area of Coordination and eliminate the Viet Cong and Viet Cong Infrastructure therein.

CONCEPT OF OPERATION:

Maintain the presence of Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9 in the assigned area and accomplish their mission by conducting aggressive small unit activities consisting of patrols and ambushes throughout their assigned Tactical Area of Coordination.

EXECUTION:

On the night of 12 September 1969 the platoon had established an ambush north of the village, a liaison team with the Popular Forces Platoon on OP GEORGE and a roving platoon OP to provide security for the village. At approximately 0330 the villagers passed the word that a large number of NVA soldiers had entered the western section of the village. The platoon CP dispatched a small force, consisting of two Marines, a Navy Corpsman and an interpreter to investigate. They moved to the school yard in the western end of the village where they found the NVA directing the villagers away from the area. The small force was taken under heavy automatic weapons fire resulting in the wounding of the interpreter in the leg. The Marines killed the NVA that had initiated the firefight and began fighting their way back to the platoon CP. The Corpsman while assisting the wounded interpreter away from the pursuing enemy was mortally wounded.

At the same time the firefight in the village began, OP GEORGE overlooking the village, came under a heavy ground attack by approximately thirty sappers using satchel charges, grenades and automatic weapons. The enemy succeeded in breaching the perimeter of the outnumbered defenders and furious hand to hand combat ensued. Through their determined and tenacious fighting the small force succeeded in driving the enemy from their positions at a loss of six Popular Force soldiers killed and one Marine wounded. The next morning numerous enemy dead were found in and around the positions on OP GEORGE, some having been killed by knives.

While the battle raged on OP GEORGE the contact in the village increased in intensity. The platoon headquarters was joined by personnel pulled in from the ambush site, the RD Cadre and Popular Self Defense Forces within the village. The Marines repulsed the probes by the NVA and the Popular Forces drove a small number of the enemy who attempted to enter the village from the east behind the friendly forces, from the village, killing several of them in the contact.

SUMMARY OF ACTION UPON WHICH IS BASED A RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARD OF AN APPROPRIATE UNIT CITATION TO COMBINED ACTION PLATOON 1-3-9, 1ST COMBINED ACTION GROUP, III MARINE AMPHIBIOUS FORCE, FLEET MARINE FORCE, PACIFIC AND SUPPORTING UNITS.

MISSION:

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At the same time the firefight in the village began, OP GEORGE overlooking the village, came under a heavy ground attack by approximately thirty sappers using satchel charges, grenades and automatic weapons. The enemy succeeded in breaching the perimeter of the outnumbered defenders and furious hand to hand combat ensued. Through their determined and tenacious fighting the small force succeeded in driving the enemy from their positions at a loss of six Popular Force soldiers killed and one Marine wounded. The next morning numerous enemy dead were found in and around the positions on OP GEORGE, some having been killed by knives.

While the battle raged on OP GEORGE the contact in the village increased in intensity. The platoon headquarters was joined by personnel pulled in from the ambush site, the RD Cadre and Popular Self Defense Forces within the village. The Marines repulsed the probes by the NVA and the Popular Forces drove a small number of the enemy who attempted to enter the village from the east behind the friendly forces, from the village, killing several of them in the contact.

The Marines called in artillery and helicopter gunships throughout the night, often within fifty meters of their positions. At first light a small reaction force consisting of the Combined Action Company executive officer, supply sergeant, an ARVN lieutenant and a Navy Corpsman arrived by helicopter. Once on the ground the Company Executive Officer quickly assessed the situation and formed two small attack forces of five Marines and several PF's; leading one himself and putting the other under the command of the supply sergeant. They then launched a two pronged attack against the numerically superior enemy. They immediately came under intense automatic weapons and RPG fire but they continued to advance, firing from the hip and meeting the enemy face to face as they moved from hut to hut. At this time a reaction force consisting of a small detachment from the Combined Action Group Headquarters led by the Commanding Officer and two Regional Force companies led by the District Chief accompanied by a small detachment of U. S. Army Advisory Team #17 from Binh Son District landed by helicopter to the west of the village. The reaction force immediately came under mortar and small arms fire and engaged remnants of the enemy battalion trying to escape to the west. They killed several along the edge of the village and directed airstrikes on the remaining enemy as he withdrew to the west.

At approximately 1130 the reaction force moved into the village and linked up with CAP 1-3-9. A count of the enemy dead totalled one hundred sixteen. Sixty-eight individual and two crew served weapons were captured and one POW was captured. The POW confirmed the unit as the 6th Battalion, 21st Regiment, 2nd NVA Division and stated that only the mortar platoon which never entered the village and the battalion headquarters section escaped alive. This action cost one Marine and one Navy Corpsman killed, four Marines and one Navy Corpsman wounded and eight PF's killed, with an undetermined number wounded.

By their conspicuous display of phenomenal courage, and steadfast devotion to duty in the face of seemingly unsurmountable odds, Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9 succeeded in bringing about the destruction of a battalion of North Vietnamese regulars and made a significant contribution toward the objectives of the Free World Forces in the Republic of Vietnam. The performance of their fellow Marines, U. S. Army elements of the Americal Division and of their Vietnamese comrades in arms was also in keeping with the highest traditions of the military services. The facts contained in the proposed citation attached and this summary are a matter of record.

SUPPORTING UNITS

Detachment, 1st Combined Action Group
 Detachment, U. S. Army Advisory Team #17, Binh Son District, RVN
 176th Assault Helicopter Company, 14th Aviation Battalion, Americal Division, USA
 Detachment, Binh Son District Headquarters, RVN
 Regional Force Company #228, Binh Son District, RVN
 Regional Force Company #986, Binh Son District, RVN
 Popular Force Platoon #17
 Popular Force Platoon #189
 Revolutionary Development Cadre Platoon #73

PROPOSED CITATION

COMBINED ACTION PLATOON 1-3-9, 1ST COMBINED ACTION GROUP & SUPPORTING UNITS

for services as set forth in the following:

"For extraordinary heroism in action against enemy North Vietnamese Army forces during the battle of An Phong (1) on 13 September 1969. Acting on information passed by the people of the village that an NVA battalion had infiltrated into the western portion of An Phong (1) CAP 1-3-9 immediately dispatched a four man force to locate the enemy; contact was made with the enemy forces in the village at 0340 and the small group of Marines and Popular Forces soldiers came under intense automatic weapons and RPG fire; at the same time the small force of two Marines and seventeen Popular Forces soldiers manning the observation post known as OP GEORGE, which overlooked the village, came under a heavy ground attack by enemy sappers using stachel charges, grenades and automatic weapons. The defenders on OP GEORGE met the enemy at close quarters and furious hand to hand combat ensued. The enemy was physically ejected from the position. Although vastly outnumbered the Marines and Popular Forces soldiers in the village continued to hold their positions and launch aggressive counter attacks, with as few as eight personnel throughout the night. Undaunted by the heavy enemy fire and superior numbers, the Combined Action Platoon directed airstrikes by helicopter gunships and fixed wing aircraft and called artillery fire missions within fifty meters of their position with devastating effect on the enemy. With the arrival of the company executive officer and supply sergeant by helicopter at dawn, the small unit again launched a two pronged attack against the determined enemy, inflicting heavy casualties and driving the remainder of the enemy from the village. The men of Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9, by their steadfast devotion to duty and complete disregard for their own personal safety in the face of overwhelming odds, were able to prevent the enemy from seizing the village of An Phong (1) and also inflict devastating casualties resulting in the decimation of the 6th Battalion, 21st Regiment, 2nd Division, NVA. This display of professionalism, determination and unparalleled aggressiveness by this small unit resulted in the ultimate death of one hundred sixteen North Vietnamese soldiers, the capture of sixty-eight individual, two crew served weapons, and the capture of a NVA POW while sustaining the loss of only one Marine, one Navy Corpsman and eight Popular Forces soldiers killed. This commendable action represents an extraordinary contribution toward the achievement of the objectives of Free World Forces in the Republic of Vietnam and was in keeping with the very highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

Enclosure (2)



NATIONAL CREDIT UNION ADMINISTRATION
Washington, D.C. 20456

Office of the Administrator

A/HNjr:dmb
October 6, 1972

From: Lieutenant General Herman Nickerson, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps (Ret)
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code DL), Headquarters, U.S.
Marine Corps, Washington, D. C. 20380

Subj: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9 III
Marine Amphibious Force involving combat action on 13 Sep 1969

Ref: (a) LtCol J.E. Hennegan, USMC, MARTU, MARTC, Philadelphia, Pa.,
ltr JEH:cet over 1650 of 12 Sep 1972, same subj

1. I am personally knowledgeable regarding the subject combat action of CAP 1-3-9 as set forth in enclosure (1) to reference (a), and I enthusiastically support the proposed unit citation. I visited the site of the action shortly after the event and talked to the troopers. I would consider the failure to award this unit citation to be a grave injustice to all the brave men involved.

2. I had the pleasure of decorating several of the CAP leaders shortly after this battle. If further documentation is needed, I suggest the Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, be contacted as he acted on my message request for the individual decorations mentioned above.

HERMAN NICKERSON, JR.

Copy to: LtCol J.E. Hennegan

ENCLOSURE (2)



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
HEADQUARTERS, 2D MARINE DIVISION F.M.F.
CAMP LEJEUNE, NORTH CAROLINA 28542

IN REPLY REFER TO
5/CRB/pmc
10 Oct 1972

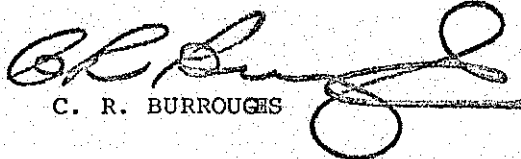
From: Colonel Charles R. BURROUGHS, 323 14 22 39
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code DL), Headquarters,
U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D. C. 20380

Subj: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon
1-3-9, III Marine Amphibious Force involving combat
action on 13 September 1969; recommendation for

Ref: (a) Lieutenant Colonel HENNEGAN's ltr JEH:cet over
1610 dtd 12Sep72

1. Reference (a) forwarded Lieutenant Colonel HENNEGAN's
recommendation for an appropriate award for Combined Action
Platoon 1-3-9, III Marine Amphibious Force. In addition,
reference (a) identified the undersigned as Director Combined
Action Program, III MAF during the period.

2. My memory of the described action is in fact most vivid
and has been accurately portrayed by Lieutenant Colonel
HENNEGAN. I am in complete concurrence with his recommen-
dation.


C. R. BURROUGHS

ENCLOSURE (3)



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20380

IN REPLY REFER TO
DL-ral

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Commander in Chief, Pacific, FPO, San Francisco
96610
Via: (1) Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious
Force
(2) Commander, United States Military Assistance
Command, Vietnam
(3) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
(4) Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet (FF1-1)
Subj: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon
1-3-9, III Marine Amphibious Force involving combat
action on 13 September 1969; recommendation for
Ref: (a) CMC ltr DLA-sro of 24Oct72, same subject
Encl: (1) MajGen Lloyd B. RAMSEY's ltr DAPM-ZA of 26Oct72
1. Enclosure (1) is forwarded for inclusion in reference
(a) for consideration of an appropriate unit award for
Combined Action Platoon 1-3-9, III Marine Amphibious Force.

Eulpassid

Copy to:
LtCol J. E. HENNEGAN
MARTU, MARTC, MCRTC
NB, Philadelphia, Pa.
19112

ENCLOSURE (4)



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314

DAPM-ZA

26 October 1972

SUBJECT: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon
1-3-9 III Marine Amphibian Force Involving Combat
Action on 13 Sep 69; Recommendation for

Commandant of the Marine Corps
(Code DL)
HQ, U.S. Marine Corps
Washington, D.C. 20380

1. Reference is made to letter from LTC J. E. Hennegan, U.S. Marine Corps, 12 Sep 72, subject as above.
2. On 13 Sep 69, the date of the combat action of Combined Action Platoon (CAP) 1-3-9, I was the Commanding General of the United States Army 23d Infantry Division (Americal). The village of An Phong, where the action took place, was in the Americal Division Tactical Area of Responsibility.
3. I am well acquainted with the combat action as described in the inclosure to subject letter. When Colonel Hennegan called me regarding my indorsing this action, I believe he was surprised of the knowledge I had concerning the events that took place on 13 Sep 69. The CAP 1-3-9 performed in such an outstanding manner that I can vividly recall their heroic efforts. Following this action Colonel Hennegan gave a briefing at my Division Headquarters in which he explained, in detail, the events that transpired. As I recall, I asked Colonel Hennegan if the Marine chain of command would submit a recommendation for an award for CAP 1-3-9. He indicated that he was sure they would. I offered to make such a recommendation through Army channels if it would be helpful. Since Colonel Hennegan and I worked in very close coordination and he never mentioned the subject again, I assumed the proposed award was well on its way, and I did not submit a recommendation through Army channels.
4. It is with great personal and professional military pride that I indorse a recommendation for a unit citation to CAP

ENCLOSURE (1)

DAPM-ZA 26 October 1972
 SUBJECT: Appropriate Unit Award for Combined Action Platoon
 1-3-9 III Marine Amphibian Force Involving Combat
 Action on 13 Sep 69; Recommendation for

1-3-9 and its supporting units for their outstanding and heroic
 action on 13 Sep 69. In my opinion, it would be an injustice
 not to recognize those brave Marines involved in this action.

5. If additional information on details are desired, I would
 be happy to provide whatever is needed based on my recollection
 of the incident.

Lloyd B. Ramsey

LOYD B. RAMSEY
 Major General, USA
 The Provost Marshal General

CF
 LTC J. E. Hennegan