



CAP

CAP 1-3-5

April 23, 1967

Radio Log

Submitted by:
Bob Cummings
US Army 5/46th (198th)

Editor's Note:

Sometimes I have to believe that things are simply **supposed** to happen. This is one such incident. Having received a note that there was a conversation regarding CAP on the VWAR-L, I signed on. The conversation involved an **unknown** CAP Unit and an "alleged" Viet Cong assault by sea. All that is recorded below is a result of that note. Having met Bob Cummings on the VWAR-L, we then discovered that Bob had just happened to record the "Radio Log" reproduced below because of **something else** that happened to him that day. He just happened to also have a **map** of the area. Incidentally, Bob **just happens** to be doing a mini-history of his Army unit, and he didn't know what CAP Unit had been involved in the activity the night of 23Apr68.

I received an e-mail from Lynn McMillen (Eravette) advising me that there was a CAP discussion on the VWAR-L. I signed onto the list, asked about previous messages, and Bob sent me the following copy of his original message, then the ensuing logs.

CAPVet

From: Bob Cummings
To: timd@one.net
Subject: CAP Team
Date: Mon, 31 Mar 1997 17:51:44 -0500

(First Posted To The VWAR-L From Bob Cummings)

I always thought, then and now, that the Marine CAP teams were the best idea to "win" the war. I have seen several times references to how effective they were but Westmoreland and Abrams would have nothing to do with the concept cause the idea was invented by Krulak.



I went over with the 5/46th (198th) from Ft. Hood, which is a hell of a way to go cause the whole damn Battalion was FNG's. Landed in Chu Lai, then to LZ Gator. Our first real boonie trip was when my company took over LZ Paradise on the coast south of Chu Lai. Paradise was on a cliff or bluff overlooking the ocean. Down the hill to the north was a village (Le Thuy?) and down the hill and on the beach to the South was a village with a Marine CAP team. We used to feed them hot chow from time to time, and in return they would send a few rounds our way when they went out on patrol.

One evening, probably April or May, 1968, the CAP team got hit hard. A regiment of NVA hit the village from the ocean using fishing boats. Anyone hear of an NVA amphib assault before? The Marines had their shit together - three rows of concertina, good bunkers, etc., but what really hurt the bad guys was a platoon of track mounted 4.2's from H troop, 17th Cav that had just come to Paradise the day before. We took every .50 we had and shot everywhere around the village. The 4.2's fired illumination and almost all their HE rounds. Then artillery, then gunships, and the fight went on almost all night.

This Is The Type Of Fishing Boats Used During The Assault

The next morning we went down to the village. I'll never forget one bunker where one Marine with a .50, firing explosive rounds (OK, OK, in violation of the Geneva Convention) had about 30 dead NVA stacked up on the first two rows of wire. They didn't get through the third row. The local in the bunker with him had been VC and the Marine gunner had killed him too. Most of the dead bad guys were dragged off, of course, but there were still maybe 100 or so bodies around.

The village held, and the Marines stayed. Those guys had their shit together.

OTOH, the only thing more dangerous than a 2 Lt. was a Marine 2 Lt.

Bob C (11B Grunt)

At that point, Bob responded to my request for permission to post his comments to this Web Site.

CAPVet

From: Bob Cummings
To: timd@one.net
Subject: Re: CAP Team
Date: Mon, 31 Mar 1997 23:50:24 -0500

Bob,

Thanks, again....and may I post your comments to the CAP Web Site once I determine the actual unit?

Tim Duffie
CAPVet

Hell yes.

I was just at the Archives, and I could have had this info, but didn't think about it. Paradise was BS705972. The CAP team was within 500 - 600 meters, just to the south in a village on the beach.

My memory recalls about 65 enemy KIA, but my memory is about as long as another part of my anatomy. I also remember that a portion of the CAP was out on patrol that night, and they almost got it from the bad guys leaving the scene. It was a memorable evening.

For April 24, 1968 the 5/46th S-3 Log at 1920:

- **CAP 1-3 to TOC:** A captured VC document indicates planned attack on CAP 1-3-4 & 1-3-5 and refugee camps in their location. VC BN 48, VC Co 95, VC Co 131 and local guerrillas. Attacks are to be 21 Apr - 1 May. US eval C-3. Bde also confirmed this, CAP 1-3-5 already hit.

This was not the day of the attack, though 'cause the same log shows me out on a bush that night, and I was definitely ON Paradise when the CAP was hit. As I recall, the attack was by NVA, and not local VC, but I could be wrong on this. I also have the recollection that the CAP near Paradise was 1-3-3 but I could be very wrong on this.

I also remember periodic cease fires for the 4.2s and Arty so the gunships could come in. As I said, the 4.2's were on tracks on Paradise. The Artillery came from LZ Gator and elsewhere.

Be sure and let me know if you find out - I'd like it too, as I'm trying to put together my Company mini history.

Bob C. (11B Grunt)

From: Bob Cummings
Subject: Re: NVA amphibious assault
To: VWAR-L@LISTSERV.ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU

(From another reader curious about the "amphibious assault", and Bob's response.)

A regiment of NVA hit the village from the ocean using fishing boats? Anyone hear of an NVA amphib assault before? I've never heard of this either. Would you give us more details? Where and when did this take place?

Bob Cummings Response

April or May of 1968 near LZ Paradise. We could see the village from the LZ. Paradise is (was) BS705972, 10 Clicks north of Pinkville on the coast.

I think I have the CAP number somewhere, and I'll try to find it.

Bob C.

I then submitted support documentation to Bob's claim that the NVA had, in fact, conducted an "amphibious assault". While it has been removed, I credited that I was quoting from Michael Peterson's **Combined Action Platoons**, Page 59:

The official III MAF Reports indicated a sharp drop-off of contact for the CAPs in March and again in April. Ten percent of all attacks in I Corps were launched against CAPs in March; and five percent -- four attacks -- in April. But one of these was a large attack: on 23 April a force of about 200 VC launched an attack on a coastal CAP south of Chu Lai (1-3-5; explained below), including an assault of 65 VC by sea. The CAP Marines and PFs suffered three killed and seven wounded; 11 enemy bodies were recovered. For this action the CAP was awarded the Navy's Meritorious Unit Commendation.

Tim "CAPVet" Duffie

Bob then provided me with the following Radio Log from the night of the attack on CAP 1-3-5.

Attached is the map (jpg file) showing the location of CAP 1-3-5. The black runways at the top of the map are the Chu Lai airfield. The river is the Son Tra Bong, the one Tim O'Brien writes about in *The Things They Carried*. LZ Gator was on Highway One (the black road) just north of the Binh Son Bridge over the Tra Bong River.

About one third of the way down the map in the ocean, you will see a little peninsula shaped like a thumb sticking out. CAP 1-3-5 was at the village Phuoc Thien, I believe, or very near there. LZ Paradise was about 500 meters west of that village, on the beach, and between Phuoc Thien and Le Thuy.

At the very bottom on the map you will see the village of An Ky on the coast. The next village South was My Lai 1. My Lai 3 is not shown on my map but was there on the Batagnan Peninsula.



For a larger copy of the map, go to:

- [CAP 1-3-5 Map](#)

S3, 5th Bn, 46th Inf. LZ Gator BS 575963.
Daily Staff Journal or Duty Officer's Log
April 23, 1968.

- 0012
A10 to TOC: We contacted the people who wanted illumination, he has cancelled it.
- 0024
TOC to L33: Acknowledge receipt of frag order 1-68 at 0024.
- 0155
9 Indulge to TOC: Indulge 1-3-5 taking incoming satchel charges --712972 Illum.
- 0207
Indulge 1-3-5 to TOC: Request gunships and flare ships at 712972
- 0231
TOC to Lightning 33: Indulge 1-3-5 requests gunships on A10 push.
ANS: Do you have someone to mark friendlies; also do you know language to direct gunships.
TOC: I will contact A10
- 0315
Oral Tread to TOC: Are the gunships for you or Indulge 1-3-5?
ANS: 1-3-5.
Oral Tread to TOC: Does 1-3-5 have any casualties?
ANS: Negative, no request for medevac.
- 0315
TOC to A10: Can you give me any info on what's happening at 1-3-5.
ANS: Satchel charges and automatic fire; some have penetrated compound. It is a general attack at 360 deg. Our tracks are checking out bushes. Paradise received 2 mortar rounds, could be satchel will not confirm until later. Some N69 and 20 rounds sniper fire. Attack started at 0145. OP Black received sniper fire and M79.
- 0424
TOC to A6 (note - A Company): We're back on illum. Do you still want distinctive mission on Van Toung I?
ANS: Affirmative. Reports that VC with rockets in that area are moving away from 1-3-5.
- 0427
A6 to TOC: Request dustoff for 8 casualties. Youth group and PF secure LZ, trees 360 degrees around area. We will have check fire for cover at 1-3-5 position 712973, routine fragmentary wounds.
- 0509
TOC to A6: About what time did you detach APC to A10?
ANS: Approx. 0200 - crew of three plus five of my people headed by A46. They have reports of NVA. They brought several casualties to compound and checked out 1-3-5 area.
- 0520
TOC to Bde: Indulge 1-3-5 received satchel charges and sniper fire from small arms. Fire was returned. A 5/46 sent 2 APC's and 5 men under cond of A46. 2 VC KIA, 1 VC detainee. 8 friendlies WIA, PF's 2 also youth group, 1 PF KIA.
- 0521
TOC to C14: Request you pass on to C16 element to look out at coord 4795 for possible rocket firing point.
- 0545
A6 to TOC: 1-3-5 has captured 1 VC in village with empty .45 holster, he does not know where main body is at.
- 0601
Oral Tread to TOC: More info on VC. Recap of killed and captured.

Friendlies: 3 PF KIA. 8 PF & Youth Group WIA.

Enemy: 2 VC KIA, 3 VC captured still at field. 1 VC WIA at Chu Lai, 1 cold .45, 19 hand grenades, 1 57mm RR, 1 AK44, various kinds of ammo and propaganda material also captured.

- 0611
A10 to TOC: Request dustoff at 712973 for 3 VN, 1 serious, Urgent- contact 45.10 LZ secure will pop smoke.
- 0613
Oral Tread to TOC: PF policed up outside of perimeter: 1 57mm RR, 2 AK47, 1 AK44, 1 BAR, Ammo for all weapons, 1 .45, 2 M-16, 1 carbine, 1 baseplate for 60 mm, many AP mines, lots of 60 mm, and some kind of rockets belts with 19 grenades.
- 0910
Oral Tread Delta to TOC: VC POWs at CAP 1-3-5 - we would like to have them here ref night activities. Also PFs

are low on ammo and weapons; need resupply of these items (neg have no choppers). CAP 1-3-5 1st run of the morning was an ammo resupply.

- 0911

Oral Tread Delta to TOC: PFs need ammo & weapons at 1-3-5. We need chopper to pick up VC prisoners at 1-3-5 location. **(Later)**

- 1253

S3 to A6: Detach one squad of 10 and attach to CAP 1-3-5; will be there approximately 1 week to help CAP 1-3-5 back on their feet. End of Log

Bob C.

Tim,

It was pure luck that I had the radio log for that day. Later that afternoon my platoon got caught in a minefield, and me and the Lt. worked all afternoon probing, mine detector, and shit to get out of it. We blew over 14 mines, but only one man was injured: the point man.

I had copied the pages for that date for the poop on the minefield, and it happened to be the same day as the attack on CAP 1-3-5. I had forgotten that the A Co. CO had sent some treads down to the village during the night. I saw the citation on your web page. The citation mentions the number of enemy dead, but for once this is a certain underestimation. There were body parts, huge blood trails, and drag marks all around, in addition to the whole bodies (mostly in the wire) that were actually credited.

A10 must have been an A Co. element down in the village, or more probably the radio contact between Paradise and CAP 1-3-5. There's lots of other shit that happened that night: LZ Ann was hit, and there were several bushes that got what were probably elements of those who hit the CAP.



CAP 1-3-5 Americal ORL April, 1968

**Provided by: Bob Cummings
US Army 5/46th (198th)**

Tim,

What follows is an excerpt (from page 20) from the Americal ORL for April, 1968. I just received a bunch of documents from the Americal, and whatever I find re CAP's I will forward to you. I think I just saw where you signed up someone from 1-3-5.

CONFIDENTIAL
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Headquarters Americal Division
APO San Francisco 96374
AVDF-CG 7 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 30 April 1968. (RCS-CSFOR-65)

On 23 APR 68, CAP 135 vic BS 7197 was attacked by the 95th LF Sapper Co supported by elements of the P-31 LF Co and 48th LF Bn. Reaction by the CAP unit and reinforcements from the Americal Division resulted in 11 VC KIA, 2 C/S and 6 Ind wpns captured. Examination of the KIA revealed that one was a VC Captain. Reports from the villagers in the area revealed that the VC had carried an additional 38 VC KIA away with them, one being a Bn CO.