

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
 HEADQUARTERS, 2D BATTALION (AIRMOBILE) 19TH ARTILLERY
 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)
 APO San Francisco 96490

20 April 1970

AVDAAR-A

29 MAR 1970

SUBJECT: After Action Report - Attack on FSB Jay

Commanding Officer
 1st Cavalry Division Artillery (Airmobile)
 ATTN: S-3
 APO 96490

I. GENERAL

At 0615 hours 29 March 1970, FSB Jay (XT039750) was attacked by elements of the 272 NVA Regiment, supported by a heavy indirect fire attack. After a fierce fight, during which some 10-12 enemy penetrated the position, direct fire artillery repulsed the assault. A total of 74 NVA were KIA (35 by artillery), 3 POW and miscellaneous weapons and equipment captured. US casualties were 13 KIA, 53 WIA and 2K105 howitzers destroyed.

II. BACKGROUND

FSB Jay had been occupied by the 9th Battalion, 3d ARVN Airborne Brigade from 7-14 March. Scattered, sharp contacts occurred throughout this period and an NVA POW, captured 10 kilometers southwest of Jay, stated that his unit's mission was to attack any enemy in the area. FSB Jay was vacant until 18 March, when the 2d Battalion 7th Cavalry, B/2-19th Arty and B/2-12th Arty occupied the position.

The following artillery units were to be involved in the action at Jay:

Company

B/2-19th Arty
 B/2-19th Arty

Location

Tay Ninh Base Camp (XT177520)
 FSB Jay (XT039750)

Company

B/1-77th Arty

Location

FSB Illingworth (C33788)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

O. D.

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General SupportLocation

A/1-30th Arty (-) (3X155)	FSB Illingworth
B/2-12th Arty	FDC Jay
A/2-32nd Arty (-) (2X8")	FSB Illingworth
B/2-32nd Arty (2X175)	FSB St. Barbara (IX276678)
B/2-32nd Arty (-) (2X8")	Camp Hazard (IX078840)
How Btry, 1-11 ACR	Camp Hazard
A/2-20 Arty (ARA)	Tay Ninh Base Camp

Only three rifle companies (A, B, and C) of 2-7 Cav were moved to Jay from FSB Joe. Company D was Opcon to the 11th ACR in eastern War Zone C, Company C became Opcon to 2-8 Cav, 8-10 kilometers northwest of Jay. Company B and reconnaissance elements of Company E were located 6 kilometers southwest of Jay. The FSB was secured by Company A, Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Company E (-).

Artillery on the FSB consisted of B/2-19th Arty (6X105) and B/2-12th Arty (6X155). The 105's were located on the southern side, the 155's on the north.

During the initial occupation on 18 March, light, sporadic small arms fire was received from the western treeline. Artillery, ARA and small arms silenced the fire. Several small contacts with groups of 1-3 NVA occurred prior to the attack and Company B killed 2 of a group of 13 NVA some 6 kilometers southwest of Jay. Patrols found several trails, fighting positions and bunker complexes showing negative to moderate recent use. One new bunker complex was found by Company A (IX10727). On 20 March an automatic ambush detonated just outside the base, and on 22 and 23 March the PPS-5 radar picked up two to three individuals in the tree line. Artillery was placed on the ambush and sightings with negative results. There were no radar pickups or other warning on the night of the attack.

III. ATTACK

At 290415 a trip flare ignited in the treeline to the south of the FSB. This was immediately followed by intense fire from 107, 122 and 240mm rockets, 82 and 120mm mortars, RPGs and 75mm recoilless rifles. This attack lasted some 15 minutes. The initial rounds knocked out the antennas on the infantry HQ, 105 battery FDC and critically wounded the FSB Commander (CO, 2-7 Cav). A platoon sized enemy force, having blown a gap through the single row of barbed wire, moved in over the south and southwest portion of the base, firing RPG's directly into the FSB. Meeting little resistance on the base, they headed for the 105 howitzers. Both the 105 and 155 batteries had begun firing direct fire into the treeline when the attack began and now the NVA were met by M-16 fire from the B/2-19 Arty gun positions. A small reaction force, led by the battery commander, quickly eliminated 5 NVA near the M gun, captured 1 (MIA)

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and drove the remainder out of the position. The enemy established a base of fire near the trash dump, and this area, as well as a .51 cal position nearby, were taken under shortrange direct fire by #1, 2 and 6 guns. A fire which broke out in the infantry ammunition dump was quickly controlled by B/2-19th Arty personnel. However, debris from the explosions put #3 gun temporarily out of action. All other howitzers continued to fire directly at enemy positions at maximum rate. When guns #4 and #5 were destroyed by RPG fire, the surviving crew members and ammunition were quickly placed in the remaining four sections. Led by the B/2-19th Battery Commander and First Sergeant, the defenders regained the barn and built up a volume of small arms fire.

Initial notification to 2-19th Bn FDC came from FSB Illingworth where the 2-8th Cav artillery LNO observed and reported the firing. The Bn FDC immediately activated the prearranged fire plan, using all artillery units in the area. The 2-19th Arty Q-4A radar at Thien Ngan was oriented on FSB Jay and located one enemy mortar which was immediately attacked by indirect fire. Communications with Jay were finally obtained by the 2-7th Cav artillery LNO, using a spare FRC-25 radio, through the Wul Ba Den relay. At his direction, fire was shifted from the eastern target groups and concentrated to the south, west and southeast.

The 105 artillery FDC had received a direct hit, seriously wounding the FDC, but the surviving personnel continued to perform their mission. Defensive fires were quickly reinforced by ARA sections, tactical air, a Spooky gunship and flareships. The 1st Brigade TOC had lost all communications with Jay, and the request for tactical air and Spooky support were initiated by the 2-19th Arty FDC to the TOC. As the attack slackened about 0600, medevacs and resupply ships began to fly in on a pre-planned corridor. Intense .51 cal AA fire along the corridor forced a change in routes and the AA sites were heavily engaged with 155, 8" and ARA fire.

As the enemy withdrew, fires were shifted in pursuit to the west and continued at a high rate. An enemy bunker complex to the southeast was pounded by medium and heavy artillery on a phased plan to support a CS drop in the area.

Total expenditures during the action were:

105mm - 2279
155mm - 956
8" - 258
175mm - 80

ARA - 7 Sections
Tao Air - 3 Airstrikes

US losses were:

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15 KIA (B/2-19th Arty, 4; 2-7th Cav, 7; B/2-12th Arty, 4)
53 WIA (B/2-19th Arty, 23; 2-7th Cav, 22; B/2-12th Arty, 8)
2X105 howitzers destroyed

Thirty five of the 74 NVA KIA were credited to artillery fire.

IV. FOLLOW UP

Pursuit artillery fire continued through the day on enemy withdrawal routes. FSB Jay displaced later that day (29 March) to FSB Hannas (XT031718) and continued its support mission without interruption.

The prompt response of all fire support elements, both at and in support of FSB Jay, was extremely effective in repulsing the enemy attack. The devastating effectiveness of direct artillery fire in the initial moments of the action on the enemy assault and support elements in the treelines can be credited with the failure of the enemy to mount a major ground assault and the very survival of the base.

1 Incl
Photo of FSB Jay

THOMAS E. FITZGERALD
LTC, FA
Commanding