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1 Testimony of CPT Stephen J. Gamble,
2 OF 106606, A Battery, Officer Student
3 Battalion, U. S. Army Field Artillery
4 School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, taken at
5 Office of The Inspector General, Head-
6 quarters, Department of the Army,
7 Washington, D. C., at 0835 to 1015
8 hours on 23 June 1969, by Colonel
9 William V. Wilson, IG.

10
11 Q. CPT Gamble, this investigation concerns the
12 alleged destruction of a village in South Vietnam nicknamed
13 Pinkville. The village we are talking about is My Lai (4),
14 approximately five or six miles north of Quang Ngai City.
15 The incident allegedly occurred in March 1968--

16 A. (Interposing) Yes, sir.

17
18 Q. --during the time Co C, 1/20th Infantry, Task
19 Force Barker, conducted search and destroy operations on
20 the Batangan Peninsula. The investigation is official and
21 is being made at the direction of the Chief of Staff of the
22 Army. The investigation is privileged in the sense that
23 the report will be made to the Chief of Staff. The substance
24 thereof should not be discussed with others. It will carry
25 a CONFIDENTIAL classification. The purpose of the investi-
26 gation is to determine the facts relative to the operation
27 in question.

28 A. Yes, sir.

29
30 Q. I'd like to place you under oath. Please stand
31 and raise your right hand.

32 (The witness was sworn.)

33
34 Please state your full name, grade and serial
35 number.

36 A. Stephen J. Gamble, Captain, Field Artillery,
37 serial number OF 106606.

38
39 Q. Organization, station and present duty assignment?

40 A. Alfa Battery, Officer Student Battalion, United
41 States Army Field Artillery School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

42 Q. What was your duty assignment in March 1968 at
43 the time of this operation?
44
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1 A. I was the battery commander, Delta Battery,
2 6/11th Artillery.
3

4 Q. Do you recall the date of this particular
5 operation? It was a combat assault.
6

7 A. Yes, sir, but I don't remember the date. I
8 remember that it was in the month, but I don't remember
9 the date, sir.

10 Q. Well, our records that we have available indicate
11 it began on the 16th of March.

12 A. Yes, sir.
13

14 Q. Do you recall attending a planning conference or
15 briefing on this operation before it began?

16 A. Yes, sir, the day before I attended a briefing
17 and that was at LZ Dottie. I believe it was LZ Dottie.
18

19 Q. Will you describe to me, in as much detail as
20 possible, the information that was put out at that briefing?

21 A. Sir, the briefing was--what I remember, the
22 officer present was--the brigade commander was present and
23 they gave the general situation of what was going to occur.
24 The purpose, that I got from the briefing, of the operation
25 was to route the 48th Local Force Vietcong Battalion from
26 that area once and for all. They were the ones who ruled
27 that whole area and the purpose was to get rid of them for
28 once and all, and there was a planned combat assault for
29 the next morning prefaced by an artillery preparation with
30 supporting helicopter gun ships, and after that was de-
31 scribed I can remember the brigade commander gave a talk
32 to the company commanders involved like myself. I was
33 present and the Artillery Liaison Officer, and he gave
34 more or less a pep talk about the operation. He talked
35 mainly to the infantrymen and just general things about
36 making sure the men all cleaned their weapons and attention
37 to detail. I believe this was the first time he had talked
38 to the men in the task force that he had recently taken
39 command of, sir, and he just pointed out those were the
40 little things--he had been a platoon leader in Korea, and
41 I can remember this very vividly--and these little things
42 made all the difference, like cleaning the weapons and
43 taking a couple of practice shots, and he wanted to make
44 sure everything went properly. That is about all I can
45 remember from the briefing, sir, because I was mainly

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1 interested in, of course, the artillery portion of it.

2
3 Q. Did he say anything about the tactics to be used
4 or previous failings of the infantry in this particular
5 area?

6 A. I do remember, sir, him saying, as I mentioned
7 previously, that they had caught this Local Force Battalion
8 which had caused so much trouble on previous operations in
9 that area and he didn't know their strength--I don't think
10 anybody did exactly--but they were still in force there and
11 we should be able to get them for once and all.

12
13 Q. Did he indicate where he thought they were?

14 A. Sir, I don't know if he did, but from the briefing
15 the Pinkville area was pointed out as their headquarters or
16 the area they operated from, right in the Pinkville area,
17 but I can't say as the colonel pointed that out himself. I
18 believe that it was the S3 of the operation when he gave his
19 portion of the briefing, sir.

20
21 Q. Did you get an intelligence briefing?

22 A. Yes, sir, the 2 did give an intelligence briefing.

23
24 Q. What did he say?

25 A. Sir, to the best of my knowledge, again it was
26 just in general terms of what was in there, the 48th Local
27 Force Battalion, and I don't believe he mentioned much about
28 their capabilities. I think it was just pointed out on the
29 past capability of having automatic weapons and mortars and
30 that was about it from the intelligence end of it.

31
32 Q. Was there a planning conference prior to this
33 briefing?

34 A. Not that I know of, sir. I was not there. I did
35 not attend any planning conference or know that one was
36 conducted.

37
38 Q. What was your mission on a routine, day-to-day
39 basis? Was it to support a specific unit?

40 A. No, sir. I was the direct support artillery
41 battery for the task force and they generally operated in
42 the area around the Batangan Peninsula, so any time they
43 needed operations and artillery preparations I normally
44 fired the preparations for them.
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Q. Who was your artillery liaison officer?

A. At the time it was CPT Vazquez.

Q. V-A-S-Q-U-E-Z?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. How did he normally operate, airborne or--

A. (Interposing) Yes, sir. He went up with the task force commander, COL Barker, and he stayed right in the ship with him and we fired a preparation and fired it from the air direction.

Q. Was he over the area during the periods that COL Barker was not there? Did he have another aircraft?

A. Oh, no, sir, he didn't have his own aircraft. If he was over the area, I would say 75 to 80% of the time, he would be with the colonel because it was the colonel's command and control helicopter.

Q. When did you first receive the instructions to provide an artillery preparation?

A. Sir, it was at that briefing. When I went into the briefing they had a briefing set up. The artillery liaison officer gave me a brief little talk on what was going to occur and he said, "It is all in the copy of the operation order and you can get the grid and everything out of that."

Q. Then he had been to some previous planning conference?

A. Yes, sir, he must have been. Right, sir.

Q. What was the length of the preparation which you were to provide timewise?

A. Sir, I can't swear exactly what it was. I'd say five minutes though. This is generally what I fired, a five-minute preparation, but I can't remember the exact time. I would say five minutes.

Q. How many guns did you have?

A. At that time, sir, I had four. I had four guns at that time.

Q. What is the normal number of rounds per tube per minute that you fire for preparations of this type?

A. We went right by the book, the school solution,

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1 sir, and that was three rounds per minute for the first
2 three minutes and then one round every 20 seconds after
3 that--20 or 30. I think it is 20 seconds, but we went
4 right by the book on that.

5
6 Q. If you had fired a three-minute concentration
7 you would have fired 36 rounds?

8 A. Per tube, sir?

9
10 Q. No, no, a total of 36.

11 A. No, we fired more than that. I may have that
12 wrong on the school solution to the firing of the rounds.
13 I'd say we probably fired approximately 120 rounds on the
14 preparation.

15
16 Q. Well, let me say this. Our information is that
17 you fired a three-minute preparation.

18 A. I see, sir.

19
20 Q. Now for that preparation how many rounds do you
21 think you fired?

22 A. I'd say about 120, sir. I am going to have to go
23 back over how that breaks down. Let's see. (Pause) The
24 only thing I can see in that, sir, is we might have--we did
25 on occasion adjust the preparation in and then use the whole
26 battery to fire a couple of volleys and then move it left
27 and right, you know, over and short of the point, and we
28 did this on occasion and we might have done it at that time.
29 In this way you would fire more rounds since the observer,
30 he adjusted it in, so the total roundwise, once he does get
31 it on target, might be quite a few rounds once he got it on
32 the point where he wanted it and we continued to fire after
33 that because we did that very often.

34
35 Q. Would you estimate that you fired more than 100
36 rounds on this preparation?

37 A. Sir, I'd say 120 because that is about what we
38 normally fired on them, sir.

39
40 Q. What proportion of these rounds were VT fused?

41 A. None, sir, to the best of my knowledge, none.

42
43 Q. All surface?

44 A. Yes, sir, point detonating fuse. I don't believe
45 I ever fired a preparation with VT.

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Q. When did you use VT fuse?

A. Not too often in that area because of the consistency of the ground. It is a very damp area and we found, sir, VT fuse gave us extremely high air bursts and it was a waste to fire them. They didn't cause any effect on the targets.

Q. I don't understand. Why would that set your shells off?

A. It gives a greater reflective and will detonate higher on trajectory coming down. Once the radio waves are sent out they will be reflected much quicker.

Q. This area was considerably inundated. Is that it?

A. I don't quite understand what you mean.

Q. Marshy, swampy.

A. Right, sir.

Q. Did you spend most of your tour up in that area?

A. When I got over there in January, the end of January - first of February, I took the battery to an LZ Uptight. This is where I fired that preparation from. We stayed there the month of February, the month of March and part of the month of May (sic). Then we moved west, about 12 kilometers west of that area, and I did return to that, almost the exact landing zone one time later in the year. I believe it was the first week in October they ran another operation in that area and I spent about a week up there.

Q. When does the monsoon season occur in that area?

A. Let's see, sir. (Pause) It was very wet right through until about May in that area, sir, so I suppose it was wet when we got up there so I'd say January through May. It was pretty bad in there. I wasn't too much of a monsoon expert at that time, you know, what to look for.

Q. What was the target of the preparation?

A. Sir, I was given a grid for the preparation, but, as was normally the case, it was moved. Once we got the rounds out there the liaison officer, who was the observer, moved it to his desires or his supporting commander's desires. It was in that Pinkville area, sir. That was the point, somewhere in that Pinkville area.

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Q. What restraints, in accordance with the Rules of Engagement, were peculiar to an artillery direct support battery regarding targets?

A. Well, sir, we had--all targets we had to clear with the liaison officer and that was a military clearance, and then they obtained the political clearance from a little village. I can't even remember the name of it, but it was in that area somewhere. I believe it was south of where we were at. They had the political clearance there. They checked with the Vietnamese people, whoever the chiefs were, in this area and got the political clearance, and we went down for permission from the battalion fire direction center to fire.

Q. Were there any restraints on concentrations being fired on villages?

A. The only--none that I know of, sir, in that area. Many times in this area we fired concentrations that were either close to or in villages at night, night especially, and these were cleared both militarily and politically.

Q. You know of no restrictions on firing into villages then?

A. Not the--well, as long as we had the clearance on it, sir. If it was cleared politically, and they gave them a reason, what the target was in there, we were, I was allowed to fire any way because a lot of this, especially in this area, there just weren't villages there. They were just a bunch of old, broken-down, fringe buildings. Villages shown on the map just weren't villages. Normally they had moved or something of this nature.

Q. If you were on call and you received a fire request for a concentration on a village and you had been cleared to fire in this particular area, could you fire on the village at the request of the liaison officer without going back to battalion?

A. No, sir, I had all of my missions checked by my battalion, every one of them, and so it was a check. The liaison officer cleared it to insure no U. S. Forces were in the area and they cleared it politically through the district chiefs and then my battalion cleared me and they all insured that I had the clearance to fire.

Q. The liaison officer you are referring to is

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1 Vazquez?

2 A. Yes, sir. His section, he had himself and two
3 enlisted men--no, three enlisted men that worked with him
4 on shifts so they can clear targets 24 hours a day.
5

6 Q. Did Vazquez work for you or for battalion?

7 A. Yes, sir, he worked for my battalion.
8

9 Q. He was not assigned to your company?

10 A. No, sir. No, sir.
11

12 Q. As I understand these descriptions that you are
13 giving me, I'd classify them as preplanned missions, if
14 you were going through all that procedure of clearance.

15 A. Well, sir, the only time we could fire auto-
16 matically without getting any checks was when a ground unit
17 or a unit was in contact with the enemy--you know, receiving
18 casualties from the enemy--and then the observer called in
19 and said, "Company fire mission," and he referred to the
20 initials of the company commander or the senior infantry
21 commander, and in this case we can automatically fire that
22 mission for them. They were checking clearance during the
23 mission or after the mission and that was as firing data
24 that they checked. We had to get those points of information
25 or else I couldn't fire a contact mission. I had some go
26 through on the procedures of obtaining clearance. That was
27 any mission.
28

29 Q. Then your normal firing in direct support of an
30 infantry operation was preplanned missions. Is that correct?

31 A. Well, sir, if I understand what you mean by a pre-
32 planned in this condition, in a normal operation we'd fire
33 the preparation on a point and once they go to the ground
34 we just awaited any fire missions that they had for us. If
35 they had a routine, a reconnaissance backfire or a contact
36 with the enemy or defensive targets at any time or they
37 request perimeter fire we send these for them and then the
38 H&I fire. We fired them. On those occasions of physical
39 contact with the enemy we had to check the clearance.
40

41 Q. All of these missions that you described you had
42 to check clearance?

43 A. If they had physical contact with the enemy, yes,
44 sir, actually you can say we did this, too. Once we go
45 through the mission we'd be getting the clearance on all

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1 artillery going out on the target during the contact mission.

2
3 Q. Have you ever heard of a free fire zone?

4 A. Yes, sir, I know what one is.

5
6 Q. What is it?

7 A. Well, it would be an area that you just fire into
8 freely and with no restrictions on it. You can fire into it
9 any time or anywhere you want in that area without obtaining
10 clearance, sir.

11
12 Q. Was this area a free fire area?

13 A. Not to my knowledge, sir. Like I say, I checked
14 everything. All the artillery that went out of there was checked
15 and cleared. At least, it was cleared to my knowledge once
16 they gave me the clearance.

17 Q. Do you know if this preparation was targeted for the
18 village?

19 A. No, sir, I really can't say it was targeted for the
20 village because to the best of my knowledge on the map, as
21 to what appeared on the ground, you really couldn't tell that
22 close, if you fire on the village or on the periphery, so to
23 speak, of the village. When the preparation went in I didn't
24 know if it was right in the village or not, sir.

25
26 Q. If the preparation had been on the village would it
27 have struck you as being an other than normal procedure?

28 A. Well, sir, up to that time, I can't say up to that
29 time, but in this area we had fired on villages, and especially
30 at night I can remember they were combined fire missions with
31 other supporting artillery. In one particular case they had
32 an intelligence report which was supposed to be very high
33 priority, that they had an artillery piece in one of the
34 villages and I can't remember how many VC's were in there
35 with it, and we did fire this mission combined with another
36 unit, sir.

37
38 Q. Was this in the Pinkville complex?

39 A. It was west of there to the best of my knowledge.
40 It was generally in that area, but I can't say it was exactly
41 in the Pinkville area, sir.

42
43 Q. So there would have been nothing abnormal, as far
44 as you were concerned, about that concentration if it went
45 into that village, once it was cleared?

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1 A. I'd say yes, sir, it wouldn't be anything abnormal
2 because we had done it before with the proper clearance.
3

4 Q. You referred to an operation order which gave you
5 the grids for your concentration preparation. Was this a
6 written document? Did you see it?

7 A. Yes, sir, to the best of my knowledge in that
8 operation they had a written document, yes, sir. I normally
9 received a copy of all operations orders that were published
10 if I was involved in the operation as far as a preparation
11 or something of this sort.
12

13 Q. You don't happen to have a copy of this document,
14 do you?

15 A. Oh, no, sir. It was classified. I believe it was
16 CONFIDENTIAL.
17

18 Q. For a three-day operation of this type was it normal
19 to prepare a written order?

20 A. I'd say yes, sir. They had on occasion prepared
21 written orders for this.
22

23 Q. Was this concentration to be fired at a specific
24 time, or was it on call?

25 A. To the best of my knowledge, sir, that was not an
26 on-call preparation. It was actually scheduled. I don't
27 recall the time it was scheduled, but it was scheduled, and
28 at certain times the liaison officer would make contact with
29 us and then they can vary the time on it a little bit de-
30 pending on how the lifts were coming in with the ground
31 troops, and then we go ahead and fire the preparation and
32 the liaison officer would adjust it in, and this might vary
33 somewhat from the planned time, H- so-and-so, so it could
34 vary.
35

36 Q. Let's take a five-minute break.
37

38 (At this point there was a short recess.)
39

40 Q. I remind you you are still under oath.

41 A. Right, sir.
42

43 Q. Were you over this area at any time during the day
44 of the 16th while this operation was going on?

45 A. No, sir. The previous day, after the briefing, I

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1 did fly over it with the liaison officer and the task force
2 commander, the battalion commander of that task force. I
3 believe he had his S2 with him also, and they were taking
4 me back from where the briefing was held to the fire support
5 base and it was right on the route to go over, but during
6 the day of the operation I did not fly over.

7
8 Q. Was CPT Medina with you on this flight?

9 A. I don't believe so, sir. I can't swear to it though.
10 During operations which were conducted in that area I saw him
11 quite frequently, but I can't actually say he was on that
12 flight, sir.

13
14 Q. Was there any discussion during the flight about
15 artillery preparations?

16 A. No, sir, I don't believe there was. CPT Vazquez
17 had a map with him. I remember him sitting at the side of
18 the helicopter--it was a Huey--and he was looking at the map
19 and just jotting a few notes down. I believe there was no
20 discussion to the best of my knowledge, sir.

21
22 Q. This is a 1:50,000 map of the area. Do you recall
23 where this preparation was to go? (Colonel Wilson handed the
24 map to the witness.)

25 A. I was right up here, sir, this Hill 110. It was
26 in this area, but I can't swear where the grid was, sir.
27 I'd say somewhere in this block of grid squares here, sir,
28 but I can't recall the exact area grid we had.

29
30 Q. Would an aerial photograph help? (Colonel Wilson
31 handed photographs to the witness.)

32 A. This is looking north, sir. This is this area
33 right here, sir? (Indicating)

34
35 Q. Um-hum.

36 A. I'd say--

37
38 Q. (Interposing) Sit down.

39 A. Yes, sir. (Pause) Sir, is this where it was
40 supposedly fired, right in there where the circle is?

41
42 Q. That's My Lai (4).

43 A. Right, sir.

44
45 Q. And it was the initial objective of C Co.

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A. Right, sir.

Q. Their landing zone was in that vicinity (indicating).

A. Right, sir.

Q. What was my next question? Do you know where their landing zone was?

A. Sir, I really don't. My memory is getting a little better I think now, but I am not going to swear on it. It was land and then move, I believe, toward the ocean. The objective was right in here (indicating), as I remember from the briefing, but I can't swear on that, but to the best of my knowledge they were coming in through this way (indicating), I believe.

Q. That is east.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you remember on which side of the village the landing zone was placed?

A. I'd say the western side, sir, but that just seems to stick in my mind, the west, but I see it is all rice paddy here. I'd say the western side, sir, but again that is just to the best of my knowledge.

Q. This is COL Barker's execution paragraph of the combat action report, or what we could call an after-action report. (Colonel Wilson handed the document to the witness.) You read that.

A. (Pause) Sir, they have that three artillery--the first line here I don't quite understand.

Q. Three minute.

A. Oh, three minute. I am sorry. (Pause) Yes, sir.

Q. Does this bring any more recall concerning the operation to your mind?

A. Just the number--well, the KIA, sir, I do remember that and I believe the total in that whole day they killed almost 200 enemy to the best of my knowledge, you know, as I remember hearing reports back on it, but now I notice they have, let's see, two three-minute preparations actually.

Q. The 68 KIA which is indicated on this report, that would be for both preparations, wouldn't it?

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1 A. Yes, sir. When I got the report back that 68
2 VC were killed, KIA, it was stated to me as both combined
3 artillery and gun ships--in other words, supporting fire.
4

5 Q. This is an overlay of the task force operations
6 officer's concept (indicating). If this were placed over
7 the map My Lai (4) would be right here (indicating).

8 A. Right, sir.
9

10 Q. Did you hear the term frequently used, hot LZ?

11 A. At that time not too much, sir, at that time be-
12 cause I heard the term, of course, all year, but at that
13 time I was fairly new and had only been a couple of months
14 in country and I had heard it, but I can't say it was that
15 frequent, sir.
16

17 Q. Do you recall that this was a hot LZ?

18 A. You mean, sir, by a hot LZ when they came down
19 they were receiving fire, or we were putting fire on the LZ?
20

21 Q. Yes.

22 A. That they had contact once they hit the LZ?
23

24 Q. -- Well, it is my understanding that a preparation
25 isn't fired unless it is a hot LZ; that if you have a pre-
26 planned preparation to be fired it is already considered a
27 hot LZ before the landing.
28

29 A. Right, sir.
30

31 Q. I would assume from your description, since it was
32 preplanned to be fired at a specific time, that it was con-
33 sidered a hot LZ.
34

35 A. Yes, sir.
36

37 Q. Do you--

38 A. (Interposing) Right, sir, in that sense because
39 it was planned to fire.
40

41 Q. Do you recall receiving any additional requests
42 for artillery direct support during the first day of the
43 operation, other than preplanned concentration, and I believe
44 you used the term contact?
45

A. Right, sir. Sir, I don't remember firing that
much after the preparation that day. We fired the preparation
and we may have fired a couple more missions in there, but I

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1 don't remember anything of any significance after the
2 initial preparations.
3

4 Q. Were you questioned at any time after this operation
5 by a field grade officer concerning the operation?

6 A. No, sir. I remember, and I can't say how long it
7 was--I'd say two weeks approximately--after the operation,
8 we had a visit from our division artillery commander and he
9 was accompanied by my battalion commander, and when they were
10 in my SPC the colonel, the Div Arty commander, asked me how
11 things were going and what operations I had participated in
12 and I mentioned that we had gotten 68 KIA's on preparation
13 recently and my battalion commander commented that they
14 weren't sure if those were enemy or not. I do remember that,
15 sir, and that's the only thing that was ever mentioned about
16 that.
17

18 Q. Who was your battalion commander?

19 A. It was LTC Looper, sir.
20

21 Q. Looper?

22 A. I believe it is L-O-O-P-E-R. I kept my mouth shut
23 after that, after I mentioned that and my battalion commander
24 said that I just didn't say anything. He continued his visit
25 and left.
26

27 Q. Did this seem a high KIA number for this type of
28 preparation?

29 A. In that area, yes, sir. In that area it really
30 was because we had on occasions had units, company-size
31 units, pinned down for a considerable length of time and
32 fired over 200 rounds of artillery and never gotten a KIA.
33 This had happened. They were very elusive in that area.
34

35 Q. Were you at about maximum range for this concen-
36 tration?

37 A. No, sir, I was firing ranges from that area--let's
38 see, I could fire to LZ Dottie because on occasion I had
39 supported them and they were receiving fire and that is
40 about maximum range which I believe would be about eleven
41 and a half kilometers, but this area would not be, sir.
42

43 Q. Did CPT Vazquez normally work as Liaison officer
44 to Task Force Barker?

45 A. Yes, sir, he did. This was his job. He was sent

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1 as the liaison officer.

2
3 Q. This wasn't an exchange like you exchange your
4 FO's and he stayed in this job most of the time?

5 A. Yes, sir, to the best of my knowledge.

6
7 Q. As I understand, the 11th Brigade AO extended
8 considerably west of Highway 1 which you would not provide
9 support for because your range was limited to about Highway 1?

10 A. Right, sir. LZ Dottie was right off Highway 1,
11 sir, and I never did fire on the western side of LZ Dottie.
12 I don't think I could have reached it. I could probably have
13 put a round somewhere on the highway, sir, but that is about
14 as far as I could go.

15
16 Q. -What other troop units were with you at Uptight?

17 A. Sir, there was my battery. I had a searchlight
18 and that was approximately four people. We had a search-
19 light and then either a complete infantry company or a
20 company (-) for security, sir.

21
22 Q. Where was this company from?

23 A. The normal way they ran it, sir, was they would
24 rotate between or among the companies involved in the task
25 force. One company or a company (-) would be on the fire
26 support base providing perimeter security for the artillery
27 at any one time. They would rotate.

28
29 Q. According to the operations officer all three
30 companies were on this operation. Who provided security
31 during a three-day operation of this type?

32 A. We had security, sir. I know that. I didn't
33 provide my own security and I had security to the best of
34 my knowledge and it was part of the task force that pro-
35 vided me with security. I never had to man the bunkers
36 there at Uptight that I can remember, sir, with my people
37 because I was extremely understrength. I just had about
38 enough people to put on the howitzers and that was about it.

39
40 Q. What was the purpose of this searchlight unit?

41 A. They were there when we got up there, sir. They
42 just provided us searchlight support. They scanned at
43 night. I think mainly it was a deterrent.

44
45 Q. Perimeter security?

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1 A. Right, they had both a white light and infrared
2 capability.

3
4 Q. Did you hear at any time that atrocities had been
5 committed on this operation?

6 A. No, sir. To the best of my knowledge I never
7 heard anything, sir.

8
9 Q. Do you have any knowledge of the psychological
10 operations that were conducted in the area?

11 A. At that time, sir?

12
13 Q. Yes, any time.

14 A. By who, sir, the American Forces going in there?

15
16 Q. Um-hum.

17 A. Well, the only thing about psychological operations,
18 sir, they had quite a few leaflet drops in the area, sir, but
19 that's the only thing I know about the psychological operation,
20 sir. There were quite numerous leaflet drops and also loud-
21 speaker broadcasts flying over and they had someone special
22 in Vietnamese on a recording.

23
24 Q. Was the Pinkville complex supposed to be VC con-
25 trolled?

26 A. Yes, sir, this is all the information I received.
27 Like I said in the beginning, it was the headquarters of the
28 Local Force 48th VC Battalion, which was supposed to be a
29 very fine battalion. They had been in the area a long time
30 and had caused us a lot of trouble--or the ground units.

31
32 Q. Was the area where Uptight was located supposed
33 to be VC controlled?

34 A. Well, at that time, sir, to the best of my knowledge
35 they considered everything right around that little area as
36 VC controlled and you couldn't be safe anywhere, because we
37 never went off the LZ--only by air. We never walked off the
38 LZ--the artillery didn't.

39
40 Q. Do you have a clear definition of the Batangan
41 Peninsula?

42 A. Well, sir, to the best of my knowledge, what I call
43 the Batangan Peninsula was just this portion out here, this
44 little knob that sticks out into the ocean (indicating).
45

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1 Q. Some people refer to that as Cape Batangan.

2 A. Yes, sir, I have heard that term also, sir.

3
4 Q. We have had some give ideas about what the
5 peninsula is and I didn't know whether it was considered
6 between these two rivers and then out there (indicating)
7 or whether it was just this Cape Batangan.

8 A. That is what I refer to, sir, just this portion
9 out here (indicating) as the Batangan Peninsula.

10
11 Q. And actually the Pinkville complex to the south
12 would not be on the peninsula?

13 A. Not in my definition, no, sir. No one ever did
14 define that to me, sir, and say from here to here (indicating)
15 is the peninsula.

16
17 Q. Um-hum. Was your perimeter at any time under
18 attack?

19 A. No, sir. All the time we were up there I only
20 know of two incidents we had on the perimeter, or no, three
21 incidents. The searchlight spotted someone close to the LZ
22 one night and they fired on them and they never did make an
23 assessment of it the next day, just one person they saw, and
24 we were supposedly mortared twice, but the rounds never did
25 get up to the LZ. They fell short of the LZ on the north-
26 eastern side. It was only a few rounds. That was the only
27 activity that ever occurred on the LZ.

28
29 Q. Do you know where those rounds were fired from?

30 A. Yes, sir, we thought--let me see on this larger
31 map, sir. It was a small hill. To the best of my knowledge
32 it was over in this area (indicating) is where we suspected
33 the setup.

34
35 Q. Coordinates?

36 A. 752858.

37
38 Q. North of Uptight?

39 A. Well, slightly north and east, sir.

40
41 Q. Did you fire the interdiction and harassing fire
42 every night?

43 A. Yes, sir.

44
45 Q. Where did you receive the instruction for the

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1 concentration?

2 A. For the harassing and interdiction fire, sir,
3 we got them directly from the liaison section about ten
4 o'clock every morning.

5
6 Q. For the following night?

7 A. For that night, yes, sir.

8
9 Q. Were these targets developed by Task Force Barker
10 or by the artillery?

11 A. I really don't know, sir. Probably, I'd say--I
12 was a liaison officer also myself later on, and I would say
13 a joint thing probably, but I can't say for sure, sir, be-
14 cause they were located on LZ Dottie and I didn't get over
15 there that much.

16
17 Q. You mentioned that there was an artillery piece
18 reported to be in a village which you placed H&I fire on
19 that village?

20 A. Well, this wasn't really H&I. It was actually a
21 fire mission sent down. I believe it came all the way from
22 division level. It was pretty high priority and we massed
23 fire on it.

24
25 Q. Do you remember which village that was?

26 A. I will have to take a look at the map, sir. I
27 remember firing it. It was somewhere in that Pinkville
28 area, sir, because I remember seeing the fires and they were
29 south of me and it was somewhere near this Song Diem River
30 here (indicating).

31
32 Q. Song Diem Diem?

33 A. Yes, sir, and it was south of the LZ, sir. I
34 remember we used the fire from LZ Dottie, I believe at that
35 time 155 and eight-inch artillery pieces there.

36
37 Q. Dottie was a considerably larger fire base than
38 Uptight?

39 A. Oh, yes, sir. You could put four Uptights in LZ
40 Dottie, at least.

41
42 Q. What was Dottie?

43 A. It was the task force headquarters, sir.

44
45 Q. Yes.

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1 A. And they had an engineer unit there and I believe
2 their mission was mainly they had some bridge construction
3 responsibilities and mine sweeper responsibilities and there
4 were artillery units there, sir, but they switched very
5 frequently. I had seen a 155 unit there and I believe it
6 was a composite eight-inch/175 unit there at one time,
7

8 Q. When you say unit do you refer to a battery?
9

10 A. Battery size unit, yes, sir, and they also had the
11 gun ship platoon, the helicopter gun ship platoon. They
12 called them War Lords. That was their nickname. I remember
13 that. I don't remember which company they were part of, but
14 it was a helicopter gun ship platoon.

15 Q. Where was your battalion headquarters?
16

17 A. At Duc Pho, sir, which is considerably south of
18 the area.

19 Q. Just a minute. (Colonel Wilson left the room
20 briefly and returned with the U. S. Army Register.) Would
21 you see if you could identify COL Loper for me?
22

23 A. Yes, sir. (Pause) He is not listed here in the
24 Regular--is this the Regular Army, sir? He probably would
25 be in the Reserve. (Colonel Wilson left the room briefly
26 and returned with the U. S. Army Register, Volume II.)
27 (Pause) It is not in here, sir. This was my battalion
28 commander, sir. I am trying to think of his first name and
29 I can't. No, sir, it is not in there, but I know that was
30 my battalion commander.

31 Q. Could he have been killed?
32

33 A. Not that I know of, sir, because he went from our
34 battalion to division artillery and he worked in the FSC up
35 there because I saw him one time after he left the battalion.
36 He was lieutenant colonel and he was artillery. I am positive
37 he was artillery. He was the first battalion commander when
38 they formed the battalion in Hawaii in 1967. I thought his
39 first name was Robert, but I can't swear to that.

40 Q. Well, I can find him some other way. Did you have
41 forward observers with the companies?

42 A. Yes, sir. The forward observers--well, since I
43 was provisional battery and they weren't really my observers.
44 Well, when they formed the task force they took the
45 observers and as far as the task force was concerned you

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1 could say they were my observers, but on paper work they
2 worked for some other unit in the battalion at that time,
3 sir.

4
5 Q. Was there a communication from the forward ob-
6 servers to the gun positions, or was it through the liaison
7 officer?

8 A. No, sir, the forward observers called me directly
9 for fire missions.

10
11 Q. But any time they called you for fire missions it
12 was usually a contact mission?

13 A. No, sir, they could call me on any mission and if
14 it was contact they'd say, "It is contact," and they'd give
15 the firing mission and give the ground commander's initials
16 that they called the firing mission for. They could call
17 me on any mission.

18
19 Q. What if it was other than contact? You would still
20 follow the procedure of clearance?

21 A. Yes, sir, I'd call the liaison officer. Normally
22 he would be listening to the same frequency and he's say,
23 "Roger," and then he'd call me back and tell us the grid was
24 clear or it was not clear.

25
26 Q. Suppose he wasn't in the air?

27 A. The liaison officer, sir? Normally he never left
28 the frequency in the air. There would be a section or a man
29 in the section, or if he was on duty, but he would be in the
30 TOC at LZ Dottie when he cleared it, sir.

31
32 Q. So in his position as liaison officer it was not
33 required that he be over the operation?

34 A. Not at all times, no, sir. He would normally just
35 fly out with the task force commander on the preparation and
36 stay with him until he came back to the LZ, and if they got
37 into some heavy contact he probably in most cases would go
38 up again with the task force commander, sir.

39
40 Q. Did you ever experience any communication difficulty
41 from gun position to FO?

42 A. No, sir, not from there at all, not much at all;
43 maybe one or two occasions when they got behind some hill
44 mass or something like that, but I thought communications
45 were excellent in that area. We could talk most of the time
46 with no problem, and could talk to Duc Pho, which I don't

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1 remember the number of kilometers away it is, and we had
2 no trouble with the observers in the area.

3
4 Q. Do you know the observer that was with Charlie
5 Co on this operation?

6 A. That would be CPT Medina, sir?

7
8 Q. Yes.

9 A. I believe his observer was a LT Alaux, sir. He
10 was his observer at one time and I can't remember when.

11
12 Q. What was that name?

13 A. Alaux. I believe he spelled it A-L-E-U-X. I am
14 not sure of the spelling.

15
16 Q. Would you see if you can find it, please?

17 A. He was Reserve, I believe. His first name was
18 Roger. (Pause while witness looked in U. S. ARMY Register.)

19
20 Q. Look under losses.

21 A. I don't think he was killed. I think he rotated
22 before.

23
24 Q. He could be.

25 A. Oh, I see, sir, that is right. (Pause) I never
26 saw his name written really and it is a French name. I
27 suppose it would be A-L-E-U-X, something like that. I never
28 did see it written. (Pause) Here is one, sir, A-L-L-U-E,
29 Eugene, and the middle initial is not discernible here. It
30 was typed over.

31
32 Q. Is he artillery?

33 A. AT. Is that artillery?

34
35 Q. Yes.

36 A. It lists him here as 2LT. He was probably a
37 lieutenant in January of--

38
39 Q. (Interposing) How do you spell it?

40 A. A-L-L-U-E, sir. That would be Aleux.

41
42 Q. First name?

43 A. It says Eugene, E-U-G-E-N-E.

44
45 Q. What is his serial number?

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1 A. O-5430652, sir. He might go by his middle
2 initial. It might be an R. I know everybody called him
3 Roger. I am positive of that.
4

5 Q. How many radio operators did your forward ob-
6 servers have with them?

7 A. Radio operators, sir? They normally just had
8 themselves and a recon sergeant and an RTO, sir. That is
9 the full party--the observer, the recon sergeant and the
10 radio telephone operator.
11

12 Q. Was the recon sergeant an artilleryman?

13 A. Yes, sir, that whole party would be from the
14 artillery.
15

16 Q. They normally worked as a team?

17 A. Yes, sir.
18

19 Q. Or were they relieved individually and rotated?

20 A. No, sir, they would be a team, and normally the
21 observer, if they split the company, he would send his recon
22 sergeant with one element and he would stay at the CP element
23 and probably keep the RTO right with him.
24

25 Q. Do you remember anything peculiar about this
26 operation at all?

27 A. No, sir. The only thing that sticks in my mind
28 is that with the 68 KIA's they had, I remember one vivid
29 thing--this was a U. S. casualty, that a man, an officer,
30 in fact, was killed getting off of the lift ship. I believe
31 it was a boobytrapped artillery round in a tree. This is
32 just one of the things I remember. I think it was on this
33 operation also.
34

35 Q. These 68 KIA's were the result of all supporting
36 weapons, to include gun ships?

37 A. Right, sir. The way it was told to me the 68 were
38 the result of artillery and supporting air mainly, everything
39 that went in before the actual ground troops were moved
40 through, sir.
41

42 Q. And this would have been at both landing zones,
43 for C Co and B Co?

44 A. Yes, sir, right, sir.
45

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Q. Do you have any further information concerning the matters we have discussed?

A. No, sir, I don't believe so, sir.

Q. Do you have any further statements to make regarding the subject under investigation?

A. No, sir.

Q. CPT Gamble, this is an official investigation. It is privileged in the sense that my report will be made to the Chief of Staff of the Army for such use as he deems appropriate. You are ordered not to discuss this investigation or the questions and answers covered during this interview except as you otherwise may have a right to do so in accordance with law.

(The witness was excused.)

(The foregoing testimony of CPT Stephen J. Gamble was taken stenographically and transcribed by Albert F. Smith, Supervisory Shorthand Reporter, Office of The Inspector General, Headquarters, Department of the Army.)

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42
43
44
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