

OPERATION PICKETT

As the 1st Brigade concluded Operation GERONIMO I in the coastal province of Phu Yen, intelligence sources indicated that large concentrations of enemy troops existed in the Plei Trap and Dak Aloi Valleys northwest of Kontum in the Central Highlands. To initiate Operation PICKETT, designed to close with this enemy concentration, the brigade conducted an air movement from Tuy Hoa on the coast to Kontum in forty-nine hours. This rapid movement was made possible by around-the-clock flying and by turn-in of excess equipment by all units prior to making the move.

Combat operations began on 9 December with deployment of battalions into landing zones some twenty-four miles west of Kontum. The brigade's three battalions then initiated search and destroy operations, which revealed numerous enemy trails, camps, and weapons and food caches. Enemy contact was light. On 26 December, the 2-327th was withdrawn from combat patrol activity and entered a training period near Kontum to include a parachute jump. On 2 January 1967, the 2-327th returned to the field to engage in semi-guerrilla search and destroy missions. On 3 January, the 1-327th withdrew from the field to engage in a training phase, also including a parachute jump. The 1-327th returned to combat operations on 9 January, at which time the 2-502d entered the training phase. Throughout Operation PICKETT, the enemy avoided contact and only small, squad-size actions developed.