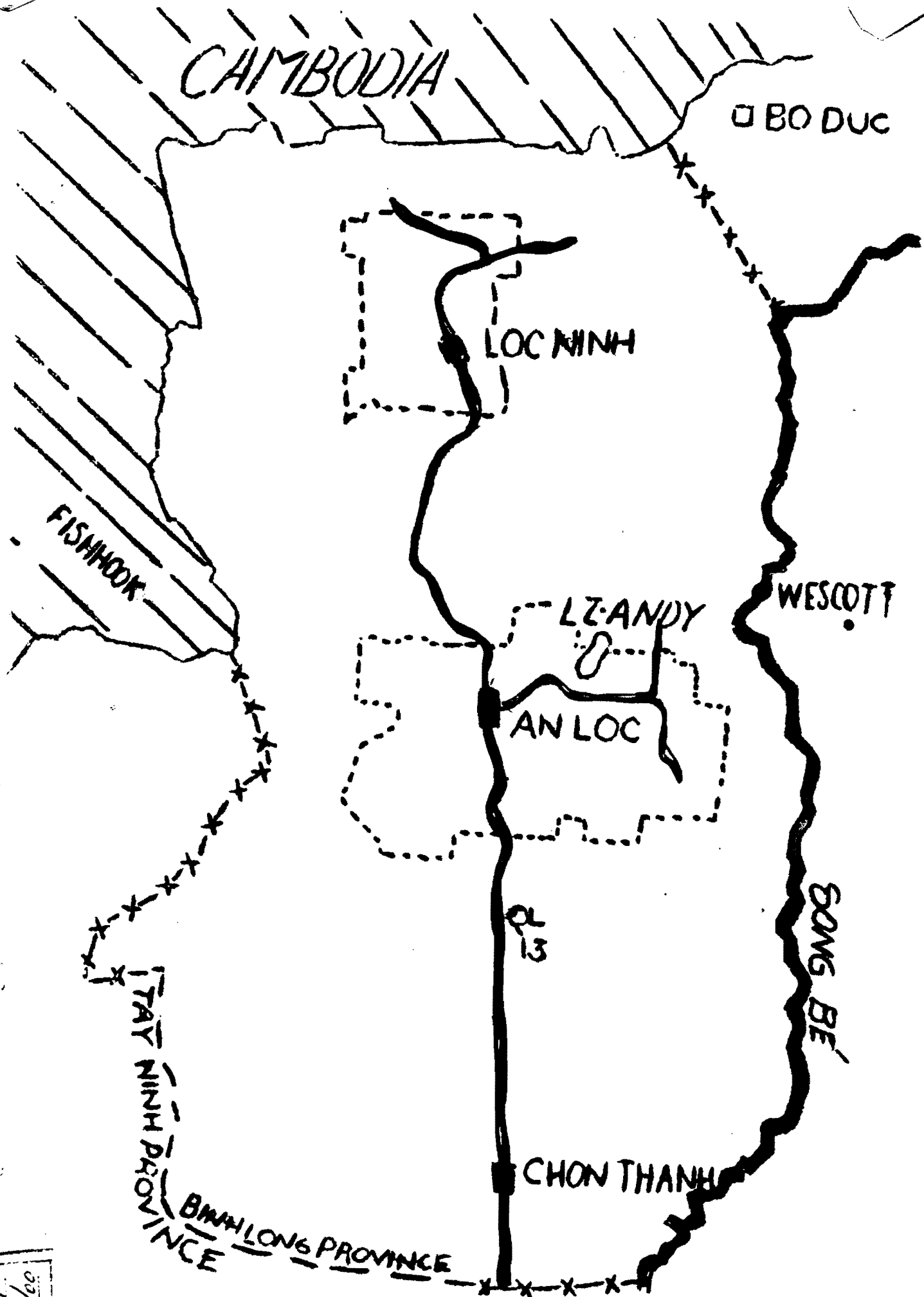


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The Battle of Binh Long Province

August 1969

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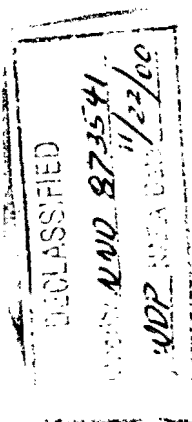
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
 14TH MILITARY HISTORY DETACHMENT
 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)
 APO San Francisco 96490

AVDAMH

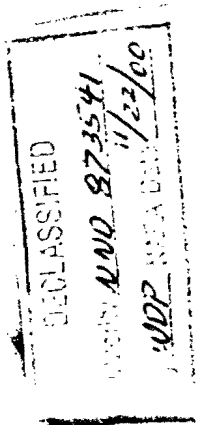
SUBJECT: The Battle of Binh Long Province, August 1969. 5-69.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF MILITARY HISTORY
 DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20315

1. Operation: Kentucky Cougar
2. Period Covered: 25 July - 12 August 1969.
3. Location: Binh Long Province, Republic of Vietnam.
4. Control Headquarters: 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).
5. Participating Elements: 3d Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile); 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment; 9th Infantry Regiment (ARVN): 1st Battalion (-), 16th Infantry (Mechanized), 1st Infantry Division; A Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Armored Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division.
6. Mission: To conduct operations throughout the Province with special attention to pacification and up-grade of ARVN units, and prevention of interference by main-force NVA units.
7. Persons Interviewed: (Letters in parentheses indicate the interviewer)
 - a. MAJ GEN E. B. Roberts, Commanding General, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - b. BRIG GEN George W. Casey, Assistant Division Commander (Operations), 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - c. COL Robert M. Shoemaker, Chief of Staff, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - d. COL James H. Leach, Commanding Officer, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. (a)
 - e. COL John P. Barker, Commanding Officer, 3d Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - f. LTC Ma Son Nhon, Commanding Officer, 9th Infantry Regiment (ARVN). (a)
 - g. LTC Lawrence Wright, Commanding Officer, TF Wright, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. (a)
 - h. LTC Kenneth Cassels, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry (Mech), 1st Infantry Division. (c)
 - i. LTC Richard W. Wood, G-3 Officer, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - j. LTC Angelo Perry, Deputy Commanding Officer, 3d Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - k. LTC Francis Ianni, Executive Officer, 3d Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - l. LTC James A. Graham, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - m. MAJ Robert D. Foley, S-2, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. (a)



- h. MAJ John O. Blake, Executive Officer, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - o. Maj Karl Gropsey, S-3, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - p. MAJ Robert V. Defavero, S-3, 3d Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - q. MAJ James A. Abrahamson, S-3 Plans, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. (a)
 - r. MAJ James E. Harris, Jr. S-3, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry (Mech), 1st Infantry Division. (c)
 - s. MAJ Donald L. McShane, G-3 Plans Officer, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - t. MAJ James B. Motley, Assistant G-3 Plans Officer, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - u. MAJ Dudley L. Tadey, G-3 Air, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - v. CPT William J. Newell, Commanding Officer, A Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division. (c)
 - w. CPT Robert A. Delaar, Commanding Officer, C Company, 8th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - x. 1LT Stephen B. Grubb, Aide-de-camp, Assistant Division Commander (Operations), 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - y. 1LT Gary Farington, Blue Sector Commander, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - z. 1LT Thomas R. Kelley, Intelligence Analyst, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. (a)
 - aa. 2LT Mark J. Wilson, Platoon Leader, E Troop, 2nd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. (b)
 - bb. PSG Lawrence D. Noland, Jr. Platoon Leader, 2d Platoon, A Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division. (c)
 - cc. SFC Joseph W. Weber, Intelligence Analyst, Division Advanced Command Post, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - dd. SP/5 James E. Foote, Driver, 1st Platoon, E Troop, 2d Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. (b)
 - ee. SP/4 Grenville Braman, A&D Clerk, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). (a)
 - ff. SP/4 Jeffrey A. Hanson, NCS Radio Operator, 2d Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. (b)
 - gg. SP/4 Joseph D. Corbin, Gumper, C Company, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry (Mech), 1st Infantry Division. (d)
 - hh. SP/4 William Florio, Assistant Gumper, A Company, 1st Battalion (Mech), 1st Infantry Division. (d)
 - ii. Richard E. Ross, Interrogation Team, S-2, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. (a)
8. Interviewers:
- a. CPT John A. Hottell, Division Historian, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).
 - b. 1LT William S. Jenks, Assistant Division Historian, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).
 - c. 1LT Joseph F. Frisz, Assistant Division Historian, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).
 - d. PFC Joseph P. Coughlin, Writer, 14th Military History Detachment, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).
9. All sketches, maps, and overlays in this report were drawn by SP/4 Joseph R. Sanchez, 14th Military History Detachment Combat Artist.



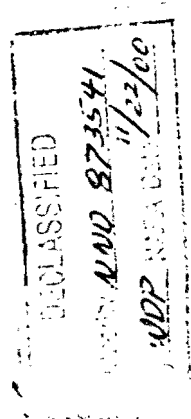
THE BATTLE OF BINH LONG PROVINCE
AUGUST 1969

I. PREFACE.

"Defense" and the tactical considerations entailed in this concept are usually considered something of a blacksheep in the military lexicon. The connotations of surrendering the initiative to the enemy and loss of surprise, along with all the detriments that being in such a posture normally includes, such as a penchant for "second-guessing the enemy" and the disaster that this invites, normally leads the combat commander to avoid the defensive situation whenever he can. Add to this the simple fact that planning for the defense is vastly more complex and therefore more vulnerable to the talons of "Murphy's Law" (if something CAN go wrong, it will) on all levels of consideration and execution, and defensive tactics rather clearly becomes a necessary evil - merely a description of what one does between attacks.

But in war the meek do not inherit much, and the present case under study, that of the defense of Binh Long Province by the First Cavalry Division in early August 1969, is a classic successful defense in the Vietnam War. All available resources of intelligence and firepower were employed to maximum effect, and meticulous planning followed by violent and expert execution won a great victory for the US Forces and our allies.

The operation was characterized by teamwork; elements of the First Cav, the First Infantry Division, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, and the 5th ARVN Division participated, and all took part in the fighting during the offensive. Intelligence played a key role in our success, and in no case was there the petty jealousy and with-holding of information that all too often characterizes joint intelligence operations. The spirit of cooperation that this shows pervaded all aspects of planning and execution and was as great a



contributor as anything else to the overwhelming success that was ours.

But when all the planning was done and all the intelligence gathered and all the bombs dropped and all the artillery fired, it was left to the American fighting man to display his courage and ability to react to the demands of the moment. The fighting was brutal, close, and tough, some of the heaviest fighting in the field that the First Cav has had for some time, but in no instance did duty suffer and the enemy was bested overwhelmingly on the fields of his choosing.

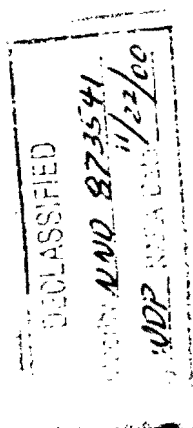
It is to the "Skytroopers" and his comrades-in-arms that we build our monuments.

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THE BATTLE OF BINH LONG PROVINCE

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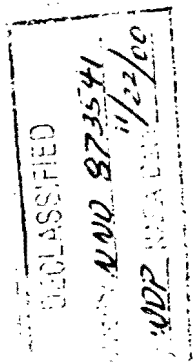
PART I: THE BATTLE OF BINH LONG PROVINCE

The month of June 1969 saw the deployment of the Third Brigade of the First Cavalry Division and the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) into Binh Long Province. Both units set up their headquarters in the old First Infantry Division Base at Quan Loi, only a few kilometers to the east of the province capital at An Loc. The region and the units were not strangers to each other, as the Fishhook is a favorite base area of several enemy divisions, and quite a few bloody battles had been fought in the past around An Loc and the district seat further north at Loc Ninh. The situation now, however, was slightly different.

Within recent months the Communists had set up a so-called "Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam" as an alternative to the Thieu Government in Saigon, and it was suspected that they would attempt to gain a province capital in the South, however temporarily, in which to establish it. An Loc and the province of Binh Long seemed a very likely target. The First Cav moved to deny it to the enemy.

I. THE TERRAIN.

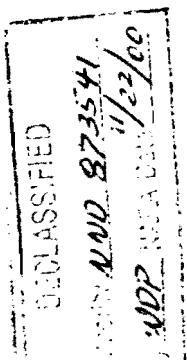
The terrain in the area presents quite a number of advantages to a potential attacking force. Foremost among these is the relative proximity of established Communist base areas in Cambodia; the straight-line distance from the Fishhook to An Loc is less than 20 Kilometers. Further, the enemy's presence in the Fishhook, if detected, would not necessarily indicate his target as attacks could be launched from that promontory to the Southwest, South, or East without, in the absence of other intelligence, our being able to foretell the actual direction of attack until it was too late. The Fishhook is, in this sense, a natural strategic choice for a base area.



In addition, the terrain between the Cambodian border and An Loc is first, extremely thick and sometimes marshy bamboo and jungle, in which, the enemy has learned, it is very difficult for us to pin him down. Then, for some seven kilometers to the west of An Loc, and virtually surrounding it, is one of the largest rubber plantations in South Vietnam. Approximately 149 square kilometers around An Loc and Quan Loi is in rubber, extending for 22 kilometers North-to-South and 12 kilometers East-to-West. Loc Ninh is also surrounded by some 70 square kilometers of plantation in a ten kilometer by eight kilometer area, and it is a mere six kilometers from the northern edge of this plantation to the Cambodian border.

The plantations are still quite productive, in spite of the war, and their neat rows of trees, in perfect dress and cover, provide a canopy that prevents both undergrowth and aerial observation. An added bonus is the fact that the trees are planted in perfect North-South and East-West rows, which makes navigation, even on the darkest night, a simple matter. The NVA has found that it can travel vast distances in a short time at night in this kind of rubber without being channeled onto trails for predictable avenues of approach, and his reconnaissance elements can move through it during the day without being spotted from the air. So it is that areas such as Loc Ninh and An Loc present targets that have virtually an infinite number of good avenues of approach suitable for use in large-scale night attacks.

But rubber plantations have similar advantages for the allies, and experience has taught us to make the most of them. Foremost among these is that it is suitable terrain for armor. The trees are for the most part some five to seven meters apart, which allows for easy movement of tanks and armored personnel carriers, and the same lack of undergrowth that aids the enemy helps us to a great a degree with the mobility of armor. So it was natural to team the 11th



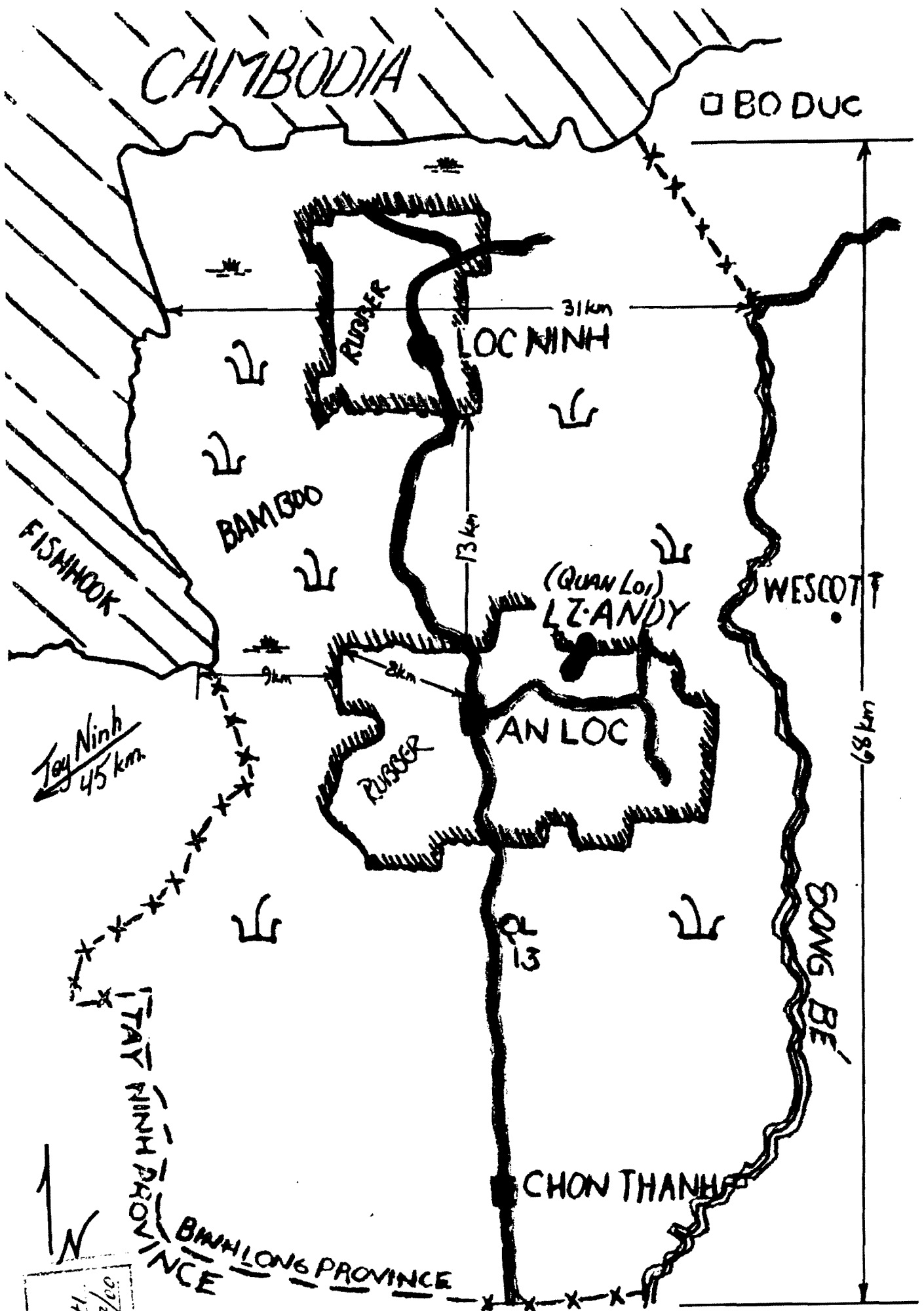


CHART I

THE TERRAIN

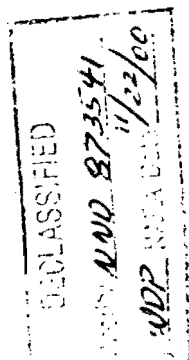
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ACR with the Third Brigade in the defense of the area, and the marriage of the two units was indeed a happy one.

Another advantage the allies have in rubber is that in it they can bring their vastly superior small arms and automatic weapons firepower to bear more effectively. The unobstructed fields of fire in 36 directions around the clock provided by the neat rows of trees and lack of undergrowth, would place the enemy at a distinct disadvantage when pitted against even a numerically inferior allied force. As will be seen later, one platoon was able to stand on its own against an enemy battalion for two hours, until it was reinforced, and there is no reason to believe that it could not have continued to do so by itself if ammunition had not run low.

Other aspects of the terrain in Binh Long Province are the Song Be River and Highway QL 13. The latter runs, as chart I shows, generally North-South right down the axis of the province connecting Chon Thanh, An Loc, and Loc Ninh, and is thus the vital artery of the area. It is a hard-surface, all-weather road which can definitely be classified in Vietnam as a high-speed avenue of approach. With armor deployed along it in stronghold positions, QL 13 could conceivably afford the defenders with interior lines in the event of an attack from the West. It can be argued whether such a thing as "interior line" even exists in the Vietnam War situation, but it will be seen that in this particular attack, we did, in fact, have interior lines, and it was put to good use. QL 13 could not have been considered any thing but the most critical of key terrain, and one of the missions of the 11th ACR was to defend it and keep it open.

Also running North-South some 12 kilometers to the East of the highway is the Song Be River. At the time of year in question, at the end of the monsoon season, the river is roughly 30 to 40 meters wide, with a swirling, dangerous

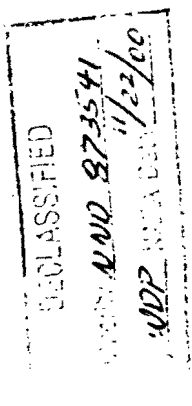


current and steep, overgrown banks. It definitely presents an obstacle to the rapid deployment of infantry troops into Binh Long Province for the East; however the vegetation is quite thick on both sides of the river in this vicinity, and if the enemy were willing and able to take the time, he could conceivably find concealment long enough to cross it in small groups.

II. INITIAL DEPLOYMENTS.

With the terrain playing such an important role, a division of labor between the armor and infantry was arrived at that assigned the armor, with infantry units attached, to the rubber and QL 13, while the infantry units of THE FIRST TEAM concentrated on the Song Be and the more thickly-vegetated areas which were unsuitable for armor. The general division of the province between the Third Brigade and the 11th ACR is shown in Chart II. The actual boundaries, of course, changed many times in response to the tactical situation and resources, but the territorial responsibilities and the division of labor they represent, remained substantially the same throughout the period before the attack.

At lower levels of command, still further divisions of labor between the armor and the infantry took place. Instead of simply mounting the infantry that was attached to the 11th ACR on tracks, and decreasing the fighting capability of both, it was decided to get the most out of the differing capabilities of the units of both arms. The infantry with its ability to move, albeit slowly, through extremely thick vegetation and to deploy into an area silently, was used as forward early warning and ambushes in the areas just outside the rubber. The armor, with its mobility and firepower and lack of stealth, took up central positions in the rubber from which it could quickly reinforce the infantry units which were then able to divide up into squad-size outposts and spread out over a greater area than they could normally cover



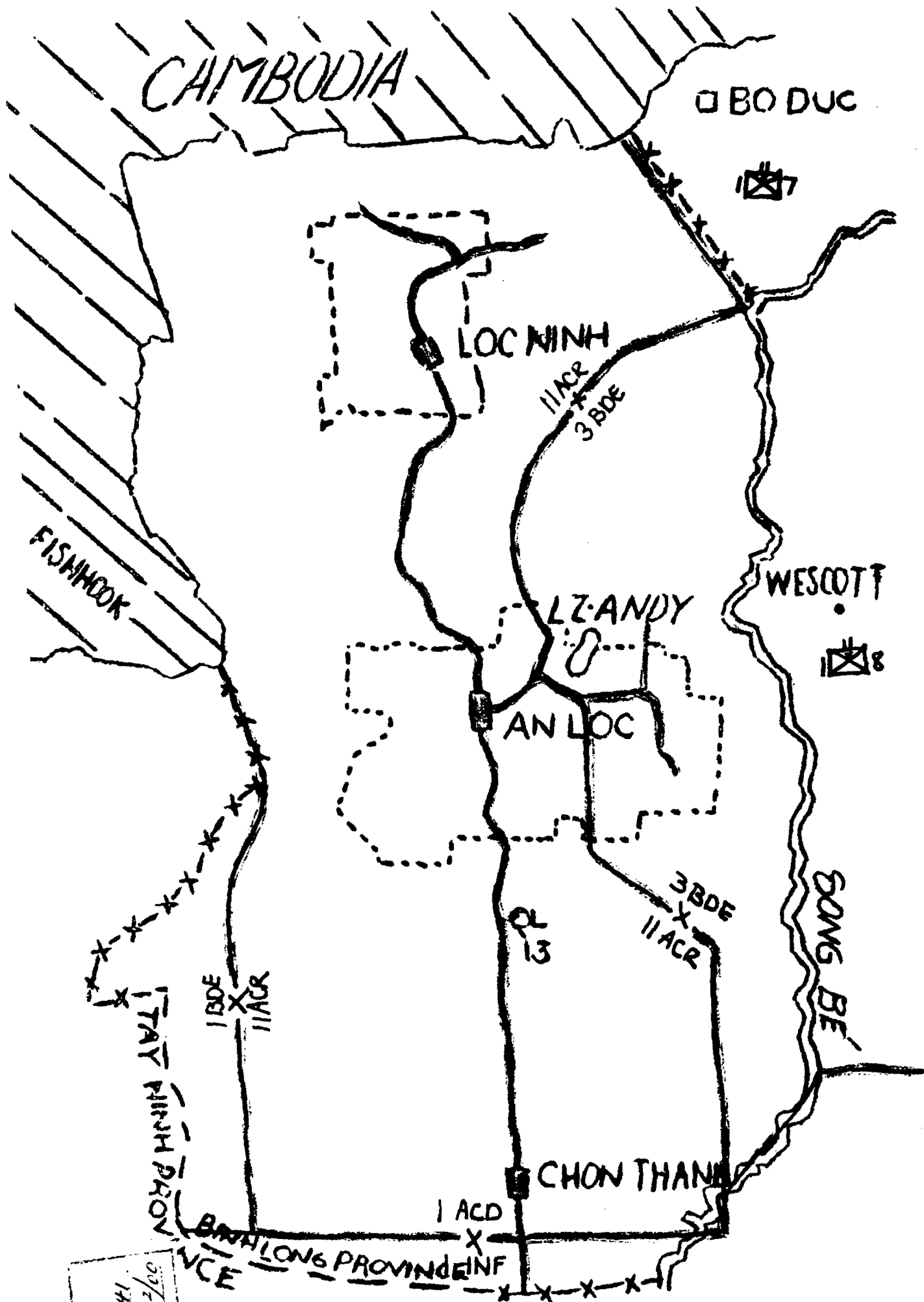


CHART II
Initial Disposition

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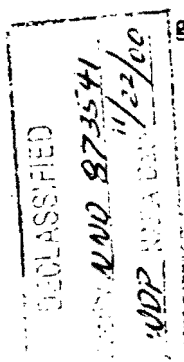
without the support of the armor. The armor by itself could have been easily detected and by-passed by an attacking enemy force and the infantry by itself covering the same amount of terrain (up to 4 kilometers per company) would have been slightly over-extended. But together, in a combined arms team, they effectively established the security of the area.

There were further missions that the FIRST TEAM was to accomplish in the province in addition to the obvious one of preventing intrusion by main-force NVA units. These were pacification and improvement of the ARVN forces in the area.

This latter mission received increased emphasis in June when Lt. General Do Cao Tri, the Commanding General of the ARVN III Corps Tactical Zone, announced his "Dong Tien" (Progress Together) program which was to begin on the first of July. The idea was to prepare the ARVN 5th Division, which had been having problems, to take over tactical responsibility for the area on its own by conducting as many combined and coordinated operations employing both ARVN and US troops as would be feasible. The Assistant Division Commander (Operations) was to be the First Cav point of contact with the elements of the 5th ARVN Division for command liaison, and would also be responsible for coordination with the Province Chief, Regional Force and Popular Force units, and the efforts of CORDS in the area as well.

After the first few halting steps, "coordinated" operations began increasing in frequency, with troops from the First Cav and the 11th ACR working together with ARVN's, RF's, PF's, and CIDG's. It is emphasized that these were "coordinated" operations and not really combined operations as there was no question of anyone being under the operational control of anyone else; ARVN's and Skytroopers, each with their own command structure, simply worked together on search and clear operations, combat assaults, and hammer and anvil sweeps, with the ARVN's making an increased number of kills. In the period 1-22 July there were a total of 42 joint ARVN-US operations throughout the FIRST TEAM area of operations.

In many ways the battle that was to come was to be the proof of the pudding, as it saw ARVN's and Americans fighting side-by-side in effectively denying the enemy goal.



III. THE INTELLIGENCE BUILD-UP AND HOI CHANH AN

It is almost axiomatic that the key to successful defensive operations is intelligence. Sufficiently accurate advanced information can actually transfer the initiative from the hands of the attacker into those of the defender, but as always in intelligence matters, the mere availability of information is only a part of the picture. The commander and his staff are confronted with a welter of unrelated facts and reports, many of them in conflict with each other, and it is quite often only with hindsight that they coalesce into clear indications of what was to come. It takes a little courage to take a stand and predict the course the enemy will take.

At 1800 hours on the 29th of July, three kilometers to the west of An Loc (Circle 4, Chart IV), a young man walked up to the 214th Regional Force Company in Binh Ninh and expressed a desire to "Chieu Hoi". He was taken to the Chieu Hoi center at An Loc on the 31st and was discovered there the same day when the interrogation team from the 11th ACR made a routine visit. His name was Nguyen Van An, 19 years old, and he said that he was a forced laborer/porter for the 9th VC Division which he claimed was in the Fishhook area. He was obviously intelligent and cooperative, and he gave the interrogators a list of AKA's (Also Known As) and personnel he said were in his unit as well as explaining rather thoroughly the organization of his division.

Several things were strange about his story. For one thing, it was felt that the 9th VC Division was still in the vicinity of the Angel's Wing in western Tay Ninh Province. While it was true that this Division had not been positively located for over a month, it seemed unlikely that it could move that far without our knowing it, and there were no indications, other than An's story, to substantiate his claim that it had moved to the Fishhook. It was known, of course, that the 9th Division had used the Fishhook as a base area in the past and had operated in Binh Long Province before, but without corroboration of any sort, An's story was just not very convincing.

Another puzzling thing, however, was that he displayed far too much knowledge as a simple forced laborer who had been with the 9th Division for only 59 days.

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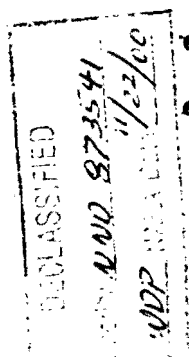
It is highly unlikely that anyone in such a position would know even a fraction of the information that An tried to give, but most perplexing of all was the fact that some of the things he said actually checked out with information already known to the interrogators. The AKA's he had given, further, had not been used for TWO YEARS, and this was definitely inconsistent with the other things he said. Fortunately, indeed most fortunately, he was not dismissed out of hand as a crackpot and the questioning continued in spite of the inconsistencies. Had the interrogators been less thorough-going and less persistent the forces defending Binh Long Province would have been without the vital information that contributed so much to the success of the operation.

On 2 August the interrogation team decided that An must be something more important than the porter he was pretending to be, and it was decided that they would have to try to convince him to tell the truth. When they arrived at the Chieu Hoi center, however, An ran out to greet them and started telling them the real story almost at once. It is difficult to say what brought about this decision on his part; but it is quite possible that he had gained some faith in the treatment he had received since giving himself up, as he had been treated quite well. The interrogators had even taken him out to eat once.

Piece by piece the story came out, and as it did, things began to make a little more sense. By the evening of the second of August the interrogation team was satisfied that they had at least a coherent report, if not a true one.

An was actually a platoon leader in the H21 Sapper Recon Company, 272nd Regiment, 9th VC Division. He had been fighting for five years without even going home, and he was convinced he would die if he participated in the coming operation. He had been told that he would be killed if he ever fell into Allied hands, but he read some psyops leaflets telling about the Chieu Hoi program and quite simply felt that his chances were better if he turned himself in, especially if he had some information that might prove of value to the Allies. He also felt, perhaps, that he would be shown more sympathy if he posed as a forced laborer, which he had in fact been some years before.

The crucial information he gave, however, was that the 9th VC Division and



elements of the 7th and 1st NVA Divisions would attack Binh Long Province sometime between 5 and 15 August, and the prime objective would be An Loc. The enemy plans that An outlines are depicted on Chart III. Basically he described a regimental-size attack on An Loc, with the 4th and 5th Battalions of the 272nd and the D368 Local Force Battalion providing the three prongs of the main attack force. If, for some reason, the Local Force Battalion would be unable to participate, it would be replaced by the Z28 Sapper Battalion of the 9th Division. The 6th Battalion of the 272nd and the entire 271st Regiment would have the mission of setting up blocking forces to the southwest of An Loc as shown.

An also believed that the four main force enemy divisions would have the following targets: 9th VC Division - An Loc, as stated; 7th NVA Division - Bo Duc, Loc Ninh, and Quan Loi; 1st NVA Division - interdiction of QL 13 to the south of An Loc and operations in Tay Ninh Province with the 5th VC Division.

The interrogators then got An to tell them about the battles that he had participated in over the last five years with the 9th Division. He gave accounts of fighting at Dong Xoai, Loc Ninh, An Loc, Bo Duc, and Tay Ninh, and this provided the intelligence people with a ready credibility check. It was discovered that the information the Hoi Chanh gave about each of these engagements was substantially correct and checked with the other information already known.

The next step was to reassess some of the recent intelligence of the area to see if there was anything that might substantiate An's story.

It was found that on the 25th of July, B Company, 1-8th Cav, while operating with the 11th ACD, had driven an estimated enemy company out of a bunker complex located generally southwest of An Loc (Circle 1, Chart IV). Documents on enemy bodies and in packs that had been left behind indentified the C-18 Anti-aircraft Company of the 101D Regiment, 1st NVA Division.

On 27 July, on the road between An Loc and Loc Ninh, cavalymen of F Troop, 2-11th ACR killed one NVA and documents on the body identified his unit as the C21 Sapper Recon Company, 209th Regiment, which is part of the 7th NVA Division (Circle 2, Chart IV).

unit identifications, while conforming to An's story, were not solid

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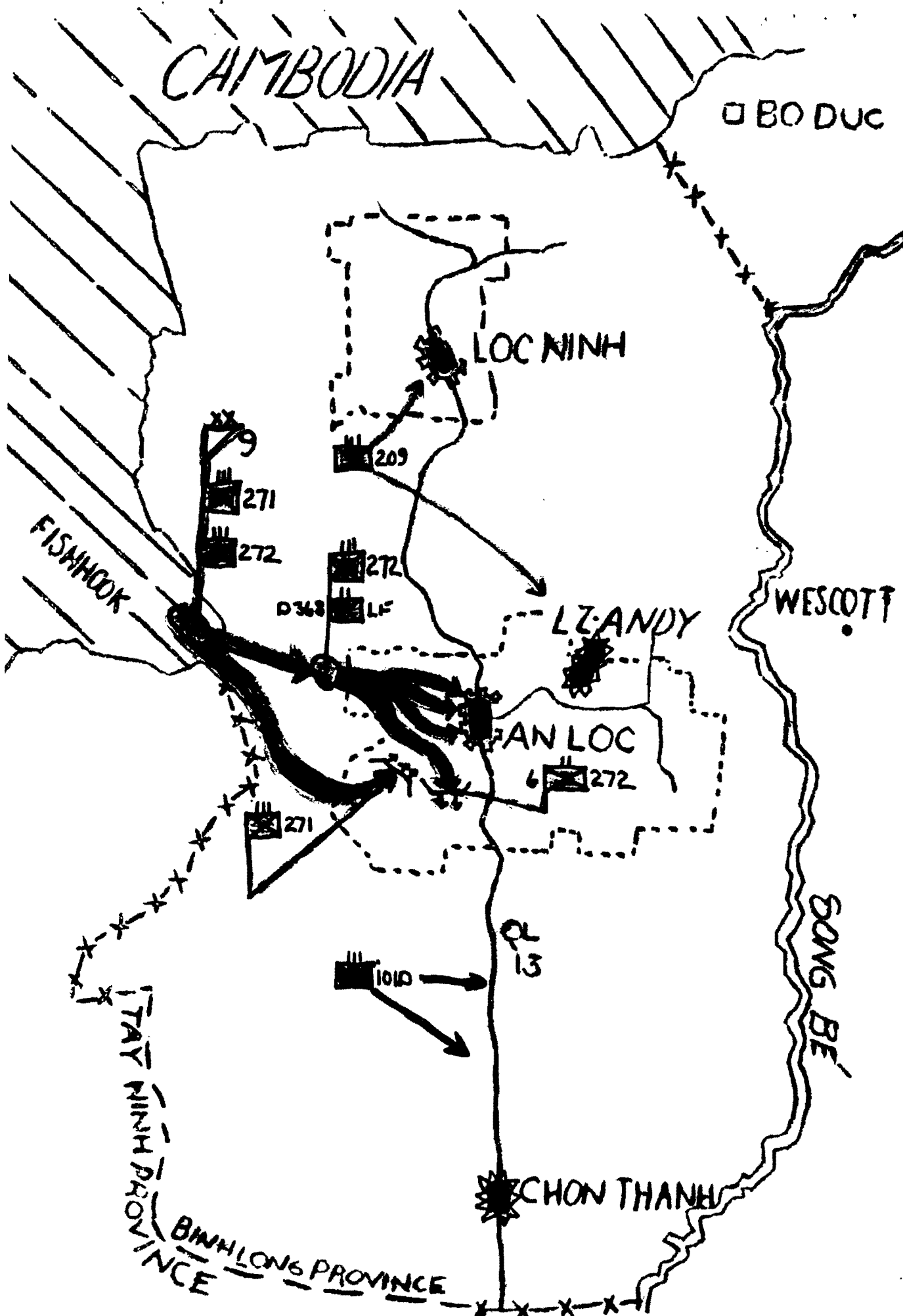


CHART III

The Enemy Plan
(See Appendix I)

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corroboration by any means. It was known that these units were in the vicinity and it was felt that the 101D and 209th Regiments probably had something similar to an Area of Operations boundary running roughly east-west through An Loc. More was needed before much faith could be placed in what An had told his interrogators.

Looking further, however, something slightly more solid was found. On 28 July, C Company, 5-7th Cav, working in the area south-southwest of An Loc (Circle 3, Chart IV) killed two NVA, and documents identified them as belonging to elements of the 271st and 272nd Regiments. At the time of the encounter it was felt that perhaps they were part of a group of hospital patients who had been sent to the 101D, and it was not seen as an indication that these units were in the area. Now, however, with An's story there was at least another possible explanation.

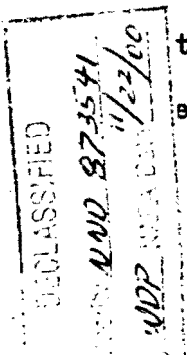
On 1 August, 16 Kilometers east of Loc Ninh (Circle 6, Chart IV), D Company, 1-7th Cav, had killed five NVA in a brilliantly-executed ambush and captured two. One of the PW's said the 7th NVA Division was to hit Quan Loi.

On 2 August, Nguyen Van Sen rallied to the 399th Regional Forces in An Loc and reported that between the 18th and 31st of July two companies of the 9th VC Division were reconnoitering the area east of An Loc (perhaps this was An's group). He also said that about 40 men from D368LF Battalion had moved into the same area on 31 July. This, to, fit in with An's contention that the D368 would participate with 272nd in the attack.

On the next day a PW was brought in who had been wounded in the engagement on 27 July with F/2-11 (Circle 9, Chart IV). He reported that the 209th Regiment was to hit Soc 10, a village in Loc Ninh District, some time between 5 and 7 August.

All this, plus some technological indicators, lent at least some credence to the information that An had given; it was possible that what he had predicted would come about, but that was about all anyone could say for it at this stage. Even the report that on 31 July a Hoi Chanh in Tay Ninh Province claimed that the 9th Division had passed through the vicinity of the Angel's Wing in early July did not definitely refute what favorable evidence there was supporting An. The division could easily have moved the distance from Angel's Wing to the Fishhook in the time then.

Bringing all of this, the 11th ACR completed its analysis of the facts



surrounding An's story on 3 August and decided that higher headquarters should be informed. The story and background were briefed at FIRST TEAM and II Field Force Headquarters that evening and the reaction at both places was that this was potentially a highly valuable piece of intelligence and one that could not be ignored.

Initially, just the same, there was a considerable amount of healthy skepticism on the First Team staff. Doubters pointed out, in addition to the obvious point that there was, as yet, very little support for the allegation that the 9th Division had moved to the Fishhook, that the plans outlined by An simply did not make sense in many respects. For one thing, his contention that the target for the 5th VC Division would be Tay Ninh was most assuredly incorrect at the time. Its location was known. For another thing, the planned blocking positions reputedly assigned to the 271st Regiment were in rather an unlikely place and orientation. No one could quite figure out just what they would hope to block in that area, and the 271st's positions as drawn out by An cut across the rear of the position he said the battalion from the 272nd would occupy.

Another seeming inconsistency was that, according to An, the D368LF Battalion would operate as a battalion in the center of the main attack on An Loc. If this were true it would be quite a departure from the enemy's normal practice of breaking down local force units and using them as guides for the main force attackers. There was nothing on the D368's record that would seem to justify its selection as an exception.

Perhaps most perturbing of all, however, was the simple fact that An seemed to know TOO much. It is highly unlikely that even a sapper recon platoon leader would know the complete plans of his division and the general objectives of three other divisions. He claimed to know so much that it actually hurt his credibility.

So the issue was very much up in the air. A summary intelligence report published by the First Cav on 4 August has this to say:

There is no other evidence to substantiate the alleged presence of the 9th VC Division in the above-mentioned areas (Binh Long Province and the Fishhook). The last known location prior to the above information was provided by a 16 June Hoi Chanh from the 271st Regiment, who located the 9th Division in the Angel's Wing on the Cambodian - Tay Ninh Province border. SLAR and IR (Sideward Looking Airborne Radar and Infra-Red) activity along the Adam's Road indicates some enemy presence in the area.

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However, these documents (Item 3, Appendix II) may pertain to hospital patients who have been sent to another division, possibly the 101D regiment, 1st NVA Division, which has been operating in the area.

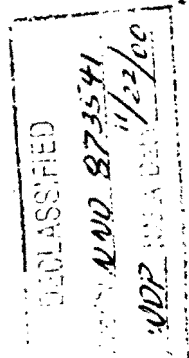
IV. PLANNING AND CONTINUING INTELLIGENCE

While the threat was, thus, by no means clear, planning procedures were initiated at FIRST TEAM Headquarters almost at once. It was felt that as long as there was a possibility that AN was giving an essentially true picture of the enemy's intentions, the First Cav should be prepared to meet the threat if it should materialize, and of course, potentially valuable planning and implementing time was already slipping by.

For the moment forces were shifted west of the Song Be and the Armored Cavalry Squadron at Loc Ninh was reinforced with two rifle companies. This squadron also stepped up Dong Tien operations with the local ARVN forces in hopes of further strengthening the defenses of the area. The 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry shifted an additional company into the rocket-belt area around LZ Andy, conducting a joint operation with its B Company and the Regional Forces from Phu Mieng in the process, and the First Cav's Third Brigade re-evaluated its base defense plans for LZ Andy itself. Plans were also made to send the 1st Battalion, 7th Cav to the Bo Duc-Bu Dop area to establish a jump CP with two of its companies.

Other planning considerations included the possibility of establishing a Division Jump CP at Quan Loi. The FIRST TEAM recognized very quickly the problems of coordination that would occur between the three essentially equal allied forces involved in the defense of Binh Long Province: The Third Brigade, the 11th ACR, and the 9th ARVN Regiment. It was suggested that the ADC-A would be considerably reinforced in his mission of providing this coordination if he were given a staff that could concentrate solely on the area.

Accordingly OPLAN JUMP was formulated. At noon on the 5th of August a planning conference was held with the Headquarters Commandant, G-2, G-3, Artillery and Signal personnel in attendance, plus representatives of the 11th Aviation Group. The following guidance was given: A jump headquarters (Appendix I, Div TAC SOP) would be established at Quan Loi on order and satellited to the Third Brigade



with the mission of coordinating the defense of the An Loc/Loc Ninh/Quan Loi complex. The advanced Command Post was to be on one hour notice.

Other planning included a careful assessment of available resources and steps were taken to insure that full use of all pertinent capabilities was made. Psyops personnel started preparing leaflets and tapes for broadcast, and surveillance missions of all types - Scout teams, Sniffer, SLAR, and IR, just to name a few - were concentrated on the Fishhook area. "Hunter-killer" or "Pink" teams focused on the area to the East of the Fishhook and began getting results almost at once. On the 4th, 5th, and 6th of August they killed a total of 25 NVA in three locations (Circles 11 and 12, Chart IV), and surveillance assets began confirming the presence of the enemy in this area. The picture had begun to clarify, and it is fair to say that by the 6th of August the key personnel on the First Cav staff had decided that the general aspects of the threat outlined by An were true.

Requests for B-52 strikes for the area of the Fishhook were submitted. On the 4th, 5th and 6th only two strikes per night were dropped in this region, but with the increased evidence of the presence of the enemy in large groups it was felt that the number of strikes should be increased. Four were submitted for the night of the 7th, increasing to seven each for the nights of 8 and 9 August, and all of these were dropped (Appendix IV). The First Cav, with its excellent targeting and Bomb Damage Assessment (BDA) systems, gets perhaps maximum benefit from this particular brand of "heavy artillery". The results speak for themselves as will be seen from the events following the massive strikes on the 8th and 9th.

V. THE DIVISION ADVANCED COMMAND POST

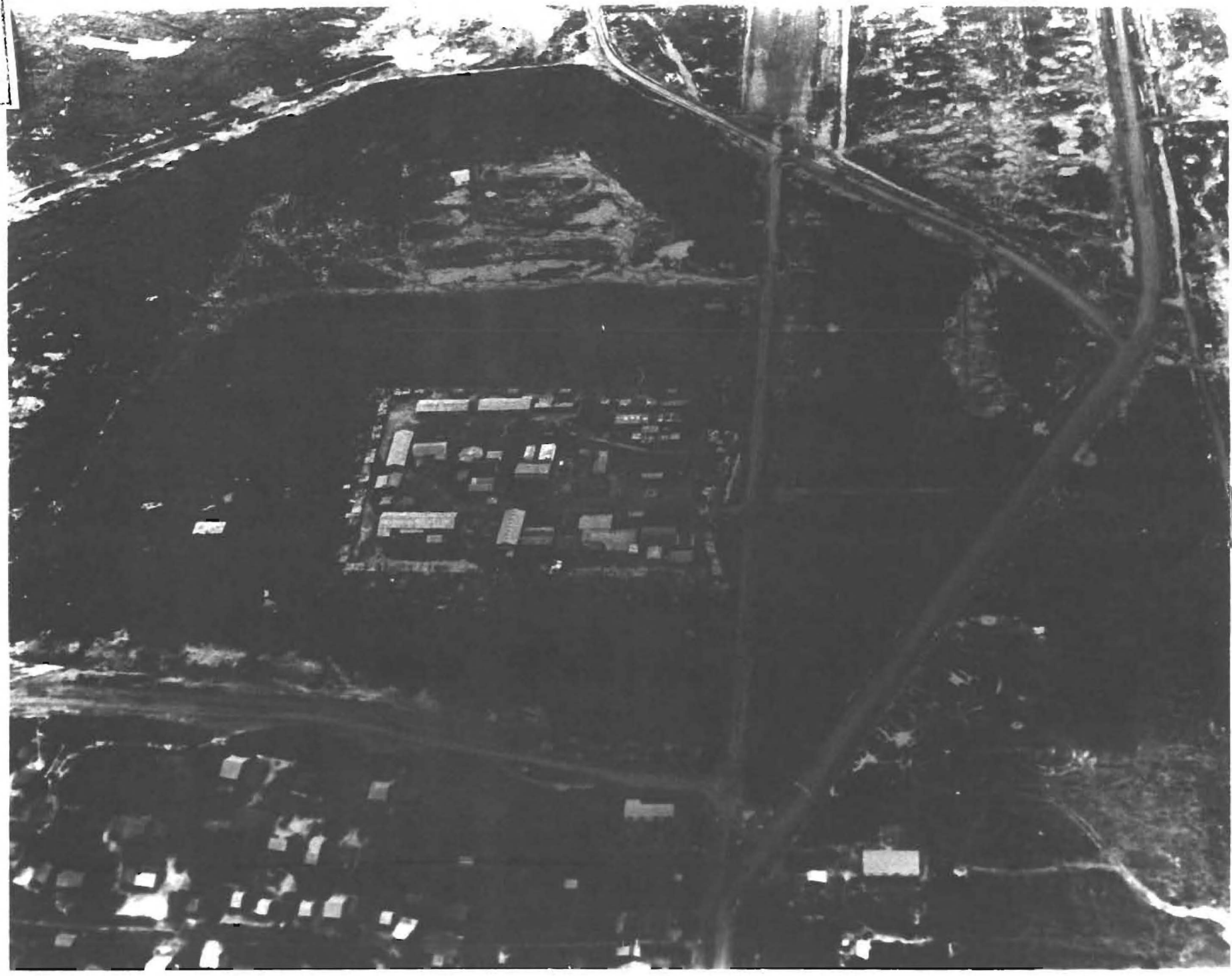
The 7th of August seems to have been decision day in the build-up before the Battle of Binh Long Province; the day when reputations were staked on the value of the available intelligence. As can be plainly seen, the picture was, at that time, by no means clear, there was still no solid corroboration of An's story, and it is easy to appreciate the quality of a unit that sees when a decision has to be made, makes it. When resources are spread thin, it takes courage to commit them to a small area on the basis of imperfect information, but in war, he who waits for "perfect information" never moves.

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At 0912 hours the order was issued to execute OPLAN JUMP. Communications and Artillery personnel left for Quan Loi almost at once, and the rest followed at about 1330 hours. By early afternoon the Division Advanced Command Post, with its complement of 22 men from the main headquarters at Phouc Vinh, was in full operation from the TOC at LZ Andy. It should be emphasized that this was not a command headquarters, but rather a staff group to effect coordination between units. Its mission was to coordinate planning for the defense of the area, including Dong Tien operations, and to provide the First Cav with a command capability closer to the battlefield.

In spite of the problems caused by bleeding key personnel from the Division Headquarters without really giving the Advanced CP an adequate staff, the arrangement must be judged a success. From the moment of its arrival at Quan Loi, the Division Jump CP energized the allied defenses and efficiently coordinated the highly complex defense and counter-attack planning, with an effectiveness that needs to be measured only by the overwhelming success of the operation.

Other major redeployments took place on the 7th. In the morning hours the 1st Squadron, 11th ACR at Loc Minh lost its two air cav companies, A/5-7 and B/1-8 - the former going to Quan Loi to reinforce the base defense and the latter traveling to Bu Dop to augment the 1-7th's forces in that area. In their place came the 34th ARVN Ranger Battalion and a joint CP was formed and dubbed "Task Force Wright".

On the basis of prior experience in the An Loc area in December 1968 it was decided that an additional armored cav or mechanized battalion was needed, and at 1340 hours on the seventh, the 1st Battalion (Mechanized) of the 16th Infantry for the First Infantry Division was alerted to move to the An Loc area with its A and C Companies. To make a full battalion, A Troop, 1-4 Cav, also from the 1st Division was obtained and went under 1-16 control. The 4th Battalion, 9th ARVN Regiment, in accordance with the Dong Tien program, was teamed with them and the combined force was given responsibility for the area just to the north and west of An Loc.

The flexibility of the FIRST TEAM and its attached units and the decisiveness with which decisions were made and carried out on the seventh of August contribute to all members of the team. As the First Cav is somewhat famous for

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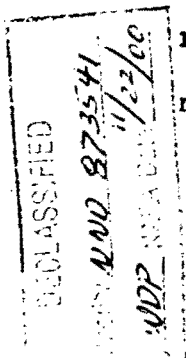
its flexibility and manages to make shifts such as this one often, it is all too easy to forget how much cooperation, decision, and good old-fashioned hard work it takes to bring about such a realignment of forces in such a short period of time. Embellishments and refinements were to come in the days that followed, but the disposition of forces for the defense of Binh Long Province became in a short 24 hours basically what it would be when the attack came.

The arrival of the 1-16th Mech had allowed the 2-11th ACR to concentrate on the area south of An Loc as well as continuing its mission of security of QL 13. Task Force Wright, which had the delicate task of defending Loc Ninh, nestled in its picturesque but tactically dangerous valley surrounded by rubber, now consisted of two battalions. The 1-7th Cav had three companies in the Bu Dop area instead of two, and the base defense at the key installation of Quan Loi had been augmented by a company. The 9th ARVN Regiment, with TF 1-9, concentrated on An Loc itself, and there were ARVN units serving side-by-side with their American allies at all points within the area of operations and at all levels of command. And to coordinate all of this there was now a Division Advanced Command Post at Quan Loi.

An integral part of a good defense plan is a counter-attack plan, and this was by no means ignored. The Jump CP gave this aspect of the preparations its most circumspect attention. Considering the nature of the terrain in the area it was felt that the combination of armor with airmobile units would provide the perfect team for cutting off the withdrawal of the enemy back into his base areas in Cambodia. The concept was to swing the armor around to the west of the enemy in the rubber and back this up with the insertion of airmobile infantry into the areas beyond the rubber where the armor could not operate. All participating units were instructed to prepare detailed counter-attack plans to cover several different contingencies, and to rehearse them (Overlays 3-6, Appendix VII).

The artillery units in the area, both American and ARVN, also prepared their fire support plans in conjunction with the plans of the maneuver units. This was done so effectively, in fact, that when the attack came, all the guns had to do rank on the data already computed and fire (See Appendix V).

In the meantime the tactical situation was developing still further. On the

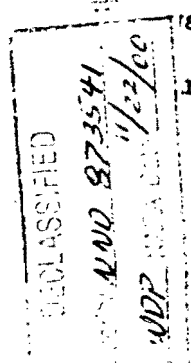


8th of August at An Loc, Pham Van Do rallied to the ARVN forces. He said that he was from the 8th Battalion, 209th Regiment, and that his unit would cross the Cambodian border, cross the Canle River and attack An Loc from the southwest. There was a good deal of question as the validity of this report, but it still raised the ever-present question of whether the right decision had been made.

On 9 August after the heavy B-52 strikes of the night before, things began to break. At Circle 15 on Chart IV, in the vicinity of the Fishhook, B Troop, 1-9th Cav, an Air Cav Troop, killed 23 NVA who were part of a large force spotted in the open. It was believed that the unit engaged was a part of the 272nd. At 0905 hours that same day the Air Cav Troop (ACT) from the 11th ACR spotted another large group of NVA in a clearing. They engaged the enemy force, killing 33, and this time the identification was more certain: 271st and 101D Regiments (Circle 16, Chart IV).

Still on the 9th, earlier in the morning, at circle 17 on chart IV, a most daring operation took place. The ACT was conducting a BDA of the B-52 strikes of the night before when they spotted a small group of NVA sitting in what appeared to be a stunned state among some bunkers. Two of the OH6A (loach) crews volunteered to take some of the ARP's (Aero Rifle Platoon) into the area to see if they could take any prisoners for questioning. There was really no suitable landing zone in the area, so the loaches had to hover down over one of the bomb craters, pushing the vegetation aside with their propwash, until the infantry could dismount. Six prisoners were taken in this bold venture and they were ferried back to Quan Loi at five men per aircraft in a helicopter that normally has to strain to carry four!

Van Ngiah, one of the PW's, said that he was a member of the 1st Battalion, 101D, and that his battalion base area had been hit by a B-52 strike the night before. He stayed in his bunker all night, and when he came out the following morning he found that only five others were remaining in the area! The PW's taken in this raid were a mixture of supply and administrative personnel, and all of them told of the havoc wrought on their installations by the B-52 strikes. The unit as securing the area was actually the 1st Battalion, 271st, as was learned another prisoner.



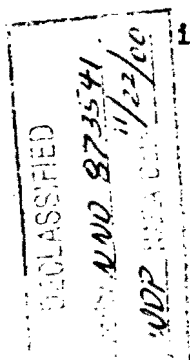
The following day, 10 August, saw another daring raid. Again, while on a BDA mission, helicopters from the 11th ACR spotted an estimated company-size force sitting in a lightly-vegetated area (Circle 18, Chart IV). The loaches got right down in the tops of the trees, not fifteen feet from some of the enemy troops, and they were surprised to see that the men on the ground would look at them and make a show of pushing their weapons aside! When this was reported to the rear, no time was wasted in taking advantage of what was felt to be an opportunity to take a large number of enemy prisoners. Nearly everyone got into the act.

A psyops bird, with a loudspeaker and an interpreter in it, was bounced immediately and flew over the area encouraging the enemy to give up. A smoke grenade was dropped into a clearing and the loudspeaker instructed the NVA soldiers to go to it and they would be picked up. One came out after about 15 minutes, was extracted, and the interpreter continued to urge more to come out.

While this was going on, troops were being moved into the area. The lightly-vegetated area the enemy had been spotted in was enclosed by clearings on the east and west with the narrower gap between the clearings on the south. The hastily-devised plan was to put the ARP's from the 11th ACR across this southern gap, and insert a company from the 4-9th ARVN's in true Dong Tien spirit with a platoon from Company C, 1-16th Mech, and the "blues" from B/1-9 across the vegetated area of the north.

While this was being done another two enemy soldiers responded to the loudspeaker and were picked up. They indicated under hasty questioning that there were "hard Core" individuals among those remaining that would probably not allow any more to come out.

And sure enough, shortly after all the ground troops were in place, a few of the enemy engaged the ARP's on the right flank, wounding two and leaving the allies with no recourse but to open fire. ARA (Aerial Rocket Artillery) and tube artillery were called in and when the smoke cleared there were 31 enemy dead and five additional detainees (Four of which were classified as PW's), and there were no further friendly casualties. Apparently the group was fresh from a hospital in Cambodia (two of the PW's were medics, one of them medical training cadre),



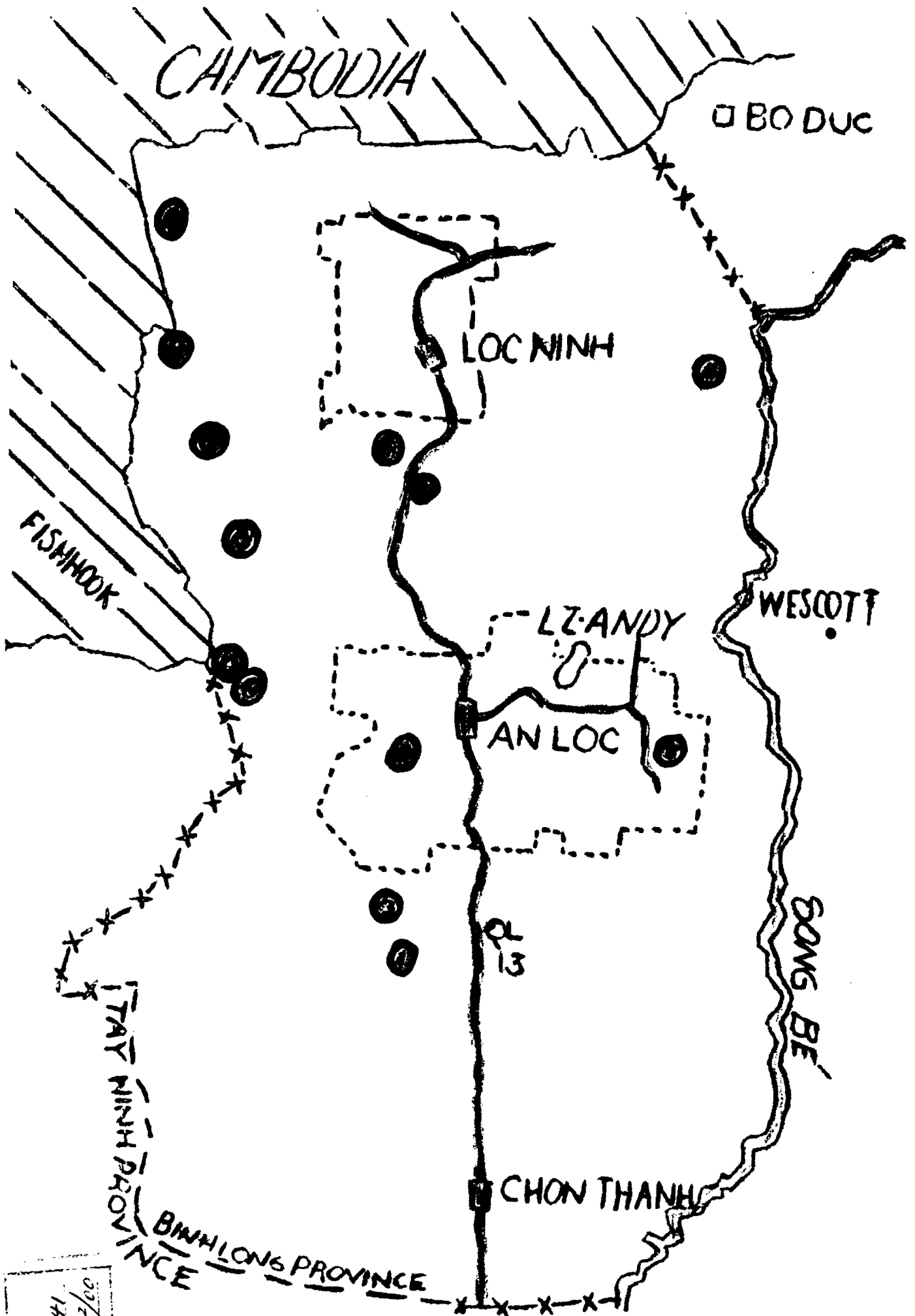


CHART IV

CHART IV

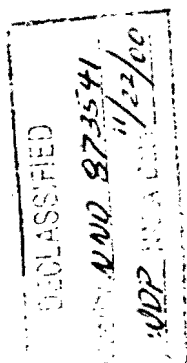
Intelligence Build-up (See Appendix II)

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and they were carrying 120mm mortar rounds to an artillery unit supporting the 272nd; the "hard core" individuals were from the 272nd.

This engagement was a forerunner of what was to come. ARVN's and Americans, troops from the First Cav, the First Infantry Division, and the 11th ACR worked together in perfect harmony in the accomplishment of a stunning, if small-scale victory. Swift and decisive execution and maximum use of resources were also characteristics that were to be seen later, and the total impression is that this relatively small operation was a microcosm of the resounding defeat the enemy was to suffer at allied hands two days later. It could also be said to be the high-point of Dong Tien operations that preceded the actual battle, as the ARVN's carried more than their share of the fight.

By the 10th of August, then, it was becoming clear that the decisions of the 7th had been sound. Hoi Chanh An's story had been substantiated as far as units and their orientation were concerned, but this did not mean that the defenders were to fall into the trap of meeting only the challenges outlined in the plans he gave them. Defense and counter-attack by elements of the 9th, 7th, and 1st enemy divisions on the province of Binh Long. A total of 14 landing zones had been selected and reconnoitered for the insertion of airmobile infantry into blocking positions, and the 11th ACR mapped out several counter-attack routes for its three task forces to become acquainted with (Detailed overlays of these plans should be looked at in Appendix VII). Rehearsals and practice alerts were held. Further, forces had been deployed so that they provided maximum coverage and swift reaction to any threat that might develop. The highly mobile forces of the 11th ACR were never so far away from QL 13 that they could not provide quick and strong assistance to any point along its route, maintaining the advantage of interior lines mentioned before. Infantry units were set out in small, mutually-supporting elements in a classical COPL-type role, where they had merely to orient to the rear to provide close-in blocking forces in the way of enemy egress. And, perhaps most important, allied forces were present in sufficient strength to cover the terrain and meet even the strongest enemy challenge, which is precisely



what they got.

VI. THE LULL AND THEN THE DELUGE

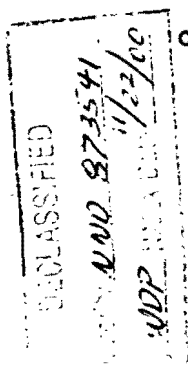
After the crescendo of activity building up to the 10th, the quietness of the 11th stood out like a warning flag. Simply nothing happened. Surveillance aircraft of all descriptions were out, and they found very little. Known enemy radio nets were silent. Some 129 enemy soldiers had been killed in the province by the elements of the First Cav. and the 11th ACR in just the action that related to the intelligence build-up in the past ten days and on the 11th there were no contacts. The enemy was in position and he was ready to strike; fortunately this is the way the lull was interpreted.

Final changes were made on the 11th. A Troop, 1-4th Cav was moved to the rubber south of Quan Loi in an economy-of-force measure, being replaced at Task Force 1-16 by D Company, 5-7th Cav.

Psyops swung into its final phase of the operation by dropping its leaflets and making the Loudspeaker broadcasts prepared several days before. Copies of the leaflets are included in Appendix VI. These were dropped along the most likely routes the enemy would follow, and they told the enemy soldier that we knew his plans and had quite a surprise waiting for him. The design, rather clearly, was to undermine his confidence in his leaders and reduce his willingness to fight, and in the fighting that was to follow there was considerable evidence that this approach had had its effect in the large number of prisoners that were taken.

The final disposition of forces can be seen in greater detail in overlay 2 of Appendix VII, but the general breakdown is shown on charts V and Va. TF Wright was at Loc Ninh and FSB Jon, TF 1-16 was divided between LZ Allons II and Thunder IV with the ARVN's in advanced positions further to the west. The 2nd Squadron, 11th ACR was at Aspen and the 15th ARVN Cav with 1-9th ARVN Infantry was at nearby Sidewinder, both units having companies and platoons deployed throughout the general area. Elements of two battalions of the 9th ARVN Regiment provided close-in security at An Loc, and the 2-1st ARVN Cav was at Chon Thanh. The Third bri-

of the First Cav had two air Cav companies on LZ Andy, one as base



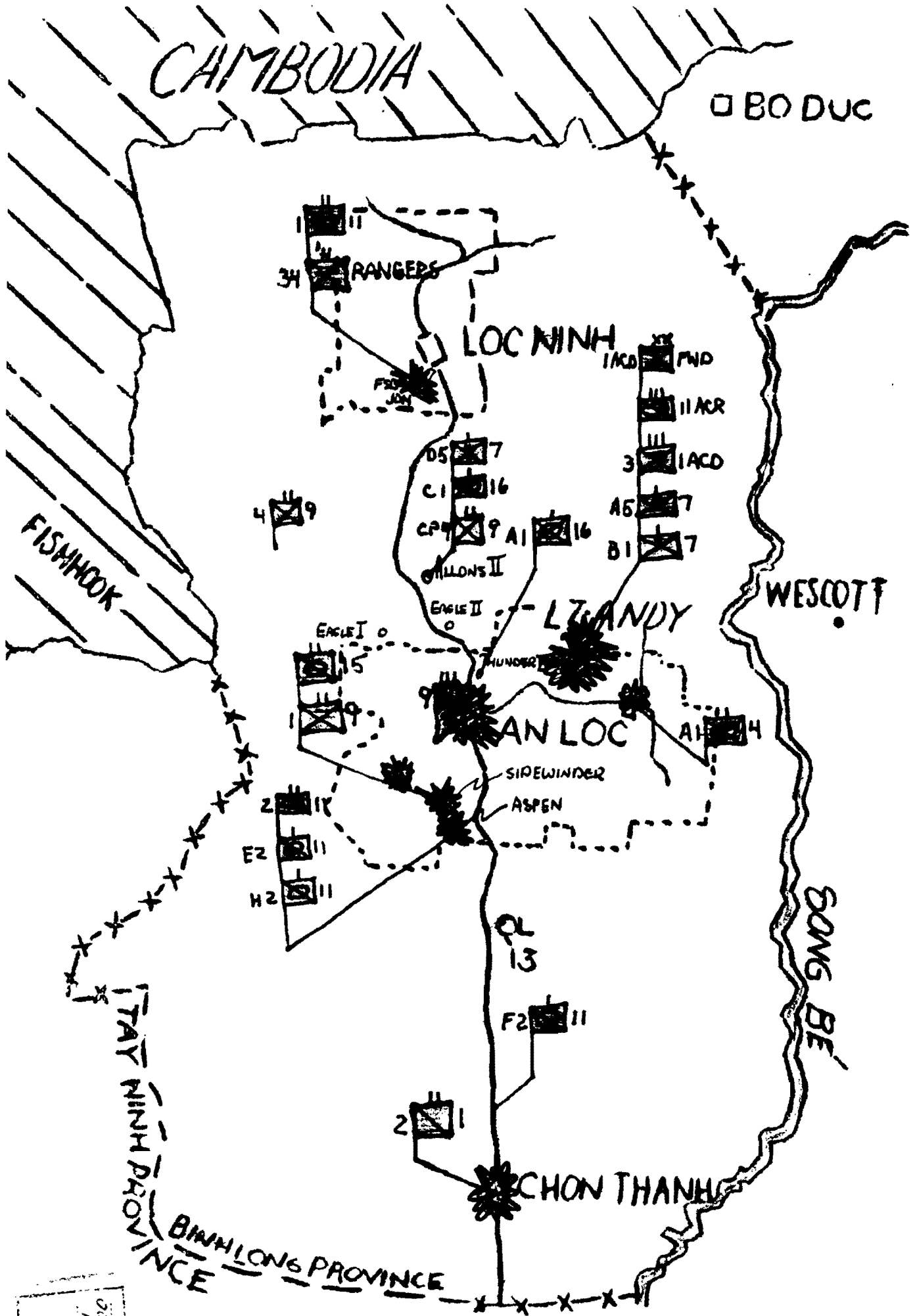


CHART V

DISPOSITION OF FORCES. 1900 HRS 11 AUGUST

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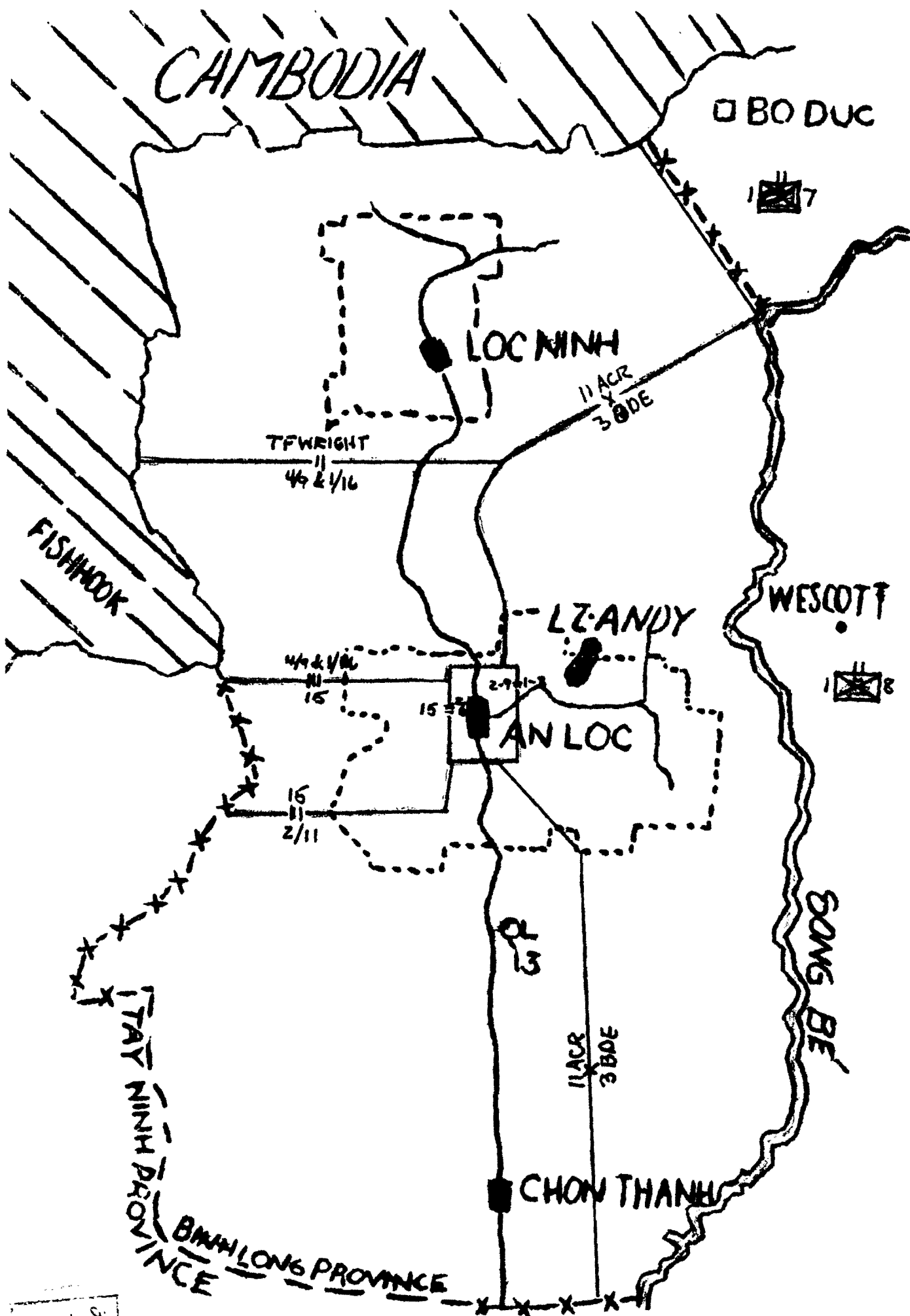


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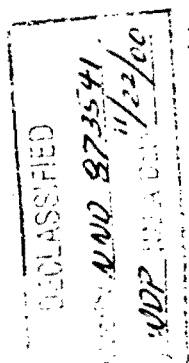
Disposition of Forces 11900 August
(See Overlay 2 Appendix VII)

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defense and one as a Ready Reaction Force (RRF), and three companies - two air cav and one armored cav - deployed as early warning and screening forces around the periphery. All units were alert as night fell; all units were ready.

It is a good thing that they were, as when the attack came, it came with a suddenness and ferocity seldom seen before. At 0045 hours, the 12th of August had barely gotten under way when Chon Thanh took the first blow. Hit by a 100-120-man force and incoming mortars, the troopers of the 2-1st ARVN Cav dug their heels in and fought the enemy back, with the help of two spookies. F Troop, 2-11th ACR, from its position 4.5 kilometers to the north along QL 13, came sweeping down the road to the southwest end of the Chon Thanh airstrip for added security. Two NVA prisoners were taken by the ARVN's, and their unit was established as the 101D Regiment. Left behind when the enemy withdrew were nine of their number.

Twenty minutes later, at 0105 hours, what was to be **the** most crucial engagement of the enemy campaign began when Quan Loi started taking incoming mortars and B-40's, and very shortly after it was discovered that the enemy was inside the wire on the western side of the LZ. He eventually broke through at a total of three locations, the other two being on the eastern side, and sharp fighting raged both inside and outside the perimeter all night. The enemy was denied a significant penetration, however, with the heroism and valor on the part of Third Brigade Troopers. Mopping-up operations to eliminate the enemy that had gotten inside the wire continued until after dawn, with three sappers getting to within 100 meters of the TOC before they were stopped by a small force of medics. All available means of support were employed: ARA, Spooky and Shadow aircraft, direct fire from the artillery on Andy itself supporting fires from nearby firebases. Gallant and courageous fighting by clerks, cooks, and mechanics and acts of unusual resourcefulness and bravery soon stabilized a potentially dangerous situation, and the enemy's main effort in the campaign was beaten. Seven Americans lost their lives in this fighting, one of them the aircraft commander of a Cobra gunship that took a direct hit from a 107mm rocket, but over 55 enemy dead were left behind and 7 prisoners were taken. (For a detailed account of the fight at LZ Andy, see II of this report).



A great part of the credit for the successful defense of Quan Loi must also go to the second platoon of A/1-4 Cav, which, in its screening position 2 kilometers to the south of the LZ, sustained a ferociously heavy ground attack beginning at about 0115 hours, Engaging an enemy force of battalion size for two hours without support of any kind (communications had gone out in the initial burst of fire) this one platoon in all probability stopped the enemy main attack from reaching the gaps in the wire on the eastern side of Quan Loi in time. An unidentified helicopter finally helped the platoon contact their troop commander and the rest of the troop reinforced them at about 0315 hours, at which point ammunition was so low in the second platoon that they figured they were only 30 minutes from being over-run. When ARA's "Blue Max" showed up, however, the shoe was on the other foot, and the enemy quickly left the scene, his morning-report strength decreased by 38, while the "Quarterhorse" lost two.

Between 0120 and 0210 hours incoming mortars and rockets were received at the following locations: 0120 - An Loc, 0135 - Sidewinder, 0140 - Aspen and Phu Mieng, 0150 - An Loc again, along with villages to the northwest, and 0210 - Loc Ninh.

At 0210 hours, D Company, 1-11th ACR, in its position north of the air-strip at Loc Ninh, started taking RPG's (Rocket Propelled Grenades) and at the same time FSB Jon received small-arms and B-40 fire from the southwest. A joint ARVN-US ambush was sent out and made contact with an estimated 40-man enemy force. The encounter was brief, the enemy seeming to be most interested in leaving the area, but 12 NVA were killed before this was accomplished.

D Company, meanwhile, was still taking RPG's in its location and soon had two tanks burning, with one soldier trapped in the cupola of his flaming vehicle. At 0345 hours, C Troop and a part of the 1st Company, 34th ARVN Rangers were sent to reinforce them and the situation soon stabilized. In this action the 34th Rangers distinguished themselves with some of the most aggressive fighting of the night. Their company commander was awarded the Silver Star for killing seven of enemy with his .45 caliber pistol; he shot six and clubbed the seventh. enemy losses in this fight with D Company and its reinforcement units were

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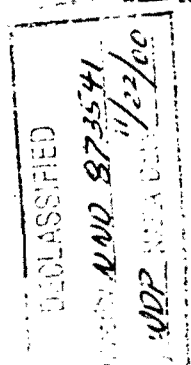
19 KIA, all from the 209th Regiment.

At 0227 hours, Aspen reported that it was receiving a heavy ground probe accompanied by incoming. The effective volume of firepower put out by the elements of the 2-11th ACR, with help from Spooky, was so great that the enemy attack could not be long sustained, and the NVA retired from the field shortly after 0300 hours leaving behind 32 of their dead and 2 PW's who said they were from the K2 Battalion, 271st Regiment.

Bare minutes after the attack at Aspen started, at about 0241 hours, the 15th ARVN Armored Cav and their infantry unit at Sidewinder reported that they too were under attack from the east and northeast. The ARVN's had not moved into position until after 1700 hours the afternoon before and had not therefore, had sufficient time to prepare their defenses adequately. Still, they fought as best they could with what they had and made the enemy pay dearly for every inch of ground. The NVA had gotten in the wire by 0305 and had broken in the northeastern side of the perimeter. Spooky and ARA arrived quickly on the scene and provided most valuable support

At this time E Troop, 2-11th ACR, which was in position at Aspen with platoon-size advanced positions along QL 13 in the rubber, was ordered to move to Sidewinder in support of the ARVN's. The enemy had already made a penetration of part of the perimeter when E Troop was notified, so they did not waste any time. The situation was quite tense for the next 40 minutes.

One of E Troops tracks, while hurriedly moving to Sidewinder, hit a mine just 600 meters to the south of their destination, and two platoons were held at this location as a reaction force while the first platoon swept around to the northern side of the LZ. This platoon had to fight its way through, but it quickly closed the gap, rolling its tracks up on the berm at about 0400 hours, a bare 40 minutes from the time they were first alerted to move. The remainder of the troop closed on the LZ at 0420 hours and the situation stabilized, relieving the pressure on the beleaguered defenders. Reaction in support had been speedy and forceful, Sidewinder had not been lost, and the 78 dead that the NVA lost (plus 3 PW's and



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LZ SIDEWINDER, AUGUST 1969

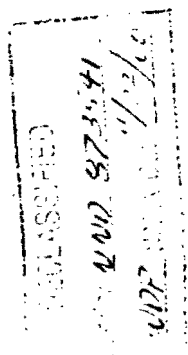
4 Hoi Chanh's) was quite a heavy toll. When dawn came the ground was in allied hands and a company of the 2-9th ARVN's had arrived in support from Chon Thanh along QL 13.

Sidewinder was the last of the ground attacks that night, and only sporadic mortar attacks on An Loc and the surrounding villages filled the time until dawn.

It had been quite a night. In the space of less than two hours, from the time of the first attack on Chon Thanh at 0045 hours until the attack began in earnest on Sidewinder at 0241, the enemy launched major ground attacks, involving units of three main-force divisions, at six different points over the entire length of Binh Long Province. It was a challenge of unusual scope and ferocity, the first time the enemy has been able to mount such a coordinated effort on such a scale. Indeed, there were those who would have thought it was beyond his capability to coordinate the actions of so many units over so much terrain. Yet he did it, and the allied forces were not caught off guard. With teamwork of the highest order ARVN's along with troops from the Big Red One, the 11th ACR, and the division so appropriately called the FIRST TEAM all worked together without a hitch to deny the enemy all of his objectives. He did not succeed in any of his ventures.

The use of available resources must also come in for its due. From the moment the enemy arrived in the province he was harried; he was hit and terrified by B-52 strikes, chased and killed by hunter-killer teams, pounded with hundreds of rounds of artillery whenever he was picked up by surveillance means, and his mind was worked on by psyops, which played on his fears so effectively that a total of 29 PW's and Hoi Chanh's fell into allied hands during the fighting. And when he attacked, the enemy found himself pitted not only against the massive firepower of allied ground units, but also section after section of ARA (74 sorties, 758 rockets, 22,650 rounds mini-gun, and 1,400 40mm cannon rounds), Spooky and Shadow birds, and over 5,000 rounds of artillery of every caliber and type (Appendix V).

Further, the deployment of the allied forces was such that at no location was the enemy able to win his point; where he could not be stopped with what was available, additional support had been positioned so that it reached the fight in time. All sections of the Area of Operations saw deployment of troops in support



at night at one time or other, a difficult thing to do under the best conditions. At Chon Thanh, F/2-11 was moved; at Quan Loi all three reaction forces were deployed and the Ready Reaction Force company utilized. At Loc Ninh, C/1-11 and part of 1-34 Rangers moved to support D Company when it was in trouble, and south of Quan Loi the second and third platoons of A/1-4 Cav, despite communications difficulties, made it in time to save the second platoon. Finally, in the most spectacular case, E/2-11th ACR quite possibly arrived just in time at Sidewinder to save the brave souls there who had stood their ground. All the time there was reserve power, as well, in the form of the two companies of 1-16th Mech and D/5-7, sitting, waiting along QL 13, ready to go where ever they might be needed.

The challenge exceeded all expectations, but it was met, and met with a vengeance!

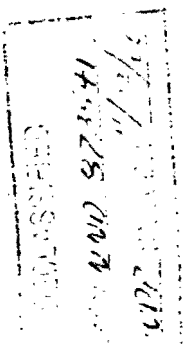
VII. COUNTER-ATTACK

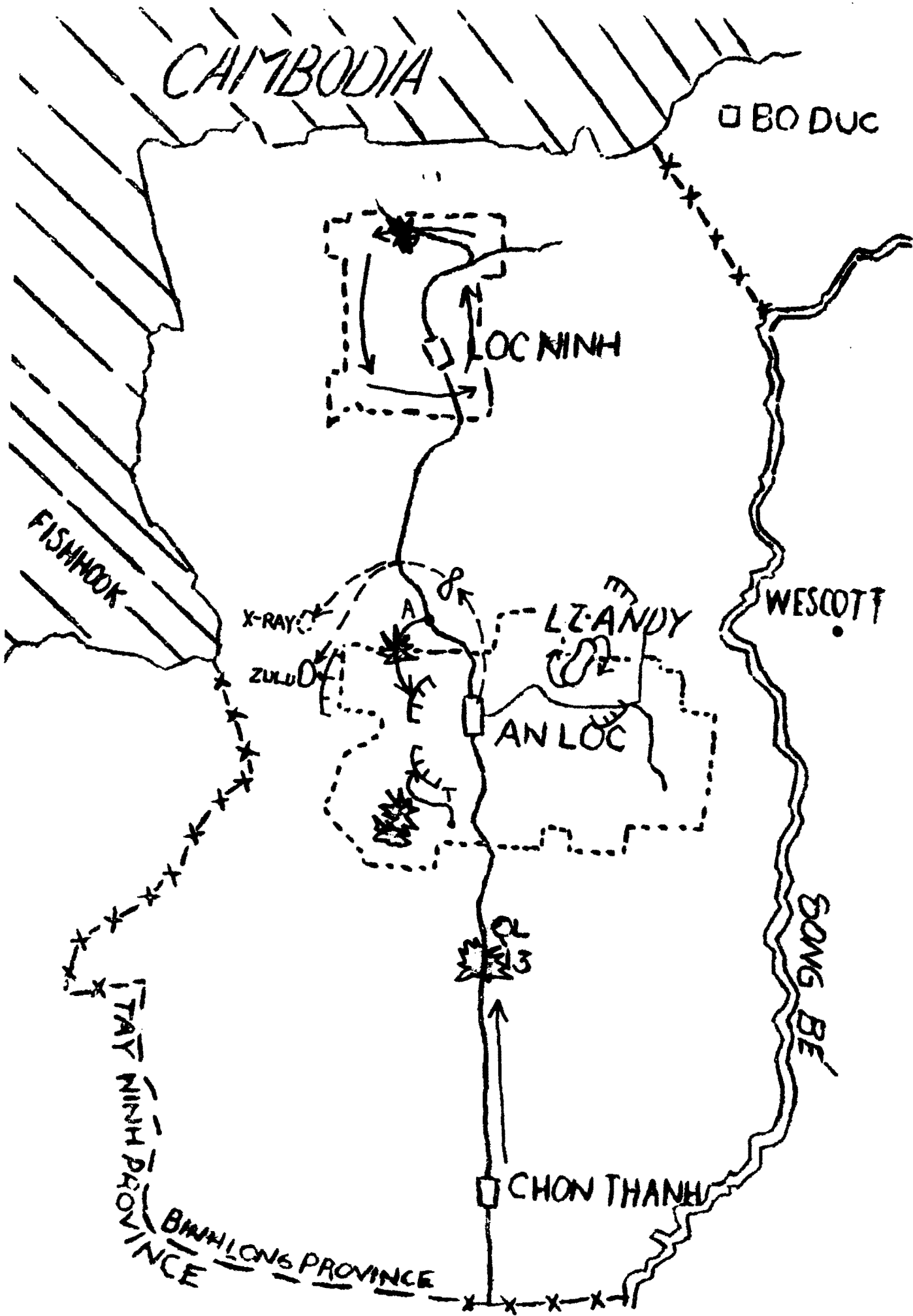
Hard fighting, however, was still to come. Early in the morning of the 12th of August the order came to execute the counter-attack plan (Chart VI). The 11th ACR, considering the nature and locations of the attacks during the night, selected routes "T" for the 2-11th and "A" for the 1-16th Mech in the An Loc area and gave a general sweeping mission to TF Wright in the Loc Ninh area due to the relatively light nature of their contact the preceding night (Overlay 3, Appendix VII).

Landing zones "x-ray" and "zulu" were selected for the insertion of the three airmobile companies to block outside the western limit of the armor's reach. The companies in the vicinity of Quan Loi were to reorient to the rear in an attempt to block any enemy attempting to leave the area, and the RRF Company conducted a close-in sweep around the LZ. All the while aerial surveillance would be kept at a maximum level to capitalize on the enemy's need to move during the daylight hours.

Things had hardly gotten under way when, at 0645 hours, Blue Max's Cobras spotted an enemy force evading between An Loc and Quan Loi. They killed eight of the NVA and speeded up the rate of evasion a little for the remainder.

The elements of TF 1-16 were the first to get rolling, and by 0745 hours, A and C Companies, reinforced by D/5-7th Cav, had married up, moved out along





Counter-Attack

CHART VI

(See Overlays 3-6, Appendix VII)

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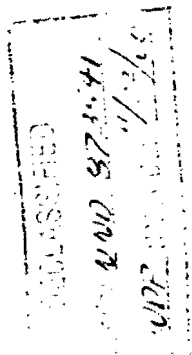
their route "A", and come in contact with an unknown-size enemy force just to the east of Eagle II. They hammered the tired and beaten enemy with fire and maneuver, corralling him between the companies and killing 29 of them in a crisp and vicious fight. The combined might of armor and infantry in quick reaction to the opportunities of the situation no doubt made the enemy wish he had stayed in Cambodia. (For a detailed account, see Part IV).

E Troop, 2-11th ACR was satisfied that the situation at Sidewinder was stable by 0700 hours and was able to move out along their route "T" to execute their portion of the counter-attack plan. H Company was to follow up in support if needed.

At 0810 hours, B Troop, 1-9th Cav helicopters, as a part of the aerial counter-attack, engaged an enemy force evading in the vicinity of LZ Andy. They reported killing six and having TEN Ho Chi Chams, but nothing further was ever seen of the latter.

Continuing the aerial interdiction, at 0825 hours a Pink team from C/1-9 received ground fire southeast of Quan Loi. They returned fire and killed two NVA. A Third Brigade LNO, Lt Tom Brennan, stationed on Nui Ba Ra at the relay station, was listening to the enemy radio net with his interpreter during this incident. The enemy commander, upon hearing the choppers in the distance, passed the word to his subordinate leaders over the radio to be sure that none of the troops fired at the helicopters. He repeated it for emphasis: "Make damn sure that no one fires at those helicopters." Well, the famous two-percent failed to get the word, and there were scenes of hilarity on Nui Ba Ra as one very angry NVA Commander raged over the radio, "I thought I told you not to fire at those ---- helicopters! Now you've done it, we're going to have to get the ---- out of here FAST!" Apparently two of them were not quite fast enough, and it is doubtful if justice arranged for either of them to be the one that caused the whole thing by taking a pot-shot at a Cobra.

At 0828 hours another phase of the counter-attack operation swung into action with the beginning of the combat assault of A and B Companies, 1-5th and A com-

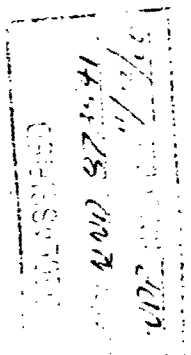


pany, 2-5th into landing zone "zulu" ("x-ray" being unsuitable because of weather in that area). These companies were extracted from Phuoc Vinh and LZ Mary and airlifted to LZ Shirley (An Loc) from which they made their assault. By 1120 hours all three companies were complete in the objective area and moving overland to increase the breadth of their blocking force. The plans also included provisions for moving D/1-7 with B Battery, 1-21 Artillery into a hasty firebase in the vicinity of LZ Eagle I before dark so that the companies in the blocking positions could have the faster support provided by 105mm howitzers. This move was complete by 1900 hours.

Hunter-killer teams kept continuous pressure on the enemy throughout the morning, and at 0840 hours a pink team from B/1-9, working northwest of Loc Ninh, spotted another evading enemy force. The Cobras rolled in hot and killed nine.

A little later, at 1005 hours, A/1-11 ACR, operating with the 4-34 ARVN Rangers 7 kilometers north of Loc Ninh, caught a small enemy force moving to the north. The Rangers dismounted and together with the tankers they accounted for 7 enemy dead.

While all of this was going on, E Troop, 2-11th ACR had reached its objective area at the end of its route "T" without incident and had broken down into platoons to search the general area for the enemy. The third platoon ran into light contact to the south, and the troop commander committed his whole force to develop the situation. At 1210 hours, he found himself embroiled in extremely heavy fighting with one of the battalions of the 271st. The contact raged for several hours, during which time a total of four air strikes and over 300 rounds of artillery were pounded into one grid square. Both forces used the rubber for all the advantages each could get out of it, and a heavy toll was exacted: 31 enemy killed by small-arms, 12 killed by artillery, and 13 killed by helicopter, while E troop lost 2 killed, 4 missing (one of which is now in an NLF hospital), and 36 wounded. Another one of the missing, a Lt Hudkin, was found three days later, on the 15th, badly wounded but still alive. He had bandaged his own wounds and driven his track to the edge of the rubber where he was spotted by helicopters and picked up. He



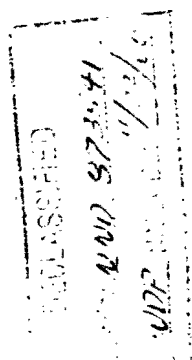
was in pretty bad shape, as one can imagine, having been left for dead three days before, but he had enough energy left to ask his rescuers if he could please have a coke!

H Company, in the meantime, had been sent at 1330 hours to reinforce E Troop, but before they reached their destination, the tankers encountered an enemy force of their own to the south of E Troops location. While sustaining one US KIA, the company accounted for another 29 enemy dead.

Seemingly quite incidental to these operations which were all a part of the counter-attack plan, but yet consistent with what An had predicted, F Troop, 2-11th ACR was minding its business escorting a convoy along QL 13 when it was ambushed by a large enemy force. The enemy, however, had been unwise enough to have chosen a site that had been used many times before for ambushes, and it was very little time before F Troop and the ARVN's that were with the convoy turned the tables. This engagement cost the 101D Regiment another 50 dead, which, at this point it could ill-afford.

This was the last large contact of the 12th, and it marked the end, for all intents and purposes, of the Battle of Binh Long Province. The FIRST TEAM continued to chase and harass the enemy, of course, killing some 230 NVA in the three days following the 12th, and the enemy had enough left in him for one last, poorly-executed attack on the hasty firebase occupied by D/1-7th on the morning of the 14th, but for both sides this was only an aftermath. The bloody thirteen hours following the attack on Chon Thanh, during which the enemy first executed his plans against the allies and then the allies executed their plans against the enemy, constitute the heart of the battle. These hours were the last for some 460 NVA soldiers who were unfortunate enough to have been on the receiving end of one of the most beautifully planned and executed operations of the Vietnam war.

On the other side of the ledger 20 American men lost their lives during this fighting. For them the fact that they are the short part of a 23-to-1 kill ratio will be little solace, but history sometimes has a way of rewarding those who die in battle, and perhaps she will be especially kind to these twenty for having been



the cutting-edge of such a brilliant operation.

VIII. ASSESSMENT

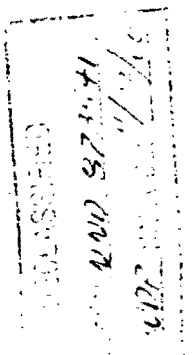
In the heat of battle one hardly has time to stop and think about how well things might be going. In a struggle for survival, valuations are reduced to a simple standard: good is alive, bad is dead or wounded. Then too, nearly everyone was simply too busy and too involved to allow the luxury of such reflection. The only thing that was really clear was that there was a hell of a fight going on.

To the trooper who has lost a buddy no amount of figures will be able to make it appear that the battle was a success. For all of us the carnage and wreckage of a bitterly-contested battleground is not the atmosphere for exultation, even if the carnage all belongs to the other side. No matter who you are, you cannot help but see mothers and wives in the face of a dead enemy.

And the natural confusion that is bound to exist when so much happens in such a short period of time obscured for a while the great measure of the success. Gradually, however, in the days after 12 August the picture emerged.

It was found that An's predictions had been substantially correct with minor variations. Bo Duc did not get hit, and the 271st along with the K4 Sapper Battalion, 16th Armor Office (directly under the control of COSVN) hit Quan Loi instead of elements of the 7th NVA Division. The enemy did not attack An Loc itself, but seemed instead to key on the allied units and installations in the vicinity, although someone did report seeing VC handing out propaganda leaflets at the West Gate of the province capital. This could have been part of the D368LF Battalion, which An had predicted would participate, but in a vastly different role than as a main-force battalion centering a regimental-size attack.

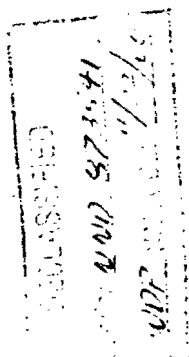
On the other hand the 271st was found roughly in the area An indicated, and it was the 209th that attacked Loc Minh while the 101D Regiment concentrated on the south and QL 13. The general thrust of An's story was enough to go on, and all that it would have been prudent to plan on. An was, after all, only a platoon leader but at the same time a very intelligent young man. The plan he outlined was in all probability something he had pieced together for himself from the bits



of information that he had and perhaps rumors that he had heard - close, but not completely correct.

There is also the possibility that what he told his interrogators was actually the plan at one time, but the enemy had plenty of time before the 29th, when they discovered that he was gone, to make alterations. Or possibly their observers in the area kept them informed of the build-up of allied forces in the province in the days before the 12th and this forced them to try and cripple US and ARVN fighting strength before attempting anything else. If this was the case, he failed miserably and the allies can take considerable pride in the fact that the NVA was either unwilling or unable to try anything further after their losses on the 12th. There was no second wave of attacks or really any offensive ventures of any importance attempted by the enemy subsequently.

Whether this is the reason or something else for the divergence between the plans given by An and what actually happened, his warning was sufficient for the allies and plans were formulated flexibly enough to meet any one of a number of variations on the general theme. The story of the Battle of Binh Long Province reads like a book solution - intelligence leading to planning and planning honed to a fine edge, followed by violent and vastly capable execution. Every ounce of possible benefit was derived from all available resources, and the First Cavalry Division and its attached units, fighting side-by-side with the ARVN's showed in all aspects of the operation a technical proficiency and fighting tenacity that has added a measure to the great tradition of the American Fighting Man. And the teamwork which so markedly characterized every aspect of the campaign shows what can be done when professional soldiers of all arms and two nations work together with one thing in mind: the mission.

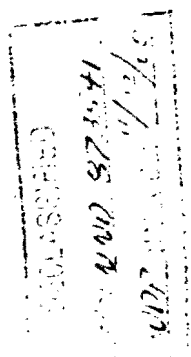


APPENDIX I

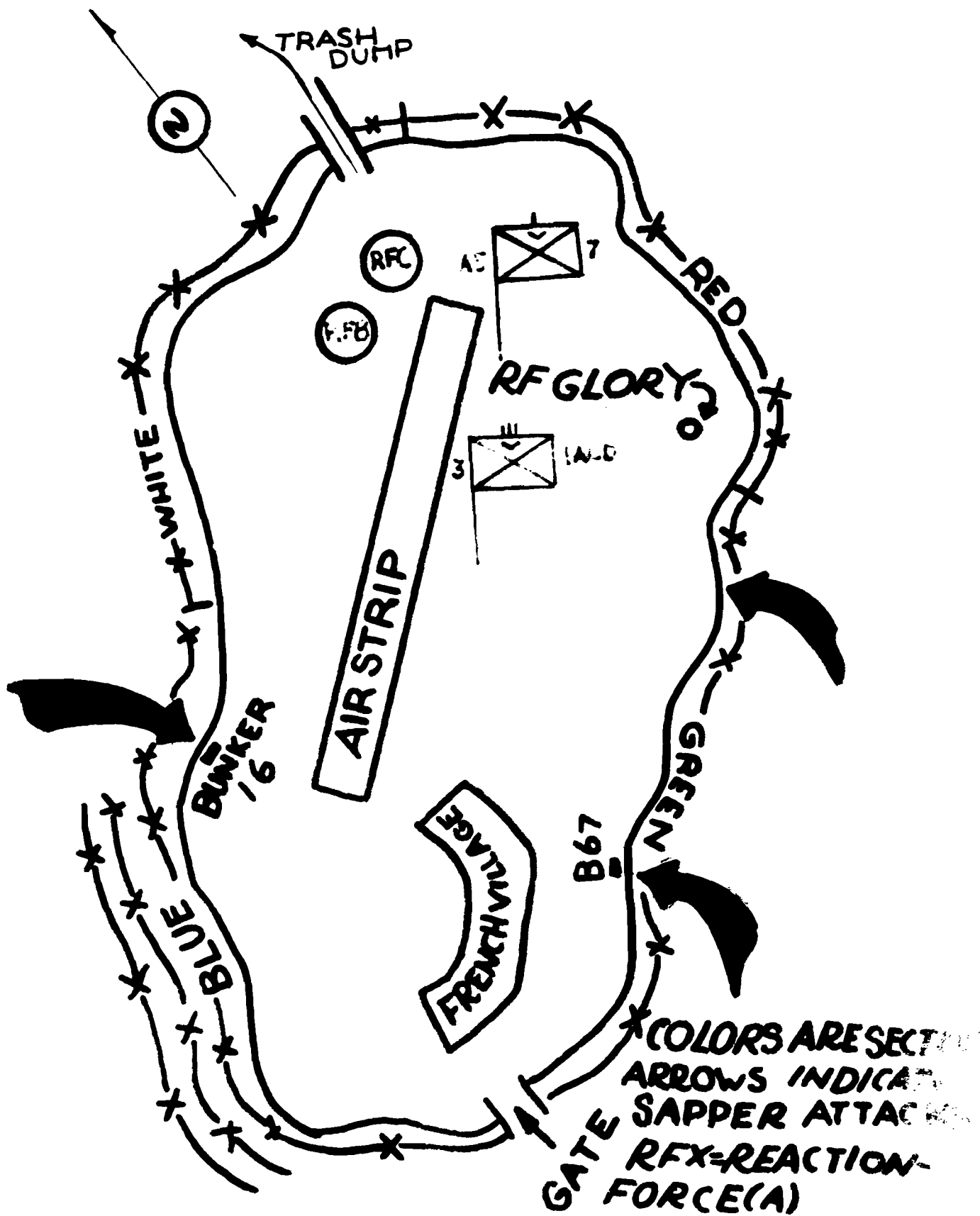
PART II

Chronology of events at LZ Andy, 12 August 1969.

- 0109: Incoming in the 6-27th area. 3 minutes later, ground probe reported with individuals in the wire; at the same time, B-40, RPG and small-arms fire received. Blue Max came on station and reported taking fire.
- 0140: Second probe reported on SE side of LZ Andy at bunker 61; breach of wire occurred at this point.
- 0205: Shadow on station.
- 0214: Build-up reported at N end LZ.
- 0222: Bunker 15 reports taking heavy RPG and SA fire.
- 0230: Green line quiet.
- 0238: Bunkers 67 and 68 receive probe.
- 0313: Bunker 2 reports individual in wire, and bunker 62 reports taking AK fire from the rear.
- 0358: More incoming, approximately 10x107mm rockets. One round hits log bird (UH-1H) on 1-8 log pad. Cobra hit on runway.
- 0410: 1 US KIA, and 23 WIA at LZ Andy.
- 0556: Reports from 11th ACR stating that their rifle platoon received sniper fire in the vicinity of the PX (French Village).
- 0630: Bunkers 16 and 17 reported receiving SA fire, and 3 PW were reported at bunkers 16 and 17. A platoon of A/5-7 and RFB were dispatched to the area.
- 0651: Sniper fire reported in the 2nd FSE area.
- NOTE: The above is by no means a complete chronology, but is an extract from the Third Brigade log for the period.



LZ ANDY (QUAN LOI)



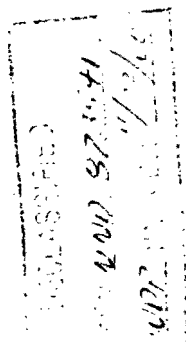
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PART II: THE FIGHT FOR LZ ANDY (QUAN LOI)

LZ Andy, also known as Quan Loi from the name of the village just outside the base, is the key military installation in Binh Long Province. The Brigade Headquarters of the 3d Brigade of the First Cav is located there along with the regimental CP of the 11th ACR, and Four of the First Team's Battalions plus two of the 11th ACR's squadrons have their rear areas clustered around the 3d Brigades TOC in the rubber trees on the south side of the runway. The airstrip itself is a hard-surface affair capable of handling C-130 aircraft with ease, and there are fueling, re-arming, and maintenance facilities for all varieties of rotary-wing aircraft.

Andy is also the firing base for two tube of 175mm and 2 tubes of 8-inch artillery from A Battery, 6th Bn, 27th Artillery, and six 155mm guns from F Battery of the 16th Artillery. Augmenting this are three 4.2-inch mortars from F Troop, 2nd Squadron of the 11th ACR. It is, thus, a military base of much importance with a wide range of operational capabilities, and one would imagine that an enemy with the mission of securing the population centers of the province would have to strike here first, in an attempt to at least incapacitate its military operation.

The base itself sprawls over the crest of a large flat-topped hill some 3 kilometers long and 1.5 kilometers wide, and this occupies some fairly good defensive terrain. The drawback, however, is that it is perhaps too big. A drive around the inside perimeter wire will take roughly 9 kilometers, and without holding an excessive number of ground troops back to defend it, available resources are going to be spread pretty thin covering the 82 bunkers and nine towers that comprise the perimeter. A rifle company, for example, manning a firebase, will normally have anywhere from 14 to 18 bunkers to cover; but the company that is assigned the mission of defending the "green" sector at Andy



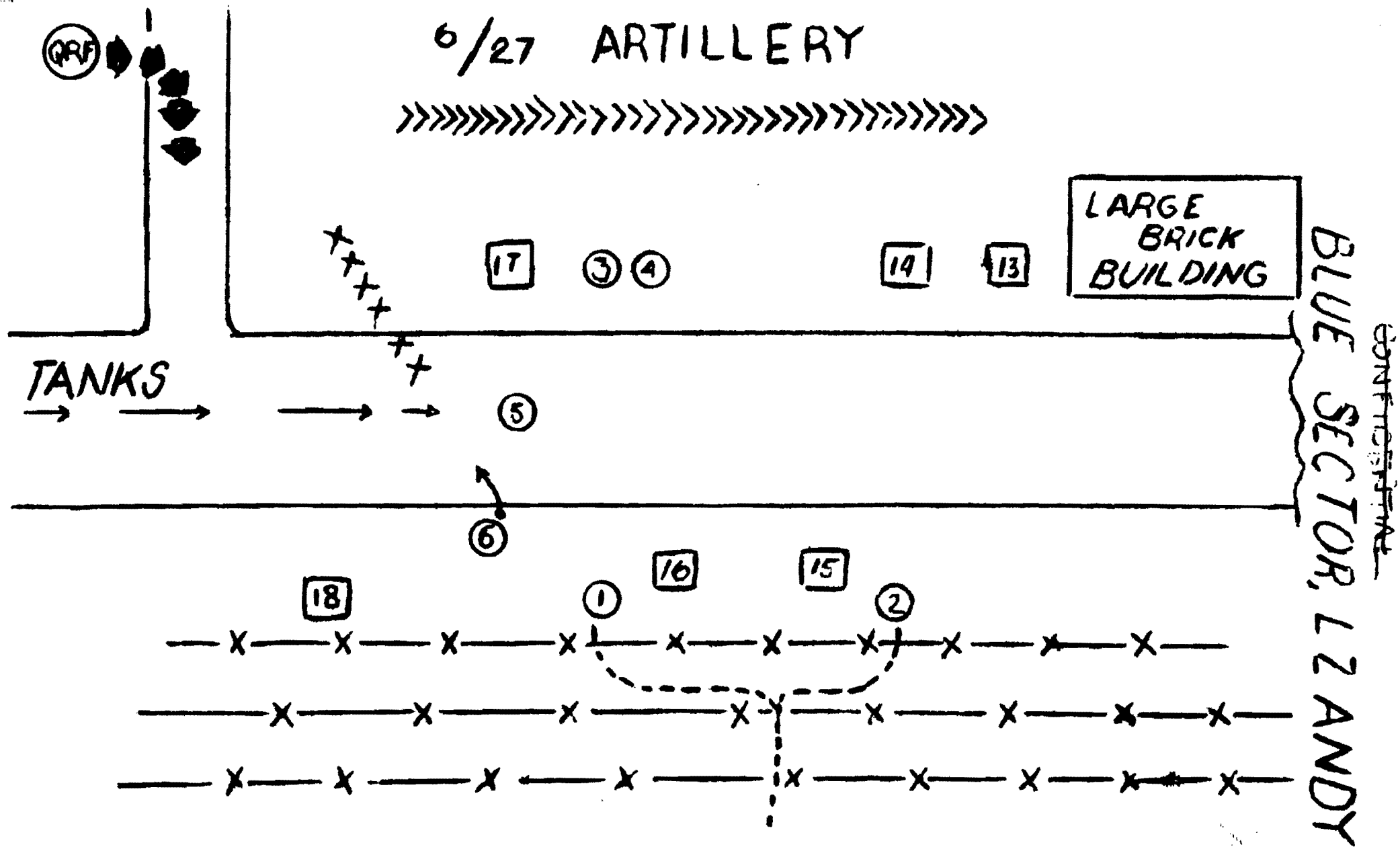
finds itself responsible for thirty! In a 100-man company, this leaves three men per bunker, which is the minimum called for in the Base Defense SOP, in over two-thirds of the sector. If one man in a three-man bunker should be wounded, one of the other two may have to take care of him, leaving only one man actually firing.

This, of course, was recognized by the Third Brigade defenders and economy-of-force measures were sought to insure that the base was adequately defended. A "mobile" defense (as opposed to a cordon defense) concept was developed with three echelons of reaction forces which would be ready to move quickly to any part of the line that might need assistance. To quote from the base defense narrative published by the Third Brigade: "...each of the four defense sectors maintain a fifteen man quick reaction force at the sector CP. Three platoon size ready reaction forces (RF "All Glory", RF Bravo, and RF Charlie) are maintained under base defense control. One quad-fifty machine gun and two 40mm "dusters" are included in the reserve forces." In addition to these the Brigade has at its disposal a rifle company as Brigade RRF (Ready Reaction Force) in the "VIP" center. In the attack on the night of the 12th of August, this system worked exactly as it was designed to, in spite of the natural confusion, and was able to handle sapper attacks at three different locations on the perimeter by some of the best sappers in the business.

The night of 11 August 1969 was an unusually dark one. The moon was almost in its "new moon" phase, and the sky was overcast. The troops manning the bunkers could barely make out the first strand of concertina only twenty yards from them, and their starlight scopes did not even have enough light to be any help. Illumination rounds were fired periodically, but as Specialist Four Raymond Friston of B Company 1-8 says, "All it did was spoil your night vision, so you were worse off than when you started." Friston, who

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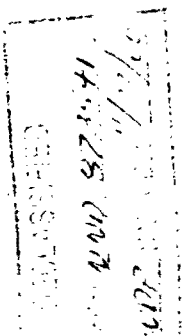
had just returned from R&R in Bangkok, was pulling "green line" duty on bunker number 18 in the Blue Sector until he could rejoin his unit in the field.

"It was after about ten o'clock that we started hearing noises, like somebody moving out in front of our bunker. Lt Farington (Blue Sector Commander) would call in an illum, but we wouldn't see nothin'. We was all awake, and scared too. Man, I KNEW those gooks were out there, but you just can't shoot at something when you can't see it. Everybody'll think you are just nervous."

Lt Farington, too, was nervous. He ordered his troops to fire some M-79 rounds in the direction of the sounds, and they seemed to stop for awhile. He had been told that there was a good chance that Andy would be hit that night, but, "They had cried "Wolf" so many times before, it kind of lost its effect." Still, the message was not ignored, and the guards were alert.

Things quieted down after midnight, and the troops in the Blue Sector began to wonder if they had really heard anything or not. Lt Farington began making his rounds at 0100, driving along the road in his jeep, and getting out to talk to the guards in the bunkers. He had reached bunker 19 (see sketch) when the artillery positions behind his bunker started taking incoming. At the same time a trip flare went off inside the wire in front of bunker 15, and a half naked enemy sapper was outlined. All the bunkers opened fire almost instantly. "I couldn't see nothing," reports Friston, still on bunker 18, "but when that trip flare went off I just started shooting."

The volume of return fire they got surprised nearly everyone. "They were all over the place," says Harvard graduate Sp/4 Grenville Braman, who was in bunker 16. "I was asleep in my hammock inside the bunker when the guys that were pulling guard on top came tumbling in bouncing me out." Fire was coming from inside the wire and around behind their bunker as well. "It was mostly RPG's that we got," continued Braman, "and it looked like bunker 15 was taking a lot of hits."



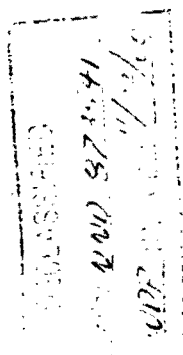
Lt Farington tried to assess the situation. He had a good vantage-point from the road, and could see that the enemy had come around both sides of the salient formed by bunkers 15 and 16 (1 and 2 on the sketch) and some of them had reached the road. Bunker 15 was taking RPG fire from all directions. The RPG screen (chain-link fence) to the front of the bunker effectively stopped the rockets coming from that direction, but, of course, the rear of the bunker was not similarly protected. Even so, the bunker was sufficiently solid and it stood up under the attack. The three troops inside it, however, were shaken up and they decided that they better make a run for bunker 16 where six of them could make a better stand.

"The area between the bunkers was pretty clear," remembers Shuman, "and they made it OK. They told us that there were gooks behind us, but we couldn't see them because of the berm behind our bunker. We put a few frags out and the firing seemed to stop for awhile."

"We could see the gooks running all around bunker 15. Couldn't figure out what they were doing - just jumping up on top of it and running around. We had to get out of our bunker to bring fire on them, and we stayed on top of it in the fighting position for the rest of the time. We could see a lot better from up there."

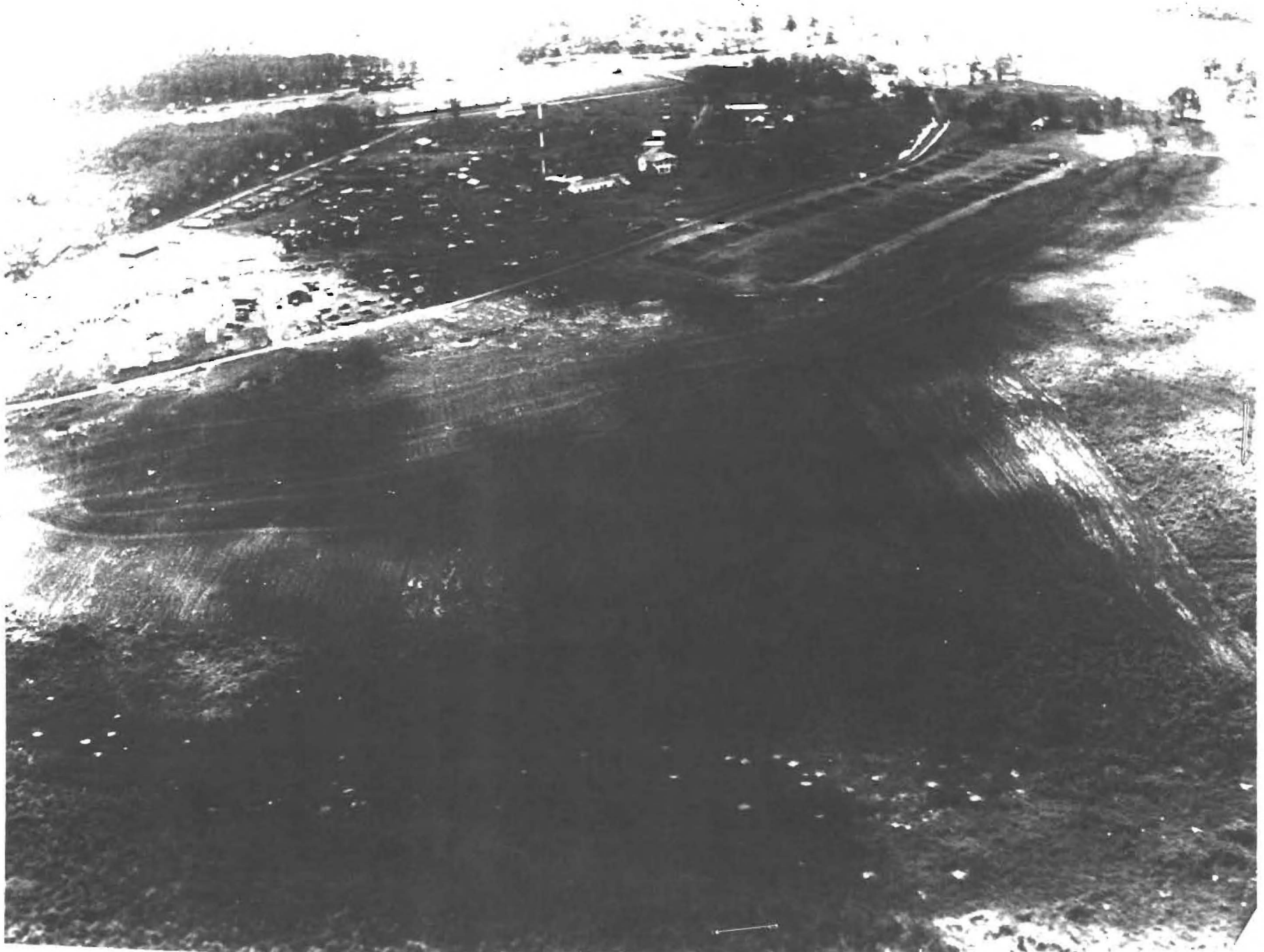
Farington noticed that the people in the artillery battery back from the road were having a hard time bringing fire into the area around the road where the enemy was with their M-16's. "Everybody that wasn't firing the guns had come to our side of the parapets and was trying to shoot the gooks that had gotten through, but bunker 17 was in their way and it kept taking hits from our own people." Farington decided to have the people in that bunker evacuate it and reinforce bunker 18, and when this was done, he notified the artillery people that they could now fire in that area at will. Bunker 16 was still manned, of course, but the berm protected it from the fire from the artillery parapets.

On the other side of the perimeter, in the meantime, fighting had also



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LZ ANDY (GUAN I.O.I.), EASTERN SECTOR

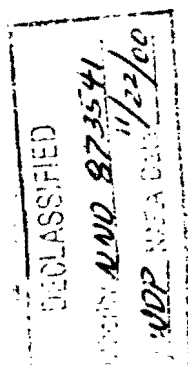


broken out at bunker 61 in the green sector which was being manned by B Company, 1-7th Cav. Quite coincidentally, earlier on the 11th the engineers had improved the wire in front of this bunker. It had been discovered that erosion had eaten out a four-foot ditch under the wire, through which the enemy could have come almost up to the bunker without obstruction and without being seen. No doubt the enemy in his reconnaissance had selected this for a prime route of entry into the LZ. Imagine his surprise when he found that the gap had been sealed.

This may be an explanation of why at this location alone the enemy used bangalore torpedoes to breach the wire; and when he blew them, of course, it gave early warning to the defenders in that area. The NVA, however still managed to penetrate the perimeter by wounding two of the men in bunker 61, and sharp fighting resulted in the area as the enemy apparently tried to widen his penetration.

Fast thinking and a good deal of initiative, however, on the part of 1Lt Barry G. Hitner of the 919th Engineers denied further progress to the enemy. LTC Perry, Deputy Commander of the Third Brigade says, "Lt Hitner probably saved the day for us."

Hitner was in charge of "RF All Glory" located at the eastern end of the LZ. He had been alerted at 0110 hours that a sapper attack was under way, but then he lost communications with the base defense commander, under whose instructions only was he to deploy his force. He heard the fighting at bunker 61, and decided on his own initiative that it was time to move. He sent two of his CEV's (Combat Engineer Vehicles - a fearsome machine with a bulldozer blade, two M-60 machine-guns and a 165mm gun which fires medicine-ball sized plastic explosive rounds) to bunker 61, and when he heard from them that the enemy was inside the wire, he deployed the rest of his force to the area, again on his

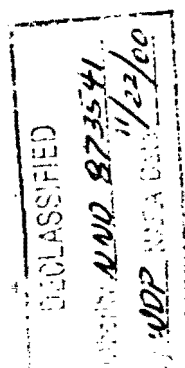


own initiative. "All Glory" did not take long to plug the gap and the situation was stabilized. Four or five enemy troops, however, had reached the inside of the perimeter and were to be heard from later.

In the meantime, back at the Blue sector, the sector reaction force, under a 1Lt Hendrickson, Executive Officer of A Company, 1-8th Cav, was moving to the assistance of Farington's troops on the line. As this group was moving out, a voice from the rear was heard to say, "Man, I'm too SHORT to be doing this, I only got 20 days!" Hendrickson turned around and retorted, "Shut up and get the **** back in line, I've only got seven."

At the road junction behind bunker 19 this group married up with two Sheridan tanks and three "A" Cavs from A Troop 1-11th ACR, which had been brought in support by Major John O Blake, the Executive Officer of the 1-8th. Farington briefed them, and Blake decided to sweep the area with tank-infantry tactics straight out of Fort Benning. He deployed the 15 men from the sector reaction force out to the left of the tanks, in the deep grass behind the road, and this joint force began its slow, tedious sweep. Major Blake, riding the lead tank, told the troops to proceed slowly and carefully as there were quite a few enemy troops in the deep grass. How true this was he found out when the lead tank reached point 6 on the sketch, just in front of bunker 17. A lone NVA soldier jumped up from the right side of the road, not ten feet from the tank, and cut loose with an RPG. Fortunately his aim was not quite up to his fortitude and the round whooshed over the top of the tank. Seconds crawled by like hours as the crew reacted and hit the man full in the chest with a bee-hive round from its main gun. All they could find the next day was about two-thirds of a head and a left arm.

The joint force rolled on, and when it reached point 5, just behind bunker 16, Lt Farington ordered the troops to evacuate it and join the reaction force

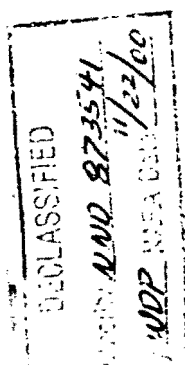


so that the tanks would have unobstructed fields of fire to the right. Moving in file along the road, the tanks and APC's put out a fearsome volume of firepower into the wire on their right. Thus the enemy that might still have been in the perimeter were trapped between the artillery, the wire and the tanks. It was a tough combination to beat, and some 31 enemy soldiers were killed in this sector alone for the loss of one American killed and one wounded.

As the tanks and infantry swept by the bunkers, Lt Farington put men back into the ones that had been vacated so that, when the first sweep was complete, the line was secure.

While this was going on, at 0238, bunkers 67 and 68 received direct hits from RPG's in the initial burst of the enemy's third and final assault, and they had to be abandoned. Sgt Douglas Chappell, B/1-7, was in the adjoining bunker, number 69, and he remembers, "The two bunkers on my left took direct hits from RPG's and the NVA were standing on top of them, firing at our bunker. About 25 of them started coming at us. They seemed to be working their way down the line to the CP bunker which was to the right of us (bunker 73). I started throwing frags (fragmentation grenades) as fast as I could and laying down a base of fire with my 16. I guess I threw about 60 frags. For a while I didn't think we could hold them off, but I was determined they weren't going to take my bunker."

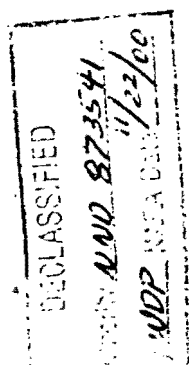
Lt Hitner, with his reaction force "All Glory" was still in the vicinity of bunker 61, but when he heard the firing further down the line, he again responded to the call. He left one CEV at bunker 62 and moved the rest down the road toward bunker 68. "There were RPG rounds going all over the place," he recalls, "and people scurrying back and forth across the road. We couldn't tell if they were gooks or friendlies."



As the lead track approached bunker 67 it was hit with two RPG's and three of the crew were wounded. Hitner deployed his force, and put fire into the gap where bunkers 67 and 68 were, adding considerably to the enemy's problems in the area. Apparently, "All Glory" forced some of the NVA that had made it to the road to evade in the other direction, as SP/4 Albert Joines who was in bunker 71, tells this story:

"I was putting out fire from my bunker when I heard this voice behind me. In perfect English this guy said, 'Hey Buddy! What bunker ya on?' It sounded just like a GI to me, so I said, '71'. I turned back around to defend my position when a B-40 hit the top of my bunker. I didn't know what the hell was going on. Then I saw this guy and his buddy drawing a bead on the bunker again. I cranked the 60 around and started throwing out lead. They lit out for the tall grass about 50 yards behind me and hid; we fought em for about half an hour. They kept harassing us by runnin' back and forth in the grass and firing at us. We finally got em when an illum caught them trying to cut the lima-lima line to the CP bunker."

It was also some of the attackers at this location that managed to get into the French village on the other side of the road. The barbed wire that surrounds the village had been blown up in several places by artillery of some kind. It has been suggested that the village was one of the enemy's objectives, and that he blew the gaps in the wire with bangalore torpedoes. The engineers who repaired the wire, however, say that the gaps were not the sort that bangalores make, but seem to haven been made by a high explosive round of some sort, possibly a plastic round from one of the CEV's. It is far more likely that the enemy troops that had made it inside the outer perimeter wire to the road found themselves trapped between "All Glory" on the right and SP/4 Joines and his bunker-mates on the left,



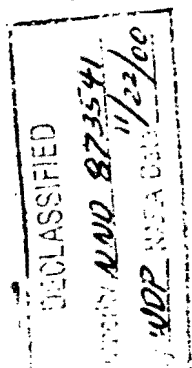
and simply took the path of least resistance.

It seemed like everyone was running out of ammunition at this time, and the base defense net was flooded with urgent requests for resupply. Major Blake, still fighting over by bunker 16, sent his jeep driver back to the CP tent to get some and take it over to bunker 68. He did not intend for the young man to go alone, but that is what he did. He drove all the way over to the other side of the perimeter with a APC-load of ammunition, dropped it off as close to bunker 68 as he could get, and drove back to the Blue sector as calmly as if he were taking a Sunday drive through the park.

1LT Douglas A Cohn, B/1-9, who was in his company's rear area, went over to the TOC to see if there was anything that needed doing. He was told that the troops in the green sector were running low on ammunition. He commandeered a jeep, filled it with the needed supplies, and drove down to the green sector where he linked up with the "All Glory" people.

Sgt Chappell, still in bunker 69, had the same supply problem but found a different solution. "I ran down to the next bunker and grabbed all the ammo I could, but I still had a hard time. It took me a long time to get the ammo back because an NVA sniper on top of one of the bunkers kept firing his AK at me. Every time I moved he opened up on me. Somehow I managed to get back with the ammo."

At 0330 hours a platoon from A Company 5-7th Cav, Brigade QRF, arrived in the vicinity of the fighting around bunker 68, and the situation very quickly stabilized. The infantry re-manned the bunkers while "All Glory", with the help of Lt Cohn and his jeep, started evacuating some of the 16 wounded, 13 of them from the bunkers and three from Lt Hitner's lead track. Through quick reaction and no small amount of heroic fighting the gaps had been plugged, and the enemy



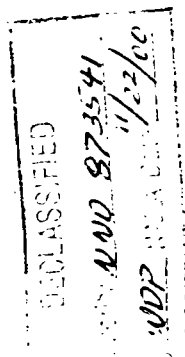
denied a significant penetration.

However, at least one small group of enemy sappers did get all the way through, as medic SP/5 Allan Sedam can attest. He was sleeping in his hootch only 100 meters from the Third Brigade TOC when, at about 0400 hours he was awakened by incoming. Sedam recalls: "We ran out of the hootch towards our bunker and there they were!" Three enemy sappers were crouched in a ditch not 20 yards from their bunker. "We opened up with our '16's. Then they threw Chicoms (grenades) and fired several RPG's at us." One RPG narrowly missed them, knocking a five-foot hole in the wooden hootch behind them. Sedam and his small force of several medics soon silenced all three attackers.

Unfortunately the incoming that had awakened Sedam and his hootch-mates took its toll. A Cobra gunship, coming in for fuel after flying in support of the troops at Sidwinder, was hit by one of the 107mm rockets on the runway. The aircraft was totally demolished and one of its crew - the aircraft commander - killed. A UH1H Huey supply chopper was also hit in the barrage while sitting on the 1-8 log pad, but no one was hurt in that incident.

As the early hours of the morning were on, the clerks, cooks, and short-timers of the 1-8th were still taking fire from the tall grass behind the road in the Blue Sector. Major Blake and Lt Farington decided that they should sweep through the area a second time with their impromptu combined-arms team. This time they started at bunker 13, using RF Charlie which had arrived in support to man some of the bunkers, and they worked their way along the road toward bunker 18. There they were to meet RF Bravo, which had also been sent to the area to help. A few more enemy were killed in this sweep, and the sniping subsided.

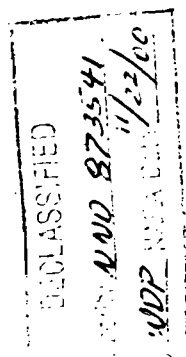
It was beginning to get light when the tanks reached bunker 18. Lt Farington hooked up with 2Lt Robert E. Walters (B-31st Engineers), the RFB Commander and placed the troops from this force in bunkers 11-14.



The attack on Quan Loi had not been a successful one for the enemy. It was later discovered that he had deployed three companies of the 4th Battalion, J-16 Sapper Regiment against the LZ - the 34th, 35th, and 37th Companies - and these were backed up with elements of the enemy 272nd Regiment. Normally on a sapper attack of that size, the enemy would hope to kill many more Americans and do considerably more damage than he managed to accomplish on this attack. Five defenders did lose their lives, but the enemy was unable to place his satchel charges on anything of value, and he actually failed to make even a significant penetration. The Third Brigade's concept of a mobile defense was most effective, reaction forces arriving at each location in time to catch the enemy in his confusion after he had broken through the last strand of wire.

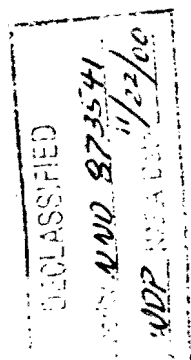
It was difficult, however, to tell just what the enemy's objectives were. One prisoner, Sgt Phung Van Kia, probably came the closest to spelling it out for us when he belligerently said that his mission was to "breach the wire and kill every American in the area." Yet Sapper Tran Son, 3d Group, 34th Company, who was captured in the vicinity of bunker 60, claims that his mission was to destroy a certain concrete building (possibly the 11th ACR's Officers Mess) after the first five men in the group had cut the wire. The remaining 19 members of his group were to destroy the village, but the element leader made a mistake and cut the wire in the wrong place. The most likely possibility, however, is that the sappers were just to make holes in the wire and blow the critical bunkers so that a main infantry unit could get through and destroy as much of the LZ's military capability, including personnel, as possible.

It is even less clear why they hit over by bunker 16. A large brick building to the left of bunker 13 seems to have been a target of some kind from the number of RPG's that hit it, but nothing was in it. This building was used to billet troops from the 11th ACR when they were at Quan Loi for maintenance stand-down, but on this particular night it was empty. The enemy could have been



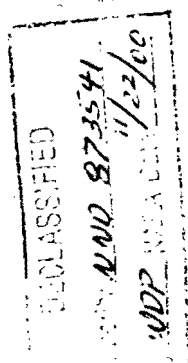
aiming for the artillery battery behind the green line at this point, but the sappers that did get through the wire gave no indication that this was their target.

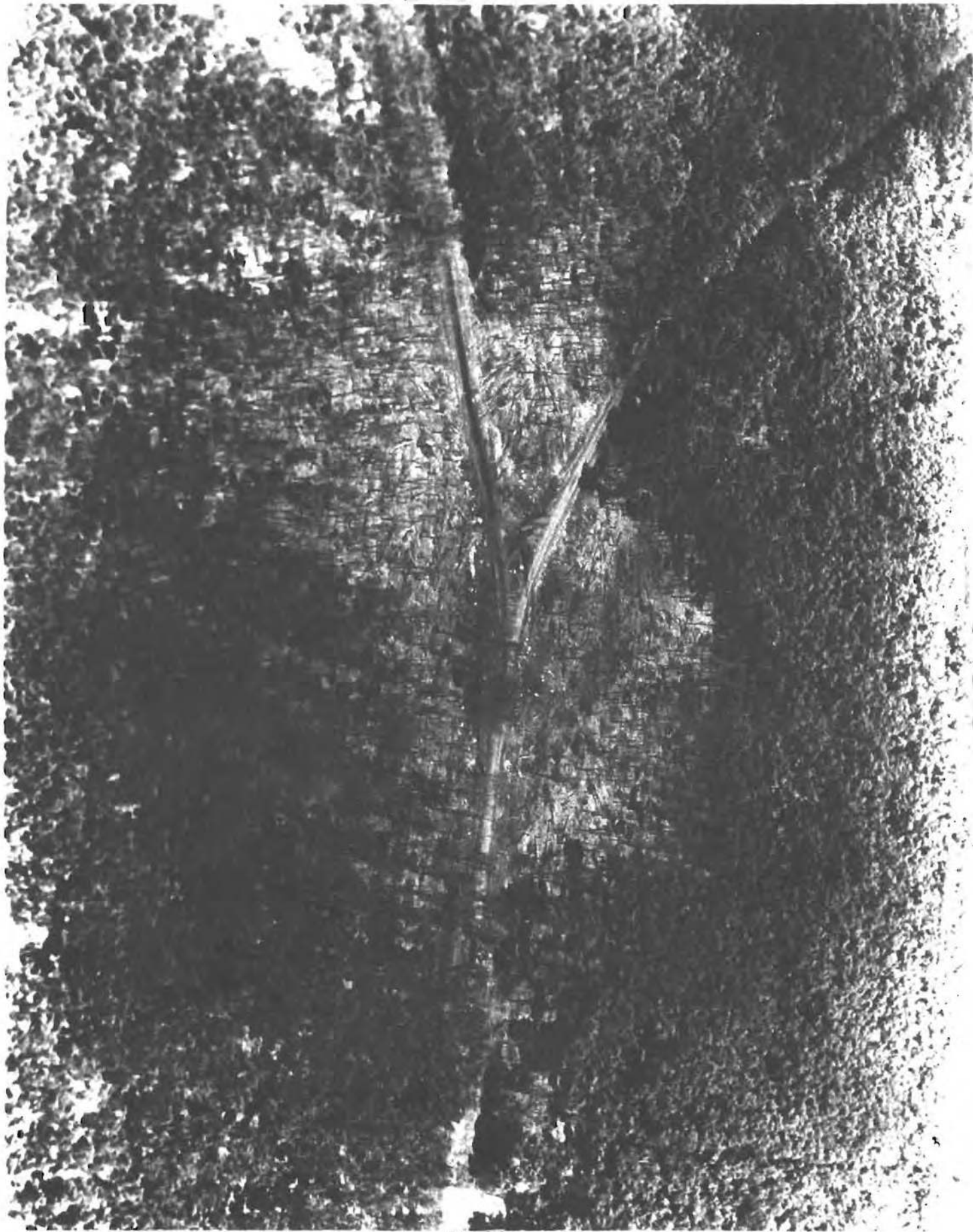
Whatever the enemy goal, he did not achieve it, unless it was to have 55 of his best-trained sappers killed, and four of them captured. His main attack of the campaign was blunted rather harshly, with the assistance of the brave troops of the second platoon, A Company, 1-4th Mech (which will be covered in part III), and the fighting spirit of the Skytroopers of the First Cav was more than a match for the enemy's best. As one Cav Trooper was heard to comment upon searching a particularly dead enemy soldier, "Man, for this Charlie the twelfth of August was the twelfth of never!"



PART III: CONTACT OF A TROOP, 1-4 ARMORED CAV, SOUTHEAST OF QUAN LOI

From 7 through 11 August, A Troop, 1-4 Cav was working OPCON to 1-16 Mech around fire support base Eagle I (XT 697927) and Eagle II (XT 748931). The troop was headquartered at Eagle II. On the morning of 11 August the unit was operating around Quan Loi (LZ Andy). A Troop's initial mission was to set up a blocking screen to cover the south and southeast approaches to LZ Andy. At 1700 hours, the three platoons of A Troop were located in the following positions: The 1st platoon was situated on Road 245 about 3 kilometers southwest of Quan Loi, (XT 809883). The second platoon was guarding the eastern approach to Quan Loi planted astride Road 303 at XT 833894. The third platoon, which harbored the command post was entrenched in the rubber at XT823884, along a dirt road three kilometers south of Andy (See illustration A). At 1800 hours on 11 August, the S-3 from 1-8 called Captain William J. Newell, the troop Commander of A/1-4, to tell him that heavy enemy troop movement was reported in the area roughly 1000 meters east of where the 2nd platoon was set up. Captain Newell then got in touch with Platoon Sergeant Lawrence D. Noland Jr, acting 2nd platoon leader, and instructed him to move his platoon east along road 303 until reaching the fork it makes with road 345. Sergeant Noland got his men together, they mounted their platoon's six tracks and two tanks, and rumbled east to the designated fork. The 2nd platoon moved into the area at 1915 hours. Sergeant Noland then set up his vehicles in a 360-degree defense configuration, with each tank covering the avenues of approach that the fork afforded, and the personnel carriers (PC) interspersed between them. The acting platoon leader then situated his three starlight scopes so that they surveyed in the general direction of north, east, and south into the rubber (See Illustration B). By 1945 hours, the 2nd platoon had completed its assigned defense mission for the night, setting up an ambush. The tank and PC commanders received their usual night briefing (light and noise





SITE OF 2A/1-4 CAV CONTACT

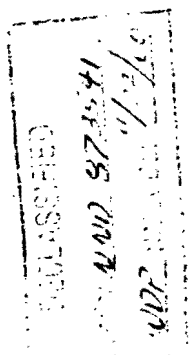
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discipline, etc), and Sergeant Noland instructed the vehicle commanders to call in situation reports every 15 minutes. He, in turn, was to call in his platoon's situation report to Captain Newell, who was with the 3d platoon, every 30 minutes.

Nothing of any consequence happened for the next two hours. But at 2200 hours the starlight scope facing north spotted two enemy moving along the northern edge of the fork (See Diagram B). Sergeant Noland popped a hand flare, and platoon elements fired on the movement with unknown enemy losses. There was no return fire.

Between 2400 hours and 0100 hours on 12 August, the starlight scopes detected enemy movement in three directions - north of the upper fork, south of the lower fork, and in between the forks (See Diagram B). Sergeant Noland then had his platoon put out small arms fire in the three directions to try to discover what was out there. At this time, all tank fire was held back. Most of the firing was coming from the .50 caliber and M-60 machineguns on the PC's. The enemy answered with return fire, to include a couple of rocket propelled grenades and small arms fire. Sergeant Noland now ordered his tanks to traverse slowly and fire their canister rounds sparingly. The enemy fire began to increase in intensity, but the second platoon had yet to receive any casualties. Then at 0130 hours, the gunner on PC 29 took sniper fire from a tree to his front, receiving a leg flesh wound. Then the second man on the vehicle, the driver, took a round through the nose by the same sniper (See Diagram B). The gunner and driver were put on stretchers and attended to by the medic. The driver was medevaced in the early morning light hours.

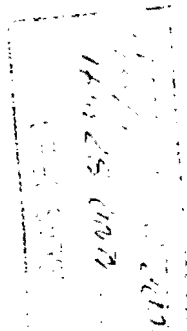
The enemy volume of fire continued to accelerate, with a noticeable increase in RPG's fired down the rubber rows. They were landing erratically everywhere, many times flying overhead, from one side of the fork to the other, impacting in the rubber. Sergeant Noland tried to reach Captain Newell but was unable to get



through so he turned his full attention to his unit. At 0200 hours, PC 21 received an RPG round near its gas tank; the PC's bucket seat and M-60 machinegun were instantly blown away. Three men were wounded as a result of this action - the vehicle commander was hit in the head by RPG fragments, the driver received chest shrapnel, and the gunner received a serious wound in his left arm. All three were put on stretchers and given first aid by the busy medic. PC 21 was no longer putting out fire. Once again Sergeant Noland tried to reach the Troop Commander on his command radio, but once again it was to no avail.

At 0215 hours, Sergeant Noland radioed his forward observer (FO) to request illumination ships. The 2nd platoon had a limited supply of hand flares to light the area. The FO, on the headquarters track, tried repeatedly to get illumination and artillery support, but was unsuccessful. At 0230 hours he was hit, receiving a head wound, and was layed out on a stretcher. At this time, an enemy machinegun, located directly in front of PC 22 in the rubber (See diagram B) opened fire. It was knocked out within 10 to 15 minutes.

The enemy continued to put out extremely heavy RPG fire and moderately heavy small arms fire. Some enemy began to crawl out of the rubber onto roads 303 and 345 and getting within 5 feet of the vehicles before being stopped by small arms fire and hand grenades. The situation was becoming increasingly critical. Again Sergeant Noland tried to reach his CO over his command radio net. He was on two pushes, to his platoon and CO. Noland did not discover until first light that the antenna to the CO's push had been shot off. Up until that time he was extremely puzzled as to why Captain Newell failed to acknowledge the 2nd platoon call sign. Fortunately at 0245 hours, an unidentified helicopter passed overhead and made radio contact with Sergeant Noland. The pilot, after a quick briefing, got through to Captain Newell, who finally became aware of the 2nd platoon's fire fight, about two hours after it had begun. Captain Newell decided quickly to move the 3d

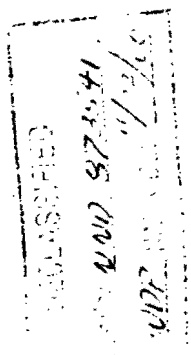


platoon to reinforce the 2nd platoon. At the same time, he instructed the 1st platoon to move north along Road 245 to where it junctioned with Road 303 and establish a blocking position at that point. Captain Newell directed the 3d platoon northwest along the dirt road in the rubber in which he had established the troop's command post. Once the platoon reached Road 303, the vehicles swung east and rumbled the approximate 3 kilometers to where the 2nd platoon was embroiled with the enemy (See Diagram A).

While the 3d platoon was enroute, the sniper that had been harassing PC 29 was finally eliminated. Shortly thereafter, an RPG round hit the front of PC 29. The track driver was wounded in the neck and the PC commander was knocked unconscious for about 30 minutes by the concussion. The vehicle's .50 caliber machinegun was also rendered inoperative, but was functioning again after 45 minutes of frenzied repairs. By the time Captain Newell reached the contact area, 5 of Sergeant Noland's men were in need of Medevac while 6 others had wounds of a less serious nature.

When Captain Newell was within 100 meters of the 2nd platoon, he ordered his tracks to start reconning the flanks of Road 303 with M-60 and .50 caliber machinegun fire. As it later turned out there were no enemy to the west of the 2nd platoon along Road 303 because the rubber was cut back 20 meters on each side of the road. The enemy was concentrated directly north, east, and south of the 2nd platoon along the forks of the road where the rubber came up to the edge of both split-offs.

When Captain Newell arrived with the 3d platoon he deployed three PC's each on the northern and southern sides of Road 303 facing the rubber and moved his two tanks to protect the approaches from the two forks (See Diagram C). By this time both tanks of the 2nd platoon were down to 9 and 7 cannister rounds each from a basic load of 50; 6 of the platoon's eight .50 caliber machineguns were



inoperative due either to expended ammunition or enemy fire, and the troops were very low on rounds. Sergeant Noland estimated that his platoon was, at best, a half-hour from being overrun.

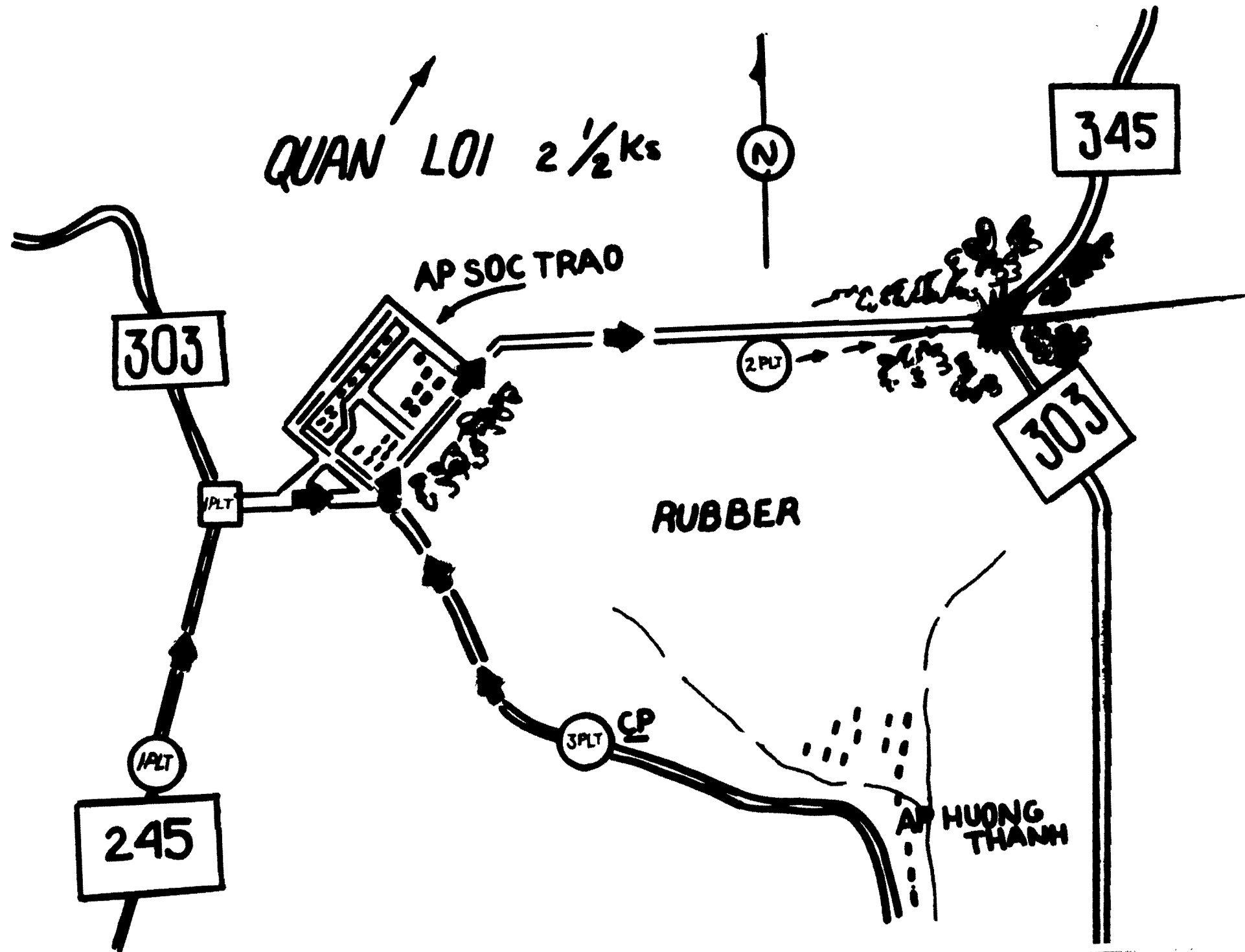
Around 0330 hours, the 3d platoon tank guarding the northern fork approach (Read 345) was hit on the side of the turret with an RPG round and rolled forward 30 to 40 meters (See Diagram C). The tank commander, gunner, and driver were all wounded. Somehow the commander got out of his cupola, dragging the gunner with him and returned to the 2nd platoon perimeter. The tank driver was still inside and could not be returned for because of the heavy volume of enemy fire.

After Captain Newell arrived, Sergeant Nolan informed him that he had been unable to secure any tube artillery, ARA, or illumination support. The CO told him to keep trying. Captain Newell then decided to commit the 1st platoon into the area to further reinforce the contact. The 1st platoon left its holding position and rumbled 3½ kilometers east along Road 303. Fifty meters from the contact area, the lead tank of the 1st platoon took a direct hit from an RPG round, blew up and killed the driver. The remainder of the crew miraculously got out and hopped on the first 1st platoon track that came by. Once the 1st platoon reached the contact area, Captain Newell deployed its tracks in the same fashion as he had those of the 3d platoon and sent the remaining tank to guard the northern fork approach (See Diagram C).

Then, at 0400 hours, a good three hours after the first heavy contact, illumination arrived. Cobra gunships from Blue Max arrived on station and ringed an area 50 meters out from the friendly force with a shower of steel. Captain Newell said, "Those Cobras did a truly outstanding job." After Blue Max worked out, enemy pressure lifted enough for dust-off to take place. With the illumination, Sergeant Noland's five seriously wounded men, including the FO, were evacuated at 0430 hours. At the same time, two troops rushed to extract the wounded

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DIAGRAM(A)

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P.C		ENEMY
TANK		MOVEMENT
RUBBER		SNIPER
DIRECTION		RPG
MG. 51 CAL		STAR
		LIGHT

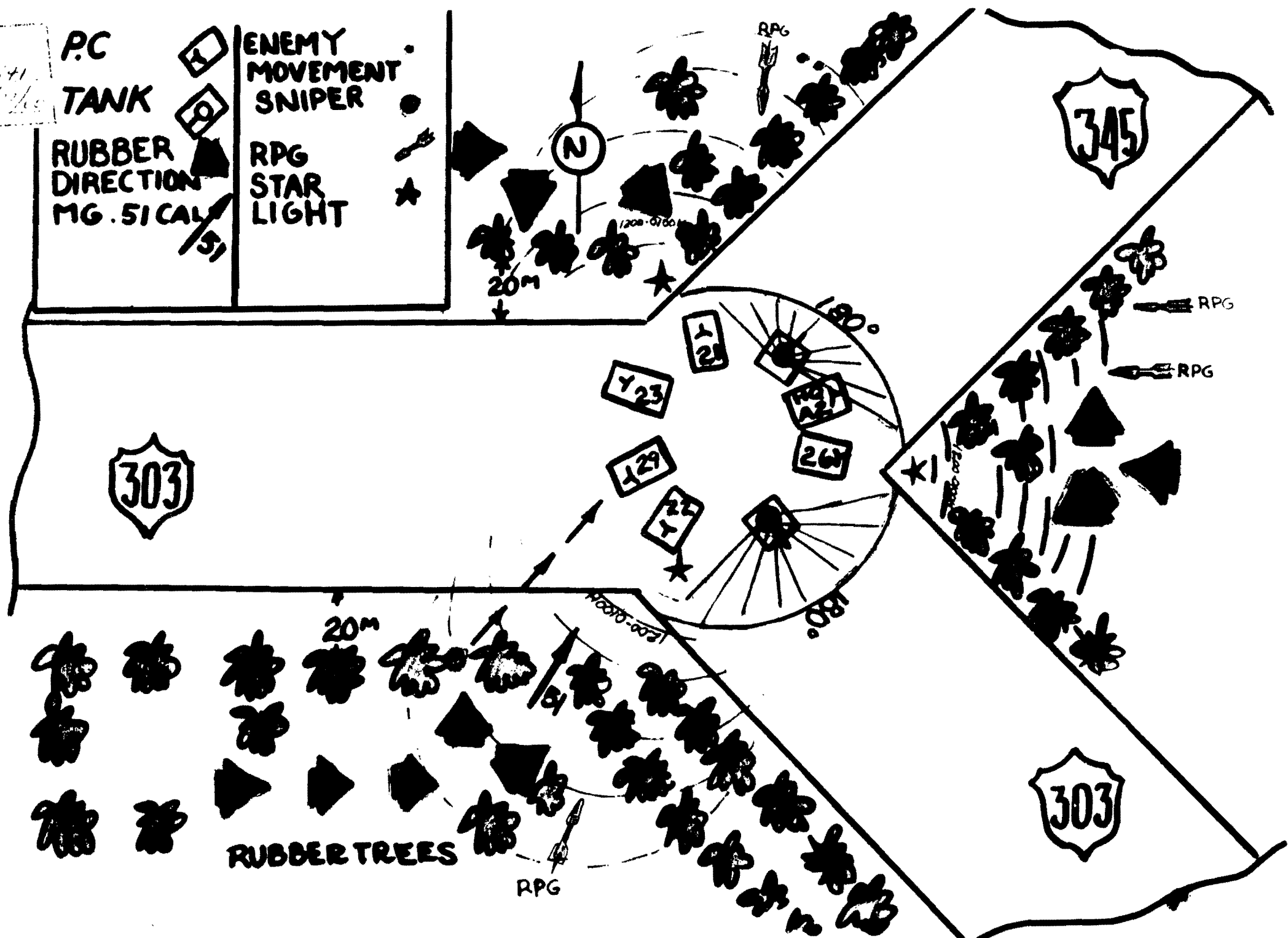


DIAGRAM (B)

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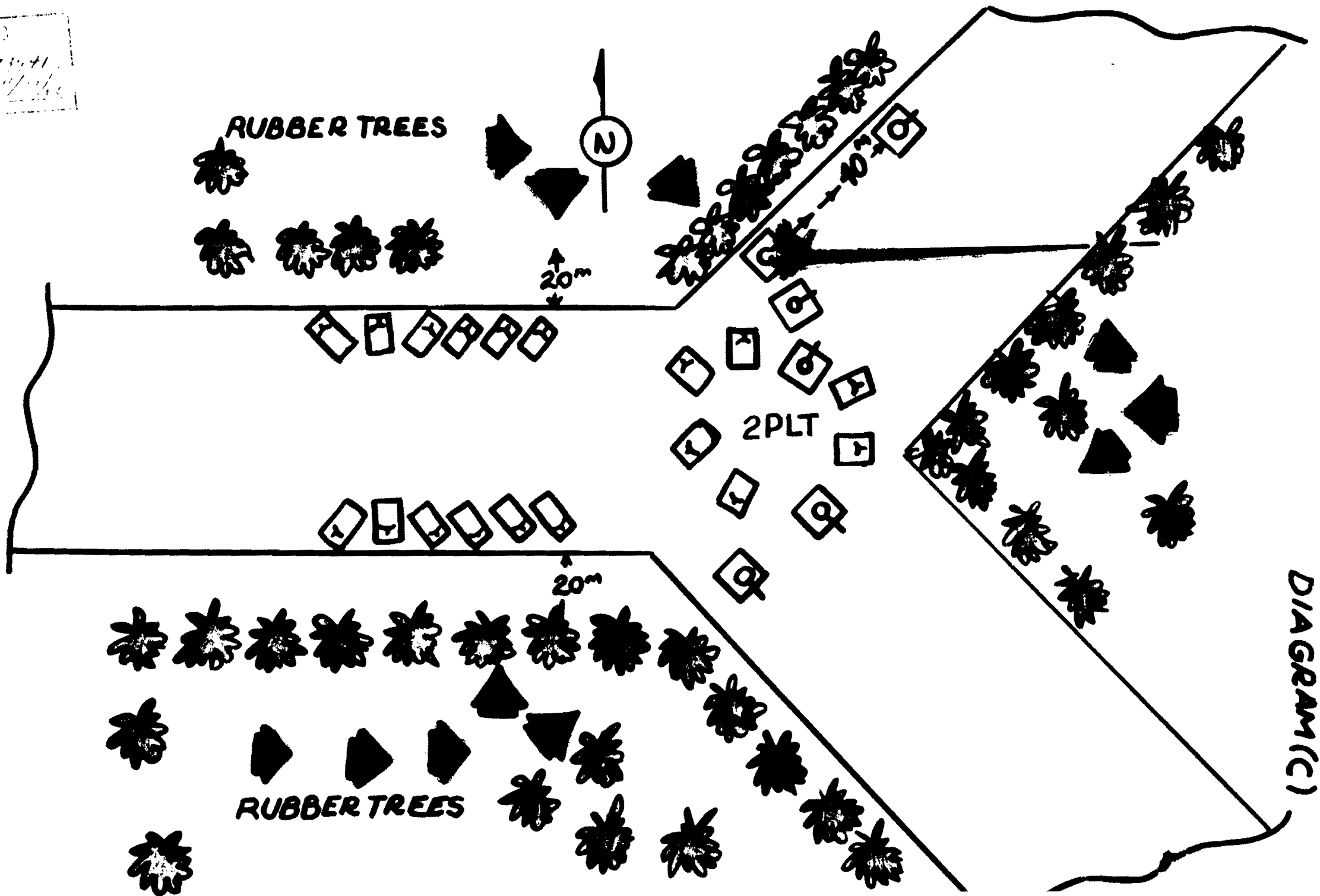


DIAGRAM (C)

driver from the 3d platoon tank that had been hit around 0330 hours. He was subsequently evacuated but died shortly thereafter.

After the Cobra gunships expended their lethal firepower, the enemy volume of firepower abruptly decreased in intensity from heavy to sporadic. By 0500 hours, all contact had ceased. The reasons for the delay in artillery and illumination support was a combination of ubiquitous enemy contact in the early morning hours of 12 August and the relatively low priority of A Troop, 1-4.

A first light sweep of the contact area revealed 23 NVA KIA, numerous blood trails, 14 AK-47 rifles, 3 RPD launchers, 25 RPG rounds with boosters, 51 hand grenades, 1 bolt-action rifle, and 1 RPD machinegun. A Troop, 1-4 Cav also discovered 9 bunkers on both sides of the upper fork (Road 345) freshly dug. These bunkers, splattered with blood, were 20 meters back from the road and 40 meters from the 2nd platoon perimeter. A sweep of the contact area a day later, 13 August, by elements of the 1-8th Cav produced 15 more bodies for a total of 38 NVA KIA. Both Captain Newell and Sergeant Noland estimated the enemy force at between 100 and 150 men. Captain Newell speculated as to the identity of the enemy unit, either D368 or the 141st of the 7th NVA Division, while the unit was actually hit by an entire battalion from the 272nd, as was learned from a PW on 18 August.

Total friendly losses were 2 US KIA and 12 wounded, 6 of which required Medevac. After Captain Newell arrived at the fire fight, the 2nd platoon took no further casualties. Two more PC's of the platoon were hit by RPG rounds, but RPG screens on the front of the PC's saved them from serious damage. Sergeant Nolan wrote down that his platoon alone had fired 14,000 rounds .50 caliber, 2 cases of M-16 rounds, detonated 2 cases of claymores and used up 12 cases of M-79 HE.

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PART IV: CONTACT OF 1-16 (MECHANIZED) TASK FORCE

On the afternoon of 7 August, at 1342 hours, the 1-16 Mech was alerted to clear fire support base Jim. At this time, the Battalion (-) was OPCON to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and composed of A and C Companies, which were to be the only two organic line companies it was to employ for the next ten days. The Battalion (-) also included Headquarters and Headquarters Company; there was no reconnaissance platoon or tanks. By 1530 hours the column tail of the 1-16 was out of Jim. The Battalion closed into fire support base Aspen (XT 749801) at 0315 hours on 8 August. At 0800 hours the same day, the 1-16 left Aspen for fire support base Eagle I (XT 696927), arriving there at 1330 hours. The Battalion (-) left Eagle I after one hour, and moved to establish and secure fire support base Eagle II (XT 747930). The 1-16 also provided security for the movement of 4-9 ARVN headquarters and a self-propelled 155mm battery (6 tubes) from Eagle I to Eagle II. Later in the afternoon of 8 August, A Troop, 1-4 Cav became OPCON to 1-16. On 8, 9, and 10 August, 1-16 operated from Eagle II with a task force consisting of its own A and C Companies, A/1-4, a 155mm self-propelled battery, and with 4-9 ARVN Headquarters co-located at the fire support base in Dong Tien fashion.

The 1-16th first received word of NVA presence in the Fishhook on 8 August. The battalion also knew that the 271st and 272nd NVA Regiments were planning a push to An Loc and Quan Loi in the very near future. On 10 August, A/1-4 was released from OPCON of 1-16. That same day, one platoon from C Company, 1-16, together with one company from 4-9 ARVN, killed 23 NVA in the vicinity of XT 637972. At 1340 hours on 11 August, the 1-16 was ordered to move to and secure a fire support base at XT 727968, which was to become Allons II.

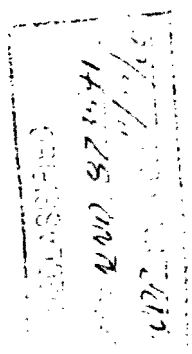
In the evening of 11 August, C Company, 1-16 was at Allons II as a ready reaction force with D Company, 5-7 Cav OPCON. A Company, 1-16 was 7 kilometers

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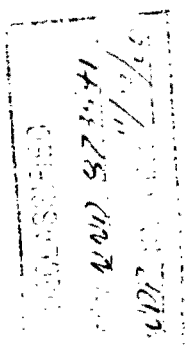
southeast at fire support base Thunder IV (XT 762896) for security. Shortly after midnight, on 12 August, the 9th ARVN Command Post at Chanh Tanh was hit with B-40 rocket and small arms fire. A short time later, enemy infiltration began to apply strong pressure on ARVN elements at Chanh Tanh. A Company, at Thunder IV, was alerted to begin preparations for moving to Chanh Tanh to reinforce.

At 0141 hours, fire base Aspen came under enemy attack; the 1-16 was alerted for possible deployment to Aspen. By 0200 hours, 1-16 had been alerted for Chan Tanh, Aspen, An Loc, and Thunder IV. Five minutes later, suspecting an imminent enemy attack, C Company at Allons II dismounted all personnel from its tracks, except for the commanders and gunners for the .50 caliber machineguns, to man the perimeter. However, between 0230 hours and 0345 hours, things quieted down and all elements of 1-16 returned to their normal alert status.

At 0605 hours, A Company, 1-16 was alerted to leave Thunder IV and execute a counter-attack plan. At 0609 hours, the Company pulled out of the fire support base and moved north to XT 739924, just south of Eagle II. At 0609 hours, 1-16 received work from the 11th ACR to move one company (C) to recon within a 4 square kilometer grid box (2 kilometers on a side) centered on XT 6891. Initial emphasis was to be given to the northwest corner of the box. The 1-16 was also instructed to move a rifle company (D/5-7th Cav) to screen, facing east, a 4 kilometer square grid box centered on XT 6889. A Company, now positioned below Eagle II, was instructed to check out a 4 kilometer grid box centered on XT 7288. All three companies of 1-16 task force now had specific instructions and began moving to carry them out. A Company waited at its position south of Eagle II until C Company, with D/5-7 Cav OPCON, moved south from Allons II and married up (See Diagram A). The 1-16 task force, with C Company first in the order of movement, began moving in a southwest direction.



At 0705 hours on 12 August, lead elements of C Company received heavy RPG and automatic weapons fire from the vicinity of XT 706903 (See Diagram A). The first track in the column was hit by an RPG round and knocked out of action. A few seconds later, the driver was felled by a 57mm recoilless rifle. The task force deployed on line and prepared to sweep the ambush site down the rubber rows against an enemy estimated to be the size of a reinforced company. A Company was on the left and C Company on the right, with the Cav troops from D/5-7 dismounting on line in front of the tracks and interspersed among them. The battalion commander's track was wedged between A and C Companies, and two tracks were staggered behind the right and left extremes on the line protecting the flanks (See Diagram B). Troops from A and C Companies jumped off their tracks and darted for cover. From prone positions they opened up with their organics laying down bases of fire. This fire supplemented the tracks' .50 caliber and M-60 machinegun fire which was spraying the area. There was much crawling back and forth between firing positions and tracks for ammunition resupply. The general direction of fires was north-south, with the task force located north. The enemy fire output steadily increased. Around 0745 hours, tube artillery, gunships and aerial rocket artillery were called in to support. About this time, the battalion commander's track and those of the A and C company commanders were all knocked out by RPG's. All three commanders mounted other tracks. The enemy tried to move northwest to cut off C Company's right flank. However, due to aggressive fighting by the 1-16 task force, the enemy was forced eastward. The strategy was to force the enemy 1400 meters eastward out of the rubber and into a clearing where artillery and cobra gunships from the 1st Air Cavalry Division's 2d/20th ARA Battalion (Blue Max) could place more accurate fire on him (See Diagram B). As the day progressed, contact was continuous. By 1200 hours, three more tracks from the 1-16 task force had been rendered inoperative, two due to RPG rounds and

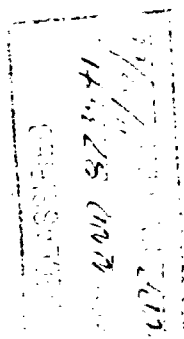


one as a result of 60mm mortar fire; no injuries resulted. However, shortly after noon, AK-47 fire from a sniper killed one US soldier. At 1400 hours, the command and control helicopter of the battalion's S-3 was shot down by .50 caliber fire at an altitude of 600 feet. One gunner and the co-pilot were wounded; they were extracted 15 minutes later by 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) aircraft. By 1500 hours, the S-3 was in another aircraft and back over the contact area. At 1600 hours, on command from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment commander, contact was broken. All friendly units returned to their original fire support bases to resume their ready reaction force responsibilities.

Throughout the contact hours, D Company, 5-7 Cav was quite instrumental in enabling A and C Companies of 1-16 (Mech) to force the NVA to move east and prevent them from turning either friendly flank. To quote Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth G. Cassels, the battalion commander, "I have never witnessed more aggressive fighting by a unit over here in Vietnam than D/5-7; it did a hell of a job."

C Company, 1-11 Armored Cavalry Regiment did **not** arrive in the contact area until 1500 hours, at the tail end of the fire fight. It was not able to make a significant contribution to the total effort.

The results of the contact showed 29 NVA KIA by actual body count and numerous blood trails. Enemy equipment seized during the day's action included 35 Chicom grenades, 2 AK-47 rifles, 2 M-16 rifles, 4 RPG-2 launchers, 1 RPG-7 launcher with 1 B-40 round, 1x57R round, and 10xD-40 boosters, **Friendly** casualties showed 2 US KIA, 27 US WIA, and 5 PC's destroyed.

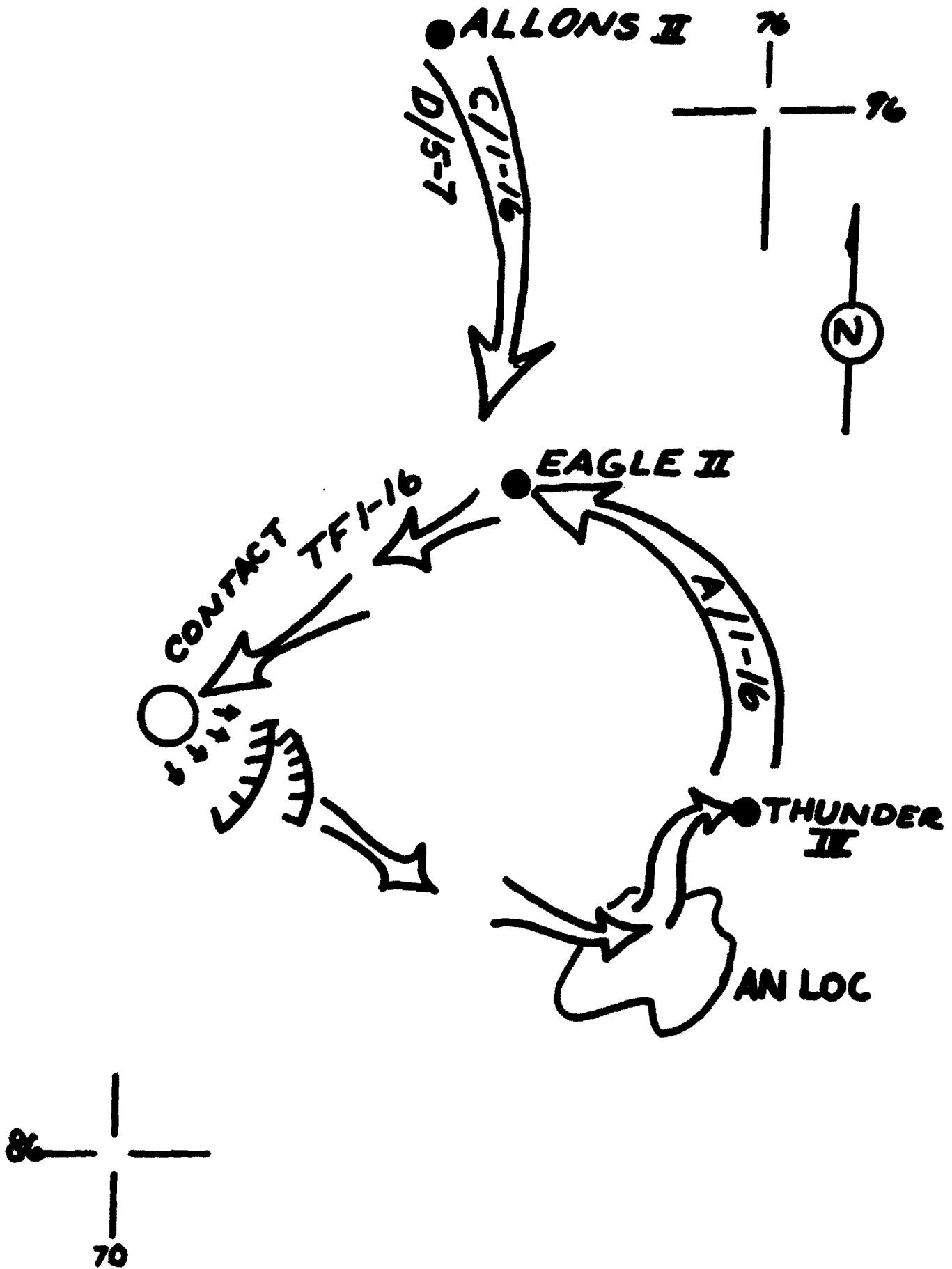


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AN LOC.

DIAGRAM (A)



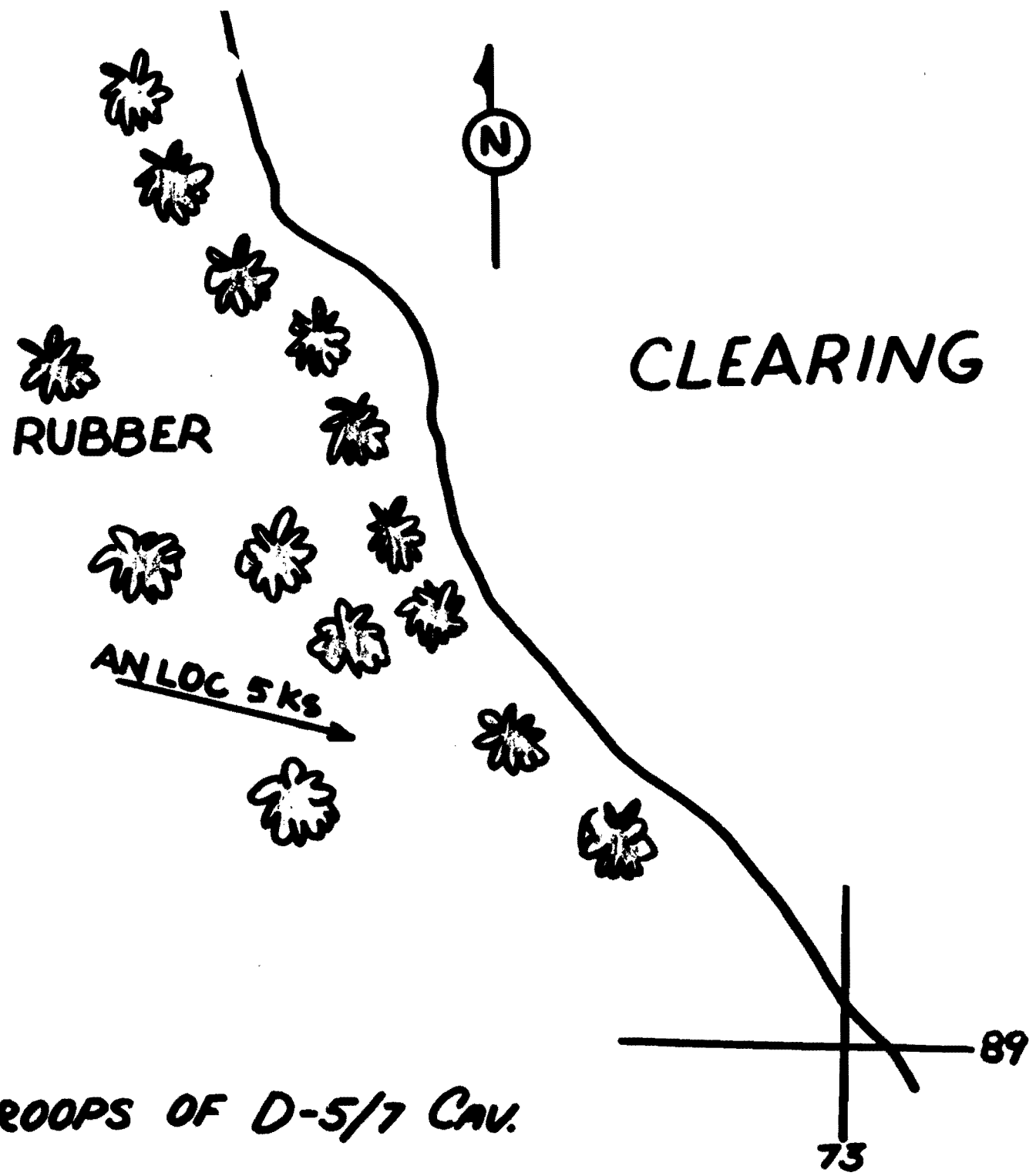
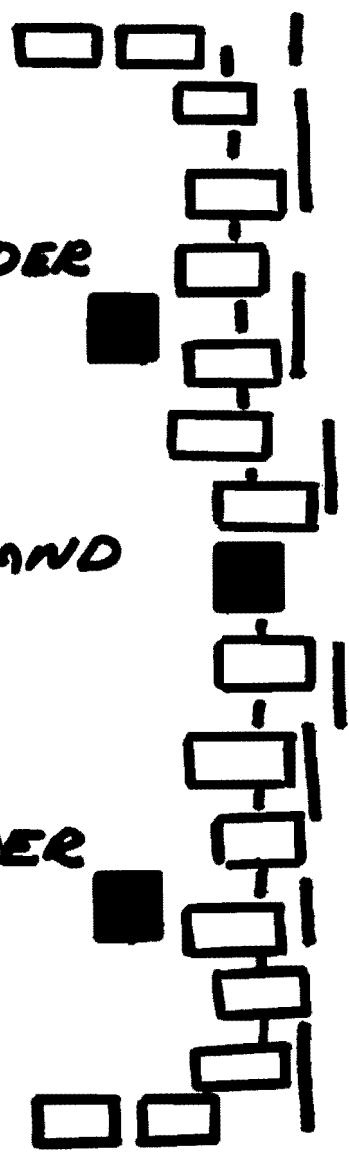
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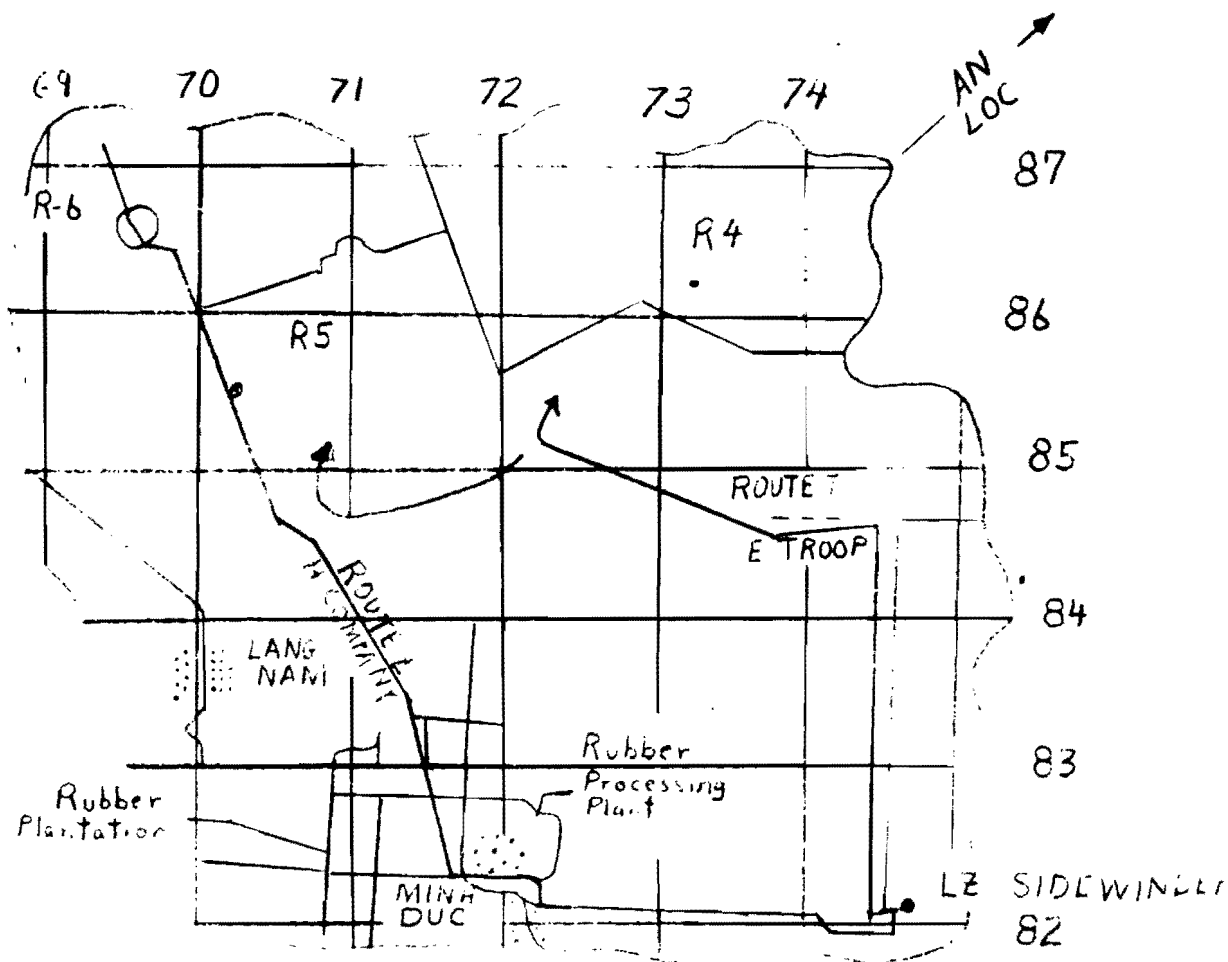
— DISMOUNTED TROOPS OF D-5/7 Cav.

DIAGRAM (B)

APPENDIX V: E Troop, 2-11th ACR Counter-Attack

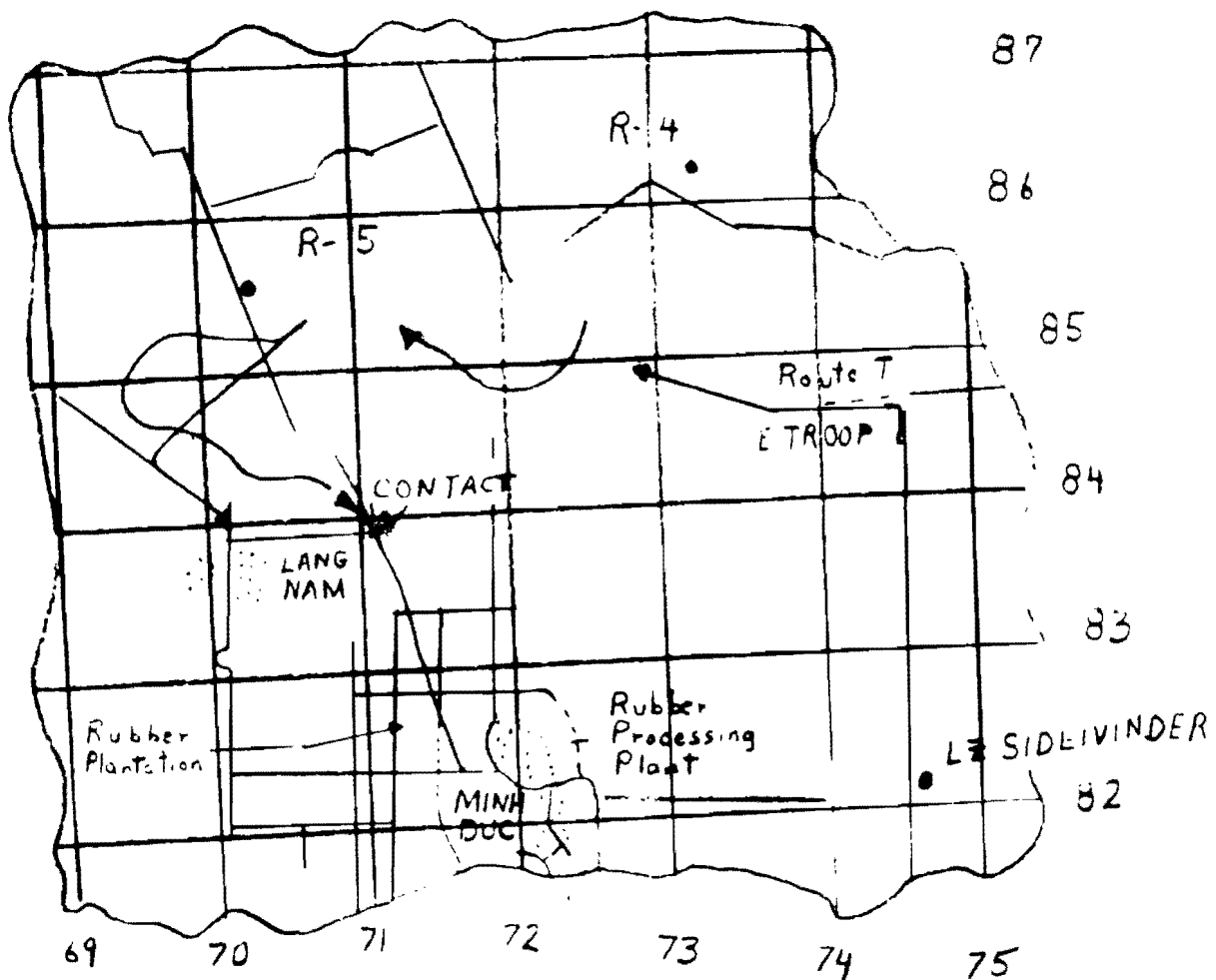
E Troop, 2d Squadron, 11th ACR secured and reinforced LZ Sidewinder during the early morning hours of 12 August 1969. At approximately 0700 hours on the same day, E Troop received an order to move from LZ Sidewinder and conduct reconnaissance in force operations of an area approximately 4 kilometers to their northwest. This operation was part of the overall counter-attack plan which was initiated by allied forces against the enemy.

To accomplish this mission, E Troop was ordered to proceed up "Route T" to an area designated "R-4". If contact was not made with the enemy, the Troop was then to proceed to an area designated "R-5" and conduct further reconnaissance of this area. At this time, E Troop consisted of 3 Mechanized Platoons and a Headquarters element, which was composed of 16, M113A1, ACAV Armored Personnel Carriers (APC's). H Company, 2-11th ACR which was composed of 2 tank platoons and one ACAV platoon was to follow E Troop via "Route Z" and recon an area designated "R-6".



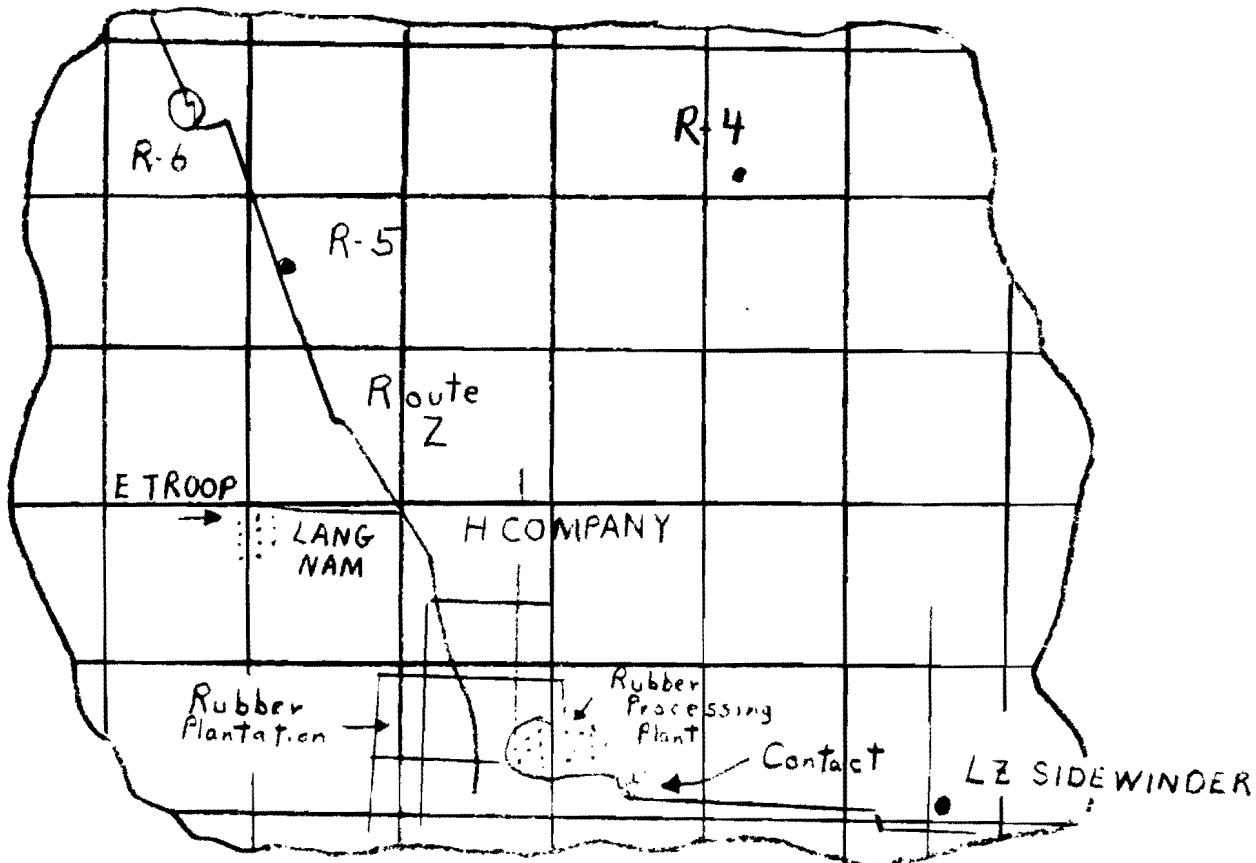
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On order, E Troop began moving to "R-4" and made no contact with the enemy while en route and during the reconnaissance of the area. Consequently, the Troop regrouped and moved to "R-5" and again made no contact during this reconnaissance operation. The Troop then split into platoon size elements and began conducting reconnaissance of the surrounding area. In the meantime, the Troop Commander's APC developed mechanical difficulty resulting in E Troop minus the 3d platoon, moving and regrouping at the village of Lang Nam. The 3d platoon continued to recon the area and in so doing split into smaller elements. Again the platoon made no contact with the enemy so it regrouped at a road junction approximately 1 kilometer east of Lang Nam. At this location, the platoon received small arms fire but contact broke immediately with no friendly casualties. The platoon then proceeded to Lang Nam where it rejoined the Troop.



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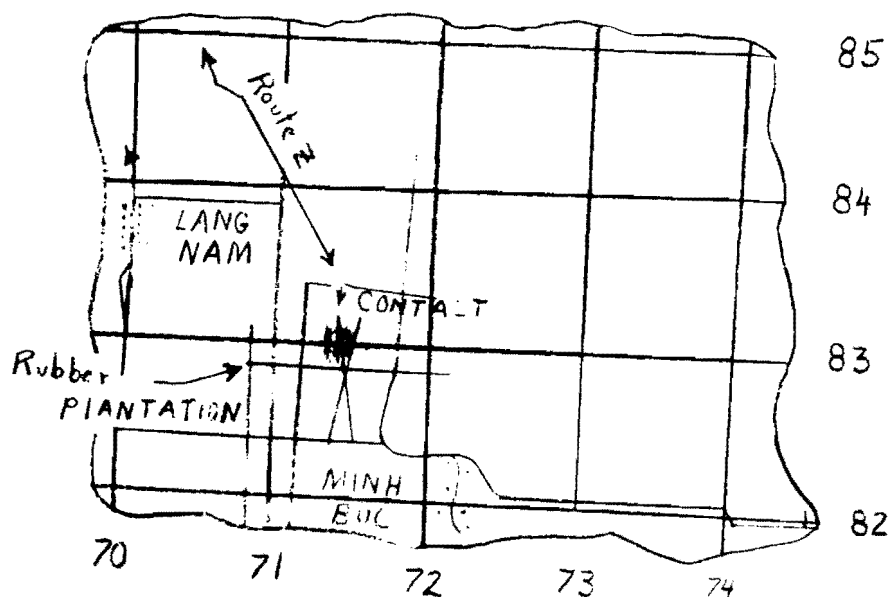
While E Troop was accomplishing its mission, H Company began moving to "R-6" at 0800 on 12 August 1969 via "Route Z". While proceeding to their destination, the company had to fight its way in and out of Minh Duc making a passage through the lines of the 15th ARVN Cavalry which had a troop size unit in sporadic engagement within the town. H Company's area reconnaissance mission in "R-6" was completed without incident. However, in proceeding to and from this area, and in reinforcement of E Troop, they sustained 10 casualties; 2 KIA, 8 WIA, and lost two tanks to RPG fire.



After regrouping at the village, the commander directed the troop to return to the area in which the 3d platoon made contact. When the Troop arrived at the road junction, they found no enemy elements. E Troop then proceeded along the road in a southerly direction into a rubber plantation. It must be kept in mind that as the Troop moved towards the plantation, it was moving on

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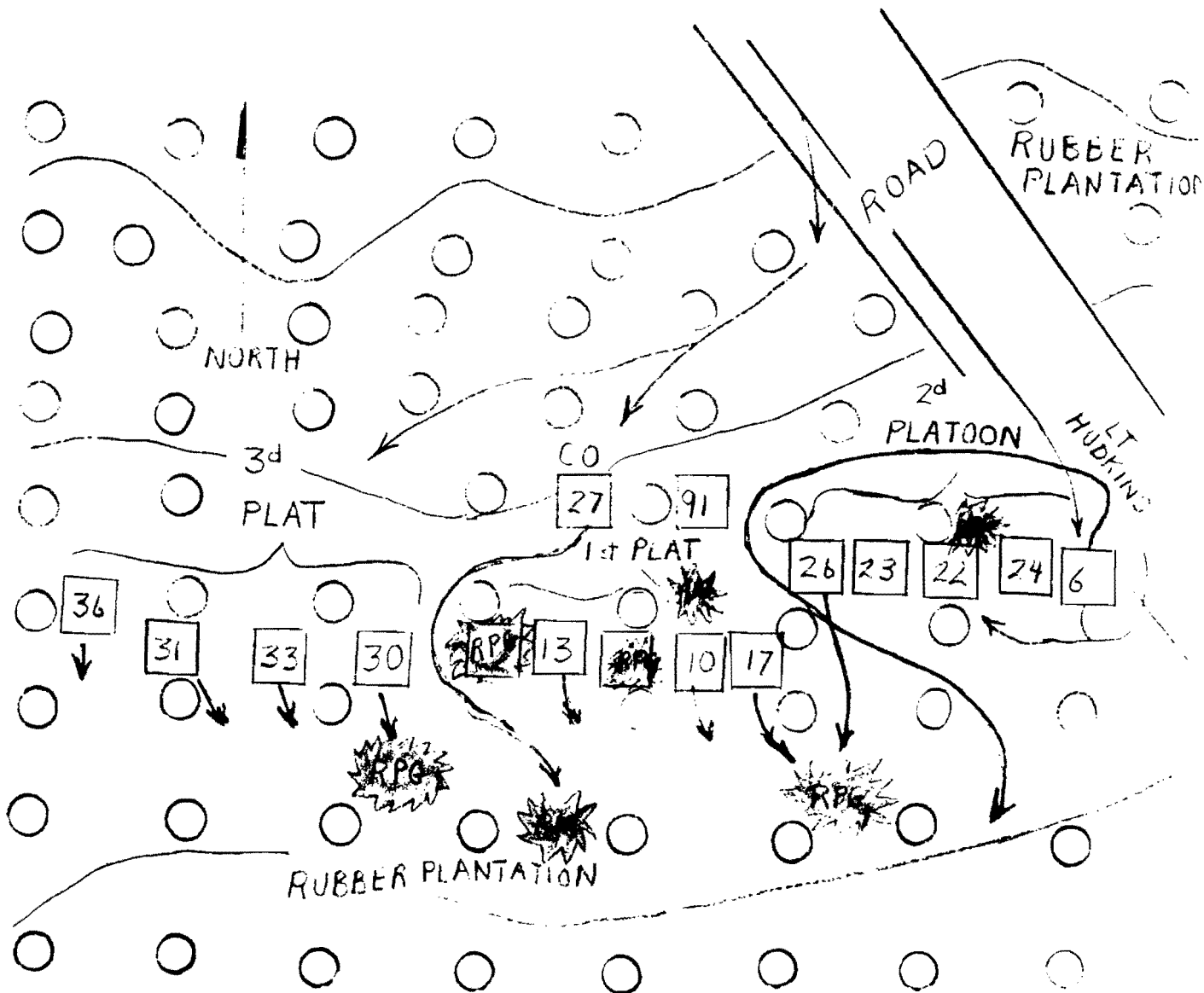
"Route Z" which H Company had passed over earlier that day. When the Troop reached the rubber plantation, the road upon which they were traveling ("Route Z") then turned to the southeast. As soon as the Troop entered the plantation,



the 3d platoon which was the lead element, spotted several individuals running. The platoon immediately engaged these individuals with their organic weapons and made a turning movement to the right allowing the platoon to move directly south through the plantation. The 2d platoon immediately deployed to provide security for the left flank and the entire Troop then went on line. Contact with the enemy was quickly broken. However, following a two to four minute lull, at 1210 hours on the 12 August 1969, E Troop began receiving heavy RPG and machinegun fire from all directions. Specialist 5th Class James E. Foote who was an APC driver for the 1st platoon of E Troop said, "I've never seen anything like it! We were getting fire from all directions! PC's (meaning armored personnel carriers) were getting hit all over the place. It was quiet and then all at once all hell broke loose!" The majority of the fire was coming from a bunker complex that was located within the rubber plantation which was off the road.

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This complex was 200 meters long (from east to west) and 75 meters in width (from north to south). The bunker complex turned out to be a base area for a battalion of the 271st Regiment of the 9th VC Division.



NOTE: Initially, 3d platoon (on the right) detected movement. Moving forward the platoon made a turning movement to the right, heading directly south. The 1st platoon was directed to move up on the left. After a 2 to 4 minute lull following minor small arms fire, the assaulting elements came under heavy fire from numerous RPG teams, and possible heavy machinegun fire. Elements from the 2d platoon moved up to protect the left flank. At this time the assault was halted, E Troop having sustained 43 total casualties and 7 ACAV's hit by RPG fire. (Small squares represent ACAV's with E Troop bumper numbers shown within).

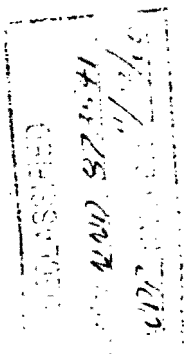
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The terrain consisted of red clay, new rubber trees which were 14 feet in height and had foliage. There were also numerous terraces which provided the enemy cover and concealment. The visibility at the time was good and E Troop began closing on line from north to south. E Troop fired its weapons without restriction to all flanks and to the front of their location. As the troop continued south, they approached the bunker complex and fighting became quite fierce.

E Troop continued to close with and destroy the enemy until the Troop Commander had lost two platoon leaders and could not continue forward. The Squadron CO, who was on the scene by this time, directed the Troop to redeploy so artillery and Tac Air could be directed onto the objective. At this time, five APC's were burning in the area of contact. The remaining vehicles moved back to Lang Nam in order to Medevac their casualties. The S-3 then directed air strikes into the area along with artillery and ARA.

H Company was later directed to move into the area of contact to recover the dead. At 1425 hours on 12 August 1969, H Company entered the area and received RPG fire sustaining two casualties who eventually died from their wounds. Fire was returned and H Company was instructed to withdraw to allow an air strike to be employed. They were further instructed to move fire support base Aspen and secure it. The reason being, the weather was closing, air support was not available, and neither were Command and Control aircraft.

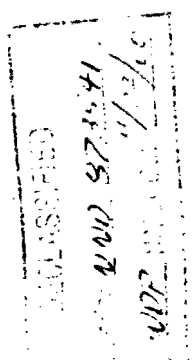
2Lt Hudkins was the platoon leader of the 2d platoon of E Troop. His vehicle was one of the first APC's to be hit by RPG fire. The unit medic checked the wounded officer and pronounced him dead due to the large amount of blood coming from his chest and groin. There were no signs of life and the medic moved on to assist other wounded personnel. At approximately 1700 hours on 15 August 1969, an Air Cavalry Troop was flying in the contact area of the



12 August encounter. Several kilometers due south from the battle site, at the edge of the plantation, an APC was observed and troops were inserted into the area to investigate. When the ground elements arrived at the location of the APC, they found 2Lt Hudkins inside the APC and still alive after three days.

The Lieutenant vaguely remembered the artillery concentrations and the ensuing air strikes. Apparently, he crawled back inside his APC (E-22) and attempted to bandage his wounds. It is believed that the Lieutenant remained at that location the entire night and on 13 August drove his APC to the location where he was located on 15 August.

Between 1300 hours on 12 August and 0300 hours on 13 August, 4 air strikes were placed into the area of contact along with artillery. During this period a total of 8x750 pounds high explosive (HE) bombs, 22x500 pound HE bombs, 14 Napalm bombs, 386 rounds of 105 howitzer, and 46 rounds of 8" Howitzer were placed within 1,000 meters of the contact area involving E Troop. Furthermore, 8 cobras from the 2d Bn (ARA), 20th Artillery expended all their ammunition into this area during the same time period. The initial contact with E Troop resulted in 31 NVA being killed, while the Troop had 4 Americans killed, 38 wounded, and 1 missing in action. The artillery concentrations that followed the ground battle resulted in 12 NVA being killed while ARA accounted for 15 additional NVA being killed which brought the total to 58 NVA soldiers who died. The air strikes resulted in 25 bunker complex being destroyed.



RESULTS OF TROOP E ENGAGEMENT OF 12 AUGUST 1969

1. PERSONNEL:

- a. Enemy: 31 KIA; 12 Killed by Artillery; 15 Killed by Helicopter
- b. Friendly: 38 WIA; 4 KIA; 1 MIA

2. EQUIPMENT:

- a. Enemy Losses: 8 RPG-7; 7 RPG-2; 12 AK-47 rifles, 32 Rounds B-40; and 15 Hand Grenades
- b. The following is a list of weapons and equipment by type recovered by US Forces from E Troop engagement on 12 August 1969.

<u>Number</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Disposition</u>
Four (4) ea	M113A1 ACAV's	Combat Loss
Three (3) ea	M113A1 ACAV's	Moderate Damage
Twenty One (21) ea	CVC Helmets	Combat Loss
Two (2) ea	Radios RT-125/VRC	Combat Loss
Two (2) ea	Radios R-442/VRC	Combat Loss
One (1) ea	Radio RT-246/VRC	Moderate Damage
One (1) ea	Radio R-442/VRC	Moderate Damage
Fourteen (14) ea	M-60 Machinegun	Combat Loss
Twenty Six (26) ea	M-16 Rifles	Combat Loss
Five (5) ea	Cal. 45 Pistols	Combat Loss
Five (5) ea	M-79 Grenade Launchers	Combat Loss
Five (5) ea	Cal. .50 Machineguns	Combat Loss

- c. The following is a list of weapons and equipment not recovered and presumed in the hands of the enemy from the engagement of 12 August 1969.

<u>Number</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Disposition</u>
Two (2) ea	M-60 Machineguns	Hand of enemy
Sixteen (16) ea	M-16 Rifles	Hand of enemy
Two (2) ea	M-79 Grenade Launchers	Hand of enemy
One (1) ea	Cal .50 Machinegun	Hand of enemy

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APPENDIX I

INTERROGATION REPORTS, HOI CHANH NGUYEN VAN AN.

A. Initial Interrogation Report.

1. Nguyen Van An, Private, Sapper, 1st Squad, 2d Platoon, 2d Company, unknown battalion, 272d Regiment, 9th VC Division. rallied at XT 721858 on 29 July at approximately 1800 hours to the 214th Regional Force Company. Source had no weapons or documents in his possession at time of capture, but he did have a compass.

2. Under questioning, An gave the following information about his unit and other units of which he had knowledge:

Source said the 2d Company had approximately 80 men. Source had no knowledge of any units of the 9th VC Division.

Source stated that the 9th VC Division had 3 regiments; the 1st, 2d and 3d. Source said each regiment had 3 battalions. The 2d Regiment consisted of the 4th, 5th, and 6th battalions. The following companies are attached directly to the 2d Regiment: H-16 (82mm Mortar Company); H-17 (DK 75 Company); H-18 (122mm Rocket Company); H-19 (Engineer Company) and the 2d Company Sapper Reconnaissance.

Source stated that he and approximately 80 other men comprising the 2d Company were receiving sapper training, and he had heard some of the other men speak of much fighting in the future (hearsay).

3. Background:

Source said he and 18 others joined 2d Company on July 7th 1969. He had been forced to join the VC on 3 June 1969 at My Hanh village when 5 VC and approximately 18 other new recruits came to My Hanh. From there they were taken to Long An Province, Tan Tru District, Tan Phouc village where they picked up some ammunition. Source and approximately 14 othersmen carried 5 B-40 rounds each. They carried this ammunition to Tay Ninh Province, Tra Cau village. This part of the trip took approximately 15 days. They then took the ammunition from Tra Cau village across the border into Cambodia. Source arrived in his Cambodian base camp on 7 July 1969, and that day he started his training as a sapper.

4. Interrogator's Comment: Source was very cooperative and he answered questions without hesitation. Source volunteered all knowledge which he felt would be helpful. Source twice stated that he was willing to guide allied troops into the area.

5. Present Disposition of Captive: Source is presently located at the MACV Compound, An Loc District, Binh Long Province, SVN.

6. OB Comment: Source seems to be making a memorized recital of AKA's and organization of his knowledge is unusually broad for a private, forced laborer, who has been with the 9th VC Division for only 59 days. The source correctly states the AKA's for the 272d Regiment, the 1st, 2d, and 3d Battalions of the 272d Regiment, and the H-19 Engineer Company and the H-21 Sapper Recon Company. He has confused his identification of the regimental AKA's for the 271st and 273d, however, and H-16's and H-17's designations were reversed by the source. H-16 is the 75mm RR Company and H-17 is the 82mm mortar company. Regimental size forces do not normally have a 122mm rocket capability. The 9th VC Division has historically been charged with opening the east-west route to Saigon from the vicinity of the Angel's Wing east. The 88th Regiment was mentioned in Source's spot report as continuing to operate in Tay Ninh Province west of Tay Ninh city and north. Source's knowledge of other

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units in the fishhook could be partially correct. The 1st and the 7th NVA Divisions headquarters elements could be in the area. Elements of the 5th VC Division may have moved north during the last two weeks. In the past it has operated along the Saigon River below the Fishhook.

B. Supplementary Interrogation Report.

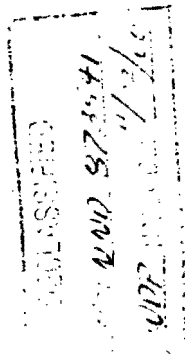
1. Background: Source now admitted, two days after the above, that he was a platoon leader in the H-21 Sapper Recon Company, 272d Regiment, 9th VC Division. He stated that by 20 June 69 elements of the 271st and 272d Regiments had returned to the Fishhook area while the 88th Regiment remained in the Tay Ninh area. The 9th VC Division re-located into the area between the O Slai Strang stream and O Loved Stream.

2. Mission: After the withdrawal into the Cambodian sanctuaries all four divisions (1st, 5th, 7th, and 9th) dispatched their subordinate Recon companies to reconnoiter targets in SVN. After one month of reconnaissance the companies were recalled to discuss the situation. On 20 July, the Recon platoons belonging to the 4th, 5th, and 6th Battalions of the 272d Regiment, along with their respective Battalion Commanders, were dispatched to the An Loc area to scout the situation there. They were to choose possible avenues of approach. The 6th Battalion will have the mission of providing a blocking force between village 8 (XT701857) and Binh Ninh (XT721862). The Sapper Company of the 272d will attack Binh Ninh. The 271st Regiment will set up a blocking force between Village 6 (XT688875) and Village 8. The Binh Long Local Force Battalion (D368) will operate with the 4th and 5th Battalions of the 272d Regiment. However, if D368 for some reason is unable to participate, then the Sapper Battalion (K59) from the 9th VC Division will replace them. An also believed that the four main force divisions would have the following targets: 9th VC Division - An Loc; 7th NVA Division - Quan Loi, Loc Minh, Bo Duc; 1st NVA Division - Tay Ninh, and interdiction of QL 13 south of An Loc; 5th VC Division - Tay Ninh.

By 20 July, elements of the 7th NVA Division had re-located within a four kilometer radius of XU500050. At this time, the 1st and 5th NVA Divisions were also pulling back into Cambodia, along the border north of Tay Ninh. Also the K71 Hospital was located in Cambodia within a 3 kilometer radius of XU4904. There were numerous caches within a five to six kilometers radius of this area including one million liters of rice. An stated that motor vehicles are driven freely throughout this area.

3. Additional Information: Source stated he joined the VC five years ago when he was 14. Since then he had participated in battles with the 9th Division against Dond Xoai, Loc Ninh, An Loc, Bo Duc and Tay Ninh.

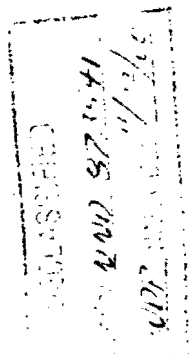
4. OB Comment: OB has no evidence of such a relocation of the four main force divisions. OB carries the 9th Division along and arc southwest of Tay Ninh City along the Cambodian border, however, OB cannot rule out the possibility of such a move. (ed. italics).



APPENDIX II

INTELLIGENCE BUILD-UP 25 July - 10 August 1969

1. 25 July: (XT 720737) 14 km S of An Loc, B/1-8 found documents left behind in a bunker complex by enemy they had driven out. ID: 101D, C-18 Anti-aircraft Company.
2. 27 July: (XU 723030) On road between An Loc and Loc Ninh, F/2-11 killed 1 NVA. ID: C-2 Sapper Recon Co, 209th Regiment.
3. 28 July: (XT 717757), 3km SSW of An Loc, C/5-7 killed 2 NVA ID: 271st, 272nd Regiments.
4. *29 July: (XT 719858), 3km W of An Loc, Nguyen Van An rallied to 214th RFC. Sent to An Loc Chieu Hoi Center, 31 July. ID: 9th VC Division.
5. 31 July: (XT 359178) Vicinity Angel's Wing, Hoi Chanh Nguyen Van Do, XA Co 28 Hamlet Guerillas rallied. Said 9th Div passed through Xa Co Hamlet (7600) between 1-5 July.
6. 01 Aug: (XU 892073), 16km E of Loc Ninh, D/1-7 killed 5 NVA, captured 2. One PW said 7th NVA Division to attack Quan Loi.
7. *31 July: An Loc Chieu Hoi Center, US Interrogators discovered Hoi Chanh An (item 4 above) who said 9th VC Division was in the Fishhook.
8. 02 Aug: (XT 863877) Hoi Chanh Nguyen Van Sen who rallied to 399th RF at An Loc said two companies of the 9th VC Div were reconnoitering the area in mid-July and stayed two weeks. D368 LF followed them through.
9. 03 Aug: (XU 717044) Hoi Chanh wounded on 27 July (item 2) said the 209th Regiment would attack Soc 10 between 5 and 7 August.
10. *03 Aug: An Loc. Hoi Chanh An revealed he was from H-21 Sapper Recon Company, 272nd Regiment and he drew out basic plans for attacks on Binh Long Province by elements of the 9th, 7th, and 1st Divisions, 5-15 August. (See Appendix I)
11. 04 Aug: (XU 595105) ACT 11th ACR killed 4 NVA N of Fishhook, no ID.
12. 05-06 Aug: (XU 577188-58 172) N of Fishhook, ACT Killed 21 NVA.
13. 04 Aug: (WS 340189) Vicinity of Angel's Wing, Hoi Chanh Le Thanh Hien, Plt Ldr C-100 Sapper Co, H95 Recon Bn, 9th VC Division, rallied to 127th RFC. 9th Division at XT 970700.
14. 08 Aug: An Loc, Hoi Chanh Pham Van Do, member 8th Bn, 209th Regiment said that unit would cross Cambodian border at XT 5795, move east to cross Canle River to attack An Loc.
15. 09 Aug: (XU 638018) Vic. Fishhook, B/1-9 killed 23 NVA. ID: Foss 272nd



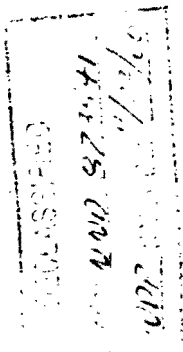
APPENDIX II

INTELLIGENCE BUILD-UP (CONTINUED)

16. 09 Aug: (XT 605905) 0905 Hours, vic Fishhook, ACT killed 33 NVA and captures 6. ID: 271 and 101D.
17. 09 Aug: XT 5990 grid square, vic Fishhook, 1115 hours BDA of B-52 strike spotted individuals sitting in stunned state. ARP's captured 6, killed 2, 4 NVA KBM, 2 NVA KBA. ID: 271 and 101D.
18. 10 Aug: (XT 622972) Fishhook, BDA spotted 40-50 individuals sitting in a lightly vegetated area. Psyops bird, ARP's, B/1-9 Blues, plt from 1-16 Mech, and 60 from 4-9 ARVN's inserted. 31 NVA KIA, 4 PW, 4 HC. ID: 272nd Regiment.

Throughout the development of the intelligence picture, technological means made a significant contribution in helping to clarify the enemy's dispositions and intentions.

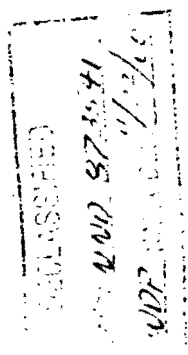
TOTALS: 5 US WIA, 129 NVA KIA, 16 PW's



APPENDIX III

CHRONOLOGY 12 August 1969, FRIENDLY CASUALTIES AND ENEMY LOSSES:

- 0045: Chon Thanh hit by an estimated enemy company and incoming mortars. F/2-11 ACR moved to SW end of airstrip for security. ID: 101D. 9 NVA KIA, 7 ARVN KIA, 22 ARVN WIA.
- 0105: LZ ANDY receives incoming followed by sapper attacks at three different locations (See Part II, Appendix 2) ID: 34, 35, 37th Co's, J-16 Armor Officer (Sapper), 272nd. 7 US KIA, 23 WIA, 55 NVA KIA, 7 PW.
- 0115: 2d Plt, A/1-4 hit by very heavy ground attack in screening position.
- 0120: An Loc receives heavy B-40 fire.
- 0135: Sidewinder receives incoming 60mm mortar rounds.
- 0141: Aspen receives four rounds, unknown variety, incoming.
- 0141: Phu Mieng (XT 7991) hit by 60 mm mortar incoming.
- 0150: An Loc and villages NW receives unknown number of mortar rounds.
- 0210: Loc Ninh, FSB Jon and MACV compound receive incoming and small ground probe. D/1-11 at N end of airstrip hit by RPG's. 22 NVA KIA.
- 0227: Aspen hit by heavy ground probe, Spooky arrives 0258. Situation quiet by 0315. ID: 209th. 1 US KIA, 19 US WIA, 32 NVA KIA, 2 PW.
- 0228: D/1-11 ACR still taking RPG's, 2 vehicles burning, one US trapped in cupola. ID: 209th. 1 US KIA, 1 KCS KIA, 8 US WIA, 19 NVA KIA.
- 0241: Sidewinder under heavy attack. 0305 NVA in wire, 0315 11 ACR to send E/2-11 to reinforce. 0316 NVA inside NE side of perimeter, ARA, Spooky expend. 0330 E Trp moves out. 0400, 1st Plt, E Trp reaches perimeter; 0420 rest of E Trp closes. 0413 one Co 2-9 ARVN loading up to move to Sidewinder from Chon Thanh. 0641 PW says NVA Battalion to hit 2-11. ID K2 Bn, 271st 1 US KIA, 3 US WIA, 44 ARVN KIA, 78 NVA KIA, 3 NVA PW, 4 HOI CHANHS.
- 0315: A/1-4 reinforces the 2d Plt. 2 US KIA, 14 WIA, 38 NVA KIA (ID: 272).
- 0341: Loc Ninh; 1-11 sends C Trp with 1 Co 34 Rangers to reinforce D Company.
- 0345: Hon Quan, vic An Loc, receives 4x107mm rocket at west gate.
- 0413: An Loc hit by 5x82mm mortar rounds from west.
- 0645: Blue Max engages enemy force evading vic XT 7998. 8 NVA KBH.
- 0745: A/1-16 marries up with C/1-16 and engages USEF while executing counter-attack plan; D/5-7 reinforces. 2 US KIA, 26 WIA, 29 NVA KIA.
- 0810: B/1-9 engages evading enemy force off Andy; 6 NVA KBH, 10 HOI CHANHS.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

APPENDIX III

CHRONOLOGY (CONTINUED)

- 0820: A/1-5, B/1-5, and A/2-5 Cav combat assault into LZ "zulu" begins to block enemy egress as airmobile part of counter-attack plan.
- 0825: C/1-9 at XT 862890 receives ground fire, engages. 2 NVA KBH.
- 0840: B/1-9 Cav choppers engage enemy force evading vic XU 625175: 9 NVA KBH.
- 1005: A/1-11, 4-34 Rangers, 7km N of Loc Ninh engage USDF: 7 NVA KIA.
- 1140: CP/1-11 receives 20x82mm mortar rounds, no casualties or damage.
- 1210: E/2-11 while executing counter-attack plan engages Bn-size enemy force. 4 US KIA, 1 MIA*, 36 WIA, 31 NVA KIA, 12 NVA KBA, 13 NVA KBH.
- 1330: H/2-11 moves to reinforce E Trp, contacts USDF S of their position. 1 US KIA, 12 WIA, 29 NVA KIA. ID: 271.
- 1425: F/2-11 escorting convoy along QL 13 engages large enemy force. ID: 101D 2 US KIA, 50 NVA KIA.
- 1610: A/5-7 on sweep around Andy received one Hoi Chanh, apparently burned by fougasse.

TOTALS:	20 US KIA	52 ARVN KIA	460 NVA KIA
	1 US MIA*	59 ARVN WIA	15 NVA PW
	145 US WIA		

*MIA from E/2-11: Letter was found supposedly from him inside I/3-11 night perimeter a month later. Letter seemed authentic and stated that MIA is in NLF hospital receiving medical attention.

4200 87 341
 4200 87 341
 4200 87 341

THE BATTLE OF BINH LONG PROVINCE

APPENDIX IV: B-52 STRIKES

1. 041825 August
 XT 495895-498905-465913-463903

 042310 August
 XU 936155-936165-966165-966155
2. 051110 August
 XT 509903-481911-48921-512913
3. 062315 August
 XT 509903-481911-483921-512913
 062100 August
 XT 448912-456917-472893-464888
4. 071625 August
 XT 571959-581964-556985-565990
 072110 August
 XU 803245-811252-832232-825224
 070915 August
 XT 609878-619879-621859-611858
5. 081630 August
 XT 588910-597917-614894-607888
 081125 August
 XT 603932-602921-633928-632919
 080635 August
 XT 639529-643935-658909-651904
 080920 August
 XT 645939-674943-676934-647929
 082120 August
 XU 577062-586064-585033-595036
 081840 August
 XU 609120-612111-583102-580112
 081430 August
 XU 653113-663113-663083-653083
6. 091635 August
 XU 764231-773235-788210-779205
 090130 August
 XU 786225-794230-913207-805201
 091845 August
 XU 574205-583210-597185-589180
 092215 August
 XT 539912-566900-563891-535903
 090645 August
 XU 600025-608032-616000-625008
 090430 August
 XT 590910-590900-620900-620910
 091425 August
 XU 555003-585003-585031-555013

100-200-57-10-11
472-10-10-10-10-10

APPENDIX V

ARTILLERY SUPPORT SUMMARY

Two artillery battalions were paramount in the action of the 3d Brigade, First Cav and the 11th ACR during the period 12 August - 20 August. The units were the 1st Bn, 21st Arty (105mm) a First Cav artillery unit in direct support of the third brigade, and the 6th Bn, 27th Arty (8-inch/175mm) a II Field Force unit which controlled the fires of the separate batteries of the 11th ACR and also provided General Support artillery to US and ARVN forces.

The artillery forces participated intimately in preparation of plans for the defense and counter-attack. Fire plans were developed to support ground force maneuver plans. Targets were selected and planned in close cooperation with the S-2 and S-3 personnel of the 11th ACR and the Third Brigade. Heavy emphasis was given to the routes into and away from objectives and assembly areas indicated in disclosed enemy attack plans.

The 1-21 Arty had in effect a splendid defensive fire plan for the protection of Quan Loi Base Camp. When the enemy initiated the action early in the morning of 12 August the planning was complete; there was little for the gunners to do but pull the lanyard.

In the course of the action on 12 August the artillery in support of the 11th ACR fired 2,816 rounds. Artillery fires in support of the third brigade of the First Cav totaled 2,303 rounds (including 686 rounds of 4.2-inch mortar illumination) the major portion of which was fired in and around Andy.

Artillery Supporting the Third Brigade:

- 1st Bn, 21st Arty (105) DS
- C Btry, 1/30 Arty (155) GS-R 1/21 Arty
- 3 sections twin 40mm AA Cannon, 4/60 Art. (AW) GS-R 1/21 Arty
- 1 Quad .50 Cal

Artillery Supporting the 11th ACR:

- 1 How Btry (155SP) DS 1/11 ACR
- 2 How Btry (155SP) DS 1/16 Mech
- C Btry, 2/33 Arty (105) DS 2/11 ACR

Supporting Artillery:

- 6th Bn, 27th Arty (8"/175) GS IIFV
- A Btry, 6/27 Arty GS-R 1ACD Div Arty
- B Btry, 6/27 Arty GS IIFV
- C Btry, 6/27 Arty GS IIFV
- C Btry, 2/13 Arty (105) GS-R 1ACD Div Arty
- F/16 Arty (155) GS-R 1ACD Div Arty

Disposition of Artillery: (12 August 1969)

- 1st Bn, 21st Arty
 - HQ&SVC Btry - LZ Andy
 - A Btry - LZ Ellen
 - B Btry - LZ Vivian
 - C Btry - LZ Wescott
- 1st Plt, C/1-30 Arty - LZ Wescott
- 2nd Plt, C/1-30 Arty - LZ Buttons
- 6th Bn, 27th Arty
 - A Btry - LZ Andy
 - B Btry - LZ Buttons
 - C Btry - Camp Gorvad

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APPENDIX V

ARTILLERY SUPPORT SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

F Btry, 16th Arty (155) - LZ Andy
C/2-13 Arty (105) - LZ Shirley
C/2-33 Arty (105) - FSB Aspen
1 HOW Btry 11 ACR (155SP) - FSM Jon
2 HOW Btry 11 ACR (155SP) - FSB Eagle II //CPT DAVID D WILEY
FSCoord, DIV TAC CP

2. Historical Input, 6th Battalion, 27th Artillery.

During the period 0110 - 0600 hours, 12 August 1969 there were attacks throughout the length of Binh Long Province on US and ARVN installations and a few of the population centers. 6th Battalion, 27th Artillery coordinated the fires of nine artillery units rendering artillery support throughout the Province.

The unique operations of the Battalion TOC, consisting of seven radio stations for direct communications with the firing batteries, two radio stations for base defense and First Cav Division Artillery Operations, and one radio set for the Quan Loi Artillery Warning Control Center, from 12 August to 15 August directed and coordinated the following fires in support of both ARVN and US troops:

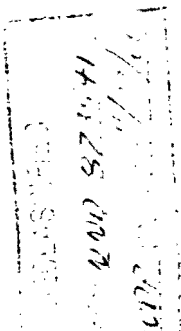
C/2-13 (105) - Thunder IV	1,768 rounds
C/2-33 (105) - Aspen	2,968
B/1-21 (105) - FSB Eagle	1,909
HOW/1-11 (155SP) - FSB Jon	1,202
HOW/2-11 (155SP) - Allons II	1,308
A/6-27 (8-inch) - Quan Loi	446
A/6-27 (175) - Quan Loi	335
F/16 (155) - Quan Loi	1,341

The effect of the 6th Bn, 27th Artillery team effort resulted in having approximately 12,000 rounds of all types of artillery being placed on the enemy in the defense of American and ARVN forces throughout Binh Long Province during the period 12-15 August.

//LT HARRY S MCGEHEE, S-1, 6/27 Arty

3. Historical Input, 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery, Defense of LZ Andy.

Events for the period 120001 to 122400 August 1969 LZ Andy:
At 0045 hours on the evening of 11 to 12 August the fire direction center, 1-21 Arty in coordination with the Base Defense Center initiated a counter-mortar - counter-rocket (CMCR) plan against suspected enemy rocket locations. As the batteries, C/1-30 Arty and C/1-21 Arty, were approximately half-way into the program a report was received from the 6-27 Arty area that they were receiving incoming RPG and mortar fire and that there seemed to be a ground probe in their sector of the green line. Immediately after this report the alarm was sounded and all available batteries were brought into the base defense CMCR plan. The time was 0110 hours. The Aerial Observer from the 1-21st Arty had met his bird dog on the strip at 0100 hours for the nightly mortar patrol. At 0109 hours the O-1 Bird Dog was lifting off the end of the strip when the AO spotted incoming and flashes of mortar locations. He immediately relayed this information to the FDC over the Base Defense Frequency and directed the lone Cobra from C/2-20 ARA on mortar patrol in on the positions he had located. The Cobra was immediately joined by his wingman and the Fire Direction Officer (FDO) also bounced another sector of Blue Max at that time. The FDO relayed the attack information to Div Arty and



APPENDIX V

ARTILLERY SUPPORT SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

requested that Shadow and Spooky birds be bounced. By this time the Battalion Commander and S-3 had arrived in the FDC to directly supervise the conduct of the artillery battle.

The Artillery Base Defense Officer then began receiving requests from the green line for illumination, defensive target and adjust fire missions on enemy in the wire in the vicinity of the French House area and bunker 61. Battery B, 1-21 Arty was firing in two roles at LZ Vivian at 0115 hours; it played an important part of base defense of LZ Andy, and it was also defending its own LZ with direct fire at a small harassing ground probe. 0120 hours: The FDC at this time was busy reacting to calls for fire. A/1-4 Cav had earlier in the evening reported heavy movement in every direction around their position. The FDC had directed C/1-30 to lay one tube on the A/1-4 location should it become necessary to support their position. At 0315 it became necessary. A/1-4 Cav was in extremely heavy contact and ARA and tube artillery were called in to provide fires. C/1-30 provided a total of 102 illumination rounds while ARA engaged close in targets and C/2-13 Arty and F/16 Arty fired on targets farther out from the position. Again at 0345 hours and at 0402 hours the intensity of the attack resumed, however, the superior fire-power brought to bear on the enemy in that area forced him to break contact.

C/1-21 Arty resumed CMCR fire and continued until 0220 hours. At 0301 hours B/3-197 Arty at LZ Buttons, fired on suspected enemy movement in that area.

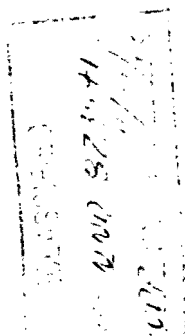
C/2-13 Arty, who had been primarily firing defensive targets close into Quan Loi during the entire attack, fired missions on enemy evacuating wounded and killed from the 6/27 area. The time was approximately 0230 hours. By the end of the attack 2-13 Arty would have tallied over 200 defensive targets in defense of LZ Andy in addition to the fires they supported A/1-4 Cav and 11th ACR units with.

At 0430 hours, C/1-21 Arty delivered fires on a sensor target that had been activated. This was the first sign that the NVA were on the move away from the LZ. At 0435 hours, Dragoon 61 (A/1-4 Cav) once again came into contact and received 5 WP and 12 HE rounds - observed - in support of this action. By 0440 hours it was obvious that the enemy was withdrawing from the battlefield.

The FDC of the 1-21 Arty immediately initiated blocking fires behind the retreating NVA. Trail junctions and stream-crossing sites were also picked off the battle map as likely areas for withdrawal and fires were placed on these. The defensive target program was intensified and observers on the towers walked the rounds up and down the green line. This intense fire program was kept up until after the enemy broke contact with all pursuing friendly units.

By 0600 hours, on the morning of 12 August, the battle action had subsided and all fire units were awaiting the contact that would result from early morning reconnaissance sightings of withdrawing enemy units.

The 1-21 Arty FDC had controlled successfully the major resources of fire-power available to the Third Brigade during the attack. These included Shadow, Spooky, Blue Max (ARA), and also batteries C/1-21, C/1-30, C/2-13, F/16, A/6-27, and B/3-197 Arty. G Trp, 11 ACR, 4.2 mortar platoon was also under the OPCON of the 1-21 Arty FDC and provided 686 rounds of illumination during the night. The assets of the 1-21 also included the aerial observer in the O-1 Aircraft who quickly brought fires to bear on the enemy's mortars and the AN/MPQ-4A radar section who called in grid locations for CMCR fires at the outset of the attack. The batteries primarily used in the CMCR capacity were C/1-21 Arty, F/16 Arty, A/6-27 Arty, and G/2-11 ACR



APPENDIX V

ARTILLERY SUPPORT SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

4.2 mortar platoon in the illumination role. ARA, who had lost a ship and pilot to either a 107mm rocket or a stray RPG round, was employed in a variety of mission to include Medevac cover and had flown 74 sorties during the night and had expended 758 rockets, 22,650 minigun and 1,400 40mm cannon rounds.

At 0830 hours, C/1-21 Arty and C/2-20 ARA sprang into action with a Ground Air Program for the insertion of the airmobile blocking force as a part of the counter-attack plan. A total of 4 WP and 97 HE was fired and one section of Blue Max expended. It became quite obvious at this time that the NVA was attempting to leave the field throughout the area. C/1-21 Arty engaged various known enemy locations and enemy in the open up until approximately 1300 hours. Other batteries were similarly occupied.

At 1725 hours an agent report was received locating very close to Quan Loi a hastily organized hospital/aid station area which was tending enemy wounded from the battle. F/16 engaged immediately with 36 rounds HE. During the entire day many sightings of NVA had been made and the majority of these noted that movement was away from Quan Loi in all directions. Selected blocking fires were fired throughout the early evening hours. From 1800 to 2200 hours all batteries were engaged in attacking sniffer and sensor targets which indicated heavy movement throughout the AO.

At 2145 hours Tower #5 reported observing movement and mortar flashes, C/2-13 Arty and B/3-197 Arty had intermittently engaged with TOT's (Time On Target) two ground-to-air targets from 1626 hours to 1925 hours.

All batteries continued firing on suspected locations, and a vigorous defensive target and planned fire program was executed during the late evening through 2400 hours and on into the early morning hours.

Total for C/1-21 Arty and C/1-30 Arty - 1234 rounds.

//S-2, 1 Bn, 21st Arty
CPT JOSE MURATTI

