



VIETNAM: 1966

A WALK WITH THE 35TH INFANTRY REGIMENT



**BY SGT JIM ANDERSON
B Co 2d Bn 35th Infantry Regiment**





"TAKE ARMS"

35th Infantry Regiment (CACTI)

The 35th Infantry Regiment had its beginnings in the deserts of Douglas, Arizona on July 1, 1916. Between the 8th and 19th of July, personnel from the 11th Infantry, the 18th Infantry and the 22nd Infantry were transferred to the 35th Infantry Regiment. During the Civil War, the 11th Infantry had been in the 2nd Division, 5th Army Corps, the badge of which is a white Maltese Cross, the 18th Infantry was in the 1st Division, 14th Army Corps, with a Red Acorn as its badge. The 22nd Infantry was originally the 2nd Battalion, 13th Infantry and as such had distinguished itself at the Siege of Vicksburg, receiving the name "First at Vicksburg." This is shown on the canton as the Embattled Partition Line. The Cactus represents the original border service of the 35th Infantry. The Crest commemorates the baptism of fire of the Regiment at Nogales, the Spanish for Walnut Trees.

WWII



KOREA



VIETNAM



WAR ON TERROR





The Author:

I grew up in small town USA. LaConner, WA. POP. 356. Played football, baseball, attended every Saturday night dance I could wheedle a ride to, along with the beer drinking and requisite hell raising that was included. Life was good. In 1966, I graduated near the top of my class (of twenty). Like I said, small town.

Vietnam had been in the news pretty much constantly in '66, and by then it was known, go to college and get a deferment, or you were going to be drafted. After a quarter of community college, I decide that it was time to just lift the anxiety of the draft and just get it over with. I visited our local draft board, told them to put me on next month's list, got my letter and found myself at Ft Lewis mid-January 1967. Six months later I was on a troop ship headed to Viet Nam. I landed with Bravo Company, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division (later changed to 4th Infantry Division).

I separated from the Army on Christmas Eve, 1968. For the next thirty years I raised a family, worked as a construction manager and completely put the war out of my mind. In the late '90s my son who had just joined the Army asked me to relate my experiences in war. While the experience was easy to retell, the names, dates, places and details I had so long suppressed, were not. Thus, was started a quest for knowledge about 'my' war that still goes on today.

Over the years I have been fortunate to have met and talked to a great many of the men who fought with the 35th. In the pages that follow I have tried to give credit to those whose stories I've retold. One name you will not see is Jim "Doc" Hall, B Co, 2/35th, 1970. Doc spent countless hours at the national archives, searching, copying and sending to me, daily journals, Operation Reports and Lessons Learned and After-Action Reports. While the hours can't be counted, the pages number in the thousands.

It is in thanks to "Doc" and those men I met who were immersed in the battles that I am able to tell of the deeds of the 35th in Vietnam. This volume will cover the first year of operations, 1966. A year in which the men, from their base at Scofield Barracks, Hawaii, arrived untried and untested; to the Central Highlands of Vietnam, emerging as battle hardened veterans.

Jim Anderson

B Co, 2/35th, 1967-68

TYPICAL NVA & VC WEAPONS



AK 47



SKS



M1 GARAND



RPD



RPG-2



CHICOM
GRENADE



82mm Mortar



60mm Mortar

TYPICAL US ARMY WEAPONS



M-16



M-72 LAW



M-14



M-79



M-26
GRENADE



12 ga Shotgun



M-60



Claymore
Mine



81mm Mortar



4.2" Mortar

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Operation Blue Light



Col Everette A Stoutner took command of the 3rd Brigade in June 1965. At that time the major units of the Brigade were: 1st Bn, 35th Infantry commanded by Lt. Col. Ed Callanan, 2nd Bn, 35th Infantry commanded by Lt. Col. George Scott, 1st Bn, 5th Mech Inf commanded by Lt. Col. Thomas Greer, 2d Bn 9th Artillery commanded by Lt Col Saul Jackson.

On December 12, 1965 Col Stoutner was directed by Col Tom Mellon, 25th Inf Div. C/S to meet Major General Fred Weyand, CG 25th Infantry Division, at his quarters at 1800 hours that evening. Gen Weyand, who had just returned from a meeting at CINCPAC, informed him that the 3rd BDE was to be deployed to Pleiku, Vietnam and that an Advanced Party should leave within a week. This information was, of course, TOP SECRET at that time.

The 3rd Brigade was tailored as a Separate Brigade Task Force and would be under the Operational Control of the CG First Field Force Commanded by Maj Gen Stanley "Swede" Larsen whose Headquarters was some 100 miles Southeast of Pleiku on the Coast at Nha Trang.

Before leaving Schofield Barracks, the 1st Bn 5th Mech was moved to the 2nd Brigade and the 1st Bn, 14th Infantry commanded by Lt Col Gilbert Proctor was assigned to the 3rd Bde. The 3d Bde Task Force was thus composed of the 1d Bn 35th Infantry, 2d Bn 35th Infantry (Cacti) and 1st Bn 14th Infantry (Golden Dragons); 2 Bn 9th Artillery (Mighty Ninth); C Troop., 3/4th Cav (MacKenzie's Raiders); D Co., 65th Engr. Bn. (First In, Last Out); 3rd Provisional Support Bn. and small detachments from the 125th Sig. Bn., 25th MP Co. and the 25th MID. The overall strength of this separate brigade task force was about 4200 people.

The 3rd Bde, less the 1/14th and the large armor and engineer equipment, deployed by air. The code name of the airlift was "Operation Blue Light". The Air Force dedicated twelve C-141 and four C -133 aircraft to this operation. The Advance Party, utilizing three C-141 aircraft, departed for Pleiku on or about December 16th. The Main Body started deployment on December 25th, and I departed Schofield Barracks at that time. Major Phil Feir was the Brigade Executive Officer. He remained at Schofield to supervise the movement and to close out the brigade responsibilities as the last elements of the brigade departed.

The 1/14th Inf, after spending 12 days at sea, arrived at Cam Ran Bay on January 17th, 1966. The 3d Brigade's initial mission was to build a Base Camp about 4 miles East of Pleiku (LZ Oasis), establish communications, and to ensure the protection of the base as the units phased in. A plane arrived about every six hours. In addition, we had the mission of securing Highway 19 from the coast to Pleiku as our out sized and logistical elements moved via that route to Pleiku.

The 3rd BDE completed its move to Pleiku during the 3rd week in January 1966 which was eight days ahead of the target date that had been set by MACV.

Operation Blue Light was completed without incident and was, at that time, the largest Air Force/Army movement in point of number troops moved and the amount of ton miles flown. The 61st Military Air Lift Wing flew 225 missions, transporting more than 4700 Tons of cargo plus approximately 4000 troops. (Col. Everette Stoutner)

25th Division to leave in 2 weeks

By LYLE NELSON

Military Writer

out of the 25th Infantry Division will leave for Vietnam within two weeks. Army officers at Schofield Barracks will say nothing. Activity at the base, however, indicates something is in the air and that a troop movement is imminent even though official channels won't talk. Reports slip and planes will soon converge on it in transport between 8,000 and 10,000 men to the zone by the first of the year. There were indications everywhere that soldiers had been tipped by their superiors to prepare for deployment. Soldiers having a quiet beer in Wahiawa bars were tipped. As one bartender said, "They're sure well paid. They don't talk."

Speculation mounted all through the week that deployment wheels are grinding.

Eventual commitment of the 25th in Vietnam was predicted from Saigon by Chicago Daily News correspondent Keyes Beech.

Last week the 25th confirmed that two large troop deployment-type exercises were scheduled to occur soon. The exercises are called Holokai 11 and 12 and involve the 4,200-man 2nd Brigade, which includes both infantry battalions of the 27th Wolfhounds, and the 3rd Brigade, which has two infantry battalions of the 35th Cavalry.

Not on the exercise schedule is the 1st Brigade. The exercises are termed "outloading" exercises, which means doing everything necessary to prepare for deployment.

This means immunizations, if needed, and making out assignments, and otherwise providing for families.

With Washington officials indicating that a continuous troop build-up in Vietnam is needed, the finger has to point to the 25th.

The "outloading" exercises and general military activity at Schofield add up to an Army, that has been held in waiting, finally on the move.

The 16,000-man force has been located at Schofield Barracks since September 21, 1964.

That's when the "Tropic Lightning" Division returned here from occupation duty in Korea.

The division recently announced plans to add two infantry battalions to beef up the division's rifle-carrier strength.

These men are expected to arrive in small groups from Mainland Army training schools shortly. It may take several months to train these men.

With the 2nd and 3rd Brigades gone it would leave up to the remaining 1st Brigade to train these new and incorporate them into the ranks.

The 2nd and 3rd Brigades have the equivalent of two infantry battalions in each.

The 2nd Brigade task force for the Holokai exercises consists of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 27th (Wolfhounds) Infantry and the 1st Battalion of the 35th Cavalry, which is mechanized.

The 3rd Brigade consists of the 1st Battalion of the 35th Cavalry.

Turn to Page A-13.

Saturday
December 18, 1965
HAWAII'S GREATEST
NEWSPAPER
Volume 54, No. 32
Telephone 567-2222

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

FINAL

Hanoi Charge

Space champs down, in very good shape

SPACE CENTER, Houston (U)—Space champions A. S. S. Burman and James A. McDivitt came home from their two-week mission aboard Gemini 7 in "very good shape" with a perfect splashdown and their two-week mission.



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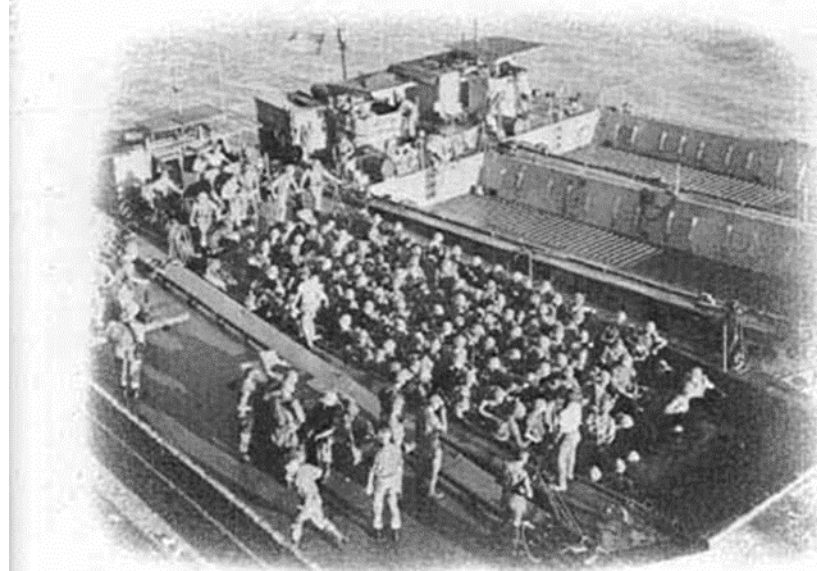
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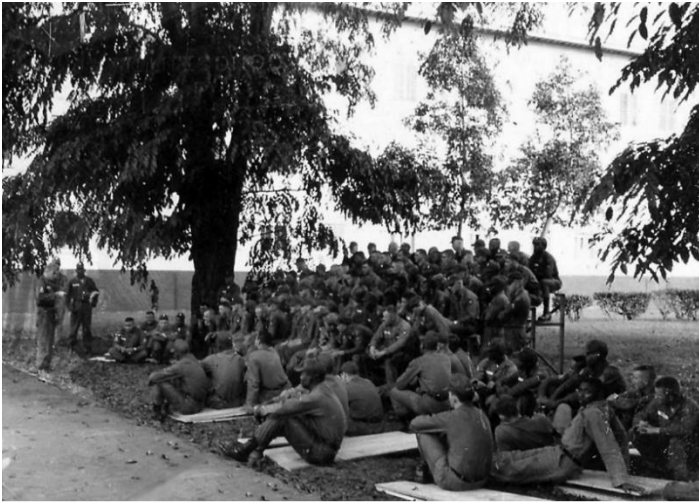
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Weather forecast: Honolulu and vicinity — Var cloudiness today, tonight and Sunday. Sunny periods during the days. Scattered showers over the moon spreading to the city at times. Gusty trades 10-15 miles an hour. High today 78. Low tonight 68. Rainfall at Honolulu Airport between 2 a.m. and 2 a.m. today, 17 inch. Yesterday's high temperature 78. Overcast low temperature 68. Sunset at 5:54. Sunrise tomorrow 7:04.

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to the READER

Spooks, pictured last Tuesday as our "Dog of the Week," is the 60th dog in one of the Star-Bulletin's oldest and most rewarding series. Every week



Orientation

Getting...



Ready...

To Move Out





Loaded

And Ready to Move



As the Band Played

We Waited



**Until Finally it Was
Time to Load Up**

photos by Tony Bisantz

Pleiku Airstrip 'All Business' As Elements of 25th Division Land

PLEIKU, VIET-NAM (ARMY IO) - The huge C-141 Starlifter screeched to a halt at the New Pleiku Airfield. Its doors opened and 60 battle-clad and battle-ready soldiers leaped to the ground.



The first troops of the 3rd Bde, 25th "Tropic Lightning" Inf. Div. had arrived in Viet-Nam.

For World War II and Korean veterans of the 25th, it was like coming home again. The division has over a thousand days of combat time on this side of the world.

Tanned from the beaches of Hawaii, where the division has been stationed since 1954, and lean from the months and years of tough jungle training, the men looked like the combat veterans they will become in the days ahead.

At the Pleiku Airstrip, there was no time for small talk—no time for stretching legs after the long Pacific flight. As Col. Everette A. Stoutner, brigade commander, loaded his men on deuce-and-a-halves for a quick trip to their new home, a barren patch of land on the base of small mountains a few miles from the airfield, a crew of men unloaded the mass of equipment the men brought with them.

Command and "pup" tents went up. Barbed wire barricades surrounded the encampment. In a few short minutes, mortars were pointing at the mountain and valley to the brigade's right.

Men stripped down to their green T-shirts and began digging the soldier's second-best friend - his foxhole. His best friend, the rifle, was always within reach.

Pfc Prince Haynes, a supply clerk with A Co., S&T Bn., stopped digging for a minute to wipe the sweat from his eyes.

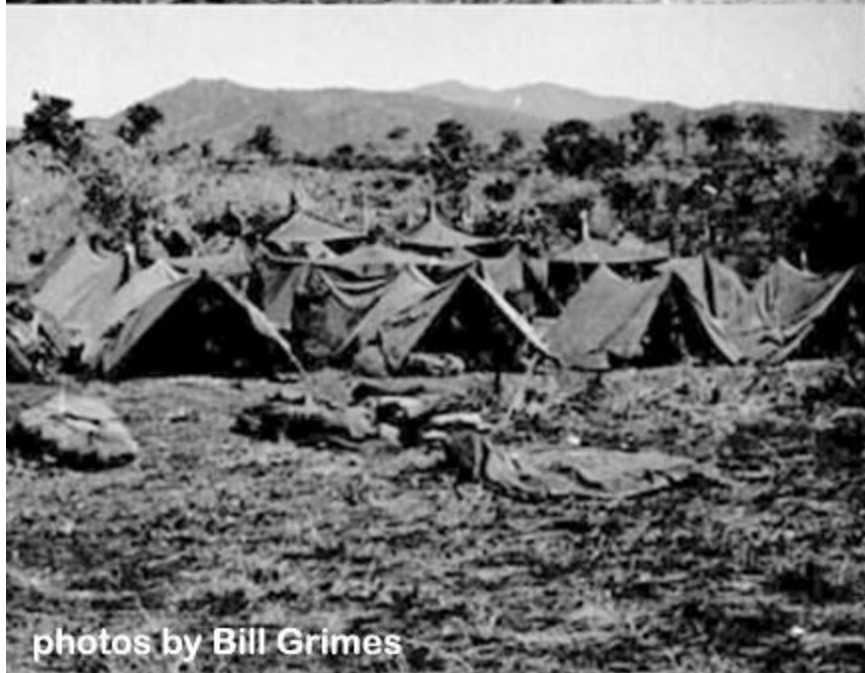
"Well, it's not as bad as I thought it would be," the Las Vegas soldier said. He thought a minute and added, "yet."

The man sharing Haynes' foxhole, Pfc Willie Goodloe, of Muscle Shoals, Ala., knew he had some exciting days ahead.

"Things are going to get worse," he said. "But we're ready. We know why we're here and we're well trained for the job facing us." He admitted that he missed his girl.

A young soldier from Neopit, Wisc., was standing guard at an entrance to the barbed wire camp. Pfc Francis Delabreau, B Co., 1/35th Inf., 25th Inf. Div., had missed Christmas in Hawaii. But it didn't seem to bother him. He looked like a man waiting for a fight.

More of the 3rd Bde is on its way to Viet-Nam. Some will come by ship, others by air. When they get here, they'll leave their camp at Pleiku and start hunting out the enemy in the surrounding highlands.



photos by Bill Grimes

Helicopter Training Begins



1st Cav Orientation



Loading



Landing



Disembarking

photos by Tony Bisantz

General Westmoreland Visits Tropic Lightning - Pleiku



PLEIKU, VIET-NAM--The first round of artillery fire by a Tropic Lightning unit in combat since Korea was sent off by the highest ranking American military leader in Viet-Nam, Gen. William C. Westmoreland, during his recent tour of the 25th Inf. Div. 3d Brigade area near Pleiku.

**Gen Westmoreland
autographs...**



**and then fires the first artillery
round to be fired by the 25th
Division in a combat zone
since the Korean War.**

Early Operations Included securing Mang Yang Pass...



And Patrolling around the New Base



OPERATION TAYLOR

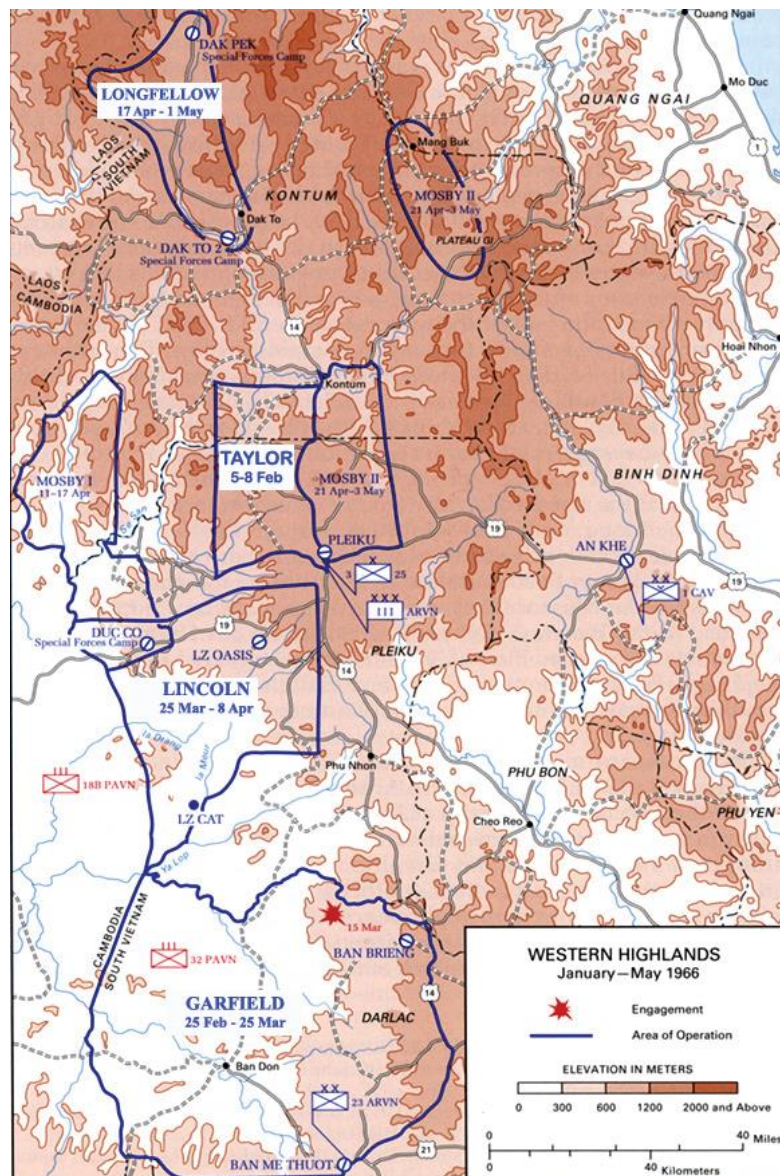


5-8 FEB 66

OPERATION TAYLOR

5 - 8 Feb 1966

Combined with other elements of the 3d Bde Task Forces 25th Inf Div, the 2/35 Inf conducted a motor march to the north of PLEI MRONG on 5 Feb 66. The battalion had the mission of providing convoy security for the operation and despite the size of the convoy (217 vehicles), encountered little difficulty.



Upon its arrival at the new base of operations (Coord: ZA 065735), the 2/35 Inf prepared for its operation against an estimated battalion size North Vietnamese Army (NVA) force located in the vicinity of the Chu Granuel Mountain.

At 0755 6 Feb 66, while securing the east side of the YA KRONG BOLAH River, the Reconnaissance Platoon, 2/35 Inf, came under small arms fire from an estimated squad size unit located on the west side of the river. After suffering one wounded, the recon platoon called in mortar fire causing the enemy to flee to the north.

One hour later, one enemy 60mm mortar round landed in the perimeter of the Battalion Command Post causing injury to three people.

It was the first battalion size operation against the NVA. In midafternoon, Co C commander, Cpt Jim Woods, halted the company when the lead element came to an old Montagnard clearing on the side of a hill. He moved into the clearing with his command group and told the FO to put one round of smoke from the 105mm Howitzer Bn on a stream intersection he had identified on his map and in the valley below him. Some of the company was on the edge of

the clearing and some still strung out on the trail leading to the clearing. Instead of one round of smoke the battery fired six rounds (battery one round) and instead of the rounds landing in vicinity of the stream intersection, they landed on the company. Jim Woods was killed immediately, and other members of the command group and others were killed and wounded.

Please remember that I was not on the ground at the point of impact. I was in the Bn TOC doing my thing as the Bn Adjutant when LTC George Scott, the Bn Commander, called and told me he was sending his command bird in to pick me up and that I was to take command of Co C immediately. I arrived in the clearing as the last casualties were being evacuated. (Cpt Bob Ord via email 2001)

OPERATION GARFIELD



25 FEB -24 MAR 1966

OPERATION GARFIELD

25 February to 24 March 1966



The best that General Larsen could counter with in the three highlands border provinces—Kontum, Pleiku, and Darlac—was the newly deployed 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, at Pleiku City, still an untested force. He informed the brigade commander, Col. Everette A. Stoutner, that the 1st Cavalry Division would support him in an emergency but, because of its duties on the coast, would only be available for limited periods of time. To hold the line in the highlands, Colonel Stoutner would have to meet enemy threats as they arose. The spoiling attack would be his weapon of choice in the early months of 1966. ("Stemming the Tide" By John M Carland Center Military History)

During the period 0730h 25 February 1966, through 2400h 24 March 1966, the 3d Bde Task Force, 25th Inf Div, conducted OPERATION GARFIELD. The 2/35 Inf was the reserve reaction force for the operation.

The operation was conducted in DAR LAC Province against the 966th Bn, 32d NVA Regiment. The 3d Bde. Task Force moved by air from New Pleiku Airstrip to BAN ME THUOT East Airfield. The 1/14 Inf and 1/35 Inf, with 2/35 Inf in reserve, conducted search and destroy operations using "eagle" flights and saturation patrolling.

On 8 March 1966, the 2/35 Inf was given the mission (OPERATION LYSANDER) to conduct a search of Plei Klung, a village in DAR LAC Province, and to establish blocking positions in support of OPERATION GARFIELD. In addition, the 2/35 Inf had the responsibility for providing security for the Brigade Rear Command Post. OPERATION LYSANDER was accomplished with very light contact and negative friendly losses.

On 15 March 1966, while still assigned the mission as the reserve element in OPERATION GARFIELD, the 2/35 Inf was given the additional mission (OPERATION QUINTUS) of securing that portion of Highway 19 bounded by coordinates BR 188518 on the west and BR 28453 to the east. This was accomplished by occupying platoon and squad size strong points and by conducting local patrolling. Furthermore, the battalion provided convoy escort train BR 288453 east to Pleiku during the period 17-21 March 1966. On 21 March 1966, the 2/35 Inf departed their assigned sector and closed to the 3d Bde base camp, Pleiku, at 1905h 21 March 1966, where the battalion continued to maintain its reserve posture for OPERATION GARFIELD in addition to local patrolling to provide security for the 3d Bde base camp.

Ban Brieng

On 4 March General Larsen ordered Colonel Stoutner to shift his base of operations to Ban Brieng airfield, the site of a closed Special Forces camp fifty-five kilometers north of Ban Me Thuot and just west of Highway 14. After completing the move, Stoutner initiated a series of patrols between the eighth and fifteenth, mainly looking west of Ban Brieng along the boundary between Darlac and Pleiku

Provinces. He was able to cover a great deal of ground this time because Larsen had made a number of Chinooks available to him to move his troops and artillery. Even so, one day was much like any another—air assaults into sterile landing zones, foot patrols into surrounding terrain, and no combat. The monotony was deceiving, however, because the enemy could appear unexpectedly. (Annual Historical Supplement 2/35 1966)

Everyone Got Sore When They Killed Sgt. Spears

By BOB JONES Sunday Star Bulletin & Advertiser

BAN BRIENG, Viet Nam—Everybody says that Sgt. Benjamin G. Spears (KIA 7 Mar 1966) was a great guy to have in the outfit and a scrappy little jungle fighter with an M-16 rifle.

He was going to come back to Honolulu and marry his girlfriend as soon as he could hang up the camouflaged fatigues that he wore with the reconnaissance platoon of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry (Cacti).

That made everyone twice as sore when a North Vietnamese infantryman killed Spears with a burst from an old Thompson sub-machine gun on a mountain trail near here.

SO SORE, in fact, that they went to some unusual lengths to kill the Vietnamese and to recover Spears' body at a time when it looked like the platoon was going to be lucky to get out of there with only one dead.



Kaaihue

Gatpatan

Knepper

S/Sgt Damien K. Kaaihue, 29, of Lahaina, was with Spears. So were two other Hawaii Gi's attached to the flank squad: S/Sgt Sergio T. Gatpatan and Sgt. Warren Knepper, 23, of Hawaii.

"We'd just cleared a village and were heading to the landing zone where the helicopters were going to pick us up," Kaaihue said. "It was about 10:30 in the morning and suddenly we ran smack into those two PAVN (North Vietnamese) crossing the trail and going down to get water.

"THEY TURNED around and ran like hell. One was faster than the other, but I fired my M-79 (grenade launcher) and got the one. The other got away in the jungle.

"I yelled to the platoon sergeant that the guy was coming his way, but he couldn't find him.

"It turned out he had a buddy who had Stayed behind with their packs. They had dug into a Montagnard grave because it was soft dirt and made a foxhole out of it.

"Then they pinned down the platoon with fire from those damn machineguns. We couldn't see them to fire back.

"SGT SPEARS came over to where we were. We were going to try and work our way around their position. I turned and yelled to the guy on my right and when I looked back, Spears wasn't there.

"Then I saw him. He was laying on the ground and had been hard to see because of his camouflage fatigues. The first shot had got him right through the head.

"I crawled over and dragged him behind a log, but the Thompsons just cut right through the dead log and they hit Spears again.

"I WANTED to get him back, but I couldn't. The bullets were hitting right behind my heels as it was and so I just played dead for a while until I could crawl out of there under some protective fire.

"Capt. John Fielding, the battalion Intelligence officer, asked me if I was sure Spears was dead and I said yes. He said we'd better get out of there.

"But that's when we decided we had to get Spears out, too. We were going to call in an air strike all over the area, but we figured that would get Spears' body too.

SO, ONE of the guys went up and marked the place where the PAVN were dug in with a smoke bomb, and then we called in the air.

"The first bomb run by the A-1s (Skyraiders) landed right on the spot and got both PAVN right in their hole. And they didn't even touch Spears. So, we dragged him out and just left the PAVN there."

SPEARS AND Kaaihue had been over here last at Vinh Long, as shotgun riders on U.S. helicopters. They had hoped to get back home together, too.

Kaaihue takes it all philosophically. Some of his other shotgun buddies have been killed here, too.

"Only about nine months to go over here," he said as we talked about the war and about dead friends under the shade of a tree.

"But like a pregnant woman who's going to have a baby, you feel that's a long wait."

"FIRST BATTLE"
Alfa Co, 1/35th Infantry
15 March 1966

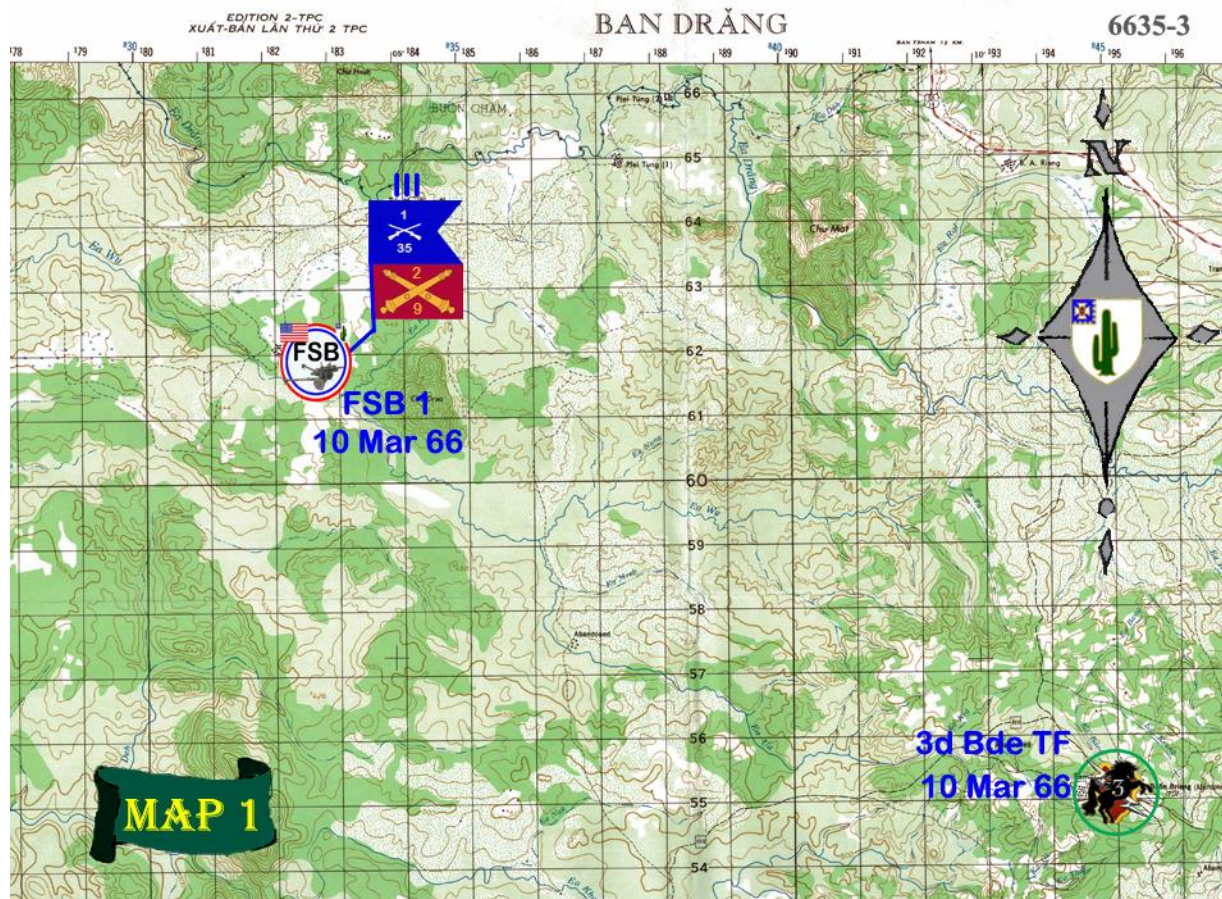
"I was fortunate to have so many great grunts working for me – real pros that gave a lot more than they took." Cpt. Tony Bisantz, CO Alfa Co. 1/35th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division.

Combat experience submitted by Captain Bisantz for use by Project Share.

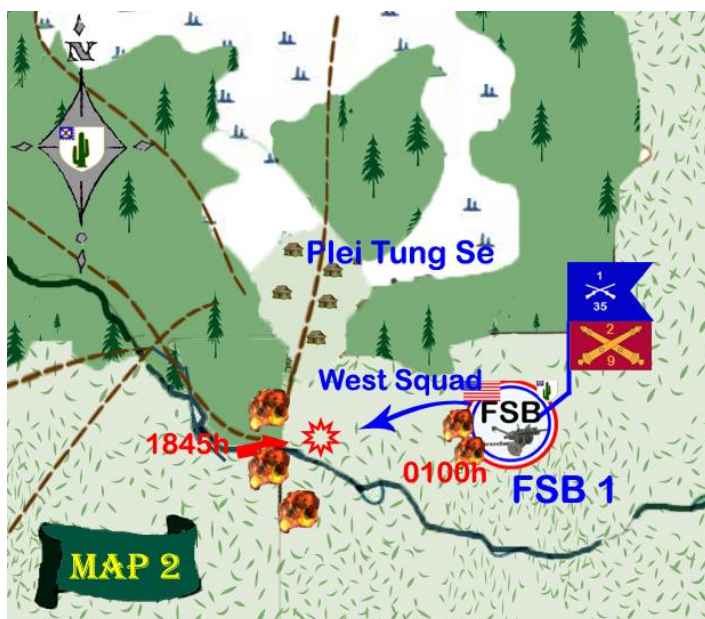
Introduction:

The 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division arrived in the central highlands during the 1965 Christmas Season. On 22 February 1966, following local base area security operations and extensive route security work along Highway 19, the Brigade jumped off on OPERATION GARFIELD. This was a search and destroy, border surveillance operation. Initially the Brigade air lifted from Pleiku to Ban Me Thout where a forward base was established. Working north, in the area bounded by Highway 14 on the east and the Cambodian Border on the west, the battalions met little resistance although there were extensive indications that NVA forces had been in the area recently. About 10 March the 3d Brigade Task Force base camp moved north to the abandoned air strip at Buon Brieng.

On 9 March an Eagle Flight from Company A, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, received ground fire while reconning an LZ. Subsequently the entire company was lifted into the area, but contact was not regained. On 10 March the remaining elements of the 1/35th were lifted into the area; and extensive patrolling activity began. A battalion base consisting of the Battalion TOC CP, the Recon Plat, the 4.2 platoon and a battery of 105mm Howitzers was established. Company A was given the mission of securing the battalion base and providing the battalion's ready reserve force. Up to this time no element of the 3d Brigade had had any major contact with the enemy. **(MAP 1)**



Narrative:

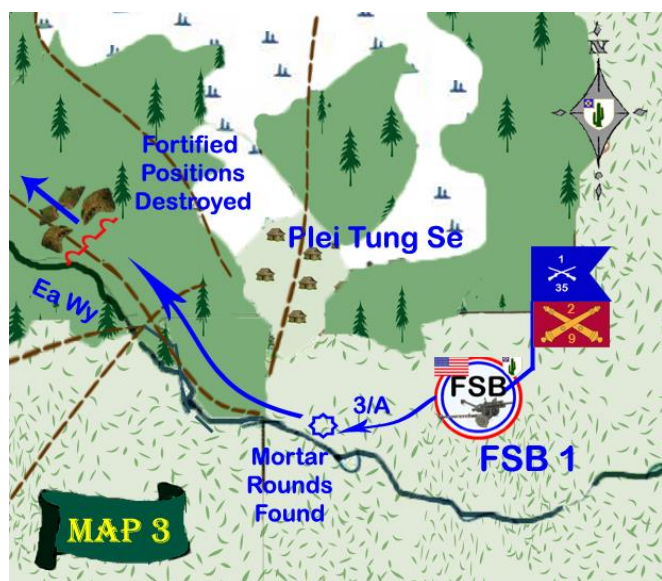


About EENT (Army acronym for as twilight ensued) on 14 March two reinforced squad size ambush patrols moved out of the perimeter and proceeded toward their previously reconned positions east and west of the Battalion CP along the trail complex adjacent to the EA WY. The patrol moving west had moved about 500 yards, halfway to their position, when the point man came face to face with an NVA patrol point man coming toward the battalion's position (1845h). Both men fired immediately and ducked for cover. The rest of the squad immediately came online, initiated assault fire, and moved forward against sporadic enemy fire. The squad leader, SSG R. C. Williams, prudently halted the squad when he came abreast of the point man. By this time all enemy fire had ceased, and it was completely dark. On the orders

from battalion, the squad returned to the perimeter and prepared to occupy their ambush positions later in the night. There had been no friendly casualties, and enemy casualties were unknown.

Extensive mortar H & I (Harassment and Interdiction) fires were initiated in the contact area and continued through the evening. At approximately 0100 hours the base was hit with a heavy enemy mortar barrage. An estimated 125 to 130 mortar rounds fell in a tight dispersion pattern in the western, unoccupied end of the LZ. Counter mortar fire was immediately started with unknown results. There

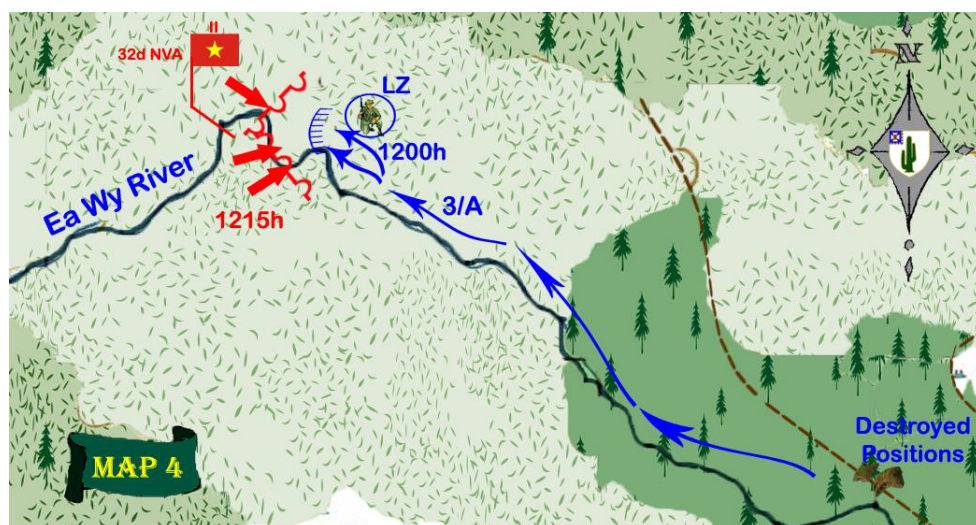
were no friendly casualties, and the enemy fire came no nearer than 50 meters to friendly positions. H & I fire in the area were resumed with new intensity, and the 3d Platoon of Company A was alerted to prepare to move out on a combat patrol at first light. **(MAP 2)**



About 0600 hours the 3d Platoon reached the point of the previous night's contact and found many blood trails in the area. Moving on a little bit further they found approximately 18 rounds of 81mm and 82mm mortar ammunition. The mortar round canisters had been damaged by small arms and M-79 fire. They also found a document showing the attacks the unit had conducted in the past year. The captured ammunition and documents were returned to the base camp.

The platoon was directed to continue its patrol west along the trail complex adjacent to the stream. At about 0918h, the platoon discovered fortified positions which they destroyed. Once completed the platoon continued on their mission along the Ea Wy River. **(MAP 3)**

By noon they had moved about 2500 meters and requested further instructions. At the same time, as the Platoon Leader, 2LT Pat Lenz, was receiving orders to return to battalion, the point man, SP4 Hood, came upon some WD-1 phone wire laid along the edge of the stream bed. He passed the word back and cautiously moved forward. The platoon leader ordered his trail squad to move up on the left side of the platoon to cover the other bank of the stream. Almost simultaneously the point element of the platoon opened fire on a squad of NVA soldiers deploying to their front.



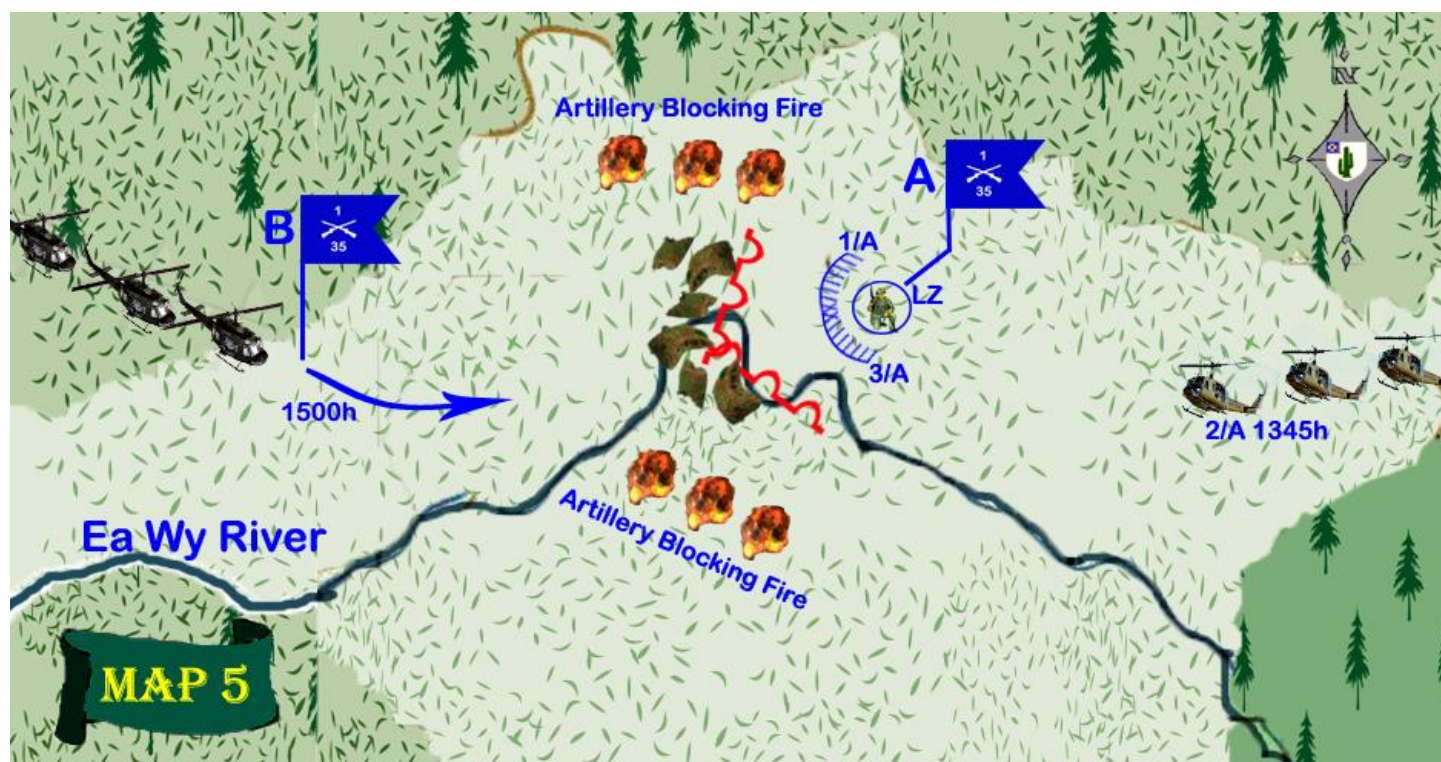
The platoon leader immediately sent his platoon SGT, PSG Jones, and an RTO to check a clearing on the platoon's right rear. He deployed his platoon on line and began to assault the enemy. The volume of enemy fire increased greatly, and the platoon was almost immediately on the defensive. The platoon leader received a wound in the thigh, and several other men, including two squad leaders; SSG's Holbrook and Williams, were wounded and

killed in the first few seconds. The enemy as initially believed to be company sized; later changed to a reinforced company or two companies. Realizing he was greatly outnumbered; the platoon leader ordered a withdrawal toward the clearing at his right rear.

Throughout this period radio, contact with the platoon leader's RTO had been sporadic at best, due to his location in the stream bed; however, the platoon's second RTO, who was with the platoon SGT, was able to relay messages between the platoon leader and company commander.

Once reorganized, the Platoon leader called for an artillery smoke round to mark his position. Although the jungle canopy was not extremely heavy, he was not able to spot two smoke rounds that were fired due to the heavy ground vegetation in the area.

At 1230h, a FAC from a sister battalion was orbiting the scene, and after some difficulty he was able to locate the platoon, mark its position with smoke and direct an air strike. A1Es were able to drop Napalm and employ 20mm cannon were within 50-75 meters of friendly forces and stopped the NVA assault just as it was about to overrun the platoon. This was the first of sixteen sorties flown in support of the American troops during the action. The Platoon leader, wounded himself, requested assistance and a resupply of ammunition at approximately 1240 hours.



At 1315h, the 1st Platoon was lifted into the LZ, along with the company commander, an artillery FO and the 4.2 Mortar Platoon FO. Upon their arrival, the enemy made a suicidal charge toward the LZ, inflicting many casualties, but at a great cost to themselves. The artillery FO was able to fill the gaps between air support missions with artillery fires.

2d Platoon, commanded by 2LT James Kelsey, was lifted in about 15 minutes behind the 1st Platoon. They immediately deployed to form half of a pincers against the enemy force which had retreated into prepared positions. As the fight progressed the Battalion S3 had gone airborne in an OH-23 to coordinate the troop lift and supporting artillery fire. The area south of the contact was kept sealed off with steady fire from two 105 batteries. At about 1500 hours Company B 1/35 was lifted into an LZ about 2 kilometers west of the contact area and ordered to sweep east in an attempt to catch the fleeing NVA forces. They were successful in killing two and capturing one.

By 1500 hours it was apparent the enemy had decided to quit the battlefield under the cover of a cleverly concealed small stay-behind-force which was effectively slowing the advance of Company A. Reduction of these positions was a bunker by bunker operation requiring the use of M-72 LAW and grenades.

The enemy positions were cleared by 1630 and Company B came from the west to link up at 1730 hours. By dark all captured enemy material had been evacuated, and a perimeter had been established.

The enemy suffered 35 KIA by body count with a possibility of 100 KIA; through subsequent interrogations of prisoners of war. Intelligence gathered from captured enemy documents indicated that the 3d Platoon had been opposed by the C-2 and C-3 Companies, 635th Bn, 32d NVA Regiment. Approximately 18 individual weapons (CHICOM carbines, AK-47) and 2 light machineguns were captured along with numerous packs, documents, and field gear. Friendly losses were 10 KIA and 27 WIA. Six Bronze Star Medals with V device were awarded to personnel of Company A.

**SOME OF THE RESULTS OF
OPERATION "GARFIELD"**

(A) ARMS AND AMMUNITION

ITEM	QUANTITY
AK-56 SMG OF CHICOM MANUFACTURE	12
SKS CARBINES OF CHICOM, NK, AND RUSSIAN MANUFACTURE	34
CHICOM RBD SMG	3
B-40 ROCKET LAUNCHER	1
M-79 GRENADE LAUNCHER (US)	1
SPRINGFIELD '03	13
M-2 CARBINE	2
HAND GRENADE	102
82MM MORTAR ROUND	112
12.7MM HMG ROUND	1,200
7.62MM SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION	21,500
.30 CALIBRE ROUND	5,080
B-40 ROCKET	38
75MM RECOILLESS RIFLE ROUND	1
CLAYMORE MINE	3

(B) OTHER

ITEM	QUANTITY
RICE, TON	61.5
FIELD HOSPITAL SURGICAL KIT, COMP.	1
DRUGS, POUND	100
UNIFORM	400
RUCKSACK	234
FIELD TELEPHONE	9
SWITCHBOARD	1
BATTERY POWERED MEGAPHONE	150
STRUCTURES DESTROYED	300

**Men of the 3d Bde load artillery
onto a waiting Chinook during
Operation Garfield**



**Casualties Arrive at
25th Medical Bn Aid
Station, Buon Brien**

**Col Everette Stoutner,
LTC Feir and Cpt Gardner
inspect captured enemy
surgical equipment**





**Taking a break
Bob Williams
in a 1000 lb bomb crater**



VC Village



**Gen Deane talks to Cpt
Bisantz after the fight**



Cpt Tony Bisantz, Kelsey, Coleman



VALOROUS UNIT AWARD

COMPANY A, 1st BN, 35th Infantry



General Orders No. 17

The Valorous Unit Award is awarded by direction of the Secretary of the Army to:
COMPANY A 1ST BATTALION, 35TH INFANTRY, 3D BRIGADE, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION for extraordinary heroism:

COMPANY A 1ST BATTALION, 35TH INFANTRY, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION, distinguished itself by extraordinary heroism on 15 March 1966 while engaged in military operations against an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam. When the 35th INFANTRY base camp was mortared in the early morning of 15 March, the 3D PLATOON, **COMPANY A 1ST BATTALION, 35TH INFANTRY, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION** set out to pursue and fix the Viet Cong force while the rest of the company prepared to reinforce it when contact with the insurgents was made. Just as the pursuit force was preparing to return to the base after a fruitless search, a point man discovered a communications wire and followed it into a hostile camp. The pursuit platoon was quickly engaged and found itself receiving intense fire from two Viet Cong companies. When this friendly unit had been under constant, violent attack for over an hour, another platoon of **COMPANY A, 1ST BATTALION, 35TH INFANTRY, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION** was helilifted into a nearby landing zone. Although the insurgents threw themselves into a suicidal, human wave attack as the reinforcing unit landed, the men repulsed them, inflicted numerous casualties among the insurgents, and began to support their sister platoon against the overwhelmingly larger Viet Cong force. A short time later, a third platoon of **COMPANY A 1ST BATTALION, 35TH INFANTRY, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION** arrived and gave the friendly force strength to overrun the still numerically superior insurgents. The men of all three platoons dauntlessly assaulted the enemy lines, penetrated the Viet Cong defenses, and drove the enemy from their positions. In coordination with the blocking artillery fire, the company then destroyed the two hostile companies. The men of **COMPANY A, 1ST BATTALION, 35TH INFANTRY, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION** displayed extraordinary courage and devotion to duty which were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon themselves and the United States Army.



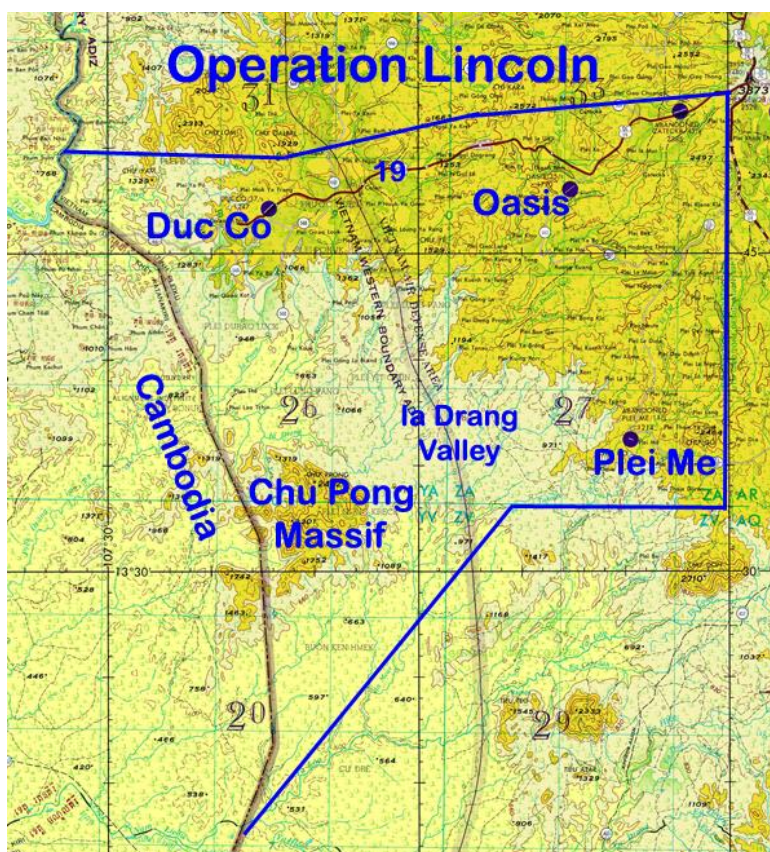
OPERATION LINCOLN

25 Mar - 7 Apr



OPERATION LINCOLN

25 Mar – 7 Apr 1966



LINCOLN'S area of operations was irregular in shape. It began about seven kilometers south of Pleiku City and extended west to the Cambodian border. The northern boundary lay a short distance north of Highway 19. The Lop and Meur Rivers, located south of the Chu Pong Massif, formed the southern boundary, running some twenty kilometers in a straight line from a point about ten kilometers east of the massif.

The 3d Bde, 25th Infantry began its participation in Operation Lincoln on 25 Mar with the deployment of its two armor units - Company B, 1st Battalion, 69th Armor, and Troop C, 3d Squadron, 4 Cavalry. The armor would protect the roads.

It wasn't until the 31st of March that the 1st Bn 35th Infantry was ordered into the operation. Traveling by air and motor, the battalion

moved from Ban Brieng back to the Oasis. On the 1st of April, LTC Callanan's battalion air assaulted into AO 11 to begin search and destroy operations.

On the 2nd and 3rd of April, the companies of the battalion conducted S&D operations and platoon sized Eagle Flights in their AO; but with few results as contacts were light

On 4 April, Stoutner's 3d Bde, 25th Div and Moore's 3d Bde, 1st Cav Div assaulted against the Chu Pong Massif itself. Backed by lavish fire support, including medium and heavy tubes from I Field Force artillery, Stoutner's battalions (1/35th and 1/14th) attacked south onto the mountain and Moore's struck from the east. Throughout the day the four battalions traversed the massif, hunting for North Vietnamese. One battalion fought several fleeting skirmishes with small units, killing 7 of the enemy, but in general the searchers found no one to fight. The picture changed little on the fifth and sixth. Gunships from both the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, and artillery fires from the 2d Battalion, 20th Artillery, fired upon small groups withdrawing toward Cambodia, but the large unit encounter that Gen Kinnard, 1st Cav Div CO, had sought failed to develop. Consequently, on the seventh, Stoutner's 3d Brigade returned to Pleiku City. Hennessey's and Moore's brigades withdrew the next day, putting an end to the operation.

After reviewing LINCOLN'S objective, which was to anticipate and disrupt the Communists' preparations for rainy season operations, General Kinnard seemed satisfied with the effort. "I think," he concluded, "we. . . pushed their timetable back."

S&D OPERATIONS IN THE IA DRANG



MOVING OUT



ON PATROL



NVA HOOTCH



[illegible]

OPERATION LONGFELLOW

17 APR to 1 MAY 1966



Brig. Gen. Glenn D Walker

The 3d Brigade, 25th Division, embarked on Operation LONGFELLOW on 17 Apr 1966. The purpose was twofold: to disrupt enemy activity in western Kontum Province, and to protect Army engineers (Co D, 65th Engineer Bn) repairing a stretch of Highway 14 running northward from the hamlet of Tan Canh, near Dak To, to the Special Forces camp at Dak Pek. Keeping one battalion back in reserve, the brigade's new commander, Brig. Gen. Glenn D. Walker (photo left), deployed his remaining two infantry battalions, artillery, and a CIDG company to Tan Canh on 15—16 April, with active operations beginning on the seventeenth.

Over the next two weeks company-size units from the 1/35th and 2/35th Inf searched pre-designated sectors for signs of the enemy. After combing one sector, the companies would move to new search zones by foot, by truck, or by helicopters provided by the 52d Aviation Battalion.

The following is the chronological order of developments occurring in the operation. The numbers preceding each are keyed to the map above.

- (2) 17 Apr: 2/35 elements conducted a helicopter assault into landing zone 4, in sector OHIO.
 - (3) 18 Apr: 1/35 elements conducted a helicopter assault into landing zone 5, in sector ALABAMA
 - (4) 19 Apr: 2/35 conducted eagle flights into landing zone 8 and 11 in sector OHIO.
 - (5) 19 Apr: 1/35 conducted search and destroy operations in sector ALABAMA.
 - (6) 20 Apr: 2/35 conducted a helicopter assault into landing zone 14 and landing zone 17 and commenced search and destroy operations in sector DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (DC).
 - (7) 20 Apr: 1/35 conducted a helicopter assault into landing zone 15 and began landing zone improvement in sector HAWAII.
 - (8) 21 Apr: Elements of 1/35 helilifted into landing zone 19.
 - (9) 21 Apr: 2/35 conducted operations in sector DC.
 - (10) 23 Apr: 1/35 continued operations in sector HAWAII, moving by ground into sector NEW YORK in the afternoon.
 - (11) 23 Apr: 2/35 continued operations in sector DC.
 - (12) 25 Apr: 1/35 (-) with attached CIDG company conducted a helicopter assault and search and destroy operations in sector MAINE. A/1/35 moved overland into landing zone 24 in sector MAINE.
 - (13) 25 Apr: A/2/35 helilifted into sector ALASKA at landing zone 27 at 1300h.
 - (14) 27 Apr: 2/35 conducted a helicopter assault into landing zone 29 to commence search and destroy operations in sector UTAH.
 - (15) 27 Apr: 1/35 continued operations in MAINE and UTAH.
- 28 Apr: 1/35 and 2/35 continued operations in sectors IOWA and UTAH.
- On 30 Apr, both the 1/35th and 2/35th began movement to brigade forward at Than Canh to close out the operation.

Although enemy units twice ambushed elements of the South Vietnamese 24th Special Tactical Zone that were working with the Americans, the 3d Brigade failed to generate significant contacts. On 30 April, as soon as the engineers had completed their work on the highway, General Walker terminated the operation. By then, he and his men figured that they had killed 11 of the enemy at a cost of one of their own. They had also suffered 108 wounded, many to booby traps.

By the time LONGFELLOW ended, the southwest monsoon season had begun, bringing with it daily showers and increasingly heavy cloud cover. This was the moment the North Vietnamese had been waiting for, when adverse weather conditions would conceal their movements, bog down allied vehicles, ground American helicopters, and minimize the effects of allied air power. Only time would tell if American spoiling operations had succeeded in disrupting the enemy's monsoon plans.



Co D, 65th Eng



52d Avn

Enemy Suspects



Operation Paul Revere



10 May 1966
to
31 Dec 1966

OPERATION PAUL REVERE I

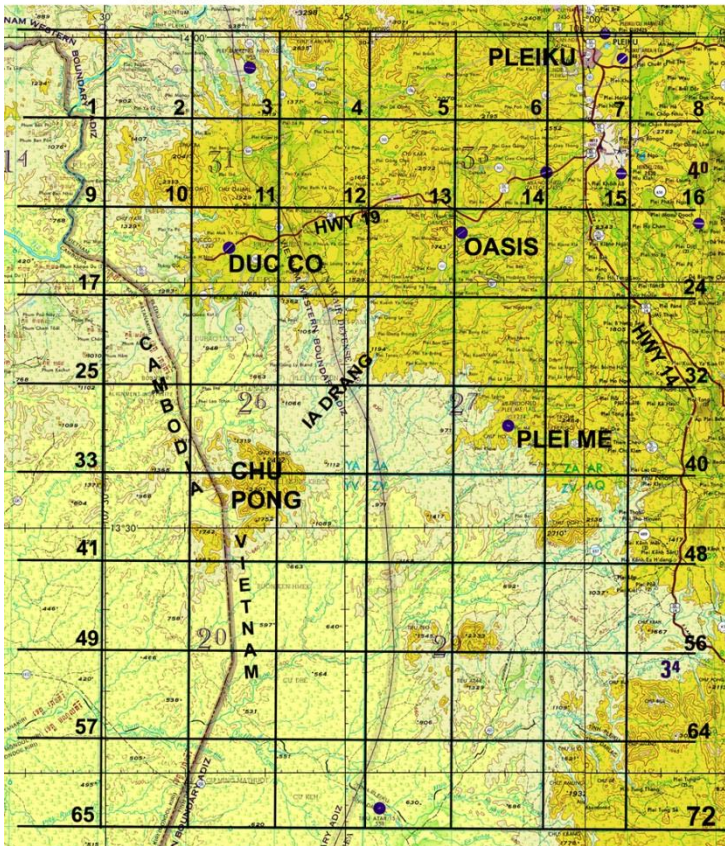
10 May to 31 July 1966

With the close of Operation Longfellow, and with relatively well prepared and defended lines of communications and supply, Gen. Walker turned his attention to the area west and south of OASIS. With the coming of the rains also came reports of increased enemy movement from their sanctuary in Cambodia.

Operation Paul Revere would eventually evolve into four phases. The primary difference between each phase was not the area of operations but under whose command the 3d Brigade Task Force would operate.

The first four months in Viet Nam had given the 1/35th and 2/35th Inf battalions valuable experience in conducting search and destroy operations, preparing defensive positions, and conducting aerial combat assaults (CA). Until now the weather had been cooperative, but now it was time for a change. A change in the area of operations (AO) and an introduction to the monsoon season's rains.

AREA OF OPERATIONS - PAUL REVERE



Bounded on the west by the Cambodian border; on the east by Highway 14; east-west grid line YA-ZA 50 on the north; east-west grid line YV-ZV-AQ 60 on the south. The AO was further divided into subsectors of 10,000 sq. meters for command and control.

1/35th to AO 52 and AO 53, and the 3/4th Cav into AO 37. During this time the brigade accounted for 7 VC and NVA KIA and discoveries of caches and structures were insignificant. (OP Rpt. 3d Bde 1 May-31 Jul 1966)

That all changed on the morning of 24 May, when operating about ten kilometers southwest of its camp at Plei Djereng, a CIDG patrol, vicinity YA760470, ran into an enemy force estimated at two battalions.

When Operation Longfellow terminated, the 3d Bde was ordered into the area west of Oasis; stretching from the Cambodian border to Highway 14, north to the east-west grid line YA-ZA 50 and south to the east-west grid line YV-ZV-QA 60. Comprising over 5,000 square kilometers, the area was simply too large to take and hold territory. As a result, the AO was divided into sectors, 10,000 meters square, so as to allow for a systematic search for the enemy.

The units spent a little over a week preparing for the beginning of Operation Paul Revere. The 3d Bde Task Force headquarters was initially located at OASIS. During the period from 11 May to 24 May, operations began with the deployment of the 1/14th to AO 29, the 1/35th to AO 46, and C Troop 3/4th Cav with one company from the 2/35th to AO 38. The 2/35th (-) and Co B, 1/69th Armor were in reserve and conducted patrolling around the Brigade base camp. All units generally maneuvered in a westerly direction to search out the enemy.

With little or no contact by the 24th, the units were shifted westward. The 1/14th to AO 27. The

Two CIDG (Civilian Irregular Defense Group) companies reinforced the patrol, and together they fought throughout the day. The next day, the 2/35th was air assaulted into AO 3 in support but failed to make contact.

ENEMY SITUATION



Lt Col La Ngoc Chau, Commander of the 66th NVA Regiment, moved his unit across the Cambodian border into South Vietnam in early May 1966. (Intelligence reports listed LTC Chau as the Commander of the 66th as late as November 1965) The 66th had three infantry battalions assigned: the 7th, 8th and 9th. Each battalion contained approximately 450 officers and men. Because of the heavy losses experienced during the Ia Drang campaign against the 1st Air Cav, many of the line units were made up of untried and inexperienced personnel fresh out of the Ho Chi Minh pipeline. In addition, the 66th carried an anti-aircraft battery of 12.5mm, tripod mounted, heavy machineguns.

The mission of the 66th was to attack the Special Forces camp at Plei Djereng, unite with two other regiments of the NVA 325th Div, also infiltrating eastward into the Central Highlands, and exploit any success against American and South Vietnamese forces that might be developed. Failing this, he was to move back across the border to the sanctuary provided by Cambodia.

The 66th NVA Regiment established a base camp about ten kilometers inside South Vietnam and 1000 meters to the north of a swampy clearing that was later to be designated by the 2/35th as LZ 10 ALFA. The Commander placed elements of his force around that clearing and at other sites within the vicinity of his headquarters that might serve as landing zones for the American helicopters. At the clearing closest to his base camp, (LZ 10 ALFA) he positioned five tripod-mounted 12.7mm anti-aircraft guns, and firing pits were dug into the swampy ground along the tree line and camouflaged. The infantry units that comprised the main body of his regiment, and other troops not required in the Headquarters area or occupied with defense of possible LZ's, were moved to the east along the stream and parallel ridges that formed the middle avenue of approach to Plei Djereng. (Col Stan Tyson, HHC 2/35 1966)

27 May 1966

The 2/35th Infantry conducted a heliborne assault into AO 11 and 12 with companies A and B at LZ 12A (YA 908385). The battalion (-) landed at LZ 11A (YA 873369). Companies A and B later closed to LZ 11A after conducting search and destroy operations to the northwest and southwest, respectively.

Based on a terrain analysis, the valley associated with LZ 10A (YA 769376) appeared to be a likely area for use by enemy forces, hence Company B was directed to prepare for a heliborne assault into LZ 10A 28 May 1966. (Annual Historical Supplement, 2nd Bn, 35th Infantry, 1966)

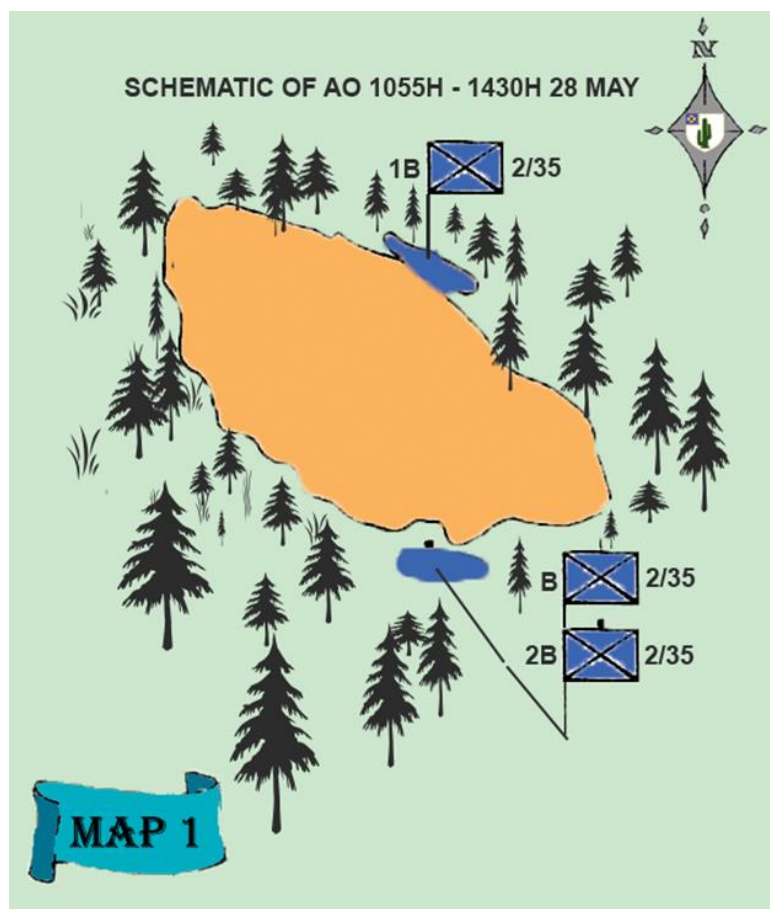
The 2/35th Bn Fwd was established at Landing Zone (LZ) 11 ALFA and consisted of the Headquarters and Command Group, Company C, Reconnaissance Platoon, and an attached Battery from the 2/9th Artillery Battalion. In addition to the artillery that was dedicated to a specific infantry battalion, additional fire support was available and "on call" from batteries of 155mm and 8-inch Howitzers at Bde Fwd and 175mm Cannons located at the Special Forces camp at Duc Co.

In the early morning of the 28th, the Bn/HQ Firebase LZ 11A was attacked, and we managed to get a machine gun with our 81mm mortars. That machine gun had the Bn HQ pinned down, and we got a direct hit on him. LTC Phil Feir talked with me that morning and I told him we were packing only about

12 rounds as we humped the mortars and that we would be more effective if we had ammo flown into the LZ. He ordered up an ammo lift for that night just before the LZ 10A of B Co. We didn't expect to need it all on 10A as we didn't expect to stay on the LZ that night. We were cleaning up from the attack on the Bn HQ when we got the word of heavy contact on 10A. Feir sent the mortars and A Company right away and diverted the ammo to 10A. That was fortuitous as we used all of it and then some. (Ray Pollard, Wpns Plt Ldr: B/2/35)

LZ 10 ALFA 28-29 May

28 May 1100H



Standard Operating Procedure, SOP, dictated that each heliborne assault was preceded by a preparatory barrage fired by the 105mm Arty Battery supporting the Bn. The thirty to fifty round artillery prep was positioned to destroy or disrupt any enemy around an LZ and to buy time for the first lift to get in and place its troops on the ground, secure the LZ and provide security and support for subsequent lifts. However, the prep for 10 ALFA was plotted in error using incorrect map coordinates and was fired on a clearing some 3000 meters to the south. Thus, the assault at 10 ALFA went in without artillery support. Although that in itself could have been critical, it actually served as an advantage for the troops from Bravo Company.

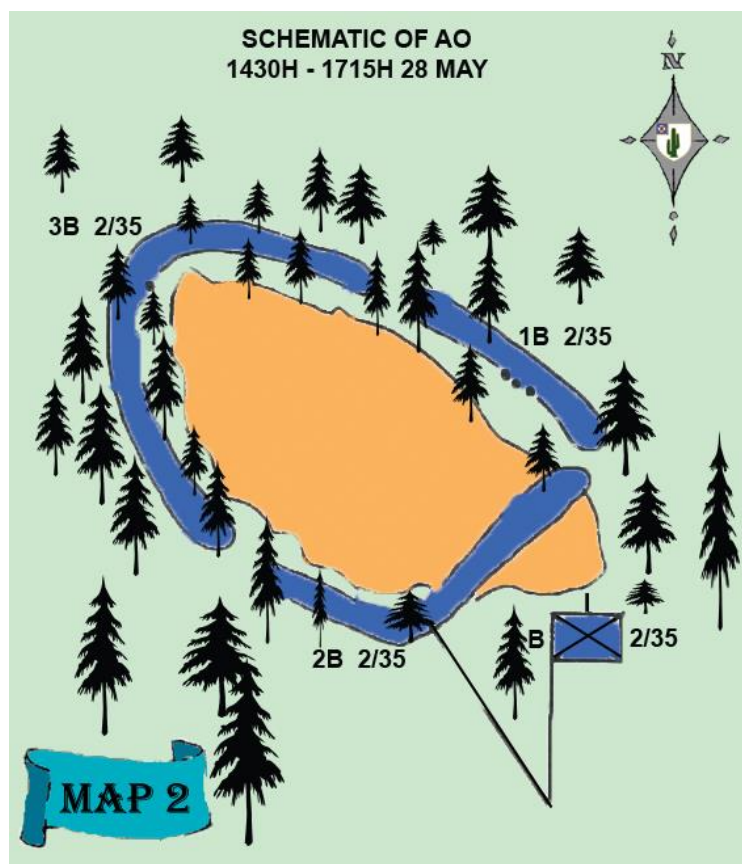
When the helicopters carrying Lt Robert Ponder's 1st Plt landed in the three to five inches of water that covered much of the LZ, the element of total surprise worked in Bravo's favor, and the NVA soldiers who were supposed to be manning the five 12.7mm anti-aircraft weapons that had been positioned

around the clearing were not in the water filled pits, but were back from the guns on higher and drier ground. Men from the 1st Plt captured two of the guns before their crews could react to the assault landing. Fire fights erupted around the other three positions, and they were quickly overrun. The NVA took immediate action by committing men to reinforce their unit fighting to recapture their guns and regain control of the LZ.

The second lift, carrying Capt Maisano and his Command Group, an 81mm mortar section, and part of the 2nd Plt, Lt Michael Glynn, came in under fire and joined the action. With fire fights breaking out all along the unit's restricted perimeter, Bravo called for fire support from the artillery. In so doing, the support mission ringed the LZ and precluded the rest of his company from coming in. Trail elements were forced to return to 11 ALFA. Bravo Co (-) was on its own to deal with the situation on the ground for the better part of two hours. **(MAP 1)**

After the initial contact, which resulted in four casualties, the LZ appeared secure; however, as DUSTOFF medevac aircraft attempted to land, extremely heavy ground fire was received from the NW.

The DUSTOFF aircraft was driven off with several hits. The estimate of enemy strength was raised to a reinforced platoon. Following the DUSTOFF incident, the volume of fire declined, although occasional sniper fire and AW fire continued to be triggered by movement of friendly troops.



Following the initial DUSTOFF attempt, 52nd Avn. Bn gunships (Buccaneer 6) made repeated passes firing both machineguns and rockets into the wood lines running north and south. Particularly heavy fire was delivered against a machine gun which was firing across the flank of the 1st Plt from the SW and could not be reached by friendly small arms fire. The gunships, however, did not suppress enemy fire to the degree required. Friendly positions were marked with smoke and two A1E aircraft strafed and dropped napalm on the machinegun position. Still, the machinegun continued in action. Another flight (F4 jet aircraft) appeared on the scene and shortly thereafter neutralized the enemy position with 500-pound bombs. The A1E's meanwhile were effectively suppressing enemy fire to the north.

Immediately following the air strike, the 1st Plt maneuvered a squad to the southwestern portion of the LZ and made contact with two NVA. Both fled into the woods to the west. A large number of packs and equipment plus, one

12.7mm anti-aircraft weapon were found. The latter was returned to the company CP. The squad continued a clockwise sweep of the entire LZ. A second anti-aircraft gun was found virtually destroyed by the airstrike. Discovery of guns #3, #4 and #5 followed in quick succession as the sweep was completed. (Annual Historical Supplement, 2nd Bn, 35th Infantry, 1966)

1255 HOURS

The force applying pressure against the LZ broke contact and withdrew into the heavy forest to the north. Artillery and tactical air support were placed on hold, and Capt Maisano called for the remaining lifts of his unit to join him. Within an hour, Bravo Co had completed its insertion, and the perimeter was secured and expanded.



Bravo reported to Bn Fwd that the area was relatively quiet, that two NVA prisoners had been taken, and that five 12.7mm anti-aircraft machineguns had been captured. One POW could speak a little English, but he would say nothing as to the size or designation of the NVA force that Bravo had stirred up.

The prisoner acknowledged he was a member of the company assigned to defend the LZ and that his Company Commander had killed himself when he failed to recapture his guns. Unit casualties up to that

point were light and none of the wounded required immediate evacuation. After an unsuccessful attempt to determine just what size unit his 1st Plt had dropped into, Capt Maisano notified LTC Feir that following a resupply for his 1st and 2nd Platoons, he would be ready to move as directed.

1430 HOURS

The remainder of Company B was lifted into the LZ. With the exception of some automatic weapons fire at the aircraft, this lift was carried out without major incident. On the ground, the 1st Plt put down a base of fire to the north. Enemy fire ceased as the aircraft departed. The perimeter was then reorganized and captured enemy equipment and gear were consolidated at the company CP.

Company B then began a sweep to the north to clear the area and obtain a body count. The initial count totaled ten. Sweep elements then moved out some 150 meters and returned; however, upon return, sniper fire again came from a bunker position at the north end of the LZ. Because the sweep elements of the 1st and 2nd Platoons were mixed, a consolidated squad attacked the bunker with grenades. Two NVA were KIA and two were captured. Both POW's were returned to the Brigade CP. Because of this action, another sweep was generated. This sweep likewise generated sniper fire from the NW. Snipers accounted for two friendly WIA. The 3rd Plt maneuvered against the snipers, later determined to number two, and suffered one KIA and seven WIA, including the Plt Leader who later in the day died of wounds. The snipers, both of whom were excellent marksmen, were firing one semi-automatic and one automatic weapon from positions concealed behind trees. Both were killed by M-79 and M-60 MG fire. (Annual Historical Supplement, 2nd Bn, 35th Infantry, 1966)

1600 HOURS

The action at 10 ALFA was being monitored at both Battalion and Brigade Forward's. From the casualty reports that had come in, the capture of the 12.5mm's and the obvious conclusion that they belonged to a unit much larger than an isolated company of NVA and presaged the presence of a sizable force, it was readily apparent that Bravo was into a situation that could not be resolved unless additional help was sent in. Even if the relief force closed on the LZ before dark, if the NVA felt their losses were worth the effort, the troops defending 10 ALFA could be in for a long and difficult night. An extraction under fire was not an option. The decision was made that Company B would hold in place and that reinforcements and resupply would be airlifted to the LZ. In that other 2/35th units were not immediately available for the relief mission, Gen Walker tagged the 1/35th for a rifle company, and Alfa Co, Capt Tony Bisantz Commanding, was ordered to move immediately to a pickup point and to await their transportation.

1615 HOURS

Immediately upon returning to Oasis, Maj Stan Tyson was told to report to Gen Walker in the Operations Center at Bde HQ. He was briefed on the situation at 10 ALFA and was told that LTC Feir had requested that he command the relief force. Once on the ground at the LZ, Tyson was to take command of both units and their attachments and serve as the TASK FORCE (TF) Commander. The mission was to conduct the defense of the LZ, and as soon as the situation allowed, to resume offensive operations. The elements of the TF were Companies B, 2/35th, and A, 1/35th, two 107mm (4.2) mortar squads and in total, numbered eleven officers and 258 men. All infantrymen of Alfa Co were issued double basic loads of ammunition, and additional ammunition was loaded on to be distributed to Bravo. The flights to pick up Capt Bisantz's troops were inbound, and just enough time was available for Tyson to pick up a PRC-25 radio, borrow an M-16 and an extra magazine from SFC Clarence Crawford, Admin Sgt, 2/35th Infantry, fill his canteen, and get to the helicopter pad.

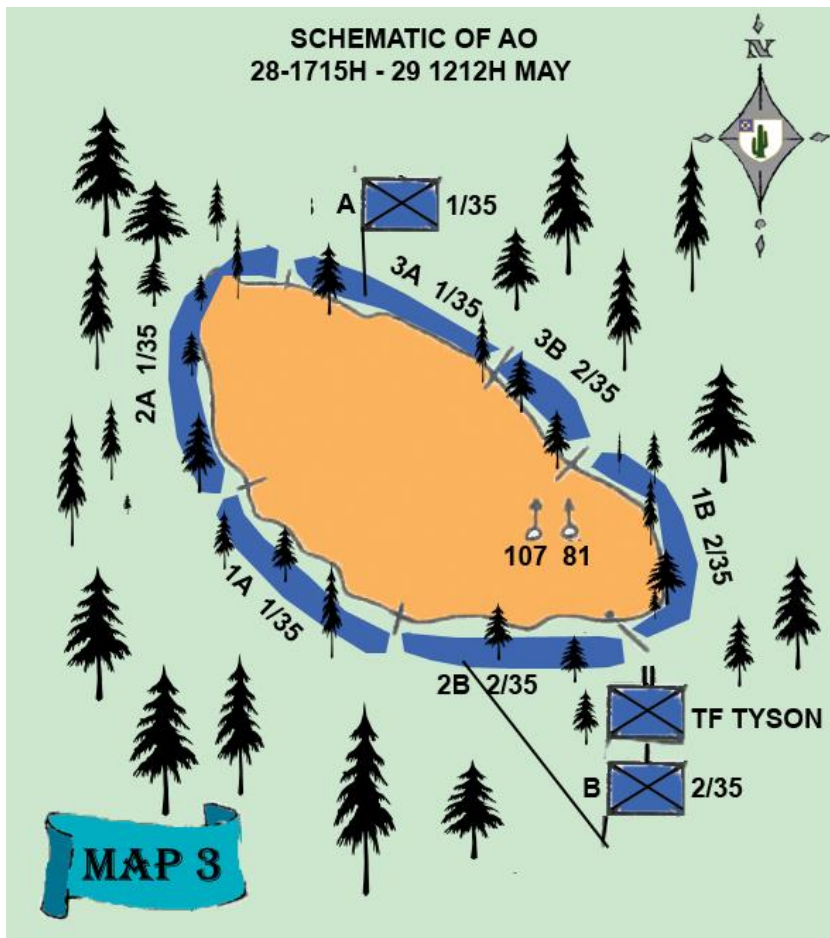
1700 HOURS



The seriously wounded were lifted out of the LZ by the Brigade CO's helicopter. Prior to this, two DUSTOFF ships had been driven off by enemy fire. One of these had received several hits. Additional wounded subsequently were lifted out without incident by two 52nd Aviation Bn gunships. The enemy was believed to have withdrawn. Resupply was requested. Information was then received that Company A, 1st Bn, 35th Infantry would be lifted into the LZ as a reinforcing element and would be placed under OPCON of the 2nd Bn, 35th Infantry. The 2/35th Executive Officer (Major Wallace "Stan" Tyson) was lifted into the LZ to command the two-company task force and to accomplish the mission of holding the LZ the night of 28 May 1966. (Annual Historical Supplement, 2nd Bn, 35th Infantry, 1966)

Flying as a hitchhiker in one of the supporting gunships, Maj Tyson arrived at the LZ with the first lift of Alfa Co, 1/35th. Fortunately, the landing coincided with a break in the action, and the entire unit got in without incident. "The pilot told me he didn't plan on staying long enough to land, and the Huey made a quick pass following the last troop carrier. The ship flared, I jumped from the skids, and I saw Capt Maisano motioning from his CP at the edge of the trees on the south side of the LZ. As the gunship climbed out, the downwash of its rotors blew the poncho from the body of one of Bravo's soldiers lying among the dead and wounded at the unit collection point. At that time, Capt Maisano's casualties totaled three killed and twenty-two wounded. As the remaining flights came in to complete the insertion, casualties were evacuated on the departing ships, including the two POWs and the five 12.7mm's."

As Alfa Co, 1/35th arrived, they were directed into their portion of the perimeter, and as they took up positions just inside the tree line, Bravo Co compressed. Each of the rifle companies occupied about half of the perimeter, with Alfa on northwestern end of the oval and Bravo on the southeast. The heavy mortars were mounted on the rising ground in the southern portion of the open area. After making contact with Bn Fwd and giving a quick update on the situation, and knowing that darkness would come early in the jungle, my first priority was to walk the perimeter to ensure that the troops were in the best defensive positions available and that they were taking full advantage of any material at hand to strengthen their line. I talked with individual soldiers and saw that the composition of the ground did not lend itself to digging in. Much would depend on using fallen logs and piles of loose stone as fortifications. The standing trees gave an added measure of protection in that they precluded the NVA from placing machineguns well back from the perimeter and bringing it under fire. Instead, the only effective fire could be brought to bear by individuals who had worked their way close enough to the defense to fire as soldier against soldier.



Captain's Maisano and Bisantz had tied their flanks together, and Bravo's Claymore mines and trip flares were shared with Alpha and placed into position. Both units had moved their 81mm mortars out to join with the 107's in the only area that would allow the overhead clearance necessary for the mortars. Each mortar had fifty rounds of high explosive (HE) and a combined total of twenty-five flares. Empty ammunition boxes filled with rock and mud served as a makeshift parapet around the tubes. Because of their exposure, casualties within the mortar sections were considerably higher than with their counterparts along the perimeter. **(MAP 3)**

Lieutenant James Brothers, Artillery Forward Observer (FO), attached to Bravo, was pressed into service as the TF FO. He registered defensive fires around the TF with the 2/9th's 105mm's from LZ 11 ALFA covering three sides of the LZ and with the remaining portion to

the northwest covered by fire from two 175mm cannon at Duc Co, some nine miles to the south.

Under better conditions, the TF could have covered a much larger area; however, considering the heavy forest and dense undergrowth, it was necessary to compress the perimeter to ensure that a cohesive all-round defense could be established. With the exception of one platoon, all positions were just inside the tree line and above the water level of the LZ. Even so, even the shallowest prone shelter quickly filled with water. Bravo's 2nd Plt had to bend back across an open portion of the southeast end of the position, and though partially exposed, their line was able to make use of a small ridge of ground that was mostly above water. Since only a few of the men had anything to dig with, positions were constructed with logs, stones and anything else that was available.

Major Tyson completed checking the perimeter at dark, giving each company commander orders to maintain a 50% alert status until 0150hrs and a 100% alert status from 0150hrs until dawn. The moon rose early the 28th and stayed bright until about 2300hrs, when the clouds obscured it. (Capt Bisantz, A/1/35)

We had heard it was hot, but we didn't know the situation yet. Our chopper landed and we deployed to the far side of the LZ . . . away from the 2/35th. My platoon, 3rd platoon, was setting up positions when Major Tyson, 2/35th XO came by to inspect the positions. It was getting dark and it was overcast. Major Tyson came from my left and disappeared into the forest and the darkness. He was moving down the line to our right. It turned into the darkest night I ever experienced in Viet Nam. That old saying about not being able to see your hand in front of your face . . . well, at 10 ALFA it was true. (Richard Hunter, 3/A/1/35)

ENEMY SITUATION

When the artillery preparation started to fall around the clearing 3000 meters from the site selected for the Headquarters element of the 66th NVA, Lt Col Chau assumed an assault was in progress and that American troops would soon be landing at that location. Because most of his strength was moving along the trail to the east, he started to deploy other troops available to block American movement northward from that LZ. When the actual landing occurred only 1000 meters from his Headquarters, he was caught off balance, and found it next to impossible to recall and redirect his troops back through the forest once they had been committed to the farther location.

As such, the force available to reduce the American presence was not sufficient to do the job, and the necessary strength was not able to reassemble until after the remainder of Bravo was safely on the ground. The 66th NVA was caught on the "horns of a dilemma". As long as the American unit sat astride its route back into Cambodia, it no longer had the freedom to continue movement to the east and possibly be boxed in by more such units being inserted on its flanks and across its route of march. Further, it could not withdraw its forces back across the border without anticipating considerable difficulty as long as the Americans were in a blocking position.

A new opportunity for success was in the offering in that the Americans had presented the 66th with a more lucrative target than the Special Forces camp - that being Bravo Co and any reinforcements that were sure to be sent in to assist the surrounded unit. With that in mind, the majority of the NVA units that were moving against Plei Djereng were recalled. One company sized element was left behind and was sent to exert pressure against the 2/35th Fwd base at LZ 11 ALFA. Long before the first units returned and were able to mount any sort of sustained effort against the defense at LZ 10 ALFA, the remainder of the TF was in position, and the early advantage enjoyed by the 66th NVA had been lost.

29 MAY 0001 - 0430 HOURS

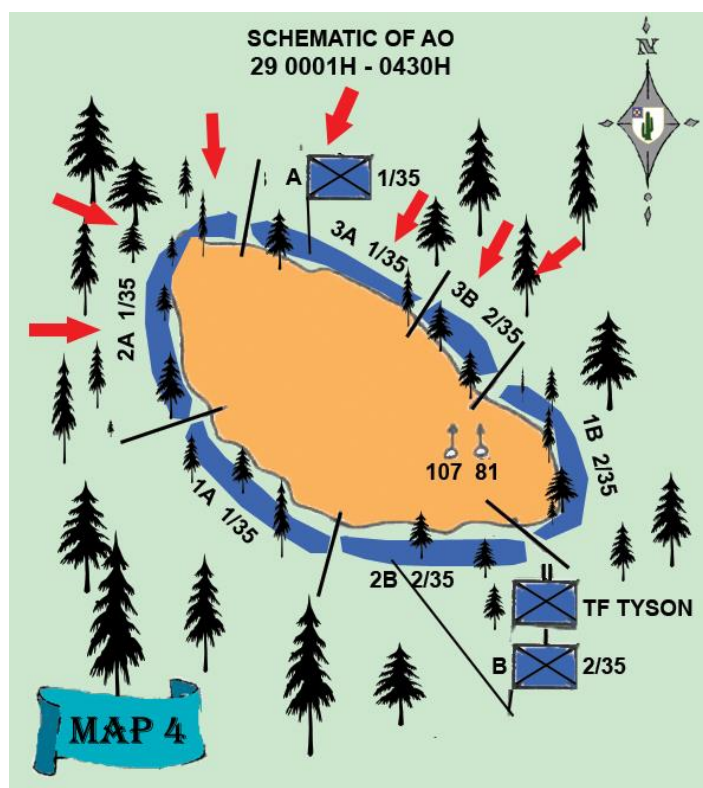
Shortly after midnight, several of the LP's in positions forward of the northern portion of the perimeter reported hearing movement to their front. The majority of the activity was forward of sectors manned by Alfa's and Bravo's 3rd Platoons. The alert status was increased to fifty percent; however, it was doubtful that any of the US troops were taking advantage of an opportunity to get any sleep at that time. As LP reports of the activity picked up, the TF went on 100%. The units were instructed to be prepared for a renewed attack that would probably come shortly after the moon passed below a ridge of high hills southeast of our position.

Just as the moon started to slide from sight, a voice called out from the darkness and demanded: "Americans, you have two hours to surrender or die."

Almost at once, a second voice responded from along the Alfa line with, "Charlie, you have two hours to kiss my ass!"

Any growing apprehension along the line was quickly relieved by the laughter that broke out across the perimeter. For obvious reasons, the 66th NVA concluded that the TF had refused the two hours they had offered.

At 0115, a trip flare was ignited forward of Alfa's 2nd Plt, followed almost immediately by another trip going off to Bravo's front. As sounds of movement parallel to the LZ continued, the men in the LP's along the northern sector were instructed to return to the perimeter.



The sounds of men moving through the heavy undergrowth could be clearly heard by the men along the foxhole line. Bn Fwd had been kept aware of the status of the TF through hourly Sit Rep's, and when Lt Brothers called for artillery flares, the Battery responded with an immediate fire mission. It was quickly discovered that the flares served to the NVA's advantage because our backs were to the open area and were silhouetted against the light. The flares were shut down, and a flare ship that was offered for assistance was refused. The fire mission was changed to HE, and for a brief period, the movement ceased. The most prominent peak to our southeast was designated as "Chu Ba" on the map, and at one point, the full moon looked to be balanced upon it's tip like a ball on a seal's nose.

The LP located about 50 meters in front of the 2nd Platoon of Alfa Co reported hearing noises of movement to their front. Everyone in the TF was alerted and mortars were fired into the area. A few minutes later they reported seeing movement to their right front, estimating it to be a company sized unit. Following instructions, each of the four men on the LP opened fully automatic fire with their M-16 rifles and dropped back to the perimeter. Almost immediately the NVA initiated assault fire on the 3rd Platoon's position.

The 2nd Platoon's listening post had caused the NVA to prematurely trigger their attack while they were still 70 to 80 meters from the perimeter. The 3rd Platoon's listening post was directly in the path of the enemy and was immediately pinned down. The Fire Team leader on the LP gave orders to withdraw to the perimeter. Meanwhile, the 3rd Platoon had demonstrated excellent fire discipline, holding their fire as the ineffective NVA fire swept over their heads. A characteristic of the fight that night and all the next day was that the NVA heavy machine guns, which they normally use with devastating effectiveness, often fired high – sometimes seven or eight feet above the ground. The American forces capitalized on this the next day, moving frequently under the enemy's "grazing" fire at a low crouch.

Three of the four men on the 3rd Platoon's LP returned safely to the perimeter, followed closely by the enemy assault formation which continued forward and came into view of the men of the 3rd Platoon. On order they opened fire and quickly broke up the enemy assault. After the initial firing slacked off, Lt. Conner, the 3rd Platoon leader who was getting his baptism of fire, accompanied by the Fire Team leader from the LP, crawled forward of the perimeter in an attempt to find the missing man. They found him, seriously wounded, and dragged him back inside the perimeter.

Their safe return seemed to signal another enemy assault, this one better organized than the last. The enemy leaders could be heard, haranguing their soldiers, forcing them to attack. This assault was preceded by about a 20-round mortar barrage which impacted behind the 3rd Platoon, at the edge of the LZ, causing no casualties. This time the enemy advanced to within hand grenade range, and after several minutes of intense small arms firing and exchanging of hand grenades, the NVA were again forced to withdraw. (Capt Bisantz, A/1/35)

The respite was short lived, and within a few minutes, the attack was renewed. The attacking force followed a similar pattern throughout the rest of the night. As each attack was beaten back, the NVA would break contact, and the firing would die down. Several times during the breaks in the action, the sounds of men cheering in the distance could be heard, and their cheers would be answered by those of the enemy who were regrouping closer to the perimeter. As the farther groups closed, their cheers would merge with those to our front, a single voice would order them forward, and another assault would be launched against the line.

This went on for a while, then they withdrew for a while, then you could hear whistles blowing and them shouting, and they'd rush us again. Several times they got as close as 10-15 meters from us, but we drove them back every time. We fired hundreds of rounds of artillery right in front of us, and thousands of M-16 rounds. They got close enough to throw grenades in on us, but we did the same and ours worked better.



Guns of the 2/9th Artillery provide fire support for the men at 10 Alfa.

As the night progressed, the scope of the attack broadened to include the defensive sectors of the 2nd Platoon, Alfa, and the 1st Platoon, Bravo. By this time, constant artillery support was being requested, and both the 107mm and 81mm mortars reported they were starting to run low on HE rounds. Several times units were reminded that as an NVA effort broke and ceased firing, the TF had to do the same in order to ensure that the ammunition that was left would carry until daylight and last until the possibility of resupply.

During all this, Alfa Co's mortars had been delivering steady fire into the area in front of the 3rd Platoon. The Heavy Mortar Platoon had been firing at a greater range, attempting to knock out the NVA mortars. Battery A, 2-9 Arty had started firing battery volley fire as soon as the attack started, adjusting back and forth in the area in front of the 3rd Platoon. They were to fire over 650 rounds in support of TF TYSON that night – an awful lot of work for five artillery pieces. The artillery support is even more impressive when one considers that the battery position came under small arms and mortar attack at the same time the attack was launched on 10 ALFA. Several of the cannoneers were wounded manning their guns in defense of a unit twelve kilometers away. (Capt Bisantz, A/1/35)

Around 0330H, Alfa reported one of the squads on its 3rd Plt line had run out of ammunition, and without coordinating with anyone, had withdrawn into the perimeter. Capt Bisantz indicated it was possible that several NVA had passed through the gap and were inside the defensive circle. The word was passed that everyone was immediately to get into a prone position, and the 81's were told to hang a flare directly overhead. Instructions were given to shoot anyone on his feet when the "lights" came on. The parachute flare popped, and by the blue-white light that exposed the scene below, it was determined that the position had not been penetrated. However, several NVA had succeeded in reaching the positions where the squad had been and were eliminated by fire teams closing from opposite sides of the breach. The errant squad was rounded up and resupplied, was returned to its position, and the continuity of the perimeter was restored.

29 May 0415 HOURS

The NVA broke contact and withdrew to the north of the LZ. At this time, it was estimated the TF had been in contact with an element of about battalion strength. The artillery continued to work along the threatened portion of the line, and as the action fell away, was shifted to harassing fires to the north and northwest. The 105's had been served without interruption despite an abortive ground attack that was launched out of the darkness against Bn Fwd at 11 ALFA. The infantrymen of Capt Michael Tryon's Charlie Company defending the base had little difficulty dealing with the attacking force.

The problem of ammunition resupply along the line became more acute as the night progressed. The M-79mm Grenade Launcher seemed to be the weapon of choice because of its area effect. The units were cautioned to stretch out their supply of M-79 rounds, because once those on hand were gone, there were no more. Ammunition was redistributed from casualties who had been removed to unit collection points and from the uncommitted portion of the line to those who needed it most. Bn Fwd was notified that if the attacks were renewed and continued to carry the weight of those experienced thus far, by daylight the ammunition situation would be serious and that an early resupply was critical.

Surprisingly enough, TF casualties remained light throughout the night, two KIA and nine WIA, probably because most of the troops were prone and the NVA were forced to fire at muzzle flashes rather than at individual soldiers. However, for that same reason, most of the wounds received during the darkness were head and shoulder hits. When it became apparent the NVA were probably going to either withdraw completely or at least wait until daylight to resume their action, the TF was returned to a fifty percent alert, and LPs were reestablished forward of the perimeter.

29 May 0610 HOURS

As dawn broke, the fog started to lift in the area; however, the Medevac helicopter at Brigade Base remained grounded by fog at that location. The 3rd Plt was directed to move forward on-line to sweep the battlefield of the previous night. This they did, finding numerous dead NVA soldiers, weapons and equipment. After Lt. Conner had moved forward about 100 meters, he asked for assistance in conducting the sweep. Lt. Everette Light, commanding the 1st Plt on the west side of the perimeter, as directed to bring half of his platoon across the LZ to assist the 3rd Plt. The two units linked up and continued to sweep eastward.

Shortly after they started forward again, Lt. Connor reported finding a stack of enemy bodies alongside an intermittent stream. At this time the Medevac ship arrived, and the wounded were loaded aboard. Just as the loading was completed, firing started east of the perimeter in Bravo Co's sector. Lt. Connor was ordered to immediately pull back to the perimeter with Lt. Light. The order was acknowledged, and they started to move back. The enemy fire against Bravo Co. increased but was not yet of major

proportion. Suddenly an intense firefight broke out in the area in front of Alpha Co., and radio contact with Lt. Connor was lost. (Capt. Bisantz, A/1/35)



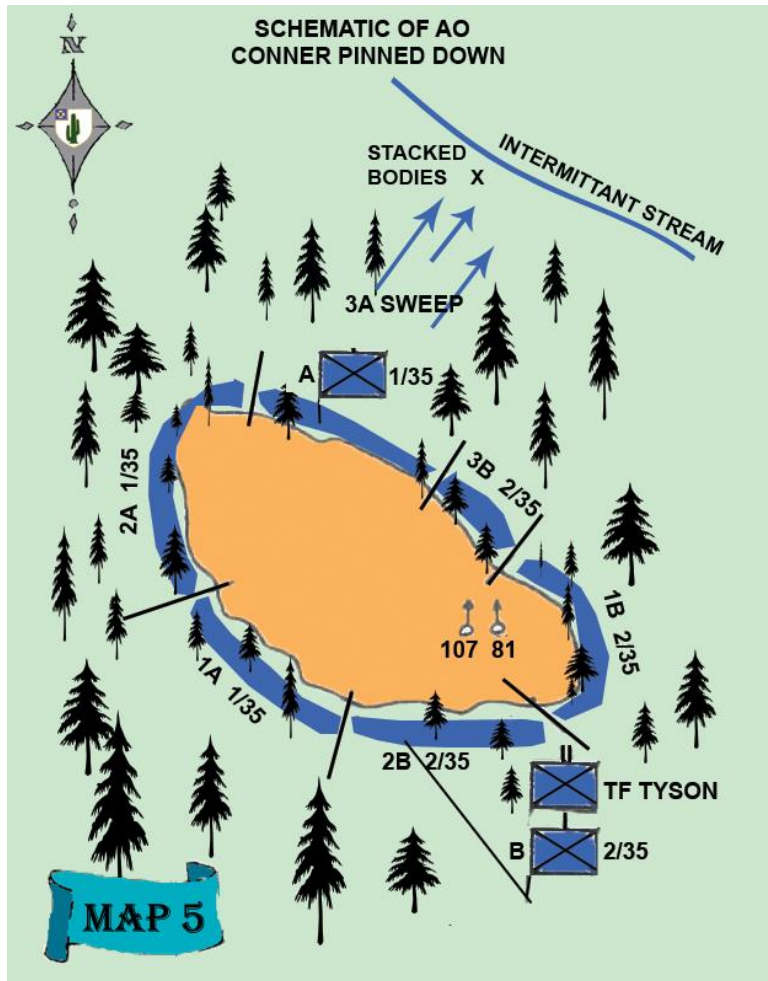
(MAP 5) Right after dawn we were ordered to pick up our line and sweep our front, collecting weapons and counting bodies. We stood up and cautiously moved down a slight, wooded slope, all in line. The slope in front of us was absolutely strewn with NVA bodies, weapons, and pieces of bodies from the artillery. We moved about 150-200 meters (not sure today) down this slope to a dry creek bed, where we found scores more bodies where our shells had caught them moving up to attack us. At the creek bed we found a barely alive NVA soldier who had been horribly wounded by our artillery. I asked our medic if he would make it back to our lines, and he just shook his head no.

We turned around and began making our way back to our line. Each of us were carrying AK-47's and SKS's slung over our shoulders. As we approached where our line had been (maybe 50-75 meters away), a burst of machine gun fire tore into us from our front and on each side. At first, we thought our own guys were firing on us as we approached the perimeter. Within a few moments, however, it became clear that after we had moved down to the creek bed, the NVA crept behind us and our line. My platoon sergeant, SFC George Williams was shot in the neck right in front of me, and something hit me in the head and knocked me head over heels. To this day I can remember exactly what it felt like; like getting hit square in the head with a baseball bat. I landed on my back and couldn't see out of my left eye because my scalp was hanging down over it bleeding. I found out later we'd been hit with one of their heavy MGs that they pulled around on two wheels. A round had hit the left side of my head and creased my skull. (Larry Conner, Plt Leader, 3/A/1/35)

We all looked around waiting for someone to give the order to "move out." Someone yelled, "Alright, move out!" Everyone started moving out on-line . . . keeping abreast and in sight of everyone else as much as we could. We walked just a few meters and there was a shot on my right. Then another. An NVA was moving across our front . . . running from right to left. He was empty handed with no gear and running fast. He fell. Then another NVA ran out, again from right to left. Another shot . . . and another. He fell right in front of the 1st squad positions, into what turned out to be a stream bed about 75 yards out. It never occurred to us that we were being baited out, away from our perimeter. We proceeded outward to the streambed where we found 30 to 40 bodies scattered about. We found an NVA still alive but seriously wounded. He was dying. Within a few minutes he was gone. Then there was sporadic firing back at the LZ. 3rd Platoon got the word to turn around and head back to the LZ to support the perimeter that was under probing attack. We picked up and carried some NVA mortar rounds and tubes that we had found at the streambed. We were going to take them back to the CP for the "count." It was about 8:00 am on the 29th.

We did an about face and headed back towards the LZ. 3rd squad was in front and 1st squad bringing up the rear. "Junior" Bonner, Kit Frazier, Pace Caldwell, Dick Snyder, Bob White and I were taking up the rear. Sporadic small arms fire broke out in front of the platoon. It sounded like AK's. One shot, then two, then a series of automatic fire. Most of us thought it was our own guys on the perimeter shooting at us. We were so close to our own perimeter and this sort of thing had happened before to other units.

After all, we couldn't have been more than 100 meters from the perimeter . . . only 100 meters from safety . . . from our own people.



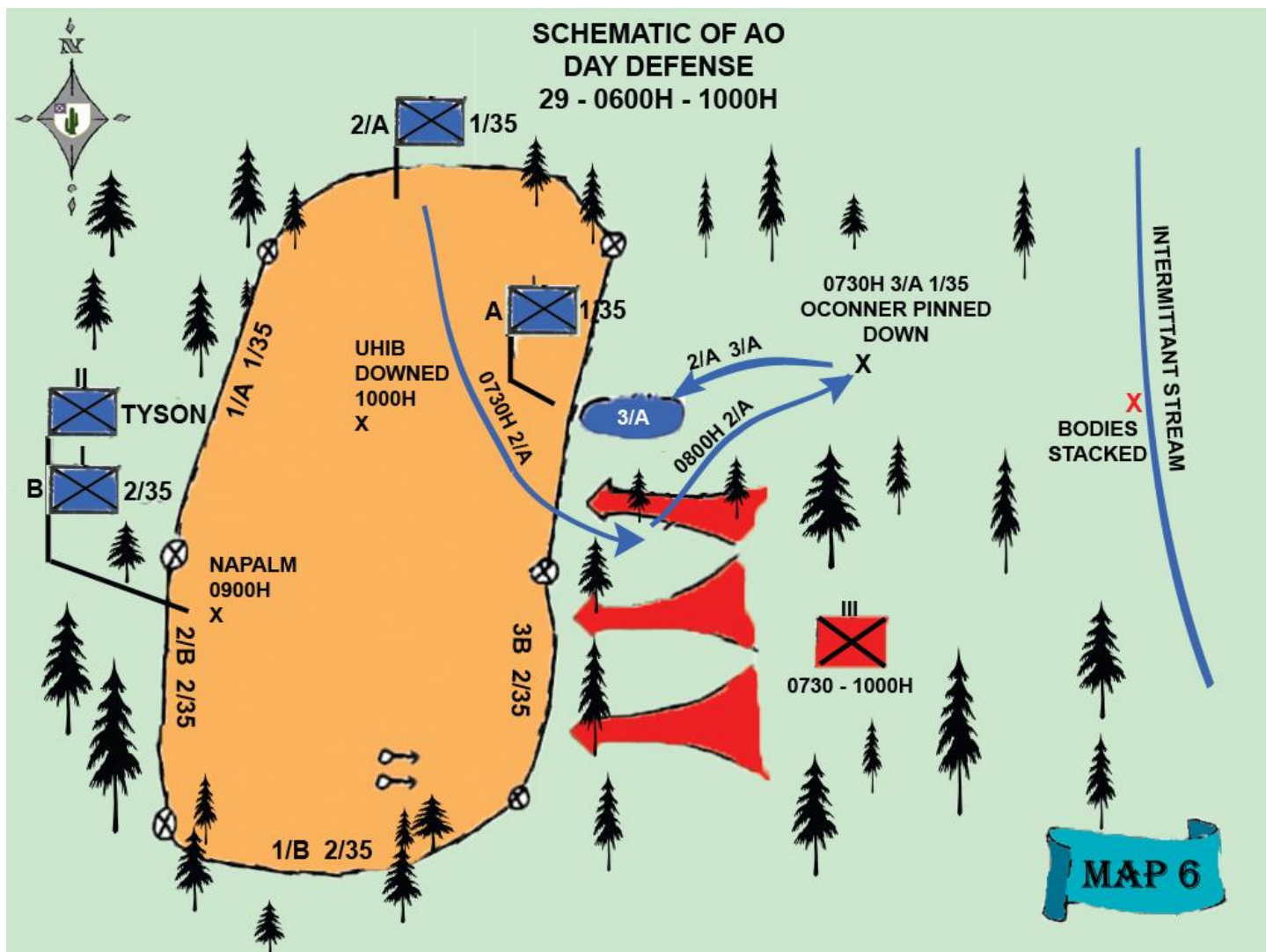
We couldn't have been more than 30 yards from the 3rd squad, yet we couldn't see anyone. Then grenades started exploding. Someone yelled, "They're PAVNS! They're PAVNS!" Then grenade after grenade exploded . . . some of theirs, some of ours. I could hear the AK's clearly now. I could hear M16's returning fire. I could see the smoke. 1st squad dropped the NVA mortar shells, along with the tubes, and rushed forward to help. We rushed forward to see Lt. Light, 1st Platoon Leader, lying on the ground, next to a small tree, with blood coming from his forehead. Lt. Light yelled at us to move up front . . . to help out.

We moved forward, under fire. I could see members of the 2nd and 3rd squad only 5 to 10 yards in front of us. We moved forward again, firing . . . rifles, shotguns, and grenade launchers. We moved into a position where we could support the rest of the platoon. We were all within 5 or 10 yards of each other, but because of the heavy underbrush, once we were in the prone position, we could only tell the other persons position by their voice, or screams, and by the sounds of the M-16.

I moved forward and to the right of Sgt Jesse Spencer. Pfc. Walter Wetzel, 2nd squad, was laying down behind a small tree about 12 inches in diameter. I moved forward until my helmet was almost touching his crotch. Sgt Spencer was right next to him with his right arm draped over Wetzel's left leg. All three of us were trying to get behind the same small tree. It was obvious by now that we were pinned down under heavy machine gun fire, with lighter automatic weapons and riflemen in support.

Pace Caldwell was a few feet to my left. I could see blood coming from his shoulder. Bob White moved to the right, in line with the rest of us. Dick Snyder moved to my left along with Kit Frazier and Junior Bonner. I lost sight of them after a few seconds. On my right was "Freeman," one of the machine gunners. He was shot thru the hand and the machine gun was damaged. He was saying something to me that I couldn't hear when another bullet hit his thigh. I thought it was an incendiary round because I could see smoke coming from his wound as he moaned in pain. Within seconds, Freeman was hit again. I looked at Bob White and saw his head jerk and hit the ground. I thought he was dead. Then he lifted his head and adjusted his helmet. Bob White was hit twice more in the helmet before it was over.

As Jesse Spencer, Walter Wetzel, and I, lay behind this small tree, I briefly looked up and saw bullets coming thru the tree, tearing it apart. A bullet came across Wetzel's butt. He started to get up from the intense pain of the wound on his butt. Spencer and I grabbed him and yelled at him to stay down. Thinking they had us zeroed in, Spencer and I crawled to the left of Wetzel looking for another, much bigger tree. I don't know where Sgt Spencer went, but I never found that bigger tree. There just didn't seem to be any trees big enough out there that morning.



Things stayed that way for what seemed like hours. Them firing at us . . . Us firing at them. It was clear the 3rd platoon was at a serious disadvantage. It became an issue of just hanging on until help could arrive. Some of us were out of ammo. Some of us had one or two rounds left. I had three shotgun shells left. Some of the guys picked up AK's from dead PAVN's because they had run out of 5.56 ammunition. Both machine guns were out of commission. And just when we thought things couldn't get any worse someone yelled out, "They're standing up. They're getting ready to charge!" I remember thinking about having a shotgun and not having a bayonet mount, and how I had left my .45 back at my position before we moved out to sweep the area. (Richard Hunter, 3:A/1/35)

Lt. Kelsey, 2nd Plt, was ordered to bring the major part of his platoon to the 3rd Plt's sector. At this time Conner's location was not known precisely, so Kelsey was told to move east in an attempt to find him. Almost immediately Kelsey and his men engaged in a firefight with about 50 NVA who were advancing toward Bravo Co.'s position. At that moment, Lt. Light crawled to the Company Commander and told him that Lt. Conner and about 15 men were pinned down by a large enemy force. Lt. Light also had been pinned down and wounded in the head, but by crawling for about 100 meters had managed to get back to the perimeter.

Lt. Kelsey was ordered to break off engagement and move north to assist Lt. Conner. Guided by Lt. Light, Lt. Kelsey's platoon quickly overwhelmed the enemy force - killing about 20 in the process. Lt. Conner's group had been hit hard with seven men being killed initially and eight to ten others pinned down by a heavy machine gun only 20 feet away. (Capt Bisantz, A/1/35)

Then, like something out of some Hollywood movie, I saw a soldier named Wolfgang Wagner, coming towards me in a crouch. It told me 2nd Platoon had reached us. They swept in from our right and took out the machine gun and provided cover while helping us withdraw with our wounded. The battle raged on after 3rd platoon was brought back inside the perimeter. (Richard Hunter, 3:1/A/35)

Lt. Kelsey's men covered the evacuation of the dead and wounded and captured enemy material (which included a CHICO AM radio, one heavy barrel machine gun on wheels, two light machine guns and numerous AK47 Assault guns. No time was taken to search the enemy dead as the situation in Bravo Co.'s sector was rapidly deteriorating, and it was imperative to re-establish the perimeter. The enemy's main assault began just about the time Lt. Kelsey got to the perimeter. His men stopped where they were, roughly at a right angle to the perimeter and started firing at the flank of the attacking enemy. They maintained this position the rest of the day, delivering flanking, enfilade fire against the NVA. As the enemy took cover from Bravo Co.'s fire by crouching behind anthills and trees, Kelsey's men kept picking them off from their open flank. (Capt. Bisantz, A/1/35)

As the two companies resumed their positions, the NVA closed rapidly behind them and renewed their efforts against the perimeter. Over the next four hours. the NVA effort slowly expanded to the flanks so as to involve more and more of the TF. Even so, the NVA force never attempted to involve the entire perimeter at any one time. With the advantage of interior lines, even though harassed by random sniper fire, the uncommitted portion of the defense still served as a ready source for reinforcements and limited ammunition resupply for the more engaged positions within the circle.

The attackers came in uncoordinated bunches - not in the human waves of the Chinese in the Korean War - but in groups of 10 to 15 up to mobs of 75 to a 100. They would charge - yelling, throwing grenades and shooting - and move straight against the perimeter without any effort to take advantage of the ground and cover. Many of the enemy were cut down by the concentrated fires of the defenders, the mortars and artillery. Others were stopped by the door gunners of helicopters that were attempting to resupply the position and the gunships that roared in every time there was a break in the artillery support.

The assault on the southeast aide of the perimeter, in Bravo Co.'s sector had not been affected by the engagements of Lt.'s Conner and Kelsey, and the enemy rapidly closed to within hand grenade range. The mortars, which were located in the open about 35 meters behind the perimeter were out of action almost immediately as the fire of the NVA cut down the crews anytime they manned their guns. Unable to man their tubes, the mortarmen became riflemen, some crawling forward on their stomachs to reinforce the line, others firing from their own positions. (Capt. Bisantz, A/1/35)

29 May 0830 HOURS

Sixty percent of the perimeter became actively engaged in the defense, and because of constant heavy contact along the line, and the danger of ground-to-air fire, the resupply ships were diverted to 11 ALFA pending a break in the action. After an hour of continuous effort, the NVA broke off and retired into the forest. As was the previous experience, there would be breaks in the fighting that might last from ten to up to thirty minutes. To take advantage of any opportunity the lulls might present, the resupply ships and Medevac's were placed in orbit nearby, and at 0945, with the first break in the action, three ships flying at tree top level and "hellbent for breakfast" came into the LZ. They off-loaded 107mm and 88mm mortar ammunition, along with small arms and rounds for the M-79 Grenade Launchers. Alerted that the ships were inbound, wounded were moved from the collection points closer to the touch down areas. TF wounded filled those ships to capacity.

A second effort was made to resupply at 1015, but the aircraft were driven off by heavy ground to air fire. Rather than abandon the mission completely, the helicopters made one more pass and the door

gunners "kicked out" their loads at 20 feet and about 110 knots. That became the final resupply for the morning. No more aircraft were able to land at 10 ALFA until late in the afternoon.

By 1000hrs, the enemy had launched four full scale attacks against the perimeter, each time getting to within hand grenade range before being repulsed. As happened the previous night, each attack was preceded by loud shouting and screaming. At one time the NVA set up an 82mm mortar in direct view of Alfa Co's CP group, who were actually on the perimeter. Two men were assigned responsibility for the weapon and spent the next two hours killing each NVA who attempted to go near the mortar.

By this time friendly casualties had begun to mount, and small arms ammunition was running low. The north and west side of the perimeter, already low in numbers, sent all but a bare minimum of their ammunition across the LZ to Alfa Co. headquarters from where it was distributed down the line. An extra machine gun from Alfa's 1st Platoon was also brought across to strengthen the defense.

A resupply helicopter had been standing by awaiting a lull in the fighting which never came, until finally, when informed that the situation was critical, the pilot volunteered to go in with the resupply. Accompanied by two gunships to give suppressive fire, the resupply was made and a few of the more seriously wounded were evacuated. However, the resupply was expensive. One of the gunships was hit by ground fire and had to circle back and crash land in the LZ. The crew escaped the burning helicopter seconds before it blew up. While all this was going on, the enemy launched another assault. This too was beaten back as the fresh ammunition supply helped to increase the friendly rate of fire. (Capt. Bisantz, A/1/35)



Fighting would become so intense the mortar platoons would have to grab M-16's, and fire into the woods, defending their own positions. I believe 6 helicopters were shot down by enemy ground fire. I remember, as we were defending the LZ and laying down fire, looking back over my shoulder to see one of the door gunners jump from about 20 feet up because his chopper had been hit and was in full flames. That particular chopper was carrying a supply of ammunition and exploded like a fireworks display. It wasn't a very big LZ and seeing those choppers scattered in the LZ made it look even smaller. Cloud cover gave way and A1E's were finally able to give us air support. I saw an F105 flying up and down the base of the mountain strafing the NVA positions. (Richard Hunter)

Late in the morning, an NVA unit numbering around forty broke from the tree line directly in front of Bravo's 2nd Plt. That unit was positioned across the open southeastern end of the LZ and was back from the tree line some twenty-five or thirty meters. It appeared that the NVA expected to close with Bravo at the tree line, and failing to meet the expected resistance, their momentum carried them out into the open. They were immediately taken under fire and finding themselves exposed, became confused and began milling around. A mortar round fired by Bravo's 81mm's landed at their leading edge, and the front ranks of the NVA turned and ran back into the others. Some of them made it back into the woods, others broke left or right. Those that ran to their right moved parallel to the line, and then for some distance, stayed within easy visual range of the men in position. The majority of this group became casualties in short order. Of the ones that moved to their left, two automatic weapons teams were able to establish themselves in the trees about 100 meters out. Their fire downed at least one helicopter before they were eliminated. That Huey lost most of its hydraulic fluid but made it into the LZ without further damage and without injury to the crew. As were their predecessors, they were added to the troops on the line.

29 May 1200 HOURS

Just after noon, a Forward Air Controller (FAC) checked into the net and asked if we could use two A1E Skyraider's that were out looking for "targets of opportunity". He indicated the fixed wing aircraft were carrying rockets and napalm. Lt Brothers had the artillery shut down, and the machineguns that had been set up back in the trees to our southeast were designated as the target. Men at opposite ends of the LZ threw smoke grenades to indicate a line of flight, and a compass heading of 140 degrees from the center of the LZ with an estimated distance to where the guns were located were passed to the FAC. The planes made two rocket runs and received return fire each time. The FAC called for the napalm, and as the first A1E made its pass, the aluminum tanks hit well beyond the target. The trail aircraft became disoriented, made a 90-degree error in its flight path, and came in over the LZ on a north to south run. The TF CP group was alerted to the impending danger when one of the nearby troops cried out, "God Almighty, look out!"

The A-1E, at tree top height, released its tanks as it passed over the far side of the perimeter. The tanks impacted directly on the TF CP. The right tank hit exactly five feet in front of the position, and the blast, metal and flame went over and spread out beyond it. The left tank fell about ten meters farther in and hit a large tree, with its napalm passing over most of the men on the ground beneath it and on into the trees. Of the eleven men around the CP, nine were injured. Lieutenant Brothers received third degree burns on his back, and 1st Sergeant Harry Miller, Bravo, who at the moment of impact, was working with a soldier who had just been wounded, had only enough reaction time to raise his hands to cover his face. In spite of receiving severe burns on his hands and face, his eyes were not injured, and within several weeks, he returned to duty with the company.

None of the wounds from the fire or exploding tanks were fatal, but because of them, six men were eventually evacuated from country. The two who were not burned had avoided injury, one by dashing out into the open so that the tanks passed over and hit behind him, and the other, by diving into a water-filled foxhole. The PRC-25 that had been serving as the TF net control station was destroyed, and the Artillery radio was pressed into immediate service to notify the FAC of the error and to call off any subsequent runs.

29 May 1300 HOURS

A Bravo company medic came to the CP area and told Capt Maisano that Pfc Donald Evans was dead. The soldier, with the Company 81mm mortars, had been hit in the legs - a bullet passing through one and almost removing the kneecap from the other. Instead of allowing himself to be removed to the relative safety of the company collection point, he chose to stay with the mortars and keep his tubes in action. When an assistant gunner was killed, he reorganized the gun crew and talked the loader and ammunition bearers through the laying and firing procedures. Pfc Evans stayed with the guns until, after receiving at least one more wound, he died from loss of blood and shock.

29 May 1400 HOURS - REINFORCEMENT

Bn Fwd passed the word from Gen Walker that LTC Kingston and the relief force had completed marshaling and would be arriving at the LZ around 1500. At the time the information reached the TF, the NVA effort was once again increasing, and as had been the case throughout the attack, was concentrating against the 3rd Platoons of Alfa and Bravo.

The danger of ground to air fire against the incoming flights was acute, and suppression of that fire was critical to the success of the relief. Bn Fwd was requested to report when the first in bound lift was five minutes out. At that time, the majority of the troops on the ground would be moved from the portion of the line least committed to the area of heaviest contact. Maximum suppressive fires would be laid down

in order to prevent the enemy from directing his fire against the ships as they were on short final and landing. It was requested that once the soldiers exited the aircraft, they move to the northern portion of the perimeter and take up positions there, because by that time the defenders would be down to their last rounds of ammunition. Once the TF was committed to the suppressive course of action, the first two lifts had to come in, regardless of fire, in order to keep the TF situation from becoming disastrous.

Ammunition was redistributed and wounded were replaced by filling in with men from the opposite side of the perimeter as much as practical. The two Company Commanders were briefed, and when the first lift was four minutes out, men were moved across the perimeter and joined the platoons in contact. The troop lifts, escorted by gunships providing covering fire from their rocket pods and offside door gunners, came in under fire, but without loss. LTC Robert Kingston and Major Fred Delisle, Battalion S-3, Opns Officer, arrived with the second lift, and the command of the TF was turned over at that time.

As the battle progressed, more choppers arrived carrying reinforcements, which included the 1st/35th Battalion Recon Platoon and Company "C", of the 1st/35th, plus more artillery and supplies. It was now about 3 or 4 p.m. on the 29th of May 1966. All but intermittent sniper fire had stopped. The LZ had 3 rifle companies, plus a reinforced Recon Platoon: however, "A" Company 1st/35th and "B" Company 2nd/35th, together, didn't quite make up a full rifle company.

29 May 1600 HOURS



Helicopters of the 52nd Aviation Bn land at LZ 10A

The build-up continued rapidly with little enemy opposition until about 1400hrs. when the LZ was hit with a mortar attack. Four helicopters were unloading at the time and immediately took off. One of the helicopters flew directly over one of the exploding mortar rounds and settled directly back into the LZ. The other three escaped. Before the last enemy round had detonated, the mortars in the LZ began firing counter battery fire. A radio telephone operator on the east side of the perimeter had heard the enemy mortar fire and quickly adjusted Alfa Co.'s mortars into the area. Following this incident, the remaining resupply was done on the fly with individual aircraft touching down for only a few seconds at a time.

At 1300hrs. Bravo Co, 1st Bn, 35th Infantry commanded by Captain Timothy J Crotty had been lifted into LZ 10B, about 2.5 kilometers northwest of LZ 10A. Their landing was unopposed, and the company patrolled southeast, joining the battalion in LZ 10A at about 1600hrs. As they moved into their sector of the perimeter, the enemy launched his last and most damaging mortar attack. This attack of approximately 18 to 20 rounds was not directed against the LZ, but against the perimeter, which, due to the increased forces in the LZ, was now located about 50 meters into the wood line from the edge of the LZ. The mortars impacted directly on the battered 3rd Platoon of Alfa Co causing some 15 casualties, six of which were serious enough to warrant immediate evacuation. (Capt Bisantz, A/1/35)

When darkness fell, the sounds of the battle across the LZ died down except for the occasional staccato bark of an enemy AK-47 or the heavier ripping sound of a friendly M-60 machine gun's reply. We heard voices calling out, but at that distance we couldn't tell what was being yelled or who was doing the

yelling. The entire night was a series of ghostly shadows cast by overhead flares and bursts of automatic weapons fire where NVA troops were probing the perimeter.

SUMMARY

Casualties for the Task Force amounted to sixteen killed and eighty-eight wounded, almost thirty-nine percent of its total strength. For the 66th NVA Regiment, 241 bodies were found in the forest around the original perimeter, and information was received that on 2 Jun, an NVA unit had passed through a Montagnard border village with walking wounded and carrying over 100 litter cases. The most glaring tactical errors made by the PAVN Commander was that he committed his forces piece-meal and did not wait until his returning units were of sufficient numbers to concentrate and break the defensive perimeter. Further, by not involving the full defensive circle, he did not challenge the movement of men and ammunition within the position used to shore up threatened portions of the line. Headquarters, IFFV did not show the 66th NVA on the list of enemy units "in country" again until after the first of 1967.





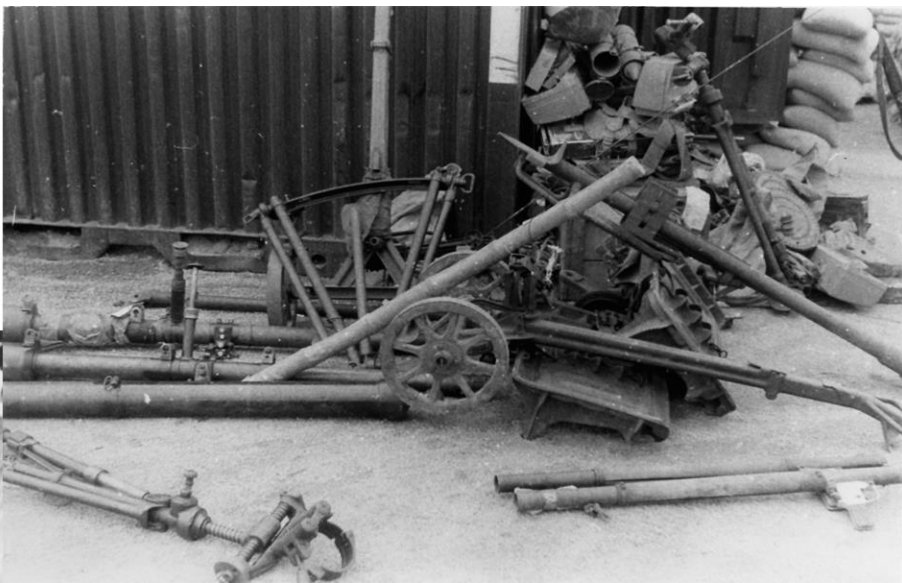
**DROPPING A 105MM
HOWITZER INTO THE LZ**

LOADING A UH-1D



ON PATROL

CAPTURED WEAPONS



**LT GEN HEINTGES, DEP CMDR
MACV, AND BRIG GEN WALKER,
CMDR 3D BDE TF, LOOK OVER
WEAPONS CAPTURED DURING
OP PAUL REVERE**



**GEN WESTMORELAND
CONGRATULATES MEN
OF B CO, 2/35TH**



PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION
COMPANY A, 1ST BN, 35TH INFANTRY



HEADQUARTERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Washington, D.C., 27 September 1968

General Orders No. 51

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (ARMY)

Award of the Presidential Unit Citation (Army) by the President of the United States of America to the following unit of the Armed Forces of the United States is confirmed in accordance with paragraph 194, AR 672-5-1. The text of the citation, signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson on 22 August 1968, reads as follows:

By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States I have today awarded the Presidential Unit Citation (Army) for extraordinary heroism to COMPANY A, 1ST BATTALION, 35TH INFANTRY, UNITED STATES ARMY for distinguishing itself by outstanding performance of duty and exceptional valor in action against a numerically superior and heavily armed North Vietnamese Army force in Pleiku Province, Republic of Vietnam, on 28-29 May, 1966. During the afternoon of 28 May 1966, Company A was directed to move to the assistance of Company B, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry, which was heavily engaged by a determined and well-equipped enemy. Moving by helicopter lift, Company A arrived in the battle area by 1700 hours and joined the beleaguered unit. During the next 20 hours the enemy attacked in multi-battalion strength with uncommon determination and intensity of effort. Outnumbered and surrounded, Company A fought valiantly, shoulder to shoulder, with Company B as successive waves of the foe sought to overrun their position. With great professional skill, the officers and men of Company A repelled each enemy onslaught. Gallant acts by all men and inspired leadership were the order of the day. When the roar of battle subsided, the enemy had withdrawn to reorganize his battered units, leaving 241 of his troops dead and numerous weapons as mute evidence of the intensity of the engagement and the valiant efforts of the defenders. Through their heroic stand, another illustrious page was written in United States military annals, honoring forever the men of Company A, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry and providing a strong source of inspiration for all personnel within the United States Army.



By Order of the Secretary of the
Army:

W. C. WESTMORELAND,
General, United States Army, Chief
of Staff



Official:
KENNETH G. WICKHAM,
Major General, United States Army, The
Adjutant General



PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION
COMPANY B, 2D BN, 35TH INFANTRY



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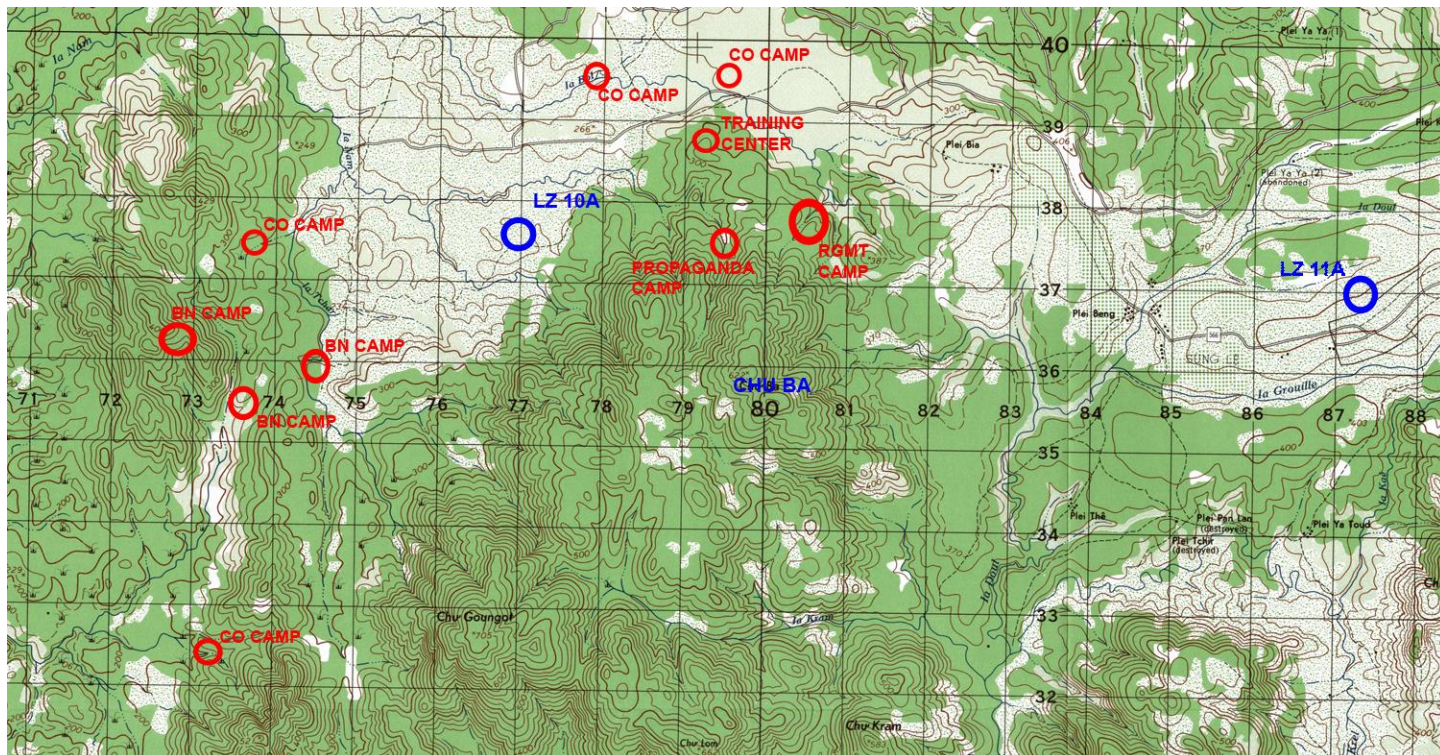


By Order of the Secretary of the
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Over the next several days, the companies of the 1/35th conducted patrols in the vicinity of 10 Alfa. The 2/35th continued to search the area around LZ 11 Alfa. Contacts were generally limited to small groups of NVA who then attempted to elude their pursuers. In the search for the now fleeing foe, numerous company and battalion sized base camps were discovered, showing just how extensive had been the positions held by the 66th NVA Regiment. In AO 10 alone, the 66th had lost 278 men KIA, five 12.7mm anti-aircraft weapons, thirty-six machine guns, forty-six rifles, four radios, one hundred and thirty hand grenades, and various other equipment.



By the 8th of June, this phase of the operation was closed down and 1/35 units began withdrawing to Oasis and from there, conducting patrols to the north.

19 June – A Medal of Honor

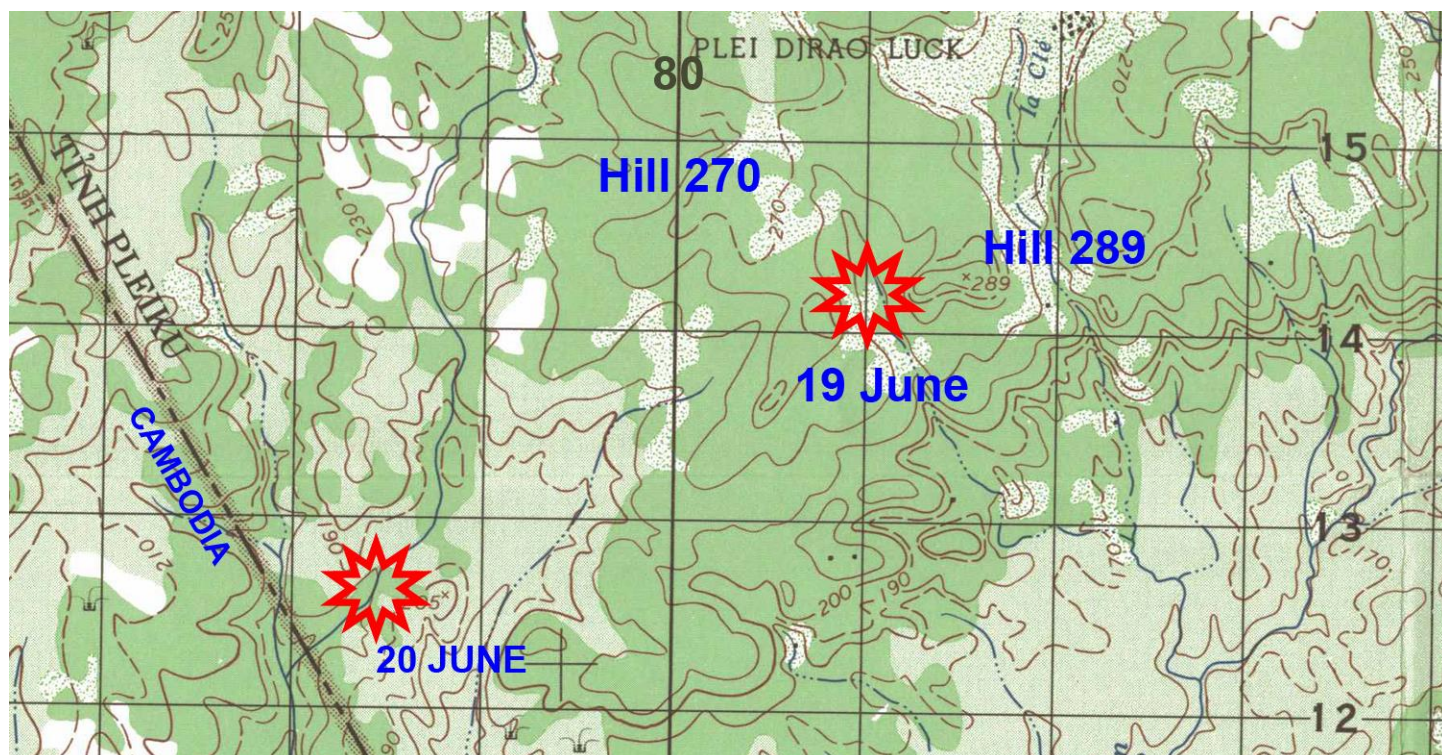
The 2d Battalion 35th Infantry's involvement with Operation Paul Revere I was attempting to interdict NVA entering Vietnam from Cambodia. To adequately cover this large AO, A Company's commander decided to split his company into two parts leaving Lt. Ron Ray with his platoon, plus a mortar squad, to cover the northern portion of their AO.

Lt. Ray was thus faced with a dilemma that plagued platoon leaders in Vietnam; how to protect his men in such an AO with a unit too large to hide in such an area but too small to defend itself against a large force.

His solution was two-fold. Reconnoitering the AO, Lt. Ray determined three likely enemy avenues of approach and set-up LPs to monitor them. He also located a knoll, steep with clear terrain on three sides, and used that as a base of operations. From this Base a patrol walked the AO each morning and checked the various LPs'. Lt. Ray normally accompanied this patrol.

A few days prior to June 19, such a patrol discovered a fresh-cut trail near Hill 270, which was one of the areas earlier highlighted as being a likely avenue of approach for the NVA. Hill 270 was at approximately YA 805147 and within three kilometers of Cambodia. The trail was followed and a small

NVA patrol was surprised, resulting in one enemy killed and another captured. Both NVA had fresh haircuts, were well fed, and well-armed. Coupled with earlier indications of enemy activity, Lt. Ray came to the conclusion that a large NVA movement could be anticipated in the area around Hill 270. The prisoner was sent to the rear and the CO was informed of the lieutenant's suspicions.



On the morning of June 19, a patrol was instructed to recon near the Cambodian border and then to link-up with the most northern LP. That LP was established near a stream that crossed a main trail near Hill 270. The link-up was successfully made resulting in approximately ten men at the site. Around early afternoon the LP detected movement in the area. Lt. Ray reported this development to the CO and instructed the LP to be prepared to pull back to base.



Almost immediately the LP came under intense small arms fire. Lt. Ray instructed the LP to blow all claymores, disengage, move back toward the base, and he would head in their direction. Convinced that a major enemy unit was present, Lt. Ray updated the CO. and asked for additional manpower. He was told that there was no other unit close enough to reinforce in any reasonable time frame and also that consensus was this was a minor probe and not major enemy movement.

The LP then reported receiving withering fire from all sides with the RTO badly wounded. Lt. Ray instructed them to stay put and he would come to them. Due to the need to move fast, Lt. Ray decided to leave the Mortar squad at the base under SSG William H. Byrd Jr. Forming the remainder of his men under Squad leaders SSG David A. Bynum and Sgt. John C. Birdine Jr., Lt. Ray moved toward the embattled LP. This decision was driven both by the certain precariousness of the LP's situation and the fact that there were only a few hours of daylight left.

Due to the previous patrols, the area was fairly well known to Lt. Ray. He reasoned they could take the main trail directly to Hill 275, then west to the contact point; or take a straight-line approach which was shorter (about 2 Km) but would necessitate his men breaking bush the whole way and thus might actually take longer. Reasoning that the enemy would be expecting reinforcement along the main trail, Lt. Ray opted to go through the heavy terrain.

The men of this rescue team, realizing time was of the essence, sacrificed their bodies while rapidly breaking a human trail toward the beleaguered LP. Upon nearing the surrounded men, Lt. Ray led the way up the slope and told his men to use grenades and numerous small arms bursts in hopes of deceiving the NVA into thinking they were a large force. The ruse was successful as the enemy pulled back from the area of penetration and the rescue patrol was able to close with the LP. A quick assessment by Lt. Ray found the LP intact, with only the RTO hit with a severe head wound.

Shortly thereafter the NVA regrouped and directed heavy fire at the group from two different locations. Lt. Ray directed a squad to envelop and silence one of the enemy positions, but they were quickly pinned down near that position. Fearing their annihilation, Lt. Ray moved on the enemy position and silenced it using his shotgun and hand grenades. Aware of an opening up hill from which no fire was being received, Lt. Ray then instructed the Medic to prepare the RTO for evacuation and called for a Medevac. As the Medic plus two men moved toward the anticipated LZ, they became pinned down by heavy fire. Lt. Ray then realized the NVA were moving to surround his force but still thought they were unaware of the exact size of that force.

Another squad maneuver was attempted to rescue the Medic and RTO, but they too came under heavy fire and were unable to move. In an attempt to cover the withdrawal of the Medic and RTO, Lt. Ray moved past them, again using grenades and his shotgun to silence the NVA while killing several. An enemy grenade was then thrown into the Medic's and RTO's position. Lt. Ray shouted a warning to them, but not seeing a reaction he dove over them and shielded them from the blast—taking considerable shrapnel. Turning toward the enemy position from where the grenade had been launched, Lt. Ray was then hit in both legs by small arms fire but managed, with his last grenade, to also silence this enemy position.

His wounds had now paralyzed his lower body and the Medic managed to help Lt. Ray back to the perimeter. Aware of a lull in the fighting, Lt. Ray ordered SSG Bynum to prepare a withdrawal in the direction from where the rescue patrol had come; reasoning that the enemy may not have yet reinforced that sector. Lt. Ray offered to stay behind and cover the withdrawal if needed. At that point Sgt. Burdine stepped forward and volunteered to carry Lt. Ray, those two being the last to leave. The Americans met only minor resistance going back down the slope and eventually reached a suitable LZ about two clicks to the northeast; Sgt. Burdine carried Lt. Ray the entire journey.

Lt. Ray and the RTO, PFC Vincent Moeller, were both evacuated a short time later with Pfc. Moeller dying during the Medevac. Lt. Ray was initially operated on at Pleiku and later was sent back to Womack Army Hospital at Ft. Bragg for further treatment. (Dick Arnold, A/1/35)



Cpt. Ronald E Ray Medal of Honor Citation



Rank and organization: Captain (then 1st Lt.), U.S. Army, Company A, 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. Place and date: Ia Drang Valley, Republic of Vietnam, 19 June 1966. Entered service at: Atlanta, Ga. Born: 7 December 1941, Cordelle, Ga.

Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Capt. Ray distinguished himself while serving as a platoon leader with Company A. When 1 of his ambush patrols was attacked by an estimated reinforced Viet Cong company, Capt. Ray organized a reaction force and quickly moved through 2 kilometers of mountainous jungle terrain to the contact area. After breaking through the hostile lines to reach the beleaguered patrol, Capt. Ray began directing the reinforcement of the site. When an enemy position pinned down 3 of his men with a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire, he silenced the emplacement with a grenade and killed 4 Viet Cong with his rifle fire. As medics were moving a casualty toward a sheltered position, they began receiving intense hostile fire. While directing

suppressive fire on the enemy position, Capt. Ray moved close enough to silence the enemy with a grenade. A few moments later Capt. Ray saw an enemy grenade land, unnoticed, near 2 of his men. Without hesitation or regard for his safety he dove between the grenade and the men, thus shielding them from the explosion while receiving wounds in his exposed feet and legs. He immediately sustained additional wounds in his legs from an enemy machinegun, but nevertheless he silenced the emplacement with another grenade. Although suffering great pain from his wounds, Capt. Ray continued to direct his men, providing the outstanding courage and leadership they vitally needed, and prevented their annihilation by successfully leading them from their surrounded position. Only after assuring that his platoon was no longer in immediate danger did he allow himself to be evacuated for medical treatment. By his gallantry at the risk of his life in the highest traditions of the military service, Capt. Ray has reflected great credit on himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.

20 June

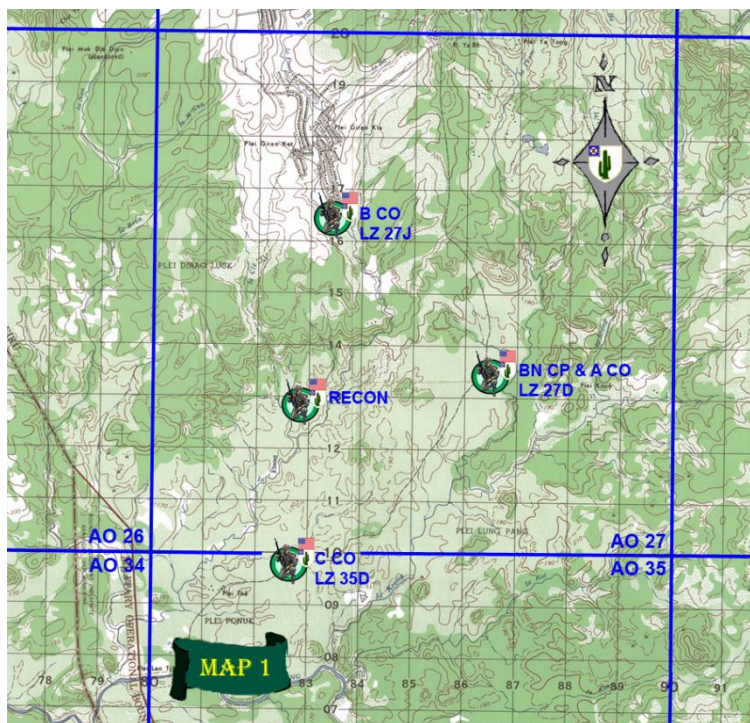
The following day, just south of the previous day's encounter. numerous NVA were seen moving. Extensive artillery and 4.2" mortars were employed in the morning hours. At 1500 hours, the Recon

Platoon pursued four individuals across an open area and became pinned down by automatic weapons and small arms fire. It appeared the Recon Platoon had been drawn into extensively prepared positions a mere 700 meters from the Cambodian border.

The balance of Co A, along with Co B and C Troop $\frac{3}{4}$ Cav, were called in to extricate the platoon. Estimates of the strength of the enemy during this fight were estimated from a reinforced company to a battalion. Company A suffered five KIAs before the battle concluded.

The 2/35th continued to see movement of small groups throughout the AO on the 21st. On the 22nd of June the 1/35th replaced the 2/35th in AO 27. The 2/35th returned to brigade base camp to act as IFFV reserve and to conduct local patrolling.

1st Bn, 35th Infantry Moves into AO 27



LTC Kingston's 1st Bn, 35th Infantry moved from Oasis into AO 27 in the afternoon of the 22nd with the battalion's command post (CP) and Company A located at well used LZ 27D (YA865133). Company B moved into LZ 27J (YA833166) and C Company into YA834078 and then north to LZ 35F (YA829027). Recon was located to the west at YA828128. The 4.2" mortar platoon and the $\frac{3}{4}$ th Cav were split between the battalion CP and Co C's location.

The disposition of troops thus covered most of the Area of Responsibility (AO), with Alpha at the Bn CP in the west, Bravo to the north, Charlie to the south and Recon to the west to observe the Cambodian border area. There was a road, such as it was, from north to south of the BN CP and then cutting diagonally from east to the Cambodian border. **(MAP 1)**

While this aided rapid movement of the units of the $\frac{3}{4}$ th Cav, it wasn't without its hazards. On the first day of patrolling, on the 23rd, four armored vehicles were hit with mines. One of their M48 tanks was destroyed with three of their men KIA.

Border Battle of 24 June: Narration of Mike Kellermeyer and Ed Hill

(Kellermeyer) The acting Platoon Leader, SFC Shishido, called a meeting of the squad leaders right away. Being part of the headquarters element of the platoon, I was invited to all such councils. Battalion had determined that we were not in the correct position. We needed to move a couple of kilometers further west to fill in the line of "cords". This was a little distressing to the squad members because they had spent so much time the evening before creating comfortable fighting positions in which they expected to languish for the next week or so. Also, our meager rations had diminished to the point that necessitated re-supply. Battalion promised to re-supply as soon as we had reached the new positions. We grumbled a little as we "saddled up" but it wasn't anything that we weren't already accustomed to so we checked each other's gear, assumed a march formation that would minimize ambush and moved out.

We moved out of the heavily wooded area into a region of rolling grassland strewn with large thickets. The grass was yellow from the blistering summer sun, but the base of the grass was green and sweet to chew on. We took a course that would allow us the most cover, moving from one island of thickets to another. About an hour into the move we took a short break to sip a little water from what was left in our canteens and have half a smoke. In the thicket I was in there was Sgt Warren Knepper and a few members of his squad. Sgt. Knepper was one of the fellows that I knew in recon. I knew him in Hawaii, before we came to Vietnam. He was a natural leader and well-liked by everyone who knew him. His squad members felt lucky to have him as a leader in combat.



Resupply chopper photo by Walt Shields

Re-Supply

Shortly after the break we were moving toward a substantially wooded area when Battalion advised us that the re-supply choppers were on the way. We replied that we had not attained our assigned positions yet but we were told to accept the re-supply enroute. We moved to the grove of trees and when we heard the sound of rotors, we contacted the pilots and advised them that we were popping a yellow smoke grenade. The pilots located the smoke and two UH1B Iroquois ("Huey") helicopters landed in short order, sending the

smoke in rapid spirals in every direction. It was remarkable that no matter where these choppers sat down, in desert or in a grassy field, they managed to hurl some kind of debris that stung our faces and arms as we approached.

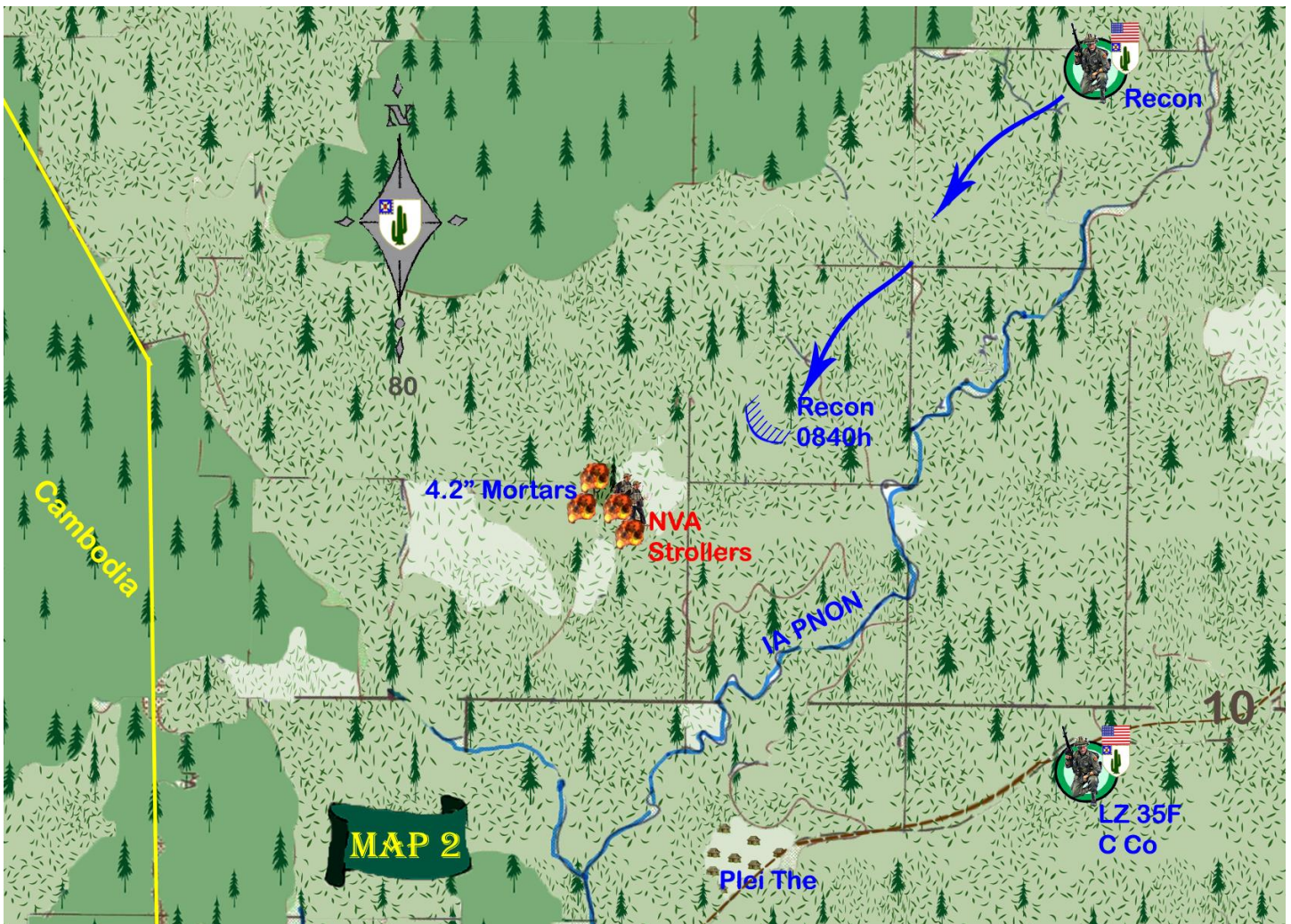
Quickly, we off loaded a lot of jerry cans of water and cases of c-rations off of the helicopters who lifted off as soon as the last ration was relinquished. I remarked to my RTO, the aforementioned Mr. Herb Daily that Battalion must be expecting this hunkered down observation of the border area to last some time judging by the number of rations that were delivered. There were so many, in fact, that we decided to set two guards on the rations while the rest of the platoon moved to the new positions where we would send back men to ferry the rations up to us.

I believe it was at this point that battalion informed us to detach a squad to ambush a suspicious trail to our northwest. A squad was picked, and they moved out, taking a jerry can of water and a case of c-rations with them. The rest of us moved off to the southwest to establish the new positions about 800 meters distant.

Two NVA Strollers

As we moved through the sparsely wooded grass, we came upon a huge field of grassland about 500 meters long and 200 meters wide. As we approached the sparse wood line at the edge of the field, the point man made a subtle signal and the entire platoon immediately went flat on its collective belly. I saw the acting Platoon Leader, SFC Shishido, crawling up to where the point man was and, after a few minutes, I crawled up there as well. SFC Shishido, kneeling by a bush at the edge of the field looked at me, pointed toward his own eyes and then in a direction across the field. I removed my binoculars from their case and focused them across the field in the direction he had pointed. There, on the other side, very near the wood line, there were two NVA soldiers walking, hand in hand. In Vietnam, two men walking and holding hands was merely a sign of friendship. The remarkable thing about the pair was that they were carrying no equipment whatsoever. They were not North Vietnamese troops on the move, they were bivouacked nearby! We reported their presence to Battalion who advised us to recon by fire.

Recon by Fire



0840H: I signaled Herb, my RTO, to join me and I got on the radio and called a fire mission in to the 4.2-inch mortar platoon. Beyond the two strolling NVA soldiers and to the right, was a heavily wooded knoll and I used it's coordinates to fire the first round. Amazingly, the round detonated in the center of the hill and I immediately corrected to "drop 100, left 100, fire for effect!" I was hoping that this would put a six-round salvo on or near the wood line where the two NVA were looking with alarm at the plume of smoke remaining from the first detonation. To my delight the rounds came in and walked right down the wood line, 5 meters in and about 50 meters apart. Textbook.

In the midst of the yellow-orange explosions trees were toppling and tree limbs were spiraling up into the air. There were also distant screams accompanying the deafening explosions and we could see brown uniformed people running among the trees. We were hitting a North Vietnamese unit, sure as hell. I called for another salvo on the same spot and then moved the next salvo to the left, hoping to cut off where it appeared the enemy was running. Then I moved the next salvo to the right of the first and then deeper into the wood line. I had an inkling that the NVA may have been using the far side of the little hill for a headquarters location, so I sent yet another two salvos of three rounds each thundering into the far side of the hill.

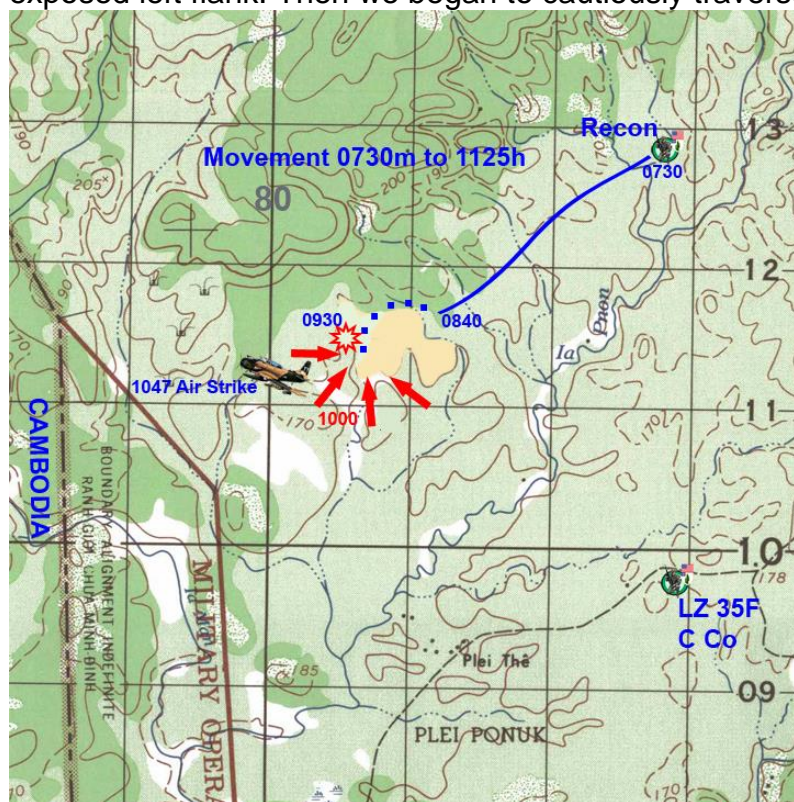
I was still firing barrages and the enemy was still running and screaming when the Mortar Platoon advised me that they were running low on ammunition and would have to desist until resupplied unless there was an emergency.

We reported to Battalion that we had struck a large NVA contingent and that we were undiscovered. We were feeling pretty full of ourselves when Battalion called back and ordered us to physically recon the area that was hit by the shelling. Incredulous, we called back to advise Battalion that there were significant numbers of enemy troops in the area, trying to intimate that there were perhaps more enemy troops than our depleted platoon could handle, if push came to shove. Battalion was unimpressed by our subtle whining and once more ordered us to physically recon the area. Another day in the life of a grunt.

Skirting the Field

We assembled and began to move down the wood line to the end of the field. We would have to walk along the end of the field (inside the woods, of course) to get to the other side. We felt that the open field left our left flank unprotected so we placed a machine gunner, a recent Hungarian immigrant by the name of Valentine, at the corner of the field so he could shoot across the field and protect our exposed left flank. Then we began to cautiously traverse the woods at the end of the field. It was slow

going even though the woods were not that dense. We knew we were about to encounter the enemy and we were being very careful. (Kellermeyer)



0930H: (Hill) Staying inside the tree line, we found an NVA outpost. We got online and charged the outpost position. During the charge, I tripped over some commo wire that led to that outpost. My buddy, Sp/4 Dale Johnson thought I was hit. Sgt. Damien K. Kaaihue charged into the bunker and killed every man. Later in the day, Sgt Kaaihue was wounded in the left shoulder. (Damien's cousin, Kenneth Kaaihue, was KIA this day while serving with C Company, 1/35th who later were engaged by the NVA) "Plat" radioed our situation to our battalion commander, LTC Bob Kingston. His orders were to "check it out".

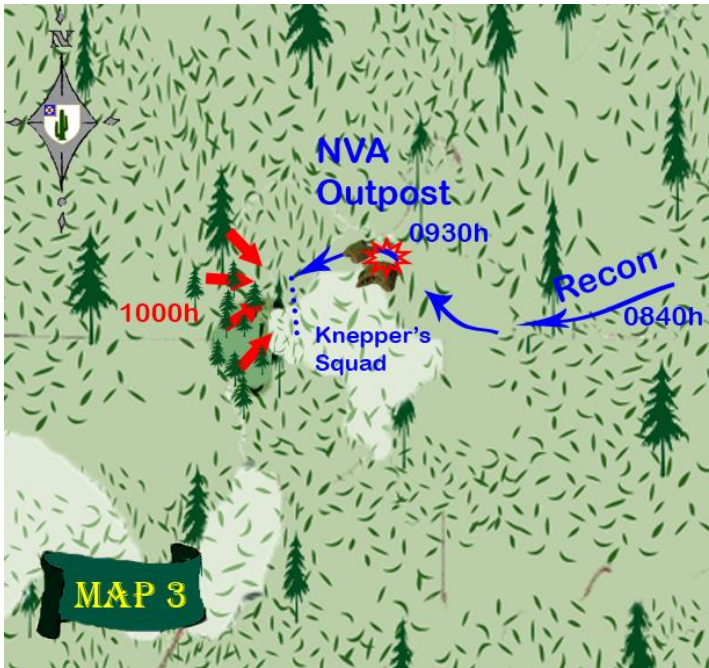
We were soon crossing a little stream. SSG Quillen told us to fill our canteens. He said as soon as we checked out this situation, they were going to pick us up and take us back to the oasis for a well-deserved rest. Some of us felt a little casual about filling up our little canteens and just took a big drink of water because we were getting picked up shortly. (Hill)

The Opposite Corner, the Fight Begins

(Kellermeyer) 1000H: When we reached the opposite corner of the field, we encountered a small clearing that ran nearly a hundred meters back into the woods. Turning this corner to the left would put us on the opposite side of the field from which we observed the 4.2-inch mortar fire. To go around this clearing would take time. It was decided that Sgt Knepper's squad would dash across the clearing while the rest of us were prepared to give covering fire if needed. We were not prepared enough.

Knepper's squad had reached the center of the small clearing when automatic weapons fire erupted from both the right and left side of the clearing. At first it was about four weapons using an interlacing

crossfire concentrated on Knepper's now totally exposed squad. They didn't have a chance. They were struck down as a group by the hail of bullets converging on them. (Kellermeyer) **(MAP 3)**



(Hill) We formed up and then started moving out online (probably five or six feet apart) toward the target area. Recon numbered about 25 to 30 men. I was located about in the center of the formation. I remember Clarence LaFrance was on my left. Allan J. Altieri, and my good buddy, Billy Green were on my right. We passed by some freshly dug NVA holes. When we had moved maybe 30-40 feet, one round went off. We all hit the ground. Someone told me later it was an NVA officer signaling to open fire on us. We had run into an NVA (battalion). They were well trained and organized. They fired low to the ground where we fell, causing many GI casualties within minutes. It seemed like the whole world had opened up with incoming machine gun rounds being fired at us and hand grenades being thrown at us. I had landed in a relatively open area and was lying flat on my face. I could hear the NVA talking.

Keeping my head down, I threw a grenade in the direction of the voices. Someone from behind me yelled that I had thrown it about 100 yards (adrenaline I guess) and overthrown them. He yelled to "throw it a little shorter this time, Hill". I managed to throw a shorter one that did some damage because we could hear the NVA shouting and screaming.

I yelled to Sp/4 Clarence LeFrance to my left and asked if he could cover me because I wanted to get out of this open area and get to his position. His position was behind a mound of dirt about 2-3 feet wide by a foot high, and a little tree. So LeFrance jumped up on one knee, shot off a burst of about five rounds before his magazine ran out, as I am scrambling toward him. My helmet fell off. I scrambled back, got the helmet, and scrambled over to his position. Machine gun fire was everywhere. LeFrance and I fought from that position for the rest of the day.

1047H: NVA would pop up. We would knock them down. To hold the NVA off us, during the course of the battle, Forward Air Control (FAC) brought in A1-Es, and jets (or as we called them Fast Movers) with bombs. (Hill)



(7th AF AAR 1966) Cpt Hoon was the first FAC to reach the embattled platoon, whose situation he describes as follows:

They had the enemy located to the west and to the south of them wrapped around this tree line. Now they started receiving small arms fire from across the clearing area and... they had our guys pretty well tied down... One Seven Alpha (the radio call sign for the platoon leader) popped a yellow smoke for me; so, it located him in the trees positively and I asked him to make sure that he gave me an idea how far his people were spread out. He said they were in the thin trees; they were spread out in a fifty to

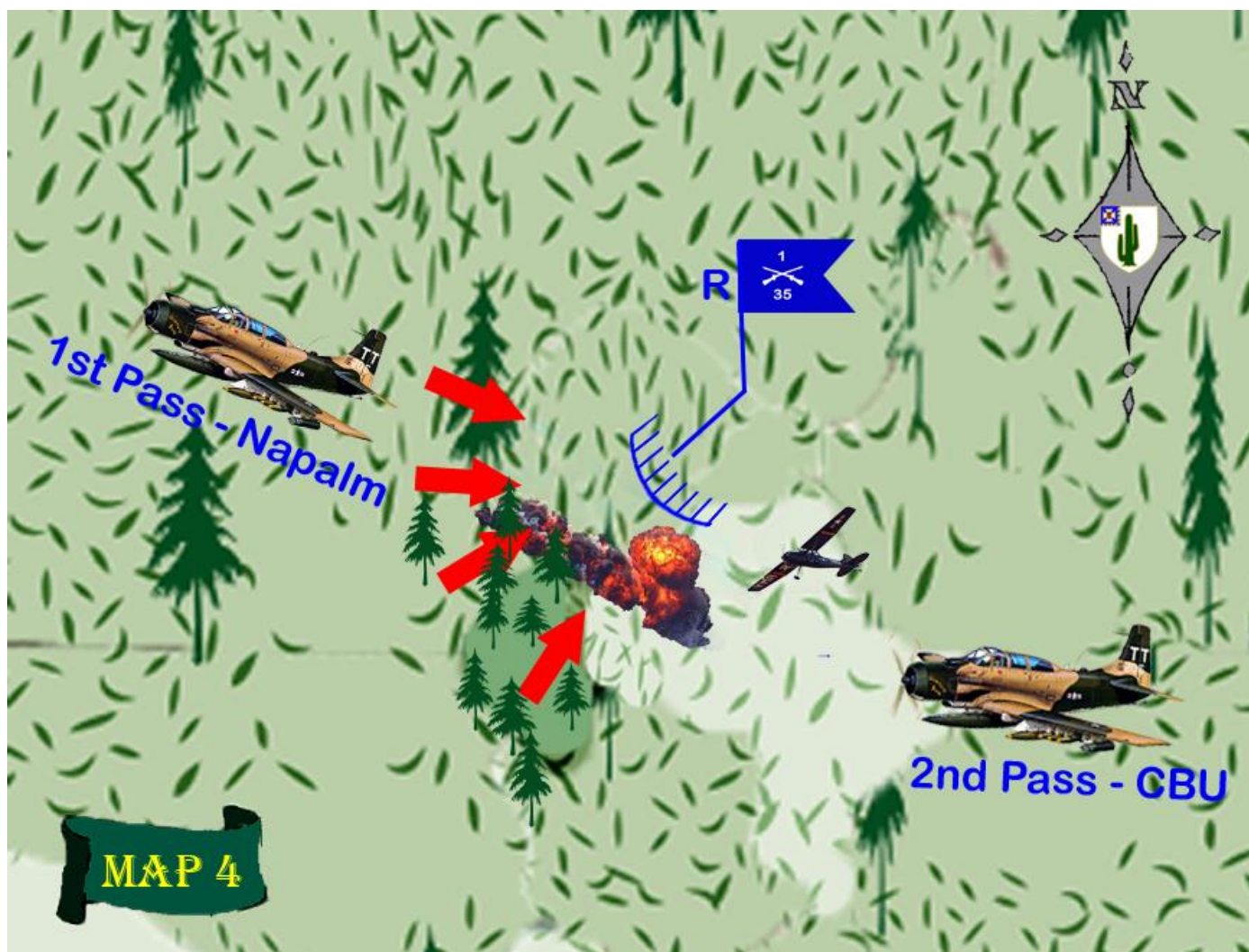
hundred-meter radius of where the smoke was. This put the enemy about a hundred fifty meters away from them at this time.

After I put the smoke rocket in for the A1-Es and they started making the passes, the first being napalm and the second aircraft coming in with CBU (Cluster Bomb Unit), the Charlies started coming out in the open; trying to close with our troops as rapidly as possible so we wouldn't deliver any more ordnance on top of them.

I told One Seven Alpha that I could see them coming out of the trees and they were closing with them, trying to rush them. I passed the word on to the fighter aircraft and they set up their miniguns underneath the wing.

(1125h) I told the fighters 'I got fifteen of them in the open' and lead says, 'I see them down there, right along underneath the edge of the smoke.' They took about two passes, one apiece, and we stopped all fifteen of them right there. Then they finished with the rest of the ordnance they had, spreading it around in those heavy trees.

Four more airstrikes were employed before the enemy finally broke contact. (7th AF) **(MAP 4)**



(Hill) Battalion brought in gunships, and artillery. The NVA tried to charge us a few times, but our return fire accuracy kept them in their positions. Sgt. Franklin Robinson, I found out later, was the only one to survive to the right of me. He alone was holding the flank and doing a real great job. Every time the NVA would try our right flank, Robinson would knock a few of them down and they would retreat.

There was an NVA machine gun shooting at us off to my left front. He was shooting too close for comfort, just inches from us. This kid from Chicago, Dave Preston I think, kept firing his chunker (M-79 Grenade Launcher) into that hole. It would be quiet for a while, then the next thing you knew there would be more gun fire from the same machine gun hole. We later found out that there was a trench leading to that gun and when a gunner was knocked out, they would send in another gunner and Preston would knock him out, too.

Doc had all or most of the wounded to my left behind a huge ant hill and he was firing away doing his part to keep the enemy from overrunning us. During another outburst of enemy fire, one of our machine gunners, SP/4 Aaron M. Hopkins, got stitched across his body and was killed. The assistant machine gunner, whose name escapes me, was a new guy. The new guy was hit and completely knocked onto his back. A little later, I saw that same assistant machine gunner back in the fight and firing his machine gun. Later, he told me that a round had hit him directly in the front of the helmet and knocked him backwards. It stunned him for a while, but he managed to get back under his machine gun and kept up steady fire and did a great job the rest of the day. (Hill)

(Kellermeyer) I had taken cover behind a giant anthill that measured some 3 to 4 feet high by 6 to 7 feet in length. On the left end of the anthill a tree, at least two feet in diameter was growing out of the anthill itself. I immediately dialed in the four-deuce (4.2-inch mortars) platoon and called a fire mission based on the data I had previously used on the far side of the big empty field. (It was the far side now that we were on the other side) I don't remember the sequence of events that occurred after that except that I ran the four deuces completely out of ammo then began spotting for an artillery battery.

Even as the salvos crashed into the far side of the little clearing, the NVA continued to reinforce until our entire front and to both the left and right were filled with chattering automatic weapons fire, including a number of dreaded .51 caliber machine guns. Those are the kind of guns that you can dig in against and they will dig you right back out.

1200H: SFC Shishido was on the horn (radio) with battalion who claimed that a column of infantry had been dispatched to relieve our beleaguered position. Forty-five minutes later the recon ambush element arrived at our rear, claiming to have fought their way through heavy sniper fire. Thus, we realized that the NVA were cutting off our only escape route to the rear. (Kellermeyer)

Alpha to the Rescue...Sort of..

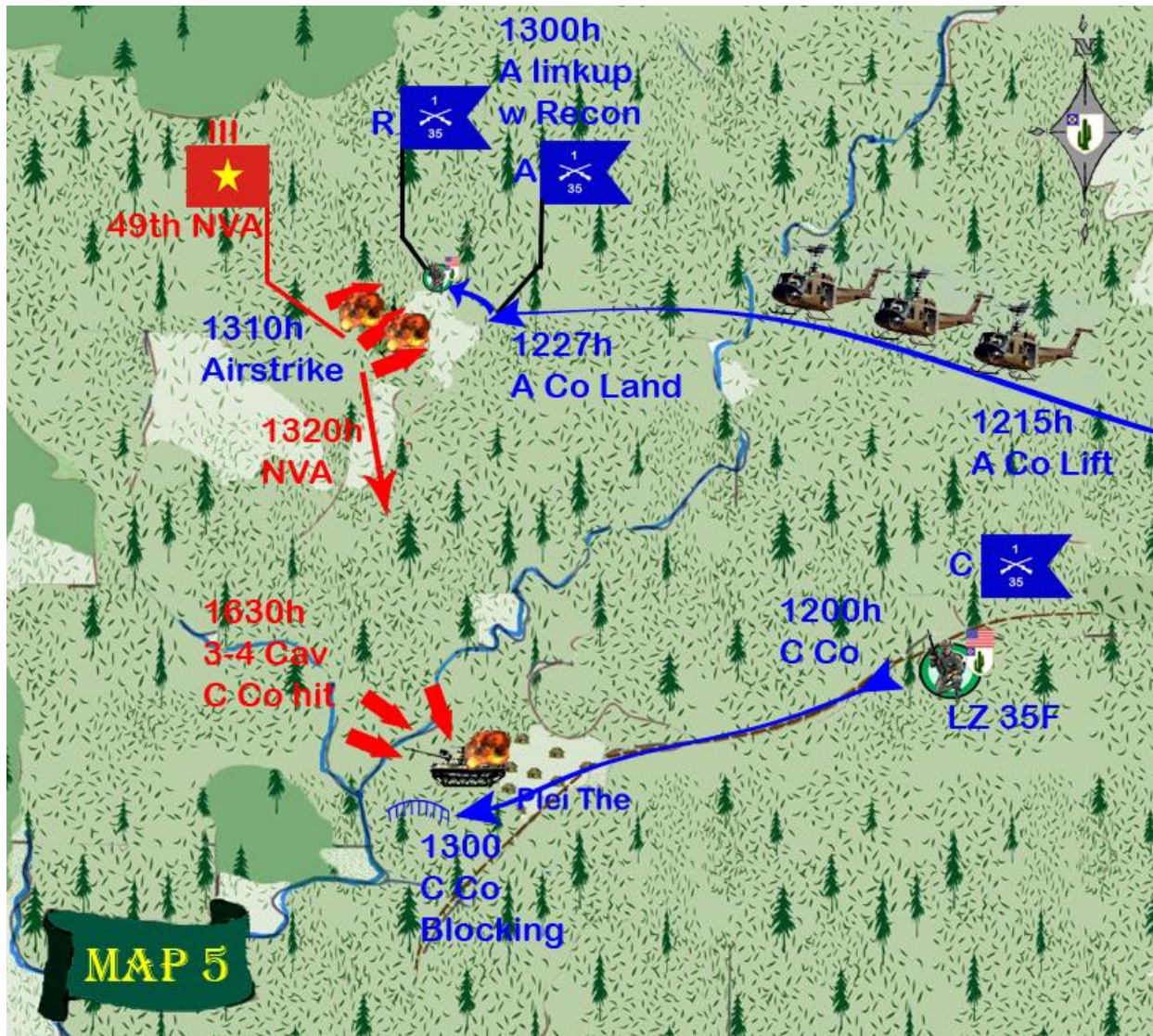
(Kellermeyer) 1227H: About this time, when things could get no worse without our total capitulation, or fighting to the last man, we were informed that elements of Alpha Company were on the ground near our location and would be joining the fight within minutes. The NVA tried to mount another attack from our left front but Carlos Lopez and the boys in his squad fought them off with excellent marksmanship.

1300H: Then the point man from Alpha Company arrived at our rear. As it happened, the fellow was a Hawaiian of oriental descent and his appearance caused a little apprehension, given the fact that we had already seen the NVA wearing our equipment. Soon the men of Alpha Company began filling into our sparse ranks, passing around canteens and cigarettes and, oh yeah, extra ammunition. From my position at the anthill I watched with great joy as new faces joined us. I noted that there were not enough men to constitute the entire company, but maybe Alpha was depleted as well.

What happened next was not only unexpected, but ghastly. The company commander, a captain who was carrying his M16 rifle by the handle, like a briefcase, walked right up beside the tree I had been peeking around for three hours and asked our little group for a situation report. Before we could answer, or warn him, he was hit several times by automatic weapons fire which knocked him down. Thankfully,

he was not killed but he was severely wounded and spent the rest of the battle on a stretcher behind us at the anthill.

1320H: It didn't take long before we were answering the NVA fire with a very invigorated response. The NVA countered our additional forces by adding more additional forces of their own. By this time there were at least three, and maybe four, .51 Caliber machine guns trained on our side of the little clearing. Alpha Company, by crawling in behind us, was now pinned down by the same fire we had been pinned down by for the last three hours. (Kellermeyer)



At this time, the FAC who had been circling overhead had air assets again available. This final airstrike effectively convinced the NVA to finally abandon the fight. The NVA began withdrawing to the south. A Co, along with the remnants of Recon, and the wounded from both were moved north to an LZ where the wounded could be extracted. They would log there for the night and go back in the morning for the ten known dead MIAs.

1430H: By this time, C Company had moved into blocking positions about two kilometers south of the battle. They were joined by a platoon from C Troop, 3-4 Cav. At 1630 hours, both units became heavily engaged with the fleeing NVA, who used small arms, automatic weapons, mortars and anti-tank rockets. One of C Troop's tanks was hit and destroyed by a B-40 rocket, the first time they had been

used against armor during Operation Paul Revere I. The Cav's tank was abandoned and later destroyed with friendly fire.

(Kellermeyer) 1642H: The forest was rapidly darkening as we made our way, without further incident, to the place where the helicopters had re-supplied us so much earlier in the day that it seemed like weeks ago. The two troopers we had left to guard the rations were frantic but glad to see us. They had listened to the sounds of the battle to their south all day and knew that recon was in a desperate fight. Coinciding with our arrival were several "medevac" choppers who whisked the wounded off to emergency hospitals to be treated within minutes. Alpha company put out a defensive perimeter and almost everyone in recon collapsed in exhaustion. Seven or eight hours is a long time to have your adrenalin pumping. (Kellermeyer)



As the day began to close, the units withdrew to await the next morning's action. The number of NVA KIA was unknown at this time, but the Americans had suffered twenty-three men wounded, four killed and another eleven missing, ten of whom were known to be dead. The one unknown was the disappearance of A Co's William Ellis. As Alpha Company moved from their landing zone to the vicinity of the recon platoon, William saw a wounded soldier and returned to the LZ to get help. William then disappeared. When friendly forces evacuated the area, William's was not to be seen. The man William was trying to help was removed with the group

during withdrawal. Searches were conducted for three or four days and into July with no trace of William. He was classified as Missing in Action. William was officially declared dead on 10/31/1977.

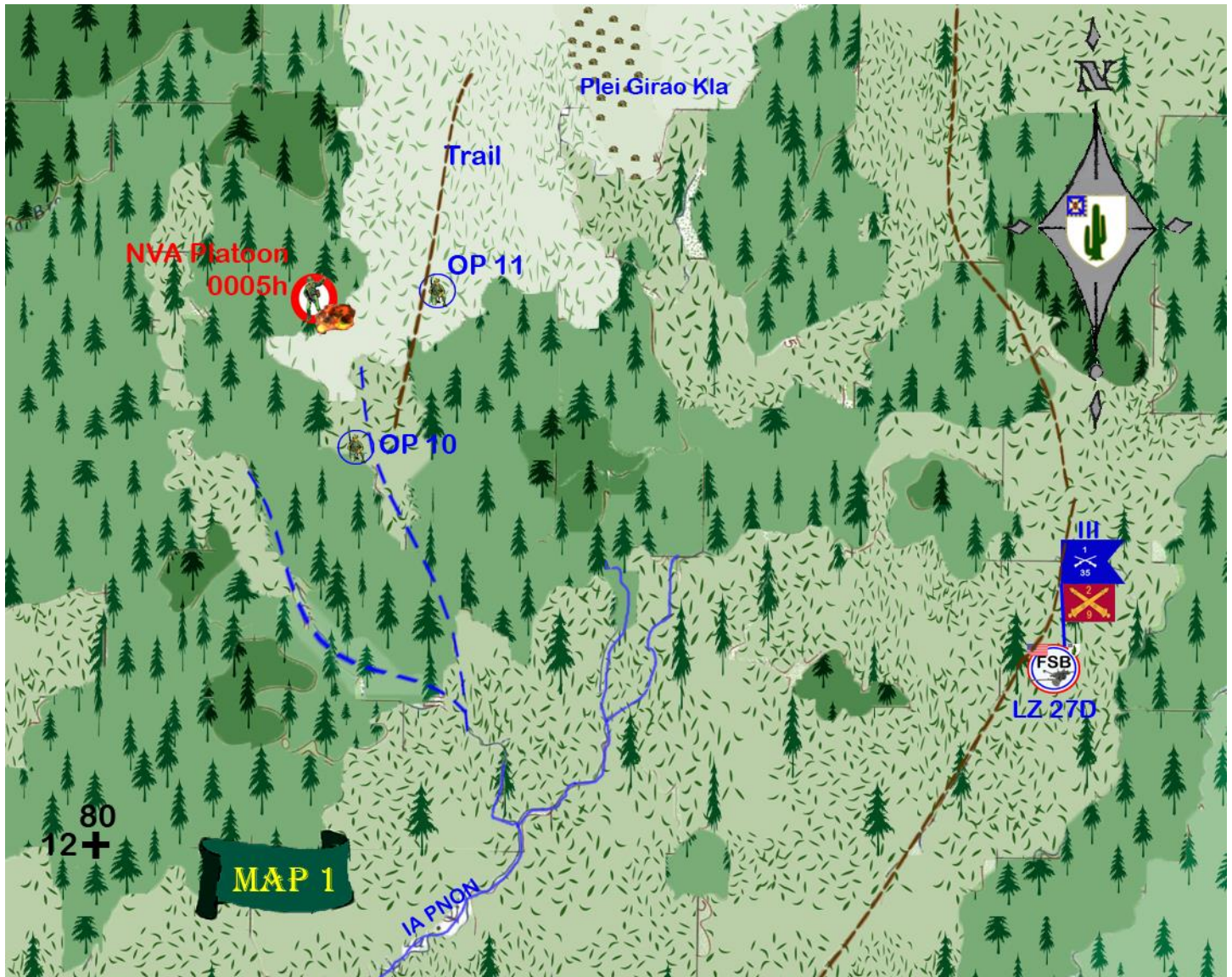
25 June: The next morning, a platoon from Co A and members of Recon returned to the site of the previous day's battle to retrieve their dead. There were a few sightings of straggling NVA, but the units were largely unopposed. All of the KIA were found and extracted. As the search of the area widened, more and more NVA KIA were found, as well as numerous weapons. By days end the enemy body count stood at 73, with an estimate of 100 killed and 150 wounded. A full helicopter load of weapons was extracted. The 1/35th had been in contact with a full battalion of the 49th NVA Regiment.

A Fight of Survival - 3 July 1966

The following description of the battle on 3 July is taken from accounts provided by Thomas Giorgi and Jim "Smitty" Smith, 3d Platoon, B Co and Jim Barrett, 1st Platoon (the relief force), B Co, 1/35. As well as details from the daily journals (DJ) 1/35th, 7th Air Force AARs, and 3d Bde TF Operations Report.

(DJ 2 July 2215H: B Co OP 10, YA816146, reported movement 100 meters to their front. Called in indirect fire with negative results.)

(DJ 2 July 2330H: B Co OP 11, YA 822157, reported a platoon size force passing in the vicinity of YA 822157. B Co moved reinforcements from N to S to set up blocking positions. At 0005H, 3 July, B Co brought artillery fire on an estimated platoon of NVA at YA813157. Failing to establish new contact with the enemy, B Co OPs were reestablished at 0210H, 3 July.) **(MAP 1)**



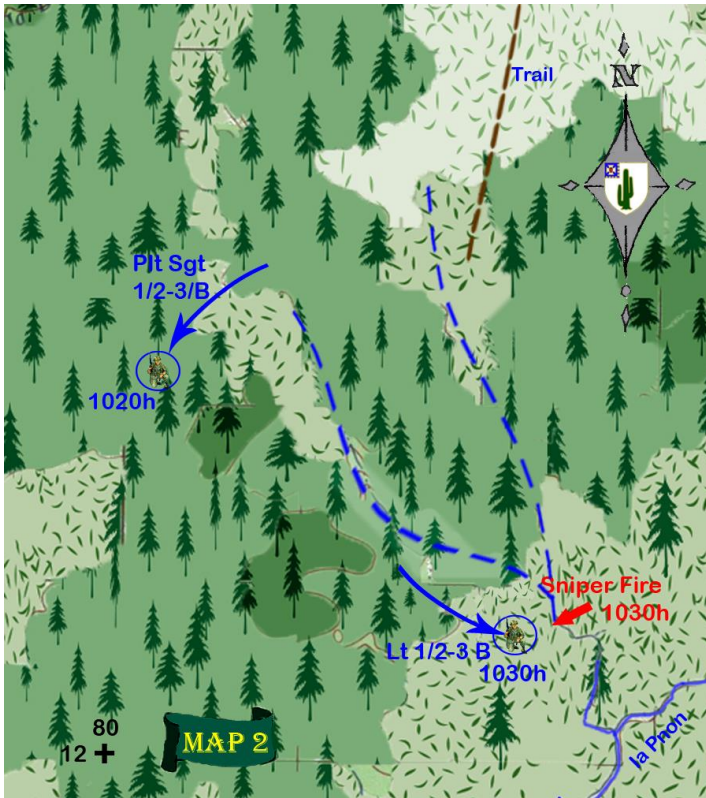
(Giorgi) We returned to our positions exhausted and after figuring out the remaining guard duty, dropped quickly off to sleep.

On the morning of 3 July 66 we were awakened at 6 A.M. by Lt. Sturdivandt informing us that we were continuing the search so eat something quick because we were moving out soon. The platoon was going to re-group at the point on the trail where the NVA were first spotted the night before.

When we all got there the Lt. split us up in to two groups of 22 each. He would take a group west toward Cambodia and the other group would search in another direction. Because he was going toward Cambodia, he thought it would be best if he had both M-60's with him.

(DJ 1020H: One half of the 3d platoon led by the Platoon Sergeant was located to the north at YA805145.)

As we came to the end of the tank trail we moved into a heavily wooded area where we found a trail that went west and then turned south. While walking on this trail we passed another trail that headed east. After a while the trail ended so we decided to go back and investigate the east bound trail. We were only on this trail when suddenly we had entered what appeared to be an enemy base camp. **(MAP 2)**



(DJ 1030H: Lt Sturdivant reported his half of the platoon had received sniper fire from the vicinity of YA826127. Details of the encounter would follow once the situation developed.)

We split up and searched the camp and we re-assembled and agreed that it was between Bn. and Co. size. We all also agreed that we did not like the feeling we were getting from this location. It was too quiet. We all felt that we had no business being here and that it would be a good idea if we left quickly. It was close to noon, so the consensus of opinion was to go somewhere, heat and eat some C-rats and continue the search after chow.

We formed a column and our 60 was bringing up the rear with the other 60 up at the front of the patrol. We hadn't gone but a few steps when the rounds started popping. Thinking we had found the ones we were looking for we figured we had them outnumbered and would soon have them right where we wanted them. Boy, were we wrong!

Charlie sent in a few to lure us out into the ambush that they had prepared for us. It wasn't long before they slammed the door shut and had us completely surrounded.

We didn't know this right away.

(DJ 1156H: Sturdivant's section of third platoon is receiving mortar fire and the unit has two WIA at YA 826127. Artillery is called in. The northern half of the platoon was notified to help, but they too had become surrounded.)

As we were at the rear of the column Sgt. Garcia hustled us up online with the rest of the squad who were assaulting to our front. I think we were up too far because they were able to flank us with ease.

"Smitty" and I were moving, dropping and firing the 60 every few seconds. Every time "Smitty" said that he had got one I kept encouraging him.

We settled behind a good size tree and I continued to feed the gun with ammo as "Smitty" kept the 60 humming. I looked to my left and I saw Sgt. Garcia lying face down next to a foxhole. I informed "Smitty" that I was going to see if I could help him. I grabbed my shotgun and ran to the foxhole and jumped in. I saw a few NVA and I shot at them while I was calling for the medic to come and assist the Sarge. I took out my Buck knife and cut open his jungle fatigue shirt and exposed what looked like a gunshot wound in his left upper back. I had no way of determining whether this was an exit or entrance wound so I took out my first aid pouch removed the bandage and placed it over the wound. He was too big to turn over to check for more wounds, plus I was shooting my shotgun at every movement I saw in front of our position.

I kept screaming for the medic who I figured was treating other wounded men from our patrol. When (medic) Brockington got to us I asked for his M-16 so that I could provide some cover fire while he worked on Sgt. Garcia. I switched to semi-auto to conserve rounds and began firing single shots across the front of our position to keep the NVA from firing at the medic and the Sarge.



After the 20th round I dropped back down into the foxhole to change magazines. They must have been counting, because the moment I stopped firing, an AW burst came in and killed both Brockington and Garcia.

At this instant I saw a figure moving to my left. I spun around and fired 2 rounds at him. I didn't know if I hit him, so I lobbed a grenade in his direction. I looked around but saw nothing. "Smitty" was calling for me to come join him and Colette so we could figure out what the hell was going on and what we could do about it. I fired off a magazine from the M16 and grabbed my shotgun and crawled back to where "Smitty" and Colette were.

We all knew we had been surrounded and were trying to figure something out when I saw an NVA crawling up on our position. I told

everyone not to move that I saw one. "Smitty" quickly said to shoot him. The one I saw from the foxhole must have eluded me because just as I prepared to shoot the NVA I heard a round go off and a split second later I was screaming in pain. My left lower back felt like it was hit by a train and my entire body burned like hell.

Lying in the prone position and being shot from my right rear, the round entered my right buttock and traveled diagonally through my pelvis missing my lower spine by less than an inch. I rolled onto my back and lost control of my arms and legs. I was thrashing and screaming that I had been hit.

"Smitty" grabbed me and rolled me back onto my stomach. He and Colette removed my web gear and loosened my belt so they could have better access to my wound. There was a gaping hole in my lower back that was an exit wound that was the size of a big lemon. "Smitty" cut off a hunk of his T-shirt and stuffed it into the hole. After a while I calmed down, and the first thing I did was wiggle my feet and toes. When they worked, I felt a little better. (Giorgi)

(Smitty) As the fighting progressed, it was now around mid-day. I finally settled close to Sgt Totten, part of the FO team who was attached to us. He had access to a radio and was literally calling in artillery on our own position. It was breaking tops of trees right beside us. I remember telling him to keep it coming in because that was the only thing that was going to keep the enemy away until help could arrive.

The monsoon rains had started sometime during the battle. We were all wet and I literally made mud out of the dirt and smeared it over my face and exposed skin for camouflage. I stayed right next to Sgt. Totten for quite some time, maybe two hours or so. (Smitty)

(Giorgi) Occasionally I would raise my head and look around to see if the rest of the company had found us yet. All along, the artillery rounds kept dropping on top of our position and the sound of helicopter gunships overhead continued. Plus, the monsoon rains kept drenching us on and off all afternoon. Also, the artillery rounds were causing large trees to come crashing down all around our position.

Things would quiet down for a while and I thought the NVA had taken off. Then someone would moan or cry out for the medic and a burst from an AW would silence them for good. All day I kept pleading with them to be quiet if they could.

"The medic is dead so don't call out for him, he isn't coming to help you."

These poor guys either didn't hear me as I was talking in whispers or they couldn't comprehend what I was telling them. The sound of them crying out as they were hit again and again has haunted me for the past 39 years. I will never forget those awful, agonizing cries.

And then it happened. I saw John Dewey who I knew was with the other half of the platoon. If he was here, there had to be others. There were.

The other two squads had broken through their contact and joined the rest of the 3d platoon. They too became part of the continuing fight to survive.



Haze Howard photo by Marshall Jackson

Next I saw Haze Howard the other medic who was with their unit. I called to him and when he came to me, I begged him for a shot of morphine. I had been in agonizing pain for hours and couldn't stand it a moment longer. As he was preparing to give me the injection he was shot in the arm and he now had become a wounded soldier like me and some of the remaining original 22 men who had made the initial contact. (Giorgi)

(Smitty) The activity started to slow down and there was only a shot heard every now and then. Me and Dale Colette got up and started walking around the area trying to help the wounded and gathering up weapons and ammunition, both enemy and American guns were collected. We piled them all together in

one pile. You see, we thought the fight was over and we were just waiting for help to arrive to get us out.

While we were checking things out, I remember seeing Lt. Sturdivant sitting against a tree, still alive with bullet holes all over his body. I tried to help him; but knew in my own mind that he would soon die.

He told me two or three times, "Help me and I will make you a scene." This has never left my memory all these years and I have yet to know what he meant by this.

I saw one of my best buddies, William E Lewis, dead. He was one of my best buddies all the way from Fort Polk, LA., then to Hawaii, and on to Vietnam. Another was Sgt Joe E Johnston, whom I recall laying on his back. He had a bullet hole in his forehead that ants were crawling all around.

Sgt. Stone was also killed, and after having seen so many of my comrades killed, I just lost control and began to cry. Dale slapped me and made me realize that this was not the time for that. (Smitty)

(Giorgi) Out of those 22, 15 had been killed and out of the remaining seven, four had been wounded. I didn't know it but "Smitty" had been shot in the arm. Sgt. Totten our FO had also been wounded in the arm by fragmentation from an enemy grenade he was throwing back at the NVA. His RTO PFC Isaac Quick had been wounded as well. PFC Booker T. McCoy would later succumb to his injuries on 7 Jul 66 at Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas. To my knowledge, SP4 Colette was wounded later in the day perhaps while we were pulling out. He was shot in the upper leg.

Dewey had come over to check on me and I asked where the others were. He said that they were coming. They fought their way in with five or six APC's from the 3/4th Cav and they were able to break the enemy encirclement. When I saw the armor, my spirits soared. I quickly figured out the area we were in was too tight to bring in tanks, but the sight of the APC's was good enough.

"Ha Ha Charlie here's where you get your butt kicked big time." (Giorgi)

The Relief Force

(DJ 1320H: The first platoon of B Co, operating some 8000 kilometers to the north was regrouped and loaded on to APCs of the 3/4th Cav and moving to the battle area.)

(Barrett) That day July 3, 1966 was a typical morning out in the boonies for the men of the 1st Platoon, B Co, 1/35th. As I remember we were late getting info as to where our AO was and what we were going to be doing. A little later word was that our 3rd platoon had made some contact. Then a short time passed and we learned that the contact was heavy and they needed assistance; then becoming urgent and we were to hook up with a Cav unit who was going to rush transport us on their APCs to the 3rd platoon contact position where they were pinned down under heavy fire.



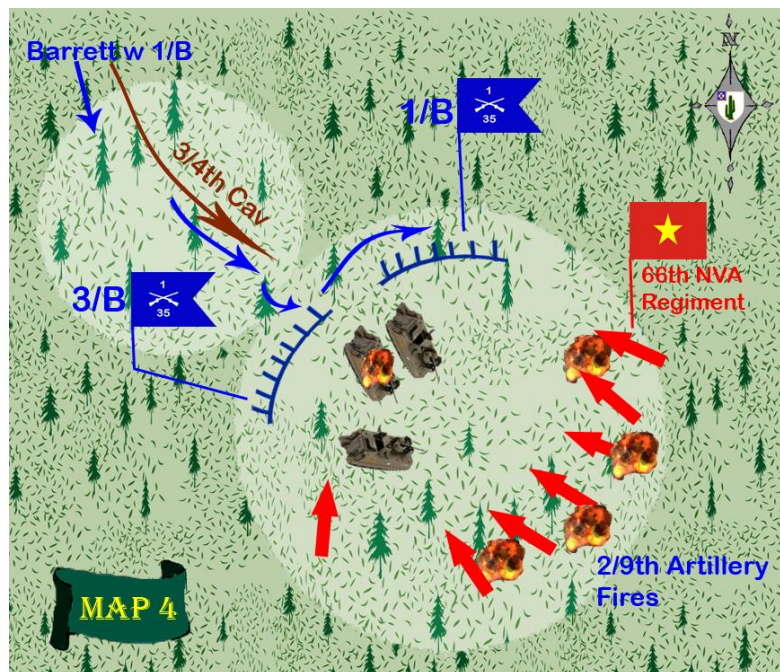
Somehow, I got tapped to be the RTO that day; not my normal. Our squad of the 1st platoon usually pulled point duty and occasionally swapped carrying the radio taking turns. We loaded up on the Cav APCs and raced like hell to an area just short of the 3rd's position. As I remember we got off the APCs and started up a small narrow semi dirt trail in thick heavy vegetation jungle with the APCs following to the area that the 3rd platoon got ambushed in.

I'm going to describe this area as how I saw and felt the layout. Take two circles and put one next to the other like clocks touching at the outer perimeter edges, one at 10 o'clock and the other at 4 o'clock. I will refer to circle 10 o'clock as circle # 1 and circle at 4 o'clock as

circle # 2. **(MAP 4)**

I was carrying the radio alongside of Lt Nichols. Basically, we were at point coming into the circle area of circle #1 when we both came upon Sgt. Joe Johnson KIA laying behind a large log at about the 5 o'clock position. We took cover for an instant and then proceeded to move thru the circle and to our left 30 to 40 feet to about the 9-10 o'clock position when all hell broke out all around us. We started taking what cover we could and returning fire.

Again, we got up and moved to our left now into what I call circle area #2 at about the 3-4 o'clock position, were taking rounds from all over it seems. We again move to our left and drift back to about the 6 o'clock position where we pretty much stayed returning fire back and forth, being pinned down at times. As I remember Lt Nichols and I were down behind 2 logs or fallen trees giving us some cover of protection. We were taking rounds from all angles hitting everything around us along with explosions front, rear and above.



At one time I think Lt Nichols got up and moved to his right to some other 1st platoon member's positions, we had pretty much been pinned down and firing out to our left mostly at the 9-10-11 o'clock position area where we were getting heavy fire from and a lot of movements and yelling in Vietnamese, then Lt Nichols coming back next to me for the radio. We both were back and forth on the radio yelling to be heard to whomever on the other end over all the noise. As I was firing off to the left, I then think he got up again moving back and to his right.

A short moment later 2 explosions went off above and behind me that showered me with dirt and tree fragments and everything else. I don't know where Lt Nichols went to; I think now we are separated. Soon after 3-4 APCs

that I could see move into our circle #2. Off to my right about 15-20 feet I could see Joe Gilliland and Raymond Buzzard and another guy from our squad firing to their front right. About 10 feet to my left was Daniel J Donaldson lobbing away M-79 rounds out to the 10 o'clock position where we kept seeing a lot of movement. We just kept firing in that area; it seemed like slow motion and high speed all at the same time.



Two APCs moved into position on my front left at about 8 o'clock vertical with rear door facing me about 30-40 feet out. The other APC moved almost straight out in front of me horizontal with its side facing me about 50-60 feet out. Soon after at about 20 feet to the left of the APC on my front left, I saw movement between two large standing trees, there were 2 logs or trees on top of each other forming a crisscross or scissor like look. Three NVA became clear with the one in the middle jumping up several times real fast. We traded fire; with them bringing on a lot more, I tried to stay as low as possible knowing the radio was sticking up high for them to see. The

radio took a couple of hits and the antenna was winged once and smacked me in the face, but it was still working. I was trying to fire and yell at the same time on the radio hardly making out anything with all the confusion and noise.

What stuck out in my mind was the NVA in the middle of the three was so much bigger than the other two. He got up a couple of more times real fast and this time I let off a small burst from my M16 and I hit him high in the right shoulder and neck and possibly in the chest. He fell backward going into a sitting position, I never saw him or the other two again. (Barrett)

(Giorgi) Wait a minute. What the hell is going on here? He's not running for his life; he's staying put and fighting all the harder.

I couldn't believe it. The crap hit the fan worse than it had all day. I saw an enemy machine gun crew brazenly out in the open firing at will. I couldn't believe my eyes. They were fanatical; like they didn't care one bit that we had armor. (Giorgi)

Air Power

(7th AF) Cpt Hubert E Thornber relieved the first FAC, who was running low on fuel, and therefore unable to finish the flight of F-4Cs he was controlling. Flying over the enemy positions, Cpt Thornber came under heavy automatic weapons fire from numerous enemy gun positions.

After calling in two more flights of fighters, the FAC then rolled in and marked the target through a hail of small arms fire. The F-4Cs succeeded in silencing three automatic weapons positions with their remaining ordnance before departing. A few minutes later, two flights of A-1Es arrived and the FAC went down to take a look. The enemy was attempting to outflank the friendly positions, so Cpt Thornber brought the airstrikes to within 50 meters, while he flew over the friendly positions as a mark for the fighters to prevent them from coming too close.

The enemy maneuver was repulsed by the airstrikes and ground forces. The battered enemy force withdrew under a heavy bombardment that inflicted heavy casualties. Cpt Thornber lead the strikes against the retreating enemy, by making simulated strafing attacks, with the fighters following him in trail. The next day, the 3d Bde TF commanding general, Glenn D Walker commended the FAC for the "excellent air work" For his part in the action, Cpt Thornber was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. (7th AF)

The Relief Force Arrives

(Smitty) Suddenly from behind us we could hear motors. Most of us that could, stood up and motioned for them to come over our way. "This is where we are, come and get us out of here." We were all happy that help had finally arrived and we would be safe now. What we didn't know was that the VC were being patient and waiting for our relief to arrive. They could have shot us at any time they wanted to but chose to wait until help came so they could kill even more Americans. The action started up again even fiercer than before.

I scrambled to get behind a tree while bullets were pecking the dirt right at my face and body. My right arm was hit at the wrist and the bullet went up, blowing out the top joint of my elbow. My arm was jerking uncontrollably. I had to grab it with my other hand to hold it still. At this time, I realized that I could no longer defend myself, so I crawled and made it to an army personnel carrier. Once I got inside, someone gave me a shot of morphine, then "Boom"; the VC hit the APC with some sort of antitank weapon that dismantled it. (Smitty)

(Giorgi) About four of the PC's had formed a wall and most of our fighting was coming from there. One of the other PC's had begun working its way toward the enemy trying to collect the wounded. One stopped about 25 yards from my position and had begun taking on wounded men. I yelled for them to come and get me, but the noise was too loud, and no one heard me.

"What about me?"

Just then it happened.



"BOOM!!!"

At first, I thought they had lobbed a grenade into the open top of the PC. "Wow, thank God I didn't make it on to that PC."

Behind me I heard another PC and I turned on my belly to investigate. Another PC was loading wounded. I screamed as loud as I could for someone to come and get me, but no one could as they too were badly wounded. These were men from the first PC that had been hit plus wounded men from the rescue group that had to endure the

NVA's fanatical stand.

If I was going to get on that PC, I had to somehow get to it some 15 yards away. So, I began to crawl on my belly. Every move caused a level of pain I had never felt before. But I had to get there before it pulled out without me. Finally, I made it to the rear door of the PC. Guys who were sitting on the floor of the vehicle reached out and pulled me in by the seat of my pants.



Tommy Giorgi

I had no idea but "Smitty" who had been on the first one was also on this one as well. I was on the floor on my belly. The vehicle was loaded with wounded. From the bottom to the open top there were wounded GI's.

We started moving and then the APC got hit causing a tremendous explosion.

Everyone got out of the track and I was alone on the floor. That's when I felt the heat. The sucker was on fire. My guess was the fuel tank got hit. I also looked down and saw a piece of shrapnel sticking out of my inner thigh. I pulled this out and determined that if I didn't get up and out, I was going to cook in this death trap.

So, with all my strength I stood up. My pants that had been loosened by "Smitty" and Colette earlier in the day dropped down to my jungle boots. I waddled over to the doorway, covered my face with my right arm and jumped out through the fire. My body quickly caught fire, so I knew

enough to drop to the ground and began rolling back and forth while I slapped at the flames burning my legs. Fortunately, the monsoon rains left my uniform soaking wet or I would have been burned worse than 25 to 30 % of my body.

After I had the fire out, I rolled onto my belly and I realized that I was un-armed. What was I going to do if I saw one? (Giorgi)

(Barrett) Some of the wounded were helped into that same APC off to the left a short time later and the intensity of everything seemed to pick up again. Just after that I was told to make contact with the Cav because they and Bn wanted us to pull out so they could call in air strikes and artillery shelling of the area. Someone told me I had the only working radio, although the only way I could contact the Cav was by getting their attention which I couldn't.

So, I had to run to one of the APCs and get them to notice me. First, I thought about running to the closest APC to my front left which was full of wounded, but I felt it had too little cover since I knew we were still taking a lot of rounds from the 9-10-11 o'clock positions. I then decided to run straight to the APC farther out which had a full side facing me giving me more cover. As I ran and was even with the APC on the left, I looked over just as an RPG round hit the rear causing a large explosion and fireball that I'll never ever forget.



Jim Barrett photo by Marshall Jackson

I made it to the other APC and got as flat to the side as possible and started yelling and pounding with the palms of my hand as hard and loud as I could to the guy on top blasting away with his 50 cal. Machine gun. He couldn't hear me, so I started slamming my M16 with both hands on the steel side and yelling. Somehow, I finally got his attention and after yelling to him several times he then understood what I was trying to tell him, to contact the other APCs in his unit and pull out so they can call in artillery and air strikes.

I then ran back towards my old position yelling to everyone that we were getting out now. Soon the APC's were busting out through about the same way we came in, everyone was running alongside and trying to get into the APCs, guys were grabbing and pulling each other into the moving vehicles up ahead of me and as I kept running alongside of one close to the rear it seemed like I'll never get in one, when out of

nowhere some guys grabbed me and yanked me up on top and we made it out to a large open clearing with high grass all around, and that is how we made it out. I also remember one of the guys running alongside an APC getting injured when an APC track ran over a log kicking it up and out slamming into his leg, I think breaking it. (Barrett)

(Giorgi) Then I heard, "Psst. Psst".

I looked and there about 20 yards away was Ray Buzzard one of the guys from one of the other platoons. He said for me to crawl over to him. When I got to him, he told me to crawl onto his back. With me on his back, he crawled the both of us over to where the remaining PC's had formed a wall of defense.

Once we were there the men tried to comfort me and got me ready to be loaded onto a third APC for a removal attempt. With a belt under my arms two men dragged me over to the rear of a PC and loaded me onto it. On this one there were wounded men who had been on the two previous ones that had been hit. We were packed in it like sardines.

The driver was conferring with the unit commander on his radio as to the best way to leave the area. We were all pretty tense so in not so kind words we told him to just get this thing moving. He did so and we began to move. Slowly at first. Then a little faster. And now faster still.

As we moved through the enemy base camp our APC was crunching over saplings as it roared through. As we went, the NVA were peppering the track with AW fire. Men who were lying on the open top of the vehicle were being shot again and again. There screams reverberating through the vehicle and my ears.

"My God leave them the alone they've been shot enough."

This APC was the lucky one I guess because we made it out into a large clearing that would make a perfect LZ for the choppers to come and take us away from this insanity. The men began removing the wounded and lining us up as we awaited the dust-off choppers. Sgt. Wong came over to check on me and I asked him for a cigarette which he lit for me.

As I lay there smoking it, I looked up and saw the "Fast Movers" as they descended from the sky to drop their load on the remaining NVA after the last Americans had withdrawn to the safety of the LZ. I clapped and cheered, and I was then lifted and carried to a waiting chopper. (Giorgi)

(DJ 1525H: Dustoff is called in for three personnel at YA820148.)

(Barrett) After getting off and out of the APCs the choppers started coming in to take out the wounded and bring in some other officers. Then later with the 1st platoon I remember kind of sitting off to the side near the high grass in a daze trying to comprehend what just happened to us today. We had nineteen KIA and many severely wounded and evacuated out on dust offs. I was sitting at one time all by myself behind Raymond Buzzard just looking at him and all the others in total silence, I still had the radio on my back, someone even took a picture of all of us in this daze.



Time lapse of "Puff" miniguns

We all had little or no ammo left and now had to re supply not knowing what was next for us. I don't remember how or when but later I no longer had the radio I don't know what ever happened to it that evening. It started getting dark and we set up for the night with the artillery dropping in rounds one after another along with a CH-47 Puff shooting streams and streams of tracers out of the dark sky into our battleground area. Possibly the worst fear was knowing we were going back in in the morning with additional reinforcements to retrieve our KIA and see what was left of the enemy and their ambush setup positions.

(DJ) 4 July 03332H: Recon Platoon linked up with B Co at YA821153.

We went back in the morning. The enemy had collected their wounded and some of their dead and was gone, but we had inflicted a heavy body count on them. They somehow had gotten out of the area or they were close by in clever hiding looking for the next time, it was very scary and no sound but us retrieving our own and accessing the AO. (Barrett)

The toll from the fight stood at 17 KIA from B 1/35 and 2 KIA from HHC (Medics). And an additional 25 were WIA from B Co and five from the 3-4th Cav. The enemy force was estimated to be at least a battalion. The NVA battalion, the 7th Bn, 66th NVA Regiment, lost 39 KIA and another estimated one hundred fifty. (ORLL 3d Bde TF 31 Jul 66)

For their actions that day, both Lt Jasper Sturdivant and Sgt Clifford Totten were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

C Co 1/35th, 7 July 1966

S&S Reporter Grabs a Gun in Bitter Viet Jungle Battle

By GARY COOPER S&S Staff Correspondent

"WITH THE 3RD BRIGADE, 25TH INF. DIV., Vietnam --- Dawn, less than half a mile from the Cambodian border.

"A 12-man squad is winding its way to home base through thick, dark jungle after spending a long restless night at Outpost Cord No. 4 watching for Viet Cong.

Fifteen minutes from now, five of the 12 men will be wounded. Two will be near death.

"Moving along a creek bed, the men try to stay as quiet as possible. "The squad leader, Sgt. John Smith, throws one hand up over his head. Everyone freezes. "One, two, three seconds pass as Smith searches the mass of jungle to his left. "Slowly, he raises three fingers, one by one, and whispers, 'I've spotted three of 'em over there.

"The tense silence erupts as the Viet Cong open up with automatic weapons. "We dive for the sand and scramble madly for a tree trunk near the creek. "A soldier at the end of the trunk cries out as a slug tears into his chest. It doesn't take long to realize there are more than three. Many more.

" 'You, you and you,' Smith says. 'Get across the creek before we're surrounded.' By two's and three's, the men splash across the creek, staying so low their chins nearly hit the water.

"The radio operator has made a frantic call to company base camp, telling them of our situation. The company is 2,000 meters from us across the same rugged, nearly impenetrable terrain. They are Roughly 30 miles southwest of Pleiku.

"Running, stumbling, firing to the left and right, carrying the wounded man, gasping for breath, we look around us for any kind of cover. "There is none, only elephant grass four feet high. "Two men in front of you drop, partially hidden in the grass. You do the same. Fifty thoughts race through your mind as you hug the ground. If only you had a rifle, a pistol, a grenade--anything.

"It's not quiet now. You can't distinguish the sound of one bullet, or even a burst from a machine gun. It's all one terrible nightmare, sounding like a million rounds going off at once. " 'Hey . . . you . . . help me . . . ' "You look around. 'Stars and Stripes . . . I'm hit . . . help me . . . ' It's Smith. He's about five feet away.

"You start crawling to him. You don't really want to, but you do. What you really want to do is bury yourself as deeply as you can into the ground. 'Smitty, where are you hit?' "His eyes stare skyward, looking at something you hope never to see. He drops his hand from his chest. Blood spurts into the air. "You find a bandage and tie it around him, telling him everything is going to be okay, thinking to yourself, wondering -- will it?

"Ahead of Smith, PFC Milton Vaughan is slumped against a tree that same stare in his eyes. Gray matter is oozing out of the wound in his head. "You find another bandage and cover the hole as he mumbles, "My God ... My God...My God..."

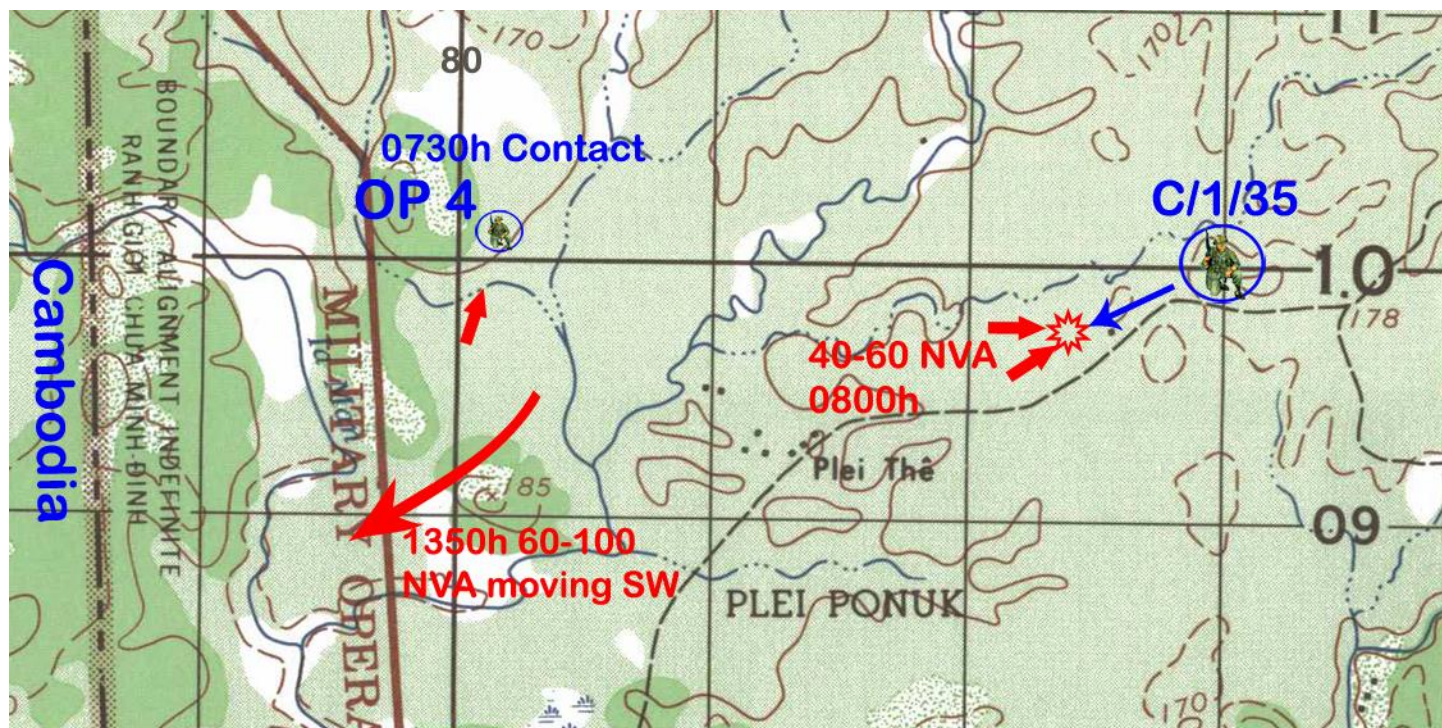
"All around you men seem to be shouting yet trying to keep their voices at a muffled whisper. The Viet Cong now maybe 50 or 60, have you surrounded. "They are screaming and yelling, hoping to panic the squad. It sounds like a Western movie with Indians whooping. But it's real. "The air is filled with the smell of cordite, leaving a dense haze, engulfing the seven men still able to fire.

"PFC Gabriel Diaz, firing his M-60 machine gun into the grass, yells. 'They're right there. I can see the bastards. They're right there, ten meters away'.

"The M-16 you found by Smith's side is ripping into the grass in front of you. There's nothing to see but grass and smoke. But they're there, ten meters away. "The rifle stops firing. You find another clip and slam it into the gun. "Viet Cong are screaming all around you. Suddenly it hits you. You're fighting

for your life. "The rifle jams. "The jungle turns dead quiet. Everything you've ever heard about an M-16 rifle races through your mind. It won't fire. No matter what you do it won't fire.

"Another M-16 is laying close by. You grab it. Shove a fresh clip in and wait. "The jungle explodes in another wild burst of fire, cries and smoke. You level the rifle and squeeze the trigger. Nothing happens--nothing. "You drop the useless weapon and squirm closer to the ground. "One thought races very clearly through your mind. 'What in hell are you doing here!'



7 Jul 1966 Contact Area

'The map, I've got to have the map.' It's Sgt. Richard C. Austin, who has taken command of the squad. " 'Where is it?' "Austin says that Smith has it. You reach Smith again. 'The map Smitty, we've Gotta have the map.' He's deep in shock. He says nothing.

Without the map we haven't got a chance. The company, now on its way to us, has to know exactly where we are.

"You reach down Smith's bloodied chest and find the map. It's warm and sticky, covered with blood. "You crawl back to Austin and give him the map. He talks into the radio, telling the company where we are.

"The area off to the right is wide open. You grab another rifle and make your way to the open spot. "A deafening blast sends your face deeper into the ground. A grenade or mortar has landed where you had been only seconds before. "It's white phosphorous. Little holes start smoldering on your back and legs from flesh-burns. You slap at the holes quickly, then turn and look back down the barrel of the M-16. "Then, the 30 minutes that has taken a lifetime to pass, is over.

"C Co., 1st BN, 35th Inf., has spotted the squad. You can hear them talking and shouting orders. "One of the first persons to reach us is SP5 Glenn R. Bowers, senior medic for Charlie Company. He bandages the wounded, tries to calm them, and calls for make-shift stretchers to be made from tree branches and ponchos.

"Forty-five minutes after Smith spotted the first three Viet Cong, he and the other four wounded are in a chopper, on their way to the field hospital in Pleiku.

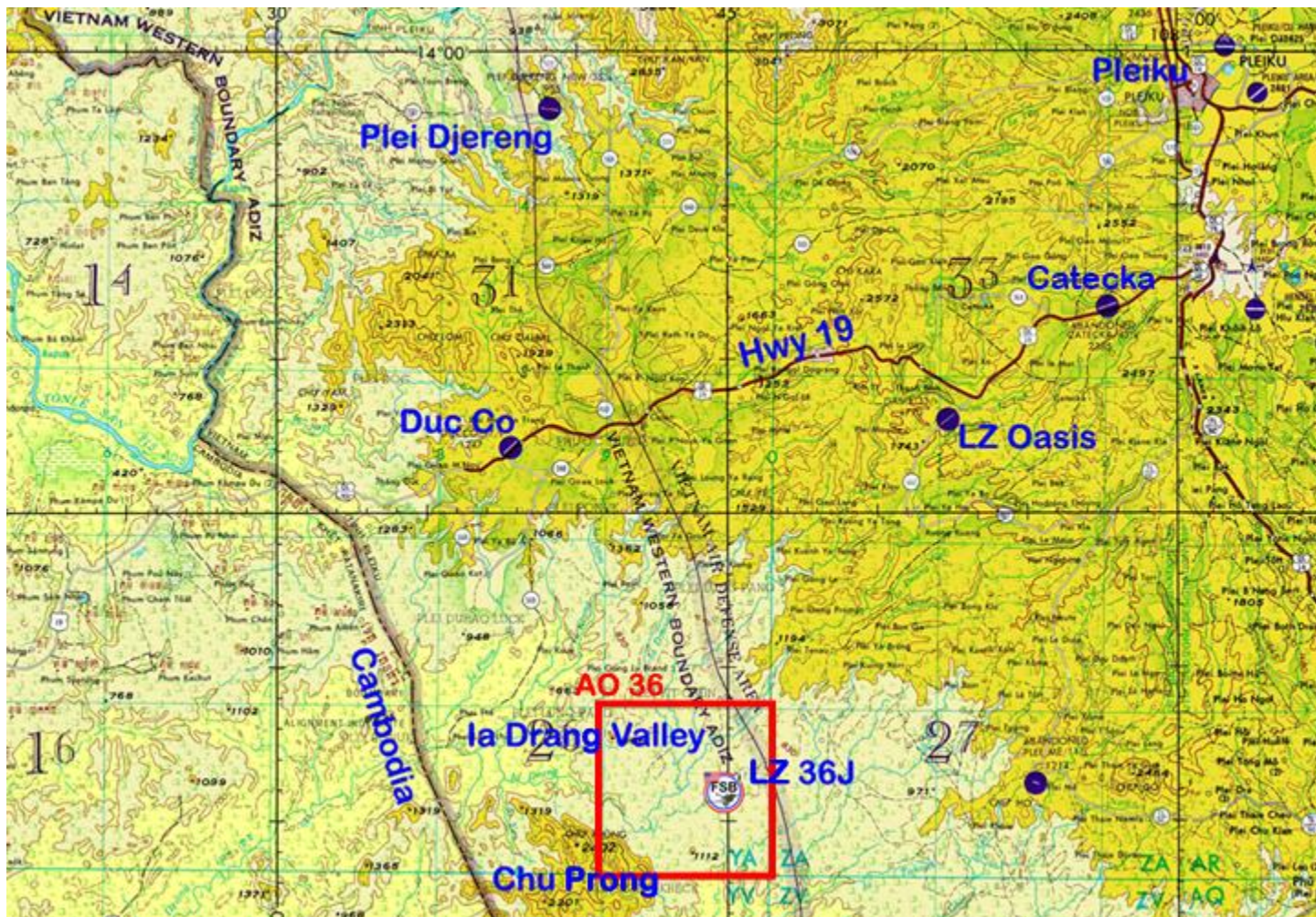
"Capt. Alvino Cortez, C Co. Commander says his company has found four VC bodies, plus some ammo and automatic weapons. But there has to be more than that dead. You know there are. "That was the morning of July 7th. That night, Austin, Diaz and the other five who survived the fight unwounded were back at Outpost Cord No. 4.

"They'll probably be there tonight. And every other night."

Throughout the remainder of July, contacts continued to be light. On the 7th, the 1/35th engaged 40-60 NVA in the vicinity of YA823097, resulting in five enemy KIA. Later that day they flushed a force of about 100 at YA800098. Air and artillery were called in, but the enemy was able to extract their dead and wounded.

On the 12th, the 1/35th began moving back to Oasis and Catecka where they would participate in local patrolling and provide security for Highway 19. Operations would continue in AO 21 and AO 22 until the end of the month.

2d Bn 35th Inf moves into AO 36



The 2d battalion, 35th Infantry had conducted search and destroy operations in AO 61 until the 28th of July when they moved into AO 36 and AO 37. The battalion CP was located at LZ 36J (YA973053). As the reporting period for the 3d Bde Task Force was coming to an end, it became evident that the NVA were taking advantage of the monsoon season to penetrate further east into Vietnam. On the 29th, ten NVA were engaged: one was killed and two were captured. One of the captured enemy reported that his own unit, the 66th NVA Regiment was located about four kilometers from the border on the northern slopes of the Chu Pong Massif. And, that the 32d Regiment was inside Vietnam about ten kilometers southwest of Oasis.

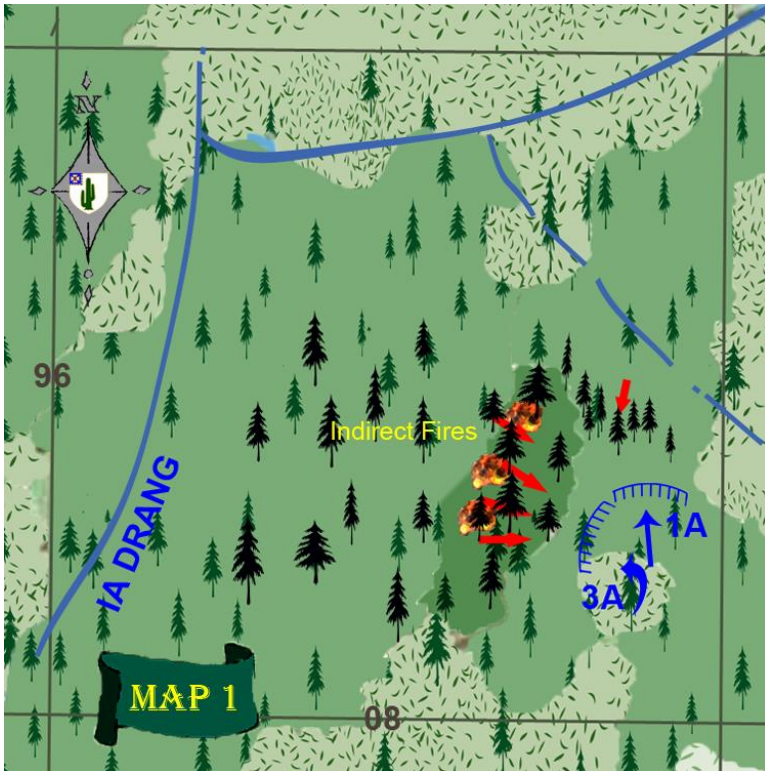
On 30 July 1966, Companies B and C executed a heliborne assault, Company C into LZ 28A and Company B into ZA 046125. The battalion 107mm cannon platoon was moved from LZ 36I to the

battalion CP at LZ 36J. Elements of the battalion reconnaissance platoon and Company A made contact with small NVA elements at YA 969056 and YA 959068. Two NVA were killed and an estimated three NVA wounded. There were no friendly casualties.

LZ 36J - 31 July

On 31 July 1966 Companies A and C continued to search for trails in zone and establish ambushes thereon. Company A (-) returned to the area of the 29-30 Jul 66 contact, arriving at YA 968074 at approximately 1100.

Noting a suspicious thicket ahead, Capt. McDonough halted his force (consisting of the 1st and 3d platoons) and directed Lt. Steltman, platoon leader of the lead (1st) platoon either to adjust indirect fire on the thicket or to dispatch a small reconnaissance party. Lt. Steltman chose the latter.



A reinforced squad was sent out. The squad in turn put out a point man. In perhaps ten minutes, the point man detected three NVA and took them under fire. One M-79 round was fired. Following the M-79 round, an NVA MG began firing. Lt. Steltman began moving the remainder of the 1st platoon forward to assist the squad in contact.

In the meantime, the forward squad detected another five NVA moving SW. A hot fire fight developed. Capt. McDonough moved forward to contact Lt. Steltman and to develop an estimate of the situation.

Since the heaviest fire at this time was coming from the west, Capt. McDonough maneuvered the 3d platoon, commanded by Lt. Tragakis, in that direction. The vegetation in the area near the trail was relatively open, however, west of the trail the vegetation featured tall bamboo

and difficult thicket. This terrain condition prevailed all the way west to the IA DRANG River.

The 3d platoon came under fire in this thicket. An artillery smoke adjustment round landed practically on top of an enemy MG position area. Very quickly, the smoke diffused through the thicket and reduced visibility almost to zero. Under these visibility conditions, the enemy in that area broke contact. In the meantime, Lt. Steltman continued to maneuver to the east of the 3d platoon.

Throughout the actions just described, artillery, 81mm and 4.2" mortar fire were brought into the area in quantity. This indirect fire initially was long to the NNE and thereafter was moved SSW into the scene of action. Zone type fire was employed.

When at length the indirect fire was lifted, Capt. McDonough's force swept and searched the area. One NVA KIA was found, also four extremely heavy blood trails. Enemy holes were found in the banks of the stream. (Bn Commanders comment: Of interest is the fact that Company A was engaged across a frontage of at least 200 meters.) (MAP 1)

Capt. McDonough personally identified the presence of three MG's. The men of the 1st platoon claim to have seen twenty enemy, an unusually high number physically to sight and thus leading one to the conclusion that two or three times that number quite possibly managed to escape detection; plus there remains that portion of the enemy force engaged by the 3d platoon.



LT Tragakis photo by George Jacunski

Following the search, the 3d platoon was ordered to conduct a counterclockwise sweep of the scene of action.

Meanwhile, the 1st platoon collected the friendly casualties (1 KIA, 6 WIA) and dispatched an element to reconnoiter for a medevac LZ. By the time the 3d platoon had completed its sweep, the 1st platoon LZ reconnaissance group also had returned. The 1st platoon then secured the area while the 3d platoon (-) repaired to the LZ and improved it as necessary. The 1st squad, 3d platoon, meanwhile was sent a short distance north along the trail as an additional security measure....time: 1240.

1400h: Personnel of the 1st platoon and several members of the company command group carried the casualties to the LZ. DUSTOFF aircraft negotiated the improved LZ and completed the medevac.

The 3d platoon moved out to the NNE prior to the completion of the medevac. By 1430, the 1st platoon had caught up to the 3d platoon and Captain McDonough consolidated his forces at YA 972077.

Enemy sniper fire began. The 3d platoon replied with MGs and M-79s. Lt. Knutson, the artillery FO, called in artillery and 4.2" mortar fire. The adjustment and FFE consumed twenty to 25 minutes. Meanwhile, to the east at YA 977078, a FAC had spotted two hooches apparently made of cut lumber. Later he assisted in the adjustment of artillery fire on these hooches.

Indirect fire was placed into a thicket north of YA 972077 and associated with the intermittent stream there.

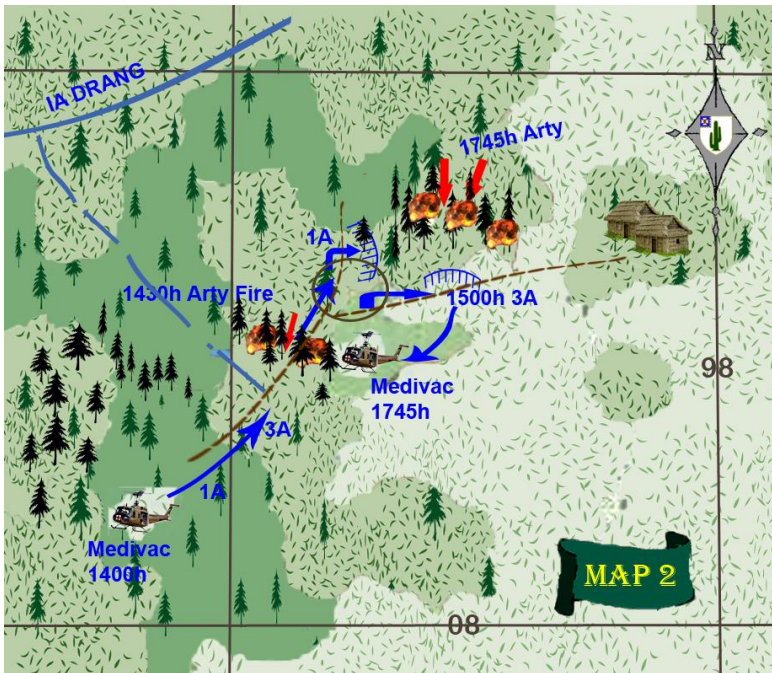
As the artillery and 4.2" mortar fire was lifted from this thicket and shifted to the N and E, Capt. McDonough moved with the 3d platoon across the stream and thicket. The platoon emerged from the thicket into an open area north of the stream. A trail junction was noted in the open area. The 3d platoon was sent down the trail heading east toward the hooches. Lt. Steltman brought forward his 1st platoon. He was instructed to investigate the trail to the north.

Just as Lt. Steltman was about to put his platoon in motion, the 3d platoon began receiving AW (2) and sniper fire from the north. For a moment, the 3d platoon and the company command group were pinned down. The snipers seemed to be in trees; however, none could be detected. The 3d platoon quickly generated a base of fire and began maneuvering in the face of accurate enemy sniper fire. This phase lasted perhaps fifteen minutes. Numerous shell holes provided convenient cover.

An enemy strong point appeared to be associated with a large rock outcropping NE of the trail junction. Capt. McDonough quickly began maneuvering the 1st platoon around to the east of the 3d platoon and into a thicket. The 1st platoon moved slowly and with caution. Gradually sniper fire from the NE diminished.

Meanwhile, the artillery, which previously had been shifted to the N and E, was quickly brought back to the SW. Artillery fragments tore at the treetops over Captain McDonough's position thirty meters in rear of the forward elements.

Under cover of the artillery fire, the wounded were withdrawn. Although the sniper fire diminished in the face of friendly artillery fire, it did not completely cease. Two additional men were wounded in the process of extracting friendly casualties. First Sergeant Perez took charge of the wounded. Captain McDonough dispatched a reconnaissance party to search for a medevac LZ. The wounded were moved to a safe area and the 1st and 3d platoons followed to make room for an air strike on station.



Capt. McDonough, Lt Knutson, and a MG team from the 1st platoon remained at the scene of action to assist in the conduct of the air strike. Much ordnance was dropped; however, aircraft fuel level became critical before the 500 pounders could be released.

Meanwhile, the wounded were moved to a LZ several hundred meters to the west. The LZ required improvement. A power saw was lowered in. The LZ quickly was made acceptable and friendly casualties (2 KIA and 9 WIA) were evacuated by helicopter around 1745h. **(MAP 2)**

Once the air strike was completed, Capt. McDonough started action to get artillery fire back into the area; however, a psywar ship appeared over the scene of action and

requested permission to get into the act. Permission was granted. Company A set out to return to its base at LZ 36J.

Following the psywar spiel, another airstrike was brought into the area. This final air effort, which started at approximately 1815, completed the action. H&I fires were programmed into the scene of action in order to deny the enemy an easy battlefield police situation. (Bn Commanders comment: This second contact demonstrates again the deadly effectiveness of snipers. Captain McDonough performed precisely as instructed, i.e., used available support weaponry and maneuvered slowly and with great care. The late hour prevented a search of the scene of action to evaluate the effectiveness of the air and artillery efforts).

As July ended, intelligence reports indicated that the North Vietnamese were using the monsoon season's cloud cover and rains to shuffle old units and infiltrate new ones into South Vietnam. A North Vietnamese soldier, captured on the twenty-ninth, reported that his own regiment, the 66th, was ensconced about four kilometers east of the border on the northern slopes of the Chu Pong Massif and that a sister regiment, the 32d, was about ten kilometers southwest of OASIS. General Larsen wasted no time. Concentrating infantry, armor, and the Koreans north and northeast of the mass if, he enlarged General Walker's task force to six battalions by giving him control over the I Field Force reserve-Lt. Col. William M. Vaughn's 2d Battalion, 7th Cavalry-on the thirtieth.

It now appeared that the enemy had begun a major offensive west of Pleiku City. The 1st Battalion, 69th Armor, under the command of Lt. Col. Ronald J. Fairfield, reported unusually heavy civilian traffic

crossing Highway 19 from south to north, a good indicator of hostile activity. The Special Forces camp at Duc Co also reported a number of sightings of and encounters with enemy units.

OPERATION PAUL REVERE II

1 to 25 Aug 1966

OPCON 1st Air Cav Division 2 Aug to 25 Aug

The mission assigned the 3rd Brigade Task Force remained the same as in Paul Revere I; to maintain surveillance of the RVN Cambodian border and areas east thereof, conduct ambushes, and block penetrations into the assigned area of operation. The area of operations remained the same as before, containing approximately 2040 square miles. The technique of "checker-boarding", moving from one numbered 10,000-meter grid square to another, which proved effective during previous operations, was continued. The brigade task force which had been under operational control authority of I Field Force Vietnam, was placed under the operational control authority of the 1st Air Cavalry Division on 2 August 1966.

While many units were placed under the temporary operational control authority of the 3rd Brigade Task Force, with commanders' names and dates of command, and the major supporting and operational control authority units are as follows:

Headquarters, 3rd Brigade Task Force, 25th Infantry Division: Brigadier General Glenn D. Walker
1st Battalion, 35th Infantry: Lieutenant Colonel Robert C. Kingston
2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry: Lieutenant Colonel Philip R. Feir
2nd Battalion 9th Artillery: Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Holbrook

LZ 36J – 2-3 August 1966 3d Platoon, A Co and Recon, 2/35th

August 1, 1966 found the 2/35 Infantry entering phase II of OPERATION PAUL REVERE. On this date Company C conducted a heliborne assault into LZ 29X without enemy contact. Company A 2/35 INF was rested and reorganized after heavy contact on 31 July 1966. 2/35 INF(-) continued search and destroy, ambush, and blocking positions in AO.



A Co Officers; Cpt McDonough 2nd left Photo by Lt George Jacunski

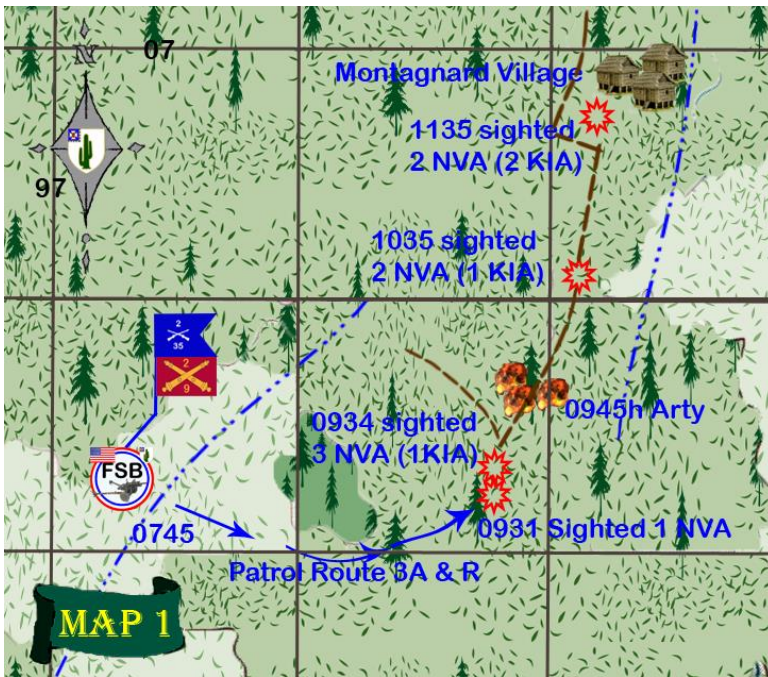
On August 2, 1966, Company A was given the mission of returning to the 31 July 66 scene of action. Rather than approach from the southwest, Captain McDonough was directed to move due east of LZ 36J (YA973053) until he crossed a north-south trail that previously had been detected by airborne visual reconnaissance.

Once astride this trail, Captain McDonough was to proceed north following and mapping the trail and its major offshoots, if any. In this fashion he was to proceed north of the 08 east-west grid line, turn west, and come into the 31 July 66 scene of action from the northwest. The area of contact

would then be thoroughly searched. Inherent in the assigned task was a concurrent search and destroy mission.

Company A's force of about twenty-four men consisted of the command group and the Third Platoon. Lt Brennan's Recon Platoon was placed under the operational control of Co A and held about 45 personnel.

At 0755 on 2 Aug 66, the composite group departed LZ 36J (YA973053). The force was commanded by Captain James M. McDonough, CO, Company A. The reconnaissance platoon was given the mission of providing the point. Since there were no trails running east from LZ 36J, Lt. Brennan, the reconnaissance platoon leader, selected a route to the SSE. This route was selected because it avoided a hill mass and some very thick vegetation.



At 0931 the north-south trail was discovered, and the point element of the reconnaissance platoon sighted one NVA at YA988052. This NA soldier was engaged with results unknown.

At 0934, three NVA were engaged at coordinates YA988053. One of the three was KIA. As a precautionary measure, Capt. McDonough instructed his arty FO, Lt. Knutson, to call fire on the area to the north of the previously mentioned coordinates.

At 0945, the artillery fire completed, Company A moved northward. The trail formed a junction. Many footprints indicated that a platoon or more had recently used the branch heading to the northeast, therefore Capt. McDonough instructed Lt. Brennan to follow

that branch but, to exercise extreme caution. After moving approximately 400 meters, the trail turned again to the north. Two NVA were spotted in a tree line. Artillery fire again was called in. When completed, Company A swept through the area without positive results.

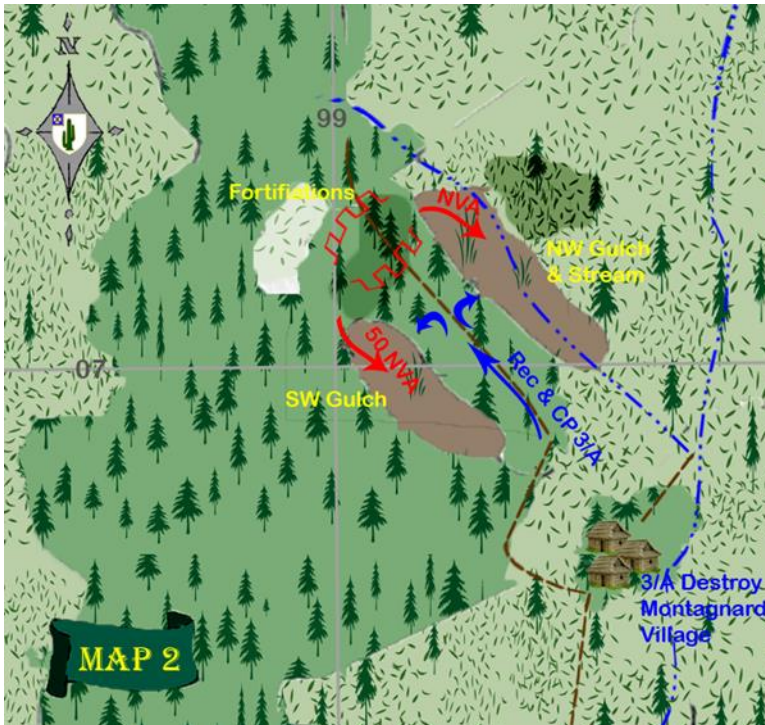
At 1035, two NVA were observed at YA991061 and were engaged with an M-79 grenade launcher. One NVA soldier was killed and the other pursued for a short distance to no avail.

Movement was continued to the north guiding on the trail. At 1125, two NVA were sighted and taken under fire at YA992067. Both were killed.

Just north of this skirmish, an abandoned Montagnard village containing twenty huts was discovered. A detailed search indicated that the huts had been used for sleeping within the past few days. At the southern edge of the village, the trail turned west. Footprints still were visible. Signs showed movement in both directions and indicated very recent use. **(MAP 1)**

Captain McDonough instructed his 3d platoon leader, Lt. Tragakis, to remain behind with his platoon and destroy the village. The company command group and reconnaissance platoon would continue to follow the trail. Lt. Tragakis was further instructed that he would rejoin Capt. McDonough upon the completion of the village destruction mission. After approximately 200 meters, the trail again turned north. Evidence of recent use by a large group persisted.

At 1200, the point squad observed two NVA at coordinates YA991071. Both were engaged by the point and both were killed.

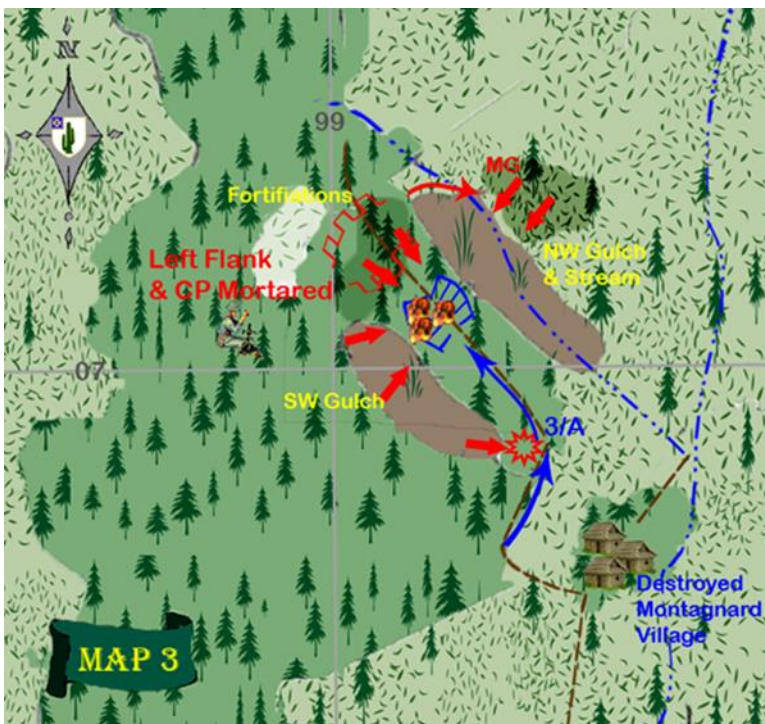


Concurrent with this action, fifty or more NVA were observed running on the flank. The enemy appeared to have been caught totally off guard. The reconnaissance platoon immediately engaged the NVA force. Both reconnaissance platoon flank security elements observed NVA to their flanks firing automatic weapons. Clearly the NVA were reacting rapidly and were moving to surround the friendly forces.

Capt. McDonough ordered the 3d platoon to the scene of action. Lt. Tragakis had heard the firing and already had started to move. The left flank element of the Reconnaissance platoon was pinned down by automatic weapons fire. In an attempt to maneuver against the enemy machinegun position, Sgt Munoz, SP4 Gardner, and SP4 Trueluck were killed almost immediately. SP4 Ledebur, the fourth member

of the maneuver group, was wounded in both legs.

Pvt Sanderson, the reconnaissance platoon medic quickly ran to the aid of SP4 Ledebur. In the process, Pvt Sanderson was wounded three times. SP4 Ledebur was killed as the result of an additional head wound. A base of fire was provided for Pvt Sanderson and he was able to return to the platoon position.



A three-man enemy machinegun team was observed moving into position on the high ground to the north, SSG Dean, the acting reconnaissance platoon sergeant, took the team under fire and killed all three.

As the 3d platoon maneuvered to assist the reconnaissance platoon, they were engaged by a small force; however, they were able to break through and closed in with the reconnaissance platoon at approximately 1300. By this time, the NVA had maneuvered two separate elements to each flank.

Captain McDonough reported his situation to battalion headquarters. His estimate was that he had entered a base area and that he was in contact with an enemy force of at least battalion size. As his brief report terminated, his estimate was confirmed as a mortar round

was heard as it fired from the tube. The first mortar rounds hit to the left flank. Both flank elements were heavily engaged at this time. Three more mortar rounds were fired and traced a path across the area from west to east. The second of the three rounds hit on the trail between Lt. Brennan and Captain

McDonough. Captain McDonough was wounded by fragments. Moments later a machinegun firing in his direction hit him in the chest. Capt. McDonough died within seconds.

1st Sgt Perez moved quickly and spontaneously to the aid of Captain McDonough only to be killed instantly by a third mortar round. This group of three mortar rounds caused more than twenty casualties, including Lt. Brennan and SSG Dean. **(MAP 3)**

Though wounded, Lt. Brennan immediately took command, made a quick estimate of the situation, and determined that he had too many wounded to attempt to break contact. He then instructed Lt. Tragakis to strengthen the perimeter using all available personnel, including the wounded that could still function. At this time, the US Force was completely encircled. Because of the thick terrain, Lt. Brennan could not readily determine his exact location.



Cessna O-2 FAC

The artillery FO, Lt. Knutson, called for smoke rounds; however, during the adjustment a FAC appeared on the scene with two A1E's on station. By this time, the perimeter was firmly established and the dead and wounded had been gathered into a central location. Enemy fire still was so intense that digging of positions was hazardous (had to be done from the prone position) and clearing of a LZ to extract the wounded was impossible.

The perimeter was marked with smoke and the A1E's dropped "mini-bombs" all around the perimeter. Prior to this all signs indicated that the enemy had regrouped for a large scale coordinated attack against the

perimeter. Yelling, screaming, and whistle blowing was heard. Some of the NVA were heard to yell in English "1st Cav" and "Lt. Brennan." (It is believed that Lt. Brennan's name was picked up from wounded personnel who called for him on several occasions).

Before the A-1Es made their bomb run, enemy troops were observed rising to the standing position, a clear indication of impending attack. At this instant, a second mortar attack of twelve rounds fell along the trail. An undetermined number of casualties were caused by these rounds.

The bomb run by the A-1Es broke up the mortar attack and, in all probability, aborted a mass attack by the enemy at this time. On completion of the A-1E ordnance, two gunships arrived on the scene. Smoke was used to mark the friendly positions, after which the gunships worked over the east and west flanks.

Upon completion of the gun ship activity, A-1Es were again on station. They laced the area to the south. Until the second air strike, enemy fire was still being received; however, upon completion of the air strike to the south, enemy fire ceased. It was thought that the enemy had broken contact. Preparation of a LZ was started at this time. As the LZ preparation neared completion, enemy automatic weapons again opened fire. Three more mortar rounds fell. Work was discontinued on the LZ and personnel were directed to return to their defensive positions.

A machine gun team from the reconnaissance platoon observed fifty NVA in the draw to the left flank. As the group came into range, it was taken under fire and ten NVA were KIA. Those remaining quickly

dispersed. One Soviet LMG (7.62), one 1 LMG (7.62), six AK-47's, and three SKS's were subsequently captured in this action.

Work again was resumed on the LZ. During this period, sporadic firing continued. Upon completion of the LZ, a DUSTOFF aircraft attempted to come in to extract wounded. The DUSTOFF aircraft was fired upon, therefore Lt. Brennan instructed the pilot to leave the area.



Pop Smoke photo by Walt Shields

Because of the large expenditure of ammunition and the need for materials to improve the small LZ, a resupply mission was attempted at 1700. As the re-supply aircraft came into the area, Lt. Brennan popped smoke; however, the pilot identified the wrong color. It is presumed that the NVA were using smoke to lure the aircraft into their area. The resupply aircraft flew over the LZ and attempted to push the supply items out. This effort was a total failure in that all items landed outside the perimeter and either were broken open and scattered or were damaged as a result of hitting the ground. This attempt to resupply apparently caused a flurry of activity by the enemy. A fire fight which lasted for 45 minutes developed.

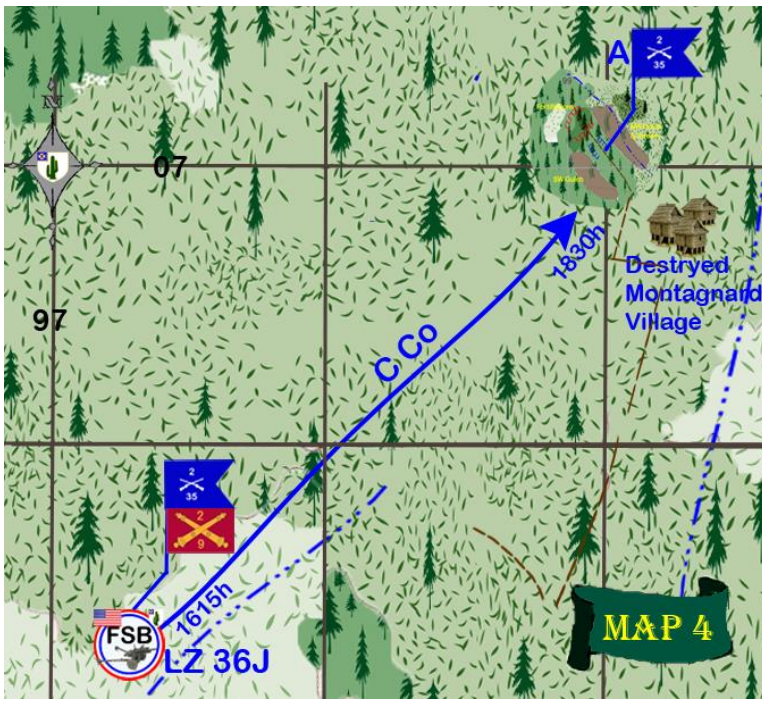
As soon as the fire fight slowed down, teams were sent out in an attempt to recover the supplies. The only items the recovery teams retrieved were a few blocks of C4, one broken chain saw, and one case of smoke grenades.

Because of the relative quiet that prevailed at this time, Lt. Brennan led a six-man group outside the perimeter in an attempt to recover the reconnaissance platoon flank security group which had been killed earlier. The attempt failed because the NVA had the bodies covered with a MG; however, the NVA likewise were prevented access to the bodies and equipment as Lt. Brennan placed one of his machine guns in position to foil any NVA attempts. In the meantime, work on the perimeter defensive positions, on protective holes for the wounded and on the LZ continued.

Shortly after it became apparent that Captain McDonough's force was in contact with a large enemy unit, Battalion headquarters began efforts to constitute a relief force. Companies B and C, both deployed well to the north in blocking positions, were directed to assemble and prepare to be lifted by helicopter to LZ 36J. Both units assembled in good order, commenced movement, and closed into LZ 36J.

Company C commanded by Captain Robert L. Ord III was directed to move overland to effect relief. Captain Charles A. Murray, newly designated commander of Company A, accompanied the relief force. Company C departed LZ 36J at 1615. **(MAP 4)**

At 1830, lead elements made link-up without major incident. On arrival at the scene of action, Captain Ord made a hasty estimate of the situation and decided to defend the perimeter with personnel of Company C only. Personnel of Company A and the reconnaissance platoon who still were functioning were given the mission of establishing an inner perimeter, protecting and preparing positions for the wounded. As personnel from Company C moved into the perimeter, automatic weapons fire was received from the north. When fire was returned, enemy fire would cease, and then pick up again when friendly fire stopped.



At 1900, Captain Ord learned of the fact that there were four casualties from the reconnaissance platoon outside the perimeter. Lt. Davis, Platoon Leader, 1st Platoon, Company C, was directed to send out a four-man team, plus a guide from the reconnaissance platoon, to attempt recovery of the bodies before nightfall. Unknown to Captain Ord, Lt. Davis took out the group himself. Only ten meters out, sniper fire wounded the point man, Pfc Pettit. Sniper fire was so intense that repeated attempts to rescue Pfc Pettit were driven back. The recovery group returned to the perimeter under covering fire, which was later discovered to have killed the sniper. There were now five casualties outside the perimeter. Captain Ord decided it was not worth sacrificing more men in recovery

attempts. Later, a medic, Pfc Doolin, crawled out and brought back Pfc Pettit, who died later that night.

A seven-man engineer squad had been attached to Company C. From arrival, this squad worked on the LZ and had improved it to the point that it easily could accept one aircraft and the strengthened perimeter. At 1945, because of the improved condition of the LZ, Captain Ord attempted to get DUSTOFF into the area to extract the more seriously wounded.

As the DUSTOFF aircraft came on short final and almost to a hover, an enemy light machinegun began firing. It was later learned that the pilot and door gunner had been wounded. The aircraft immediately withdrew as Company C troops put down a heavy base of fire to cover the departure. By this time, darkness as well as enemy activity precluded further attempts by DUSTOFF aircraft.

At 2000, four mortar rounds fell within the perimeter. It is believed the distribution was one round of 60mm and three of 82mm. This mortar attack caused the following casualties in Company C; from the one 60mm round, two WIA; from the three 82mm rounds, two KIA (including Lt. Davis) and sixteen WIA. These rounds landed on the perimeter positions. Lt. Davis was killed in the process of checking his portion of the line.

The battalion reconnaissance platoon and the 3d Plt. had no casualties since they were occupying positions on an inner perimeter as previously mentioned. The relatively heavy number of casualties resulting from this mortar attack is explained by the fact that the men of Company C were establishing the new perimeter and had not yet had adequate time to finish their positions. Concurrently with the start of the mortar attack, enemy small arms were fired into the perimeter from the N and NE. Again, enemy fire immediately ceased when a large volume of fire was returned. Artillery fire was adjusted into the area in which the enemy mortar was believed to be positioned. As the artillery rounds landed, a secondary explosion was heard.

Work began again on improving positions. At 2130, an alarm was given that mortar rounds again were incoming. Personnel dived for their positions, however, the rounds landed outside the northeastern corner of the perimeter. There were no casualties from this mortar attack. Counter mortar artillery fire again was brought in, after which work resumed on the defensive positions.



NVA Mortar Crew

At 2145, two NVA approached the perimeter from the north-northeast. It appeared that they did not realize they were approaching the perimeter. The lead individual carried a light machinegun on his shoulder and an AK-47 in his hand. The second man did not have a weapon. SSG Pasowicz, a squad leader of the 1st Platoon Company C, permitted the two NVA to get within two meters of his position, and then halted them in English. Regardless of whether they understood English, the NVA halted, answered in Vietnamese, and SSG Pasowicz immediately replied with an automatic burst of fifteen rounds from his M-16. The remaining four rounds were expended on the second NVA who turned, took a step, and fell. The second body was not found at daylight.

7th US Air Force

Things had remained fairly quiet until 2040 hours when the friendly positions began to receive mortar fire. An AC-47 was diverted and began expending flares overhead, but the attack gradually built up in intensity and soon the friendly perimeter was threatened.

Cpt Hoon, FAC, reached the area about midnight. The AC-47 had already expended his guns in a box around the American perimeter and he was reloading for a third run. Just before firing the third salvo, "Spooky" picked up ground fire which he marked with a 45-minute ground flare. At this time, Cpt Kenneth Beaird and Cpt Peter Hegseth, of the 1st Air Commando Squadron, reached the target.



AC-47 Puff the Magic Dragon

Cpt Hoon described the conditions that existed that night in a letter to the 1st ACS, citing the two A-1E pilots for the action that followed:

"The weather was unsuitable for tactical fighter operations due to heavy overcast, layered clouds below, and a fast-moving cloud bank about to engulf the target. It was further complicated by the darkness of the night and the confusing light of illumination flares being dropped approximately four kilometers north over another unit."

On the ground the situation was so critical that the commander had briefed the FAC over the radio in a whisper to avoid compromising the position of the Command Post. He then marked his position by using a small pen flashlight. The enemy troops could be heard shouting and screaming a couple of hundred yards north of the ground troops, apparently preparing to launch an all-out assault.

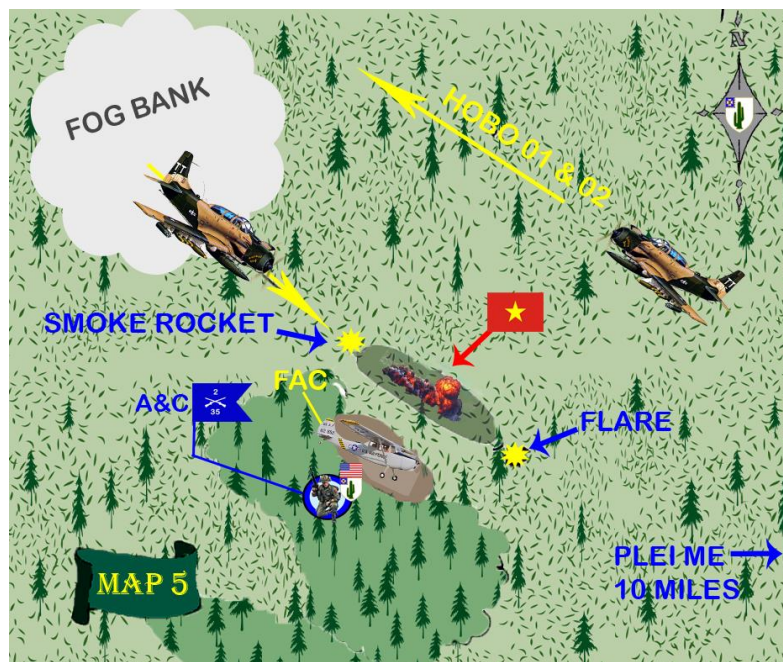
Cpt Hoon described the air strike this way:

"I put my smoke mark in two to three hundred meters north-west of the ground flare which the AC-47 had dropped. The wind carried my smoke straight to the flare just like an arrow. At that moment the ground lit up like a Chinese New Year with small arms and automatic weapons fire.

"Cpt Beaird initiated the attack with napalm on three separate passes, totally blanketing the area of the ground fire. Cpt Hegseth alternated passes in the firing area with CBU. After all droppable ordnance

was delivered, Cpt Beaird, suffering mechanical difficulties that rendered him unable to fire his miniguns, made simulated passes over the battle area. Cpt Hegseth observed each pass and was able to pinpoint a new area for each run. This continued until there was no longer any ground fire. This was confirmed by the ground commander who said that all hostile fire had ceased.

"It was heartwarming to hear the ground commander, who had suffered heavy casualties in the preceding twelve hours, say that he could rest easy for the rest of the night. **(MAP 5)**



Thereafter, Captain Ord devoted attention to the task of bringing in continuous artillery and mortar fire plus the fire support ordnance provided by USAF. The artillery FO attached to Company C, Lt. Zschoche, adjusted DEFCONS (Defensive Concentrations) around the perimeter. Extensive H&I fires were planned and placed throughout the area for the entire night. Lt. Knutson, the artillery FO who had been accompanying Captain McDonough's force, although wounded earlier in the action, assisted in the fire planning and adjusted the fires of another artillery battery.

During the remainder of the night, the perimeter received sporadic automatic weapons fire and two relatively light probes.

At daylight, sweeps were pushed out 25, 50 and finally 75 meters.

The bodies of the four men from the reconnaissance platoon were found undisturbed. The NVA KIA body count in the immediate area was completed. During the sweeps, contact was made on two occasions, each with one NVA. The first contact was made from a distance of 75 meters. The NVA was not armed. He carried only a pack or case. It is assumed that he was a medic or else simply was policing the battlefield. He was not hit by friendly fire and he successfully evaded capture. The second contact was made in precisely the same manner, again without positive results. Early morning weather conditions on 3 Aug 66 precluded aerial medevac, however, at approximately 1200 DUSTOFF moved into the LZ, landed, and loaded two WIA. While loading the third WIA, firing broke out to the south. Two positions on the perimeter engaged a six-man NVA force. The DUSTOFF ship immediately withdrew, receiving several hits on liftoff.

Meanwhile, Company C, 1st Bn, 7th Cav, 1st Air Cav Div, which had begun moving shortly after first light, was pushing toward the scene of action from the south. At 1230, link up was made with Captain Ord's elements. The remainder of the 1st Bn, 7th Cav, followed.

At 1335, detailed sweeps of the area were completed, and the entire 1/7 Cav had closed. Company C, 1/7 Cav, killed two armed NVA during the sweep. The entire area was secured and DUSTOFF and resupply aircraft were able to get into the area without incident.

The first aircraft to arrive brought in a volunteer physician (Dr. Reber) from the brigade clearing company. He immediately administered needed aid to the seriously wounded. His selfless and courageous act brought quality medical attention to several of the seriously wounded and undoubtedly was instrumental in saving the life of one if not several individuals.

Enemy losses were put at 106 KIA, with an estimate of 132 KIA and 150 WIA. Forty NVA packs, over forty rifles, five machine guns, one M-79 Grenade Launcher and RPC-2 Rocket Launcher were captured.

Follow-Up

Following the two-day battle, the 2/35th had minor contacts. One on 20 Aug when C/2/35 engaged an enemy NVA platoon at YA748226. Supported by TAC air and artillery, the patrol caused the enemy to break contact, leaving behind seven KIA. US losses were 1 KIA and 3 WIA. Another C/2/35 contact was made with an enemy squad at YA740227.

And another on 21 Aug when A/2/35 triggered its ambush at YA751226 against a reinforced enemy platoon. Utilizing claymores and indirect fire, the contact was short, lasting mere minutes, but resulting in ten NVA KIA.

Between the 3rd and 16th, the 1/35th conducted patrols along the Ia Drang and Chu Pong mountain area without contact. On the 16th, the battalion moved to Catecka, where she remained as the security force and as the reserve force for Operation Paul Revere II.

For her actions in the battle on 2-3 Aug, Co A, 2/35 Infantry was awarded the Valorous Unit Award.



VALOROUS UNIT AWARD

COMPANY A, 2D BN, 35th Infantry



General Orders No. 4704; 16 September 1967

**The Valorous Unit Award is awarded by direction of the Secretary of the Army to:
COMPANY A, 2D BATTALION, 35TH INFANTRY, 3D BRIGADE, 25TH INFANTRY
DIVISION for extraordinary heroism:**

COMPANY A, 2D BATTALION, 35TH INFANTRY distinguished itself by extraordinary heroism while engaged in military operations on 2 and 3 August 1966 during Operation PAUL REVERE II in Pleiku Province, Republic of Vietnam. While searching an area of previous hostile contact south of the Ia Drang River, this company suddenly engaged a North Vietnamese Army battalion. Intense mortar and machine gun fire quickly inflicted many casualties and the men were forced to dig into defensive positions within a small perimeter. Many of the wounded who could still fire were placed on the perimeter to help repulse the enemy's human wave attacks. Aided by mortar, artillery and air strikes, the gallant men of COMPANY A, 2D BATTALION, 35TH INFANTRY dauntlessly manned their tenuous positions and inflicted heavy losses on the insurgents, forcing them to abandon their attack. Despite continuing probes by hostile elements, the besieged company prepared a helicopter landing zone; however, medical evacuation and supply aircraft were driven off by enemy fire. soon after the arrival of friendly reinforcements, the fanatic North Vietnamese mounted another wave assault, which was thwarted with the help of massive mortar and artillery support. Throughout the night the men repulsed repeated probes and received small arms and mortar fire. Although they had suffered numerous casualties early in the battle, they valiantly defended their small perimeter and inflicted severe losses in men and equipment on the enemy. The men of COMPANY A, 2D BATTALION, 35TH INFANTRY, displayed extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty which were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect distinct credit upon them and the Armed Forces of the United States.

By direction of the Secretary of the Army under the provisions of paragraph 202. 1, AR 672-5-1.



Operation Paul Revere III

26 Aug to 18 Oct 1966

OPCON IFFV

The Enemy Situation:

Generally, the beginning of the reporting period coincided with an increase in ARVN agent reports and sightings related to threatened enemy increases of overt and covert attempts to disrupt and discredit GVN elections which were scheduled for 11 September 1966. The monsoon weather conditions continued to have adverse effects on friendly operations in the area, playing particular havoc with land lines of communication.

The 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, operating north of Highway 19 began to have considerable success in breaking down the Viet Cong infrastructure in the area. Operating with a CIDG unit from Plei Djereng, the battalion was instrumental in the apprehension of one Viet Cong and the killing of another who were members of the local Viet Montagnard Cong (VMC). One small North Vietnamese Army unit was contacted in the area north of Highway 19 resulting in four NVA KIA and one NVA captured. The prisoner of war was from the 17th Transportation Battalion. Based on his circumstances of capture and interrogation results, it was determined that an NVA battalion was possibly located in the rugged terrain about 5 to 10 kilometers east of Plei Djereng. Major NVA units, of the 630th front, were believed to be in their Cambodian sanctuary, vicinity Chu Pong mountain.

While agent reports of up to one enemy regiment reinforced by local forces were moving to disrupt GVN elections, incidents that occurred at the brigade forward base of operation and base camp, as well as the 4th Infantry Division base area, were all minor. It was theorized that the Viet Cong would possibly attempt to overtly and covertly influence the GVN elections. The theory proved incorrect as the Viet Cong threat for disrupting the elections did not occur.

Beginning late September, visual sightings and special agent reports indicated enemy may have been infiltrating from the Cho Pong area to bases southeast near Highway 14 and possibly to Phu Yen Province.

By early to mid-October there was a significant increase in enemy activity in an apparent southeast to northeast direction to the northern perimeter of the area of activities. Special unit reports (R2) of unidentified army units continued to increase. It became apparent that as many as five North Vietnamese Army regiments were located in area bounded by YA-ZA 00 north-south grid line on the east, Se San River and YA 30 east-west grid line on the south, RVN/Cambodian border on the west, and YA 70 east-west grid line on the north. Of these enemy forces, one regiment was considered possibly located in area east of Plei Djereng.

Operations:

Operation PAUL REVERE III commenced 260001 August with the 3rd Brigade Task Force reverting from the operational control authority of the 1st Air Cavalry Division to I Field Force Vietnam. The 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, was placed under operational control authority to the 3rd Brigade Task Force as the operation started.

Period 26 August – 10 September:

General: During this period the brigade task force continued its mission of surveillance of the border, ambushing likely routes of infiltration or access, blocking the enemy if he crossed the border in strength and conducting search and destroy operations during daylight hours. Enemy contact, although occurring on an almost daily basis, consisted primarily of snipers and small groups of individuals. Only once during the period was a unit of approximately platoon size sighted. The pattern of operations concentrated efforts principally in the area south and east of Duc Co. Other positions of the area of operation were periodically searched as depicted on the operations schematic at enclosure 3.

1st Battalion, 35th Infantry: From 26 August through 2 September, the battalion conducted search operations throughout period, the battalion also provided security for several "Round Up" operations conducted in that area and worked in conjunction with CIDG elements therein. On 3 September, the battalion, less Company B, lifted to the vicinity of Plei Me and conducted local patrols at that location. Company B moved to OASIS and provided security for an artillery battery located there. On 5 September, the battalion conducted air lifts into areas of operation 48 and 55. Operations were subsequently conducted in areas of operation 48, 55 and 56 until 10 September without contact.

2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry: The battalion with a platoon of C Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry, conducted surveillance and ambush operations in areas of operation 27 and 35 from 26 August through 1 September with light contact. On 2 September, the battalion, less Company C, conducted an air assault into area of operation 28. For the next several days, only light contact was encountered in that area. Company C was attached to Task Force MAO, 2 thru 6 September, and operated in area of operation 27. This company was then placed under the operational control authority of 1st Battalion, 69th Armor, to assist in the security of the brigade base of operation.

Period 11 September – 27 September:

General: The brigade task force continued surveillance, search and destroy operations throughout the operational area. The areas of operation covered were proximate to those of the previous period, specifically the area south and east of Duc Co and north of Highway 19 between Duc Co and OASIS. No significant contact was developed during the period

1st Battalion, 35th Infantry: The battalion was operating in area of operation 8 at the beginning of the period, and on 13 September moved by helicopter into area of operation 4. The battalion continued to conduct search and destroy operations in areas of operation 2,3,4,10,11, and 12 throughout the period without significant contact. CIDG companies from the CIDG camps at Duc Co and Plei Djereng periodically conducted operations in conjunction with the battalion.

2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry: Throughout the period the battalion with operational control authority for C Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry continued to provide surveillance along the border, conducted ambushes, and search and destroy operations during daylight hours in area of operation 27 and adjacent areas of operations (18, 19, 26, 34 and 35) Operations during the period in the area resulted in sporadic light contact.

Period 28 September – 18 October:

General: During this period of Operation PAUL REVERE III, Task Force WALKER was again constituted. It was composed of the 3rd Brigade Task Force, 25th Infantry Division, and 2nd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division with the 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry and the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry. Elements of Task Force WALKER thoroughly saturated the operational area in the conduct of surveillance, search and destroy, ambush, and blocking operations. The border area west of Duc Co was particularly well

patrolled. Search operations were conducted within the operational area further north and south than at any time previously during the operation. Elements of the task force secured a portion of Highway 19 from Pleiku east to the vicinity of Mang Yang Pass for approximately a week. Despite the concentrated search efforts, the enemy persistently avoided engagement and the period was noted by its lack of significant contact.

The 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, concentrated its surveillance efforts along the border northwest of Duc Co, specifically in areas of operation 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, and 11. On 14 October, the battalion was lifted northeast and operated in area of operation 6 and 506 through 18 October.

The 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry continued operations in area of operation 30, from 28 September until 1 October. The battalion then returned to the brigade base camp, where it refitted and trained for future operations. On 10 October, the battalion assumed the mission of providing security along Highway 19. It secured the highway until 15 October when it was relieved and joined the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry in operations within area of operation 506.

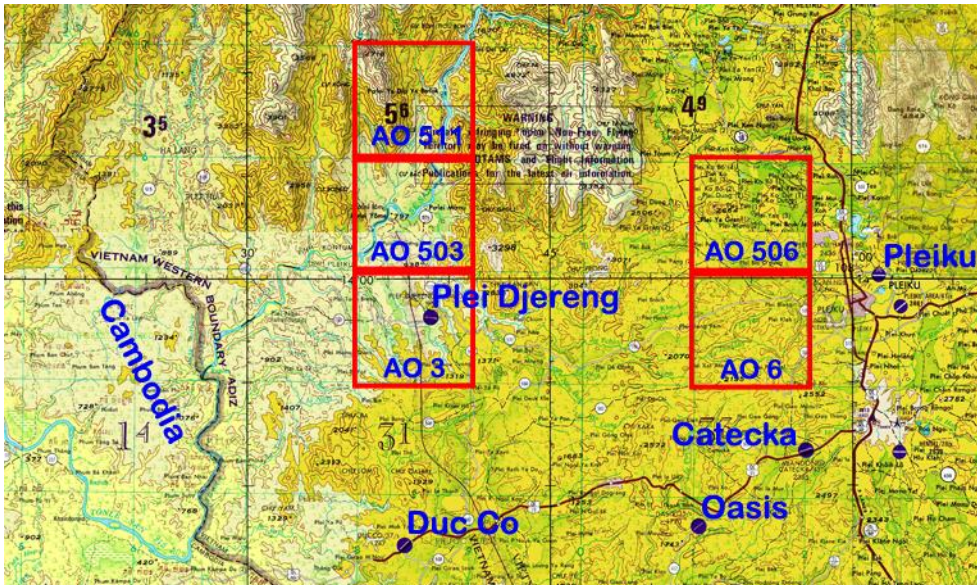
Operation Paul Revere III closed without significant enemy contact.

Operation Paul Revere IV

18 Oct to 31 Dec 1966

OPCON 4th Infantry Division

Operation PAUL REVERE IV was initiated at 18 October 1966. At this time Task Force WALKER was dissolved and the 3rd Brigade Task Force was placed under the operational control of the 4th Infantry Division. The 1st Battalion, 69th Armor was released from operational control authority of 3rd Brigade Task Force and placed under the operational control authority of the 4th Infantry Division.



The area of operations was extended north of the previous operational area. The "checkerboard" concept was adopted for the new area. The brigade task force concentrated its operational efforts in the area northwest and east of Plei Djereng, along Route 509 and northwest of the Se San River. Contact during the early portion of the operation ranged from light to moderate throughout the period.

1d Bn, 35th Infantry



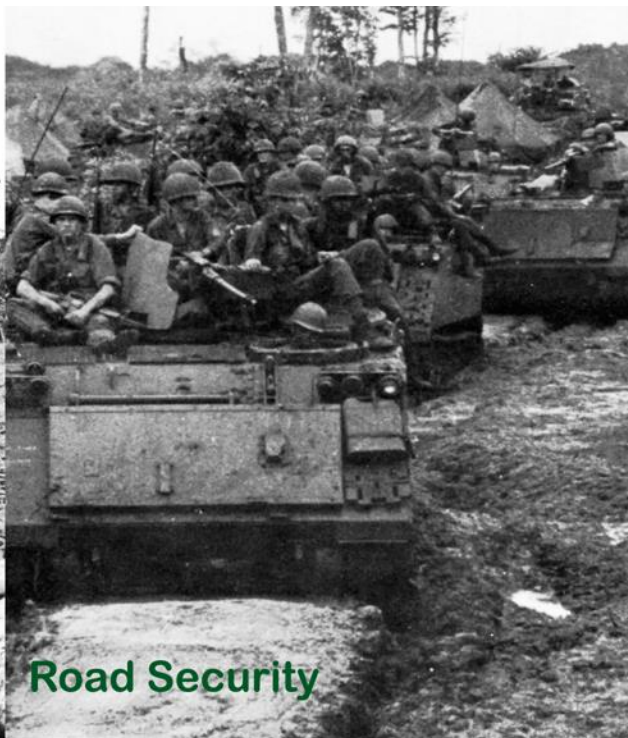
Brig. Gen Glenn D Walker presents colors to Col James Shanahan as the new 3d brigade commander, 20 October 1966

The 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry was initially located in areas of operation 6 and 506. On 19 October the battalion lifted into areas of operation 3 and 503 and commenced operations in those areas. The battalion continued patrolling throughout the assigned area of operation while marshaling its forces to meet its task as the reserve reaction force for the division. On 30 October the battalion conducted a heliborne assault into area of operation 502.

On the 25th of October, a platoon from C Company, 1/35, was attached to the 3/4th Cav on a convoy security mission south of the battalion CP. At 0650h, the lead vehicle hit a mine at YA899409 and the element was attacked with mortars and small arms fire. Incoming fire was received until 0745h, at which time the enemy broke contact and withdrew to the east and south. Dustoff came in to extract the six wounded and three American KIAs that resulted from the mine explosion. The 1/35th continued as the reserve reaction force for the brigade; conducting local patrols, security missions and civil action missions.



Rushing the wounded to the aid station



Road Security

Checking a Montagnard Hooch



Mortar Platoon 1/35
On Patrol near the Cambodian Border



3/4 Cav Patrol





Above: Montagnard Villagers Receive Medical Attention

Below: Maj Tippin, Bde S-5, Makes Friends With Vietnamese Children



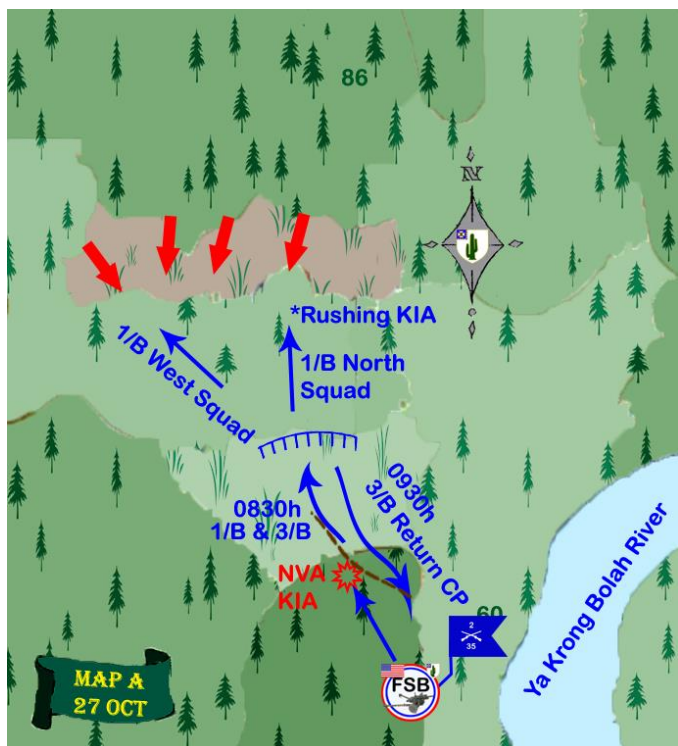
2d Bn, 35th Infantry

The 2/35th began Operation Paul Revere IV with an airmobile assault into LZ 503A, YA 862598, by B/2/35. 2/35 Inf (-) then moved into LZ 503A with no enemy contact. As soon as the LZ was secure, three maneuver elements, Task Force McDonnell. (consisting of the battalion reconnaissance platoon and the 276th CIDG Company), A/2/35, and C/2/35, left the LZ to patrol to their respective locations: Task Force McDonnell to YA 871628; A/2/35 to YA 843597 and C/2/35 to YA 859576. TF McDonnell conducted extensive patrolling to the northwest in areas of operation 511 and 512. During the last several days of October, the battalion has several contacts ranging from light to moderate. During its search and destroy operations it discovered several ammunition and supply caches.

On 21 October 1967, the 3d Platoon, Company A, made contact with an estimated 20-25 NVA in an enemy base camp, YA 825610. The 3d Platoon observed two NVA who appeared to be coming forward to surrender. Both had arms held upward and neither was carrying a weapon. The platoon, remaining cautious as the two NVA approached, was immediately taken under fire by at least four automatic weapons. The vicious firefight which lasted for an hour resulted in a friendly KIA and four enemy WIA. Lt. Lugo, the platoon leader, called in indirect fire support and directed in the fires of an AC-47 aircraft (spooky). A search of the area, after contact was broken by the enemy, revealed a base camp featuring 100 foxholes, a light anti-aircraft position with the weapon still intact, and numerous caches of small arms ammunition. Heavy rains during the night washed out any traces of the withdrawing enemy.

On the afternoon of 23 October 1966, TF McDonnell engaged a 15 man enemy force composed of VC, VMC, and NVA. After killing one VMC, the TF chased the enemy into a cave complex, and, by the use of tear gas and hand grenades, killed another of the enemy and captured one NVA.

CU Dar - 27 October 1966



(MAP A) Early in the morning of 27 October 1966, the 1st platoon of Company B, was moving north on a trail just north of the 2/35 Inf CP. The point saw two NVA enter the trail at YA 859597. Both parties opened fire. The two NVA went down firing. Having withdrawn south around a bend in the trail to reload, the point again moved north and found one NVA KIA. The point then detected movement and was pinned down by fire from an AK-47.

A squad of 1/B was placed online and moved north after first hurling grenades. Upon receiving fire, the squad was halted, and mortar fire was called in on the enemy position as an additional squad came online.

At this time (0830), the company commander joined 1/B with 3/B. All squads of 1/B were placed online. The platoon swept north across a field with head high brush to YA 860600 and established a base at that location. At the same time, 3/B found and searched

a newly made trail leading to the 2/35 CP Perimeter. The search was conducted to the east and north (YA858595- YA862595 -YA862600) and was completed by 0930.

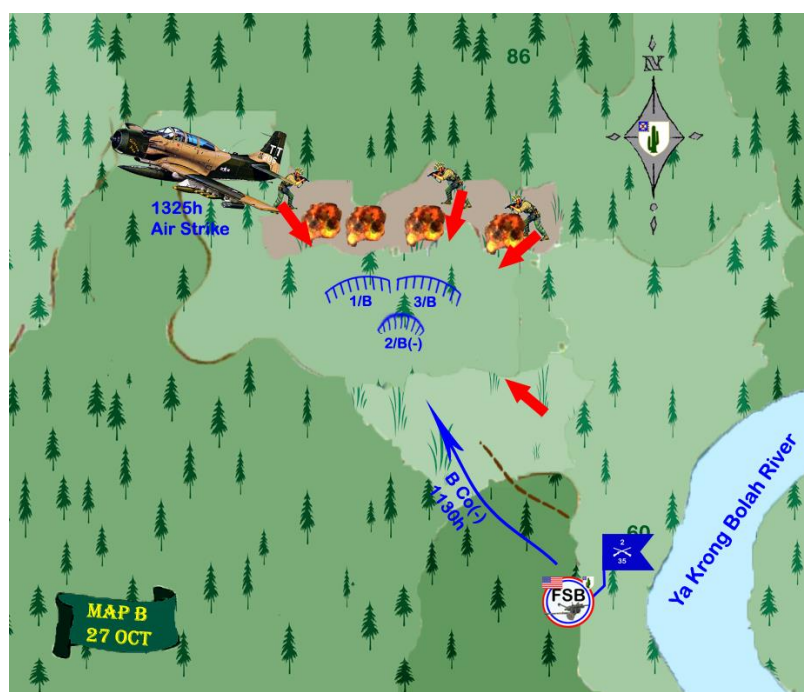
At this point, the company commander and 3/B returned to the battalion CP leaving a four-man ambush/security party from 3/B with the NVA KIA. 1/B was directed to sweep the area around its base for a radius of 500 meters, then patrol north to the hill labeled CU DAR (YA 860615).

1/B platoon leader (1LT Hornak) dispatched one patrol west to YA 857601 and another north to YA 859602. The former patrol received small arms fire from a draw at YA 859602. LT Hornak promptly issued orders to consolidate his force as a preliminary to placing artillery fire in the draw.

In the meantime, the westernmost patrol began to receive heavy volume of fire from the northwest and the north from an enemy force estimated to be a reinforced squad or a platoon. Fire continued from YA 859602. Fire on the western patrol ceased, then began more heavily than before, then ceased once again.

The 1/B point man (Pfc Rushing) saw two to four NVA to his front (north) at YA 861601. He moved fifty meters north from the platoon base to investigate the sighting. At this time, LT Hornak decided to withdraw the platoon 100 meters to the south in order to place artillery saturation fire from YA 858602 to YA 861602. LT Hornak went forward to retrieve PFC Rushing. Having joined up, the pair was returning to the platoon base, covering one another and moving alternately by bounds, when an NVA shot both of them with an AK-47. PFC Rushing was killed, and LT Hornak was wounded in the groin. The latter crawled the remainder of the way to the platoon base.

Enemy fire was then received from three NVA at YA 858602, four NVA at YA 860601, and four NVA at YA 861601. In addition, an enemy sniper was located at YA 861599. Two other snipers, firing occasional shots into the CP area without results, were located southwest of the platoon CP. Platoon members observed two casualties inflicted on the enemy force at YA 861601. One NVA received a shotgun blast in the face and another NVA's arm was shot off by a LMG. Bravo Company CO, CPT McQuillen, prepared to reinforce.



(MAP B) Co B (-) departed the 2/35 CP at 1130. Perimeter security was maintained by 2/3/D/65 Engr, 3/3/D/65 Engr, and headquarter personnel all under the command of the battalion communications officer, CPT Grimes. Co B picked up the security party left with the NVA body and linked up with 1/B shortly thereafter.

The company commander placed 3/B online on the left (west) at YA859600, facing north. A Squad from 2/B was designated to evacuate the wounded platoon leader. At this juncture, an 81mm mortar round fired by the Company B, 81mm Mortar Section, burst in the trees and inflicted slight wounds on two men from 1/B and one man from 3/B. The carrying party then evacuated all four wounded.

At this point in time, Company B was deployed with 1/B and 3/B online facing north at YA 860600 and YA 859600, respectively. 2/B (-) was in reserve fifty meters to the rear, 3/B was on the edge of a steep slope which descended fifty feet into a thick brush covered draw. The company lay down a heavy base

of fire and 1/B attempted to move forward. Heavy enemy automatic small arms fire pinned 1/B down and the company commander reinforced with a squad from 2/B.

Company B again put up a heavy volume of fire, including extensive use of M-79 shot shell cartridges. M-79 HE (high-explosive) ammunition was ineffective as the rounds failed to explode because of the short range to the target. 3/B (Reinforced) then crawled forward fifty meters to a ledge on the edge of the draw (YA 861601). Enemy fire had ceased just prior to their arrival at the ledge.

The platoon had proceeded approximately ten meters down the ledge when, at 1315, the company commander was informed that fighter aircraft would be available in ten minutes. 1/B withdrew to the ledge and the FAC (COMPOSE 05) placed the air strike with extreme accuracy on the two locations most likely to be used by the NVA forces as ambush sites. Napalm was used at YA 861602 while bombs and 20mm strafing were placed between YA 858603 and YA 860803.

A poncho and hammock were later found at the former location, and a canteen and other miscellaneous gear at the latter location. The canteen apparently had been blown off an NVA harness and hurled into the air. (The canteen had made and settled into a relatively deep self-inflicted indentation in the ground).

Company B (-) searched the area vicinity YA 856605, then returned to the CP on an azimuth of 122 degrees. 1/B (-) remained at the scene of action, one squad returning to the CP with the body of PFC Rushing and the captured enemy equipment.

Perimeter Attack - 28 October 1966

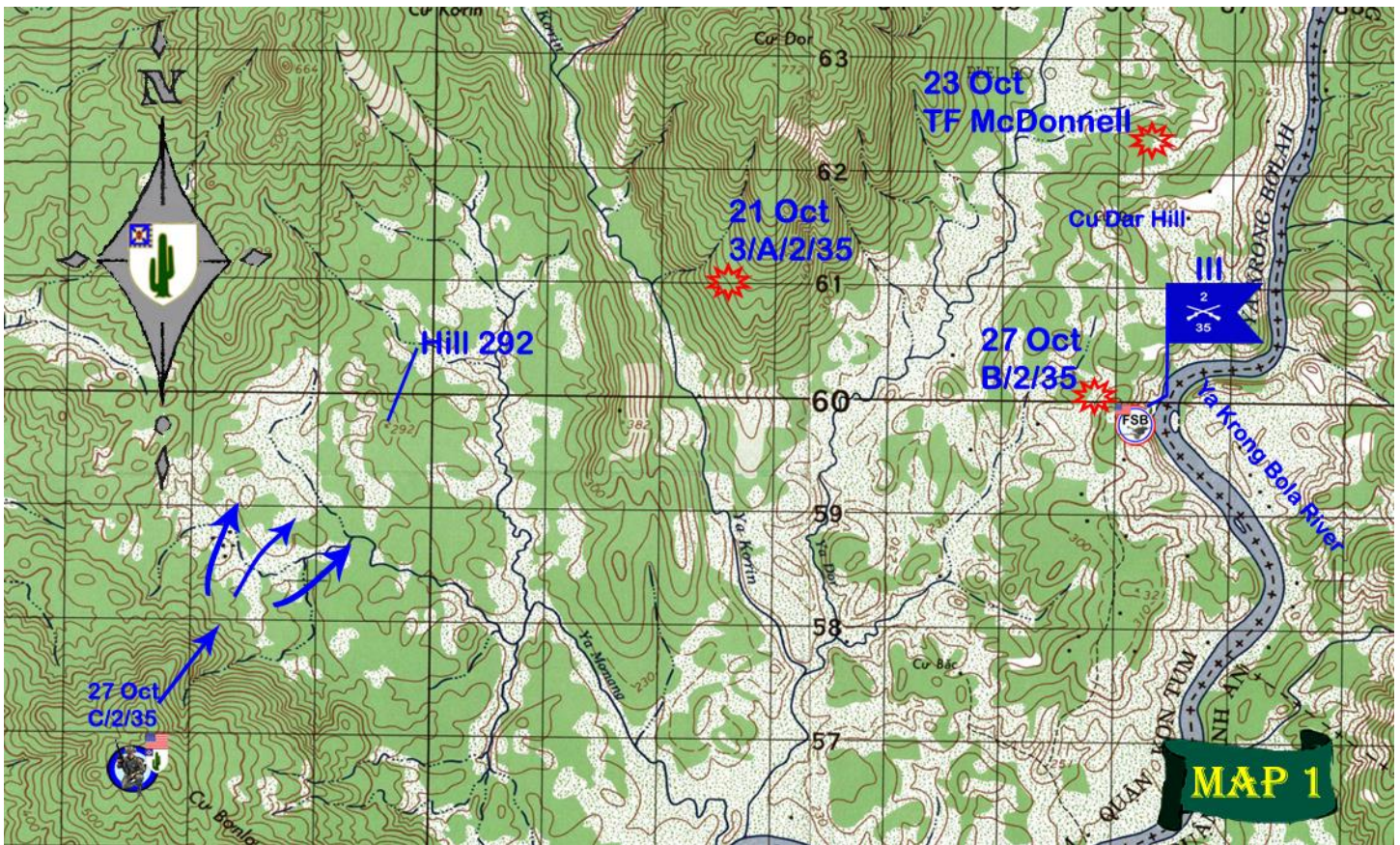
The day was 28 October 1966, and it turned out to be hot and fair, a dazzling sun boosting the temperature above 80 before mid-morning, with not one cloud appearing in the sky thereafter.

The unit was Charley Company, Second Battalion of the 35th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, under command of Capt. Michael R. Tryon, age 25. The company started its long march at 0800, moving northeast from Hill 637 in the hope of bivouacking at Hill 292. The march, should one wish to be technical about it, was to extend from coordinate YA 778-567 (Hill 637) to coordinate 796-597 (Hill 292) on the same map sheet.

All three platoons of Charlie Company moved on separate axis, having been told not to hold to any certain azimuth. This was in order to confuse the enemy as to their objective's location. About 1000 meters separated the units as they patrolled.

At 1100h the 2nd platoon entered upon a well-used enemy base camp. Their early caution was in vain. It had been stripped bare. Its one-time occupants had cleared away, leaving nothing that was worth destroying. But there they rested briefly in the shade. At about 1730 Second Platoon came to a hamlet with four hootches. But the day was going fast, the column still had a far piece to travel, not pausing to check the village out. One hour earlier, First Platoon had come that way and had stopped for a look

First Platoon had moved on 1,000 meters to Hill 292, which had already been designated for the nighttime defense. It closed on the knob at 1700h but did not feel too cheerful about it. The ground was high enough, but there were many tall trees, and the ground was littered with large boulders and rubble, though there were patches of loose earth. The men had time to send out a watering party to a clear stream that lay about 300 meters to the west of the position, some distance beyond the open ground that would be used for a landing zone. By the time the party had returned with the water, First Platoon's third of the perimeter was already well foxholed, and the crew-served weapons were in place.



Only 29 men were in First Platoon. Second Platoon was also thin, mustering just 31. Counting the men around Tryon in the headquarters group, the force as of that moment totaled 73. **(MAP 1)**

Second Platoon, led by point man McLemore, entered into the rim just 90 minutes later. Its watering party was sped to the creek because the night was now coming with a rush, as it always does in these latitudes. The rest of the platoon fitted into a sector and began looking for the softer spots where digging was possible.

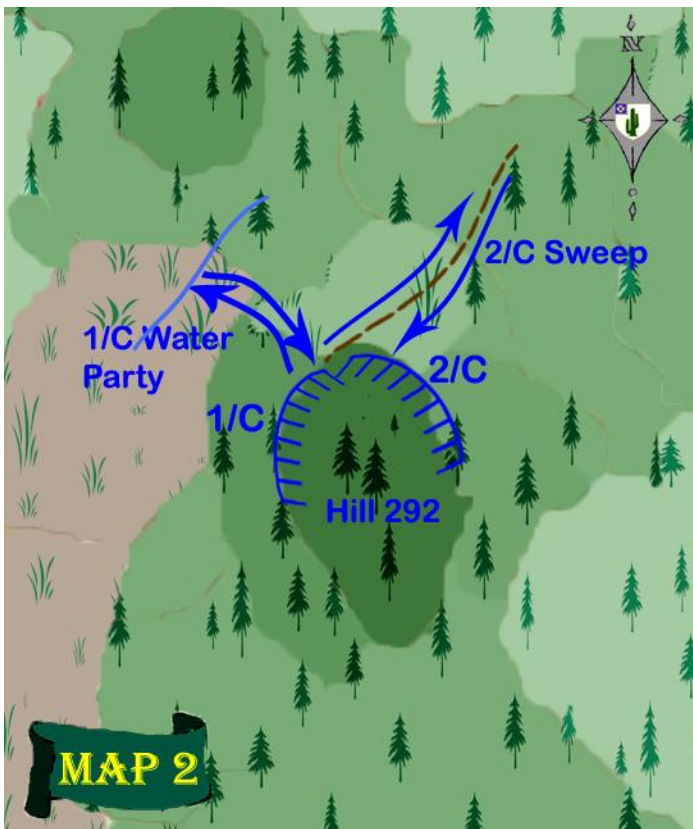
The Second Platoon sweep that would go out that evening once the perimeter had shaped up was already standing by, one squad armed and ready to go, but awaiting, as were Captain Tryon and the others, the return of the watering party.

The patrol out of First Platoon, under S.Sgt. Jesse Johnson, a 31-year-old Negro from St. Louis with nine years of Regular Army service, had made its round trip, scouting one main trail that ran past the perimeter for 250 meters to the northwest.

"Negative," Johnson had said to Tryon "We didn't see or smell one thing."

First Platoon's outposts had been pulled in and no LP's had yet gone out.

So, among the men of the main body within the clearing there was no general feeling of alarm or awareness of immediate danger. Yet there were exceptions. The dark was coming ever faster, though it was not yet full in those few minutes before the moon would rise. It was the eerie time of day when the imagination plays tricks and the eyes see too much and too little



Both machine-gun positions in First Platoon were well forward on the rim and the crews, working hard at it, had about finished the task of setting the weapons and digging a hole in very loose earth. Pfc Michael Edwards, the assistant gunner on the right, straightened up and peered at the brush line 30 meters to his front

"Surer than hell," he whispered, "I see eyes out there Can't you see them?"

His audience was the gunner, Pfc Dennis W Fountain, 21, of Lansing, Mich. Fountain quit digging to take a look. Several moments passed, then he answered, "I see something that looks like eyes." He paused, looked back over his shoulder, and added, "Mike, the moon has just come over the trees What we see may be a reflection from the leaves"

At the other gun, Pfc "Chick" St Clair, head gunner, was also stirring and staring "Mac," he whispered, "I am not kidding—I see something out there.

Maybe it's my imagination You take a look"

McLemore squinted long and hard. "I see nothing," he said. "I hope I keep seeing nothing. You better hope, too."

At that precise moment a whistle was blown somewhere out beyond the company circle. As the sound died, a green-star cluster rose above the hush not more than 10 meters to their front.

Among the watering party, now legging it back to the company position as fast as men could beat through the bush, there were none of these equivocal doubts and false hopes. Approaching the landing zone on the return journey, Pfc. Gary Lynn Finney was certain he saw a movement off to his right and told the others. Finney, a 23-year-old welder from Bay City, Mich., the father of two children, may have felt a pang that he had extended his tour in Vietnam for six months. **(MAP 2)**

As they swept past the LZ, they all felt the presence. They saw no one and heard nothing. But the reeds on both sides of them were bending and billowing, and they knew the movement marked the passage of crawling men because the night was windless. The perimeter was 50 meters farther along. Wordlessly, and by common consent, the men broke into a run. Spec. 4 James E. Pell, who had charge of the Command Post security detail, rushed on ahead to tell the news to 1st Sgt. Huey P. Danley, a Louisianan. Not quite making it, he was five meters from Danley when the first hot rounds beat against the company's ground.

One casualty was calling for an aid man before the bullets arrived. Pfc. Terry Kellam, a rifleman, had been standing when the green-star cluster was fired. It hit him in the chest and shoulder.

Less than 30 seconds later came the blast of rifle and machine-gun fire. It broke more raggedly than shatteringly against the half of the company circle that faced the LZ, engaging all positions of Second Platoon and three positions of First Platoon Blazing at them were two machine guns and perhaps 20

other automatic weapons. The North Vietnamese fire base was at least 30 meters from the company line as the action began.

Almost simultaneously with the initial burst of enemy automatic weapons fire, the left machinegun of the 2d platoon commenced firing. Within five seconds of the initial enemy burst, outgoing fire was three times as heavy as incoming fire. M-79 grenadiers were firing heavily using both HE and shot rounds. The heaviest outgoing fire was in the 2d platoon area where firing continued for approximately twenty minutes. Because of the ferocity of the enemy attack, the deafening roar of both friendly and enemy weapons, and the difficulty of movement because of the heavy incoming fire, it took that long to slow down the rate of fire. During this period, the 1st platoon was receiving and returning fire; however, no infantry assaults were made on their positions. Their fire, therefore, was slow and well controlled.



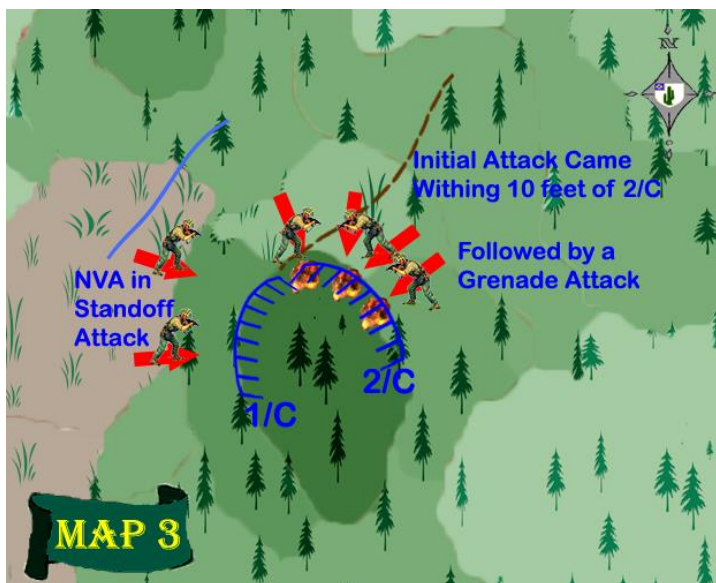
Sergeant Wendell Wilson of Second Platoon, from Scottsville, Ky., was killed instantly in the first second. He had been sitting, back to the enemy, feet dangling in a shallow hole, as he spooned beans from a C-ration tin. Two bullets, not more than an inch apart, entered near his spine and tore through his heart. He slumped over, doubled up in the fox hole.

Seeing it happen, not five feet away, Fountain knew Wilson was dead and did not bother to check the body. At the same time, Pfc. Aaron Cowan of East St. Louis, a rifleman on the other side of Fountain, was hit by a bullet in the left thigh. Bewildered by the suddenness of the wounding, he yelled to Fountain, "Hell, they didn't let me get started."

Private First-Class Evander Marsh, a 20-year-old Negro from Newark, had time to get off two rounds from his M-79 launcher; he aimed toward the spot 15 meters off where he had seen the flare go up. The reason he had taken position behind a tree was that he had found too late that the foxhole was not large enough to hold both himself and his buddy, Pfc. Thomas Leak Jr. of Kansas City, Mo. So, he yielded the better cover to his friend and within 30 seconds afterward heard Leak crying, "I'm hit, Marsh, hit, hit, hit." Marsh crawled over from the tree. Leak had a bad sucking chest wound from a bullet. "You'll have to wait," Marsh said. "The medic has his hands full."

Browne, the assistant gunner, had no sooner finished giving aid to Kellam than he heard a cry his own position: "Oh, my eye, my eye, my "It came from the chief gunner, Spec. 4 Robert Martinez of Denver. A grenade fragment had blinded his left eye. Browne pulled out his handkerchief and handed it to Martinez, saying, "That will have to do you till the aid man comes." Together, they kept working the gun, firing at the flashes they saw in the bush. Careful with their aiming, they fired not more than 100 rounds in the first minute and were enormously pleased when they saw some of the flashes from enemy ground wink out, to stay that way.

Sergeant Johnson was also having his moments of satisfaction. When the fight had been going less than one minute, he crawled along, checking the platoon line from end to end. Every man in position to fire was using his weapon.



With the fight only five minutes along McLemore tested the claymore mines he had buried and found that the wire had been cut, which could only mean that skirmishers had moved to within 15 feet of him. Thereupon Edwards tested his claymore and in the wake of the blast heard several voices screaming only a few yards to his front. He had fired the mine in the nick of time.

His partner, Fountain, was reserving his mine for the big push that he thought would be coming soon. It was his first action and he was making the most of it. He knew that there were enemy skirmishers within 10 feet of his gun, but, like McLemore, he could not bring fire to bear on them without standing in the clear.

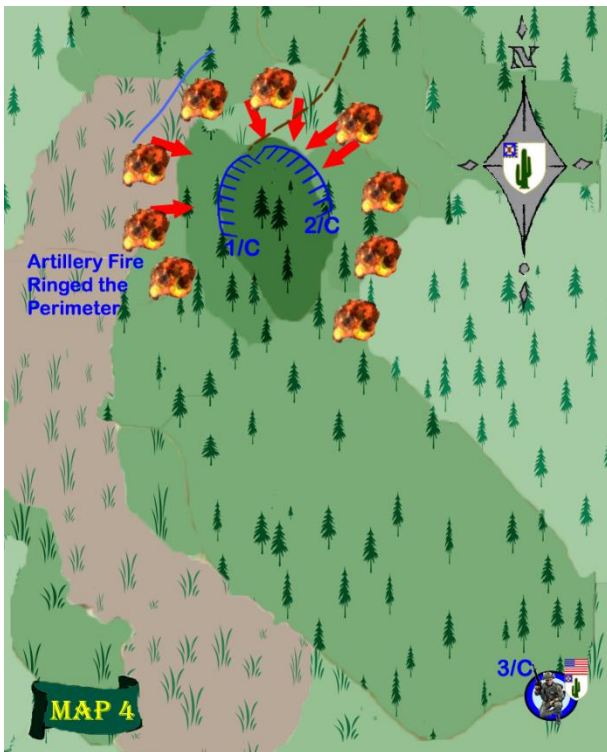
Fountain's first good opening came when a figure bounded out of the dark and straight for the gun where Young had collapsed from the shoulder wound. Before Fountain could swing his M-60 around, the Vietnamese, standing directly above Young, put two more bullets in him, one in the right leg, the other in the left chest, killing him. The skirmisher started back over the piled-up logs in front of Young's gun. He was standing again and starting to run when Fountain's M-60 fire cut him down.

From approximately 1850 to 1915, the enemy made repeated heavy assaults against the 2d platoon sector. Enemy fire consisted primarily of short automatic bursts. Spread over a distance of approximately fifty meters and with ten to fifteen men firing at a time, the enemy advanced, dropped back, and then advanced again. At times, the enemy moved to positions as close as five to ten meters from friendly positions. During approximately the last five minutes of intense enemy fire, the attacking elements seemed to form a line and, from the prone position or from behind trees or irregularities in the ground, simply poured heavy fire into the perimeter.

As the charging attacks slowed down in the 2d platoon area, a number of small rushes were made against the 1st platoon sector. The first assault was made astride the trail from the northwest against the MG position in that sector. The enemy came within ten or fifteen meters of the perimeter before being forced to fall back. About five minutes later, the other MG position of the 1st platoon was assaulted astride the trail from the southeast. Again, the enemy was repelled by fire.

(MAP 3) After six minutes of the action it seemed to Finney that the ground beyond the perimeter suddenly quieted. Then he heard a whistle blow, and as the sound died two grenades came in on his machine gun. Both were duds. He waited a few seconds before throwing them out, then he heard grenades popping elsewhere along the line. Eight potato mashers sailed in on McLemore and St. Clair; all failed to explode. Marsh was less fortunate. He was diving headfirst for his foxhole when the grenade shower started. His legs were in the air when one potato masher exploded five feet from the hole. One slug tore into his kneecap.

Private First-Class Timothy Rooney, First Platoon's aid man, was next to Second Platoon's flank when the grenading began. One missile blasted out next to his legs; miraculously, no metal touched him, though the explosion lifted him bodily and threw him outside the perimeter. In the fall he pulled the muscles of his left arm. Crawling back, he started toward Martinez to give him first aid. A North Vietnamese charged in to stop him, flashing a knife. Rooney took out his .45 pistol, got to his feet, grappled with the man, then conked him in the head and continued on, paying as much heed as if he



had been swatting a fly. Finney then saw someone flash out of the darkness and empty an M16 clip into the prone figure. Rooney was already working on Martinez.

Private First-Class James Stewart, a Second Platoon rifleman, was lying next to a tree and using it for cover. As he rolled over, a grenade came in and exploded under his body. The metal tore into his groin, scrotum, and lower bowel. Rooney looked him over and figured he had little or no chance. He gave him morphine. Sgt. Phillip Hord, a First Platoon squad leader, had a grenade explode in front of his foxhole and was peppered with metal in the chest and shoulders. Also, out of First Platoon, Spec. 4 James Springer was hit by fragments in the back and right arm; this happened less than a minute after a bullet, first stripping the sight from his rifle, became lodged in his right arm.

Fighting next to McLemore, Pfc. Harry Williams was hit by a large grenade shard in the right thigh. "Mac," he said, "I think I got a bullet in my leg." McLemore stripped down

his pants, felt him over, and said, "So far as I can tell, you got nothing there but blood." A minute or so later, Rooney was in the hole bandaging Williams. It was his first fight.

(MAP 4) The grenading lasted about four minutes. By the time the fight was 10 minutes along, the U.S. artillery was working over the ground outside the perimeter, feeling its way carefully, gradually coming closer, firing three shells at a time. The light battery support came from 2/9th Artillery. There was also fire from the 175's of A/6/14th, based at Plei Djerang. Guided by Lt. James Stutts, a forward observer who had been promoted that day, the fires ranged all around the outer circle, except in the south-southwest quadrant.

There was good reason for the omission. The company's Third Platoon was still out there somewhere, wondering what to do. With the fight 11 minutes old, the platoon called in for the first time. It had held up at a river bank, and was approximately 700 meters from the perimeter to the south-southwest. What to do? "Don't try to come in," Tryon said. "Stay right where you are until morning." With the pressure still building against the company, that was the toughest decision made during the night, and its wisdom is beyond question. The platoon stayed in place. One man was killed by a sniper in early morning; its experience otherwise was uneventful.

By this time (approximately twenty minutes after the initial enemy burst) artillery fire began to come in close enough to be effective. A contributing factor in the delay was that the artillery FO's radio failed to function initially and several minutes were wasted in the process of finding another radio and re-establishing contact with the firing battery. Once the artillery began to burst close to the enemy on the east, the ferocity of the enemy attacks in that area decreased considerably until after 1915 when enemy activity degenerated to a "lie on the ground, shoot, and throw grenades" effort.

When the grenading tapered off, Pfc. John M. Mucci saw a large figure loom directly in front of his foxhole. Because of its size, he thought he was looking at a GI. "Come on in!" Mucci yelled. The figure dashed toward him. A little late, Mucci realized it was a North Vietnamese. He tried to fire upward with

his M-16; there was only a click—the magazine was empty. He made a football tackle at the man's knees and dragged him down into the (foxhole).

Mucci had already reached for his machete as he now slashed away at the tall enemy.

Specialist 4 Robert Prunier jumped to help Mucci and got a throttling hold on the NVA soldier's neck. Suddenly Mucci's blade broke, leaving half the steel in the man's shoulder. Prunier, maintaining his stranglehold, was now on top of the Vietnamese and bearing down on him with his full weight. Mucci, freeing himself from the tangle, picked up Prunier's M-16. By then Prunier had the body so well covered that Mucci had only the man's legs for a target. He fired two bullets into the thighs and the figure went limp.

Figuring he was dead, Mucci and Prunier picked him up out of the foxhole and heaved him toward the outer darkness. The body came down heavily on the back of the aid man, Rooney. Rooney grabbed for one arm and was astounded to see it swing around in a complete circle; Mucci's machete had cut through the bone and the arm was dangling by flesh alone.



Sickened, believing the man dead, Rooney started crawling away. Mucci, meanwhile, had lost interest, having resumed fire from his foxhole. He glanced that way just by chance and saw that the "dead man," too, was in motion, pawing his way along, using only one arm. That was too much. Having used everything else, Mucci went after him with an entrenching shovel, at last killing the enemy by bashing in his head. It took two or three minutes.

Maybe a minute passed after Mucci got back to his foxhole. Then from the outer darkness came a mocking voice in English: "Hey GI, how is your company commander?"

Undaunted, Mucci sang out, "He's fine. How about yours?"

"Not very well," came the answer "You have just killed him."

There could be little doubt about it. What had once been a fine figure of a man was ornamented with an officer's belt and was carrying a pistol that had remained undrawn, its firing pin broken.

From this time, 1950h, until contact was broken completely, the enemy fired at the perimeter from approximately thirty meters range, threw hand grenades, and fired M-79 grenade launchers. A few minor attacks consisting of only four to five men were made against the 2d platoon sector and were relatively easily repulsed. It was apparent that the enemy was withdrawing and by 2100 fire into the perimeter essentially had ceased.

During the entire action, the enemy used grenades to the maximum. The M-79 rounds he also used proved to be extremely effective, inflicting nine of the thirteen friendly casualties. Many of the enemy rounds burst on the edge of the friendly positions. There were also a number of tree bursts, planned possibly in an attempt to get increased fragmentation effects or in an attempt to hit the command group in the center of the perimeter. In any event, the gunners seemed to be well trained.

At 2100, friendly casualties stood at two KIA and ten WIA. Two men had been hit in the first exchanges of fire; the others accumulated as the fighting progressed. Since contact was considered to be broken, aerial medevac was requested for the more seriously wounded. At 2213, a USAF "HUSKY" medevac helicopter arrived in the area to extract three seriously wounded men by winch through the heavy tree

canopy. At approximately 2237, just as the three wounded had been loaded aboard the aircraft, a rocket was fired from southeast of the perimeter causing the helicopter to crash inside the perimeter.

McLemore had been picking up grenades, his back to the scene, when the crash came. Assisting him in the tidying-up chore was his platoon commander, Lt. Ramon T. Pulliam, an Alabaman, who was standing and looking the other way.



McLemore heard Pulliam scream, "God damn! God damn! God damn!" the voice rising higher each time. Those few seconds contained more horror than Pulliam had known in his entire life and he was momentarily paralyzed.

Pulliam was off and running toward the blazing Husky. Sergeant Johnson also jumped from his foxhole and came on the run to join the rescue party. Next came Rooney, the boy medic who had already been through the ordeal of a lifetime in one evening.

Pulliam and Johnson worked as a team at the front of the fire. The Husky's plexiglass had been shattered by the crash, a fact that helped to feed the fire, though it was a blessing in disguise. They could get to the pilots. Johnson had grabbed the air medic's ax. With Pulliam helping him, he used it to cut away the pilot's harness. Then they pulled him out, his clothing ablaze, a small problem left to other hands. For they were already back, struggling to save the co-pilot, first cutting the harness, then hauling him bodily through the aperture. It was not easy. A large man, he was in dementia from his physical agony and resisted with a giant's strength.

The ship had been burning as it came down. The three wounded men, Cowan, Martinez and Leak, were killed either by the rocket or the crash itself. The pilot and copilot were both injured, however, the men of Company C were able to chop into the aircraft and get them out before the fuel caught fire. The mechanic was pinned inside the wreckage. Although numerous attempts were made to get him out by cutting into the ship, finally the fuel ignited, and the ship was engulfed in flames before he could be saved. This incident raised the Army KIA total to five.

C Co commander Tryon, through the crisis, had been doing as a good commander should—moving around the circle from position to position, talking to the men, steadying them. The captain was certain the enemy would come back, and because this conviction never left him, he continued with his rounds throughout the night.

From the time the medevac helicopter crashed until 0630h the following morning when sweeps were sent out, there were movements of individuals detected around the perimeter, however, no further attacks were made. The individuals moving about were engaged to prevent them from policing the battlefield and artillery fire was brought in continuously for the same purpose.

The sweeps of the area in the morning found nineteen NVA KIA. One enemy WIA was captured. There were also one RPD, two SKS, three pistols, and six AK-47's found near the scene of action. At 0815h, a second USAF "HUSKY" medevac helicopter returned to the area and evacuated the pilot, copilot, and some of the Company C wounded. That afternoon, men with relatively minor wounds were evacuated by UH-1D helicopters after an LZ had been cut in the clearing to the northeast.

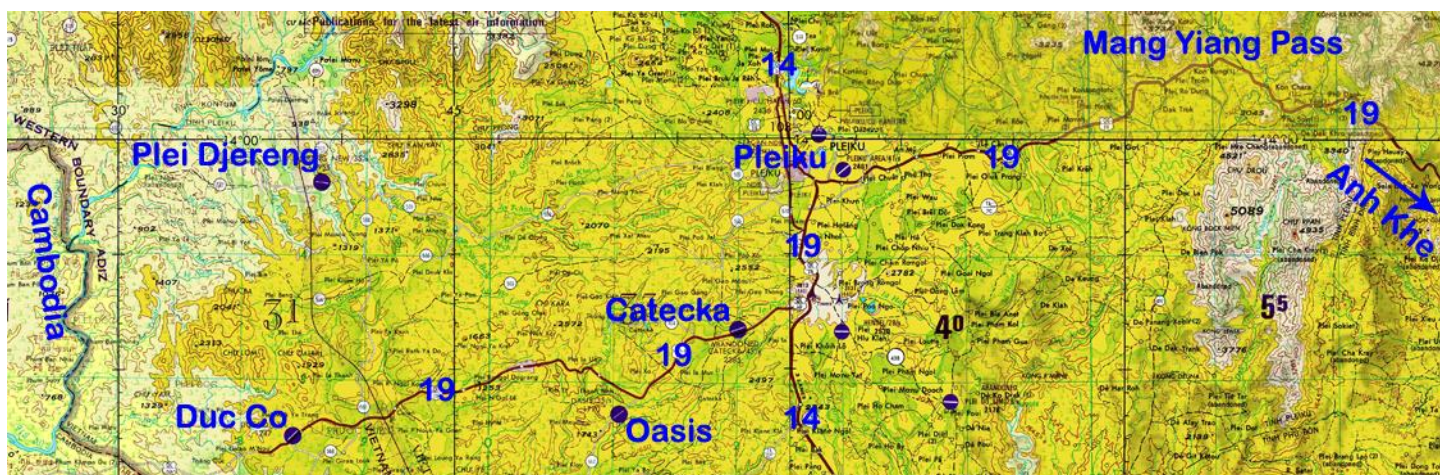
ROUTE SECURITY MISSIONS

During the periods in which the Cacti Battalions were not participating in major combat operations the battalions provided road security for Highway 19 East and Highway 19 West. The sector of responsibility varied from time to time but in most cases encompassed that portion of Highway 19 from Pleiku West to the Cambodian Border, and from Pleiku East to the Mang Giang Pass.

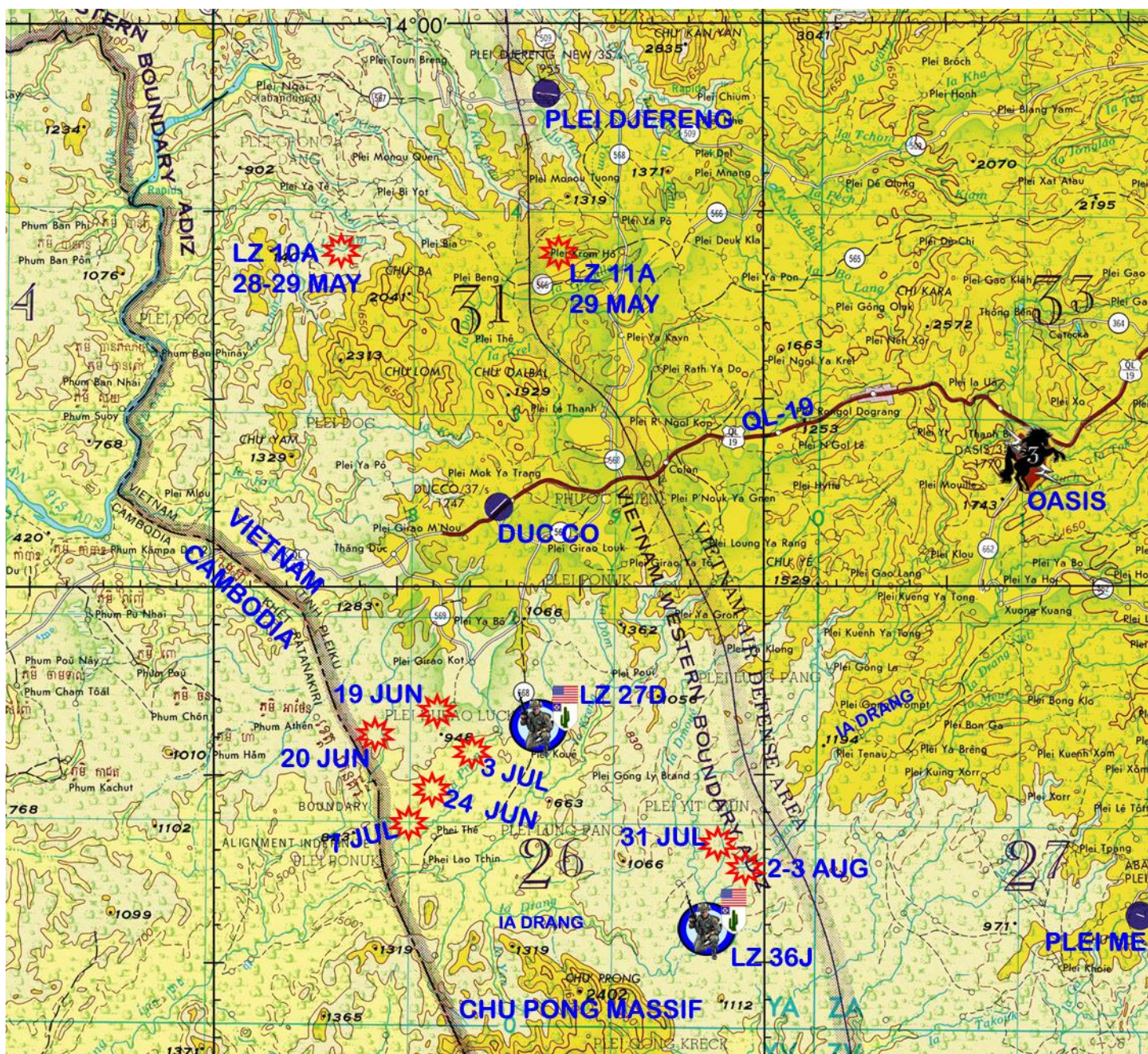
The security of Highway 19 is of the utmost tactical importance to the war effort in the Republic of Vietnam for it provides a means for quick redeployment of units to most areas in the Central Highlands. In addition, Highway 19 is the main east-west supply route for the 3d Bde Task Force, the 4th Inf Div, the 1st Air Cav Div, RVN units, and other units of MACV, such as the Special Forces camp at Duc Co.

Furthermore, the indigenous people of the Republic of Vietnam depend upon Highway 19 as a transportation system for passengers and commodities. Lack of physical security would not only hamper the country's economic growth but would also stem the war effort.

Thus, the battalions not only accomplished their tactical mission of securing the road for military purposes, but also contributed materially to the economic growth of the Republic of Vietnam.



PAUL REVERE BATTLE LOCATIONS





The 2d Bn 9th Arty during 1966 fired LZ preparations for Airmobile Assaults, fired nightly defensive concentrations around unit locations, attempted to channelize enemy into ambush sites by fire, assisted unit commanders in land navigation, integrated 105 HOW direct fire into infantry unit perimeter security, fired extensive H&I (Harassment & Interdiction) fire on suspected enemy locations and infiltration routes, provided accurate and effective fire support when units were in contact, worked closely with the Infantry Arty LO in providing coordinated fire support, and provided blocking fires to prevent enemy withdrawals.



“Mighty Ninth”





C Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry provided troop transport on occasion and served as an extremely useful mobile reserve/reaction force, assisted in securing perimeter positions during hours of darkness, supplemented company defensive perimeters when it became necessary to move elements of a company to reinforce at another location, and provided an additional command and control headquarters which on several occasions executed search and destroy missions with both battalions in their areas of operation.



“Raiders”





52d Aviation Battalion provided troop lift and resupply for the line units during the entire year, provided gunship support, engaged with the enemy, assisted in the evacuation of wounded on occasion when DUSTOFF was not immediately available, provided aircraft for extraction of POW's and provided the means for getting timely intelligence information to higher headquarters, and provided command and control ships for the Battalion Commanders.



52nd Aviation Bn





The 1st Battalion, 69th Armor provided valuable assistance on road security missions, assisted in ground surveillance and reconnaissance of areas of operation, although traffic ability restrictions caused by lack of suitable stream crossings hampered tank operations in some areas, and assisted in securing perimeter positions during hours of darkness.



“Speed and Power”





The 7th US Air Force supported the units by providing Forward Air Control (FAC) coverage over the infantry's areas of operation, assisting unit commanders in land navigation, alerting unit commanders of possible enemy ambush locations, informing commanders of enemy activities and fortifications, conducting immediate air request strikes in support of ground units in contact. These strikes were most effective and very accurate; and conducting air request strikes on suspected or known enemy locations. Not only did these strikes destroy enemy fortifications and men, but also effectively blocked the enemy from routes of approach and withdrawal which prevented any resupply of men or equipment.



7th USAF



The elements which supported the Cacti contributed immeasurably to the effective execution of the battalion's missions. Their attitude and professionalism reflected great credit on the supporting branches of the U.S. Army.

IN MEMORIAL

								
William Armstrong	Dennis Morgan	James Woods	Frederic DeLange	William Ayers	Paul Helsel	Donald Smith	James Spence	Steadmon Adams
2/6/66>>		2/6/66	2/12/66	2/27/66>>			2/27/66	3/15/66>>
								
Gary Bartz	Thomas Chandler	William Holbrook	Raymond Hood	Ignacio Huicochea-Reyna	Carmelo Sanchez-Berrios	Dorsey Tatum	Pedro Vazquez-Gonzales	Robert Williams
3/15/66>>								3/15/66
								
Albert Christy	Benjamin Lee	Johnnie Tenon	Richard Coleman	Denis Abbott	James Pruitt	Benny Flores	Louis Ridings	Donald Evans
3/17/66>>		3/17/66	3/29/66	4/22/66	4/30/66	5/17/66	5/23/66	5/28/66>>
								
Michael Glynn	Aramis Gonzalez-Perez	Roy M Jones	Ricardo Moreno	Leroy Robinson	Roger Rodriguez	John Barry	Thomas Campbell	Charlie Carden
5/28/66>>					5/28/66	5/29/66>>		
								
Sheldon Cohen	Darrel Dorman	Billy Ray Patrick	Leonard Peacock	Wallace Pilson	Richard Roundtree	Sylvester Swinford	Walter Wetzel	Don Green
5/29/66>>						5/29/66		5/31/66
								
Everett Light	Jose Simbola	Vincent Moeller	Curtis Bullard	Wayne Evitt	David Hutchings	Frederick Phoebus	Bobby Senters	George Williams
6/4/66	6/17/66	6/19/66	6/20/66>>					6/20/66
								
Willie Frances Jr	Allan Altieri	William Ellis	Octavio Febus	Billy Green	Aaron Hopkins	Kenneth Kaaihue	Warren Knepper	Richard LaBarbera
6/21/66	6/24/66>>							
								
Robert Reid	Horace Rogers	Gordon Skyles	Carroll Tuthill	Jerry Williams	Harry Forbes	Richard McGee	James Wilson	Curtis Brockington
6/24/66>>				6/24/66	6/29/66	7/1/66	7/2/66	7/3/66>>
								
Christopher Brooks	Tommie Campbell	Robert Catling	Daniel Fields	Eurey Hatchett	Haze Howard	Joe Johnson	Herbert Lapp	William Lewis
7/3/66>>								7/3/66>>

IN MEMORIAL



7/3/66>>

7/3/66



7/5/66

7/7/66

7/25/66

7/31/66>>

7/31/66

8/2/66>>

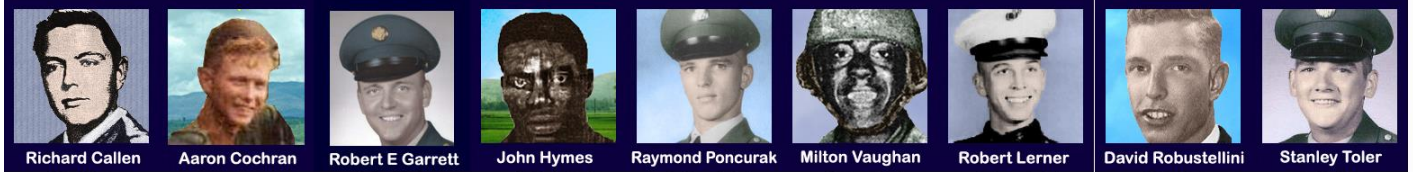


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8/7/66

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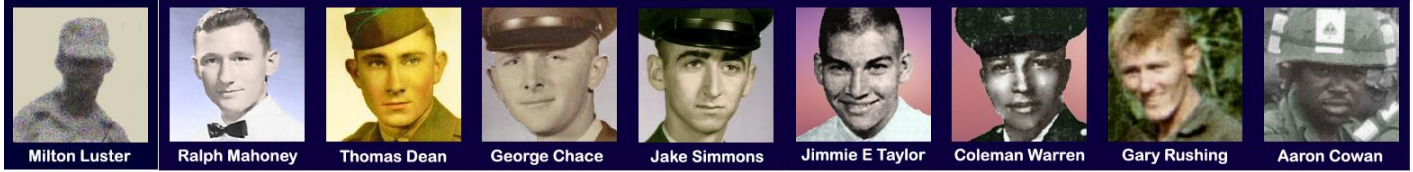
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11/28/66

