



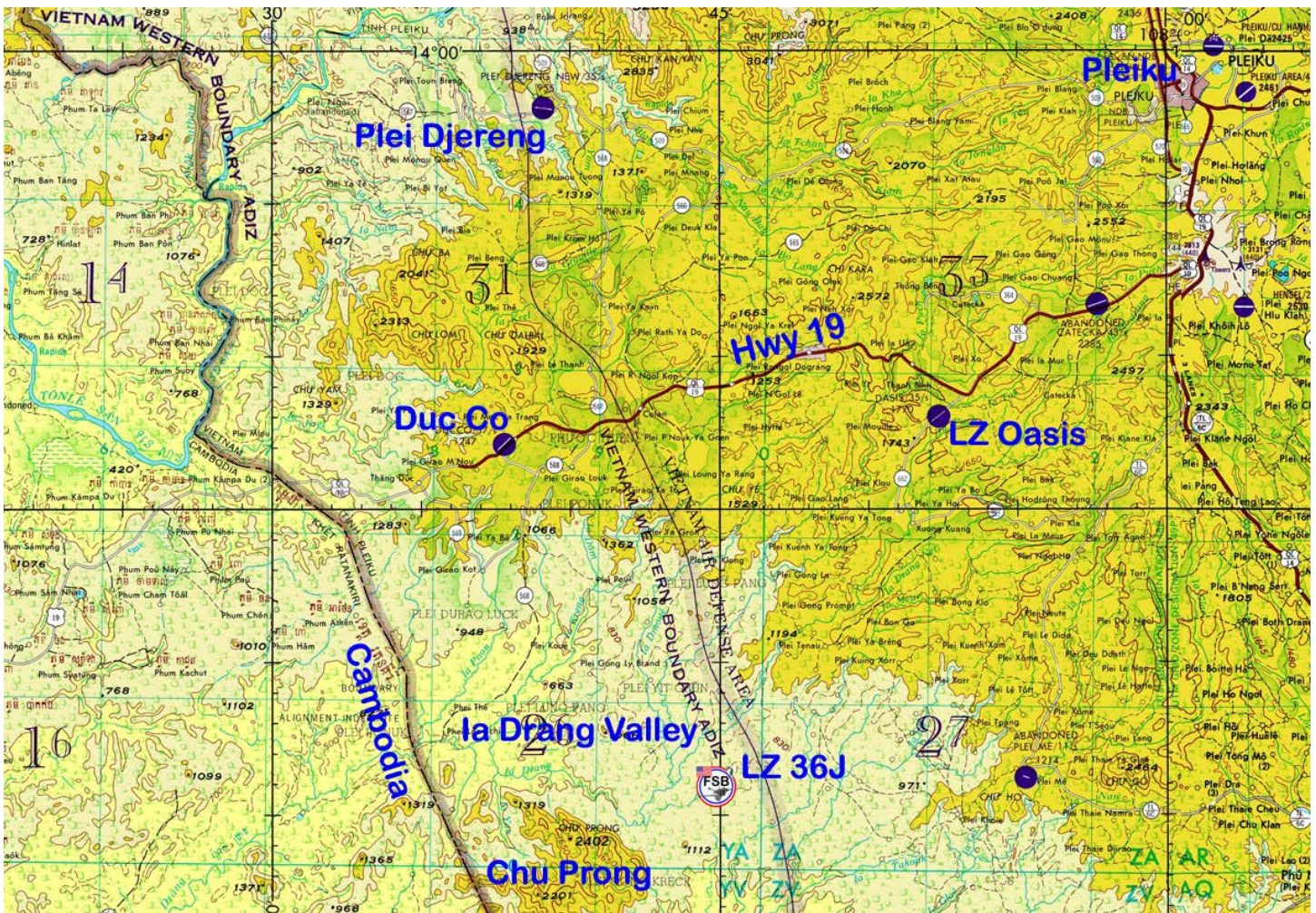
WELCOME TO "A WALK WITH THE 35TH"



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LZ 36J - 2 August 1966 3d Plt. 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.



Area Map

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.



A Co Officers - Photo by Lt George Jacunski A/B/HHC 2/35

At 0755 on 2 Aug 66, a composite force consisting of the 3d Platoon, Company A, and the attached battalion reconnaissance platoon, 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.

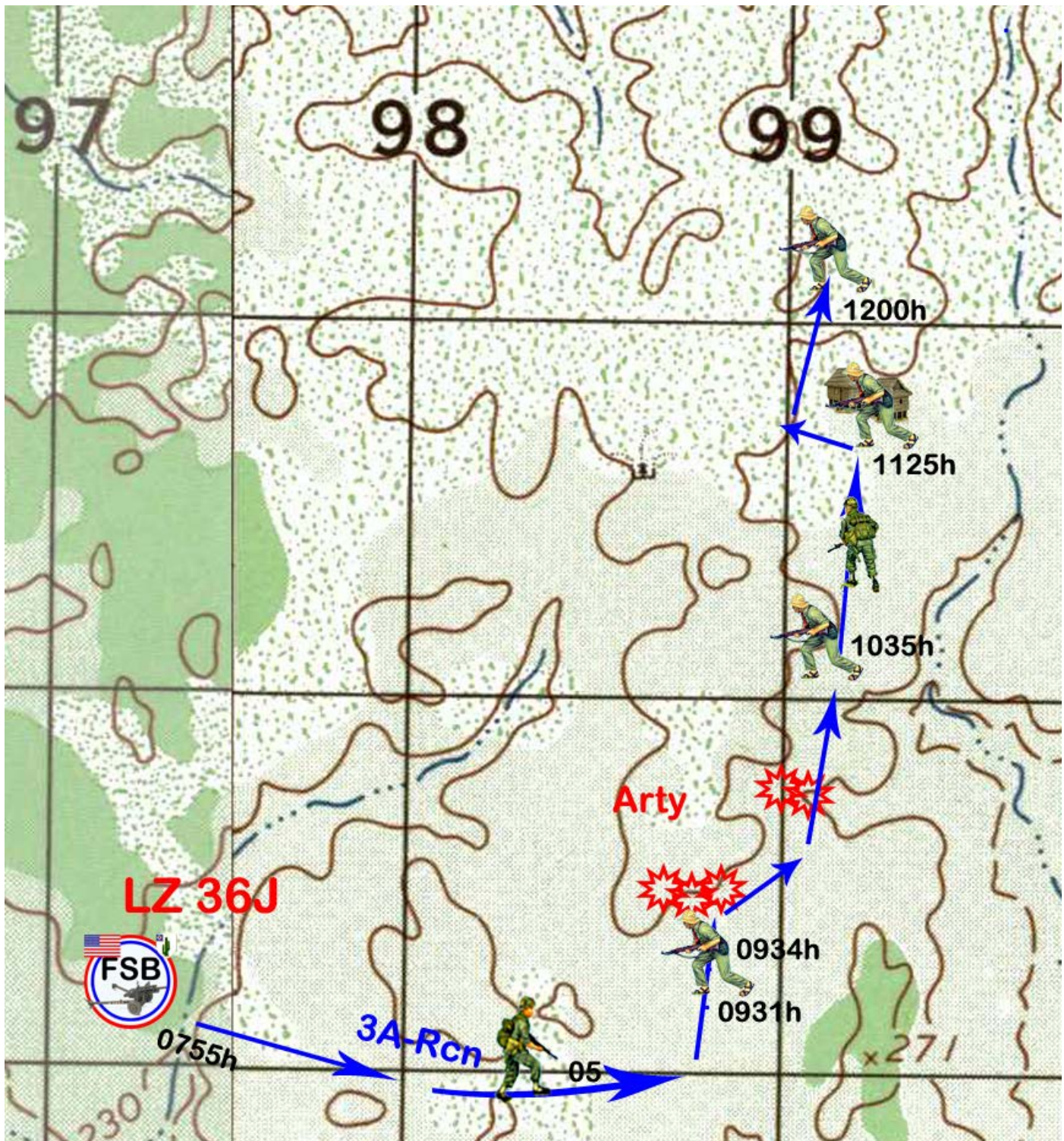
At 0931 a north-south trail was discovered and the point element of the reconnaissance platoon sighted one NVA at YA988052. This NA soldier was engaged with results unknown. At 0934, three NVA were engaged at coordinates YA988053. One of the three was KIA. As a precautionary measure, Capt. McDonough 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 foot prints 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.

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.

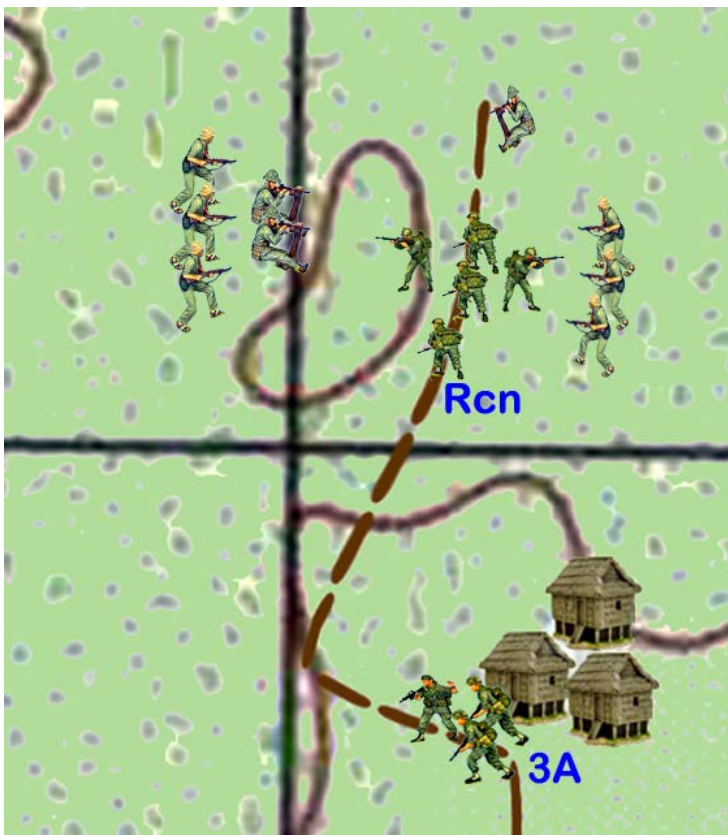
Concurrent with this action, fifty or more NVA were observed running on the flank. The enemy appeared to have been caught totally off guard. The reconnaissance platoon immediately engaged the NVA force. Both reconnaissance platoon flank security elements observed NVA to their flanks firing automatic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



2 August 1966 3A and Recon 2/35 route of travel

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.



2 August 1966 - 1200 hours

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

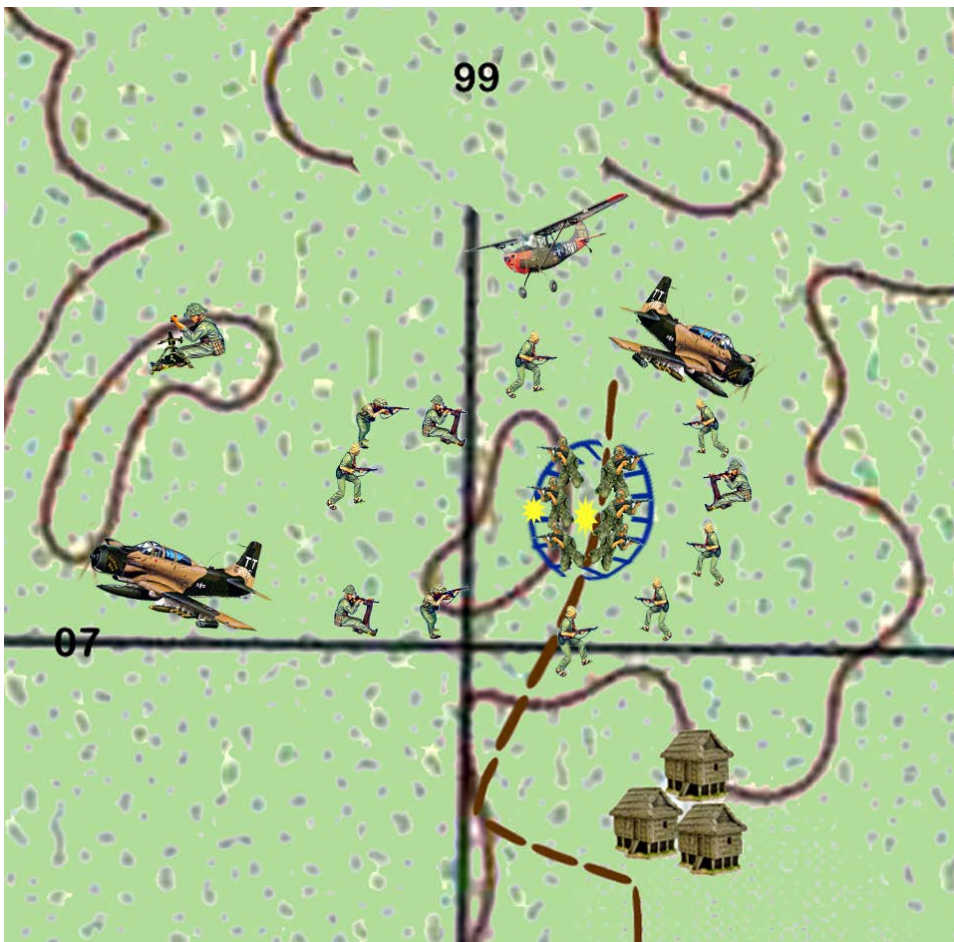
traced a path across the area from west to east. The second of the three rounds hit on the trail between Lt. Brennan and Captain McDonough. Captain McDonough was wounded by fragments. Moments later a machinegun firing in his direction hit him in the chest. Capt. McDonough died within seconds.

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.

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.

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).



Two A1E Skyraiders dropped mini bombs around the perimeter

Before the A1Es 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 A1Es broke up the mortar attack and in all probability aborted a mass attack by the enemy at this time. On completion of the A1E 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.

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 thirty NVA in the draw to the left flank. As the group came into range, it was taken under fire and ten NVA were KIA. The remaining twenty quickly dispersed. One Soviet LMG (7.62), one 1 LMG (7.62), six AK-47's, and three SKS's were 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.



A1E Skyraiders on a mission in Vietnam

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.



Pop Smoke photo by Walt Shields

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 B at 1603 and Company C at 1602. 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. 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.



Dust Off by K. Price Randel (UH-1 Huey)

(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.



NVA Mortar Crew

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.

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.

At approximately 2220, the enemy began blowing whistles, bugles, and screaming in unintelligible fashion. Captain Ord, concluding that a major assault was imminent, called in repeated artillery FFE (Fire For Effect) on the area from which the greatest volume of screaming seemed to be coming. These repeated artillery drubbings caused the "war dance" to cease. Apparently the artillery was on target. Captain Ord estimated that preparations for a major assault again had been disrupted.

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.

At 2400, one USAF AC 47 (puff the Magic Dragon) fired its entire load around the perimeter, followed at 0200, by an airstrike of two AIEs dropping napalm, CBU's, and finally strafing with 20mm cannons. This latter airstrike was conducted under very adverse weather conditions. The ceiling was extremely low and the pilots were further hampered by frequent rain showers. A single flashlight was used initially to identify the friendly perimeter to the FAC. Air support strikes were extremely well executed. All pilots involved displayed magnificent skill, courage, and perseverance.



AC-47 Puff the Magic Dragon

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.

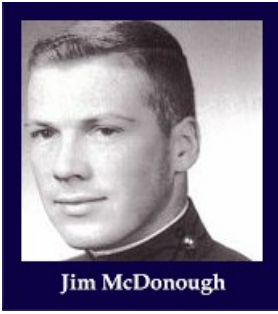
The first aircraft to arrive brought in a volunteer physician (Dr. Reber) from the brigade clearing company. He immediately administered needed aid to the seriously wounded. His selfless and courageous act brought quality medical attention to several of the seriously wounded and undoubtedly was instrumental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

Upon completion of the evacuation of the wounded, the remnants of Company A, and the battalion reconnaissance platoon were lifted to LZ 36J. Company C then conducted a more expensive sweep to the northeast, discovered a battalion size base camp, and counted an additional fourteen dead NVA. Company C returned to LZ 36J at 1700, having had no contact along the return route.

2 August 1966

A Company and Recon reinforced by C Co 2/35th

In memory of the following men, you will not be forgotten.



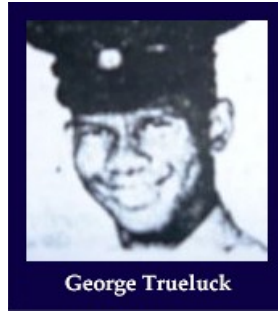
Jim McDonough

A Company



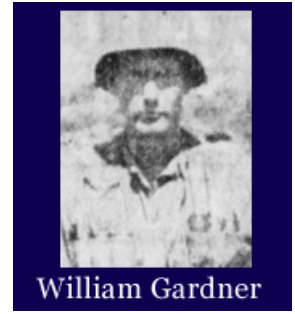
Benito Perez

A Company



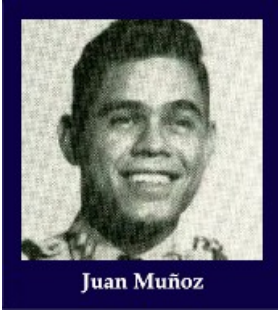
George Trueluck

Recon



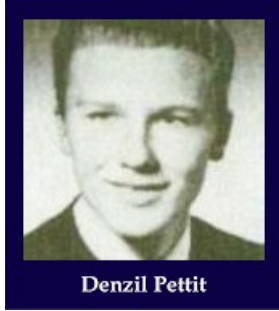
William Gardner

Recon



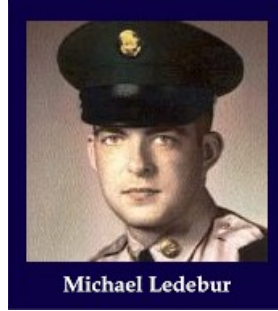
Juan Muñoz

Recon



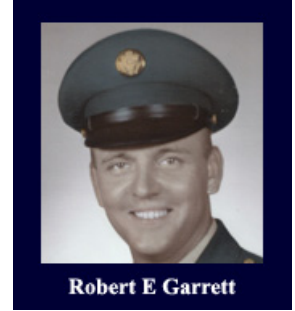
Denzil Pettit

Recon



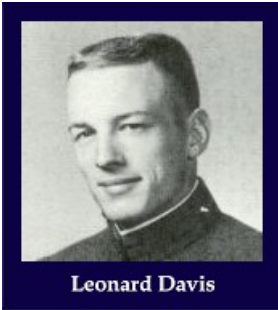
Michael Ledebur

Recon



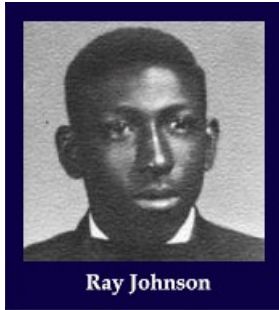
Robert E Garrett

Recon



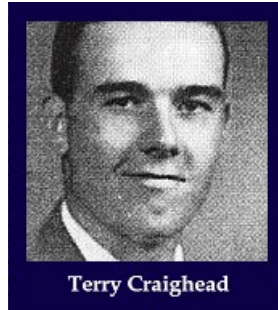
Leonard Davis

C Company



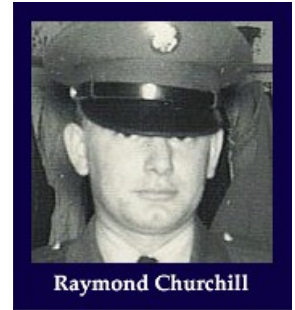
Ray Johnson

C Company



Terry Craighead

C Company



Raymond Churchill

FO 2/9th w A Co

**Alpha Company 2/35th Infantry Regiment
Valorous Unit Award
HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96375**

GENERAL ORDERS

NUMBER 4704

16 September 1967

AWARD OF THE VALOROUS UNIT AWARD



1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced.

Awarded: Valorous Unit Award

Date action: 2 August 1966 to 3 August 1966

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: COMPANY A, 2ND 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, 2ND 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, 2ND 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.

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