



WELCOME TO "A WALK WITH THE 35TH"



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1. On 22 April 1967 the 3d Brigade Task Force commenced operations as part of multi-brigade Task Force Oregon and was assigned a Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR) encompassing a majority of Duc Pho District and parts of Mo Duc District, Quang Ngai Province, Republic of Vietnam, covering an area of approximately 155 square miles (See Inclosure 1). The missions initially assigned the Brigade Task Force included conducting offensive and defensive operations designed to locate and destroy NVA and VC main force, local force, and guerrilla units; eliminating Viet Cong infrastructure; and supporting revolutionary development and RVN operations (See Inclosure 3).

2. Without a rest or stand down after participating in Operation Pershing with the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), the Brigade deployed by air and sea to Duc Pho and relieved the 2d Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). The Brigade established a Forward Tactical Command Post at Duc Pho, and the maneuver battalions displaced to establish separate Forward Fire Support Command Posts; thereby increasing the range of operations.

3. The area encompassed by the Brigade TAOR had been under communist domination since the end of World War II. The two districts, which had long provided communist forces with a regular food source, a secure area for resupply operations, important operational basis and many well indoctrinated communist leaders, were considered critical for the continuation of communist aggression. Opposed by large NVA and VC forces and well organized and well equipped VC hamlet guerrillas which were a result of a strong communist infrastructure (See Inclosure 2), the maneuver elements immediately began extensive search and destroy operations. On the first day of operations the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry made contact with enemy forces in an extremely well fortified hamlet. The battle continued through the rest of the day and night and was climaxed by a sweep of the village the following morning, which found 33 enemy killed (See Tab A). Documents captured revealed that the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry had clashed with the 3d Company, 93d Battalion, 2d VC Regiment. The 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry fought two (2) more major battles during the latter part of April. Both of these battles were fought against a well armed and disciplined enemy in the fortified villages and were almost identical to the battle on the 22d of April 1967. Each time the enemy waited until US Forces were at close range then opened fire with their automatic weapons and machineguns. Through gallant fighting of the American soldiers, 24 enemy were killed in the battle on 23-24 April 1967 and 41 enemy were killed in the battle on 25-26 April 1967.

4. Battles and skirmishes occurred daily in the numerous fortified hamlets throughout the TAOR as the enemy fought aggressively to maintain control of the area. The domination by communist forces had been so extensive that almost every hamlet was fortified. The enemy had carefully considered all approaches to the fortified villages and had constructed mutually supporting bunkers with interconnecting trenches and concealed escape routes. Their positions were further defended by ingenious mines and booby traps placed along likely avenues of approach. Since innocent civilians often inhabited the fortified villages with the VC, artillery

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and gunship preparations could not be used to soften the villages. Often as the men assaulted a village, the enemy would wait until the American forces were only 15 meters from their concealed positions before cutting loose with a hail of automatic weapons fire. The enemy fought well, adjusting his forces to counter US attacks and exercised maximum cover, concealment and fire discipline. Despite these extremely hazardous conditions and the knowledge that the enemy forces could be behind the next hedge-row, the men of the Brigade conducted daily searches of hamlet after hamlet with a fierce determination and loyalty which is an example for all Free World Force.

5. During the initial phases of operations in the Duc Pho area, the civil affairs teams moved quickly to aid the local populace of Duc Pho. Golden Fleece Operations immediately began on the rich coastal plain to deny valuable foodstuff to the VC and NVA and provide food for the hungry villagers. Under the protection and watchful eyes of combined US and ARVN forces, workers were moved to the fields to harvest rice. The rice was evacuated to Duc Pho and distributed among the villagers and used to aid the development of refugee camps. In conjunction with the Golden Fleece Operations, the Psychological Warfare Teams instituted intensive programs of massive leaflet drops, loudspeakers from aircraft, and PSYOPS Teams working with the infantry. In the three months prior to the Brigade's arrival it was reported that only three (3) Hoi Chanhs rallied to the Government of South Vietnam. Within a few weeks, the total had reached 100 with over 60 rallying in a four (4) day period. The total continued to rise and reached 268 by 20 August 1967.

6. The Brigade continued to expand the TAOR during May until it increased to over 240 square miles. Each of the numerous fortified hamlets within the TAOR required a detailed search in order to deprive the enemy of hidden caches of weapons, supplies, and foodstuffs. Search and destroy operations continued in an attempt to find and fix the antagonists, and squad size to platoon size contacts occurred almost daily. The aggressive search and destroy operations forced the enemy to withdraw and reorganize because lines of communications and control deteriorated under the unrelenting pressure exerted by the 3d Brigade. No longer were enemy forces free to roam the countryside to terrorize those not sympathetic to the communist ideology. The latter part of May saw increased activity in the TAOR as the enemy began to mass forces in an attempt to gain a victory and win the confidence of the people. On the 19th of May a special agent report from Duc Pho District revealed an enemy force, 300 strong, located in the vicinity of BS8431. Contact was made in the afternoon as elements of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry combat assaulted into the area. A fierce battle continued into the night as units were deployed to block avenues of withdrawal. A sweep of the battlefield revealed that many were able to escape during the night, but thirty-one enemy bodies littered the battlefield. Documents captured indicated the antagonist to be the 2d Company, 9th Battalion, 22d NVA Regiment and 3d Company, 7th Battalion, 22d NVA Regiment (See Tab B).

7. A day and a half later the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry again made contact with the 70th Heavy Weapons Company and 3d Company, 7th Battalion, 22d NVA Regiment. The enemy force had moved into a fortified village vicinity of BS8928, and was determined to stand and fight. Bitter close in fighting lasted

for 18 hours before a final assault was mounted on the enemy positions. Over 80 enemy, by body count, died while many others were believed to have died in tunnels and caves destroyed by artillery and air strikes (See Tab C).

8. During the same period the 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry was also in heavy contact. On the 20th of May, Company A made contact with elements of the 93d Battalion, 2d VC Regiment and the 14th Company, 400th Mortar Battalion, 3d NVA Division (See Tab D). Initially pinned down by heavy automatic weapons fire, Company A layed down a heavy volume of fire and began maneuvering against the well prepared positions. The bitter fighting continued throughout the night and into the next day. Company A was reinforced by Company C and Troop C, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, and the combined force mounted a devastating attack on the communist force. Artillery, gunships and air strikes supported the combined force assault which left 89 enemy killed by body count.

9. Enemy contact continued unabated through the 29th of May, as contacts were made with squads to reinforced companies. On the 27th of May the 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry clashed with elements of the 60th Battalion, 1st VC Regiment, 2d NVA Division (See Tab E). The contact began when the Blue Team was immediately surrounded, and they fought desperately in 103° heat to hold their position. Company B, Recon Platoon and Troop C (-), 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry were deployed to reinforce the Blue Team. The Blue Team was dangerously low on ammunition and had sustained heat casualties as well as battle casualties when reinforcements arrived. The reinforcements quickly organized and assaulted the enemy positions. When the last pockets of resistance were overrun, the units consolidated to establish a perimeter for the night. Early the next morning they came under a mortar attack, which was quickly silenced by counter-mortar fires and artillery. A sweep of the battlefield on the morning of the 28th revealed 87 enemy killed by body count.

10. On the 28th of May Company B and the Recon Platoon continued a sweep of the battlefield and established night locations near the mouth of the Song Tra Cau Valley. Two (2) platoons of Company B and the Recon Platoon had been deployed to ambush positions. At 0240 hours Company B (-) came under a heavy mortar attack which was followed by a two pronged ground attack that carried to within 15 meters of the perimeter before it was repelled. Although the company commander was mortally wounded in the mortar barrage, the unit maintained its combat integrity and fought with inspired determination to repel the attacking forces. Although many of the fallen enemy were probably carried from the area, a sweep of the battlefield the next morning found 29 enemy dead. The contact was with elements of the 20th Battalion, 1st VC Regiment, 2d NVA Division and documents captured indicated the presence of elements of the 1st, 2d, and 3d Companies of the 90th Battalion, 1st VC Regiment, 2d NVA Division (See Tab E).

11. During the period 19 May to 29 May, 381 communists, by actual body count, were killed and 151 weapons captured by the 3d Brigade. The series of battles within this ten day period dealt serious blows to the communist forces. Defeated in every encounter with US Forces, communist control of the area was rapidly deteriorating.

12. As enemy action decreased, emphasis was placed on establishment of lines of communications within the TAOR. Enemy sapper units increased use of anti-personnel and anti-tank mines and booby traps to harass and interrupt work by US Forces to open roads. The sapper units were very professional and deadly imaginative in the use of local material to fabricate mines. Defying the sapper units, the engineers intensified their effort to repair bridges along Highway #1 through the TAOR. Under the tactical security provided by the Brigade the road was opened, and on the 14th of June the first convoy from Chu Lai closed Duc Pho. The convoy proceeded through the TAOR under the security provided by the Brigade without incident. The re-opening of Highway #1 marked the first time in 2½ years that it was open for travel and provided evidence of the crippling blows that had been dealt communist forces. This demonstrated that the 3d Brigade Task Force controlled the area and was a great psychological victory for the GVN. Valuable supplies for the development of refugee areas in Duc Pho and Mo Duc Districts began to flow down Highway #1.

13. In the last part of June intelligence reports indicated that enemy forces were again attempting to mass in order to gain a victory. Reports stated that a large force was located immediately to the north of the Brigade TAOR. After acquiring an extension of the TAOR, the 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry combat assaulted two (2) companies and the Recon Platoon into separate landing zones for a sweep of the area, (See Tab F). Immediately upon touchdown the units received fire from a hamlet to the northwest of the landing zone. The infantrymen assaulted the fortified positions through heavy automatic weapons fire. The enemy forces realizing their desperate situation attempted to withdraw to the north. Gunships from Troop B, 1-9th Air Cavalry and the 174th Aviation Company were waiting as the enemy attempted to traverse the rice paddies. Over 50 enemy soldiers died attempting to break contact with the attacking infantry. The rapid response to intelligence reports saw the enemy force nearly annihilated by the determination and courage of the members of the 3d Brigade Task Force.

14. By early July enemy forces in the TAOR had reached a frantic level. All attempts to gain a victory had been defeated, and their control of the population had been successfully thwarted. The result was that enemy forces split into small bands to conduct harassing actions against villages and US Forces. Enemy movement was curtailed and almost limited to hours of reduced visibility with the communists hiding in camouflaged tunnels, caves, and spider holes during daylight hours. The high degree of professionalism of the members of the Brigade Task Force was again aptly demonstrated as techniques were quickly developed for finding the enemy in their hiding places. The new techniques soon became an example for all other units in the Republic of Vietnam. The enemy was no longer safe in the underground hiding places, and often their camouflaged tunnels, caves and spider holes became their own tombs. Finding the underground enemy was only half of the problem for he had to be removed from his sanctuary. The men proved their courage and loyalty as many knowing death could be imminent, crawled into tunnels, barely large enough for US Soldiers, armed only with a flashlight and a 45 caliber pistol. The techniques developed inflicted heavy casualties on dispersed enemy forces.

15. On 15 July 1967 Company C, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry was operating in the dense rugged mountains southwest of Duc Pho, when they made contact with elements of a NVA Battalion (See Tab G). The enemy was well equipped and protected

by concealed, heavily fortified bunkers. Company C surrounded the bunkers and began an assault which lasted six hours. The enemy had all avenues of approach sealed off with automatic weapons fire to prevent the infantry from maneuvering too close to him, and the close fighting and dense jungle prevented artillery, gunships and air strike support. The determined soldiers would not withdraw for fire support in spite of heavy casualties because the enemy would have time to escape. The infantrymen laid down a barrage of fire with individual weapons, 90mm recoilless rifles, and M-72 LAWs, then charged the enemy bunkers through the heavy volume of fire finishing the enemy by throwing grenades in the bunkers. Twenty-five stubborn NVA soldiers were killed in the attack.

16. During the first part of August the Brigade TOC received intelligence reports that an enemy force of 160 men equipped with 30 caliber machineguns, AK-47 rifles, and carbines was located to the north of the TAOR (See Tab H). On the 8th of August, after a request for an extension of the TAOR was approved, the 2d Battalion, 35th Infantry combat assaulted two (2) companies and the Recon Platoon into the area. Gunships and scout helicopters observed several enemy attempting to evade. The units maneuvered to block enemy withdrawal, and another company was combat assaulted to assist in sealing off the battlefield. With the avenues of escape blocked, the units began a sweep of the area. Fierce fire fights developed throughout the day as the units closed on the enemy. Many communist attempting to evade across open areas were cut down. Documents captured indicated that the 3d Company, 36th VC Local Force Battalion was engaged.

17. Daily contact with enemy forces continued through the middle of August. On 20 August contact was made with the 2d Company, 97th Battalion, 2d VC Regiment, 3d NVA Division (See Tab I). Team Hocker consisting of the combined force of C/2-34th Armor (-) and the Recon Platoon, 2-35th Infantry had been given the mission of searching the hamlet of An Tho. The team received a report of ground-to-air fire approximately 500 meters to the northwest and dispatched a tank team to sweep the area. The tank section suddenly was engaged by fire from automatic weapons and recoilless rifles. The remainder of Team Hocker deployed to the scene and began to sweep the area. Although receiving heavy fire including recoilless rifles, the combined force rapidly closed on the enemy's fortified position. Other units were deployed to act as blocking forces and Team Hocker assaulted enemy positions killing them before they had time to flee their positions. Without loss of a single US life, the entire enemy company was annihilated, as determined by a captured personnel roster.

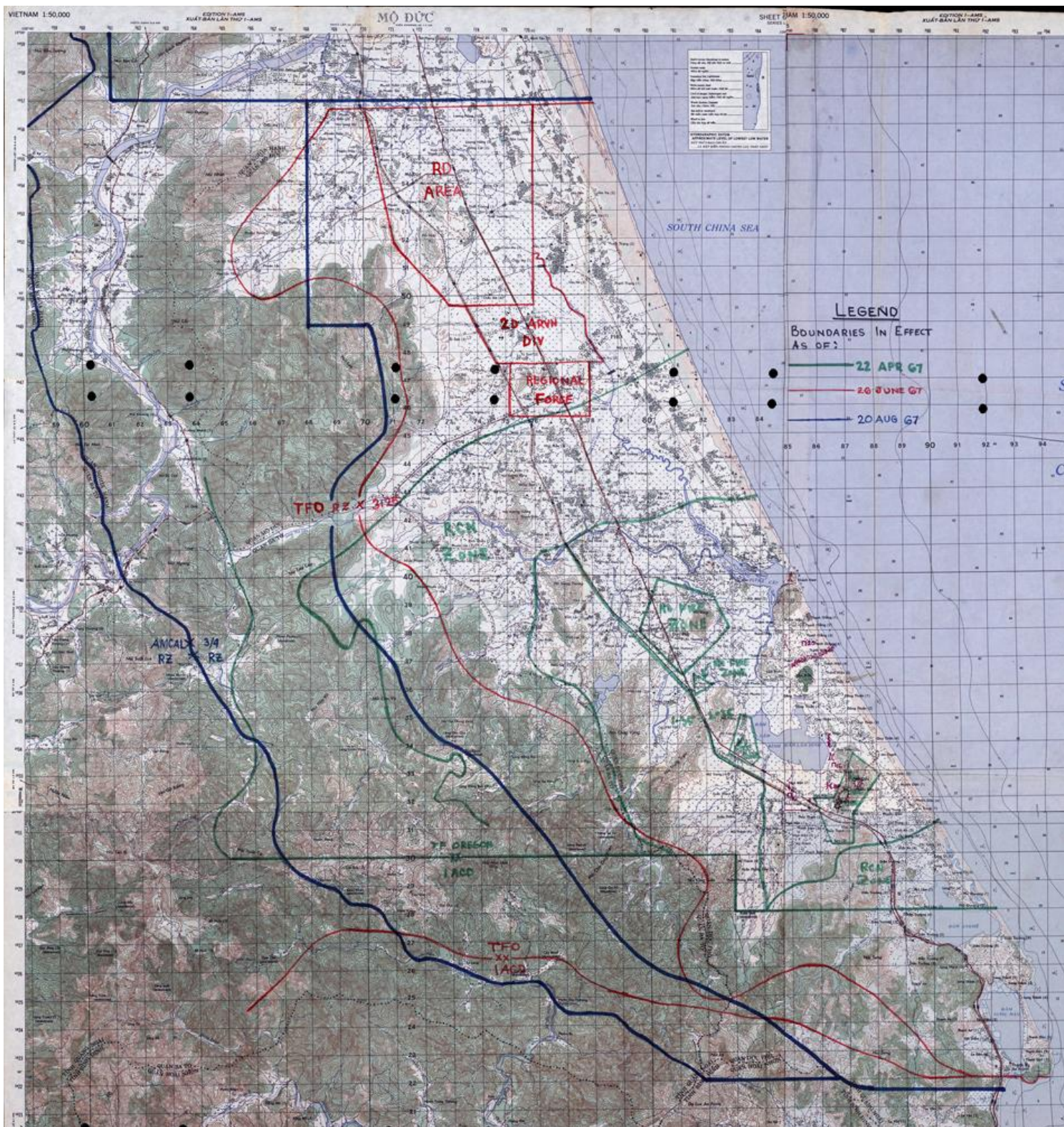
18. During the period, 22 April 1967 to August 1967 the 3d Brigade Task Force killed 1826 communist soldiers, by actual body count (there being many killed by air strikes and artillery without possibility of a body count), and compiled one of the best enemy-to-friendly loss ratios ever recorded for extended operations in the Republic of Vietnam. Commencing operations in a traditional enemy stronghold with reports of heavy concentrations of regular forces, the 3d Brigade Task Force inflicted heavy losses on communist units, gaining control of the area and freeing the people from communist aggression. In fourteen (14) major contacts, the enemy were unable to gain a victory and

sustained heavy, permanent losses. The rich coastal plain which was strategically important as a food supply source and equipment was denied to the communist forces after only 121 days of operations by the 3d Brigade Task Force. The success of the Brigade in destroying the communist force which dominated the Duc Pho and Mo Duc Districts is an inspiration for all Free World Forces in the fight against communist aggression.

Tab:

- A - Battle of Thiep Son (2)
- B - Battle of Nga Man
- C - Battle of Dien Truong (4)
- D - Battle of Vinh Hien
- E - Battle of Tan Phong
- F - Battle of Red Hill
- G - Battle of 15 July
- H - Battle of An Ba
- I - Battle of An Thach

AREA OF OPERATIONS



ENEMY UNITS

