

UNCLASSIFIED

AD NUMBER

AD394187

CLASSIFICATION CHANGES

TO: unclassified

FROM: confidential

LIMITATION CHANGES

TO:
Approved for public release, distribution unlimited

FROM:
Distribution authorized to U.S. Gov't. agencies and their contractors; Administrative/Operational Use; 20 Aug 1968. Other requests shall be referred to Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development [Army], Washington, DC 20310.

AUTHORITY

AGO D/A ltr, 29 Apr 1980; AGO D/A ltr, 29 Apr 1980

THIS PAGE IS UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310



IN REPLY REFER TO

AGAM-P (M) (22 Nov 68) FOR OT UT 68X081

27 November 1968

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report - Operation TOAN TIANG, IIQ, 3d
Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, Period 8 April - 23 June 1968 (U)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

~~This document contains information affecting the National~~
Defense of the United States within the meaning of the
Espionage Laws, Title 18, U. S. C., Section 793 and 794.
Its transmission or the revelation of its contents in any
manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

1. Subject report is forwarded for review and evaluation in accordance with paragraph 5b, AR 525-15. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT UT, Operational Reports Branch, within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.
2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure that the Army realizes current benefits from lessons learned during recent operations.
3. To insure that the information provided through the Lessons Learned Program is readily available on a continuous basis, a cumulative Lessons Learned Index containing alphabetical listings of items appearing in the reports is compiled and distributed periodically. Recipients of the attached report are encouraged to recommend items from it for inclusion in the Index by completing and returning the self-addressed form provided at the end of this report.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

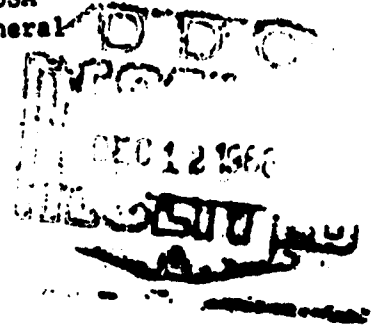
Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

1 Incl
as

DISTRIBUTION:

- Commanding Generals
 - US Continental Army Command
 - US Army Combat Developments Command
- Commandants
 - US Army War College
 - US Army Command and General Staff College
 - US Army Armor School
 - US Army Artillery and Missile School
 - US Army Aviation School
 - US Army Infantry School
 - US Army CBR Weapons Orientation Course



Regraded unclassified when separated
from classified inclosure.

CONFIDENTIAL

AD 394187

SECURITY

MARKING

The classified or limited status of this report applies to each page, unless otherwise marked.

Separate page printouts MUST be marked accordingly.

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE ESPIONAGE LAWS, TITLE 18, U.S.C., SECTIONS 793 AND 794. THE TRANSMISSION OR THE REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS IN ANY MANNER TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW.

NOTICE: When government or other drawings, specifications or other data are used for any purpose other than in connection with a definitely related government procurement operation, the U.S. Government thereby incurs no responsibility, nor any obligation whatsoever; and the fact that the Government may have formulated, furnished, or in any way supplied the said drawings, specifications, or other data is not to be regarded by implication or otherwise as in any manner licensing the holder or any other person or corporation, or conveying any rights or permission to manufacture, use or sell any patented invention that may in any way be related thereto.

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
3d BRIGADE, 9th INFANTRY DIVISION
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96373

..VDE-EOO

20 August 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations after action report (MACV/ICB/J3/32) (U)

THRU: Command Channels

TO: Commander
U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
ATTN: J343
..FC 96243

1. Name or Identity and/or Type of Operation: TUMI PHUNG
2. Dates of Operation: 8 April - 23 June 1968
3. Location: Long An Province, Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts, Gia Linh Province.
4. Control or Command Headquarters: Headquarters, 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division located at Tai An (AS 546649).
5. Reporting Officer: Colonel George C. Benson, Commanding Officer, 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division.
6. Task Organization.

a. U. S. Forces:

(1) Maneuver Battalions.

4d Battalion, 3d Infantry (until 7 May)
6th Battalion, 31st Infantry (effective 27 April)
3d Battalion, 39th Infantry
4th Battalion, 59th Infantry
2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry (09 May - 20 May 68)
5th Battalion, 60th Infantry (19 April - 16 June) (20 June - 23 June)
3d Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry (30 Apr - 5 May 68)

(2) Brigade Control:

HHC, 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div
2-4 Arty (-) US
Btry B, 7-8 Arty (B in and 175MA) Co reinforcing
Btry C 1-84 Arty (155MA) reinforcing
Btry B (-), 1-84 Arty (155MA) reinforcing
3d Plt, 9th AF Co (SPT)
3d Plt, Co C, 9th sig Bn (SPT)
Co D, 709th Maint Bn (US)
Co C, 15th Engr Bn (US)
Co G, 9th med Bn (SPT)
TM, 9th MI Det (SPT)
3d Plt, 335 MC (SPT)
Sec, 4th AF Plt, 2d CA Co (SPT)
AV Flt TM, 46th Reops Co (SPT)
2d Plt, C Btry, 5-2 Arty (US)
2d Plt, H Btry, 29th Arty (US)

FOR OT UT
68X081

Inclosure 1

CONFIDENTIAL

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

CONFIDENTIAL

b. Vietnamese forces operating in close coordination and cooperation with 3d Brigade units:

46th Inf Regt (ARVN)
50th Inf Regt (ARVN)
30th R.G
RF/PF Forces, Long An Province
Nha Be and Binh Chanh District Forces
5th Ranger Group
Capitol Military District Forces

7. Supporting Forces:

II Field Forces Aviation Units
7th USAF
1st Log CMD

8. Intelligence:

a. Enemy situation during operation TOAN THANG

(1) Early in Operation TOAN THANG, VC/NVA Forces in sub-region 3 concentrated on resupply and recruitment in preparation for their second offensive in the Saigon area. During this period in early and late April, enemy forces avoided contact except where their troop base areas and logistical installations were threatened. Enemy initiated activity early in TOAN THANG was concentrated on harassing and probing type attacks on RF/PF outposts and ARVN-allied base areas. Emphasis was placed on the severing of route #4 and major bridges along route #4 and route #5A. Leading up to the enemy's initiation of the 2d offensive, concerted effort was placed on the aforementioned enemy activities in an attempt to cover maneuvering of the attack forces into the CMD area immediately south of Saigon. There was evidence that the enemy, attempting to bolster its elements, began a significant shifting and dividing in order to render the rearward supporting elements more effective. This was evidenced for example with the C/312th LF Co. C/312 normally operated as a support company to the MF element entering Long An on the northwest commo-liason route. The 312th was unable, because of inherent responsibilities, to conduct coordinated sizable attacks. All of their attacks were strictly harassing and probing in nature. However, they initiated this dividing trend breaking from one company to three (C1, C2, and C3). This division enabled C/312 to expand its area by some 20 K's, and it rendered them capable of coordinated attacks throughout the Tan An area. It also gave them the capability to function throughout the Thu Thua area and a portion of the Ben Luc area. It was obvious that the enemy was increasing impetus on all fronts for maximum support during the offensive. It was during this period that their propaganda, sabotage and military proselyting efforts were significantly increased.

(2) The 3d Bde, realizing the significance of this increased impetus, deployed all of its military resources in an attempt to nullify the enemy's effectiveness. The enemy's efforts were thus thwarted in their 2d offensive. The enemy's thrust from the south, with elements of the 2d Ind, Phu Loi II, and 506th Bns, was a dismal failure and cost him the equivalent of three bns. Immediately following this period, the enemy avoided contact utilizing loc's for movement out of the Saigon area. Significantly, the enemy failed to make use of his artillery or commence heavy mortar attacks to recoup his position. All attacks during this period were cover for MF movement. This was noted particularly with the frequent attacks on Rach Kien. Contacts established around this time indicated the presence of enemy units in the post TEF base areas. The only threats during this time were evidenced in the Ben Luc area with the brigades as a target. The enemy maintained a lesser but possible threat with positions of at least two battalions along the southern Long An border. The 261 Bn was consistently reported in the area vic XS 4565, and the 514 Bn and another has been reported in the general area vic XS 5857.

(3) The local force elements supporting the offensive remained relatively inactive in sub-region 3.

CONFIDENTIAL 2

CONFIDENTIAL

(4) The remainder of TOAN THANG was spent ferreting out what remained of enemy units in the southern Saigon area.

(5) The enemy concentrated at this point on replacements, resupply and avoiding of contact in preparation for a possible 3d offensive.

(6) The enemy maintained pressure on the cities and towns by threats, harassments and attacks by fire in accordance with his policy of strangling the cities and consolidating his control of the countryside.

(7) Toward the end of May and early June, prior to the 3d Bde move south, the enemy was geared heavily toward propaganda goals. The enemy maintained pressure on the cities and LOC's. Saigon was attacked on a continuing basis as were the major routes into the city. Within Long An Province the cities were subjected to attacks by fire and ground attacks on a limited scale. Significantly, the attacks within Long An were conducted by local forces rather than major units. Continuing reports of resupply and replacement activity along the Vam Co Dong and Vam Co Tay LOC's pointed to a hurried building of the enemy major forces.

(8) Two bn size replacement groups crossed route #4 from north to south.

(9) Agent reports during this period noted an eastward shift of the enemy's major forces in Long An to a more central position and a resupplying of areas of operation for Major units.

(10) Enemy activity increased in all areas for a massive offensive prior to late August. They maintained this attitude at the time of 3d Brigade's departure from Tan An to Dong Tam.

9. Mission: 3d Bde in close coordination and cooperation with 46th Inf Regt (ARVN), 50th Inf Regt (ARVN), and 5th Ranger Gp (ARVN) conducts offensive operations to clear assigned AC within the Capital Military District, Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts and to destroy VC/NVA forces operating in Long An Province.

10. Concept: The 3rd Bde in close coordination with the 46th Inf Regt (ARVN), 50th Inf Regt (ARVN), 5th Ranger Group (ARVN), and Long An Sector forces conducted airmobile assaults, water born assaults, reconnaissance in force, cordon and search, night patrolling, and ambush operations within Binh Chanh, and Nha Be Districts and Long An Province to clear designated AO's of VC/NVA forces and destroy their base areas and LOC's. The brigade employed from three to five battalions as maneuver forces to accomplish assigned missions. The 3-39 Inf conducted reconnaissance in force operations in northern Long An Province and within the C&D to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces. The 5-60 Inf conducted reconnaissance in force operations in C&D, Binh Phuoc, and Binh Chanh Districts to destroy VC/NVA forces. The Bn also secured the Ben Luc Bridge with one company. The 2-3 Inf conducted reconnaissance in force operations in Binh Chanh District to provide security for highway 4 and destroy VC/NVA forces operating within the district. The 4-39 Inf conducted clearing operations in Nha Be District to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces and continued maintaining a company base at Cat Lai to secure main water LOC's in the area. The 6-31 Inf conducted reconnaissance in force operations in Binh Chanh district and C&D to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces. The 2-47 Inf conducted reconnaissance in force operations within the C&D to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces attempting to enter Saigon.

11. Execution: Early in Operation TOAN THANG, contact with VC/NVA forces was limited to small-scale operations except where combat was forced by friendly forces or enemy weapons/ammunition caches were discovered. During this period the brigade directed its efforts toward locating and destroying the VC/NVA forces known to be infiltrating into Binh Chanh and Nha Be districts prior to the second Saigon offensive. The second week of May represented a peak in enemy operations when the second Saigon offensive was initiated and VC/NVA forces attempted to enter the city from the south. The offensive culminated in devastating defeat for enemy forces followed by a period of VC/NVA withdrawal back into the southern portions of Binh Chanh and Nha Be districts to rebuild units and effect resupply.

CONFIDENTIAL

During this time, until Operation TONK THANG was discontinued, 3d Bde operations were directed toward pursuing and destroying VC/NVA forces as they attempted to withdraw south. In Long An Province, brigade units secured vital installations, conducted offensive operations against known or suspected VC base areas, and reacted to current intelligence reports.

Typical of the action marking the early stages of Operation TONK THANG occurred on 13 April 1968 while Co A 4-60 Inf was conducting airborne assaults and recon in force operations southeast of Tan Tru (vic AS 703589). At 1530H while searching an area known to be used by VC forces as a staging area, the company came under fire from small arms and B-40 rockets by an unknown size VC force. Co A immediately returned fire using their organic weapons and received gunship support from D 3-5 Air Cav. During the initial exchange of fire, Co A sustained 5 WIA. Contact continued throughout the afternoon at varying tempo until 1810H when the enemy was finally able to break contact and withdraw. A search of the battle area confirmed 8 VC had been killed by Co A and 9 killed by D 3-5 Cav.

The enemy's logistical buildup prior to the 2d Saigon offensive enable friendly forces to locate and capture or destroy large quantities of arms and supplies prepositioned along avenues of approach and withdrawal. On 2 May 1968 at 1530H, one such cache was found by Co B 3-39 Inf while on a recon in force operation southeast of Ben Luc (AS 634713). The arms and munitions found included four (4) cases of 50-cal ammunition, 46 60mm mortar rounds, 50 120mm mortar rounds, 30 M16-7 rounds, four (4) cases of M16-47 ammunition, one (1) 75mm recoilless rifle round, one (1) M16-2 launcher, 77 M16-2 rounds, 200 M16-2 and 7 propellant charges, 50 120mm mortar fuses, 65 60mm mortar fuses and three (3) 107mm rocket rounds. The most significant aspect of the find was the presence of 120mm mortar and 107mm rocket rounds. This marked the first time heavy indirect fire weapons had been found in Long An Province. Three days later, at 050400H, Ben Luc came under a combined mortar and 107mm rocket attack.

On 6 May 1968 with the beginning of the 2d Saigon offensive, the 3d Bde was charged with defending the southern side of Saigon and destroying VC local and main force elements attempting to infiltrate through Nha Be and Binh Chanh Districts. The devastating effectiveness of the brigade's operation during the offensive (6 May - 13 May 68) resulted in the equivalent of 3 VC battalions being destroyed (See Inclosure 1, Combat After Action Report from 6 May - 13 May 1968).

Following the offensive until 23 June, when the conduct of operation TONK THANG was assumed by the 1st Bde, contact with VC/NVA was extremely light as the enemy attempted to withdraw.

Night activities during Operation TONK THANG were aimed at interdiction of water LOC's and the destruction of enemy sampans carrying supplies and equipment. Most of the 238 sampans destroyed during the operation were engaged by aquabushes or night reconnaissance aircraft flying in support of the brigade. Operations of this type were highly successful and forced the enemy to rely on other more difficult means of transportation in addition to destroying and/or capturing a significant amount of material.

Operation TONK THANG was successful from several standpoints. The VC and NVA forces second attempt to enter Saigon from the south was a dismal failure and resulted in devastating defeat for them. Their loss of men during the 86 day period Operation TONK THANG was conducted totaled 1363 KIA and 19 POW's. The enemy was also prevented from gaining control of any significant LOC's or population centers. Operations in Long An Province were somewhat limited by the small number of forces available, however, the brigade continued to interdict enemy infiltration routes and conducted small-scale recon in force operations. Employment of airboats and night river patrols continued to ensure the security of major waterways in the vic of Cat Lai. One Mechanized platoon was located at the Ben Luc bridge nightly during TONK THANG to augment ARVN security forces. Combined operations with the Vietnamese 11th River Assault Group

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

were conducted using the boats both for troop movement and as a screening force along inland waterways. The successfulness of Operation TONK THANG is the result of coordination and team work between air and ground forces creating a highly effective fighting force.

12. Results:

a. Friendly losses for Operation TONK THANG were as follows:

- (1) US KIA: 82
- (2) US WIA: 437
- (3) US MIA: 0

b. Enemy losses during Operation TONK THANG were as follows:

(1) Personnel:

- (a) VC/AVN KIA: 1363
- (b) POW: 19

(2) Equipment Captured:

Small Arms	225
Crew-Served weapons	58
ammo, HL	852 rds
ammo, SA	143290 rds
rice	57 lbs
rockets (122 r1)	2
Genacos	437
radios	3
Gas Mask	17
AVN Currency	76700
MK-50 Drums	38
M-79 rds	46
Medical Supplies	130 lbs (approx)
Documents	185 lbs (approx)

(3) Equipment Destroyed:

Bunkers	3342
Structures	623
Foxholes	237
Punji Pits	176
Sampans	238
PG-2 Prop Charges	157
PG-7 Prop Charges	140
Booby Traps	89
Roadblocks	89
Home-made Bombs	58

c. Tactical Air Support; During Operation TONK THANG, the 7th Tactical USAF supported the 3d Brigade "Go Devils" with 326 preplanned and 105 immediate airstrikes in addition to conducting four combat sky spots. Approximately 375 of the strikes were followed up with recon in force operations in the target area by ground troops.

13. Administrative Matters

a. Combat service support of Operation TONK THANG was timely and adequate with few exceptions.

b. Transportation of troops and supplies was primarily conducted by air and organic vehicles. However, because of the terrain, boats were used in increasing numbers for the same purpose.

5
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

c. There were short periods of time when failure of pump units at the Tan An Airfield resulted in excessive ground time for aircraft attempting to refuel, thus denying the ground commander maximum use of this extremely valuable asset.

d. Medical support was provided by Company D, 9th Medical Battalion located at Tan An Airfield. There were no problem areas in the Medical Field. Evacuation of wounded personnel by helicopter was conducted in an outstanding professional manner, often under extreme conditions.

e. Continuous operations over long periods of time created minor maintenance problems with equipment. Increased emphasis placed on preventive maintenance and equipment rotation systems between base camps and units in the field alleviated the problem.

14. Special Equipment and Techniques

a. To combat increased VC/NVA movement during hours of darkness, UH1D helicopters and/or O-1 birdog type aircraft with observers aboard using light intensification devices conducted visual night reconnaissance along waterways and LOCs.

b. To minimize the high casualty rate normally experienced when engaging an entrenched enemy in house-to-house fighting, tactical airstrikes were used to neutralize enemy forces and/or pin the enemy down allowing friendly forces time to move into more favorable attack positions.

c. As in the first Saigon offensive, water way security was increased through the use of aquabushes and river patrols on airboats.

d. The brigade was supported by both D 3-5 Cav and B 7-1 Cav during operation TOAN THANG. The use of Air Cav Troops proved extremely effective in maintaining surveillance over the large AO assigned to the 3d Brigade. Many successful operations were developed around sightings made by the Cav within a designated AO prior to insertion of ground forces.

15. Commander's Analysis

During the early portion of Operation TOAN THANG, it was apparent that VC/NVA Forces were rebuilding following the earlier TET offensive in preparation for renewed offensive operations in the Saigon area. Local and main force units avoided contact with friendly forces except when forced to fight because of friendly initiated operations. Once engaged, VC/NVA Forces attempted to break contact as soon as possible remaining to fight only to protect base areas of arms caches.

Brigade operations during this period were conducted primarily in northern Long An Province and Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts to disrupt VC/NVA LOCs and neutralize enemy forces before they could reach the CMD. Because of the VC/NVA logistical buildup necessary to support their forthcoming offensive, brigade forces were very successful in capturing large quantities of arms and ammunition found in caches located along enemy LOCs.

By early May, VC/NVA forces had moved the equivalent of six battalions into Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts in an attempt to infiltrate them into Saigon during the second offensive. To counter the growing threat to Saigon, brigade forces moved into positions south of the city in CMD, Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts. From company and battalion basecamps established along the Kinh Doi Canal, brigade forces continued offensive operations to the south neutralizing enemy forces before they could reach Saigon. Several enemy units managed to move into built-up areas on the south side of the city causing the brigade to conduct house-to-house fighting. Close air support provided by gunships and tactical air greatly reduced the brigade's casualty rate which would normally have been much higher in house-to-house fighting. The enemy's attempt to enter Saigon from the south was a dismal failure in every respect and by 13 May, VC/NVA forces were withdrawing south as quickly as possible in an attempt to break contact.

CONFIDENTIAL

During the remainder of Operation TIGAR, contact with enemy forces was extremely light as VC/NVA forces began reorganization and supply of forces.

16. Recommendations:

a. Against a well-entrenched enemy, airstrikes are very effective in neutralizing "hard" targets, however, care should be taken not to withdraw friendly forces from the target area too soon prior to the airstrike, and allow the enemy time to withdraw.

b. In the past enemy fortified positions have been built into the edge of tree lines to afford occupants maximum concealment and visibility. Recently, however, VC/NVA Forces have been encountered in bunkers located well forward of tree lines in an attempt to avoid airstrikes and artillery. When approaching a line of trees or nipa palm, careful study should be made of terrain up to 200 meters forward of the tree line to avoid "walking into" bunkers.

c. The use of Air Cav in locating enemy forces prior to inserting ground troops will save several hours of needless searching in "dry holes". An excellent compliment to the reconnaissance capability of an Air Cav Troop is the "People Sniffer" readings obtained from this instrument can be exploited by gunships or by dropping "CS" in the form of M-158A2 cluster canisters to flush enemy from concealment.

d. Often VC/NVA Forces engage friendly forces just prior to darkness in the belief extraction by helicopter will occur before dark. If airmobile operations for the day are begun at 0900H or 1000H, this will allow time to exploit late contacts.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

J. L. Burt
J. L. BURT
MAJ INF
ADJUTANT

1 Incl

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
3D BRIGADE, 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96373

AVDE-BCO

11 August 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report (NACV/RCS/J3/32) (U)

THRU: Command Channels

TO: Commander
U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
ATTN: J343
APO 96243

1. Name or Identity and/or Type of Operation: Combat operation to defend southern approaches to Saigon-CMD area and defend key installations in southern Saigon-CMD area.

2. Dates of Operation: 6 May - 13 May 1968.

3. Location: Gia Dinh Province, Nha Be and Binh Chanh Districts.

4. Control or Command Headquarters: Headquarters, 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division in coordination with CG, CMD.

5. Reporting Officer: Colonel George C. Benson, Commanding Officer, 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div; Lieutenant Colonel Joseph H. Schmalherst, Commanding Officer, 6th Battalion, 31st Infantry; Lieutenant Colonel Anthony P. Deluca, Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, 39th Infantry; Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Adcock, Commanding Officer, 4th Battalion, 39th Infantry; Lieutenant Colonel John B. Tower, Commanding Officer, 2d Battalion, 47th Infantry; Lieutenant Colonel Eric F. Antilla, Commanding Officer, 5th Battalion (Mechanized), 60th Infantry.

6. Task Organization:

a. U. S. Forces:

(1) Maneuver Battalions:

6-31 Inf
3-39 Inf
4-39 Inf
2-47 Inf (off 09 May 68)
5-60 Inf (M) (-)

(2) Brigade Control:

B Trp, 7-1 Cav (7-13 May 68)
D Trp, 3-5 Cav (8-13 May 68)
HHC, 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div
2-4 Arty(-) DS
Btry B, 7-8 Arty (8 in and 175mm) FS Reinforcing
Btry C, 1-84 Arty (155mm) Reinforcing
Btry B(-), 1-84 Arty (155mm) Reinforcing
3d Plt, 9th MP Co (Spt)
3d Plt, Co C, 9th Sig Bn (Spt)

INCL 1

8

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Co D, 709th Maint Bn (Spt)
Co C, 15th Engr Bn (DS)
Co C, 9th Mod Bn (Spt)
Tn, 9th MI Det (Spt)
3d Plt, 335 RRC (Spt)
Sec, 4th AA Plt, 2d CA Co (Spt)
AV Fld Tn, 246th PSYOPS Co (Spt)
2d Plt, C Btry, 5-2 Arty (DS)
2d Plt, H Btry, 29th Arty (DS)

b. Vietnamese forces operating in close coordination and cooperation with 3d Brigade units:

30th River Assault Group (RAG) (ARVN)
RF/PP Forces, Gia Dinh Province
Nha Be and Binh Chanh District Forces
Capitol Military District Forces

7. Supporting Forces:

II Field Forces Aviation Units
7th USAF
1st Log Cmd

8. Intelligence: Enemy situation prior to the May (2d) Offensive:
Reporting Period: 1 April to 11 May 1968

During this period all enemy activity in sub-region 3 indicated massive efforts to resupply, train and provide recruits to all VC/NVA units suffering from the heavy losses sustained during the TET Offensive. At the same time, the enemy continued harassment of Allied and ARVN installations throughout the TAOI concentrating on attacks by fire and avoiding contact except where their base areas were challenged. It was obvious during this period that the enemy's rebuilding efforts were pointing towards a second offensive in the Saigon area.

Major battalion-sized elements in our AO became increasingly difficult to engage. For apparent security purposes, traditional enemy unit base areas were abandoned with only token LF representation, movement patterns seemed erratic as the enemy attempted to cover their subsequent movement into attack positions south of Saigon. In addition, information was received that some LF and MF company-size elements, normally operating separately, were uniting in an effort to bolster the attack strength of the larger MF units. LF elements in the 3d Bde's immediate area of interest around US installations, began coordinated attacks in order to cover the maneuver of the Saigon attack forces. Increasing VC command emphasis was placed on terrorist activities, interdiction of lines of communication, sabotage of Route 4 and attacks by fire on all strategic points in sub-region 3. Interdiction along Route 4 was especially heavy between Tan An and Binh Chanh. Specially formed sapper elements initiated more frequent route-severing attempts along secondary roads leading to and from all US subordinate installations. Attacks by fire increased on ARVN, RF/PP OP's throughout sub-region 3. In an attempt to hamper reinforcement efforts by Allied and ARVN units, combined LF elements put ever increasing pressure on the Tan An and Ben Luc Bridges. At various times both locations came under rocket, mortar, ground and probing attacks. During this reporting period, especially in the last two weeks of April, pressure was exerted on all major Allied and ARVN installations in Can Duoc, Can Giuoc, and Nha Be Districts as a diversion to the maneuvering of the attack elements into positions south of Saigon.

The bulk of the offensive from the south was to be borne by the 3d Independent, 506th LF, and Phu Loi II battalions with the aid of supporting elements from the 5th Nha Be Bn

The enemy's overall plan for the attack in the southern region had the 2d Ind, 506th, Phu Loi II and supporting elements from the 5th Nha Be attacking and occupying the 7th, 8th and 9th Precincts along Saigon's southern extremities. The D-16 LF and the 263 Bn's with supporting rear elements were to provide diversion by attacking from the southwest into the Cholon - Phu Lam area.

CONFIDENTIAL

9. Missions:

- a. Deploy the 3d Bde south of Saigon to deny VC/NVA forces access to the city.
- b. Defend key installations south of Saigon.
- c. Be prepared to reinforce US and ARVN units in Saigon-CMD area.

10. Concept of Operation:

- a. The general concept of operations was to move four maneuver battalions by airlift and vehicle to positions along suspected routes of infiltration into the southern Saigon-CMD area.
- b. Conduct extensive combat operations in Binh Chanh and Nha Be Districts to locate and destroy VC/NVA units staging to attack the Saigon-CMD area.

11. Execution:

a. 6 May 1968: The disposition of forces in Gia Dinh Province on 6 May was the 4-39 Inf at Nha Be (XS 916823) and the 6-31 Inf at FS/PB Smoke (XS 789769). Because of the buildup of intelligence, the 5-60 Inf(M) was moved from Binh Phuoc (XS 615550) to XS 815868 south of Saigon. At nightfall on the 6th, the complete disposition of units was: 6-31 Inf (Co's A and D) at FS/PB Smoke, XS 789769; 4-39 Inf had Co B at Cat Lai (XS 956895), Co C at XS 880853, Co E and HHC at Nha Be (XS 916823), Co C/3-39 Inf (OPCON to 4-39) at Nha Be (XS 916823); the 5-60 Inf (M) had HHC and Co A at XS 815868, 2d Plt of Co A at XS 984878 (OPCON to 4-39 Inf), and Co C elements at XS 875868, XS 814875, and XS 853887.

b. 7 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf moved Co's B and C from Binh Chanh to FS/PB Smoke and conducted company-sized airmobile assaults and recon in force operations east of Binh Chanh. The operations had negative results and at nightfall the disposition of the battalion was HHC and Co C at FS/PB Smoke, Co A at XS 808865, Co B at XS 819866, Co C had one plt at the Bon Luc Bridge (XS 618748) and one plt OPCON to 5-60 Inf (XS 816874) and one plt at XS 775842.

The 3-39 Inf conducted local security patrols via Rach Kien until the afternoon. Beginning at 1400H, the Bn Hqs and Co's A and B were airlifted to positions south of Saigon. The final disposition of the battalion was: HHC and Co B at XS 838969, Co A at XS 828868, Co C (OPCON to 4-39 Inf) at XS 880870. Co's A and B of 3-60 Inf became OPCON to 3-39 Inf to defend base-camps at An Nhut Tan (XS 665674), Rach Kien (XS 740669), and the French Fort (XS 896616).

The 4-39 Inf conducted riverine and footmobile recon in force operations west and northwest of Nha Be with three companies. The operations had negative results and the disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co C and Co E at Nha Be (XS 916823); Co A at Tan Tru (XS 654623); Co B at Cat Lai (XS 956895); Co C/3-39 (OPCON to 4-39 Inf) at XS 880870; and one plt of 5-60 Inf(M) (OPCON to 4-39 Inf) at XS 896873.

The 5-60 Inf (M) conducted recon in force operations with Co's A and C. The field CP of Co C/5-60 Inf (M) came under mortar attack at 0345H. The company received a total of 80 rounds of 82mm mortar fire. Fire was returned using organic weapons, arty and a light fire team. The CP received 8 to 10 RPG rounds at 0515H. The same support was used for this contact. There were no casualties from either contact and the VC losses are unknown. The 3d Bde received a call at 0545H that an ARVN outpost at XS 827875 was under a ground attack from an estimated VC company. The 2d Plt of Co C departed its night location (XS 845885) to reinforce the outpost. At 0610H at XS 827875, the platoon established contact with an unknown size VC force. The platoon was joined by the rest of Co C at 0642H. The company remained in contact until 2000H when the enemy withdrew to the south. Co C was joined at 1030H by Co A/5-60 Inf (M) at XS 829876. The two units were supported by

CONFIDENTIAL

nine airstrikes and artillery all during the day. US casualties were: 2 YHA, 48 WHA (28 required dust off). The VC losses were 213 VC body count (A/5-60 - 80, C/5-60 - 35, B/7-1 Cav - 58, 10, and airstrikes - 30). Enemy equipment captured included: 19 M-47's, 5 RPG-2 launchers, 1 RPD-56 machine-gun, 63 B-40 rockets, 3 B-41 rockets, and an unknown amount of loose small arms ammo. The final disposition of units was: HHC and Recon/2-47 Inf (OPCON 5-60 off 071800H) at XS 845879, Co A(-) at XS 825872, Co C at XS 835876.

B Troop, 7-1 Cav supported the 5-60 Inf (M) (-) in its contacts between 0700H - 2000H.

c. 8 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf conducted local security patrols around their night location with negative results. The disposition of the unit at nightfall was: HHC, Co's A, D, and E at FS/PB Smoke (XS 789769). Co C conducted three platoon-sized ambushes via XS 815775, XS 815823 and XS 615755.

The 3-39 Inf conducted recon in force operations with Co A (reinforced by Recon/2-47 Inf) and Co B. Co A established contact with an unknown size VC force at XS 834875 at 1200H. The company received RPG, AW and SA fire and reacted with gunships, T/C Air, arty and organic weapons. Co A was reinforced by Recon/2-47 Inf at 1245H. The contact continued at the same coordinates throughout the day breaking at 2000H. The casualties for Co A for the day were 3 WHA. A total of 10 VC were killed by Co A. Co B established contact with an unknown size VC force at XS 834878 at 1445H. Co B was supported by helicopter gunships, T/C Air, arty and organic weapons. The contact continued until 2000H at the same coordinates. Total casualties for Co B were: 4 KHA and 4 WHA. The VC losses were 37 killed by Co B and 20 killed by supporting gunships. Recon/2-47 Inf sustained 7 WHA and one track damaged by a RPG-2 round while supporting Co A. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC and Recon at XS 845884; Co A at XS 839881; Co B at XS 844882; Recon/2-47 Inf (OPCON to 3-39 Inf) at XS 845885.

The 4-39 Inf reacted to contact initiated by D Troop, 3-5 Cav. At 1040H, 2/A/5-60 Inf departed its night location and linked up with an ARVN platoon at XS 852783. Both units established contact with an unknown size VC force immediately. Co C departed Nha Be in trucks and airboats to reinforce the contact arriving in the area at 1245H. The units in contact received RPG, AW and SA fire. The units were supported by helicopter gunships from D Trp, 3-5 Cav, T/C Air, arty and organic weapons. The contact continued at the same coordinates until 1930H when the VC broke contact and withdrew to the southwest. Total casualties for US units for the day were 12 WHA. The VC losses were 42 VC BC. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co E and Co C/3-39 at Nha Be (XS 917823); Co B at Cat Lai (XS 958897); Co C at XS 861800; and 2/A/5-60 Inf at XS 896873.

The 5-60 Inf (M) (-) conducted extensive patrols in the area of the contact on 7 May and around its night location and acted as a RRF for the 3-39 Inf and 4-39 Inf. The daylight patrols had negative results and the disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC and Co C(-) at XS 802870; Co A at XS 810868; Co B/6-31 Inf (OPCON to 5-60 Inf) at XS 802866, XS 795865, and XS 788868.

B Troop/7-1 Cav conducted screening missions south of Saigon from 0700H to 1830H. The unit killed 8 VC in isolated cases throughout the day. D Troop/3-5 Cav supported the 4-39 Inf from 0700H to 1930H and killed 25 VC in the area of contact (XS 852873). The 3d Bde losses for the day were: 4 KHA and 19 WHA. VC losses were 112 VC BC.

d. 9 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf conducted recon in force operations with Co's A and C. At 0819H FS/PB Smoke (XS 789769) received 15 rounds of 82mm mortar fire. The counter-mortar fires resulted in 1 VC KIA with negative friendly damage or casualties. The battalion conducted recon in force operations during the day with Co's A and C. The units were airlifted to via XS 896874 with Co A inserting first followed by Co C. From the LZ the units moved to the west with Co A in the lead. At 1500H both companies established contact with an estimated company-size force. The units used helicopter gunships, T/C Air, arty and organic weapons to support their contact which continued until 1900H. During the contact, the two companies sustained 15 WHA

Best Available Copy

11
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

and killed 26 VC. The final disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC, Co's D and E at FS/PB Smoke (XS 78774); Co A at XS 86774; Co B OPCON to 3-39 Inf; and Co C at XS 867874. The 3-39 Inf flew a continuous VR south of Saigon during the night of 10 May 68. Using a starlight scope, he spotted several sampans and one group of 15 VC during the night. Using helicopter gunships and arty, he killed 6 VC via XS 713710 and sank 3 sampans via XS 846655. At 0225H the battalion field CP (XS 845835) began receiving a mortar attack. The camp received a total of 50 rounds of 82mm before the attack ceased at 0255H. At 0345H, the camp came under a mortar and ground attack by an estimated VC battalion. The attack continued until 0630H when the VC withdrew to the south and west. The contact was supported by helicopter gunships, USAF C-47 Spooky flare and gunships, arty and organic weapons. US casualties from the attack were 2 KHA and 67 WHA. Enemy losses were 4 VC KIA. During the day Co A conducted recon in force operations in the vic of the battalion basecamp with negative results. Co B conducted recon in force southwest of the battalion basecamp in pursuit of the attacking force. The company received sniper fire three different times between 0700H and 1400H with no casualties. At 1400H via XS 843878, Co B established contact with an unknown size VC force. The action continued until 1700H with the enemy fire fluctuating between heavy to sporadic. The action was supported with helicopter gunships, TAC Air, arty and organic weapons. The action resulted in 12 VC body count and 1 US WHA. The 3-39 Inf received OPCON of B/6-31 Inf at 1400H to support the B/3-39 Inf contact. When the company approached the area of contact, they began receiving sporadic sniper fire. The company established a block to the southwest of the contact area. The sporadic sniper fire continued until 1700H and resulted in 9 US WHA. The action resulted in 10 VC KIA for Co B/6-31 Inf. Ren/2-47 Inf (OPCON 3-39 Inf) conducted local patrols in the vic of the battalion basecamp (XS 845886). The patrols sustained 1 US WHA from sniper fire at 1500H via XS 844855. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC, Co B, Ren/3-39 and Ren/2-47 at XS 845885; Co A at XS 842883; and Co C OPCON to 4-39 Inf.

The 4-39 Inf conducted recon in force operations with Co's C/4-39 Inf and C/3-39 Inf. The units moved from XS 860800 to the south to a village located at XS 853784. Prior to reaching the village at XS 857790, the units established contact with an estimated company. The action was supported by helicopter gunships, TAC Air, arty and organic weapons and resulted in 2 US WHA and 34 VC body count. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC and Co's C and E at Nha Be (XS 916822); Co B at XS 977853; and Co C/3-39 Inf at XS 842794.

The 5-60 Inf (L) conducted recon in force operations with Co's A and C from XS 804868 towards the 3-39 Inf basecamp (XS 845886). At 1300H via XS 833877, both companies established contact with an estimated VC company. The units killed 5 VC in the action which continued for one hour and sustained 9 US WHA. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC and Co C at XS 810877; and Co A(-) at XS 797865.

The 2-47 Inf (M) became OPCON to the 3d Bde at 1130H and conducted recon in force operations via XS 860880. At 1550H the battalion established contact with an estimated VC battalion. The action continued until 1830H when the VC withdrew to the south. The action was supported by helicopter gunships, TAC Air, arty and organic weapons and resulted in 61 VC body count, 7 AK-47's, 2 RPG-2 launchers and 2 MPD-56 machineguns captured. The unit sustained 18 US KHA and 36 US WHA. The battalion established a battalion field location at XS 872886 with all units co-located at this location.

Troop D/3-5 Cav supported contacts of 5-60 Inf, 3-39 Inf, and 6-31 Inf during the day and killed 7 VC, sank 6 sampans, destroyed 28 structures and caused 8 secondary explosions.

Troop B/7-1 Cav supported the 2-47 Inf and 4-39 Inf contacts killing 30 VC and destroying 1 ea 122mm rocket launcher via XS 836852.

e. 10 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf conducted footmobile recon in force operations during the morning via XS 860874 with Co's A and C. The operation had negative results. At 1440H Co A and Co C conducted airmobile assaults into

Best Available Copy

12

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

a L2 XS 813835 reacting to the 5-60 Inf (N) contact. From the L2, the units moved west to the woodline then southwest to XS 804827. Both companies established a block oriented to the east at this location. The block had negative results. The final disposition of the units at nightfall was: HHC, Co's B, D, and E at FS/PB Smoke (XS 789769); Co A at XS 794829; and Co C at XS 814822.

The 3-39 Inf conducted footmobile recon in force operations with Co's A and B via XS 841882. At 0930H Co B departed its night location (XS 845885) and began moving to the northwest. At 1005H via XS 841882, the company began receiving RPG and automatic weapons fire. The company reacted with helicopter gunships from Troop B/7-1 Cav, TAC Air and arty. At 1100H Co A departed its night location (XS 842880) to support the contact and entered into the engagement at 1255H. At 1300H Recon/3-39 Inf also reinforced the contact. The three units kept the enemy force contained in their bunkers and used arty and airstrikes on the enemy while Troop D/3-5 Cav screened and provided gunship support. The contact continued until 1930H when Co's A and B swept into the area of contact. The action resulted in 65 VC body count, 5 US KHA and 27 US WHA.

The 4-39 Inf conducted waterborne (airboats) screening operations, waterborne assaults and footmobile recon in force operations in northern Nha Be District (via XS 865885). During the night (0040H, 0225H, and 0254H), Co C/3-39 Inf (OPCON to 4-39 Inf), in an ambush position via XS 841790, engaged a total of 7 sampans heading north toward Saigon. The area of ambush was swept at first light and 8 VC bodies were found along with enough canned goods and rice to feed 100 men approximately two days. Co C/4-39 screened in the airboats between XS 865885 and XS 855882. At 1230H the company beached at XS 857849. While searching an airstrike area (XS 857849), the company found a total of 18 VC bodies killed by TAC Air, arty and small arms. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC and Co's C and E at Nha Be (XS 918822); Co B at XS 858800; and Co C/3-39 (OPCON 4-39 Inf) at XS 893802.

The 2-47 Inf (M) conducted mechanized recon in force operations with Co's A and C from XS 873884 to the west with negative results. The battalion established a battalion field location at XS 810872 with seven platoon-size ambushes in that general vicinity.

The 5-60 Inf (N) conducted mechanized recon in force operations with Co's A and C. The companies departed their night locations and moved south to reinforce an ARVN outpost which was under attack (XS 813825). At 1120H via XS 813828, Co A established contact with an estimated VC company in heavily fortified bunkers. Co C moved to the east flank and two companies from the 6-31 (A and C) were inserted on the west. All units battered the VC all day until 2000H when the contact was broken. Helicopter gunships from Troop D/3-5 Cav, TAC Air, arty and organic weapons supported the contact. The action resulted in 4 US KHA, 28 US WHA and 20 VC KIA, and 3 VC POW's. The final disposition for the battalion was: HHC and Co C at XS 810863; Co A(-) at XS 815876; and 1/A/5-60 Inf at XS 820870.

Troop B/7-1 Cav supported the 3-39 Inf in its contact during the day. Totals for the action were 5 VC KIA.

Troop D/3-5 Cav supported the 5-60 Inf (M) and 6-31 Inf contact all through the day. Totals for the action were 11 VC KIA, 1 VC WHA, 16 sampans destroyed, and 39 structures destroyed.

f. 11 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf conducted airmobile and recon in force operations with Co's A and C. At first light the two units began sweeping the area of yesterday's contact (XS 814820). During the sweep at XS 815823, Co A discovered 3 VC KIA, 2 RPG-2 launchers, 13 B-40 rockets, 3 AK-47's, 2 AK-47 bandoliers, 10 chicom grenades, 15 lbs of clothing and 1 lb of documents. The company also destroyed 12 bunkers in the same area. Co C in the same area found 3 B-40 rockets, 1 K-50, 1 RPG-2 launcher, 1 SKS rifle, 1 9mm pistol, 1 AK-47, 1 AK-50, 1 chicom radio and some web gear. From this area Co C continued operations to the south. At 1515H via XS 823791, the company engaged an estimated VC platoon. The contact was supported by Troop D/3-5 Cav and

CONFIDENTIAL

arty and broke at 1600H. The action resulted in 4 US WHA and the enemy casualties are unknown. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co's A and E at FS/PB Snake (XS 789769); Co B at XS 845878; Co C at XS 808808; and Co D at XS 886770.

The 3-39 Inf conducted recon in force operations with Co's A and B initially. Co A conducted footmobile operations from XS 826864 to the northeast. At 1115H vic XS 836875, the company started receiving RPG, automatic weapons, and small arms fire from an estimated 50 VC. The company reacted with Troop D/3-5 Cav gunships, arty and TAC air. Ron/2-47 Inf (M) was positioned to the north of the contact in a blocking position. At 1200H, the platoon came under heavy automatic and small arms fire from the VC forces attempting to withdraw to the north. The two units pounded the enemy from both sides all during the day until the VC broke contact at 1830H. The units sustained 5 US WHA as a result of the contact and killed 27 VC. Co B conducted recon in force operations from XS 843883 to the south. At 0930H vic XS 845879, the company established contact with an estimated reinforced VC company. Co B/6-31 Inf was placed OPCON to the 3-39 Inf and moved from XS 850880 west to the point of contact establishing contact and blocking from the east at 1100H. Co B/2-47 Inf (M) was placed OPCON to the 3-39 Inf at 0930H and began moving south to the point of contact at 1000H. At 1100H Co B/2-47 Inf established a block oriented north at XS 846880. At 1105H the unit began receiving SA fire. All of the units involved pounded the enemy with TAC Air and organic weapons until 2000H when the contact broke. The action resulted in 9 US WHA and 21 VC body count. The final disposition of the battalion was: HHC at XS 845884; Co A at XS 834876; Co B at XS 842882; and Co C at XS 847872.

The 4-39 Inf conducted airmobile and recon in force operations northeast of Nha Be. The operation had negative results and the disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co's B and E at Nha Be (XS 916822); and Co C at XS 886772.

The 2-47 Inf (M) conducted local patrols from the vicinity of its night locations with negative results. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC at XS 810872; Co B at XS 790841; and Co C at XS 854887.

The 5-60 Inf (M) conducted local patrols from its night location south of Saigon with negative results. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC and Co A at XS 815877; and Co B at XS 817872.

Troop B/7-1 Cav supported the 3-39 Inf and 6-31 Inf contacts killing 6 VC.

Troop D/3-5 Cav also supported both contacts with negative results.

g. 12 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf conducted airmobile assaults and footmobile recon in force operations in southern Binh Chanh District with negative results. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC, Co's A and E at FS/PB Snake (XS 789769); Co B at XS 847876; Co C(-) at XS 845785; and 1/6-31 Inf at XS 804775.

The 3-39 Inf and attached units had sporadic contact in the area of the 11 May contact with groups of VC varying in size from a fire team to a platoon. The groups were spread and appeared to be the remnants of the units engaged 11 May. The battalion field CP received a total of 23 rounds of 75mm recoilless rifle fire from an unknown size VC force. There were no casualties and the counter-mortar fire produced unknown results. At 0830H vic XS 828874, Co A found 20 VC KIA, 20 B-40 rounds, 1 RPG-7 launcher, 8 AK-47's, 2 AK-50's, and some web gear. At 1050H vic XS 842882, Co B began receiving sniper fire from a hippopalm area. The company attacked the area, engaging and killing 5 VC and capturing 1 AK-47. The company continued to search in the area. At 1630H vic XS 841881, Co B engaged a VC platoon killing 15 VC. At 1440H Co B/2-47 (OPCON to 3-39 Inf) engaged an estimated squad killing 11 VC and capturing a small amount of small arms ammo. The contact for all units was sporadic all day. The totals for the days action were: 89 VC KIA, 8 AK-47's, 2 AK-50's, 1 RPG-7 launcher, 300 rds of AK-47 ammo, 150 US 1:50,000 maps of Saigon, 20 B-40 rds, and 5 RPG-7 rds. The disposition of the battalion was: HHC, Ron/3-39 Inf and Ron/2-47 Inf at XS 845884; Co A at XS 841876 to XS 891879; Co B at XS 846878; and Co C at XS 843873.

14
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

The 4-39 Inf conducted airmobile assaults and footmobile recon in force operations with Co's B and C in western Nha Be District (XS 857849). At 1300H vic XS 857850, Co B discovered 3 VC killed by arty, 1 B-40 rd, 15 munker sampans, 2 AK-47's and a small bag of ammo. The rest of the operation had negative results. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co's C and E at Nha Be (XS 916822); Co B at XS 869777.

The 2-47 Inf conducted mechanized recon in force operations vic XS 857886 with negative results. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC at XS 875396; Co B at XS 843873; Co C at XS 854887; and Ren Plt at XS 843973.

The 5-60 Inf (M) conducted local patrols with negative results. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC and Co C at XS 877872; Co B at XS 815876 and XS 896864.

Troop D/3-5 Cav and Troop B/7-1 Cav supported 3-39 contacts with D/3-5 Cav killing 1 VC.

h. 13 May 1968: The 6-31 Inf conducted airmobile assaults and footmobile recon in force operations with Co's A, C, and D in southern Binh Chanh District. At 1630H vic XS 799838, Co D found 1 VC KIA and two hand grenade booby traps. The company destroyed 13 bunkers in the area. At 1640H the company had 1 US MIA from a booby trap. The battalion S-3, airborne over XS 814774, spotted 3 VC KIA floating in the river. All other operations had negative results. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co's A, C, and E at FS/PB Smoke (XS 789769); Co B OPCON to 3-39 Inf; Co D at XS 790835.

The 3-39 Inf conducted mop-up operations south of Saigon with Co's A (vic XS 845875), B (vic XS 846876), B/6-31 (vic XS 847878), B/3-39 and B/2-47 (vic XS 842880 and west). All body counts and equipment captured were a result of previous actions except for 1 VC KIA by B/6-31 Inf vic XS 849877 at 1345H, and 1 POW captured by B/2-47 vic XS 844882 at 1000H. The totals for the day were: Co A/3-39 - 16 VC KIA, Co B/3-39 - 14 VC KIA, B/6-31 - 15 VC KIA, Ren/3-39 - 1 VC KIA, B/2-47 - 1 POW captured. Equipment captured for the day was: 13 AK-47's, 2 M-30's, 27 B-40 rockets, 3750 7.62 rds, 1 Cal 38 pistol, 1 Cal 45 pistol, 7 obdcom grenades, 1 VC flag, 1 VC map with markings. Co A was moved from south of Saigon to Rach Kien in the afternoon. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC, B/3-39, B/6-31 and Ren/3-39 vic XS 845882.

The 4-39 Inf conducted airmobile assaults and recon in force operations northwest of Nha Be with negative results. Two men from Co B were wounded by a grenade booby trap. The disposition of the battalion at nightfall was: HHC, Co's B, A, and C/3-39 at Nha Be (XS 916822); Co C/4-39 at XS 847786.

The 2-47 Inf (M) conducted local security patrols from the vic of their night locations. The disposition of units at nightfall was: HHC and Ren Plt at XS 884893; Co B at XS 793803; and Co C at XS 846885.

The 5-60 Inf (M) conducted mechanized recon in force operations vic XS 7578 with Co's B and C. At 1330H vic XS 750780, Co B established contact with an estimated VC platoon in a heavily bunkered area. Troop D/3-5 Cav, T/C ar, arty and organic weapons supported the contact. At 1600H Co B was joined from the west by Co C/5-60 Inf. The contact continued until 2000H and resulted in 6 US KIA, 8 US MIA and 30 VC KIA. Troop D/3-5 Cav also killed 15 VC while supporting the 5-60 Inf. The disposition of the unit at nightfall was: HHC and Co C at XS 710796; and Co B at XS 744773.

Troop D/3-5 Cav screened the Bde HQ south of Saigon and supported the 5-60 Inf contact.

15

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

12. Results:

a. Friendly losses during the operation were:

- (1) US KIA: 43
- (2) US WIA: 253

b. Enemy losses during the operation were:

(1) Personnel:

- (a) VC KIA: 876
- (b) POW: 9

(2) Equipment Captured:

Small Arms	88
Crew-Served Weapons	24
Hi Ammo	185 rds
PAC-25 Radio	1
Small Arms Ammo	5300 rds
Web Gear	30 lbs (approx)
Clothes	25 lbs (approx)
Documents	12 lbs (approx)

(3) Equipment Destroyed:

Sumpans	44
Bunkers	426
Grenades	23
122mm Rocket Launchers	2
Structures	295

c. Tactical Air Support: During the operation the 7th USAF supported the 3d Bde "Go Devils" with 37 preplanned and 52 immediate airstrikes. Approximately 90% of the airstrikes were followed by sweeps of the target area by ground troops.

13. Administrative Matters:

a. No significant problems were encountered in providing logistical support to Bde units during the operation. The 4-39 Inf and 6-31 Inf were resupplied by air and vehicle from their FS/PB's at Nha Bn and FS/PB Smoke respectively. The 3-39 Inf, 2-47 Inf (M), and 5-60 Inf (M) were resupplied by air and from battalion forward trains locations in Saigon/Long Binh by vehicles.

b. Communications throughout the operation were provided by FM and RTT. Both RTT and UHF were provided by the communications platoon, NHC, 3d Bde and the 9th Signal Bn. The 3d Bde Forward Tactical Operations Center was provided with "hot" lines to the 9th Division at Barrant, RVN and CMC in Saigon.

c. Medical support was provided by Co D, 9th Medical Bn located at Can Det Airstrip, Tan An, RVN. No problem areas developed during the operations and dust offs were conducted in a highly efficient and professional manner.

16

CONFIDENTIAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L

d. The continued contact created some minor problems in the maintenance of equipment, but command emphasis on the performance of preventive maintenance at every available moment remedied the situation.

e. The problem of refugees was handled primarily by refugee centers established in Saigon by CND personnel. All refugees collected were afforded transportation by the Bde to these centers.

14. Special Equipment and Techniques:

a. A technique used at night was the use of a UH1D helicopter and/or O-1 Birdog-type aircraft with observers aboard with light intensification devices to conduct visual reconnaissance of the waterways and LOC's south of Saigon. This denied the enemy the use of the waterways as LOC's.

b. Finding the enemy located in built-up or heavily-fortified areas necessitated the frequent use of tactical air support, artillery and helicopter gunships. In addition to killing the enemy, this allowed time for reorganization of units in contact to the most favorable attack position and pinned the enemy down long enough for reinforcements to arrive.

c. The technique of house-to-house fighting, first seen in the TET Offensive, once again had to be used to rout the enemy from positions in built-up areas.

d. The Boston Lander boats attached to the 4-39 Inf were used on two occasions to reinforce units in contact. After beaching troops, the boats were used to screen waterways.

15. Commander's Analysis:

During the eight-day period, the 3d Bde was heavily engaged with the equivalent of six VC battalions attempting to infiltrate Saigon from the south. To counter the threat, highly mobile defensive positions composed of five (5) battalions were positioned across the southern side of the city. From company to battalion-size base area elements of the Bde conducted recon in force operations to the south neutralizing many VC/NVA forces before they could reach the defensive positions south of Saigon. Operations of this type were made possible through extensive use of Assault Helicopter Companies (AHC) and riverine operations. The battalions were able to rapidly adapt to either mode of transportation, and quickly switch from one to the other without loss of momentum or time. Operations were conducted over widely varying terrain ranging from rice paddies to built-up areas. To reduce the high casualty rate normally experienced when neutralizing an entrenched enemy in house-to-house fighting, tactical airstrikes were used extensively. The effectiveness of the 39 airstrikes delivered in support of Bde operations during the period is reflected in the final casualty ratio 20.3/1. Because of the heavy vegetation along the numerous waterways south of Saigon, a major problem facing friendly forces was locating the enemy both during his attempt to infiltrate and exfiltrate the city. Two of the most effective means of locating enemy troops was through the use of air cav troops, and ambushes (ambushes along waterways). Ambushes placed along the various waterways in the AO provided valuable information on enemy withdrawal routes and posed a constant threat to enemy movement conducted primarily during hours of reduced visibility. Air cav troops were most effective during daylight hours when they conducted aerial recon and, when the situation warranted, recon in force operations with their organic aerb scout platoon. The air cav troops recon large areas of terrain in short periods of time which made them ideal for our operations. Action conducted during this period clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of a flexible defense and aggressive pursuit of enemy forces.

16. Recommendations:

a. Operations in Binh Chanh, Nha Bo and Capitol Military Districts should continue until that area is cleared of all VC units that participated in the 2d Offensive on Saigon. Future operations should be concentrated on infiltration routes for supplies and equipment into the Saigon area to prevent another buildup and attack on the city.

19
C O N F I D E N T I A L

CONFIDENTIAL

b. While a great deal of importance must be placed on the Saigon area, large-scale operations must be conducted more frequently in Long An and other provinces. During the long period of time that the bulk of the brigade's forces were in the Saigon area only limited operations and local security-type operations could be conducted in other areas. Lack of brigade operations in Long An and elsewhere permitted the VC to construct new base areas and move additional elements and supplies into outlying provinces.

c. Increased importance must be placed on the security of bridges along Hwy 4. The highway is a vital link between the capital city of Saigon and the delta region and is the main artery for commercial as well as military traffic moving in and out of the Delta. It was clearly demonstrated during the 2d Offensive on Saigon that the highway and bridges must be trafficable at all times in order for forces in Long An and other provinces to rapidly react to VC activities in the Saigon area.

d. Continued emphasis must be placed on RF/PF outposts in the Saigon area and upgrading the effectiveness of these vital installations. US and RVN forces must continue to work in close coordination in order to insure that RF/PF outposts are provided with all necessary materials and weapons. A system to allow quicker reinforcement of RF/PF outposts by US and RVN forces must be developed in order to protect these positions from numerically superior forces. At present this is difficult to accomplish due to remote locations of outposts, communications and transportation problems.

e. Continued emphasis must be placed on the major VC infiltration and supply routes that lead through the Plain of Reeds into Long An Province and subsequently into Saigon. Night VR missions as well as SLAR and RED H missions in the Plain of Reeds must be continued in conjunction with daylight missions.

f. Replacing of obsolete equipment currently being used by RVN forces must continue at as rapid a rate as possible. In this regard, the issue of M-16 rifles to RVN units has not only increased the fire power and effectiveness of the RVN soldiers, but has given increased confidence to their ever-growing aggressive attitude.

g. Civic actions programs should be given added emphasis and expanded. Projects should be conducted under the control of GVN and given all possible support by US. It must become more of a program of the Vietnamese for the Vietnamese.

FO: THE COMMANDER:

GERRY L. BURT
MAJ INF
ADJUTANT

UNCLASSIFIED

Security Classification

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R & D

(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)

1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author)

HQ, OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310

5a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Confidential

5b. GROUP

4

2. REPORT TITLE

Combat After Action Report - Operation TOAN THANG, HQ, 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division (U)

3. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)

Experiences of unit engaged in counterinsurgency operations, 8 Apr-23Jun 68

4. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name)

CO, 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division

5. REPORT DATE

20 August 1968

7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES

19

7b. NO. OF REFS

6a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO.

6b. PROJECT NO.

N/A

8a. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

68X081

8b. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)

9. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT

10. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

N/A

11. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY

OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310

12. ABSTRACT

19