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Contemporary
Historical
Evaluation of
Combat
Operations
REPORT

OPERATIONS THAYER/IRVING

12 MAY 1967

HQ PACAF
Directorate, Tactical Evaluation
CHECO Division

Prepared by: MR. LAWRENCE J. HICKEY
S.E. Asia Team

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FOREWORD

This CHECO study deals extensively with military efforts made in the latter part of 1966 to pacify northern Binh Dinh Province, one of the most-populated and heavily-contested areas of the country. The struggle for Binh Dinh Province began seriously in December 1964, when the Viet Cong made battalion-sized attacks for the first time. They moved into the An Lao Valley, captured two Army Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) fortified positions, and remained despite extensive air attacks and counter-operations. This enemy initiative, an escalation in fact, which was later revealed as part of a plan to cut South Vietnam in half along Highway 19, played a major part in the United States' decision to raise its level of participation in the year.

Some two and a half years later, the struggle for control of this area is continuing with definite signs of progress as indicated in this report. Nevertheless, the fact that this important area, where the U.S. has launched a major military effort, still is not secure, underscores the painstaking military approach required in the unique fighting of Vietnam.

Airpower is an essential element of this approach and was used extensively, but, it, too, cannot be expected to produce sudden, dramatic, finite results any more than the search-and-clear ground operations they support. This hard reality, the recognition of a long and difficult military task against a resilient and determined enemy, must be kept in mind in reading this study.

This study has greater detail than previous battle studies to provide

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a more complete environmental background in which the air role can be placed in perspective. This same treatment will be given in later studies to extended operations in other geographic areas.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

Assessment of Air Effort

The overall Allied military operations in northeast Binh Dinh Province have, since September 1966, achieved spectacular success. The enemy military forces were dealt, on a long-term basis, a crushing defeat, with more than 4,000 killed by body-count and thousands of others wounded, captured, or returned to government control. ^{1/}

The vast Viet Cong (VC) political and guerrilla infrastructure throughout the area was seriously crippled and in many cases totally destroyed. The enemy was seriously demoralized and even regiments were rendered completely ineffective. Almost the entire enemy base and logistics system--organized and constructed over a period of many years to support a full division, two independent battalions, and all its local and guerrilla forces--was either destroyed or captured.

Superficially, in terms of killed by air (KBA) and bomb damage assessment (BDA), results from the nearly 3,000 tactical air sorties and 250 B-52 sorties would appear negligible compared to the effort expended. ^{2/} In this case, however, reported KBA and BDA were only minor clues to the actual success and value of the tactical and strategic air effort.

Opportunities for analyzing decisive results are all too infrequent,

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since by far the majority of tactical and strategic bombing sorties are flown against an unseen and subsequently unexploited target. This situation leads to reported results that are at most minimal. Even in many instances, when meaningful exploitation of air strikes is achieved, the enemy's penchant for removing bodies and rapidly clearing away all signs of Allied effectiveness, denies accurate results.

There have been many instances when visible and very spectacular results have been accomplished in many close air support situations. When an Army commander tells his forward air controller (FAC) that air support saved his platoon, company, or battalion, from serious losses or even annihilation, and the unit's perimeter is littered with enemy bodies strewn around bomb craters or charred with napalm, the effectiveness, and oftentimes decisiveness of air support stands little challenge.

Many factors contribute to an effective evaluation and documentation of the valuableness of air support. It is essential that various aspects of the operational milieu of this campaign, such as terrain, weather, concepts of operations, enemy dispositions and tactics, and pertinent Allied unit characteristics be considered. This provides a proper perspective for the story of air support in the northeast Binh Dinh Province campaign.

Binh Dinh Province

Bound on the east by the South China Sea, Binh Dinh is a central highlands coastal province located in the northeastern corner of II Corps.

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Approximately three-quarters of the provincial area is terrain typical of the central highlands--that is, rugged, heavily-forested mountains with 40- to 60-degree slopes cut by fast-flowing streams. The western half of the province contains extensive areas of relatively flat mountain plateau which is, for the most part, heavily vegetated. The mountains are drained by numerous small streams which converge into several major river valleys, varying in width from two-to-four kilometers and extensively terraced and cultivated for rice.

As these major rivers, the Kim Son, the An Lao, the Vinh Thanh, the ^{Suoi}~~Quat~~ Ca, and the Lai Giang broaden out into the coastal plains, most of them divide into numerous small channels which provide ample water for the intensive rice cultivation of the paddied lowlands. It is in the terraced river valleys and these broad coastal lowlands that the great majority of the province's population (estimated at 876,000) ^{3/} live, engaging in rice cultivation and fishing in the shallow coastal waters and bays.

The central coast of Binh Dinh is marked by three isolated mountain masses, the Phu Cat, the Nui Mieu, and the Tiger Mountains, each perched almost on the very brink of the sea and separated from each other and the western mountain ranges by expanses of rice paddied plains.

Militarily and economically, the most strategic areas for the control of Binh Dinh Province are Qui Nhon, the largest city, the various smaller district towns, the two national highways and National Railroad which transverse the province, the populous river valleys and coastal lowlands,



and finally the coastal waters, strategic for both the large scale fishing industry and as a waterborne access route for supply and possible infiltration.

Qui Nhon and the district towns are garrisoned and have remained fairly secure in Government Republic of Vietnam (GVN) hands, although the VC have had the capability of massing against select district towns in force, and at least temporarily overrunning them.

National Highways 1 and 19 are the major land transportation routes and provide access to the north, south, and west. Highway 1, which is paralleled by the National Railroad, roughly follows the eastern coastline and is the major national north-south transportation route from Saigon to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and from the DMZ north to Hanoi.

Highway 19 has always been strategic in that it is the main overland access route to Pleiku and Kontum Provinces. Control of this road has been exigent upon the control and logistical support of both these provinces and the major Allied border control operations such as PAUL REVERE and SAM HOUSTON.

Thus, the overall Allied military strategy for controlling these various strategic areas and wresting the province from VC hands was based on three specifics. These were: (1) the establishment of key and strategically located bases from which the towns, populated areas, and highways could be secured and pacified; (2) implementation of an extensive naval support program to control the heavy coastal traffic and prevent seaborne supply and infiltration of enemy forces; and (3) the setting up of an air



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support program adequate to insure the airpower necessary to achieve Allied objectives. ^{4/}

The Koreans

With the arrival of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Capital Division, (also known as [aka] the Tiger Division), in the fall of 1965, and the establishment of a base camp a few miles northwest of Qui Nhon, Highway 19, west to the An Khe Pass and a large segment of Highway 1 were gradually secured against all major harassment. The extensive river valley northwest of Qui Nhon, the largest single lowland plains area in the province, was gradually cleared and pacified. By late summer of 1966, most of the southwest quarter of Binh Dinh Province, with the exception of some of the heaviest mountain area, had been fairly well cleared and land travel within the Korean tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) had become perhaps the safest in Vietnam. ^{5/}

Airpower played a significant role in these pacification and clearing operations, although not to the extent that American units normally employ tactical airpower for similar purposes. From 21 October 1965 through 1 June 1966, approximately 450 TAC air missions were flown in support of the Capital Division pacification program. A great many of these missions were of the harassment and interdiction (H&I) type. ^{6/}

Tactical airpower had generally been used with frugality by Korean forces. Their strategy of operations and assault tactics were principally developed around the concept of fire support from division artillery, since

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tactical air was not ordinarily available for use in Korean tactical planning and training programs. Furthermore, appreciation of the capabilities of tactical air support was not normally found in Korean officer and non-commissioned officer ranks to the extent that it existed among U.S. forces.^{7/}

The Koreans also expanded their tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) gradually and in measured steps, a tactic which lent itself well to advance preparation of adequate artillery fire support bases.^{8/}

According to Maj. Robert D. Stuart, former assistant air liaison officer for the ROK Capital Division, when the Koreans did make contact with the enemy, they were so eager to press their attack that they were unwilling to wait 20 or 30 minutes for an immediate air strike to soften up the enemy. They preferred relying upon their division artillery, getting in there immediately, and fighting it out. Consequently, by the time air support arrived, the Koreans were frequently so closely engaged that TAC close air support (CAS) could not be used. "In the seven months I have been here, I have never seen a close air support strike of any significance,"^{9/} Major Stuart said.

On the other hand, Korean forces developed a fine appreciation of flare ships. They also conducted very successful air psychological operations (psy-ops) programs, particularly in October 1966, during Operation MAENG HO 6.^{10/}

1st Air Cavalry Division

At about the same time that ROK Capital Division was being deployed

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near Qui Nhon, An Khe, the main base camp of the 1st Air Cavalry Division was being established astride Highway 19. It was located along the Song Ba River, midway between the An Khe and Mang Yang Passes. By fall of 1966, the segment of highway between these two passes had been secured from all except small sniping attacks and occasional mining incidents. Operation DAZZLEM and other base security operations had made great strides in eliminating enemy main force units from a large area of the Song Ba Valley and forcing them into the northern half of the province. ^{11/}

Tactical airpower was used extensively throughout these clearing operations. Through February 1967, H&I strikes were continually being used within the DAZZLEM II area. This kept enemy forces off-balance and dispersed even though actual ground contact with enemy units was extremely limited. ^{12/}

Tactics of 1st Air Cavalry Division

Deployment of the 1st Air Cavalry Division (1st ACD) was unique as a division-sized employment of a massive helicopter transport and assault capability. There were several factors concomitant to this capability which had a profound effect upon the utilization of airpower as a support weapon throughout the northeast Binh Dinh Province campaign.

The normal methods the 1st ACD used for deployment of its brigades during operations was to simultaneously place several companies and battalions into numerous landing zones (LZs) scattered throughout the area of operations (AO). They would then begin to sweep progressively away from each LZ.



Because of tremendous air mobility of the 1st ACD, LZs were almost exclusively located on high ground--usually mountain tops or ridges in suitable terrain. When search of an area was completed, the unit was helilifted into another LZ on the next ridge and the process began all over again. From this high ground, the units would sweep downhill and work out the slopes and ravines for the enemy with the obvious advantage of commanding positions over the operating terrain. 13/

This type of operational strategy, however, necessitated availability of a very large number of LZs. This was no problem in the coastal lowlands and larger river valleys, but the rugged and heavily forested coastal mountain masses and the western mountain ranges were a different story. In mountains and valleys of the western section of the AO, a large number of LZs already existed due to previous operations--primarily the WHITE WING/MASHER series. These had either been cut out by chain-saw equipped troopers, lowered from helicopters, or blasted out by air strikes.

Since many of the areas targeted for proximate and future sweeps did not have sufficient LZ's for anticipated operations, these had to be created. This factor, as it will be seen, accounted for an extremely large number of tactical air sorties during the ensuing operations. 14/

There was another background factor which had a great impact on the relative dearth of immediate CAS type sorties which most frequently produced more spectacular results in terms of KBA. It pertained to one of the most successful innovations of the 1st ACD which involved the 1st



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of the 9th Cavalry (1/9th Cav). This unit, entirely helimounted in armed UH-1s and ^{OH-13s}~~OH-13s~~, served the dual-purpose of all-around scout and immediate reaction team for developing promising enemy visual reconnaissance (VR) 15/ sightings.

When an operation commenced, the 1/9th Cav fanned out in their helicopters over the entire AO--the northeastern portion of Binh Dinh Province. From an altitude of 50 feet above the terrain, they scouted the area for egress routes through which the enemy was fleeing the sweeping ground forces.

They also created diversions to confuse the enemy, and scouted adjacent areas for signs of enemy units moving to reinforce threatened VC/NVA troops and camps. The 1/9th Cav also killed or captured individuals or small groups of enemy with their side and forward-mounted machine guns and grenade launchers. This unit and its quick-reaction Blue Teams (helimounted quick-reaction platoons consisting of about 50 men), frequently 16/ provided exploitation forces for B-52 and tactical air strikes.

These tactics, throughout the fall campaign of 1966, produced an extremely high kill rate in small groups, as the enemy attempted to disperse and exfiltrate the areas of ground sweep operations. Thus a large portion of the high enemy KIA figures for the campaign were achieved on quite a different basis than had occurred in most Allied ground operations.

This factor helped to explain why KBA and BDA figures for such an extraordinarily successful operation were so minimal. A high percentage

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of enemy forces were not killed in the classic troops-in-contact, CAS type situation, but individually or in small groups by armed helicopters. By using helicopters in this manner, a very large number of enemy prisoners were also taken. Many important targets, subsequently struck by tactical and strategic airpower, were elicited from these sources. ^{17/}

Another tactic had an important effect on the use of airpower during THAYER/IRVING operations. When a sizable enemy unit was contacted, the 1/9th Cav usually attempted to surround the enemy force by positioning aerial assault troops all around the enemy. This method of trapping the enemy occurred during the largest battle of the entire campaign. As a result, air support could not be used on the trapped enemy because of their close proximity to friendly forces around them. ^{18/}

The Enemy

Northeastern Binh Dinh Province had been for many years almost exclusively controlled by the Viet Cong. Until 1966, the political, paramilitary, and main force (MF) communist structure was thoroughly entrenched and developed to a highly sophisticated level. ARVN forces were committed to the defense of numerous small outposts and district towns, but seldom dared venture beyond them except in strength. ^{19/}

Communist MF units, charged with military control of northeast Binh Dinh and execution of the war throughout that area, consisted of two independent MF battalions. These were the E210 and the E2B (aka as the 50th), with a normal strength of about 400 men each. The 610th NVA/VC Division

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had a strength of three 2,600-man regiments--the 22d NVA, the 18th NVA, the 2d VC, and supporting units--which brought the total division strength to approximately 11,000 men. ^{20/} These main forces were supported by numerous Viet Cong local force (LF) companies and platoons. They conducted guerrilla operations throughout their local areas and provided security for the political infrastructure.

Preliminary Operations

The 1st Cavalry Division, supported by ARVN and ROK elements in nearby AOs, started the first major series of Allied operations against northeast Binh Dinh Province on 24 January 1966, under the code name Operation MASHER (see map for locations of principal preliminary operations). This search and destroy operation was conducted by the 3d Brigade, 1st ACD, against elements of the 22d NVA Regiment and by 6 February, accounted for a confirmed body-count of 603 enemy KIA/KBA, with additional estimates of ^{21/} 1,200 enemy killed or wounded.

MASHER was followed by a quick sweep through part of the An Lao Valley from 7 through 15 February with Operation WHITE WING. The enemy generally avoided contact, however, and only 47 enemy were confirmed KIA during the ^{22/} operation.

Operations shifted to the south on 11 February, with Operation EAGLE CLAW staging into the Kim Son Valley, the normal AO of the 18th NVA Regiment. Heavy air support complemented this operation which lasted until 27 February. It made a significant contribution to the more than 339 VC/NVA confirmed

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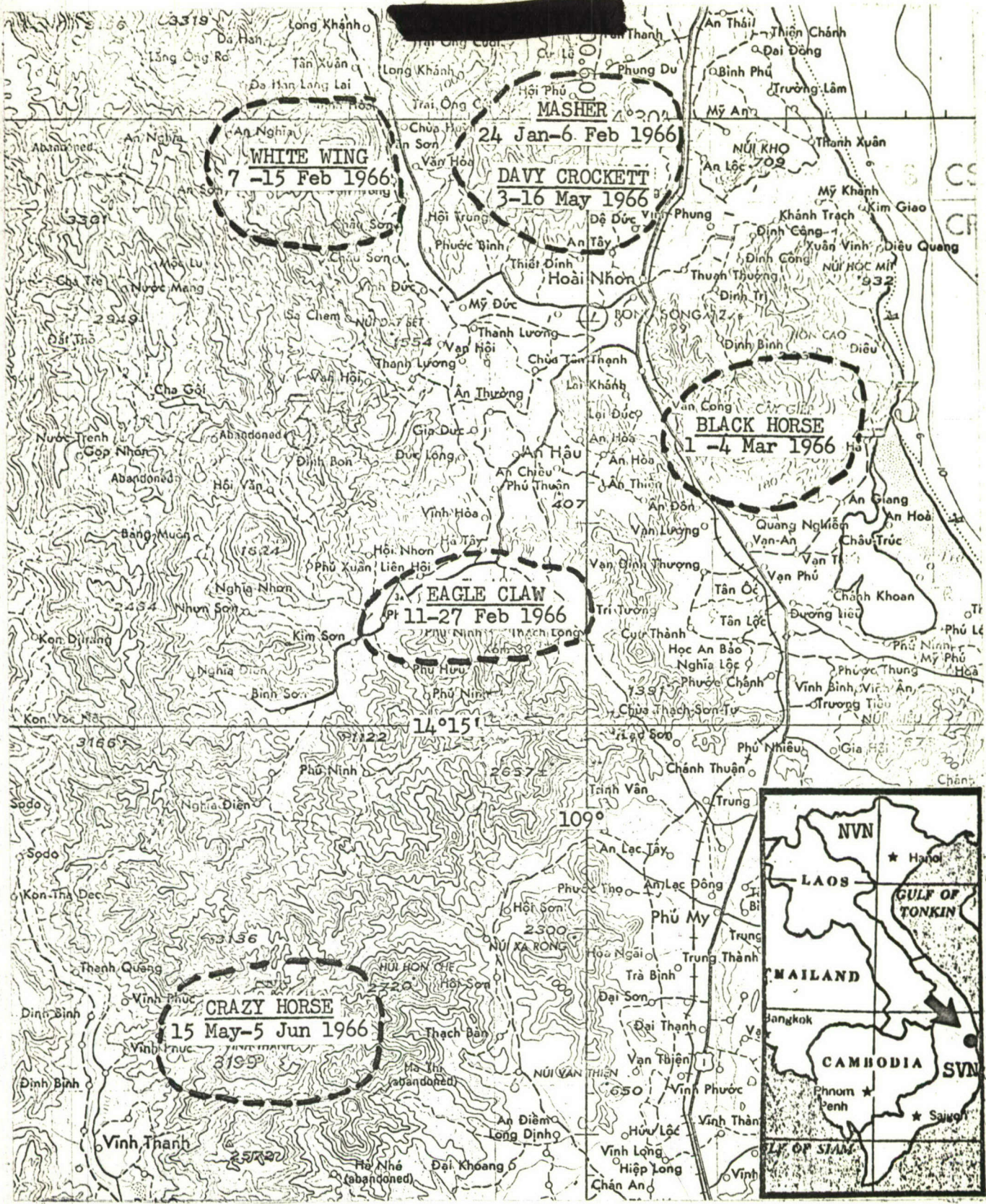
KIA and the 1,500 enemy further estimated killed or wounded. ^{23/}

The Tiger or Cay Giép Mountain complex became the next target, and the 1st ACD moved in on 1 March with Operation BLACK HORSE. The enemy successfully avoided contact, however, and results were only 19 enemy killed. This operation was the beginning of a subsequent major effort to construct LZs by air strikes in this mountain complex. ^{24/}

This series of operations terminated with 1,342 enemy killed by body-count and an estimated additional KIA of 1,746 and WIA of 1,348. Six hundred and thirty-three VC/NVA were captured and 485 rallied to government control under the Chieu Hoi program. TAC air contributed 600 sorties in support of this effort and delivered more than 850 tons of ordnance against enemy positions, LZ preps, and in the LZ construction program. ^{25/}

From 3 to 16 May, elements of the 1st ACD were again conducting operations in northeast Binh Dinh. Operation DAVY CROCKETT, conducted in much the same area as Operation MASHER, pitted the 1/9th Cav, five battalions of the ARVN 22d Infantry, and various ARVN armored personnel carrier (APC), and 105-mm howitzer support units against elements of the NVA 22d Division. The ensuing engagements again cost the enemy forces heavy losses with 102 Communist troops killed by body-count against friendly losses of 17 KIA and 29 WIA. ^{26/}

On the day that Operation DAVY CROCKETT terminated, the 1st ACD began an operation that resulted in the commitment of the 1st Brigade against large elements of the 2d VC ~~Division~~ ^{REGIMENT}, which were preparing to assault the



OPERATIONS IN N.E. BINH DINH PROVINCE

January-June 1966

Figure 1

Vinh Thanh Special Forces Camp.

Operation CRAZY HORSE continued until 5 June, keeping nearly continuous heavy contact with the enemy. Seventh Air Force poured in 260 tactical air sorties to support the troopers with 362.5 tons of bombs, napalm, white phosphorus (WP), cluster bomb units (CBU), rockets, and 20-mm cannon fire.

When the combined operation terminated on 5 June, the 1st Cav, ROK Capital Division, and Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) forces had accounted for a total of 507 confirmed enemy KIA, 381 estimated KIA, 175 enemy WIA (estimated), and 28 enemy prisoners. In addition, the tremendous quantity of enemy documents captured and information obtained from prisoner interrogations made an important contribution to the intelligence background for the THAYER/IRVING series initiated the following September. 28/

From the end of Operation CRAZY HORSE until the beginning of Operation THAYER I on 13 September, there were no other large Allied operations in the area. Preparations were being made, however, to exploit the intelligence gathered as a result of these earlier operations. This would pave the way for another move into the area--this time to remain until enemy forces were completely eliminated.

The Lull Before the Storm

After heavy losses were inflicted against the Communist forces in northeast Binh Dinh Province by the Allied campaigns, a temporary lull in large scale fighting occurred. Throughout the first six months of 1966,

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the 1st ACD conducted operations in other areas of the central highlands. The enemy main forces regrouped, obtained, and trained replacements from North Vietnam, via the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and locally, by upgrading lower echelon VC and guerrilla forces and by manpower levies against the general population. In this manner, the enemy managed to bring most of his combat regiments and battalions back to fighting strength; quality had declined, ^{29/} however, and supporting units frequently were without replacements.

While this process was taking place, the provincial and main force VC commanders were laying the strategy for a fall-winter offensive. It was aimed at: (1) recovering areas encroached upon by Allied expansion of their TAORs; (2) destruction of the Vinh Thanh Special Forces Camp; (3) "liberation" of the Vinh Thanh Valley; and (4) heavy attacks against elements of the ARVN 22d Division, whose TAOR included the populated areas of northeast Binh Dinh. ^{30/}

Enemy Air Defense Capabilities

After the serious defeats suffered earlier in the year, the enemy leaders in Binh Dinh Province were becoming acutely concerned with measures to counteract Allied airpower and mobility. The constant tactical air support encountered during engagements with Allied units, the unique threat posed by the massive employment of helicopters by the 1st ACD, and the constant harassment by both fighter-bombers and B-52s throughout enemy operating areas, were having deleterious effects on troop morale and accounting for a heavy attrition in personnel, equipment, and supplies. ^{31/}

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The 610th Division relied for its protection on the 200th Antiaircraft (AA) Bn, which was heavily equipped with 12.7-mm AA machine guns from low-level attack by tactical air and helicopter.^{32/} Requirements also called for an AA company to be assigned to each regiment, with a regimental headquarters protected by six 12.7-mm guns.^{33/} Light machine guns and automatic weapons were also abundant and could be quite effective against low flying fighter-bombers, observation aircraft, and helicopters.

Indications of enemy problems associated with acquiring and maintaining an adequate AA defense capability became evident, however, when an NVA prisoner, captured in late December 1966, revealed that his AA infiltration company departed North Vietnam with seven 12.7-mm AA guns. By the time they had reached Binh Dinh Province and were assigned as the AA company for the badly decimated 18th NVA Regiment in November, their equipment was down to three 12.7-mm guns. The remainder had been lost or destroyed during infiltration.^{34/}

The increasing use of B-52 strikes was also causing concern to the enemy. On 26 June 1966, the Binh Dinh VC Province Headquarters issued special instruction regarding this threat. In an order entitled "Defense Against B-52 and B-57 Bombings,"^{35/} the enemy expressed serious concern over the problem: "Recently the enemy has begun to use B-52 and B-57 bombings many times to aim at and cope with our activities, and destroy our installations, assembly areas, factories, radio stations, and movement corridors, causing a number of heavy casualties."^{36/}

These orders, captured when elements of the 1st ACD overran the

[REDACTED]

Binh Dinh Province Headquarters on 15 October 1966, listed precautions and measures to be taken "to avoid these unfortunate casualties caused by the enemy B-52 bombers...." These were: 37/

"During the day at each place of work there must be an air raid shelter, so that when the sound of airplanes is heard from afar (especially B-52 and B-57 bombers), personnel can immediately go into shelters. In this regard, we must strive to find natural caves for shelters and work sites.

"Units and installations which do not have shelters or bunkers must prepare and organize their work (with the exception of essential projects) so that all personnel can enjoy safety.

"At night units and installations must divide their work in order to turn aside the threat of the B-52 bombers, and to react and give warning to comrades in the units and installations so that precautions can be taken. Also, the creation of the conditions for sleeping of personnel underground at night must be set up.

"The main mission is the protection of important installations, but we must not become so engrossed in this that the enemy is able to discover the current locations of other units and installations.

"Units and installations which presently do not have shelters must seek cover in which to work and sleep; but if this is not possible, they must dig bunkers immediately in which to work and sleep.

"While preparing to combat the B-52 and B-57 bombings, we must prepare at the same time against enemy sweep operations and enemy aircraft and artillery in the area of units and installations.

"All units must comply with the contents of this directive immediately. All commanders must inform 3K* in regard to the precautions taken against B-52 bombings."

* Code name for Binh Dinh VC Province Headquarters.

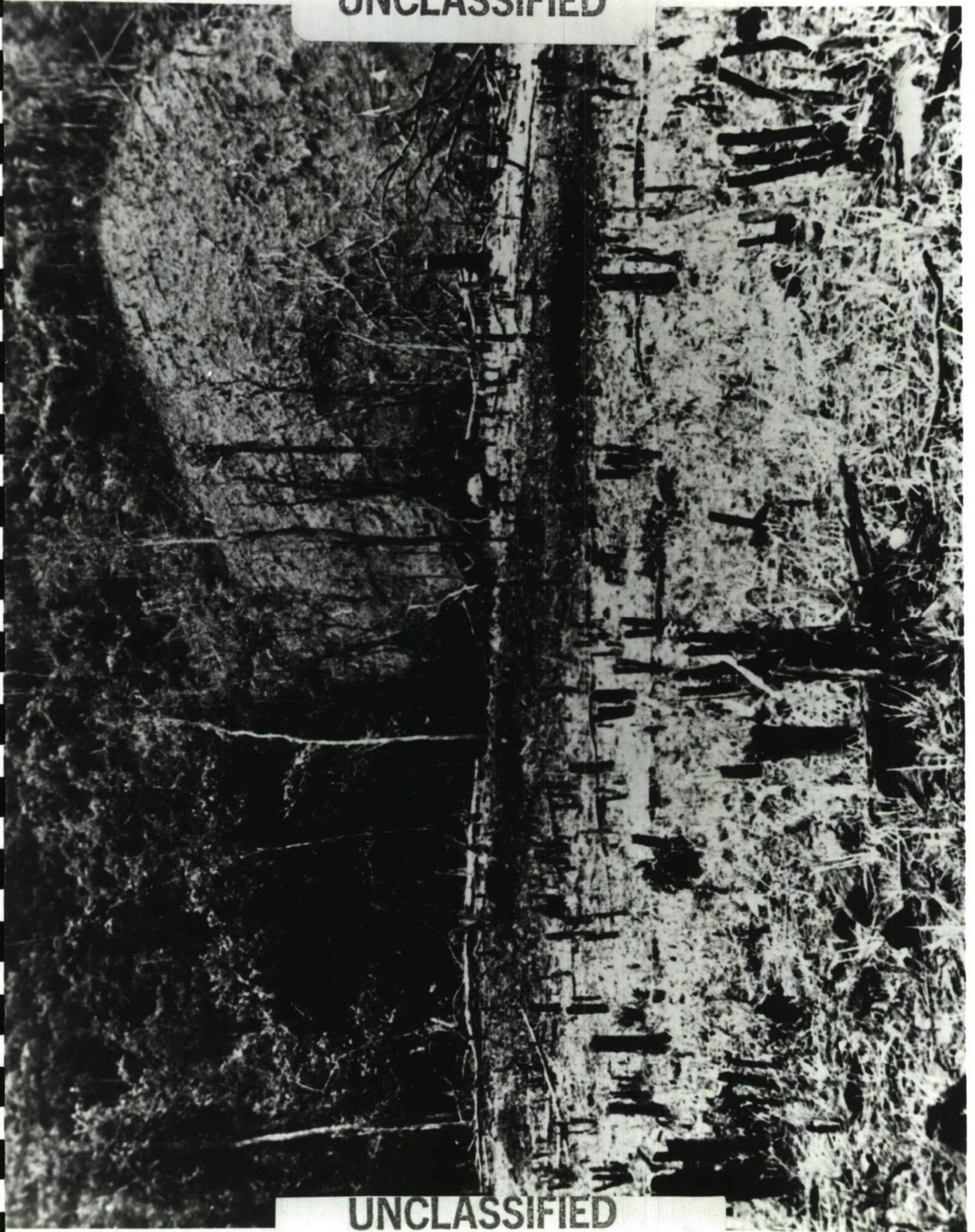
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UNCLASSIFIED

Figure 2

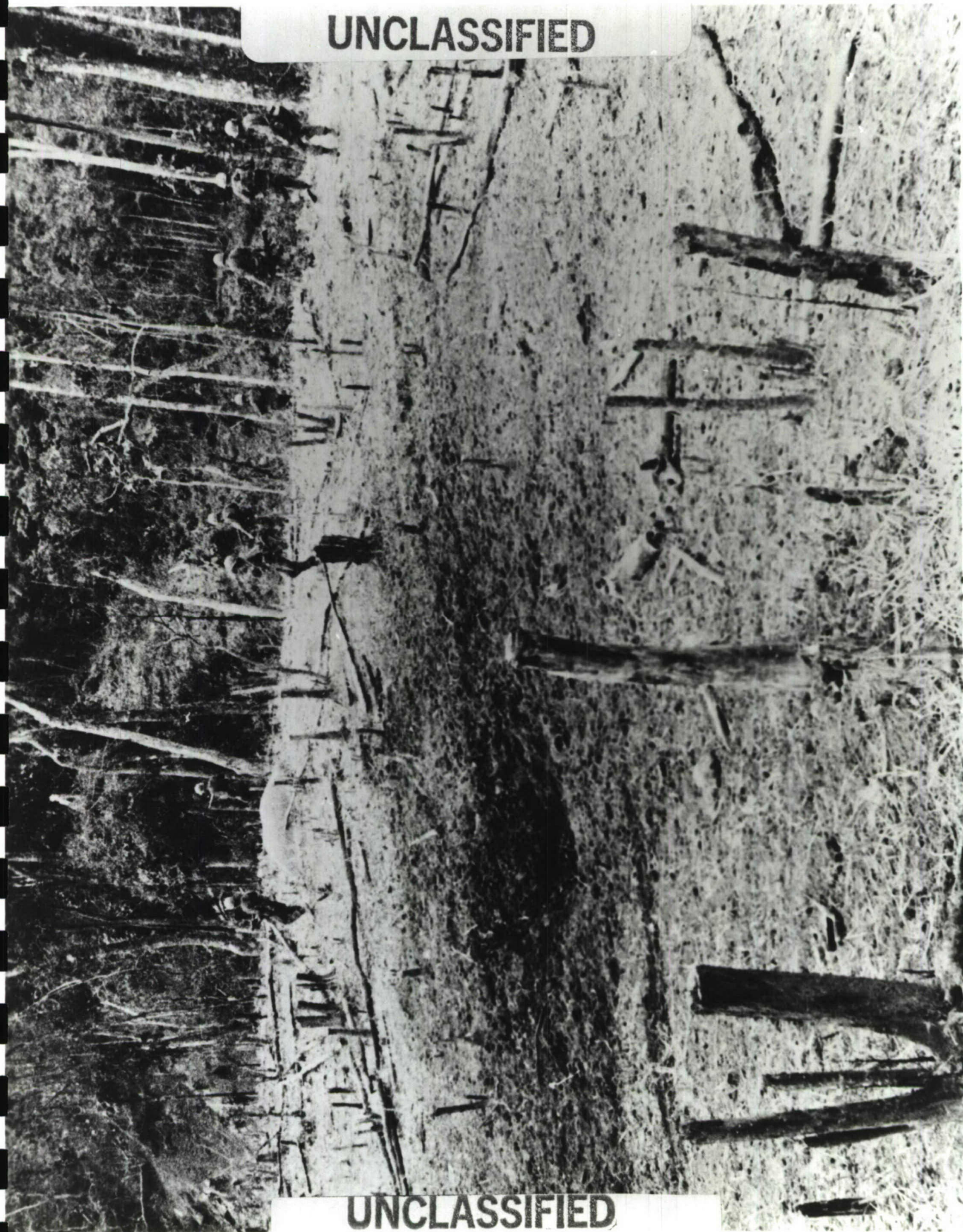
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UNCLASSIFIED

Figure 3

UNCLASSIFIED



UNCLASSIFIED

Figure 4

UNCLASSIFIED



UNCLASSIFIED

Figure 5

[REDACTED]

Iron Rock III

Nearly two months after issuance of this directive, at 8:05 A.M. on 27 August, nine B-52s were making their final bomb-run on a strike zone coded Iron Rock III. (See Fig. 2-5.) Within minutes, the giant bombers expended their ordnance--the ground below lay pockmarked with hundreds of bomb craters--and began winging back toward their base on Guam. ^{38/}

Ten days later, an Air Force reconnaissance jet flew over the target area, which consisted of a medium-forested valley separating the two main peaks of the Phu Cat Mountain complex. ^{39/} Examination of the post strike photography produced this typical bomb damage assessment (BDA) report in a message from the Commander, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam (COMUSMACV): "...Trail activity is light within target area. Craters in target area: 208. Craters out of target area: 85. Items of military significance: None." ^{40/}

Despite these negative results of photo interpretation on that late August morning, the rain of bombs on the small valley killed 100 VC, destroyed one ammunition storage area, six rice storage structures, and a VC hospital. This information was obtained on 20 September from an Allied agent whose report was subsequently given a reliability-credibility rating equivalent to a U.S. force body-count (B-2). ^{41/} This strike and two subsequent B-52 strikes on 5 September, totaling 15 sorties, undoubtedly caused a serious deterioration of enemy effectiveness at a time when Capital ROK Infantry Division (CRID) forces were preparing to clear the area for

[REDACTED]

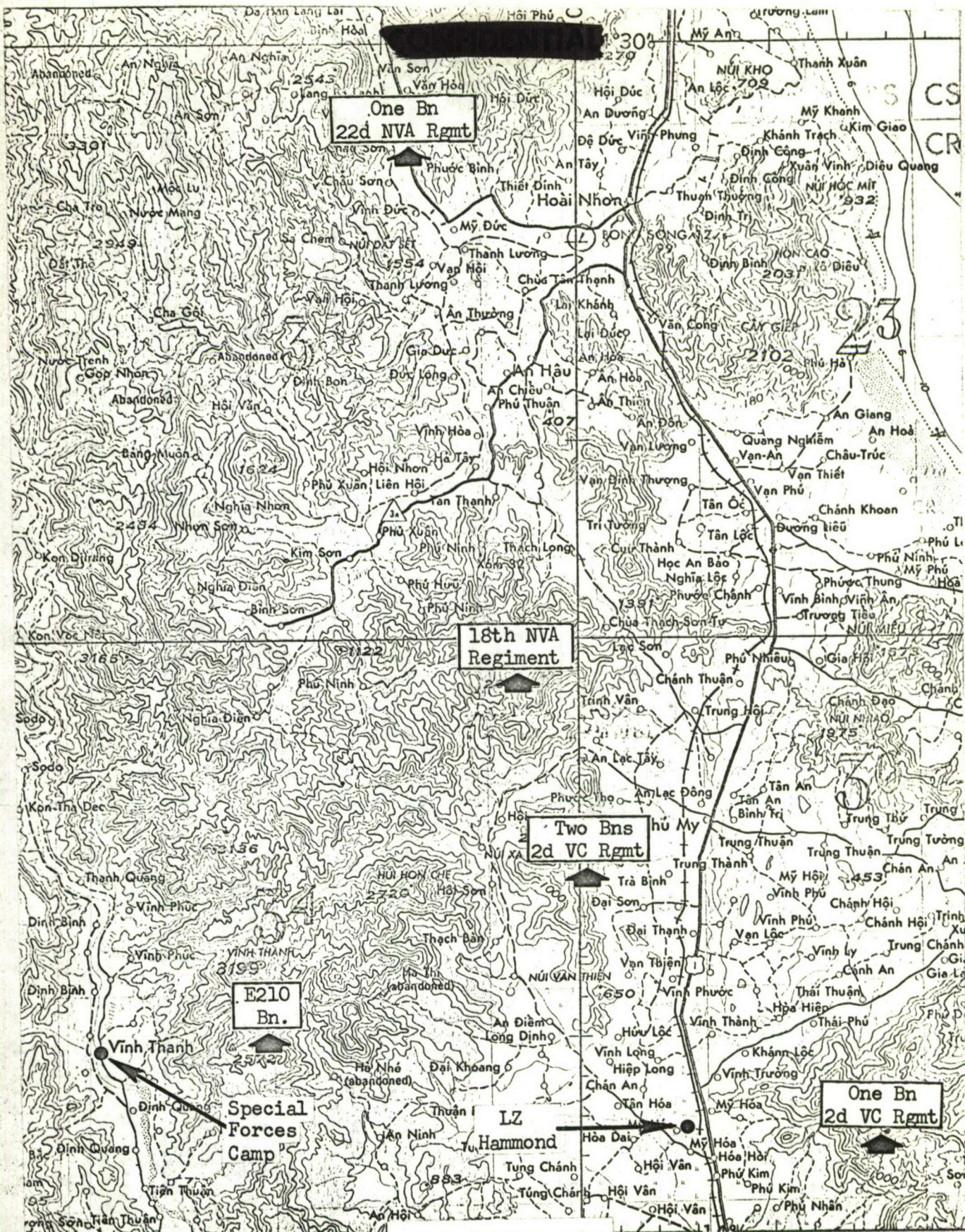
Operation MAENG HO 6. ^{42/}

Enemy Dispositions (1 - 7 Sep 66)

Before initiation of Operation THAYER I, two regiments of the 610th Division had moved out of their normal AOs and were making preparations to launch their fall-winter offensive. The first two objectives were an attack on the Vinh Thanh Special Forces Camp and the disruption of GVN National Elections, scheduled for 11 September. ^{43/} (See Fig.6.)

The 18th NVA Regiment had moved east from the Kim Son Valley to high ground, and had sent some units down into populated areas of Phu My District. The 2d VC Regiment, together with the E210 Battalion, moved to the mountain mass between the Vinh Thanh and Cuoi Ca Valleys. Their Vinh Thanh Special Forces Camp had to be aborted when 13 penetration agents were uncovered and premature contact developed between camp CIDG forces and elements of the regiment. With this development, the 2d VC Regiment positioned two battalions on high ground west of Highway 1 and north of LZ Hammond. The third battalion occupied a location east of the highway along the eastern fringes of the Phu Cat Mountains. ^{44/}

Meanwhile, the 22d NVA Regiment remained in its normal AO with one battalion located in the An Lao Valley and the other two deployed on the Bong Song plains. It was in the latter location that three platoon-sized ^{45/} elements of the regiment were contacted by ARVN forces on 31 August.



ENEMY DISPOSITIONS

1 September 1966

Figure 6

[REDACTED]

CHAPTER II

OPERATION THAYER I

The Enemy Strikes (7 - 8 Sep 66)

It was not until the night of 7 September, that the enemy offensive was launched in full scale. That evening, the 22d NVA Regiment attacked all three battalion bases of the 40th ARVN Regiment at De Duc, An Thai and Tam Quan. ^{1/} (See Fig. 7.) At Tam Quan, one of its outposts was overrun with 16 ARVN KIA and 15 MIA. ^{2/} The outpost was reoccupied by noon the next day, with the assistance of three A-1Hs which struck enemy fortifications and structures, destroying 30 of them on immediate strike sorties. ^{3/}

Further to the south, two hamlets in Phu My sector were attacked that same night. One Popular Force platoon hamlet garrison lost four KIA and four WIA in beating off a two-company probe. ^{4/} The other hamlet was supported by an AC-47 which expended 16,000 rounds of 7.62-mm and 25 flares, ^{5/} but twenty civilians were kidnapped before the enemy withdrew. ^{6/} These two attacks were apparently executed as diversions to cover movement of two battalions of the 2d VC Regiment which were taking up ambush positions along either side of Highway 1. ^{7/}

The next morning, the 1st Bn, 41st ARVN Regiment was proceeding north along Highway 1, when just north of Phu Ly Bridge, it was ambushed from both sides of the road. Tactical air strikes and artillery were immediately called in. The 3d Bn, 41st ARVN Regiment, which had also been moving north along the highway, arrived to support the 1st Bn. Nineteen ARVN were

[REDACTED]

KIA, 22 WIA, and 21 MIA before the enemy withdrew, but 72 enemy bodies were found scattered around the ambush site. ^{8/} Many had been killed as a result of the four F-4C and eight F-100 sorties which flew in immediate close support. ^{9/}

The VC battalion which had struck the ARVN convoy from the west side of the road, retreated further west into prepared positions where they were pinpointed and hammered by TAC strikes and artillery for two days. The second battalion retreated east--just north of the Phu Cat Mountains, while the remaining battalion of the 2d VC Regiment moved northeast to the southern part of the Tiger Mountain complex. ^{10/}

THAYER I (8 - 12 Sep 66)

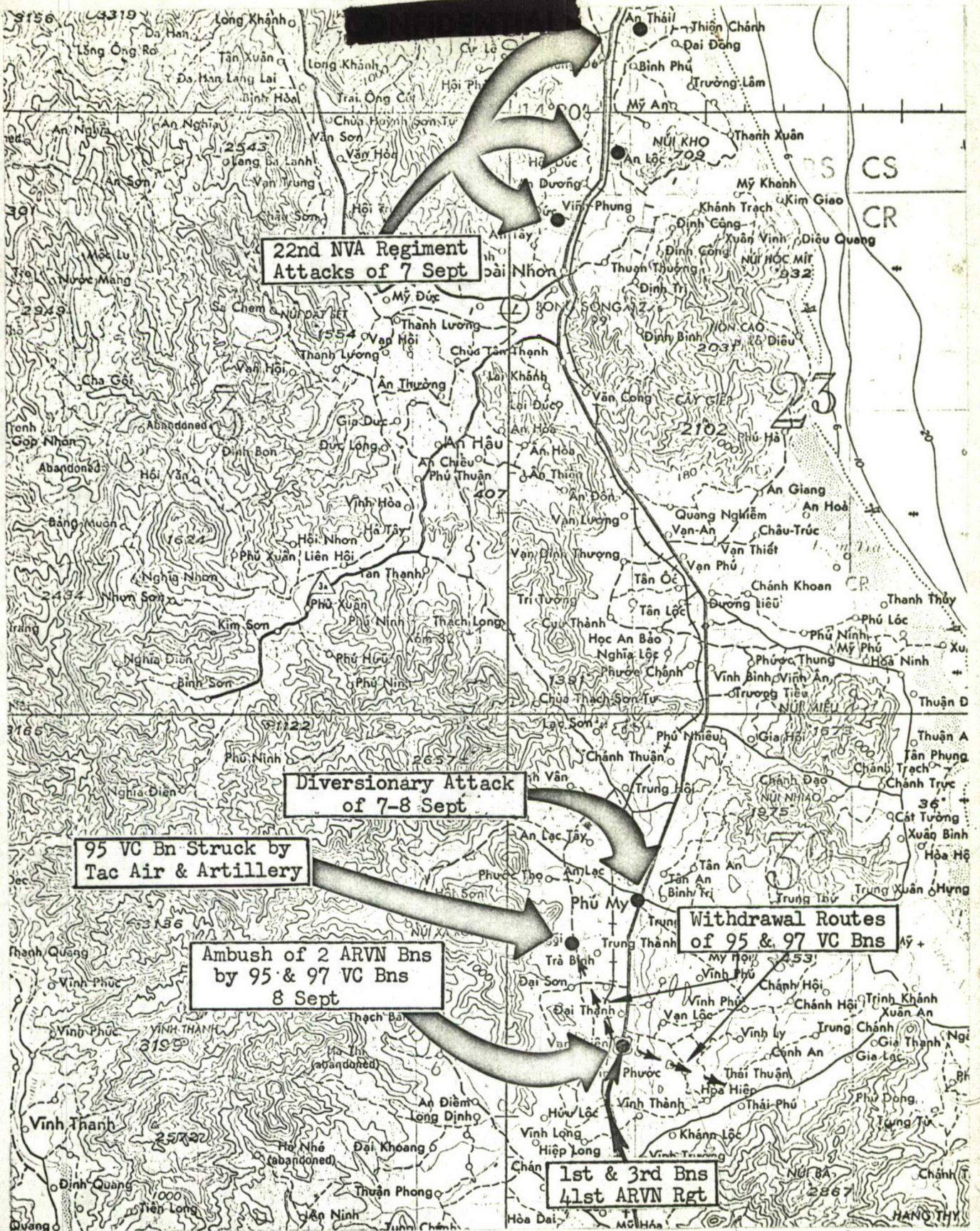
Operation THAYER I was initiated by OPLAN 23-66, issued on 8 September. ^{11/}

"Division attacks with maximum surprise by air assault A-Hour, D-Day into northern Binh Dinh Province; conducts extensive search and destroy operations in zone; prepares to continue the attack south to the vicinity of the Phu Cat Mountains in conjunction with ROK and ARVN forces."

The same day, the 2d Brigade deployed the 1/5th Cav into LZ Two Bits, located adjacent to a CIDG-Camp near Bong Song. Although the purpose of the 1/5th Cav was to set up an intelligence facility there, this show of force in the Bong Song area also successfully foiled enemy plans to disrupt the GVN National Elections in that area. ^{12/}

ARC LIGHT Preps

Phase II of THAYER I entailed a thorough search of the high ground



ENEMY ATTACKS

7-8 September

Figure 7

[REDACTED]

throughout Area EAGLE--the known location of base and supply facilities of the 18th NVA Regiment. ^{13/} (See Figures 8, 9.) To support deployment of the 1st and 2d Brigades into Area EAGLE on 13 September, a series of seven ARC LIGHT (B-52) strikes were conducted on 10 - 12 September, in Area LIZARD and the western section of Area PYTHON.

These strikes were placed on targets mainly developed through agent reports of VC command posts, equipment and supply storage areas. ^{14/} The purpose of these strikes, totaling 39 sorties, ^{15/} was threefold: first, to disrupt enemy plans for harassment of the GVN National Elections in the Vinh Thanh Valley area; second, to drive the enemy out of the struck areas and into EAGLE area where they could be engaged by the 1st ACD forces about to be deployed; and third, as a diversion tactic to deceive the enemy as to the actual location of the next major division effort. ^{16/}

"A" Company, 1st of the 9th Cavalry (A/1/9th Cav), conducted post-strike aerial reconnaissance of the strike zones and when possible inserted ground teams. ^{17/} The BDAs for these strikes were, for the most part, disappointing and the strike, Binh Dinh 40 on 11 September, missed the target completely. (See Fig. 8, and Appendix Nr. I for complete data on all ARC LIGHT strikes.) Strikes 37 and 39, conducted on 10 and 11 September, respectively, destroyed some enemy structures and fortifications, but there were no signs of casualties to the enemy. The last strike, Binh Dinh 43, however, flown on 12 September, made a direct hit, on what apparently was the Phu Cat VC District Headquarters. ^{18/}

[REDACTED]

The following is a description of the damage inflicted by the bombs: 19/

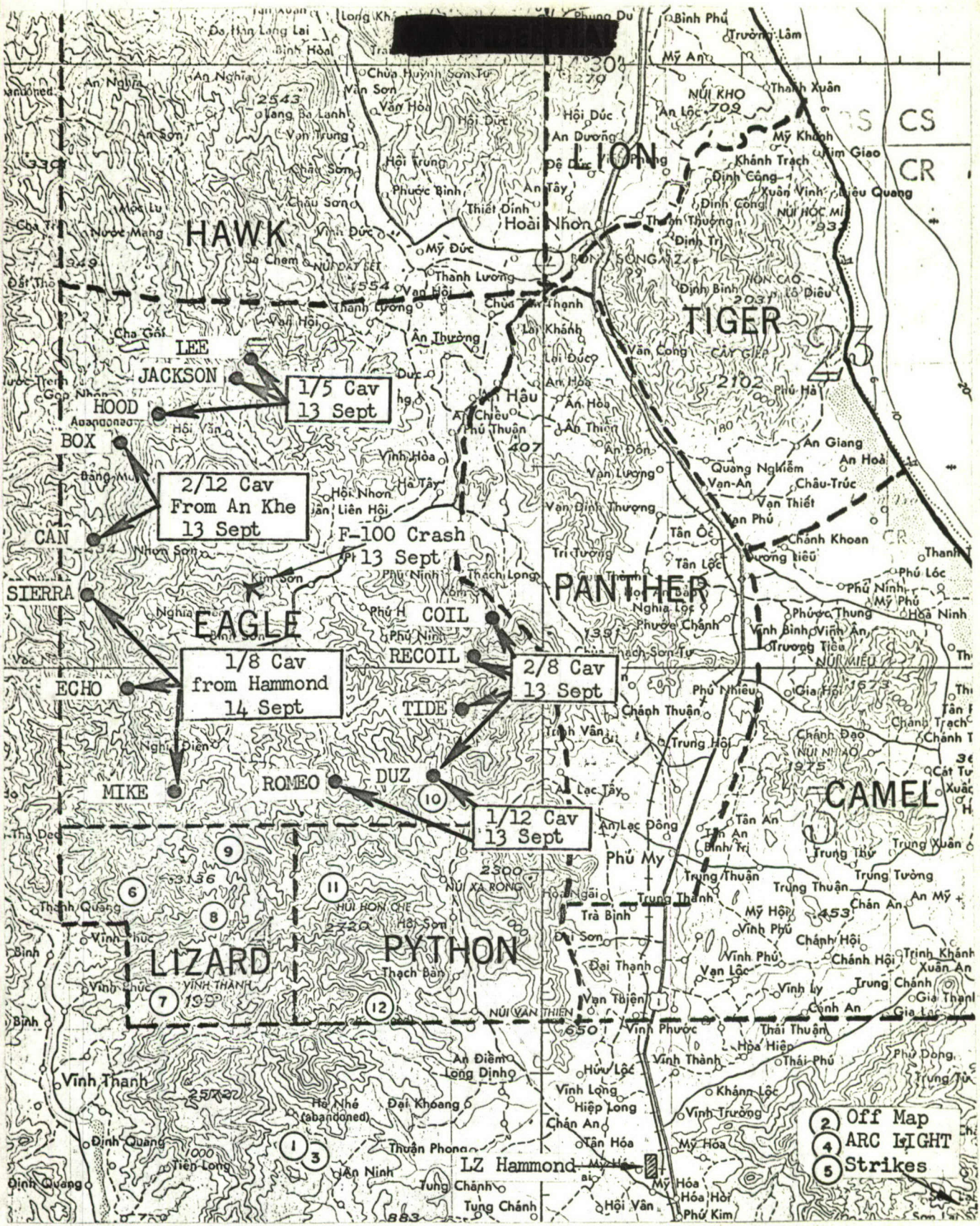
"Huts within 50-70 meters of strike areas were either demolished as a result of blast or pierced with fragments from the bomb or objects hurled as a result of the blast. Foxholes and tunnels did not appear physically damaged except in the immediate vicinity of the bomb craters. There was no evidence of burning or secondary explosions in the target area. Crater sizes varied from 15-20 feet across and 2-5 feet deep. Air bursts in the open areas in the south cleared an area generally 50 meters or more in diameter of vegetation and gave the appearance of the ground being scorched."

The ground follow-up team also found large quantities of logistical and supply records, documents containing codes and APOs for many LF units in Binh Dinh Province; biographic records on supply personnel; and the 1966 Phu Cat VC District financial records. No signs of enemy casualties were discovered but in nearby areas, a total of 19 uniformed enemy were observed 20/ in three small groups, two of whom were killed by the search team.

Operation THAYER I (13 - 22 Sep 66)

On 13 September, three battalions (1/8,2/8,1/12) of the 1st Brigade, 1st ACD, began movement by helicopter assault into five LZs along the mountain ridge line that overlooked the Kim Son Valley from the south and east. Across the valley, the 2d Brigade put two battalions (1/5,2/12) plus two batteries of the 1/77th Artillery into five more LZs that were perched at the top of the western ridge line. All LZs were heavily prepped by 21/ TAC airpower, (ARA), tube artillery, and armed Chinook helicopters.

Seventh Air Force provided two F-4C and 12 A-1H sorties for air cap



ARC LIGHT PREPS & INITIAL DEPLOYMENT

THAYER I - 13-20 Sept

Figure 8

[REDACTED]

during the initial LZ assaults and these aircraft expended general purpose bombs (GP), napalm, CBU-2, WP, and 20-mm cannon fire to suppress enemy fire and hit likely enemy locations. The LZ preps began at 0640 hours, and by early afternoon, the LZs had been saturated by ordnance expended by 21 F-100s and 3 F4Cs. ^{22/}

In support of the initial deployment of the division, U.S. Air Force C-130 and C-123 aircraft worked throughout the day moving troops and equipment from An Khe to the division's forward base at Hammond. Before the day was over, 27 C-130 sorties had moved two battalions of the 1st Brigade and elements of the 1st Forward Support Element, while 19 C-123 sorties had transported the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Brigade and a portion of the 2d FSE into Hammond. ^{23/}

Only light contact was developed with the enemy throughout the day, with the exception of the 1/9th Cav. Conducting screening operations over the entire AO, they encountered heavy fire against their armed choppers during the entire day.

Particularly heavy ground fire was encountered by choppers from the 2d Brigade in the vicinity of LZ Bird and TAC air strikes were called in to suppress the area. A flight of F-100s was called in and began hitting the enemy with GP and napalm. The Number Two aircraft was making a napalm pass on an automatic weapons bunker when it failed to pull out of the dive and crashed, killing the pilot. ^{24/}

The day ended with 40 TAC air sorties supporting Operation THAYER with

[REDACTED]

air cap, LZ prep, direct air support (DAS), and CAS. ^{25/}

Contact remained light on 14 September, as the 1/8th Cav assaulted its three assigned LZs on the western rim of the Kim Son Valley. In the course of the day, one secondary explosion was observed during an air strike near LZ Bird.

The first significant ground contact was encountered by a platoon of B/1/5 Cav on 15 September. The company had discovered numerous bunkers and 1,400 pounds of rice, while conducting sweeping operations. A platoon searching a nearby area, became pinned down by heavy, accurate small arms and automatic weapons fire from a bunker-entrenched enemy company. Artillery hit the area and considerably reduced the volume of enemy fire. ^{26/} Then the forward air controller (FAC), Rash 21, began to put in two A-1Es from the 1st Air Commando Squadron (ACS). The Hoboes (radio call sign for 1st ACS aircraft), hit the enemy with napalm, CBU, and 20-mm cannon fire. ^{27/} According to the 1st ACD After Action Report, "the accuracy and effectiveness of these fires enabled "B" Company to maneuver other elements against the enemy position." ^{28/}

The air strike lifted just at dark when 15 UH-1D helicopters, diverted as they returned from another mission, and simulated a night air assault into the rear of the enemy position. ^{29/} An AC-47, which was also over the area, lit up enemy positions with flares while hosing them down with 10,500 rounds of 7.62-mm ammunition from its three miniguns. ^{30/} No body-count could be obtained because of darkness but enemy losses were estimated

[REDACTED]

to be heavy. A sweep of the area the following day netted significant quantities of enemy equipment, but it was evident that the dead and wounded had been evacuated during the night. ^{31/}

On 16 September, weapons and ammunition caches were uncovered by 2/8th Cav. The D/1/8th Cav discovered two weapons factories and captured 3,000 grenades and 1,200 anti-personnel mines. Enemy bunkers and positions were discovered throughout the entire area. The 3d Platoon, B/1/5th Cav made contact with an estimated enemy platoon and artillery and an AC-47 provided support. A search of the area the next day revealed two bodies and signs that many had been wounded. ^{32/}

On 17 September, small unit contacts continued as the division troops swept the slopes down toward the floor of the Kim Son Valley. The wreckage of the F-100, shot down on 13 September, was located and the remains of the pilot extracted. In the process, one soldier was killed when he detonated a booby trap planted in the wreckage. ^{33/}

Light contact was encountered on 18 September, as forces encountered and destroyed enemy fortifications and facilities. One squad~~ron~~ of "B" Company, 8th Engineers removed a damaged U.S. Air Force C-123 from the air-strip at LZ Two Bits. Large numbers of TAC air sorties continued to support the operation with DAS and CAS strikes throughout the AO. As a result of one strike, a FAC estimated enemy casualties as five KBA. ^{34/}

Contact improved on 20 September, with 15 VC KIA in one firefight supported by artillery, ARA, and gunships. (See Fig. 9.) Rice caches, an

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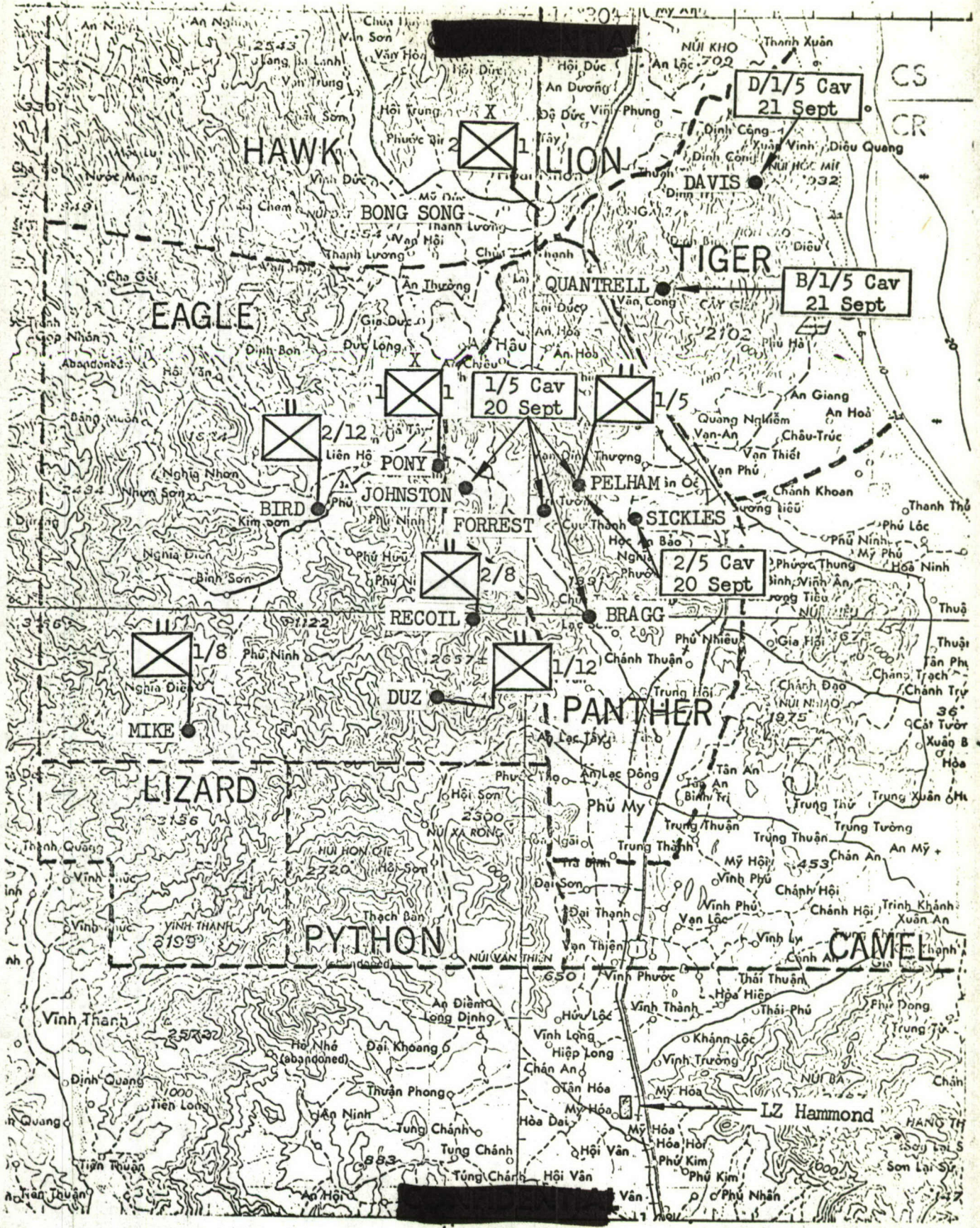
enemy tunnel system, and bunkers were discovered and destroyed. Intelligence reports received during the day indicated that elements of the 18th and 22d NVA Regiments were in the PANTHER Area and plans were made to air assault 1/5 Cav into that area on 20 September. The next day, this unit was assaulted into four LZs which had been heavily prepped with air and artillery. At the same time, the 2/12th Cav (-) was dropped into LZ Bird. ^{35/}

Responding to a report that the 610th Division Headquarters was located in the Tiger Mountain area, two companies of 1/5 Cav air assaulted into Area TIGER on 21 September. A fire fight with two enemy platoons developed and C/2/5th Cav (-) was dropped in by helicopter as a supporting force, while ARA and mortars worked over the enemy positions. TAC air and artillery were then fixed on the target. By sundown, six enemy were confirmed KIA, with darkness preventing further assessment of damage. Search and destroy missions continued throughout the AO on the following day. ^{36/}

Operation MAENG HO 6, Phase I (22 Sep - 1 Oct 66)

Operation MAENG HO 6, originally known as DEUL KUK HWA, was planned as a search-and-destroy operation to clear the Phu Cat Mountain complex and incorporate the area into the CRID TAOR. ^{37/}

This enemy secret zone had not been penetrated since the French days and was the base and staging area for the E2B (aka 50th), VC MF Bn, and two or three local force companies. These forces posed a serious threat to the security of the New Phu Cat Airbase, then under construction, and exercised control over a civilian population of some 14,000 in the base



DEPLOYMENTS TO AREAS TIGER/PANTHER

THAYER I - 20-22 Sept

Figure 9

[REDACTED]

area itself. ^{38/}

During Phase One, the ROK Capital Division used four battalions (1/1, 3/1, 1/26, 2/26) to surround the mountain stronghold and prevent the enemy's escape. ^{39/} At the same time, Vietnamese Naval junk forces from Coastal Group 22, operating under American advisors, blocked sea exfiltration routes by positioning their junks along the adjacent shoreline of the AO. ^{40/}

The operation was officially initiated at 0650H on 22 September, but the four battalions did not begin deployment until the next day. ^{41/} Ten TAC air sorties, four F-4Cs, and six A-1Hs, supported the initial movement into the area ^{42/} and by the end of the day, 48 VC were KIA, 15 captured in action (CIA), and 287 suspects were rounded up. Six crew-served (C/S) weapons were also captured. Korean losses for the day were three KIA and 23 WIA. ^{43/}

Major contacts were again developed without friendly losses, ^{44/} on 24 September when 25 enemy were KIA and five CIA. Again, on 25 September, three Koreans were KIA and five WIA as contrasted with VC losses of 67 KIA and 74 captured. ^{45/}

The Korean push into the enemy base area precipitated a major battle on 27 September, resulting in 101 VC killed and 33 VC captured, along with 69 small arms (S/A) and five C/S weapons. There were only two Koreans killed. ^{46/} Six F-100 sorties supported the day's action, ^{47/} and a FAC confirmed two VC as KBA. ^{48/}

Contact remained light through 1 October, when MAENG ^{49/} HO 6 became an integral part of the combined Allied Operation IRVING.

[REDACTED]

The Enemy Hits Back (23 Sep 66)

During the early morning hours of 23 September, the 1st Air Cav Division forward base at LZ Hammond was hit by mortar, recoilless rifle, and small arms fire. (See Fig. 10 for major contacts on 23 Sep - 1 Oct 66.) The American losses were one KIA, and 32 WIA, with 17 aircraft damaged--six of them seriously. ^{50/} An AC-47 supported the camp with flares and 2,500 rounds of minigun ammunition, ^{51/} while artillery and armed helicopters ^{52/} struck at suspected enemy positions.

The Hammond attack turned out to be only a diversion, however, while further to the north, the 7th and 8th Battalions of the 18th NVA Regiment attempted to attack the command post of the 41st ARVN Regiment. The ARVN forces staged a counterattack and numerous TAC air strikes repeatedly blasted the enemy positions. On the following morning, a sweep of the immediate area revealed 137 enemy bodies by U.S. count. ^{53/} Later reports boosted the total enemy losses to more than 200 KIA, mostly as a result of the air strikes. ^{54/} ARVN losses from the battle were reported as negative. ^{55/}

Based on intelligence data elicited from NVA prisoners during the battle, three battalions of the 1st ACD were committed to blocking positions in the hopes of trapping the retreating enemy forces. These actions were not immediately successful, but finally the two enemy battalions were again ^{56/} pinpointed on 2 October, and the major battle of the campaign ensued.

Conclusion of THAYER I (23 Sep - 1 Oct 66)

From 23 through 29 September, small unit contacts continued throughout

[REDACTED]

the AO, but no major engagements developed. The base, logistics, and supply facilities of the 18th NVA Regiment continued to be captured and destroyed by sweeps through the Kim Son Valley and Area PANTHER. 57/

The 1/9th Cav spotted a small group of enemy from a scout helicopter on 29 September, along the northern fringe of the Tiger Mountain complex. Helicopter gunships killed a total of 26 enemy in three groups. The 1/9th Cav again made a significant contact the next day, four miles south of the THAYER AO. There were 34 VC from the E210 MF Battalion killed by armed helicopters and a Blue Team. ARA was also called in on another enemy force in the same area, and 14 more VC were KIA. 58/

At dawn on 1 October, an ARC LIGHT strike, "Quick Run," was scheduled for a time-on-target of As Soon As Possible (ASAP). As a result of intelligence data developed on the location of 610th Division Headquarters, six sorties were expended on the main regimental hospital and medical facilities of the 2d VC Regiment. 59/

The 1/9th Cav exploited the strike area for two days. Numerous bunkers and foxholes were found in the target area, but "there was no apparent bomb damage to the foxholes and bunkers in the impact area. Clothing and debris, however, indicated that several huts in the vicinity of the bunkers were completely demolished. 60/ Seven enemy bodies were discovered KBA in the target area. One person, without visible injury, was found in a bunker-- apparently killed by blast concussion. In an adjacent area, there were 43 recapped, 1/4-ton truck tires, an inoperative 22-HP generator, and a diesel

[REDACTED]

engine redeemed. ^{61/}

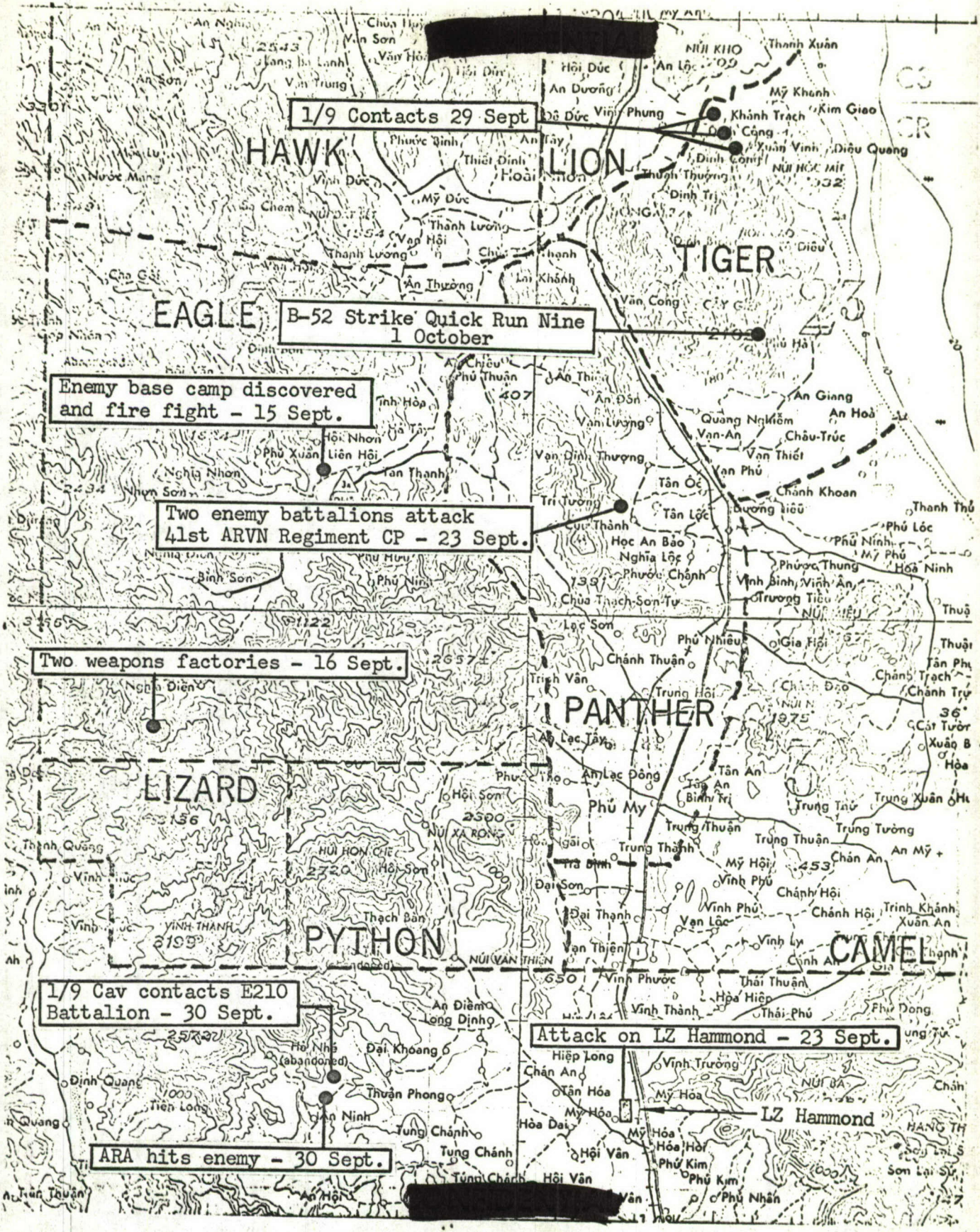
Ground forces continued a fruitless search for enemy divisional headquarters during the day. The remainder of the 1st ACD forces established blocking positions and began preparations to move into new LZs to conduct Operation IRVING, which was scheduled to begin at midnight. ^{62/}

THAYER I Results

Although Operation THAYER I did not produce a major confrontation with the 610th NVA/VC Division, it did achieve important results. ^{63/}

"The division's initial air assault in THAYER I placed the 1st Brigade in the rear of the 18th Regiment, among the regimental service and medical facilities. The 8th Medical Company, and medical detachments C-27, C-28 and C-29 were overrun. About 10% (of the personnel) from these units were KIA and almost all of their major medical equipment and pharmaceutical stocks were captured. This loss had a continuing affect (sic) on the 18th regiment, and was mentioned in captured documents as late as 18 Oct over a month later. Supplies captured from rear service elements will be difficult to replace, especially 12.7-mm weapons and weapons parts.

The enemy had lost a total of 231 confirmed KIA, 322 possibly KIA, 72 NVA/VC captured and 1 Chieu Hoi Returnee. One hundred and four individuals and 20 crew-served weapons also fell into the 1st Cav's hands. ^{64/} The low-level, scout-and-sweep tactics of the helicopters of the 1/9th Cav and their supporting Blue Teams proved their worth by accounting for 122 of the 231 KIA and 25 of the enemy prisoners. This success was not achieved without expense, however, as 32 of the battalion's helicopters were hit by enemy ground fire and one OH-13 was totally destroyed. Many of the choppers



SIGNIFICANT EVENTS - THAYER I

Figure 10

[REDACTED]

initially shot down were later recovered and could become operable after repair. ^{65/} Total losses to the 1st ACD were 33 KIA, 248 WIA, and 2 MIA. ^{66/}

Operation THAYER I was supported by a total of 222 TAC air missions comprising 425 sorties. These sorties expended 232.5 tons of bombs, 69.5 tons of napalm, 800 pounds of WP, 847 rockets, and 54 cans of CBU. Eight ARC LIGHT strikes produced 45 B-52 sorties which dropped 702 tons of bombs and six plane loads of BLU-3B. ^{67/} Airlift was accomplished by 27 C-130 sorties and 42 C-123 sorties. ^{68/}

Few of the more than 400 TAC air sorties were flown as immediate strikes in support of troops in contact and, as a result, KBA was almost non-existent, especially since many of the strikes were used for H&I in areas of heavy foliage and trees. A great many sorties were also expended in LZ preps which did not produce significant results, since the enemy was apparently taken by surprise and did not challenge the 1st ACD in their LZ deployments. Most of these conditions, along with the additional factor of bad weather, continued to exist through Operation IRVING and denied evidence of significant results from the massive employment of airpower. ^{69/}

Through the end of Phase I on 1 October, Operation MAENG HO 6 produced 249 VC KIA, 128 captured, and 316 VC suspects detained. This was accomplished at the loss of 9 Koreans KIA and 42 WIA. ^{70/}

[REDACTED]

CHAPTER III

OPERATION IRVING

Prologue

When Operation IRVING terminated on 24 October 1966, it was considered one of the most successful Allied operations to that date. The 1st Air Cavalry Division (ACD) had accounted for 681 VC/NVA KIA and 220 captured; ARVN forces in DAI BANG 800 AO, their part of IRVING were credited for 221 KIA and 681 CIA; and ~~Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CRID)~~ ^{Capital ROK Infantry Division} forces added another 922 KIA and 380 enemy prisoners during the phases of MAENG HO 6 between 2 October and 9 November. Thus in the space of about a month, enemy forces in northeast Binh Dinh Province suffered losses of nearly 2,000 confirmed KIA and nearly 1,300 captured. ^{1/}

During the American phase of Operation IRVING alone, more than 700 tactical air sorties were flown and two B-52 strikes were carried out. ^{2/} There was no single confirmed KBA from these sorties and BDA was relatively insignificant. These results were due to many factors, including terrain, weather, troop tactics, and especially the general mission given to TAC air support. All of these combined factors provided very minimal concrete results from the air effort.

The Enemy in a Bind

By 2 October, when Operation IRVING opened, the enemy forces in northeast Binh Dinh were extremely vulnerable and conditions were excellent for a successful operation. The CRID forces had completed cordoning off the

[REDACTED]

Phu Cat Mountains by land, and enemy forces there were effectively trapped. ^{3/}
The enemy was further menaced by four ARVN Battalions (5th, and 6th Airborne, 1/41, 3/41) which were poised along Highway 1 ready to begin a sweep to the sea along the north edge of the Phu Cat Mountains, an area heavily infested with VC LF units. ^{4/}

Meanwhile, the 2d VC and 18th NVA Regiments had been forced out of their western mountain sanctuaries east into the coastal mountains and flooded lowlands. They were prevented from returning to their mountain bases by the continuing presence of 1st ACD elements there, and were extremely vulnerable to exposure by aerial reconnaissance due to the open nature of the coastal plains. ^{5/} At the same time, sea escape routes were cut off by two Vietnamese Naval Junk Forces; the 21st and 22d Coastal Groups; U.S. Navy Swift Boats; and the destroyers USS HALL and USS FOLSOM. ^{6/}

The 18th NVA Regiment is Hard Hit (2 - 3 Oct 66)

By 0700H on 2 October, Operation IRVING was in full swing, with elements of five battalions of the 1st ACD air assaulting into positions east and south of the Nui Mieu Mountains. The A/1/9th Cav was given the assignment of aerial scouting the Hung Lac Peninsula, the north end of Nuoc Ngot Bay, and up the coastline opposite the Nui Mieu hill masses. ^{7/}

As the scout choppers, lead by Apache 6, the commander of A/1/9th Cav, moved up the peninsula from the south, they began to spot small groups of armed men attempting to hide. The helicopters rounded the north edge of the bay, and more groups of armed NVA were spotted and taken under fire.

[REDACTED]

By this time, the armed gunships had killed eight uniformed NVA and captured one VC sergeant. The "A" troop commander therefore decided to commit a Blue Team, which was put down southeast of the little village of Hoa Hoi at 0830H. ^{8/}

Within minutes, as the four squads moved forward to search the area, heavy contact developed with a heavily entrenched NVA force. While the Blue Team probed from the east, several armed helicopters hovered west of the village area to prevent enemy forces from exfiltrating to the west. Meanwhile, the four squads had been pinned down by heavy automatic weapons fire and were unable to move forward. To relieve the pressure on his forces, the "A" troop commander began to hover his UH-1 slowly through the village at an altitude of 20 feet, while his gunners sprayed the enemy with fire from the M-60 door guns and M-79 grenade launchers. These fires killed 30 ^{9/} NVA.

There was no doubt now that a major enemy force had been encountered, so B/1/12th Cav was air assaulted on the beach directly to the east of Hoa Hoi. They, too, became heavily engaged in a fierce firefight with ~~"A"~~ force which was now estimated at 200-300 NVA. These were the battered 7th and 8th Battalions of the 18th NVA Regiment which had taken such serious ^{10/} losses on 23 September and had been eluding Allied forces ever since.

Now that the Blue Team had pinpointed and developed the situation, they were ordered by their commander, Apache 6, to withdraw. One squad was completely pinned down, however, and Apache 6 therefore hovered his chopper at an altitude of 20 feet between his squad and the enemy bunkers, permitting

[REDACTED]

the squad to withdraw to less exposed positions. Nevertheless, the enemy positions were so close when Apache 6 was setting down to evacuate the squad's two KIA and one WIA, an NVA soldier ran up behind the chopper. The pilot spotted him in time, and swung the tail roter into him a moment before the chopper touched down.

The casualties were loaded aboard under heavy fire and the chopper began lift-off despite four hits in the fuel tanks, hydraulic and transmission lines. As it became airborne, the ship was hit by an additional two 12.7-mm rounds in the skids. Despite this damage, the helicopter made it to the LZ which was less than 200 yards away. ^{12/}

Meanwhile, nearby, two more choppers, Apache 15 and 16, were attempting to mark two enemy machine gun nests. In the process of marking one of the guns, Apache 15 was riddled in the fuel tanks by the other. Before the chopper went down, the crew managed to destroy one gun with a hand grenade and mark the other for destruction by two other helicopters. A few minutes later, a third chopper, which had been covering the downed helicopter and screening for B/1/12th Cav, was hit by heavy fire and also went down, although without damage other than by ground fire. ^{13/}

By 1150H, Apache 6 was airborne in another ship and had regrouped his Blue Team in the LZ for extraction. Five minutes later the downed helicopters were helilifted out and within an hour, the Blue Team had also been evacuated. ^{14/}

The A/1/9th Cav helicopters continued to support ground elements during the afternoon, since B/1/12th Cav was still in heavy contact and "it was

[REDACTED]

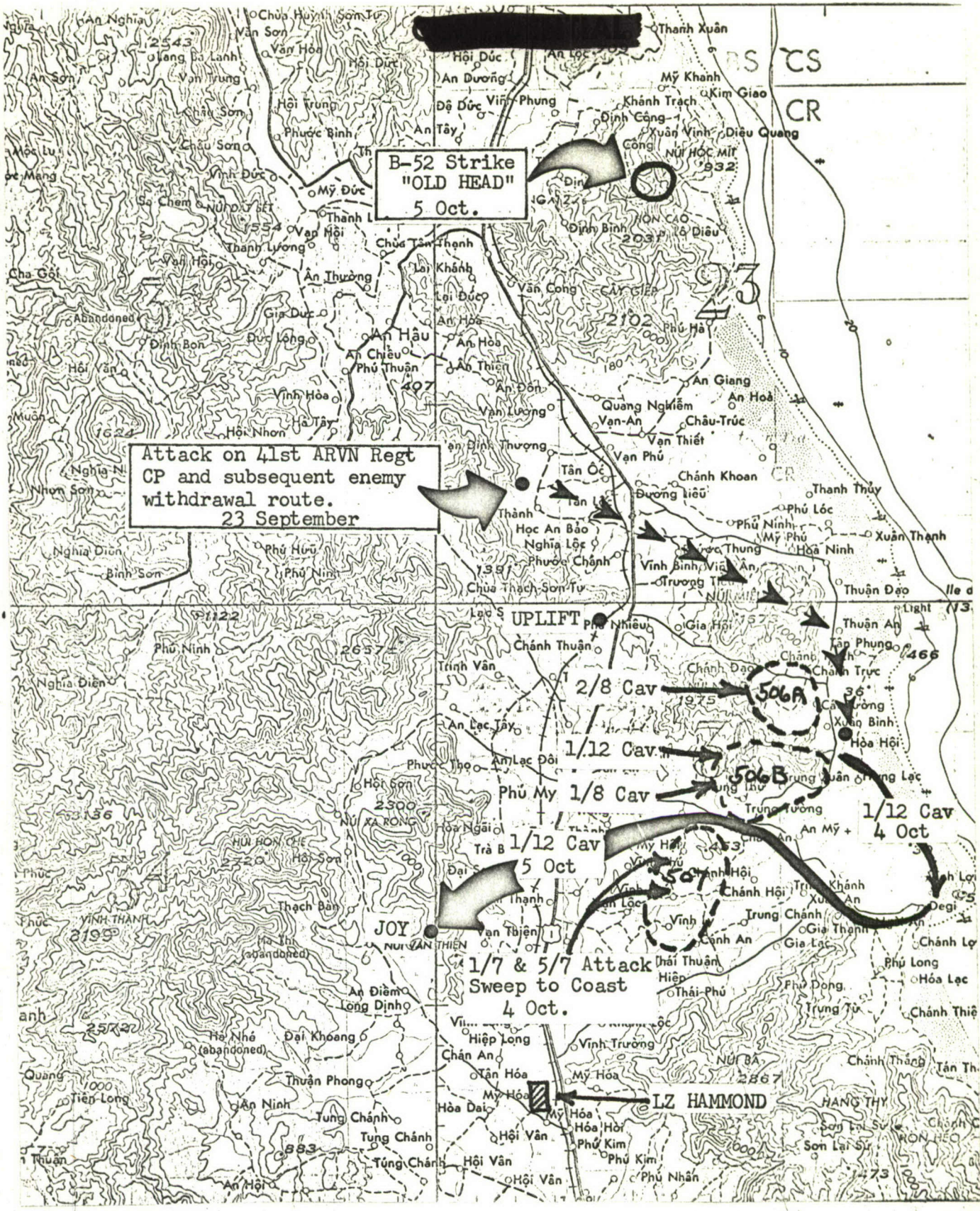
decided by Apache 6 and S3 1/12th Cav that an airstrike would be too dangerous because of the proximity to friendlies." As a result of the day's actions, the armed helicopters and Blue Team of A/1/9th Cav had accounted for 92 NVA KIA, 35 of whom were killed from the "A" troop commander's helicopter. 15/

Throughout the afternoon, contact continued as "A" and "C" companies 1/12th Cav were helilifted into encircling positions. These units were followed by two more companies from 1/5th Cav who were air assaulted onto the beaches to the east of the village just after dark. Friendly forces completed linking up and the enemy was then effectively trapped. 16/

The enemy repeatedly attempted to break out of the encirclement during the night, while overhead an AC-47 expended flares and minigun fire. Several C-47 flaeship sorties followed to keep the battle scene lit up. These efforts, plus constant illumination from artillery rounds provided enough light for the American ground troopers to effectively repulse all enemy attempts to break through the cordon around them. 17/

That night, according to 1st Lt. Johnnie Hohenshelt, FAC 2d Bde, 18/
1st ACD:

"...The Brigade Commander asked the Brigade ALO to provide him with a plan for the Air Force to annihilate the village at first light...The ALO went through channels and requested that A-1Es at Pleiku be loaded with specific ordnance for very close support. The birds were uploaded and all cocked, ready for a first light take off (when) reevaluation of the ground situation at first light in the morning...determined that the ground troops who were surrounding the village were in such close proximity



OPERATION IRVING - 2-6 October

Figure 11

[REDACTED]

that airpower could not be used."

It is interesting to note, however, that during the night an artillery barrage totaling 833 rounds was poured into the village. ^{19/}

At 0700H on 3 October, the two A-1Es, ready to take off from Pleiku with 12 MK-81 bombs each, were cancelled. This ended the Air Force's role in the battle of Hoa Hoi. ^{20/}

During the morning, American forces stormed into Hoa Hoi and in hand-to-hand fighting wiped out the remaining enemy forces. The total enemy losses, almost entirely NVA, were 233 KIA by body-count. The 1/12th Cav took 35 NVA prisoners and an additional 15 suspected of being NVA Regulars. The 1/9th Cav also took a small number of prisoners, with losses to the 1st ACD for the engagement totaling three KIA and 29 WIA. ^{21/}

An interesting comparison can be drawn from statistics of air sorties for these, the two heaviest days of contact during Operation IRVING. On 2 - 3 October, a total of seven F-100s flew in CAS over the entire IRVING AO and six more F-100s flew Sky Spot (now called Combat Proof) missions. ^{22/} Weather conditions were favorable during these two days but during later periods, when they became extremely poor, 25 - 40 sorties a day were being expended throughout the AO. ^{23/}

Hunt Through Coastal Lowlands (4 - 13 Oct 66)

Sizable contact continued with the enemy on 4 October as 1/7th and 5/7th Cav conducted sweeping operations west of Nuoc Ngot Bay. The A/5/7

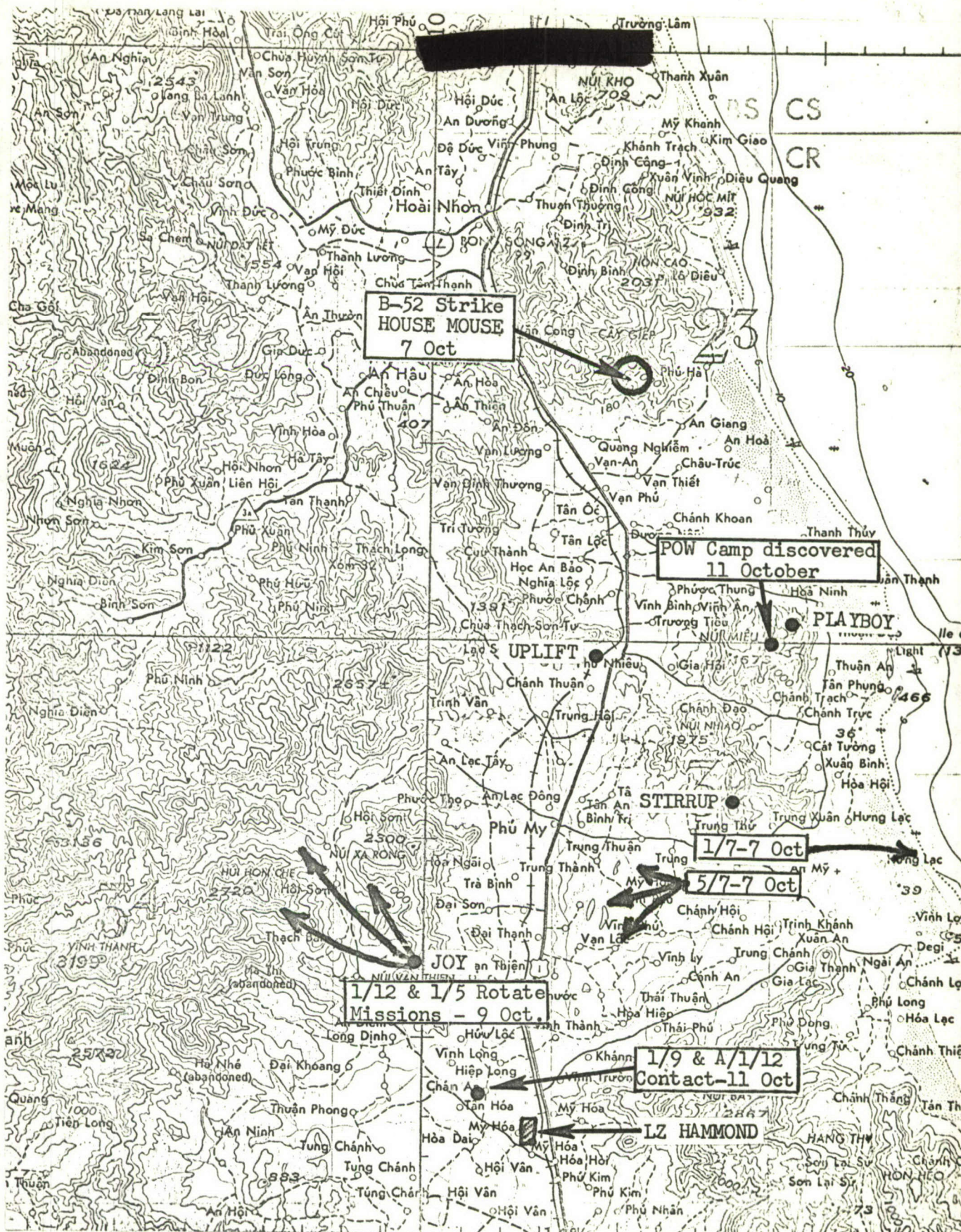
[REDACTED]

became engaged when it moved into the DAI BANG 800 AO to secure a downed OH-13. More troops were dropped into blocking positions and 30 enemy were KIA. During the day, A/1/8th Cav air assaulted into LZ Firefly and 1/12 Cav conducted a sweep of the Hung Lac Peninsula. ^{24/}

Airpower continued to play a minor role in operations as poor weather and lack of targets limited air sorties on 4 October to two F-100s on a Sky Spot mission. ^{25/} Employment of tactical airpower after that date was considerably stepped up, although contact with the enemy continued light and scattered for several days, with the enemy breaking into small units and attempting to exfiltrate back to the western mountain bases. This tactic, however, left them extremely vulnerable to armed helicopters of the 1/9th Cav which killed many VC/NVA in small contacts during this period. ^{26/}

An ARC LIGHT strike was conducted on the northern slopes of the Tiger Mountains on 5 October. The strike slightly damaged an enemy storage area but ground exploitation by C/1/9th Cav revealed no signs of enemy casualties. The same day, armed helicopters of 1/9th Cav killed 30 enemy west of Nuoc Ngot Bay and 1/12th Cav moved into the Cuoi Ca Valley to search for enemy base camps and facilities. ^{27/} The F-100s flew 14 CAS and six Sky Spot ^{28/} sorties, but weather continued to hamper air operations.

The air sortie rate increased daily from 13 sorties on 6 October to 35 on 10 October. ^{29/} During this period, however, there was no major ground contact with the enemy in the IRVING/DAI BANG 800 AOs and most air strikes



OPERATION IRVING - 7-12 October

Figure 12

[REDACTED]

were utilized as H&I (there were 43 Sky Spot sorties between these dates),^{30/}
LZ preps, and in the LZ construction program. By 10 October a total of 161
strike sorties had been flown in the IRVING AO with both KBA and ~~KIA~~^{BDA} reported
as negative.^{31/}

Another ARC LIGHT, "Quick Run," strike hit the southern Tiger Mountain
area on 7 October. Again, there was no evidence of enemy casualties but the
area appeared to have been occupied by at least an enemy battalion within 48
hours of the strike. The strike did cause considerable destruction to the
camp area and fortifications.^{32/}

An old enemy base facility was uncovered as a result of sweeps in the
Cuoi Ca Valley (Area PYTHON) on 9 October and 55 VC were captured without a
fight in a nearby cave.^{33/}

An abandoned enemy Prisoner of War (POW) camp was discovered on 11
October, along with bodies of 12 VC and NVA deserters who had been slain by
their guards when the camp became menaced by Allied operations.^{34/}

Early that same morning a Blue Team from A/1/9th Cav captured one VC
who revealed that his unit, on a tax and rice gathering mission, would be
moving north from his scene of capture. The platoon was hunted down by
armed helicopters of 1/9th Cav and all 30 members of the 2d Platoon, Phu
Cat LF VC Company, were subsequently killed or captured.^{35/}

The first BDA from tactical air was recorded on 11 October, with one
secondary explosion and one structure destroyed with an air effort of 25

[REDACTED]

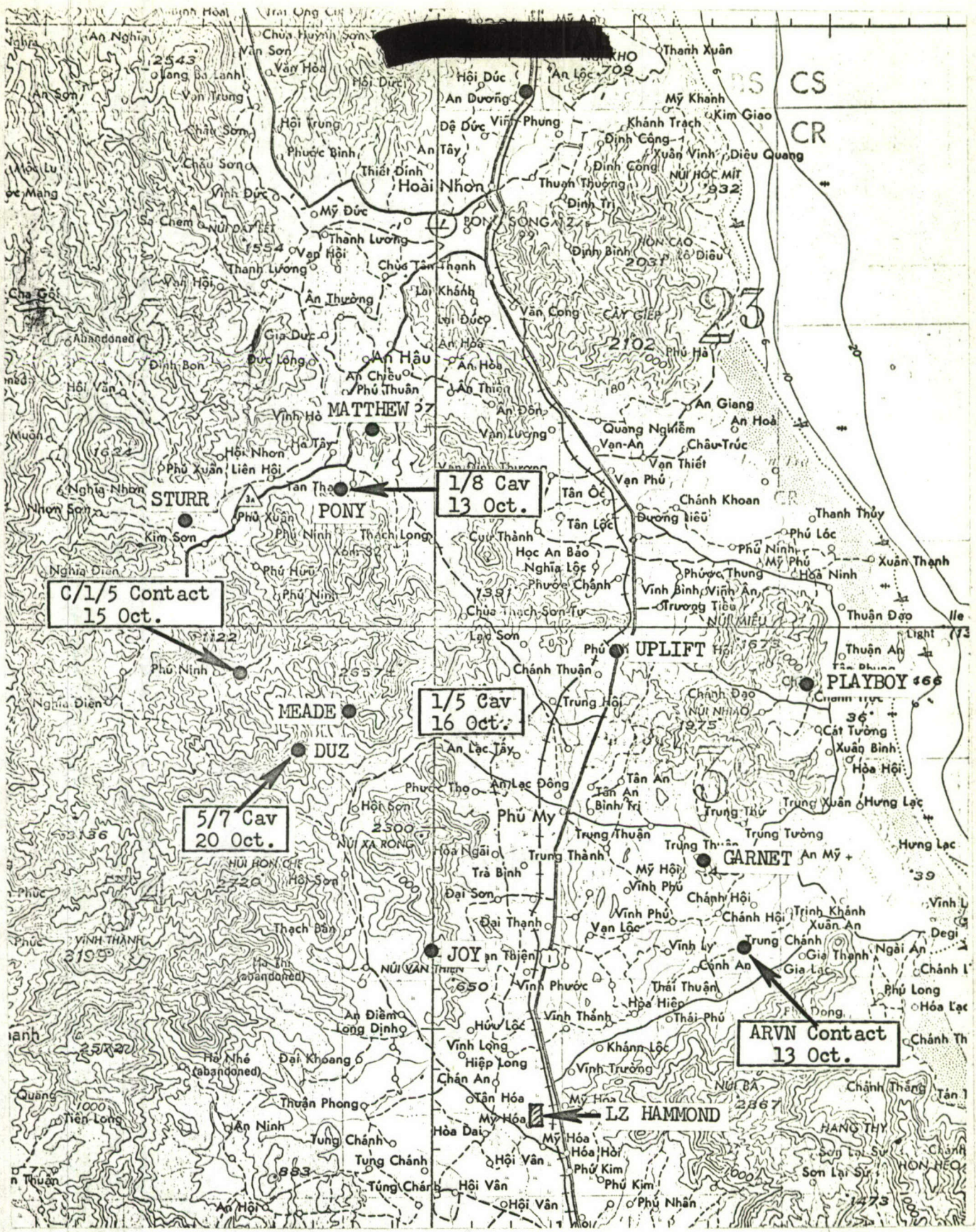
strike sorties. Tactical air strikes took no part in the annihilation of the enemy platoon. ^{36/}

Back to the Mountains (13 - 18 Oct 66)

On 13 October, operational emphasis was again shifted to the enemy bases in the western mountain area. The 3d Brigade concentrated three battalions in the Cuoi Ca Valley and located the VC Binh Dinh Province Headquarters northwest of the valley. A large VC medical facility was also discovered in the valley area. At the same time, other units began conducting sweeps of the Kim Son Valley in hopes of trapping enemy units returning to this area after Operation THAYER I. ^{37/}

The major contact of Operation DAI BANG 800 occurred on 13 October, when the ARVN Airborne Task Force fought a major battle with a company of the 95th Bn, 2d VC Regiment. The battle left the enemy unit decimated with 102 confirmed KIA and no friendly losses. Fire support, in the form of ARA, was provided by 2/20th Art, 1st ACD, and apparently accounted for a large portion of the enemy casualties. ^{38/} The ALO for the ARVN Airborne unit, in the unit After Action Report, confirmed 63 KBA during 5 through 14 October, but the notation "helicopters" appeared after the figure and it is probable that most of these were the result of the ARA support in the 13 October engagement. ^{39/}

The period 14 through 18 October produced the peak number of air sorties in support of Operation IRVING. During these five days, 215 tactical air sorties were logged with the high point reached on 17 October when 57 sorties, nine of them immediates, were flown. ^{40/}



OPERATION IRVING - 13-24 October

Figure 13

[REDACTED]

Diversion Attack (18 Oct 66) ✓

At 0225H on 18 October, the 8th and 9th Bns of the 22d NVA Regiment initiated a 37-minute attack against positions of 1/40th ARVN Regiment about 12 miles north-northeast of Bong Song. This attack was a possible diversion north of the main IRVING operating areas designed to relieve some of the pressure on the 18th and 2d Regiments which were trying to evade Allied forces south of Bong Song. The attack was not successful, however, as friendly casualties were only six wounded, while 11 enemy bodies were found on the battlefield. Forty-six additional bodies were found nearby in shallow graves the next day, and two enemy prisoners were captured in the engagement. ^{41/}

The 1/9th Cav conducted helicopter sweeps over Area LION on 18 October, in a search for the attacking units. In addition, two troops of 1/9th Cav deployed to LZ Two Bits to counter the enemy threat north of Bong Song, but no further major contact was made with the 22d NVA Regiment until early November during Operation THAYER II. ^{42/}

The LZ Construction Program

One of the most controversial aspects of airpower application during Operation IRVING was the extensive use of air strikes in LZ construction programs. The After Action Report of the 1st ACD for THAYER/IRVING mentions that on 18 October "Four TAC Air LZ construction strikes were completed under control of A Troop (1/9th Cav)." ^{43/}

Concerning this type of mission, Capt. Lawrence L. Miller, FAC for the

[REDACTED]

1st Bde, 1st ACD during IRVING and later Division FAC stated: 44/

"Probably the most numerous target (during IRVING) was the LZ construction. In many cases we worked along the coast attempting to clear the trees off mountain tops and ridge lines...One of the things I noticed...was that to build an LZ might take twenty bombs. The ideal bomb would be a thousand pounder with a delayed fuse that would not impact in the trees but would impact after it hit the ground and would blow everything out.

"On one occasion I recall working three flights one day on one target...the same target another FAC had worked with several other flights.... Finally toward the end of the day we had four connecting craters out of...at least 20 attempted bombs, but the final evaluation by the ground commander was that although we had cleared the area, the terrain was too much of a slope or too rough to use as an LZ anyway, so there was a waste of about four sorties."

1st Lt. Johnnie Hohenshelt, FAC, 2/8th Cav, 1st ACD reported: 45/

"During this period, we expended a great deal of ordnance in that area (the Tiger Mountains), usually on peaks...And in many cases the weather was such that our fighters couldn't get very good dive angles...and as a result, much of the ordnance that we expended on the LZ construction program was not particularly effective because of the pinpoint nature of the target....

"I remember one particular incident of...FACing for...the fifth flight of fighters to go in on one LZ construction peak, and after expending five flights of fighters, we still didn't have an LZ that you could land a chopper in...In many cases we expended a great deal of ordnance in an area and never actually constructed an LZ...."

Capt. Earl C. Mizell, a 2d Brigade, 1st ACD, FAC, had this to say: 46/

"On one occasion, I was asked to do a weather reconnaissance for an LZ construction mission in the Tiger Mountain complex. I was given the

[REDACTED]

coordinates and they were on a pretty steep slope. I informed the tactical air control party...that I didn't think it would be suitable for an LZ construction...because the slope was so steep there that a chopper would never set down...Then I was informed that I would look around in the immediate vicinity for a spot which we could hit to make an LZ.

"Later I was told that the division was trying to establish a large number of helicopter LZs in the Tiger Mountains so that in five or six months... they could come back in and have access...without having to do anything at the time...

"I personally felt...this...was a gross misuse of TAC air and if they wanted to build LZs that they ought to lower satchel charges out of helicopters, place them exactly the way they wanted them, and blow them up.

Capt. Owen O. McIntyre, FAC for 1/5th, 1st ACD, gave much the same
47/
estimate of the situation:

"I put in one flight of B-57s that had a total of twelve 1,000-pound bombs and they were dropped on top of a peak...One of them went a long way toward making the LZ, however, the other eleven were virtually wasted....

"We talked a great deal about this and felt that the tactical air effort to make LZs or construct LZs for the Army was quite a waste of tactical airpower."

Maj. James Ryan, ALO, 1st Brigade, 1st ACD, had a different viewpoint
48/
however:

"Air support is also extremely useful in preparing landing zones. An Army engineer team dropped from a Chinook can spend a half a day with heavy equipment clearing a landing zone. We can go in with 500 and 1,000-pound bombs and clear enough jungle so the Army engineers can clear an area in half an hour using hand tools."

Capt. Lawrence Miller brought out a further implication of the LZ

construction program during Operation IRVING when he stated:

"Because of the number of air strikes that we requested on these LZ constructions, I think that the one side effect was that the Cav always had one flight in the air during day operations. One flight of F-100s was available in case something more important came up... Oftentimes flights were diverted from their pre-planned target to more significant targets.

"After a few days of this type work, it became apparent that the LZ construction type target was used merely as a means of having TAC air available, where it wouldn't normally be available under the present request system."

The Enemy Evades (19 - 24 Oct 66)

There were 16 VC KIA and 16 prisoners captured on 19 October, but the enemy continued to avoid major contact. The next day, intelligence reports pinpointed two VC battalions in the Kim Son Valley and a massive artillery and TAC air effort was poured into the suspected location. Seven TAC strike sorties expended three tons of ordnance and 2,020 rounds of artillery were directed on the target. The cavalry expected to exploit the kill zone with three companies on 21 October, but because of bad weather, only one platoon was inserted into the area and no successful results were achieved. ^{50/}

No further contacts of any significance occurred, but on 22 and 24 October, the last day of the operation, major enemy base complexes were located, including an abandoned POW camp and extremely large quantities of enemy supplies and material. ^{51/}

Results of Joint Allied Operations

Operation IRVING terminated with a total of 681 VC/NVA KIA, possibly

[REDACTED]

128 enemy KIA, 220 VC/NVA captured, 1,172 Civil Defendents (persons detained as violators of GVN laws, including terrorists, VC agents, VC political cadres, draft dodgers and deserters), turned over to GVN officials for disposition, and 59 Chieu Hoi Returnees. The 1st ACD units also captured 191 s/a, 19 c/s weapons, 377,417 rounds of small arms ammunition, 350 pounds of TNT, 350 mines, 226 grenades, 6 telephones, 18 transistor radios, 3 military switchboards, 1 ordinary switchboard, 107 packs, 460 linear inches of documents, 43 tires, one-half ton of cloth, 4 typewriters, 4 sewing machines and 5,000 reams of paper. Also captured were a half-ton of medical supplies, 66.6 tons of rice, and 496 tons of salt. The 1st ACD losses were 19 KIA and 150 WIA. ^{52/}

Operation DAI BANG 800 cost the enemy 221 KIA, 681 VC captured, 64 Chieu Hoi Ralliers, 95 s/a, 5 c/s weapons and 115 tons of salt. The ARVN losses were 3 KIA and 18 WIA. ^{53/}

In Operation MAENG HO 6, terminating on 9 November, the enemy lost 1,161 KIA by body count, 518 captured, 653 VC suspects taken in, 454 s/a, 43 c/s weapons, nearly 1,000 grenades, 234 mines, almost 55,000 rounds of s/a ammunition, and large quantities of foodstuffs and other equipment were captured. It is interesting to note that 690 CBU-bomblets were also recovered from the enemy. All this was accomplished as contrasted with Korean losses of 30 KIA and 115 WIA. ^{54/}

Evaluation of Air Effort--Operation IRVING

In 23 days, Operation IRVING received the support of 701 tactical air

[REDACTED]

sorties which expended 488.2 tons of bombs, 76.7 tons of napalm, 400 pounds of WP, 266 rockets, and 40 cans of CBU. Two ARC LIGHT strikes were conducted in the Tiger Mountains complex employing 324 tons of GP bombs. 55/

Of the 701 air sorties, there were 204, or 29 percent of the IRVING sorties, in the Sky Spot category. Such a high percentage was largely attributable to poor weather conditions, particularly toward the end of the operation. More than half the total of Sky Spot sorties were flown during the final week of operations. A significant night H&I program also made a contribution to this high figure. 56/

Maj. James Ryan, commenting on the use of Sky Spot during IRVING 57/ stated:

"Sky Spot pilots might hate to fly their missions, but they're doing a lot of good for our GIs on perimeter defense. When the VC see the terrain in front of them erupt at night, they get pretty scared. They stop to think and reorganize and our Army troops are a lot safer. The Army thinks Sky Spot is great. It keeps the enemy off balance and saves the night..."

"One VC prisoner said that he belonged to a company which was lined up to hit the rear forces of the U.S. However, Sky Spot strikes from behind him (the VC) and all around him, kept his company from striking at the U.S. troops. His company was broken up and made ineffective by the air strikes, he said."

The H&I program, which included air, artillery, and naval gunfire, accounted for a large portion of the air expended during the operation. In a large measure, it accounted for the lack of BDA/KBA feedback. Speaking about this interdiction program, Capt. Earl Mizell said: 58/

[REDACTED]

"Most of the missions I FACed during Operation IRVING fell into one of...three categories. These were suspected exfiltration and infiltration routes. I think my missions were about divided equally between the three and my personal opinion of them that the daylight raids on trails--exfiltration/infiltration routes were basically a waste of time. I felt that strikes against suspected or known enemy locations were of more benefit than the hitting of exfiltration/infiltration routes."

1st Lt. Dale H. Strawn, FAC, 5/7th, 1st ACD, shed some light on the 59/
paucity of BDA feedback on these missions:

"I would say that the majority of my targets were suspected infiltration routes and suspected exfiltration routes or suspected way stations or rest areas... I would believe that the air expended may have done some good, however, the BDA feedback was limited to what I could see from the air, which was very little, and the Army very seldom went in on the ground to see what the actual BDA was."

The significance of the interdiction program and how it fit into the overall 1st ACD operational strategy was summed up by Lt. Col. Harry T. 60/
Warwick, ALO, 1st ACD during Operation IRVING:

"In connection with Operation IRVING...there was not considerable airpower used in the classic sense of killing enemy or relieving pressure on friendly troops. In Operation IRVING, the enemy was trying to escape rather than fight. The only fighting was done when the enemy was trapped. However, although there was considerable VC and NVA killed during Operation IRVING, they were only found in very small groups with few exceptions.

"We did use a considerable amount of air in what we call the interdiction program. When the 1st Cav went through the valleys, the VC and the NVA naturally went into the hill masses. The 1st Cav kept considerable pressure on them by going into the hill masses with their troops and then extracting them and then keeping constant pressure on them with heavy

[REDACTED]

artillery fire. The Cav used airpower in this interdiction program by striking those targets that they were unable to hit with the artillery. This kept the VC and NVA in small groups, therefore, they were unable to organize any kind of attack...I believe that this had quite a lot to do with the number of POW and Returnees that were generated in IRVING. With the constant pounding by air and artillery, it had a definite effect on the morale of the enemy and to a certain effect destroyed his will to fight."

LZ preps also constituted a significant number of the total air sorties expended during IRVING. Capt. Herbert Somerder, ALO, 3d Brigade, 1st ACD, 61/ commented on this:

"Some of the close air support missions were used as landing zone preparations. They would work it in with the regular artillery and ARA preps...In most cases it was probably well used."

62/

Lt. Col. Harry T. Warwick summarized:

"I think one of the most important roles we played was to insure that the LZ was safe, as safe as could be possible for the landing of troops...In order to get the troops on the ground, an LZ must be prepared. In the preparation...it gives away the position of where the Cav troops will be put on the ground. This makes it quite easy for the VC or NVA to be prepared for the landing and inflict serious and heavy casualties during the initial landing phase. This is why we put so much importance on LZ preparation and feel that during the initial stages of the landing we should have fighters in the Air Cap capacity. Once enough troops are on the ground to secure the LZ, then you can take the aircraft away and expend them on an alternate target and...rely on immediate air strikes to handle any situation that develops after that."

In evaluating the total tactical air effort during Operation IRVING, Lt. Colonel Warwick concluded that "although the body KIA was not significant,

[REDACTED]

the pressure that was applied to the enemy throughout IRVING played a tremendous part in his defeat in this area." ^{63/}

A similar statement was made by Major Ryan, ALO, 1st Bde, when he said "there may have been no KBA in Operation IRVING for the record, but KBA is not the most significant element of a ground support operation. Without air support, the ground forces could not have moved about as they did." ^{64/}

Capt. Lawrence L. Miller, 1st ACD FAC, indicated the Army's satisfaction with the air support they received during IRVING: ^{65/}

"In talking to the Army Commanders at all levels, all feel that the work performed by the Air Force during Operation IRVING and in continuing operations is outstanding. But... trying to measure (it) in terms of KIA or BDA you just can't because the main effect, to them, the main value...has been to keep the enemy broken up...keep him on the move, and disallow him to function as the type of unit he would like to."

Concrete evidence of the effectiveness and the psychological value that the constant threat of air strikes has on the enemy was strikingly revealed in a detailed analysis of the interrogation reports of enemy prisoners taken during Operation IRVING. This analysis, undertaken by the Research and Analysis Branch of the Combined Military Intelligence Center, Vietnam (CMIC), revealed that "all of the prisoners who responded to the question 'what weapon do you fear most?' replied that they feared most air and artillery firepower." ^{66/}

Evaluation of Air Effort-Operation MAENG HO 6

Operation MAENG HO 6 terminated on 9 November and, although it lasted

[REDACTED]

nearly twice as long as Operation IRVING, a total of only 22 strike missions were flown, two immediate and twenty pre-planned, as compared with 357 strike missions during Operation IRVING. This striking variance in strike mission figures was due largely to differences in the operations themselves. No small credit was also due to the completely different concept of the role of tactical airpower held by Korean forces. ^{67/}

Another factor which impeded the employment of airpower during Operation MAENG HO 6, even more than during IRVING, was extremely poor weather. According to Maj. Robert Stuart, Assistant ALO, CRID, "If we hadn't had such poor weather during the operation, three times as much air would have been employed. But nevertheless the Koreans just don't depend that much on TAC air." ^{68/}

The BDA and KBA for MAENG HO 6 was listed as 21 VC KIA, four bunkers and three trenches destroyed, four secondary explosions, 11 structures destroyed, and ten structures damaged. The Air After Action Report for the operation credited these figures to artillery and friendly aircraft, ^{69/} but Major Stuart stated this was in error and these were KBA and BDA feedbacks from air strikes and not artillery. ^{70/}

Air Psy-War Program Evaluation

The Air Force participated in an intensive psy-war program throughout all three AOs of the IRVING series. The 1st ACD relied heavily on their own helicopters for this purpose, but the U.S. Air Force also conducted successful operations with numerous U-10 sorties throughout the IRVING AO. ^{71/}

[REDACTED]

In Operation DAI BANG 800: "A USAF U-10 psy-war support aircraft was placed under operational control of the Division G-5. This aircraft was used effectively in support of 22d Division, Binh Dinh Sector and CRID operations...A total of 55 sorties were flown using standard leaflets and pre-cut tapes. Included were six special tape and personal appeal missions."^{72/}

The U.S. Air Force psychological operations (psy-ops) were also very successful during MAENG HO 6. The CRID forces surrounded An Thang village, located at the northeast corner of the AO, between the mountains and the sea. For five days they subjected the heavily VC-oriented population of 7,000 to a massive psy-ops campaign utilizing, among other things, U.S. Air Force U-10 aircraft. As a result, when the Koreans moved in, they were met with almost no resistance.^{73/}

In addition, "A total of 14,000 refugees were peaceably interned during the operation, so the use of this aircraft was very effective."^{74/}

[REDACTED]

CHAPTER IV

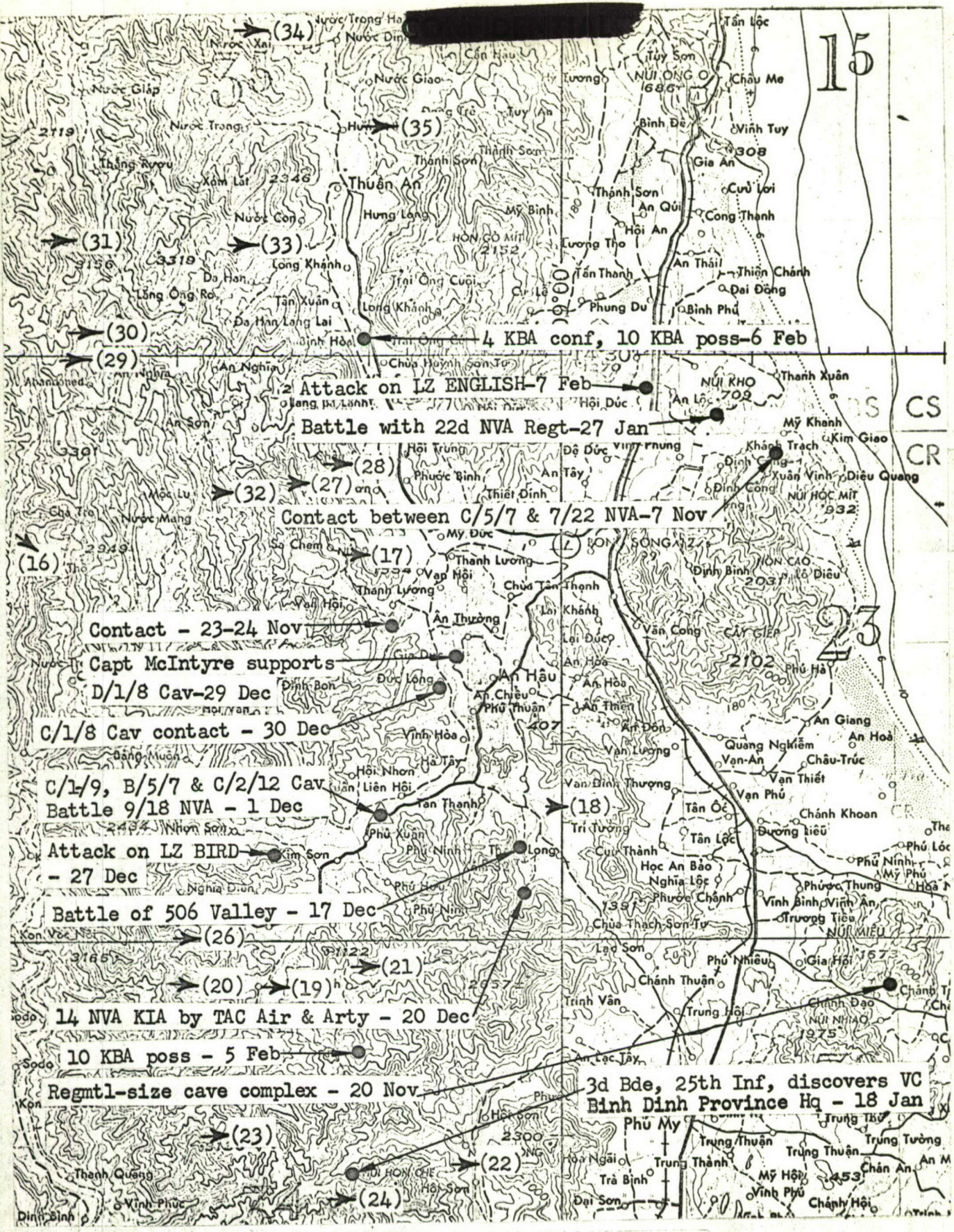
OPERATION THAYER II

Background of Operation

Operation THAYER II began as a two-brigade effort to exploit the success of the previous five weeks of almost continuous contact with the enemy in the rich coastal plain and the Kim Son and Cuoi Ca Valleys to the west. ^{1/} It became necessary on 31 October, however, to commit a division brigade to Operation PAUL REVERE IV in Pleiku Province, thus temporarily reducing the size of THAYER II to three battalions and supporting units. ^{2/}

Enemy forces had been badly mauled during the previous two months. The E2B MF Battalion was nearly wiped out during MAENG HO 6 and B-52 strikes, and the E210 MF Battalion, having suffered moderate casualties moved south to avoid further contact. Two battalions, the 7th and 8th [REDACTED] of the 18th NVA Regiment, experienced severe casualties and were considered combat ineffective. Nearly all the 18th NVA Regimental support facilities, bases, and supplies had been captured or destroyed. ^{31/} The 2d VC Regiment had suffered moderate casualties during previous action and was moving north to avoid further contact. This left the 22d NVA Regiment as the only major enemy unit whose effectiveness had not been seriously impaired during earlier operations. ^{4/}

Light contact continued throughout most of THAYER II, with major battles sporadically flaring up. Air support continued heavy throughout the operation with both tactical support sorties and ARC LIGHT strikes. A



ARC LIGHT STRIKES & SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

THAYER II

Figure 14

[REDACTED]

steady attrition of enemy forces, together with several major engagements, ultimately cost the enemy an additional 1,700 KIA and more than 300 POWs, thus further affecting the already debilitated condition of the 610th Division and its supporting forces.

5/

ARC LIGHT Support (27 Oct - 4 Nov 66)

While 1st ACD forces made steady light contact and continued to uncover base and logistic support facilities of the 610th Division, a series of four ARC LIGHT strikes were directed against enemy base and supply areas during the first two weeks of THAYER II. These strikes reflected the improved quality of Allied intelligence as all but one strike achieved immediate significant results.

6/

On the morning of 27 October, an ARC LIGHT strike was conducted by nine B-52s on the evergreen-forested slopes of the Vinh Thanh Valley about 20 miles due west of Bong Song. What lay below the expending aircraft were two large enemy base complexes with numerous large thatched huts, tunnels, bunkers, and shelters.

A third base complex was later discovered nearby and the whole area was later identified as probably having contained elements of the 610th Division and Binh Dinh VC Provincial Headquarters. In the next three days, the reconnaissance force, B/1/9th Cav, thoroughly explored the entire area, and confirmed destruction or heavy damage to approximately 40 structures; numerous bloodstains in several of the huts pointed to enemy occupancy and their casualties caused by the strike. It wasn't until three days later that

[REDACTED]

fifteen mangled and dismembered bodies, one in a basket, were discovered several hundred meters from the strike scene. ^{9/} Light skirmishes occurred between small groups of enemy in the strike area and the ground search team, but the enemy apparently made a successful escape although probably taking with them numerous wounded as a result of the bomb strike.

The following day, another nine-plane raid dumped tons of ordnance on a suspected enemy base some eight miles west of Bong Song, but no significant results were observed. ^{10/}

Fifteen additional ARC LIGHT sorties hit a suspected enemy base area eight miles south of Bong Song on 29 October. Again a major enemy base complex suffered massive devastation when it took a direct hit. One dead VC, clad in a khaki uniform, was found by the exploitation team crumpled in a bomb crater. ^{11/}

Five days later, on 4 November, the enemy's peace was again unexpectedly shattered as 18 planeloads of bombs crashed into their camp, destroying dozens of bunkers, foxholes, and huts. ^{12/} In one large bunker "which had been used by approximately 28 personnel," search teams found the camp fire ashes still warm when they moved in to sweep the target area. A large quantity of medical equipment, including heavy duty surgical tools, 23 hand grenades, four small arms and numerous personal items were found throughout the strike area.

As a result of the air strike and subsequent ground exploitation, 11 enemy were confirmed KIA/KBA, 30 enemy were estimated KBA, two VC turned

[REDACTED]

themselves in with Chieu Hoi passes, and 50 VC suspects were detained. 13/

Elements of 22d NVA Regt Located (7 Nov 66)

About noon on 7 November, C/5/7th Cav fixed ^{the} positions of a company sized element of the 7th Battalion, 22d VNA Regiment between the north slopes of the Tiger Mountains and the south bank of the Lai Giang River. The enemy was armed with automatic weapons and put up stiff resistance as they attempted to withdraw in small groups through trenches and huts. Artillery and naval gunfire were called on enemy positions and air strikes were requested. 14/

Capt. Herbert Somerder, ALO, 3d Bde, 1st ACD, was airborne in his O-1 when he received word of the engagement over his radio. By the time he arrived over the battle scene, two F-100s had scrambled from Bien Hoa and were on their way north. 15/

"It took fifty-five minutes for the fighters to arrive from the first immediate request. Upon their arrival, I ascertained the position of the ground troops. They were located to the south, southeast, and southwest of the villages from which the ground fire was being received. Coordinating with the LNO (Liaison Officer), we got our position marked...and I put the first flight of fighters...in the village just to the north of the friendly position."

Directed by the FAC, the two F-100s put in napalm, 500-pound bombs, and then strafed enemy positions. As the first flight departed, a second arrived over the target and strikes commenced 500 meters to the east of the original point of heavy contact, since by this time the exact positions

[REDACTED]

16/

of all friendly elements were in question.

"I started to put the fighters in there...and then the LNO called and said they were in heavy contact again slightly to the south of where I had put the other strikes in...Again we had to re-mark the friendly positions because they had moved slightly, and I put the flights (in) with 500-pound bombs.

"There were three fighters and we put them about 100 meters from the troops because the gunfire we were seeing now was from trench lines and tree lines...near the next northernmost village. After we dropped the bombs, we...(put) napalm in there and...strafed also.

"Immediately after these flights left, the LNO said he saw ten bodies lying in the area we had bombed and strafed, and the automatic weapons fire was about all stopped at that time."

Following this strike, Captain Somerder was relieved by Captain Duvall, who then put in a third flight of fighters. 17/ This series of firefights throughout the small villages cost the 7th Battalion, 22d NVA Regiment, 11 KIA by ground fire and 23 confirmed KIA "by TAC air, ARA, and 1/9 Cav gunships." 18/ Total enemy losses to that unit during the entire day totaled 46 KIA. Friendly forces lost one KIA and two WIA. 19/

Enemy Attrition Continues (8 - 31 Nov 66)

By the second week in November, the 610th NVA Division had their fill and the 2d VC and 22d NVA Regiments, along with Division Headquarters, began withdrawing north to the vicinity of the Binh Dinh-Quang Ngai Province borders. From this area, the 22d NVA Regiment continued farther north into base camps located in southern Quang Ngai Province. 20/ This move was evidently prompted by the relentless search for the 610th Division by the

[REDACTED]

1st ACD during the previous two months. The remaining enemy regiment, the 18th NVA, was believed at this time to have dispersed throughout the Kim Son Valley area and was considered to be combat-ineffective. 21/

ARC LIGHT strikes continued to support the Binh Dinh campaign with strikes on 8, 15, 21, and 23 November. Results from these strikes were not as impressive as were those from the strikes during the previous two weeks, 22/ but at least two of the strikes caused moderate damage.

The ARC LIGHT conducted on 8 November hit a medium-sized enemy camp with nine sorties and this is an extract from the BDA report. 23/

"The following installations were destroyed by the bomb strikes: one hut..., one old fighting bunker..., 10 foxholes with overhead cover..., and 15 bunkers...One hut was destroyed by burning..., with the nearest crater being 20 meters away. Scattered rice around the hut indicated a possible minor explosion...

"Two VC were killed as a result of the bomb strike. Two VC were wounded during the ground search..."

The next strike was conducted on 15 November and did heavy damage to a base area on the east side of the Kim Son Valley. 24/

"All three bunkered areas were hit by the bomb strike, and the bunkers were destroyed. Bunkers in the immediate vicinity of bomb craters were collapsed from within, had overhead covers caved in, and were full of debris. Bunkers located in cleared areas, but away from craters, had overhead cover blown away and were relatively free of debris.

"There were no indications of enemy casualties due to the strike."

[REDACTED]

A steady attrition of enemy forces, particularly from the 18th NVA Regiment, continued throughout this period although there were no major engagements. On 20 November, a completely furnished cave complex, capable of supporting a regiment, was discovered on the slopes of Nui Ngiao Mountain. 25/

Direct air support was continuous during this period but there were no significant CAS missions flown until 23 November. On that afternoon, A/1/9th Cav sighted ten to 15 enemy in a trench system in the lower An Lao Valley. 26/ Two A-1Es from the 1st Air Commando Squadron (ACS) were scrambled from Pleiku and expended napalm on the enemy emplacements. 27/ The enemy lost five KIA/KBA as a result of this encounter and the air strikes opened up a tunnel system and destroyed three huts and six bunkers. 28/

An hour later, three F-100s were scrambled as a consequence of further enemy sightings by A/1/9th Cav in a nearby location. 29/ As a result, three VC were KIA/KBA, and another tunnel complex was uncovered by the air strikes. 30/ Enemy losses for the day totaled 26 KIA/KBA.

Heavy contact flared again the following day when enemy forces were fixed in the same general area, and pounded by tube artillery and TAC air strikes. When the engagement ended, 30 enemy bodies were left on the field and another 11 enemy soldiers were captured. 31/

Enemy forces continued to be encountered throughout the AO on the next day and in scattered engagements, 32 enemy were KIA. The 1st ACD losses were nine KIA and two aircraft destroyed. 32/

A private from the 18th NVA Regiment was captured on 28 November, and

[REDACTED]

he revealed that "morale in his unit is low due to fear of B-52 raids, helicopters, and artillery. Most of the men in his unit have malaria, and two men recently died of the disease." ^{33/}

A second prisoner, 2d Lt. Vo Thanh Phong, attached to the financial section of division headquarters, indicated the effects of continuing Allied operations against the 610th Division and gave some aspects of future objectives of enemy forces in the area.

"The 2d VC and 22d NVA Regts remain marginally combat effective, and the 18th Regt lost equivalent of two bns during Sept and Oct 66. Latter part of Oct 18th Regt received 150 local replacements. Most of these persons were confused and the desertion rate is high. Overall strength of each company is 50 men." ^{34/} 2d Lieutenant Phong stated further that "the entire forces of Military Region (MR) 5 (a geographical area comprising several provinces), will be brought to bear to annihilate the 1st Cav Div during Jan, Feb, and Mar 1967." ^{35/}

The source revealed also that the 610th Division had received limited numbers of replacements during 1966, but the I Field Forces' Intelligence Summary (INTSUM) report contained an additional editorial comment that "it is felt that the unknown number of losses to all three Regiments of the division from B-52 raids, TAC air strikes, Allied ground actions, malaria, and desertion have negated any recent gains from replacements." ^{36/}

Decimating the 18th NVA Regt (1 - 26 Dec 66)

December began ominously for the enemy with the 9th Battalion, 18th NVA Regiment, suffering heavy losses in an engagement with the 1st ACD. At mid-morning on 1 December, C/1/9th Cav made contact with a seemingly small group

[REDACTED]

of enemy troops. The battle grew throughout the day and B/5/7th and one platoon of C/2/12th moved into an encircling position. By nightfall, the enemy force had sustained 70 KIA by body count, further decreasing the estimated strength of the already hard-hit 9th Battalion, 18th NVA Regiment to 165 men ^{38/} as opposed to an authorized strength of 600. ^{39/} A 60-mm mortar and numerous automatic weapons, equipment, and documents were also captured. ^{40/} Tactical air support was unable to provide close air support during this battle due to poor weather conditions, but one Sky Spot mission was flown against a probable enemy escape route. ^{41/} Losses to the 1st ACD for the day were three KIA and 21 WIA. ^{42/}

ARC LIGHT strikes, totaling 30 sorties, supported THAYER II on 6, 7, and 11 December, but no significant BDAs were reported. ^{43/}

Light contact continued throughout the AO with small groups or individuals. Most of these were deserters or persons separated from their parent units. Other elements were pinpointed and destroyed as the hungry 18th NVA Regiment sent out numerous small parties to collect rice and supplies. ^{44/}

Heavy ground action again occurred on 17 December, during a search of the western slopes of the 506 Valley (named thusly because it was traversed by Highway 506), by elements of the 1st ACD. On a small finger of forested land jutting into the valley from Nui Hon Giang Mountain, C/1/8th Cav made contact with small groups of well dug-in enemy soldiers. Although the original contact was quickly broken off, it was soon reestablished, this time with an estimated battalion-sized force. Artillery was called in and

[REDACTED]

TAC air strikes were requested. Meanwhile reinforcements began moving in 45/
to encircle the enemy positions.

Weather conditions were again unfavorable, but by 1130H, the FAC, Rash
11, was over the area waiting the arrival of two A-1Es which had been
scrambled from Pleiku. In the words of the FAC, 1st Lt. Johnnie Hohenshelt: 46/

"While the fighters were enroute, I tried to sort out where the friendly locations were and work with the fire support coordinator and make sure he was in a position to monitor the air strikes...In this particular case, he was airborne in a Charlie Charlie chopper (Command and Control Helicopter).

"I had both friendly positions marked with smoke...and I had talked to the fire support coordinator and I was fairly certain of their exact location...I got contact with my A-1s, got the artillery shut down, (and) got confirmation from both lead and the A-1s...that they knew where the friendlies were.

"I then marked with smoke the area on the ridge line southwest of the finger and got confirmation from the fire support coordinator that he saw my smoke and that was indeed where he wanted the fighter's ordnance.

"We worked the ridge line to the west-southwest...The friendlies down at the tip of the finger were very obvious down under a big tree, and while we were working the southern end, we had no trouble with them at all.

"The fire support coordinator wanted us to work the ordnance on further to the north...We had napalm and fragmentation bombs...(and) the first fragmentation bomb was dropped on the contour line up to the north. The people at the base of the finger... immediately called and wanted us to back the fragmentation off as some of the fragments were going through the trees above them.

[REDACTED]

"Throughout the engagement, I didn't see any of the enemy (and) I didn't see anything significant...One of these strikes I think netted a couple of KBA and during the engagement in the area I think we got quite a bit of KBA out of it." (No KBA credit was ever reported to 7th Air Force for this engagement. Nevertheless, it seemed probable that the six fighter-bomber sorties which expended directly on the enemy positions, and the two additional sorties delivered over nearby egress routes very likely accounted for a significant portion of the 116 KIA reported for this engagement.)

Lieutenant Hohenshelt was relieved by Rash 09 who put in two more A-1Es and two F-4Cs. ^{47/} While the air strikes were being carefully worked in on enemy positions, C and D/1/12th Cav had taken up positions to the north, with A/1/12th on the east. The B/1/8th Cav came up to block from the south, while the C/1/8th Cav maintained its position on the west. ^{48/}

By 1800H, Rash 09 was replaced by Lt. Colonel Warwick, the division ALO, and two more scramble sorties were nearing their target. ^{49/}

"I...had a set of F-100s there that had napalm and 500-pound high drags and I tried to assure the Army... that we could put this ordnance as close in as the Army choppers were putting their rockets. But I was unable to get a firm position on all the enemy as well as the friendlies.

"Finally, there was about an 1,800 foot ceiling and darkness (so) we expended these fighters on a very likely egress route. We never did get any results from it however....

"I might mention that this was an outstanding job of ordnance delivery. I marked the valley and I told them I wanted them to start from the Willy Peter (White Phosphorous) marker and put two bombs..., 200 meters up put two more, and then come back around and put two naps (Napalm), and 200 meters up from that two more. And they just stepped it right up the valley...Each time when they pulled off the target,

[REDACTED]

They pulled up into the clouds at approximately 1,800 feet. There were choppers all over the area and it was in darkness, yet this ordnance was delivered...exactly where they were told to put it."

Initial reports put enemy losses at 50 KIA and three POWs, but bodies continued to be discovered, including 40 found on 19 November. This brought total enemy losses for the battle to 116 confirmed KIA from the 7th and 8th Battalions, 18th NVA Regiment. ^{50/} These losses put all three battalions of this regiment out of commission and total strength for the 7th and 8th Battalions was subsequently estimated at under 150 men each. ^{51/} This victory had not been without cost, however, as the 1st ACD had four UH-1 and three OH-13 choppers downed by ground fire during this engagement. ^{52/} For the entire day's operations over the AO, 11 choppers were hit by ground fire and eight of these were downed. ^{53/} Personnel losses were nine KIA and 63 WIA. ^{54/} Sporadic contact continued in the area over the next two days and four more immediate sorties struck enemy positions in the same vicinity. ^{55/}

On 20 December, C/1/8th Cav observed an enemy company moving along the floor of a small open valley a mile south of the previous battlefield. Maneuver units were unable to make contact, but TAC air and artillery took the enemy under fire. ^{56/} Eight F-100s and two F-4Cs blasted the enemy unit with GP, napalm, rockets, and then strafed with 20-mm mortar fire. ^{57/} As a result, air and artillery were jointly credited with 14 NVA KIA/KBA by body-count. ^{58/}

The same day, a North Vietnamese second lieutenant from the 18th NVA Regiment turned himself in with a Chieu Hoi pass, bringing with him a

[REDACTED]

7.62-mm light machine gun. This and numerous other sources--agents, returnees, and prisoners--confirmed the near-desperate condition of the 18th Regiment. ^{59/} Several reports tended to confirm that the regimental support units, including the AA Company, had been broken up to provide line officers for the depleted battalions. ^{60/} One prisoner stated that "all original officers of the 7th and 8th Battalions have been KIA." ^{61/}

As early as November, there was evidence that the 400th Mortar Battalion, the 200th AA Battalion, and the 135th Recoilless Rifle Company had been broken up to provide the 610th Division's maneuver battalions with replacement officers and men.

The condition of the 18th NVA Regiment was the most critical, however. One prisoner reported that one of its companies had 80 men sick ^{62/} while the NVA Lieutenant, who returned on 20 November, claimed his company had 20 men WIA. ^{63/} Information also indicated that the normal policy for the NVA battalions and regimental headquarters was to displace every seven-to-ten days but because of pressure from allied operations and constant harassment from air and artillery strikes, units were sometimes forced to change locations daily. ^{64/} This need for constant movement to avoid detection and the constant attrition from Allied operations, artillery, and air strikes was fast bringing the 18th NVA Regiment near the point of dissolution.

LZ Bird (27 Dec 66)

The commanders of the 610th Division were well aware of the critical condition of the 18th NVA Regiment, and so, by 20 December, the 22d NVA

[REDACTED]

Regiment ^{plan was to} make an attack against a forward position of the 1st ACD following the Christmas-truce period.

The LZ Bird was a 1st ACD forward artillery fire base perched above a sharp bend in the Suoi Lon River about one kilometer west-northwest of the village of Kim Son I on the floor of the Kim Son Valley. On 27 December, the LZ was manned by C/1/12th Cav, C/6/16th Artillery, and B/2/19th Artillery, equipped with 105-mm and 155-mm howitzers. ^{64/}

At 0104H on 27 December, an intense barrage of 60-mm and 81-mm mortar fire slammed into the camp. ^{67/} Minutes later, the 91st Company, 9th Battalion, 22d NVA Regiment, led a two-battalion assault against the LZ, penetrated the outer perimeter, and engaged the American defenders in a pitched battle around the gun positions. ^{68/} Some of the guns were overrun, but the remainder were lowered to point-blank range and raked the enemy ranks with Bee Hive and high explosive rounds. ^{69/}

A "Spooky" flareship was immediately dispatched to the scene and arrived overhead by 0200H, dropping 45 flares. This aircraft was relieved an hour later by a second AC-47, which continued to light up the battle scene using 38 flares. ^{70/}

ARA was also sent to the area and C/1/5th Cav and B/1/9th Cav were helilifted into positions near the LZ and began working their way in. At the same time, a continuous barrage of artillery from other fire bases rained shells all around the LZ. ^{71/}

In desperate hand-to-hand fighting, the enemy, their ranks ripped by

[REDACTED]

artillery, were finally forced back out of the LZ. A short time later the enemy began a withdrawal toward the north-northeast under continuous ^{72/} pounding from artillery, ARA, and Sky Spot air strikes.

Seven immediate air strikes were requested and four F-4Cs and six F-100s were scrambled, but the entire area was completely weathered in and all sorties delivered their ordnance through the thick cloud cover under Sky ^{73/} Spot control.

The 8th and 9th Battalions of the 22d NVA Regiment left 45 NVA and 12 VC KIA on the battlefield. Additional bodies discovered in the next two days brought the enemy dead to 79, confirmed by body-count, for the early morning assault. The enemy also lost 14 s/a and six c/s weapons on the field. American losses were also heavy. The 1st ACD lost 27 KIA and 65 ^{74/} were WIA; three 155-mm howitzers were damaged, and one 155-mm was destroyed.

Although the enemy had sustained a high number of casualties during their assault on LZ Bird, subsequent enemy prisoners and Chieu Hoi Returnees ^{76/} stated that the enemy considered the attack a success.

The Hunt Continues (28 Dec 66--2 Jan 67)

Poor weather continued to hamper air operations on 28 December, but ground forces engaged a dug-in enemy company about four miles southwest of Bong Song. A sweep of the contact area over the next two days netted 37 NVA ^{77/} bodies.

The weather improved considerably on 29 December, and numerous air

[REDACTED]

sorties were flown throughout the THAYER II AO. During the afternoon, D/1/8th Cav got into a firefight while searching the battle area of the previous day. Several immediate sorties had already been flown in a nearby area around noon, but action flared again about mid-afternoon and Capt. Owen 78/ McIntyre was notified to proceed to the area in his O-1.

"I flew over the area and observed that elements of the 1st Air Cav were occupying a small hill...There was a burning village (and) I was advised that I would put in an immediate air strike on a small village defined as Gia Duc 2.

"...While waiting for the fighters to arrive, I recced the battle area. One of the more startling things that I noticed were the four or five American dead laying along the edge of the ridge line waiting to be evacuated out of the area.

"About one click (kilometer) upstream, I noticed people were leaving the western side of the river and moving over to the east side...The target description was such that anything west of the river was considered VC and anything east of the river was considered to be friendly...

"These people were moving across the river as fast as they could. I commented to the controlling agency, which was Slashing Tiger, that these people were crossing the river in boats and he said that was affirmative, and we would have to let them go as they had women and children. However, it was also obvious that they had two or three men of military age and strong VC suspects with them.

"Eventually two B-57s arrived. I was almost in position to mark the target when I noticed a man in black pajamas walk into the village. I advised the clearing authority that this man had gone into the village and they said he was Charlie and we were cleared to strike anyway. So I rolled in and marked the target, and the mark hit very close to where he entered the village and where the B-57s

[REDACTED]

dropped their napalms right on the mark and continued to work the village over from one end to the other.

"Air worked the village over quite effectively, destroying something like seven hootches and damaging eight. They actually laid the ordnance quite effectively into the small village area."

The two B-57s were subsequently credited with one KBA, probably the lone "Charlie" Captain McIntyre observed entering the village just prior to the strike. 79/

Rash 17, Captain McIntyre, was called to the same area on the following 80/ day:

"This time it was C/1/8th...in contact along the small ridge line. I was asked if I thought we could put in an immediate air strike into the area. I advised I thought we could put in some close air, particularly if they were A-1Es.

"However, the first set of fighters I received were diverted and they were F-100s. Even though they were not A-1Es, they were not handicapped particularly by weather (overcast from 2,500-3,000 feet with scattered showers in the area), as their ordnance was high drag bombs and napalm...

"I sensed that the people on the ground were apprehensive in using the F-100 in close air support... (since it) had been requested that their first pass be made with 20-mm so they could check their accuracy. I felt that this was unnecessary since I knew where the friendlies were and I knew where they wanted me to put the bombs...It was considerably out in front of where they were...(Then) they requested we move in closer and put in eight 500-pound high drag bombs."

When this ordnance was successfully delivered, the ground forces suggested that the napalm be brought in even closer to around 150-to-200

[REDACTED]

meters of their positions as they were still receiving heavy automatic weapons and recoilless rifle fire from the enemy positions. While this strike was in progress, Captain McIntyre called for more air which arrived almost immediately in the form of the originally scrambled flight of A-1Es from Pleiku. ^{81/}

The A-1Es had napalm and CBU, but because of the terrain, the CBU was not used. Captain McIntyre decided "we would use the ten cans of napalm and make as many passes as possible. The napalm was again dropped with extreme accuracy..." ^{82/}

After eight of the ten cans of napalm had been expended, the ground commander decided to attempt disengagement as it appeared that the enemy was moving in closer to the Cavalry positions to avoid the air strikes. Captain McIntyre kept his fighters making dummy bomb runs over the enemy positions to keep the enemy down while the friendly forces disengaged. ^{83/}

After the friendly ground forces had successfully drawn back, the remainder of the napalm was expended and "we got a comment from the ground commander that it was excellent." ^{84/}

"By this time I could distinguish beyond any doubt that as the A-1s came over, there were a large number of flashes coming up along the ridge line. I kept these places in mind and when the next flight of A-1s showed up--they had...ten cans of napalm and 20-mm--the lead rolled in (and) the first napalm drop was extremely effective. The friendly troops commented they could feel the heat but if we could keep it up we could burn Charlie out of there."

[REDACTED]

Captain McIntyre continued to put in the A-1s, who followed each napalm run with a strafing pass. ^{85/} Finally, his rockets expended, he turned the flight over to Lt. Colonel Warwick and, after three and a half hours of continuous air strikes, returned to Hammond. ^{86/}

"Follow-up inquiry determined that the next day when they moved through, they found eight VC killed and numerous weapons...There was quite a significant weapons cache...picked up out of the area and we were given credit for eight to ten VC killed by TAC air.

"Overall I felt that the TAC air was not as effective as it could have been, because they insisted that the bombs be dropped too far out in front of them, until they were convinced of their accuracy. And then by this time, the bombs had been used up. I felt that if they had marked their position and let me use my judgment as to where the bombs should go, we would have gotten heavier ordnance down into the jungle... into the prepared positions of the enemy, and been more effective.

"However, we were obligated to do as they requested, and even so TAC air was quite effective. The overall coordination took a little more time than it should have, however, during situations such as this--in close support within 50 meters in front of the friendly position--it is much more prudent to be careful than possibly have an error."

On 30 December another ARC LIGHT "Quick Run" strike was flown by six B-52s approximately ten miles west of Bong Song. ^{87/} The C/1/9th Cav reconnoitered the strike zone and found numerous signs of very recent occupation and captured small amounts of equipment, arms, food, and supplies. ^{88/}

In the ground sweep of the area where Captain McIntyre put in the air strikes on the previous day, three NVA were encountered. Two of them were

[REDACTED]

killed and the second was wounded and captured. This captive turned out to be Senior Captain Le Phuoc, the Plans and Training officer of the 18th NVA Regiment and Regimental Deputy Chief of Staff. He proved to be very cooperative and provided complete intelligence on his unit as well as the 610th Division. Information included future plans of the division and tactics the enemy intended to employ against effectiveness of the 1st ACD. 89/

Information from Captain Phuoc and other sources indicated that the 610th Division had been recently reinforced by many local recruits, but their quality was poor. Good intelligence reports indicated that as many as 1,300 North Vietnamese replacements reached the Division in November, 90/ but by the end of Operation THAYER II, these reports were not confirmed.

The Search Steps Up (3 Jan - 12 Feb 67)

On 3 January, the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division was placed under Operational Control (OPCON) of the 1st ACD and deployed by road to the vicinity of the Cuoi Ca Valley to conduct offensive operations. This move expanded search forces in the THAYER II AO by two battalions and one battery of artillery. 91/

There were no other large engagements with the 610th Division until late January, but large quantities of enemy supplies and equipment were captured and destroyed. Daily enemy personnel losses continued at a high rate during most of the period.

Five ARC LIGHT strikes were conducted during January with a total of

[REDACTED]

33 B-52 sorties flown. ^{92/} Eight KBA were recorded as a result of two strikes conducted on 16 January, in the mountains west of the An Lao Valley. TAC air sorties continued at a high rate but there were no significant instances of close air support.

Huong Van The, a squadron leader of the 8th Battalion, 22d NVA Regiment, was captured on 6 January and he subsequently provided information indicating additional unrecorded enemy losses over the previous month. The prisoner was WIA in the attack on LZ Bird on 27 December, and was taken to a hospital that contained "50 seriously wounded and 20 slightly wounded personnel." The POW further stated that the hospital was attacked on 3 January, killing its 15 wounded patients.

By 10 January, the condition of the 18th NVA Regiment had deteriorated to such a degree that the following flash letter, written by the 610th Division's commander, was sent from Song Kon Station in Binh Dinh Province to his division. ^{94/}

"After suffering repeated failures, soldiers and cadre of the 18th Regiment are demoralized and possess the intention of rallying to the enemy side. Order the various security sections to survey all cadre, especially the cadre from squad leader level to battalion commander level, to calm and improve the morale of the aforementioned disaffected men."

Before intercepting this message, the 1st ACD had received a report indicating an entire squad [REDACTED] from the 18th NVA Regiment intended to surrender. ^{95/} This intelligence data became the basis for an intensive

[REDACTED]

Chieu Hoi psy-war effort against the 18th NVA Regiment which was conducted on 18 - 19 January. ^{96/} A Chieu Hoi Returnee from that regiment, who surrendered on 12 February, stated that "on these two days the unit was assembled and that no one was allowed to leave the immediate area." ^{97/} He further revealed that his "company political officer told the unit that they were now subordinate to Binh Dinh Headquarters instead of the SAO VANG (610th) Div because the Regt was very weak." ^{98/}

Meanwhile the 3d Brigade Task Force of the 25th Infantry Division was on the verge of a major discovery. On 11 January, B/1/35th killed two enemy in the lower Cuoi Ca Valley. The enemy were found to be carrying the unusual sum of 100,000 Vietnamese Piasters (in U.S. money, \$800). ^{99/}

"This unusual find and the large number of weapons captured in the following days indicated that the 3d Brigade Task Force had struck close to a major headquarters. On 18 January, a series of caves, formed by granite boulders piled upon one another, were discovered in a ravine (in the western section of Area PYTHON). This complex provided shelter for the financial section, psychological operations section, ammo warehouse, hospital, and intelligence section of the BINH DINH Province Headquarters. In addition, part of the medical and signal support of the 18th NVA Regiment is believed to have been located here."

As a result of this discovery, a large portion of the headquarters administrative staff was either killed or captured and most of the equipment and material from this headquarters was captured or destroyed. The haul included 10,500,000 VN Piasters (about \$90,000 U.S. dollars), in National Liberation Front (NLF) payment certificates and large quantities



of radios and signal equipment. 100/

An attempt was made on 20 January to blow up the cave complex with demolitions. The result was a secondary explosion that moved a 30-foot-in-diameter rock, ten feet. A subsequent attempt on 23 January, with 250 pounds of explosives, caused "six or seven massive secondary explosions lasting for two or three minutes and blowing a gap in the side of the hill 100 meters long." Additional caves were uncovered by the secondary explosions. 101/

Agent reports and those of prisoners later indicated that the effectiveness and presence of the 3d Brigade, 25th Division, in the Cuoi Ca Valley and nearby hill masses, prevented the 18th NVA Regiment from attempting a major attack on LZ Hammond in late January. 102/

Heavy contact with the enemy again occurred on 27 January, when C/2/12th Cav became heavily engaged upon moving into an LZ four miles northwest of Bong Song. About the same time, ARVN Marines were engaged a mile south of these locations. 103/ The area was hit during the day by immediate sorties with six F-100s and two A-1Hs. An AC-47 was on station after dark and continued support by expending flares and 15,000 rounds of minigun fire. 104/ A sweep of the battle area and sporadic contacts in the same vicinity the next day, cost the 7th and 8th Battalions, 22d NVA Regiment, 45 KIA and loss of eight small arms and one light ~~minigun~~. 105/

machine gun

TAC airpower was again utilized in close air support on 5 February, when B/1/9th Cav engaged 20 armed enemy on the mountain ridge between the



[REDACTED]

Cuoi Ca and Kim Son Valleys. TAC airpower was credited with an estimated ten KBA according to the I Field Forces Vietnam (IFFV INTSUM) for 5 February. 106/ One secondary explosion was also observed during the strike. 107/

On 6 February, a FAC was conducting a visual reconnaissance (VR) mission in the lower An Lao Valley, when he spotted occupied trenches, bunkers, and foxholes. An immediate air strike confirmed four enemy KBA and ten enemy estimated KBA. 108/

The same day, the 3/40th ARVN Regiment battled an estimated NVA Battalion ten miles northeast of Bong Song. Four A-1Es, two A-4s, and two F-100s supported the action with immediate sorties. As a result, 45 VC structures were destroyed, 14 were damaged, there were ten secondary explosions, 109/ and probably elements of the 22d NVA Regiment suffered 81 KIA in the attack. 110/

The enemy struck back hard early the next morning, however, with a heavy mortar attack against LZ English and its Army airfield. The camp, located only three miles north of Bong Song, was raked by an estimated 50 rounds of 82-mm and four rounds of 60-mm mortar fire. 111/ Three AC-47s supported the friendly forces, comprised of the 2/12th Cav and elements of the 40th ARVN Regiment, by lighting up the area with 132 flares and expending 112/ 16,500 rounds of ammunition against suspected mortar positions.

Enemy casualties were unknown but friendly losses were heavy. U.S. losses were one KIA, 53 WIA, three UH-1D helicopters damaged, one 10,000-gallon fuel bladder destroyed, a second damaged, five 500-gallon fuel pods damaged, a quarter-ton truck destroyed, and two 2½-ton trucks damaged. ARVN

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:

Regiment losses were six WIA. ^{113/} This action was the last major contact of Operation THAYER II, which terminated on 12 February 1967.

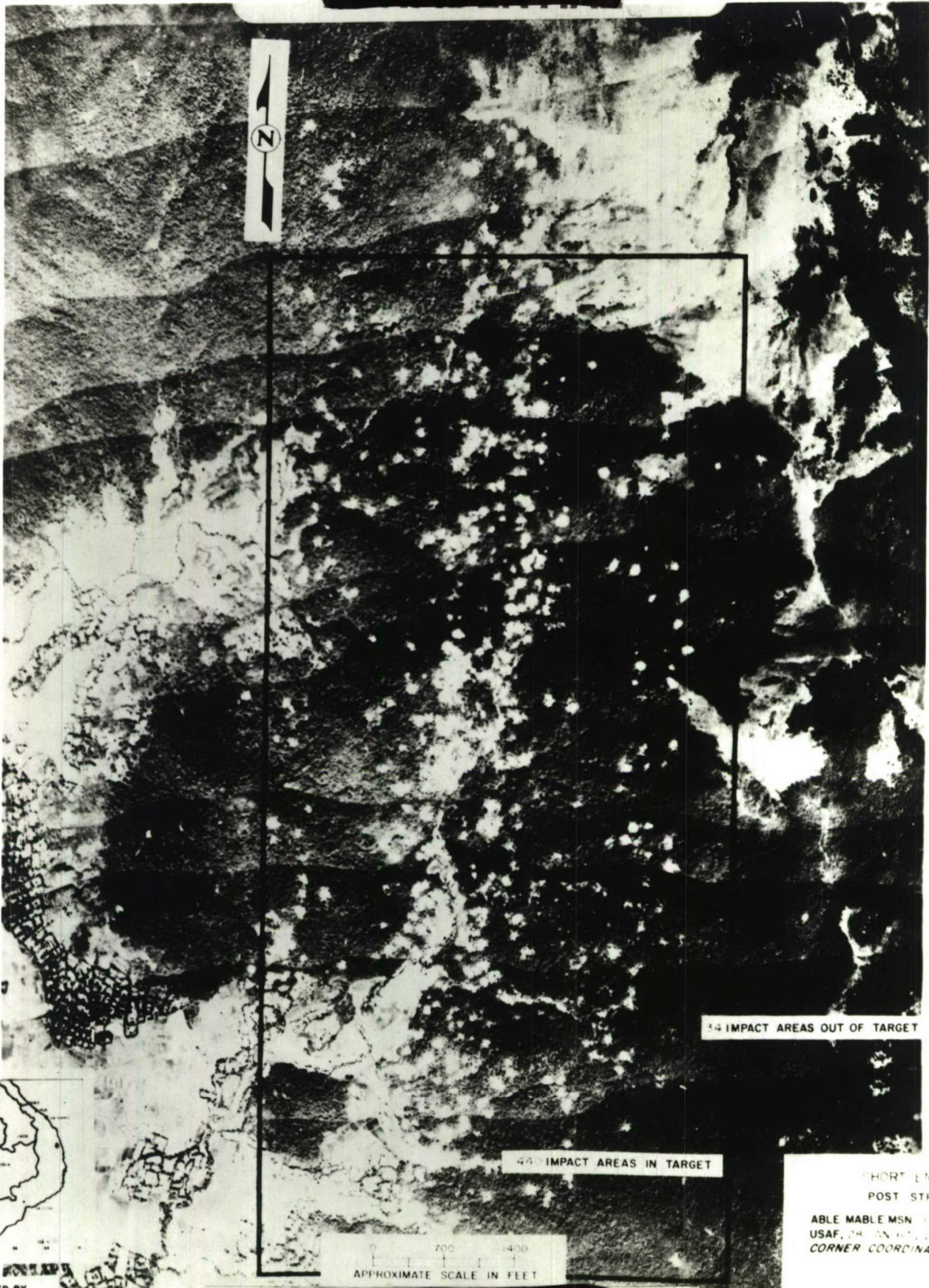
Results of Operation THAYER II

Operation THAYER II terminated after the Tet truce on 12 February. The northeast Binh Dinh Province pacification program continued in full swing as the 1st ACD focused their efforts north of Bong Song with Operation PERSHING--still in progress as of 1 April 1967. ^{114/}

THAYER II cost the enemy, confirmed by body-count, losses of 1,100 VC KIA and 657 NVA KIA. An additional 89 VC and 63 NVA were taken prisoners during actual combat, while another 152 individuals, ^{115/} from a total of nearly 4,000 detained as suspects, ^{116/} were subsequently classified as POWs. Large scale defections of enemy-combat personnel never materialized as only 145 VC and 16 NVA were classified as Chieu Hoi Returnees. ^{117/}

It is known, however, that the enemy desertion rate was, and continued to be, extremely high. ^{118/} Rather than turn themselves in, the majority of VC deserters merely returned to their villages. THAYER II left enemy morale at a very low point, and continuing high losses during Operation PERSHING, undoubtedly, increased this problem.

In addition to personnel losses, 426 individual and 53 crew-served weapons were captured from the enemy. Losses in supplies and material were also high, with an additional 145,000 rounds of small arms ammunition captured. ^{119/}



34 IMPACT AREAS OUT OF TARGET

44 IMPACT AREAS IN TARGET

0 700 1400
APPROXIMATE SCALE IN FEET



PREPARED BY
1st RECON TECH SQ
APO 96307

SHORT END 1
POST STRIKE
ABLE MABLE MSN 1370,460 TRW
USAF, DR. ON RT. 218 P. 12M
CORNER COORDINATES
BR 45 124
60 194
80 194
90 194

Figure 15

[REDACTED]

The northeast Binh Dinh Province campaign succeeded in virtually eliminating enemy control over the lowland population south of the Lai Giang River. It had the effect of denying the enemy, rich rice harvests and large salt deposits of the area. This may ultimately cause a critical food supply problem for enemy units operating throughout the sparsely populated and only lightly cultivated Central Highlands area.

In addition, the major enemy supply, logistics, and base facilities east of the Vinh Thanh Valley had been uncovered and destroyed. During THAYER II alone, there were 538 tons of rice and 43 tons of salt captured from enemy stockpiles. ^{129/} The significance of this was reflected during the interrogations of prisoners and defectors who stated, almost to a man, that food, medicine, and other supplies were in critically short supply, and that disease, particularly malaria, was prevalent throughout the enemy units.

It appeared probable that a large number of enemy reinforcements from North Vietnam had reached northeast Binh Dinh Province to replace the decimated 18th NVA Regiment. The 610th Division remained critically under strength and local VC replacements proved unreliable, poor fighters. They had an extremely high desertion and Returnee rate. Apparently, unless the 610th NVA Division could be continuously and massively reinforced by replacements from North Vietnam, it would be either forced to retreat westward and relinquish its historic TAOR or suffer eventual dissolution under continuing Allied pressure.

Evaluation of Air Support--Operation THAYER II

In nearly four months time, TAC air supported Operation THAYER II with

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a total of 2,248 sorties. There were 2,264.3 tons of bombs, rockets, napalm, WP, CBU, and 20-mm cannon fire expended in close air support and direct air support of the friendly ground forces. The B-52s added another 156 ARC LIGHT sorties and dropped a total of 3,089 tons of ordnance against enemy targets.

Assault airlift contributed 349 C-123 and C-130 sorties to the effort, and hauled 1,020.3 tons of cargo, including 4,294 passengers, into the battle area. Eleven recce targets were flown by U.S. Air Force aircraft 121/ during this period in support of the operation.

Documented KBA as a result of the combined B-52/TAC air effort during THAYER II was negligible, and very little feedback ever reached Seventh Air Force. Personal interviews and I Field Forces Vietnam (IFFV) documents indicated, however, that a fairly reliable KBA figure (based on bodies discovered and reported as probably or confirmed KBA), would range between 70 to 100 KBA for the entire operation. Approximately one-half of these KBA were the result of ARC LIGHT strikes.

Maj. James H. Schoenberger, ALO, 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, illustrated some of the problems that exist in determining the effectiveness 122/ of air support in the brigade's Air After Action Report for THAYER II:

"The 3d Brigade has not given recognition to the Air Force in proportion to the contribution made. Not one KBA was confirmed, although prisoner reports repeatedly said they were hit by air and that they feared aircraft above all else. There was one incident where an element discovered 3 bodies in a shallow grave, they reported them

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dead approximately 3 days and killed by H and I. I checked this and found that an air strike had been put within 25 meters of the spot 3 days previously and that no H and I fire had come any where near this area, it being out of their range."

The overall effects of the air support program in Binh Dinh Province can be stated only as unknown. After an engagement, it is nearly impossible in most cases to accurately determine which body was killed by what source, especially when ground forces, armed helicopters, ARA, artillery, and TAC airpower may all have employed fire against the enemy in the kill area.

There is no doubt about it: airpower was an integral and indispensable element in the overwhelming force brought to bear with such effective results against hostile forces during this entire phase of the northeast Binh Dinh Province campaign. This was brought out by Maj. James H. Schoenberger when he commented that "the working relationship between the Army and Air Force is at an all-time high within the Brigade...The Brigade Commander stated, 'The best air support we've ever had.'" ^{123/}

In summing up the effectiveness and response of airpower to the needs of his brigade, Major Schoenberger said: ^{124/}

"Communications and coordination was effective and provided excellent timing during the operation. All immediate air requests were dispatched with the utmost speed, the minimum being 15 minutes and the maximum 24 minutes. In most cases, ground troops were able to sweep the area of the strikes, although their reports could have been more comprehensive in some cases."

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FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

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21. (C) IFFV INTSUMs, Nov. 66.
22. (C) IBM Printout ARC LIGHT Strikes, CICV Targets, N/D.
23. (C) Msg, Hq 1st ACD to CG, MACV, subj: BDA After Action Rpt (BINH DINH 66), N/D.
24. (C) Msg, Hq 1st ACD to CG, MACV, subj: BDA After Action Rpt (BINH DINH 69), N/D.
25. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 20 Nov 66.
26. (C) Ibid, 23 Nov 66.
27. (C) DASC ALPHA Log, 23 Nov 66.
28. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 23 Nov 66.
29. (C) DASC ALPHA Log, 23 Nov 66.
30. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 23 Nov 66.
31. (C) Ibid, 24 Nov 66.
32. (C) Ibid, 25 Nov 66.
33. (C) Ibid, 11 Dec 66.
34. (C) Ibid.
35. (C) Ibid.
36. (C) Ibid.
37. (C) Ibid, 1 Dec 66.
38. (C) Ibid, 17 Dec 66 (OB Estimate).
39. (C) Ibid, 7 Jan 67. (POW, Sr. Capt. Le phuoc, Data.)
40. (C) Ibid, 1 Dec 66.
41. (C) DASC ALPHA Log, 1 Dec 66.
42. (C) USMACV Daily SITREP, 1 Dec 66.
43. (C) IBM Printout ARC LIGHT Strikes, CICV Targets, N/D.
44. (C) IFFV INTSUMs, Dec 66.

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45. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 17 Dec 66.
46. (C) Interview with 1st Lieutenant Hohenshelt, 13 Jan 67, Doc. 16.
47. (C) DASC ALPHA Log, 17 Dec 66.
48. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 17 Dec 66.
49. (C) Interview with Lt. Colonel Warwick, 14 Jan 67, Doc. 4.
50. (C) IFFV INTSUMs, 17-20 Dec 66.
51. (C) Rpt, OB Holdings for Units, 31 Dec 66.
52. (C) MACV Journal, 17 Dec 66.
53. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 17 Dec 66.
54. (C) MACF Daily Journal, 18 Dec 66.
55. (C) DASC ALPHA Logs, 18-19 Dec 66.
56. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 20 Dec 66.
57. (C) DASC ALPHA Log, 20 Dec 66.
58. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 20 Dec 66.
59. (C) Ibid, 21 Dec 66.
60. (C) Ibid, (Rpts, Nov, Dec 66.)
61. (C) Ibid, 23 Dec 66.
62. (C) Ibid.
63. (C) Ibid, 20 Dec 66.
64. (C) Ibid, 23 Dec 66.
65. (C) Ibid.
66. (C) MACV Daily Journal, 27 Dec 66.
67. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 27 Dec 66.
68. (C) Ibid, 28 Dec 66. (POW, Pvt. Nguyen Dong, Data.)
69. (C) Ibid, 27 Dec 66.

This page follows page 88 & is part of the footnotes for Chapter 3.

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42. (C) THAYER I/IRVING, 1st ACD, After Action Rpt, 13 Jan 67, P. 28, Doc. 1.
43. (C) Ibid, P. 29.
44. (C) Interview with Captain Miller, 14 Jan 67, Doc. 5.
45. (C) Interview with 1st Lt. Hohenshelt, 13 Jan 67, Doc. 16.
46. (C) Interview with Capt. Earl C. Mizell, FAC, 2d Bde, 1st ACD, New Phu Cat, by Historian Lawrence J. Hickey, 13 Jan 67, Doc. 22.
(Hereafter cited: Interview with Captain Mizell, 13 Jan 67, Doc. 21.)
47. (C) Interview with Capt. Owen O. McIntyre, FAC, 1/5, 1st ACD, New Phu Cat, by Historian Lawrence J. Hickey, 13 Jan 67, Doc. 22. (Hereafter cited: Interview with Captain McIntyre, 13 Jan 67, Doc. 22.)
48. (C) Interview with Maj. James Ryan, ALO, 1st Bde, 1st ACD, Bien Hoa, by Kenneth Sams and Capt. James Bruce, Jr., 8 Nov 66, Doc. 23.
(Hereafter cited: Interview with Major Ryan, 8 Nov 66, Doc. 23.)
49. (C) Interview with Captain Miller, 14 Jan 67, Doc. 5.
50. (C) THAYER I/IRVING, 1st ACD, After Action Rpt, 13 Jan 67, P. 29, Doc. 1; (C) DASC ALPHA Log, 20 Oct 66.
51. (C) THAYER I/IRVING, 1st ACD, After Action Rpt, 13 Jan 67, P. 30, Doc. 1.
52. (C) Ibid, P. 32.
53. (C) Ibid, P. 33.
54. (C) USMACV Daily SITREP, 9 Nov 66.
55. (C) THAYER I/IRVING, 1st ACD, After Action Rpt, 13 Jan 67, Doc. 1.
56. (C) Extracts, USAF-VNAF/JOPREP/OPREP 5s, 2-24 Oct 66, Doc. 20.
57. (C) Interview with Major Ryan, 8 Nov 66, Doc. 23.
58. (C) Interview with Captain Mizell, 13 Jan 67, Doc. 21.
59. (C) Interview with 1st Lt. Dale H. Strawn, FAC, 5/7th, 1st ACD, New Phu Cat, by Historian Lawrence J. Hickey, 13 Jan 67. Doc. 24.
60. (C) Interview with Lt. Colonel Warwick, 14 Jan 67, Doc. 4.
61. (C) Interview with Capt. Herbert Somerder, ALO, 3d Bde, 1st ACD,

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70. (C) DASC ALPHA Log, 27 Dec 66.
71. (C) MACV Journal, 27 Dec 66.
72. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 27 Dec 66.
73. (C) DASC ALPHA Log, 27 Dec 66.
74. (C) MACV Daily Journal, 27-29 Dec 66.
75. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 3 Jan 67. (Confirmed by Sr. Capt. Le Phuoc.)
76. (C) Ibid.
77. (C) Ibid., 28-29 Dec 66.
78. (C) Interview with Captain McIntyre, 13 Jan 67, Doc. 22.
79. (C) Records, subj: KBA, (7AF DIS-CR File), N/D.
80. (C) Interview with Captain McIntyre, 13 Jan 67, Doc. 22.
81. (C) Ibid.
82. (C) Ibid.
83. (C) Ibid.
84. (C) Ibid.
85. (C) Ibid.
86. (C) Ibid.
87. (C) IBM Printout ARC LIGHT Strikes, CICV Targets, N/D.
88. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 30 Dec 66.
89. (C) IFFV INTSUMs, 31 Dec 66; 2, 4, 7 Jan 67.
90. (C) Ibid., 7 Jan 67.
91. (S) Msg, IFFV to 1st ACD, subj: Change 1 to Frag Order 38-66 (THAYER II), N/D, Doc. 26.
92. (C) IBM Printout on ARC LIGHT Strikes, CICV Targets.
93. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 10 Jan 67.

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94. (C) USMACV PERINTREP, Jan 67.
95. (C) Ibid.
96. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 12 Feb 67.
97. (C) Ibid.
98. (C) Ibid.
99. (C) After Action Rpt, THAYER II, 3d Bde, 25th Inf to IFFV Corps, ALO 25 Feb 67, Doc. 27. (Hereafter cited: After Action Rpt, THAYER II, 25 Feb 67, Doc. 27.)
100. (C) Ibid.
101. (C) IFFV PERINTREP 4-27, Jan 67, P. 8.
102. (C) IFFV INTSUMs, Jan, Feb 67.
103. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 27 Jan 67.
104. (C) DASC ALPHA Log, 27 Jan 67.
105. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 28 Jan 67.
106. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 5 Feb 67.
107. (C) 7AF DCAA Rpt, 6-7 Feb 67.
108. (C) Statistical Rpt, KBA (7AF DIS-CR File), N/D; IFFV INTSUM, 6 Feb 67.
109. (C) Rpt, 7AF, DCAA, 6-7 Feb 67.
110. (C) USMACV MONEVAL, Feb 67.
111. (C) MACV Journal, 7 Feb 67.
112. (C) Rpt, 7AF, DCAA, 7-8 Feb 67.
113. (C) MACV Journal, 7 Feb 67.
114. (C) IFFV INTSUM, 12 Feb 67.
115. (C) IFFV PERINTREP, 7 Feb 67.
116. (C) USMACV MONEVAL, Feb 67.
117. (C) IFFV PERINTREP, 7 Feb 67.

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- 118. (C) IFFV INTSUMs and PERINTREPs, Jan-Feb 67.
- 119. (C) IFFV PERINTREP, 7 Feb 67.
- 120. (C) USMACV MONEVAL, Feb 67.
- 121. (C) Statistical Data, 7AF, DOA, N/D.
- 122. (C) After Action Rpt, THAYER II, 25 Feb 67, Doc. 27.
- 123. (C) Ibid.
- 124. (C) Ibid.

APPENDIX I

ARC LIGHTS STRIKES NE BINH DINH PROVINCE
25 August 1966-8 February 196

TIME	DATE	COORD	COORD	COORD	MSN NAME	TARGET CODE	# A/C	MSN #	FOLLOW UP	BDA
1. 1215	25/08/66	BR720560 BR740560	BR720540 BR740540	Iron Rock I F-432	Binh Dinh 28	03	528	--	No Sig.	
2. 0805	27/08/66	CR040530 CR040490	CR050530 CR050490	Iron Rock III A-216, B-216	Binh Dinh 30	09	531	--	100 KBA	
3. 0730	31/08/66	BR740560 BR740560	BR720540 BR740540	Iron Rock I A-192, B-215	Binh Dinh 28	09	540	--	Enemy Psn.	
4. 0900	05/09/66	CR090470 CR070450	CR070470 CR090450	Iron Rock II A-216, B-216	Binh Dinh 29	12	555	No	No Sig.	
5. 0900	05/09/66	CR040530 CR040490	CR050530 CR050490	Iron Rock III E-429	Binh Dinh 30	03	556	No		
6. 0600	10/09/66	BR642647 BR673667	BR661675 BR653638	Green Hot I A-288, B-288	Binh Dinh 37	12	564	No	Enemy str des	
7. 0600	10/09/66	BR652590 BR670590	BR652610 BR670590	Green Hot II A-72, B-72	Binh Dinh 38	03	565	No	No Sig.	
8. 0500	11/09/66	BR690628 BR709659	BR681646 BR717640	Anchor Chain I A-216, B-216	Binh Dinh 39 E-432	12	566	Yes	Enemy str des	
9. 0500	11/09/66	BR685670 BR705685	BR685685 BR705670	Anchor Chain II E-432	Binh Dinh 40	03	567	Yes	Missed target	
10. 0610	12/09/66	BR776708 BR800697	BR793690 BR793690	Pen Knife I	Binh Dinh 41	03	568	No	No Sig.	
11. 0610	12/09/66	BR739661 BR760666	BR756672 BR743655	Pen Knife II A-72, B-72	Binh Dinh 42	03	569	No	No Sig.	
12. 0610	12/09/66	BR750602	BR780602	Pen Knife III A-72, B-72	Binh Dinh 43	03	570	Yes	Phu Cat Dist Hq	

APPENDIX I (Continued)

TIME	DATE	COORD	COORD	COORD	MSN NAME	TARGET CODE	# A/C	MSN#	FOLLOW UP	BDA
13. 1200	01/10/66	BR938890 BR948890	BR938910 BR947910	BR948954 BR922961	Mud Bath A-120, B-120	Quick Run 9	06	602	Yes	7 KBA
14. 0615	05/10/66	BR931944 BR931944	BR948954 BR922961	BR920895 BR940895	Old Head A-264, B-264	Binh Dinh 55	12	609	No	Enemy Camp
15. 0645	07/10/66	BR920870 BR940870	BR920895 BR940895	BR920895 BR940895	House Mouse A-144, B-144	Quick Run 10	06	612	No	Good Strike
16. 0900	27/10/66	BR563957 BR594960	BR595948 BR564945	BR595948 BR564945	Alpha I A-72, B-72	Binh Dinh 59 C-124	09	636	No	15 KBA Very Sig
17. 0900	28/10/66	BR748958 BR761958	BR748930 BR761930	BR748930 BR761930	Alfa 92 A-192, B-276	Binh Dinh 58	09	639	Yes	No Sig.
18. 1030	29/10/66	BR850840 BR865840	BR865805 BR850805	BR865805 BR850805	Short End I A-336, B-441	Binh Dinh 33	15	642	No	1 KBA
19. 1100	04/11/66	BR713750 BR713720	BR733720 BR733750	BR733720 BR733750	Alfa 40 A-216, B-216	Binh Dinh 65	18	651	Yes	11 KBA
20. 0530	08/11/66	BR661744 BR662733	BR690748 BR692738	BR690748 BR692738	Alfa 4 A-120, B-147	Binh Dinh 66	09	657	Yes	2 KBA
21. 1300	15/11/66	BR757743 BR783759	BR755755 BR785749	BR755755 BR785749	Alfa 15 A-216, B-216	Binh Dinh 69	09	670	No	Good BDA
22. 1000	21/11/66	BR807664 BR824639	BR815669 BR832644	BR815669 BR832644	Alfa 55 A-96, B-95	Binh Dinh 70 C-42	05	689	Yes	Nothing
23. 1900	23/11/66	BR690682 BR710670	BR700654 BR680669	BR700654 BR680669	Alfa 99 A-216, B-216	Binh Dinh 61	09	694	Yes	Nothing
24. 1500	06/12/66	BR760638 BR750653	BR734640 BR745626	BR734640 BR745626	Alfa 36 A-216, B-214	Binh Dinh 64 C-196	12	724	Yes	None

APPENDIX I (Continued)

TIME	DATE	COORD	COORD	MSN NAME	TARGET CODE	# A/C	MSN#	FOLLOW UP	BDA
25. 0630	07/12/66	BR560964 BR561936	BR580965 BR582938	Bravo 40 A-216, B-216	Binh Dinh 67 C-198	12	725	Yes	No Info
26. 0900	11/12/66	BR660765 BR666775	BR692758 BR686749	Bravo 36 A-144, B-144	Quick Run 27	06	736	Yes	Empty Area
27. 1300	30/12/66	BR710969 BR730983	BR735975 BR716960	Charlie 60 A-144, B-143	Quick Run 29	06	780	Yes	Good Photos
28. 0800	04/01/67	BR734989 BR734973	BR746973 BR746989	Charlie 95 A-144, B-144	Quick Run 30	06	790	Yes	No Info
29. 0900	16/01/67	BS640033 BS657056	BS649059 BS649030	Charlie 69 A-144, B-144	Binh Dinh 97	06	821	Yes	8 KBA
30. 0900	16/01/67	BS665055 BS636054	BS665045 BS636044	Charlie 87 B-144, C-243	Binh Dinh 96	06	822	Yes	Same as above
31. 0700	26/01/67	BS620080 BS637080	BS637105 BS620105	Charlie 17 B-288, C-495	Binh Dinh 98	12	847	No	Same huts
32. 1200	26/01/67	BR697995 BR696984	BR706944 BR706983	Charlie 6 B-72, C-125	Binh Dinh 200	03	848	No	No Sig.
33. 1400	02/02/67	BS722100 BS702077	BS730093 BS710070	Charlie 72 C-590	Binh Dinh 99	09	867	Yes	No Sig.
34. 1500	03/02/67	BS710190 BS710210	BS730190 BS730210	Old Trap II C-781	Binh Dinh 26	12	871	Yes	No Sig.
35. 0500	08/02/67	BS770158 BS796158	BS796143 BS770143	Delta 30 C-1183	Binh Dinh 100	12	887	Yes	No Sig.

TACTICAL AIR, AIRLIFT SUPPORT, AND B-52 FLOWN DURING THAYER/IRVING

APPENDIX II

OPERATION	DATE	TACTICAL AIR STRIKE SORTIES				TONS OF ORD-NANCE	B-52		AIRLIFT SUPPORT			RECCE TOTS	
		CAS	DAS	IMME-DIATE	TOTAL		SORTIES	TONS	SORTIES	PAX	TONS	REQ	COMPL
		REQ FLOWN	REQ FLOWN	REQ FLOWN	REQ FLOWN								
THAYER I & II	SEP 66	0	10	70	80	244.5	39	649	80	1288	197.3	4	4
		32	215	70	317								
	OCT 66	0	284	79	363	219.0	6	108	--	--	--	4	0
		17	145	79	241								
	NOV 66	788	---	143	931	459.2	39	714	--	--	--	0	0
		364	---	143	507								
	DEC 66	530	---	86	616	368.2	18	344	122	119	791.3	5	7
		335	---	86	421								
	JAN 67	916	---	209	1125	736.7	21	457	147	2888	31.7	0	0
		411	---	209	620								
	FEB 67	196	---	76	272	236.7	33	817	--	--	--	0	0
		101	---	76	177								
TOTAL	2430	294	663	3387	2264.3	156	3089	349	4295	1020.3	13	11	
	1260	360	663	2283									
IRVING	0	747	171	918	570.9	--	--	--	--	--	0	1	
	49	450	171	668									

SOURCE: 7AF Commander's Operation Book

GLOSSARY

AA	Antiaircraft
ACD	Air Cavalry Division
ACS	Air Commando Squadron
ALO	Air Liaison Officer
AO	Area of Operation
ARA	Aerial Rocket Artillery
ARC LIGHT	B-52 Strikes
Art	Artillery
ARVN	Army Republic of Vietnam
ASAP	As Soon As Possible
A/W	Automatic Weapons
BDA	Bomb Damage Assessment
BDE	Brigade
BLU	Bomb, Live, Unit
BN	Battalion
CAS	Close Air Support
Cav	Cavalry
CBU	Cluster Bomb Unit
CHECO	Contemporary Historical Evaluation of Combat Operations
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, Pacific Area
Click	Kilometer
CMIC	Combined Military Intelligence Center
COMUSMACV	Commander, U.S. Military Advisory Commission, South Vietnam
CP	Command Post
C/S	Crew-Served
CRID	Capital ROK Infantry Division
CTZ	Corps Tactical Zone
DAS	Direct Air Support
Div	Division
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
FAC	Forward Air Controller
Frag	Fragmented Operations Order
FSE	Forward Support Element
GP	General Purpose
GVN	Government Republic of Vietnam

[REDACTED]

H	Hours (1105H)
H&I	Harassment and Interdiction
IFF	I Field Forces
IFFV	I Field Forces Vietnam
INTSUM	Intelligence Summary
KBA	Killed by Air
KIA	Killed in Action
LF	Local Force
LNO	Liaison Officer
LZ	Landing Zone
MACV	Military Advisory Commission, Vietnam
MF	Main Force
MG	Machine Gun
MIA	Missing in Action
mm	millimeter
MONEVAL	Monthly Evaluation Report
NLF	National Liberation Force
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
NVN	North Vietnam
OB	Order of Battle
OP	Operations Order
OPCON	Operational Control
OPLAN	Operation Plan
PACAF	Pacific Air Forces
POW	Prisoner of War
Prep	Preparation
Psy-War	Psychological Warfare
R&A	Research and Analysis
Regt	Regiment
ROK	Republic of Korea
SA	Senior Advisor
SAC	Strategic Air Command
S/A	Small Arms

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

TAC
TAOR

Tactical Air Command
Tactical Area of Responsibility

VC
VR

Viet Cong
Visual Reconnaissance

WIA
WP

Wounded in Action
White Phosphorus

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