

When the battle area cleared the next morning, the enemy had once again been defeated. In this case it was the 8th Bn, 66th Regiment which had halted in hasty positions on its way to the artillery positions and was eating lunch when outposts brought word of the approach of a large US unit. In some cases enemy machine guns were fired from exposed positions and many NVA then entered the fight wearing their heavy forage packs. To say the enemy was completely unprepared would not be an understatement. This state of unreadiness meant the enemy lost 403 killed by body count as well as substantial weapons and equipment. It would be safe to say that this 8th Battalion was no longer an effective fighting unit.

THE BLACK KNIGHTS

On 20 Nov the 3d Brigade terminated SILVER BAYONET I and was replaced by the men of the Blackhorse Brigade with the initiation of SILVER BAYONET II. Included in the 2d Brigade task force were four cavalry battalions—the 1/5, 2/5, 2/12 and 1/8 and elements of four artillery battalions—1/77, 1/21, 2/17, and 2/20. The remainder of the operation was spent attempting to regain contact with large bodies of the enemy and was characterized by constant harassment of small groups attempting to avoid contact. All told, the enemy lost 1,519 killed by body count with another 2,000 estimated killed. There were 57 captured. His material losses were comparable, with 897 individual weapons captured and more than 400 others destroyed; 126 crew served weapons captured, as well as a great deal of communication equipment and grenades.

There is no doubt that the ARVN relief force would have been defeated en route to Plei Me, and the camp itself overrun, without the intervention of the 1st Cav. What made the intervention even more unique was the manner in which THE FIRST TEAM conducted the initial support operation and eventually the pursuit. The enemy was no stranger to the helicopter and the advantages it offers its allies. What he failed to grasp was the use of the helicopter in a role other than as mover of supplies, other than as an airborne 2½ ton truck. For the first time he found his withdrawal routes blocked, his columns attacked, artillery fire adjusted on routes of exfiltration—all because of the third dimension which the 1st Cavalry added to the war. So baffled was the enemy during the pursuit of the 33rd Regiment from Plei Me by constant harassment and rapid compromise of "secure" way stations that a captured document revealed the NVA

cadre concluded there were traitors within the regiment providing target information to the Americans.

LESSONS

The PLEIKU Campaign was the division's baptism of fire in the Vietnam War; it marked THE FIRST TEAM's participation in each of the three Major Conflicts our nation has been involved in since the division's formation in 1921. It meant that the 1st Cavalry was one of the two US Army Divisions entitled to two stars on the Combat Infantryman's Badge. It also meant some new "firsts" in FIRST TEAM history. It was the first time a large American unit operated continuously over difficult terrain, devoid of roads, relying extensively on helicopter tactics. It was the first time American units met and defeated consistently large NVA units fighting as battalions and regiments under Field Front control. Also particularly noteworthy were the repeated moves of the 105mm howitzers by means of the Chinook helicopter to provide constant fire support to fast moving airmobile infantry, the reconnaissance by fire techniques developed by the Air Cavalry Squadron, the coming of age of the aerial artillery tactics, and the perfection of massive logistical efforts. There was an unprecedented use of airmobility and fire power as over 400 helicopters consumed 85,000 gallons of fuel daily.

In another respect these 37 days of combat had proven something of even greater importance. They had shown beyond a doubt that the air assault concept was valid under actual battlefield conditions. The campaign had been the acid test of combat for the airmobile division and there can be no question that it fully carried its weight. The accolades paid to the division reflect this splendid success. General Westmoreland declared it "the most significant defeat inflicted upon the enemy in this war." Other congratulatory messages followed: General Harold K. Johnson, Army Chief of Staff, sent a message to General Kinnard which recited in part:

"On behalf of all members of the United States Army, I salute the intrepid officers and men of the 1st Cav Div (AM) for their superb action in the battle of the Ia Drang Valley. . . . The Army and the nation take pride in your display of courage, determination and fighting skill."

Secretary of Defense McNamara, usually conservative with compliments, declared, "There was no other outfit in the world that could have accomplished what this Division did."

The defeat of the Field Front, or 630 NVA Division, in the Pleiku Campaign, blocked his first attempt to move into the Central Highlands in strength. We will see later that the enemy had placed considerable emphasis on gaining a foothold in the western portion of the II CTZ.

THE ENEMY

This first major engagement with the enemy taught the Cavalrymen a great deal about the training and discipline of the NVA regulars. It also proved the elusiveness of the supporting Viet Cong guerrillas. We had learned a lot about the enemy. We know that there were two nominally distinct enemy military organizations—the NVA and the Viet Cong forces. More convincingly though we knew each was controlled by the Hanoi based Communist Party led by Ho Chi Minh.

These NVA units infiltrated into South Vietnam through the demilitarized zone at the 17th parallel and along the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos and Cambodia, a system of roads and foot trails meandering southward before turning east toward the sparsely populated frontiers of South Vietnam.

In addition to these NVA units other Communist fighting forces in South Vietnam include the VC's Main Force, District Force, and Village Defense Force Organizations.

Significantly and most dangerous is the VC pretense of a truly South Vietnamese "people's army." This facade rapidly crumbled beginning in 1965 with the increased introduction on a growing scale of North Vietnamese forces and equipment and stepped up operations by regular North Vietnamese divisions. The Main Force units are the VC Shock Troops and are composed of well trained and equipped men who are capable of fighting conventional battles of limited durations, although they are reluctant to do so. The District Forces and Village Defense Forces are usually paramilitary forces and are generally made up of local civilians who are part-time soldiers or guerrillas and whose military duties do not take them far from home. They are often seen as farmers and merchants by day—terrorists—guerrillas at night. Among them the less well-trained and equipped serve as guides, guards, messengers, bearers, and informants for the regular military units.

The enemy, whether he be NVA or local guerrilla, is collectively referred to as "Victor Charlie," V.C., "Old Charlie" or just "Charlie." The small guerrilla army which existed in 1960 had matured into a formidable force by 1966. Correspondingly, the demands on local civilians have increased to support these larger units. The military and

political support organizations have grown so rapidly they now collect four times as much taxes as does the constituted government of South Vietnam. The logistical requirements for food and weapons have also greatly increased. As a result "Charlie" is supported in the field by an incredible logistical organization beginning with the Local V.C. tax collector and extending many miles to North Vietnam over trails and roads worn smooth by the feet of thousands of porters.

Literally translated, the phrase Viet Cong means Vietnamese Communist and those who are members of the V.C. army employ all the communist tricks of deceit and violence. Viet Cong also applies to the military or to the civilian components of the "Front," of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam, more popularly known as the NFL.

"The war in Vietnam is a different kind of war" said President Johnson on July 28, 1965. "There are no marching armies of solemn declaration. Some citizens of South Vietnam, at times with understandable grievances, have joined in the attack on their own government. But we must not let this mark the central fact that this is really war. It is guided by North Vietnam and it is spurred by Communist China. Its goal is to conquer the south, to defeat American power and to extend the Asiatic domination of Communism."

While NVA units are usually found wearing khakis and carrying packs, the local guerrilla or old charlie is clad in Calico Noir, the traditional black P.J.'s of the Vietnamese peasant. The arms for main force and district force units may range from 75mm recoilless rifles and 82mm mortars to Communist and French manufactured machine and submachine guns. The individual soldier may be armed, however, with nothing more than a few potato masher grenades. He is ingenious, a master at camouflage, and an expert in living and moving underground. His elaborate tunnel complexes stretch for miles and are used for both cover and for concealment from ground and air surveillance. He knows the insidious effectiveness of booby traps, poisonous punji stakes, spike boards, Malaysian gates, and trip-wired cross bows. Each has taken its toll in American casualties. His adept use of terrorism has controlled great numbers of Vietnamese, for he thinks nothing of torturing or killing village and Province Chiefs, teachers and other influential citizenry. As a result many Vietnamese support the Front only because of fear. Because of the militia and the secret agents of the Communist organization, more than a third

of the people of South Vietnam were paying taxes to the Front by the end of 1966 even while they continued to pay taxes to the legitimate government of South Vietnam.

He fights well but often more for fear of capture than from ideological conviction. His cadre keep him isolated from contacts which would tend to counter their propaganda and indoctrination. Main Force battalions have carried out well-planned attacks and ambushes with NVA counterparts. Utilizing an explicit tactical doctrine summarized in four words, "Four fast, one slow," the V.C. carefully plan every move. His credo is "Fast advance, fast assault, fast clearance of the battlefield and fast withdrawal" based on "slow preparation."

As described, his usual tactic is to hit and run. He will exfiltrate an area when he feels his security is endangered, only to return when his enemy has withdrawn. As will be seen he is a master at this exfiltration especially under the cover of darkness. When he is trapped, however, he will fight and fight viciously for his life. He will not initiate engagement though unless forced to or unless he feels he has the upper hand—which is usually a numerically superior force or he is in well-prepared, camouflaged defensive positions. If he does undertake an offensive attack, it may or may not be preceded by mortar and recoilless rifle fire to "unsettle" the enemy.

As an individual, he is strong but small (usually not over 100 pounds), raised in the jungles and accustomed to the severest rigors of life. He stores food, weapons, ammunition, and medical supplies in caches throughout his base areas. He needs little more than two pounds of rice a day to keep him going.

His actions under fire have led some to suspect use of narcotics before battle, as reflected in this report:

"... they started charging me with 10 to 15 man waves, on a regular skirmish line, hollering and screaming. I hit some of them two or three times with bullets and they would keep coming at me, stop, turn around and then I could see big blood splotches on their backs as they took two or three steps toward the rear and then fell over. When they were charging me they were yelling, and even after I hit them they were laughing."

This is what the Cavalrymen learned of his adversary. There is no doubt the enemy is a professional, at least in his type of warfare. Much of what the troopers were told at Fort Benning they now knew was true from personal experience.

DECEMBER

Following the PLEIKU Campaign, division attention was again directed to the east of An Khe, first to provide security for the establishment of the Republic of Korea Capitol Division's base camp at Binh Khe and then into an area we have come to know well—the Soui Ca Valley. G-2 Intelligence indicated that as many as 1500 hard core VC and local guerrilla forces were in the valley. The 3rd Brigade was tasked with finding and destroying them.

Operation CLEAN HOUSE was conducted in three phases from the 17th of December until the end of that month. After moving into assembly areas on the 17th, the 1/7 Cav began its search on the 18th along with the 1/8 Cav in an Operation called SCALPING MUSTANG. The 2/7 began its search the following day. These battalions were supported by elements of the ROK Capitol Division which were in blocking positions near the mouth of the valley. Although there were 137 enemy killed during the three phases, the losses were suffered mostly in short fierce engagements with the enemy attempting to break contact whenever possible to exfiltrate the area.

On December 29 a unique system was used. Intelligence indicated that "Charlie" was departing the valley through a particularly forbidding piece of heavily wooded terrain. To counteract this possibility and to reconnoiter the area quickly, 300 riot control agent (CS) grenades were dropped by Huey helicopters on the suspected area from a locally built grenade dispenser. An area of 300 meters by 350 meters was effectively denied by the agent. No VC were seen moving, and thus with relatively little effort, it was determined there were no enemy occupying the area.

Psy-ops efforts continued throughout CLEAN HOUSE, and 306,000 leaflets were dropped on the objective area to explain the presence of US troops, appeal for surrender and to get the people not to aid the VC. In order to deflate the value of VC "payment certificates" given to indigenous civilians for work performed, Psy-Ops dropped 30,000 reproductions of the VC 1,000 Dong notes. We attempted to defeat the enemy and undermine his resources in every way possible. Several captured documents added to our rapidly building files on enemy formations in the area.

MATADOR

After CLEAN HOUSE the division returned to more effectively secure its base camp and highway 19 between An Khe and Pleiku. Operation MATADOR was conducted in two phases, the first of which was to open this portion of the highway

followed by phase II with search and destroy operations along the Cambodian border. MATADOR I took place between 31 December 65 - 13 January 1966 with the commitment of the "All the Way," 1st Brigade. Highway security today is merely a routine mission, but a year ago it was considered a major operation. The enemy had controlled the road system and territory between the major cities for many years. It was along "The Street without Joy," as Highway 19 has been called, that the French Group Mobile 100 suffered 2,000 killed out of 3,600 men in an armored convoy in 1953 in the mountain pass separating An Khe and Pleiku. During the eight days between January 4 and 12th the 2/12 Cav escorted 37 convoys into Pleiku with a total of 2913 vehicles. Each trip was made without incident. As the convoys carried much needed supplies into the central highland, they broke the hold the VC had established on the logistical flow through the area. The entire portion of the road was protected by various artillery positions along its length. Phase II began on 13 January and lasted for four days while 2/5 Cav and 1/5 Cav conducted spoiling attacks along the Cambodian border to demonstrate that significant enemy fortifications were not in Pleiku and Kontum Provinces. The 2nd Brigade which had entered the operation set up its command post at the Polei Djereng US Special Forces Camp while the units operated from company sized bases along the border. The heavily forested area required the use of the trooper ladder from Chinooks for the first time to introduce engineer troops through the thick canopy. LZ would then be cleared with chain saws in order to accommodate one or two choppers so that heavier heliborne engineer equipment could be lifted in. Although contact was limited to occasional encounters with small groups of local forces, MATADOR I and II served several useful purposes. In the first place it convinced the CIDG forces in the vicinity that there were no large enemy forces along that portion of the border. With their morale bolstered, it encouraged their offensive operations. It also provided mutual experience for US and CIDG forces in working together. Moreover, the division gained further detailed knowledge of the trails in western Pleiku and Kontum Provinces, while it destroyed VC way stations, training areas, and generally disrupted the enemy's logistical support facilities.

BONG SON

It was only eight days later, on January 25, that the division launched its longest and largest operation to that date. Operations MASHER/WHITE WING, also known as the BONG SON

Campaign, lasted for 41 consecutive days as the division moved into the northeast and eastern portions of Binh Dinh Province. (Map 8). Although the division had operated east of An Khe before, this was the first time we had penetrated so far into the eastern sections of the enemy's domain.

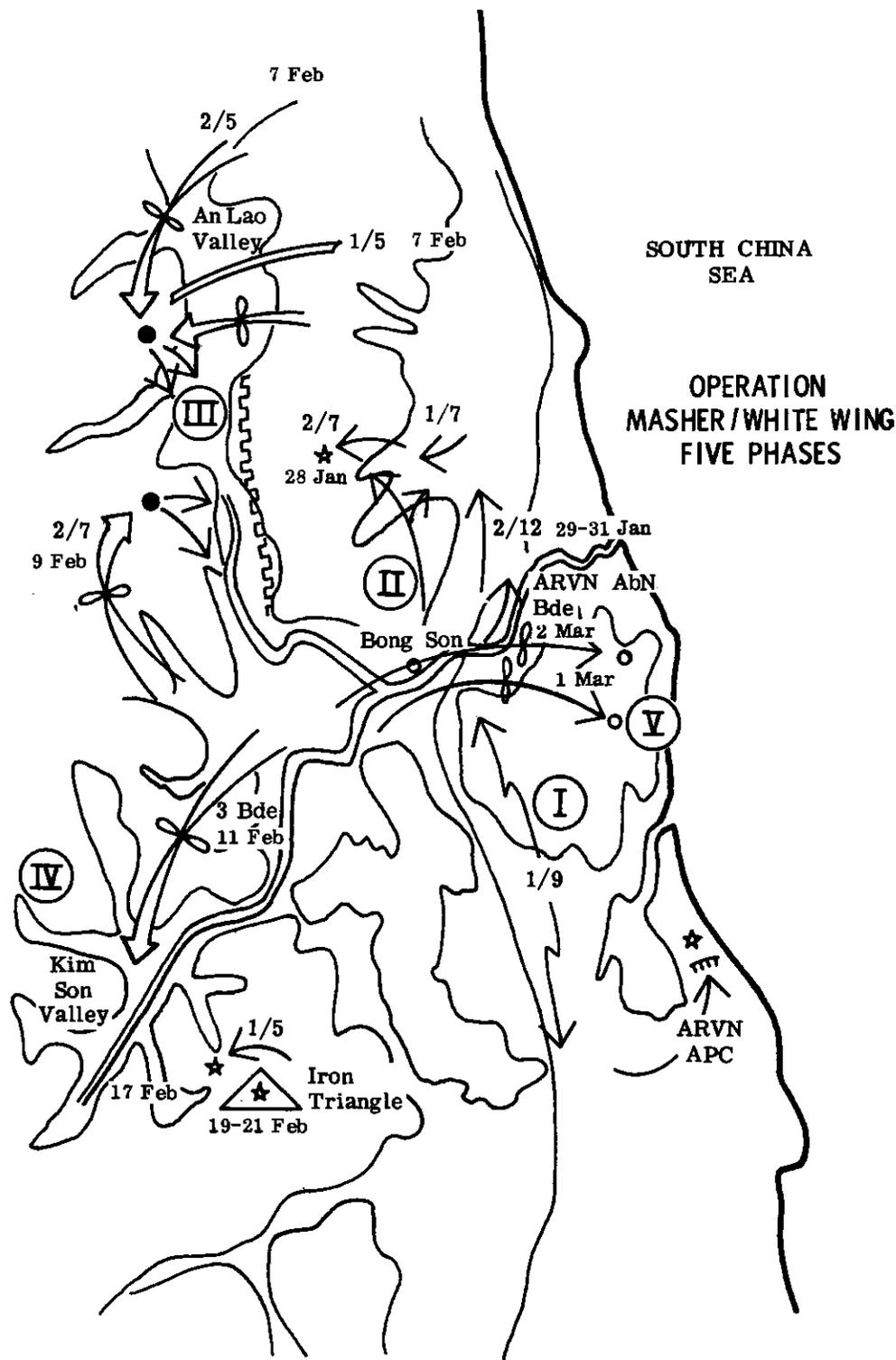
Reliable intelligence had built up over several months that eastern and northeastern Binh Dinh Province contained another NVA Field Front, the Sao Vang (Yellow Star) Division, then known as the 610th, but recently renumbered the 3d NVA Division. As the operation developed it became apparent that there were three regiments in the area—two NVA and one VC, all part of the Yellow Star Division. These units were primarily concentrated in the central-coastal plain north of Bong Son, situated on the Lai Giang River, and in the mountains to the north, west, and southeast of Bong Son. The plains area to the north was known to contain main supply routes as well as providing good recruiting areas. To the northwest is the An Lao Valley, an enemy held stronghold for 15 years, except for a brief period in 1954 when peace was restored between the Viet Minh and the French. To the southwest were the Kim Son and Soui Ca Valleys also rich rice producing areas and under VC domination.

The mission assigned the division once again gave maximum freedom of action to General Kinard: attack and destroy enemy elements in the area of operations, reduce VC influence in the coastal areas, and return the fertile lands and the local people to GVN control.

MASHER/WHITE WING was conducted in five phases in which each one of the division's brigades participated in one or more. We were not alone, however, THE FIRST TEAM worked in conjunction with other Free World Forces. Additional support came from the III Marine Amphibious Force, the 22nd ARVN Division, and the ROK Capitol Division, each working toward the ultimate goal—Pacification. Mainly the 22nd Division secured National Route 1 which ran from Bong Son to Qui Nhon, while their airborne brigade attacked east of NR 1. The Capitol ROK Division provided highway 19 security between An Khe and Qui Nhon.

Although phase I began as a 3rd Brigade operation, the situation soon developed that required division wide participation. This initial phase lasted for only 3 days and was geared at deceiving the enemy as well as increasing the security on N.R. 1. The 1/9 Cav operated with excessive activity along the southern portions of the Chop Chai Hill Mass, southeast of Bong Son for deception purposes.

The first contact was established however, on



MAP 8

28 January, the beginning of Phase II, when the 3rd Brigade conducted air assaults and overland attacks north of Bong Son. The ARVN Airborne brigade was to the east and along the coast while elements of the 3rd Brigade attacked to the west of Route 1. Because of these attacks two enemy battalions, the 7th and 9th of the 22 NVA Regiment were found, fixed and destroyed. The division attempted to cut off enemy retreat by landing in blocking positions to the west and north of the areas of contact along expected routes of withdrawal. Fighting was heavy and by 1500 hours on the 28th, 28 aircraft had been hit by ground fire and four CH-47 Chinooks were inoperable. Heavy fighting continued for the next two days until the 30th when the enemy broke contact and withdrew to the adjoining high ground to the north and west. Phase II terminated on the 3rd of February at which time the enemy had already suffered dearly—566 killed by body count and 215 captured.

NEW FIRSTS

It was during Phase II that two unique firsts were established for both Army Aviation and for Army Artillery history. One was the operational displacement of the 155mm towed howitzer by CH-54A "Flying Crane" helicopters of the attached 478th Aviation Company. By means of a special sling fabricated by members of the Division Support Command, we were able to reposition the 155mm howitzer permitting it to occupy firing positions that would otherwise have been inaccessible. Unheard of until recently is the high ground artillery emplacement which has been used with considerable success by the division's artillery. The howitzer, which weighs about 13,000 pounds, gives the division a 3000 meter range bonus over the 105mm howitzer and greatly increases the amount of steel that can be placed on a target. The second historical "first" was the successful firing of the combination SS-11 missile/2.75 inch rocket weapon on February 2, 1966. This weapon system which is now standard in the 2/20 aerial rocket artillery battalion was devised, manufactured, and promoted by one individual, Warrant Officer Robert W. Maxwell of B Battery 2/20 Artillery. It is properly known as the Maxwell system. Therefore, the helicopters of the 2/20 had either one or the other of these two systems, but not both and to change systems for attack on different targets took precious time. Mr. Maxwell decided to eliminate this problem, and his invention substantially increased the effectiveness of his battalion. The Maxwell system provides the point-target capability of the SS-11 missile and the area fire superiority of the

2.75 inch rockets. This flexible and responsive system has added greatly to the ARA helicopter capability.

PHASE III

Phase III found the 2nd Brigade moving into the operational area with three additional infantry battalions—the 1/5 Cav, 2/5 Cav, and 2/12 Cav. The division had escalated to two brigades and six infantry battalions in preparation for its entry into the An Lao Valley. The plan called for the US Marine Corps to block enemy escape routes to the north of the An Lao as part of its Operation DOUBLE EAGLE. The 22 ARVN Division was to block to the south. The brigades of THE FIRST TEAM were to establish blocking positions east of the valley on the dominant terrain, assault three battalions west of the Valley, and then attack east into and through the Valley. D-Day was 4 February; however, bad weather required a two-day delay during which time the enemy was able to escape. This was the only time in six months of fighting that inclement weather had caused a delay in 1st Cavalry airmobile operations. As a result, the attack into the An Lao was disappointing and met with only slight resistance.

During the third phase, the division's Psy Ops personnel were busy broadcasting and dropping leaflets to inform the people of the An Lao that the division would not remain there, and if they chose to leave the valley the opportunity was presented. Approximately 4,500 of a total population of 8000 elected to leave, and of those 4,500, over 3,300 were flown to freedom in division Chinooks.

KIM SON VALLEY

The fourth phase of the operation was initiated to exploit intelligence reports of an enemy buildup in the Kim Son Valley, dubbed the "Eagle's Claws" or "Crow's Foot" because of the seven valley configuration on the map. In this phase the division perfected a new technique for finding and fixing the enemy. The 3rd Brigade air assaulted elements of three battalions onto the high ground and on exfiltration routes of these various valleys, establishing ambush positions. Simultaneously, the remainder of the brigade assaulted into the center of the valley along the valley floor and began sweeping outward toward these ambushes. These "beater" forces flushed the enemy into the kill zones of the ambush positions; the tactics worked as well as it was planned. For more than three days ambushes were sprung which resulted in two heavy contacts.

On February 17th, B Company 2/5 Cav air assaulted into an LZ and by 9:15 a.m. had found

and fixed a VC company armed with heavy weapons and a large number of automatic weapons. Two additional companies of the battalion were quickly committed to exploit the contact. A third placed under OPCON of LTC Edward C. Meyer, CO, 2/5 Cav assaulted to the southeast of this contact and immediately engaged another heavily armed unit. Intensive TAC AIR and tube and aerial artillery fires were delivered on the area throughout the day. And by 6:00 p.m. "Charlie" had had enough. A sweep through the enemy's defensive position revealed 127 of his bodies. A large number of mortars and recoilless rifles were left behind. It was concluded that the 2/5 had fought and decimated the anti-aircraft battalion of the Yellow Star Division as well as the signal company of the 2nd VC Main Force Regiment.

IRON TRIANGLE

The capture of a battalion commander in the 22 NVA Regiment led to the second significant action on the eastern edge of the Crow's Foot area and about 12 miles south of Bong Son, where an elaborate defensive position called the IRON TRIANGLE, was discovered on 19 February. The captured battalion commander directed elements of the 2nd Brigade to a meeting place where the prisoner had met his regimental commander two days earlier. As these elements began to move into the area, a fierce fire fight developed with what was estimated to be a regimental headquarters and supporting troops. When units of the 22 Regiment attempted to reinforce the regimental headquarters, they became caught in the cross fire of two companies of the 1st Bn, 12 Cav. For the next three days, the Iron Triangle was hit by wave upon wave of B-52 bombers and large concentrations of artillery. Finally by February 21st, the division had devised and implemented its own one-two combination. The area was saturated with CS (a riot control agent) to drive the enemy from his fortifications and was followed by a B-52 strike. Enemy resistance ceased, and the final enemy body count was 313.

Meanwhile, the 1st Brigade had replaced the 3rd Brigade in the Kim Son Valley on February 16 to allow the 3rd Brigade to return for base camp security and the TAOR mission. As elements of the 1st Brigade moved along the high ground on the eastern and southern portions of the Son Long Valley, the southwestern finger of the Kim Son, they encountered the headquarters company and the heavy weapons company of the 18 NVA Regiment. After a heavily contested engagement the airborne troopers of the 1st

Brigade captured ten of the twelve 12.7mm AA machine guns and nearly all of the recoilless rifles of the regiment.

The fifth phase of the campaign from 1-6 March was aimed at destroying the enemy forces in the Cay Giep Mountains. This is a forest covered mountain stronghold where air assaults were made by bombing holes through the canopy before Skytroopers could live up to their name and enter combat by means of rappelling from Hueys and descending on the trooper ladder from Chinooks. Once on the dominant high ground they swept down the hills, into the 22 ARVN Division which blocked together with two battalions of the 2nd Brigade along the low ground south of the mountains. Simultaneously, the ARVN junk fleet established a screen to the east. Contact was light, but the division did succeed in driving a large enemy force into the ARVN which resulted in 50 enemy killed and another 30 captured.

On March 6, MASHER/WHITE WING ended with 1st Cavalry forces back in the area south of Bong Son where the initial mission had begun 41 days earlier. The division had operated in 360 degrees around Bong Son in which enemy contact was maintained during each day of the forty-one days.

The BONG SON Campaign dissipated any residual doubts of an airmobile division's capability to conduct sustained operations, for at least four infantry battalions were effectively supported over the 37 miles from base camp throughout the operation. Also of particular interest was the first time elements of the division successfully completed an air assault into a riot control permeated area with all personnel, including pilots, masked.

BONG SON was a crucial operation for the division, for it offered additional proof, if skeptics remained, that the victory in the PLEIKU Campaign was no fluke. Undoubtedly the new 1st Air Cavalry had what was necessary to find, fix, and finish Charlie wherever and whenever the opportunity presented itself.

The statistics of the operation are impressive: 1,342 enemy killed by body count and a total of 2,150 killed by all participating Free World Forces. A hard blow was struck at the three enemy regiments which had long threatened Bong Son and the stretch of National Route 1 to Qui Nhon. Intelligence sources indicated five of the nine enemy battalions engaged were ineffective. Three field hospitals had been captured. Another encouraging sign was revealed from the fact that 140,000 Vietnamese civilians volunteered to leave their hamlets in the An Lao and Son Long Valleys to return to QVN control.

BASE SECURITY

One can now appreciate that the overall scheme of the way the Air Cavalry operates in Vietnam is not too dissimilar from that of the old cavalry days during the Indian Wars. In the Indian days, the troopers operated from a centrally-located, well-fortified base area, a base area which would be secure. It was here that they would refit and maintain their equipment, plan their operations and return for rest. That pattern is remarkably clear today, for in a war like Vietnam's where there are no front lines and resultingly no rear areas, it is also necessary to have a secure area to which the troops can return; hence, a base camp. The modern operational areas are, of course, farther apart and each of greater dimension than those of old due to nothing else than the means of mobility involved. In the case of THE FIRST TEAM, the most secure area of all is its large base camp, with a nine and a half mile circumference, which encompasses an area one third as large as Manhattan Island. While subdued and camouflaged patches black and OD for black and gold, OD name tags, ranks and insignia were sewn on the field uniforms, continued improvement was visible in base camp. The barrier defense system underwent complete planning, as it was envisioned by next fall to have a string of powerful lights completely ringing the barrier and floodlighting avenues of approach out for a distance of several hundred meters. The TAOR and highway 19 were also relatively secure as the stay-behind battalions, supported by a reinforced artillery battalion, made their presence felt. While there had been no major contacts in the TAOR, the mission demands every bit as much preparation and effort as does an air assault in the operational area.

The town of An Khe itself had grown rapidly as eager businessmen and local merchants capitalized on the services they had to offer. The laundry business probably grew the fastest and the Vietnamese were introduced to something new called starch. There were good laundries in which one could be fairly sure he would get back the same clothes he handed in and in a reasonable state of cleanliness. And then there were the bad ones. It didn't take long to make a decision. Other way-side shops along route 19 offered the usual trinkets, scarves, folding chairs, cabinets in addition to many other items on which one could spend money. A G.I. could not avoid the small girls running up with small cones of peanuts to sell, "Hello, G.I."—"you buy?" Then the little boys would crowd and compete for the shoe shine. More often than not either one or

the other and perhaps both would be purchased. One couldn't help but feel compassion in seeing the dirt and sores all over their bodies. But then merely having money would not help the situation.

It is only accurate to say that base camp and the TAOR are relatively secure, for the troops in each are constantly alert to the possibility of enemy mortar attacks. Such was the case at 20 minutes after midnight during the night of 19-20 February when elements of the 407th VC Battalion initiated a well planned attack on base camp to include an assault of Hong Cong mountain as the main thrust, an infiltration of the barrier on the opposite side of camp as a diversion, and a mortar attack. The V.C. company which attacked Hong Cong used one platoon in the actual assault of the communications facility with two platoons positioned in ambush posture to attack any ground relief forces which might be committed. All reinforcements for the facility, however, were effected by helicopter and the enemy ambush sites were successfully avoided. Although the attack on the communications-signal facility did not succeed in destroying any of the vans or transmission's facilities, friendly losses did include the death of a few men, the destruction of four generators, and the loss of one M-60 machine gun. Elsewhere, the diversionary attack accomplished very little, for of the few enemy who were able to penetrate the barrier each was immediately killed. The mortar attack delivered 106 x 82mm mortars which landed in the vicinity of division headquarters, the division's helipad, and the 1st Bn, 7th Cavalry with little damage. Artillery and ARA fired more than 1,700 rounds in a counter mortar program but without estimate of damage to the attacking enemy.

CAMP RADCLIFF

The next day, Monday, February 21st, was also an important one in base camp history. For that day Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge flew from Saigon to officially dedicate Camp Radcliff. The commemoration of base camp honored Major Donald G. Radcliff, one of the division's first fatal casualties of the Vietnam war.

Major Radcliff was a member of the advance liaison party and departed Fort Benning on August second for his orientation flying in this country. On the 18th of August General Kinnard sent a personal message to Lieutenant Colonel John B. Stockton, CO, 1 Squadron, 9th Cavalry in care of the USNS DARBY:

"Regret to inform you Major Donald Radcliff KIA 17 August 1965."

Maj. Radcliff, executive officer of the 1/9 Cav, lost his life at the controls of a gunship after he volunteered to fly a combat mission in the relief of a US Special Forces Camp. For his heroism that day he was awarded, posthumously, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart. His courage was in the highest tradition of the United States Army and it was only fitting that his name should be inextricably woven into the history of THE FIRST TEAM in Vietnam.

At the solemn dedication ceremony that February 21st, General Kinnard humbly explained, "In bestowing his name upon this camp we carve into history our recognition and appreciation for his sacrifice."

JIM BOWIE

The next significant operation began on March 13th and was of a search and destroy nature executed by the 1st and 3rd Brigades in the Vinh Than and An Tuc Districts to the north and east of Camp Radcliff. It was planned as a follow-up to the BONG SON Campaign, as intelligence reports indicated a VC headquarters and its service facilities were in the Kon Truc area. Units from Bong Son may have entered the area to rest and refit. Since the Kon Truc base area was also adjacent to the TAOR, operations there would also enhance our security. D-Day for Operation JIM BOWIE was originally scheduled for March 10th, but low ceilings and heavy rains once again forced a three day postponement. The two brigade assault was still made on the 13th at less than desirable conditions with a broken ceiling of 1,200 feet instead of the preferred 4,000 feet absolute. There was only light resistance with limited and sporadic contact, as captured documents and prisoner interrogation revealed that the enemy unit had made an orderly departure on 8 March. On March 21st, the 1st Brigade was returned to Camp Radcliff where it proceeded to the Pleiku-Plei Me area again to commence Operation LINCOLN on March 25th. The 3rd Brigade continued JIM BOWIE with ground sweeps and heliborne assaults from the Kon Truc area, through the old U.S. Special Forces Camp at Kannack, back to division base at An Khe, terminating the effort on March 28th. Although this operation saw relatively little contact, there were many way stations, training areas, and supply caches destroyed. There was wide-spread disappointment over the fact, however, that no engagements were made with units of the 407th VC Battalion which were believed to have withdrawn into that area after the attack on Camp Radcliff on February 20th.

Of interest is the fact that this operation was

logistically supported directly from base camp, 36 miles away. The skytroopers also gained valuable experience in perfecting assault techniques into extremely dense and mountainous jungle terrain, for the terrain around Kon Truc was perhaps some of the most difficult yet encountered by the division. Characteristic are steep hills rising 3,215 feet on the eastern side of the DAK KRON Bung River and 2,000 feet on the western bank. Numerous streams flow through deep ravines. Heavy vegetation covers the area.

Another innovation in the use of artillery was perfected during JIM BOWIE, the piggy-back sling which allows simultaneous displacement by Chinook helicopters of a 105mm howitzer, its firing section, and 30 rounds of ammunition. With the artillery crew in the aircraft, the 105mm ammunition is carried in a sling load beneath the howitzer itself, thereby saving a great deal of precious time in turn-around by allowing the crew to have a quick reacting package for immediate operation once displaced. In the field of tactics, the use of a "no-fire box" around a unit in dense jungle when the unit was unable to pinpoint its ground location, proved to be an effective means of fire support coordination. The box served as a fire support coordination line and limited fire inside the box to the artillery battalion with the mission of primary fire support for the unit. Other fires could only be delivered inside the box at the request of the unit and under control by its direct support artillery.

The air assault technique is, of course, much in evidence throughout all the operations. To place our operations in proper perspective, Major John J. Madigan of the division's G-3 training and operations office explained the alternative to the helicopter:

"In the first place, our movements to combat would be to a great extent roadbound, with all that such moves entail in South Vietnam—clearing the road, which slows the column, which in turn makes it more susceptible to ambush. By remaining on the road we would be subject to diversionary attack and the relief column ambush technique which cost the ARVN so heavily in the period just prior to the intervention of allied troops. Second, the VC and NVA drive to dominate the western portion of II CTZ and its subsequent penetration to the sea to link up with forces in Binh Dinh Province, could not have been countered by a road-bound force. The conventional force in this war must of necessity telegraph its punch, simply by being Channelized by road net. Once headed in a

certain direction the force must remain headed in that direction, reverse itself and return whence it started, or leave the road and attempt to move cross country at the generally accepted rate of 400-500 meters per hour. By our telegraphing the punch the enemy has in the past had all the time he needed to decide whether to stand and fight on terrain of his own choosing, or to avoid a fight, side-step the punch and counter punch as he saw fit. In essence, the enemy had found himself with many of the advantages which traditionally are supposed to accrue to the defense on interior lines. This is particularly true when considering the planning required before Free World Forces could mass enough troops to take the offensive. With the appearance of the cavalry, we have a division capable of seizing the initiative from the enemy, of placing him on the defensive with no advance warning, of swooping into previously invulnerable secret bases in multi-battalion strength, prepared to stay until the enemy is killed or abandons his sanctuary. In short, we have carried the fight to the enemy and forced him, prepared or unprepared to settle the issue. Finally, by smashing the enemy whenever his concentration of forces justifies committing our battalions, the Cav. has given the lie to those prophets of doom who say the VC is all but invincible. The ARVN have taken heart from this, and in the II CTZ have turned in some spectacular results against the enemy in battalion size operations."

LINCOLN

On the 25th of March, the 1st Brigade with three battalions had returned to the scene of the PLEIKU Campaign to begin Operation LINCOLN, also a search and destroy operation. LINCOLN was initiated to avert an enemy offensive, believed in progress, or pending in the immediate future. Although no specific enemy units were forecasted as a result of prior reconnaissance in force operations, the Division G-2 still carried in the area the 32d, 33d, and 66th NVA Regiments, which were encountered in November 1965, as well as an additional transportation company. These units were supported by the usual signal, medical, and engineer troops.

On the morning of the 25th, the 1/8 Cav air assaulted directly from An Khe to an LZ near Duc Co. This 78 mile air assault was one of the largest combat assaults of an entire battalion undertaken by THE FIRST TEAM. The 1/12 Cav, the 2/8 Cav, and the supporting artillery and

logistical units proceeded into the operational area by combat convoy made up of over 450 vehicles as well as 24 C-130 sorties. The division's aviation group and the helicopters of the 1/9 Cavalry supported LINCOLN from the "Turkey Farm," near II Corps Headquarters at Pleiku, and so named because of its appearance from the air with the many choppers irregularly spaced on the ground.

Meanwhile, the division's 3d Brigade continued Operation JIM BOWIE, northwest of the division's base, but planned for commitment into the LINCOLN Area. The 2nd Brigade maintained base, TAOR, and highway 19 security. The 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division conducted Operation GARFIELD, south of the LINCOLN AO, but prepared for commitment into LINCOLN on order of I Field Force Vietnam.

For the five days before March 30th, the 1st Brigade conducted small unit reconnaissance missions north and east of the Chu Pong Massif, while the 1/9 Cav screened along the Cambodian border in zone, north and south of the Chu Pong. Only light and sporadic contact was established.

The tempo of action increased sharply on the 30th, however, when the aircraft of the 1/9 Cav sighted three enemy in an open area south of the Chu Pong and observed thirty more hiding in prepared positions. Weapons ships of the 1/9 made gun runs and TAC AIR took them under fire with napalm. The 1st Brigade was notified of a possible significant target. To develop the situation, in true 1/9 fashion, the infantry platoon, A Troop, 1/9 Cav assaulted into the area. The platoon captured a prisoner who incredulously stated, "There are 1,000 troops in the area." Sure enough, shortly thereafter, this platoon became heavily engaged with a much larger force. An attempt was made to extract the platoon, but two lift ships of the 1/9 were downed by heavy fire. Fifteen men were killed in these crashes including the recently captured prisoner.

Reinforcements were on the way as A/1/12 Cav was enroute from Pleiku to assist the beleaguered platoon. Having closed into the area about 5:00 that afternoon, Alpha Company also became heavily engaged. ARA, close air support, and continuous illumination from SMOKEY BEAR, an Air Force flare ship, were provided throughout the night. Also at 11:00 PM a CV-2 Caribou made a low-level ammunition and ration drop to the units. This marked the 1st Cavalry's first attempt in making such a resupply at night. It was completely successful. A few minutes after 1:00 AM on the 31st, A Company of the Jumping Mustangs 1/8 Cav and B/2/19 Artillery, executed a night air assault into LZ CAT to provide tube

artillery support for the blue platoon and A/1/12. This was another first for the division—the first night combat assault by a rifle company and an artillery battery successfully planned and executed into an LZ not previously reconnoitered. The enemy broke contact prior to sunrise, on the 31st. He left behind 197 bodies and there were over 200 more estimated killed.

At 10:00 AM on the 31st, the decision was made to advance the operation's time schedule. This was done by the division's assuming operational control of the 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division and by moving the 1st Cav's 3d Brigade into the operational area at Plei Me. These deployments marked the initiation of Phase II of the operation, which lasted until the 4th of April without significant contact.

Phase III began on April 4th as all units reacted to division OPORD 6611, issued on March 29th, by assaulting into the Chu Pong itself. The 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division attacked from the north, the 1st Brigade from the south and the 3d Brigade from the east. For the next four days, until the termination of LINCOLN, the entire Chu Pong was traversed with light to heavy contact. No new bunker or cave systems were discovered. LZ's X-Ray and Albany, sites of heavy contact during the November 1965 PLEIKU Campaign, showed no signs of occupation or use by the enemy since the division's departure. Further proof that the enemy had not thoroughly combed the area is the fact that when an Air Force plane which had been shot down during the PLEIKU campaign was located by the Division's 3d Brigade, the six .50 caliber machine guns and over 1800 ammunition rounds had not been removed.

In total the enemy lost 480 killed, with roughly 200 of this number credited to the division's artillery. The light-weight M-102 howitzer was first used by the 1/21st Artillery and proved to be a valuable asset for the Airmobile Division with its lightweight and 6400 mil traverse. Also the Division's 8th Engineer Battalion built a 3500 foot C-130 airstrip in 96 hours and covered it with the new T-17 membrane in another 18 hours. A total of 2300 man hours and 787 equipment hours were required. In related engineer activity, two airstrips were built using the sectionalized bulldozer, which was delivered piecemeal by helicopter, assembled on the ground at the site location, and put to use.

NATION BUILDING

Although the division was heavily burdened with searching for and destroying the enemy from the South China Sea to the Cambodian border, it was waging an equally important war—the war of

helping the Vietnamese people to help themselves. It has been called "nation building" and is a campaign "to win the hearts and minds of the people" over to their legally constituted government. As the Division's G-5 office, headed by LTC Harry J. Phelps, has overall supervisory responsibility for the Civic Action affairs, the large portion of the implementation of the projects are left to the Civil Affairs Officers appointed by the respective subordinate units. These efforts have magnified since the initial attempts during Operation Friendship in the last days of October.

This is the battle without bullets. It is the battle to fight disease, ignorance, and poverty. Each of the various Civil Affairs Teams uses its own method—although the goal is always the same. Medical assistance is rendered to hundreds of persons a day—sometimes thousands. Clothing, food and soap are distributed. When time permits, division members show local civilians how to dig and use wells, how to build schools and hospitals, and generally to improve their economic and social development. There are many things to be done.

In the hamlet of An Son, Major Wilmot Hall, the 1st Brigade Civil Affairs Officer rose to his feet before a meeting with the hamlet and began to speak, carefully and slowly and in short sentences so there would be no errors in the interpretation to those present.

"We come from the United States of America. We are soldiers, but we want to do other things than just shoot the Viet Cong. We want to help your people and all the people of Vietnam. We want to help you to help yourselves so that everyone will enjoy a better life. But first, we must know what you need."

The hamlet chief, the spokesman present, produced a list of needs so basic that it staggered the officer for a moment because of its simplicity.

"We need a place for women to have babies," the Chief said.

Major Hall replied seriously. "A doctor will visit your hamlet once a week to treat the sick and examine the women who are heavy with child. An engineer officer who knows how to build a hospital will draw up a plan for your own medical center. But can you give us a person from the hamlet whom we can teach how to nurse those of your people who are ill?"

The Chief nodded.

Rather than dispense the largesse for which the U.S. Army is known the world over, Major Hall held up his hand for silence and attention. "We will help you help yourselves," he continued. "Our soldiers will not always be available to help

with the work in the hamlets and villages. They will show you how to build with the material we will provide. But you must do much of the work yourself."

The Chief nodded. However, he had additional requests such as the needs for wells and pumps, culverts so that their dirt roads would not be washed out with each monsoon rain, small bridges so that they could cross raging waters during the rainy seasons, and finally, they wanted the knowledge to bring an end to disease which for scores of years had been running rampant.

Meanwhile, other Cavalrymen independently took up the civic action cause of their own volition. Captain Warren E. Mullan, a platoon leader in the 2/20 ARA Battalion was asked by a Vietnamese school teacher if he would take time to teach a few words of English to a class of youngsters. The father of four children could not refuse. The first visit was followed by additional and longer visits until Captain Mullen began spending several hours a week in An Khe—as a school teacher. His explanation: "I just love kids."

MOSBY

Operations MOSBY I, 11-17 April, and MOSBY II, 21 April-03 May, were search and destroy and reconnaissance in force operations north and northeast of LINCOLN, respectively. Little or no contact was established by the committed units, but the division gained valuable intelligence of infiltration routes, rest stations, as well as uncovering a few sizeable caches.

The next operations, while not significant in terms of raw numbers, are included to demonstrate the unique capabilities of the division. The first of these, Operation BEE BEE, 26-28 April, was a show of force executed near Bong Son in conjunction with elements of the 40th Regiment, 22d ARVN Division. An air assault by C/2/7 Cav into an LZ in that vicinity had apparently flushed into the open a company-sized unit of the 22 NVA (Quyét Tam) Regiment. They were caught in the open by the gun ships of C Troop, 1/9 Cav and ARA ships of C Btry 2/20 Arty (ARA) in what is popularly known as the "Turkey Shoot" for the Cavalry helicopters. The aircraft killed 58 enemy without touching ground and without a single American loss. BROWNING, on 29 April, was a daylight raid with the mission of locating a VC rice husking machine reported to be operating in the Vinh Thanh Valley within the division TAOR. Two infantry companies, with ARA support, air assaulted into the area where the machine had been reported. There was light contact with the enemy, and the machine was found in a building which had been set afire by ARA.

Their mission completed, the infantry companies were withdrawn from the area by 12:00 noon and returned by helicopter to Camp Radcliff. BROWNING is typical of the type operation which we have repeatedly conducted on short notice to exploit intelligence.

LEWIS AND CLARK

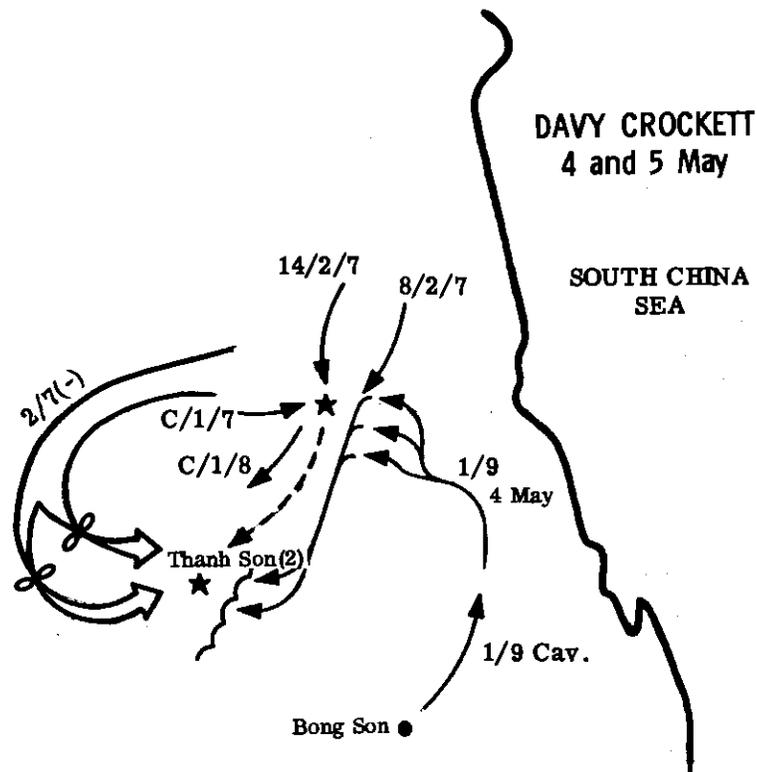
Operation LEWIS AND CLARK, 3-16 May, found the 2/12 Cav air assault near Plateau Gi, 48 miles northwest of base camp, and return in leaps and bounds to An Khe. Only six enemy were killed, but the battalion discovered an ordnance station, an aid station, a training area with a bayonet assault course, and the location of an enemy battalion headquarters. Of importance, we were insured no major enemy forces were in the north and northwest of the Division's TAOR.

DAVY CROCKETT

While LEWIS AND CLARK was underway, the Division moved the 3rd Brigade into a second operational area, once again to the territory covered by MASHER/WHITE WING in northeastern Binh Dinh Province. DAVY CROCKETT, conducted simultaneously with LEWIS AND CLARK from the 4 to the 16th of May, was divided into two phases each of which claimed major enemy contact.

During the month of May the central highlands near Pleiku extending to the coastal areas around Bong Son undergoes a seasonal weather transition. The northeast monsoon weakens and the southwest monsoon winds strengthen, resulting in a decrease in precipitation, accompanied by rising temperatures. During both phases of DAVY CROCKETT the temperatures ranged from 94 to 110 degrees heat with little rainfall and high humidity. Each man was told to carry salt tablets keeping heat exhaustion cases to a minimum. In general, the weather was very favorable for air assault techniques.

Prior to the 3rd Brigade's entry into phase I around Bong Son and the confluence of the An Lao and Kim Son Rivers, reliable intelligence located two battalions of the 22 NVA Regiment, the objective of the 3rd Brigade's mission. On the 4th of May the 1/7 and the 2/7 assaulted into the northern part of the operational area and were in blocking positions when D Troop, 1/9 Cav, and ARVN APC Troops launched an overland attack to the north to drive the enemy into the trap. The attack northward was characterized by light sporadic contact until early in the afternoon of the 5th when the 1/9 Cav received heavy automatic weapons fire. (Map 9). In reaction,



MAP 9

the 2/7 and 1/7 moved to the area of contact to encircle what was estimated as an enemy battalion. Tube and aerial artillery maintained continuous fires, expending 806 rounds of all caliber within forty minutes, to fix the enemy while the maneuver elements encircled. Although high losses were known to have been inflicted on the enemy, the major part of the battalion was able to elude the encirclement through a gap left open in the south. The well-coordinated attack the next morning fell short of expectations as the enemy was no longer there. Shortly thereafter, at 9:55 AM an element of the 1/9 Cav went to secure a helicopter downed by enemy ground fire near the hamlet Thanh Son (2) which was south of the previous evening's encirclement. The 1/9 Cav received heavy fire from the hamlet and concluded that it was there to which the enemy battalion retreated and had held up.

The 1/7 Cav was ordered to attack south from its present position. D Troop 1/9 with the attached ARVN APC Troop attacked to the east. 2/7, in classic example of airmobility, was assembled, given its mission, and air assaulted into new positions south of the hamlet all within the space of less than an hour. Forty minutes after the battalion had been found, the enemy discovered the aggressive 1st Cavalry soldiers had once again surrounded him. The threat of the closing noose forced the enemy to dig in and that was the last mistake he was permitted to make. . . . Ordnance from twelve sorties of F-4C fighter-bombers pounded the area combined with relentless artillery fire. At one point an enemy company, caught between two 3d Brigade companies which were separated by only 300 yards, was bombed with 750 lb. bombs, in what Colonel Harold G. Moore, then 3d Brigade CO, described as "the most accurate display of tactical air precision bombing I have ever seen." The enemy positions had not been breached by nightfall but the division maintained the encirclement, and contact continued throughout the night as small groups attempted to exfiltrate. The enemy lost over 140 killed on the 5 and 6, and a captured prisoner subsequently revealed that the entire 9th Battalion, of the 22 NVA Regiment had been engaged and destroyed as a fighting unit.

The second phase of DAVY CROCKETT took place in the Crow's Foot between 11-16 May. The only significant contact was made on the 11th when aircraft of the 1/9 spotted what was thought to be an enemy battalion moving south-southwest in the valley. Once again air strikes and artillery were called in to hold the enemy while elements of the 1/9, 1/7, and 1/5 maneuvered into blocking positions on routes of withdrawal. Later the esti-

mate was dropped from one battalion to 40 NVA troops operating with 25 local guerrillas. Nevertheless this contact netted thirty-eight enemy dead from the sixty-five man force.

The second phase of DAVY CROCKETT saw extensive use of the Hunter-Killer airmobile technique as developed by Colonel Moore. This technique is just one of the many ways the air assault capability can be used effectively and ingeniously. To avoid tiring inordinate numbers of infantry in looking for "Charlie," the concept calls for a small lightly equipped force to scout an operational area with the mission of searching and hunting down the enemy. Once located, and this is often the most difficult part of this war, a larger combat-prepared "killer" team, on stand-by alert at a nearby LZ, can be rushed into the area to close with and destroy the force. When the terrain and weather permit, the hunter-killer concept employs the inherent advantages of the Air Cavalry; it relieves the infantry from the constant demanding jungle patrolling, and reduces unnecessary flying hours on our aircraft.

"AIR ASSAULT"

This is only one particular airmobile technique, but throughout there has been the repeated term "air assault," around which the continued success of THE FIRST TEAM revolves. But what exactly is an air assault and what are the components of such a maneuver? Once again, Major Madigan of G-3 Training and Operations explains it this way:

"First, of course, comes intelligence information pinpointing an enemy unit. Map study of the area will isolate a few likely LZ's; or perhaps we have been in the area previously and already know where we want to land. In any case a careful reconnaissance is made without attracting attention to the spot selected for the assault; the commander may have two or three long looks from a helicopter casually flying at various altitudes past the LZ. Plans are made for the assault as responsibility for initial security of the LZ is assigned, and equipment is issued and checked. Liaison is established with the helicopter company commander, who has probably been through a number of these assaults in support of one or another of our battalions. Fire support is laid on and perhaps TAC AIR will have a few planes in the area. Certainly ARA will be with the aerial column, to provide final preparatory fires on the LZ and then to remain in orbit on call with half their armament. As the troopers load the choppers, a complex system of communication is activated, linking artillery observers with their units, Commanders, pilots and other

contributors to the operation, to insure a rapid flow of information. As the troop carrying helicopters near the LZ, artillery fires, which have been hammering at the clearing and the trees surrounding it are lifted. ARA swoops in to deliver rocket fire on the enemy on any likely positions and is followed by escorting armed Hueys which spray the area with machine gun fire. The gunships go in on the deck to entice the enemy into firing at them and revealing his position. The troop ships arrive, sometimes landing, more often hovering a foot or two in the air and sometimes as high as ten feet, as the infantry hit the ground and head full speed for the edge of the LZ. The forward artillery observer, by now on the ground with his Company Commander, is in contact with his battalion either through the artillery liaison officer or an orbiting chopper, or directly to the battalion from his own radio. He is prepared to bring fire right up to the perimeter. ARA remains on station as succeeding waves of helicopters hit the LZ. Once the LZ has been secured, artillery must be moved in and the Sky Troopers are prepared to continue their mission on foot. By now they may be 15-25 kilometers from the battalion CP they left not over 30 minutes earlier. They may have crossed a mountain and a couple of rivers enroute to their objective with not even a second thought. Small wonder the shock actions of the air assault, as executed by this division, have proven to be more than the enemy can counter."

GENERAL KINNARD LEAVES

It was on the 5th of May, just after the initiation of LEWIS AND CLARK and DAVY CROCKETT, that the Airmobile Division experienced its first change of command. General Kinnard, who pioneered the air assault concept with the experimental division at Fort Benning and who brilliantly led the Air Cavalry in its first months of war, relinquished command to Major General John Norton, also a knowledgeable expert on airmobile tactics.

General Kinnard was to return to the Pentagon for his new assignment as US Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Force Development. But there was the old Cav tradition for a colorful farewell ceremony to be given a departing Commanding General. And a most important ceremony it was going to be, for never before has one man been able to fashion an operational reality from a vision and a dream and then continue to command it in combat. Not even in the hey-day of the birth and development of the airborne divisions in World War II did one individual accom-

plish a similar task. The men who envisioned the dreams of airborne tactics were not the division commanders in combat.

With all the pomp and circumstance afforded a man of General Kinnard's caliber, the division went all out to deliver a proper send off to the soft-spoken CG. The sunny weather helped capture the panorama of color of the massed battle-streamered flags and guidons whose military traditions reflected an encyclopedia of American History.

In true air assault fashion, the ceremony began with a simulated combat assault by ARA rocket ships which, after flying low overhead, released a thundering volley of rockets which exploded outside the Camp Radcliff perimeter. The reconnaissance twin-engined Mohawks made a fly-by to pay their respects, after which followed the aircraft from the 1/9 Cav, trailed by the gun and "slick" ships of the 229th "Stacked Deck" Assault Helicopter Battalion. A trio of CH-47 Chinooks brought up the rear, with a piggy-back sling load of 105mm howitzer and ammunition pallets slung below.

There was the usual "trooping the line" of massed colors and the deserved praise by Lt. General S. R. Larsen, CG I Field Force Vietnam. As the day drew to a close, guidons bearers representing all the units in the division, took their positions along the path leading from the general's quarters on the hill, past the twin Quonset huts of the Command Headquarters, to the CG's waiting chopper on Skytrooper pad. After final farewells, General Kinnard once again trooped the line of colors, this time shaking the head of each and every one of the division's sergeant majors.

The band played "Auld Lang Syne," for an era was ending and on the morrow a new one would begin. The roar of the Mohawks signalled the final fly-by with all aircraft units of the division represented. Three bubble-nosed OH-13's trailed in the order of succession and hovered as they turned and displayed individual placards which read in sequence: ALL THE WAY; ★★ ★★ (four stars); HWOK. And so departed Major General Harry W. O. Kinnard, formerly of THE FIRST TEAM.

GENERAL NORTON COMMANDS

The following morning, General Norton, the Cav's new CG trooped the line of colors and a new era for the division began. General Norton was no stranger to the Cav, nor to the airmobile concept. In 1959-60, he served in Korea as a Battle Group Commander with THE FIRST TEAM, and in the early '60's, as an Army Aviation Officer to the Continental Army Command,

he served on the Howze Board, which gave birth to the Air Mobile concept.

When Operation CRAZY HORSE kicked off on May 16th, General Norton was at the helm of what would be a very rewarding and successful year for the 1st Cavalry. Ironically, 1966 was the Year of the Horse in the annual Vietnamese New Year, or TET, tradition of naming each year in succession after one of twelve animals. It was surely not going to be an ordinary "Year of the Horse," for the 1st Cavalry was there to insure it would be a year of hope and new found freedom for the Vietnamese.

CRAZY HORSE

The mission during CRAZY HORSE was to search and destroy in the rugged hill mass between the Suoi Ca and the Vinh Thanh Valleys south of the Crow's Foot area. While not an obstacle to airmobile movements, the density of the jungle represented many problems in the construction and selection of LZ's. The area was also effectively split into a northern and southern portion by a natural corridor between the two valleys. The "Oregon Trail," as this corridor is called, was used consistently by the enemy as an avenue of approach into and egress out of the Vinh Thanh Valley. Intelligence indicated the enemy was in the area, and a captured document revealed the possibility of an attack on the Vinh Thanh Special Forces Camp in the northern end of the valley on May 19th, Ho Chi Minh's birthday. The period around the 19th was also to be one of no moon.

The 1st Brigade prepared for commitment against what we had determined to be the 2nd VC Regiment. Its mission was to continue the attack in zone to destroy the 2nd VC Regiment, and pursue the enemy regardless of his direction of movement. Maximum effort was to be made to capture prisoners for intelligence purposes.

The possibility of the overrunning of the Vinh Thanh Valley Special Forces Camp brought about an Harassment and Interdictory (H&I) artillery program and massed TOT fire missions on a scale not achieved since MASHER/WHITE WING. An indication that the artillery H&I fires did significantly hurt the enemy was revealed by a soldier subsequently captured during an attack on the co-location of the 1st Brigade's forward CP and the 2/19 Artillery. Under interrogation, the prisoner volunteered that the attack had been staged primarily in revenge for casualties suffered by the artillery H&I Program.

Our initial contact was made on 16 May when B/2/8 Cav touched down at LZ Hereford and became engaged with what the Commanding

Officer estimated to be a VC battalion. A & C Companies, 1/12 Cav, assaulted to reinforce, landing late in the afternoon. Contact broke at 10:45 that night. During the subsequent four days there was light to heavy contact throughout the operational areas, as the Cavalry units hopped and skipped from LZ to LZ. Early in the afternoon on the 21st of May the mortar platoon of C/1/12, which remained at LZ Hereford while the company's rifle platoon swept down ridges to the west was attacked and overrun by a company size force of enemy. Killed that day with the weapons platoon was Sam Castan, a Senior Editor of Look Magazine who was on an assignment with the division.

The operation went into its second phase on May 24 which lasted until the termination of CRAZY HORSE on 5 June. The concept during this phase was to surround the area with Cavalry and ARVN units to prevent exfiltration while all available TAC AIR and artillery blasted the center to destroy or drive out to the blocking forces the remaining enemy elements. Following three days of this intensive fire power the area would be swept again to destroy totally the last remaining enemy forces.

During the last days of the operation, heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy both from fire support and by the infantry units. During this time ROK forces maintained contact with an enemy battalion for 4 days, inflicting serious casualties. In total figures, CRAZY HORSE cost the enemy 507 killed by body count with an additional 380 dead. He lost 97 individual weapons and 16 crew served weapons. The division evacuated or destroyed 45 tons of rice and 10 tons of salt. Captured documents provided valuable information for the first time on the VC infrastructure of Binh Dinh Province. Too much credit cannot be given to the logistical support side of CRAZY HORSE. The Forward Support Elements carefully insured there was always enough artillery ammunition on hand. Because there were no roads in the operational area, the air line of communications (ALOC) performed superbly in unit resupply.

Meanwhile, by early June, improvements were visibly affecting the comforts of life in base camp. The semi-permanent 20'x80' buildings, with concrete floors and 2"x4" frames with tin roofs, had sprung up throughout the unit areas. Most of the men, however, still lived in tents with dirt floors but they could now see hope for things to come. More and more men had electricity in their hooches, as generators became more readily available. Roads in base camp were wider, and were periodically sprayed with an oil-based substance

to keep the dust down in the drier seasons. A swimming area with floats and wonderful place to relax was completed in a portion of the Song Ba River which flowed through Camp Radcliff. Yes, life had become more comfortable than during those days of late September.

ROTATION

It was also during the next three months of June, July, and August that the "old" FIRST TEAM would be rotating back to the States—the new replacements would soon arrive for their year with the Cav. Most of the "short timers" were on a count down, as each day they struck another day from their FIGMO Calendar (FORGET it, I Got My Orders!). This calendar is a massive cardboard cut-out of a voluptuous "round eye" whose anatomy is ingeniously subdivided into 365 days. This points to the fact that there are three things every GI knows in Vietnam: his rotational date, the number of days left before that date, and that another week has passed when he takes the weekly Chloroquine-Primaquine malaria prophylaxis tablet. The usual question during the waning months of one's tour was often repeated, "Has your turtle arrived yet?" Once one's replacements has arrived, the comment follows, "Oh, I see you've got your turtle! Now you can stack arms!" A "turtle" is no more than one's replacement, as seen from the rotating man's eye—it seems like it will take forever before he will arrive!

DECKHOUSE—NATHAN HALE

On the 18th of June a company of CIDG forces was overrun by an estimated battalion of NVA in an area southeast of Camp Radcliff at the Dong Tre Special Forces Camp, in Phu Yen Province, south of Binh Dinh. The 2d Battalion, 327th Infantry of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division began Operation DECKHOUSE I, a day later on the 19th to close with and destroy the attackers of the CIDG force. When these elements of the 101st became heavily engaged on three sides with the 18th B NVA Regiment, the IFFORCEV reserve-reaction force, Task Force Colt, with B & C/1/8 Cav and B/2/17 Artillery were committed on June 20 from Kontum to reinforce. Thus began the 1st Cavalry's Operation NATHAN HALE in the vicinity of Tuy Hoa. That same day the 3rd Brigade Headquarters assumed control of the 2/327 still in contact and the 1/8 Cav after it deployed into the operational area. On June 22 at 5:43 AM B/1/8 Cav and C/2/327 Inf came under a heavy two pronged enemy ground attack at position Eagle. There was also sustained enemy mortar fire which fortunately overshot the

target and was largely ineffective. The enemy breached the friendly lines and took cover in the defensive foxholes only to be routed in violent hand-to-hand fighting by the reserve platoon of B/1/8. The enemy broke contact later that morning leaving behind 134 of its dead. For the outstanding display of unit courage and gallantry that morning, B/1/8 Cav has been recommended for the highest award for unit bravery—The Presidential Unit Citation.

On June 24th, elements of the 2/7 Cav encountered what was estimated to be a company at Plateau Cay Song 6 miles southeast of Dong Tre Special Forces Camp. Later that afternoon the estimate was revised upward to an enemy battalion. Elements of the 2/7 took blocking positions to the south while the 1/8 assaulted to the north. The cordon could not be completely sealed before nightfall, and the enemy managed once again to escape by fragmenting his forces and slipping through the jungle to predesignated rendezvous areas.

On the 26th, 1st Cavalry Division Headquarters assumed control of the operation until its termination on July 1st. The remainder of NATHAN HALE was characterized by extensive hunter-killer operations with very few enemy found and only sporadic contact made. The final tally on 1 July showed enemy losses at 459 with an additional 291 estimated killed.

The influx of new personnel became noticeable during the operation. These replacements from commanders, to aircraft pilots, to communications personnel arrived and began to learn the tactics and techniques essential to timely and successful airmobile operations. NATHAN HALE was a success in not only accomplishing the assigned mission but as a training vehicle for these recently arrived men.

HENRY CLAY

Operation HENRY CLAY began the next day, on July 2nd and lasted for twenty-eight days. It was merely a continuation of NATHAN HALE to the west and toward the Cambodian border. Contact was sporadic and very light with only 33 enemy killed. The division took advantage of the opportunity to integrate replacements at all levels, while it compiled additional data on terrain throughout the area of operations.

PAUL REVERE II

The stage was now set for another major effort in the west—PAUL REVERE II. The 3d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division had had a continuing mission, beginning in May 1966, to interdict infiltration and supply routes in the Pleiku and Kontum

Provinces. As the 1st Cavalry was moving west during HENRY CLAY intelligence sources indicated a significant enemy build up in this area during the period 10-26 July. Reports reflected the possibility of a repeat of the circumstances during the early stages of the PLEIKU CAMPAIGN; that is, a diversionary attack on a fortified area, with the enemy in position to ambush relief forces on a highway or at likely LZ's. In particular, II Corps intelligence estimated that the 32nd, 33rd, and 66th NVA Regiments were still in the area and planned to attack CIDG camps at Duc Co, Plei Me, and also the city of Pleiku. Using strategy on a grand scale, the Communist invaders hoped that these attacks would draw major U. S. Forces away from Tuy Hoa and the eastern coast, thereby enabling the Viet Cong to secure the rice harvest in that area at that time of year.

By August 2, sufficient forces had been committed for PAUL REVERE II so that General Norton was given control of the AO. The operation followed the now-familiar pattern of extensive search and maneuver interspersed with brief periods of intense contact. As already seen the division had covered the AO extensively during the PLEIKU CAMPAIGN in Oct-Nov 1965, MATADOR 11-17 January, and in LINCOLN 25 March-8 April. We had a good idea of what to expect in both the enemy and the terrain. It was the weather, however, that was unexpected and unusually severe. General Norton described it as some of the worst weather he had ever seen for airmobile operations. Only a few hours a day were available for lift and resupply and even during these periods flying was hazardous.

From 2 to 7 August efforts centered on finding the enemy. We knew he was in the area, but most of the sightings and contacts were of individuals and small groups. On August 8th, however, A/1/7 Cav came under heavy fire at LZ Juliet and withstood mass assaults by a reinforced battalion for several hours. An attempt to encircle the company was beaten back by heavy artillery and TAC Air Support. The company was reinforced by two companies of the 1/12 Cav which were diverted, in a classic example of flexibility, while in the air to conduct another assault several miles away. When the helicopters with the reinforcements appeared on the LZ, the enemy broke leaving 106 dead. He was pursued until contact was lost after dark.

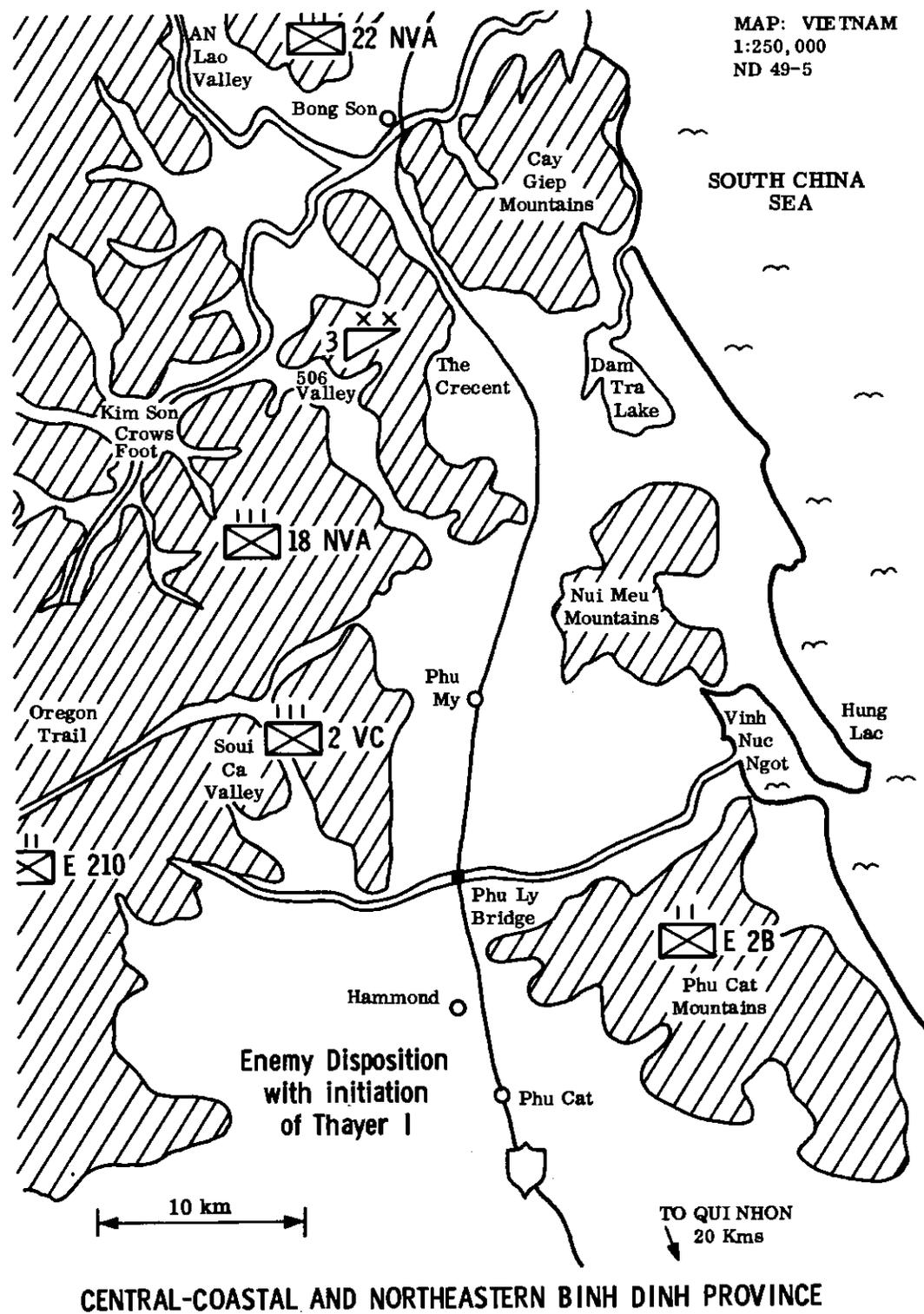
On the night of 9-10 August, the 9th Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st ROK Cavalry Regiment was working an area near the border, reinforced by a platoon from 1/16 Armor, 3d Brigade, 25th

Infantry Division. An enemy battalion attempted to overrun the company base, but was halted short of the objective with the armor platoon firing cannister. The one sided nature of the battle is evident from the fact that the Koreans suffered only seven killed and fifteen wounded, while the enemy lost 197 by body count with an untold number of killed and wounded dragged away.

The final major contact of the operation found the division once again at the Chu Pong massif, this time at Hill 534, on the southern portion of the hill mass. On August 14, A/1/5 Cav encountered forces at least in battalion and possibly regimental strength as it pursued a group of VC on foot. While attempting to link up with Alpha Company 1/5, Bravo 2/5 also became engaged with a large enemy force likewise in prepared, bunkered positions. As the size of the fortification became known additional companies were committed until two battalions were positioned around the enemy. The fierce close-in fighting continued throughout the night and well into the morning of the 15th. By morning, a total of 138 NVA dead were counted on the slope of Hill 534.

By 24 August, 1st Cavalry elements had begun movement of OASIS, the forward Division CP area, in preparation for return to Camp Radcliff. Within the next two days all units had closed into An Khe, and PAUL REVERE II had terminated.

Operation PAUL REVERE II was conducted in extremely dangerous weather, and great credit must be given to the division's aviators who braved very difficult flying conditions to accomplish their mission. PAUL REVERE II witnessed the heaviest commitment of the 8th Engineer Battalion in any single operation to that date. All of the battalion's resources and skills were fully required during this month-long operation to offset the effects of the prevailing rains of southwest monsoon. They did a superior job in keeping the roads in the area open as well as maintaining the respective airfields in operational condition. These two tasks alone required twenty-four hour attention. Artillery, as usual, played a major part in the operation, as over 100,000 rounds of various calibers were fired in support of the infantry. One innovation was the Air Force aerial re-supply of 6,100 artillery rounds for the 105mm and 155mm howitzers and the 175mm gun. Particular credit must be given to the ability of the aircrews to find and hit the LZ. Because of the terrain involved and the inherent lack of vehicles in the airmobile division, a wide dispersion in any airdrop would mean retrieving the cargo load and its packing



MAP 10

material, and in most cases by hand, round by round. The accuracy of the drops kept these extra efforts to a minimum.

The enemy lost 861 dead to the allied forces during PAUL REVERE II. There were 83 NVA captured and 43 VC captured. There is little doubt that the enemy was seeking a victory just before the Vietnamese national elections on September 11th. His defeat and withdrawal from the area not only deprived him of that victory, but further degraded his image in the Pleiku Province.

As PAUL REVERE II was drawing to a close, a task force with the 2/7 Cav was placed under the operational control of IFFORCEV on Operation BYRD and was sent to the southernmost part of the II CTZ to support the Vietnamese Revolutionary Development Program in Phan Thiet, Binh Thuan Province. This task force remained on this mission through the close of 1966.

ORGANIZATION DAY

On September 3rd, the division celebrated ten days early (because of tactical considerations) its 45th anniversary since the 1st Cavalry was activated in 1921. Brigadier General William A. Becker, Assistant Division Commander-A, was commander of the several thousand troops massed on the Golf Course air strip parking ramp. His staff was the Division's General Staff Officers: LTC Ardie E. McClure Jr, ACofS G-1; LTC William B. Ray, ACofS G-2; LTC James H. Mapp, ACofS G-3; LTC Robert A. Tolar, ACofS G-4; and LTC Harry J. Phelps, ACofS G-5. Behind them were massed the Division colors with the colors and guidons representative of each unit in the Division. These new Cavalrymen, many of them with the Division less than a month, had already become combat tested in PAUL REVERE II; they now listened to the glories of the past, to the traditions and honors that have come to the Cavalry, to its battle record: the purge of the Indian crises, the island hopping heroics through the Pacific, and the gallantry in the Pusan Perimeter before the northern thrust across the 38th parallel. They also heard recounted the historical birth of the airmobile division only a little over a year ago and the hard-fought battles that ensued in Vietnam. They could feel exceptionally proud of this heritage which was handed to them, but even more so from the fact that they were contributing to it, making a new, a most important chapter in the history of THE FIRST TEAM.

After the reading of the division history, General Norton spoke of his pride in THE FIRST TEAM and the need to carry on in this traditional manner; LT General Larsen, CG IFFORCEV, emphasized the importance of the

1st Cavalry in the II Corps area and how in less than a year its many operations had completely taken the initiative away from the enemy. The ceremony terminated solemnly with a roll call of those cavalrymen who were killed in PAUL REVERE II which was followed by a minute of silent prayer.

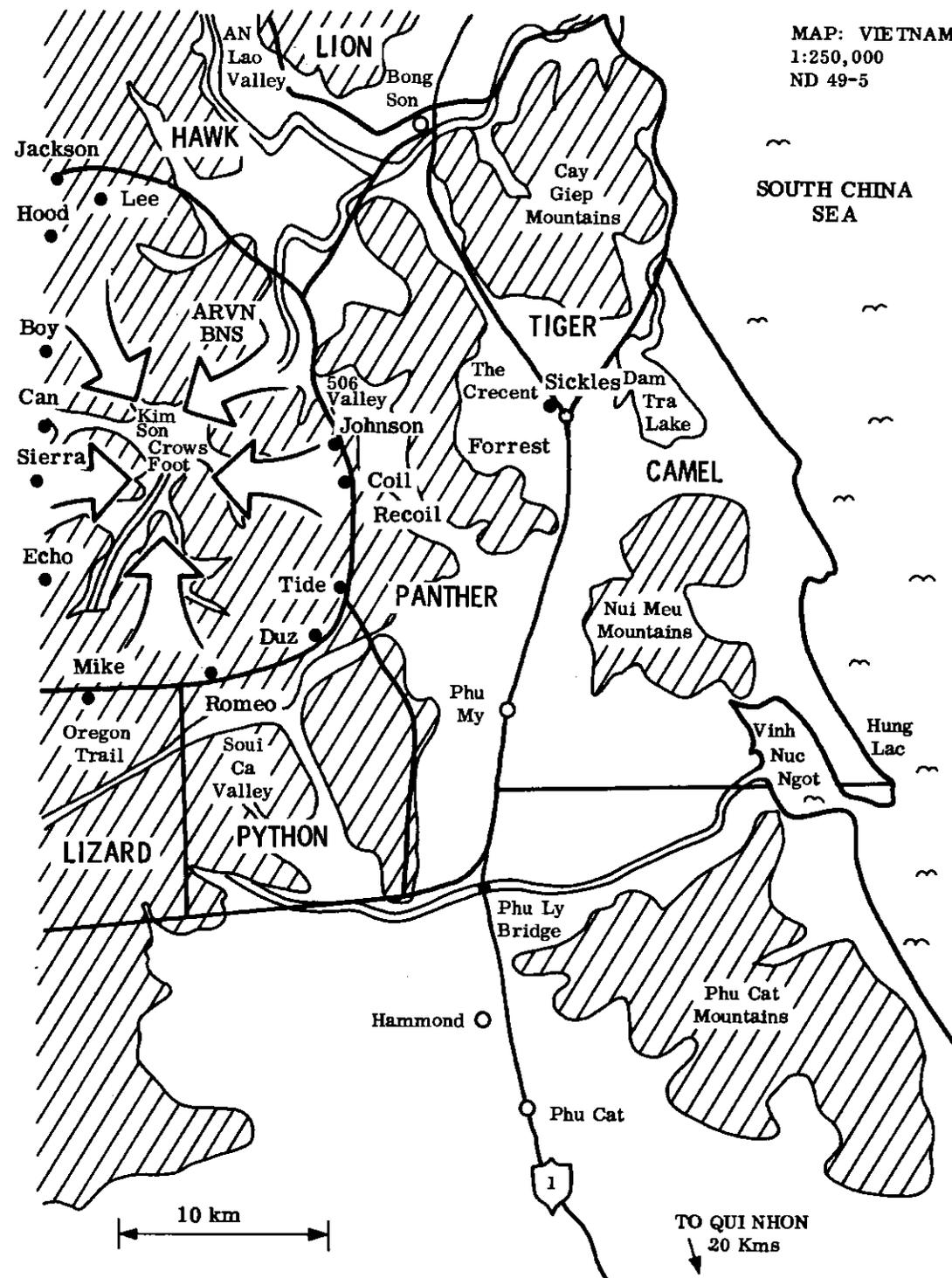
At 9:50 that evening the enemy launched another mortar attack against Camp Radcliff, only this time there was no ground attack. The casualties were light to both personnel and to the helicopters which were parked on the Golf Course.

THAYER

Ten days later, the 13th of September, the day of the Division's actual organizational day, THAYER I commenced in what banner headlines in the Division's weekly, The Cavalair, proclaimed as the largest air assault undertaken to date. THAYER I initiated the first phase of the Binh Dinh Province Pacification Campaign, a grand strategy to clean up, once and for all, all regular VC and NVA units in the area as well as uprooting the long established VC infrastructure. Although this Campaign was still continuing after the first of the year, 1967, there were three separate, but closely allied division operations prior to 31 Dec 1966—THAYER I, IRVING, and THAYER II. In sequence, each one covered substantially the same territory, northeastern and central-coastal Binh Dinh Province, and had the same mission—complete pacification of the Province. This campaign marked this division's first opportunity to move into an area in force and remain there in force until the job was done.

To accomplish this mission, it was not enough merely to find the enemy. (Map 10). The division had to seek out and find the base areas of the 2nd VC and 18th NVA Regiments. By locating these vital stockpiles of food, arms and ammunition, equipment, and medical supplies he had worked so hard to build up, we would definitely complicate his capability to continue as an effective fighting force.

THAYER I began with five infantry battalions air assaulting into a circular configuration around the Crow's Foot area, landing on 14 high ground LZ's, after which they searched the ridge lines down toward the Kim Son Valley floor. (Map 11). Meanwhile, two ARVN airborne battalions deployed into the THAYER I AO and positioned themselves in the north of the valley to prevent enemy exfiltration as the noose grew tighter. Ground contact was sporadic, but there was no question about locating rear supply areas, for on September 16th elements of the 1st Brigade

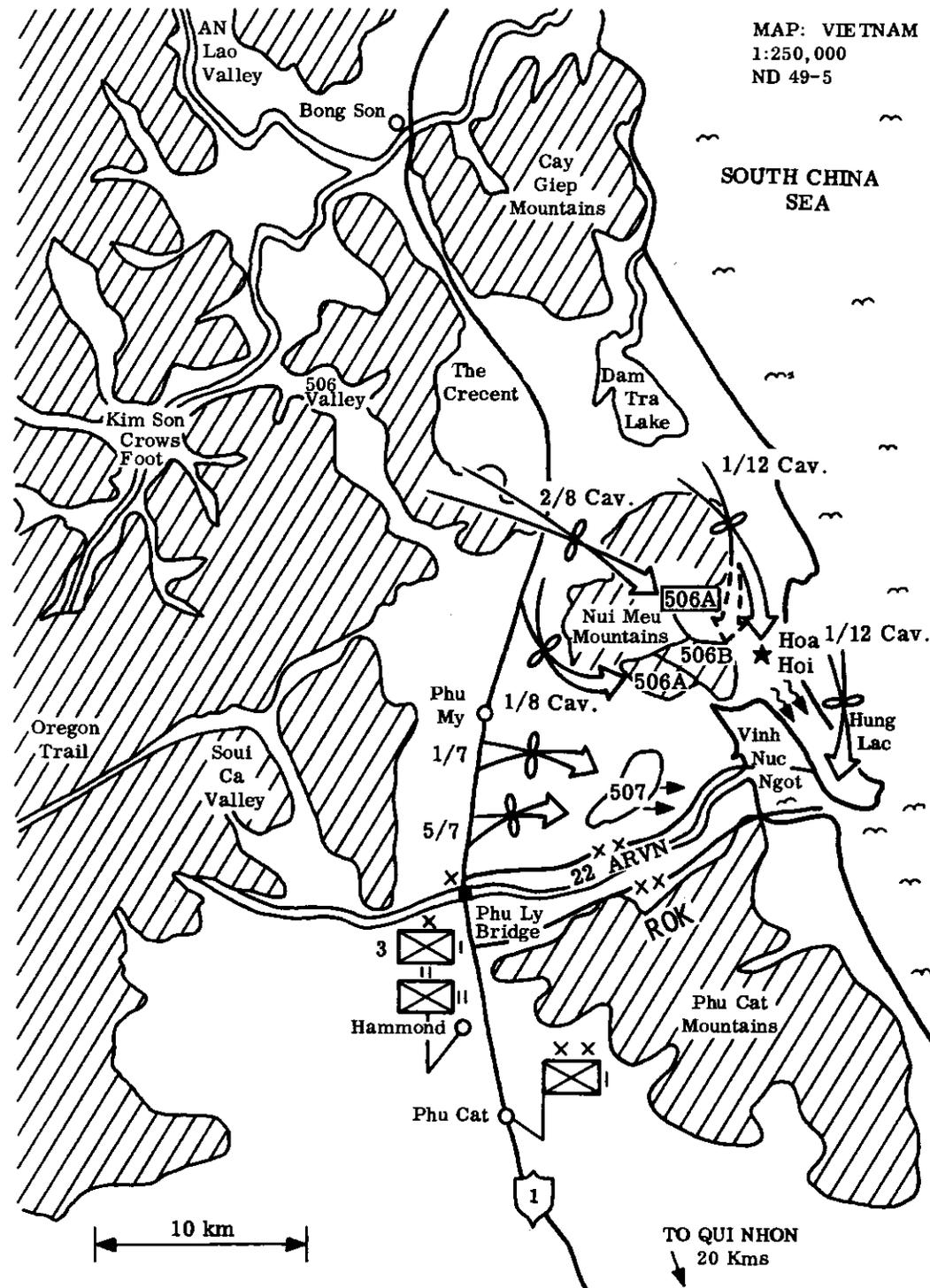


CENTRAL-COASTAL AND NORTHEASTERN BINH DINH PROVINCE

MAP 11

MAP: VIETNAM
1:250,000
ND 49-5

SOUTH CHINA
SEA



CENTRAL-COASTAL AND NORTHEASTERN BINH DINH PROVINCE

MAP 11

MAP: VIETNAM
1:250,000
ND 49-5

SOUTH CHINA
SEA

located an anti-personnel mine and grenade factory. 3000 mines and 1377 grenades were in various stages of completion. That same day, the 1st Brigade came across a major regimental sized hospital with specialized surgical equipment and accommodations for 50 patients. A weapons cache on 17 September revealed 75 rifles, to include 16 M-16's and 200 lbs. of TNT. These were just a few of many. The number of these caches and their contents fully indicated that the Division was astride an important regimental trains area. By thoroughly dominating the valley, the Division prevented the enemy from using these bases he needed to remain combat effective. He had one of two choices: to stand and fight or to exfiltrate. He decided to run and headed eastward toward the coastal regions.

On the 19th of September, elements of the 2/8th Cav became heavily engaged with two enemy combat support companies in the highway 506 Valley situated to the east of the the KIM SON Valley. Taken in light of other intelligence, this contact was significant for it pointed to the fact that some of the enemy forces had left the valleys and were in fact moving east. Consequently, on September 20th, the 2nd Bde was given the mission of conducting a reconnaissance in force operation in area PANTHER with the 1/5 Cav. This battalion's assault to the NUI HON GIANG hill mass, east of the 506 Valley, was unopposed. That same day elements of the 2/5 Cav also deployed to the low ground further east of this hill mass to block routes of egress. The Division now operated in two areas of the THAYER I AO: the 1st Bde continued search operations in the KIM SON Valley while the 2nd Bde operated in the PANTHER AO. On the 21st, a day later, two companies of the 1/5 Cav air assaulted toward the northeast into area TIGER in response to reports that the Regimental Headquarters as well as the 9th Bn, 18th NVA Regiment were in that area. It is believed these units were attempting to exfiltrate to join other elements of the 3rd NVA Div located to the north in the AN LAO Valley. Sporadic contact was made on the 21st and 22nd of September which apparently forced these enemy units farther north. Significant contact with these forces was not established during the remainder of the operation.

ELUSIVE VC

On 22 September, elements of the 22nd ARVN Division joined the 1st Cavalry's search and destroy mission in THAYER I. Fortuitously, the 2nd Bn, 41st Regiment and the Regimental CP of the ARVN Div entered the AO in the Crescent area, a position near the location of two sought-

after enemy battalions--the 7th and 8th Bns, 18th NVA Regiment. This further confirmed that the enemy had moved east. Confused and unsure of which way to go, the two battalions decided to attack ARVN and achieve a victory on their way out. Consequently, at 3:40 AM in the morning on the 23rd, the ARVN position was attacked, but the enemy had underestimated ARVN's resources. The ARVN soldiers gave a tremendous account of themselves and, with artillery and air support from the 1st Cavalry, counter-attacked at 6:00 AM, forcing the NVA battalions off the battlefield, leaving behind 137 of their dead. They departed the battle area in an easterly direction, and, although there were strong elements of the 2nd VC Regiment in area TIGER, it is probable that the nearby presence of the 1/5 Cav and 2/5 Cav presented too great a threat to any enemy link up. Based on intelligence from captives of the ARVN contact, the Division reacted by committing elements of three battalions by air assault into a cordon operation in area PANTHER. During the following days, the division continued to search in area PANTHER and TIGER but to no avail, as local sweeps failed to locate the enemy units. As subsequently pieced together, the battalions moved north of Lake DAM TRA O and headed south along the coast, arriving at a location northeast of the Nui Mieu Mountains on 27 September. They then began to move in a southwesterly direction intending to cross National Route 1 on 30 September at a point just north of the PHU LY Bridge. The plan was to return to their base areas in the SOU CA and KIM SON Valleys. A captured soldier revealed the plan, and as reaction a company of the 1/5 Cav was dispatched from HAMMOND to move along the highway in force, thereby giving the impression of a larger number of troops. The company also established blocking positions west of National Route 1. This rapid reaction discouraged the enemy from attempting to force a crossing; instead, he returned east and was reported on the flatlands south of the NUI MIEU Mountains on 30 September. This retreat provided what proved to be the Division's first major contact on D-Day of Operation IRVING.

IRVING

Meanwhile other 1st Cavalry units moved east from the valleys and maneuvered into position to trap the enemy in a coastal pocket. There evolved a screen around the proposed IRVING AO, to prevent enemy exfiltration back to the western valleys. Therefore, as THAYER I drew to a close, it was concluded that the bulk of the enemy forces in the AO had been forced out of their base areas

in the rugged mountains and were located in the coastal plains to the east. Routes of egress west were blocked, and contact on the plains confirmed that sizeable enemy forces were there in a natural pocket, bounded generally by the NUI BA hill mass on the south, and the coast line on the east, the NUI MIEU hill mass on the north, and National Route 1 on the west. As most of the contact took place within this pocket, it is understandable why IRVING has been called a battlefield within a much larger battlefield.

The enemy, uprooted from his mountain sanctuary and supplies during THAYER I found himself forced with the choice of fighting at a disadvantage during IRVING, or exfiltrating from the area in small groups. Exfiltration was made difficult because of the already mentioned screen established in the later stages of THAYER I.

One can now appreciate that what was to be the great success of IRVING began when THAYER I was launched, for it was during September that the Division was building the subsequent battlefield. Favorable conditions had been established, although it was impossible to predict results. Tactically, IRVING was a logical continuation of THAYER I, but the name was changed to distinguish it as part of a Free World Force effort from THAYER I, a 1st Air Cavalry Operation.

In IRVING, the two enemy units primarily encountered were once again the 18th NVA Regiment and the 2nd VC Regiment. Prior operations—MASHER/WHITE WING, January through March 1966, and CRAZY HORSE, May and June 1966—saw the division engage and defeat elements of these Regiments. In addition, there were numerous local VC forces as well as two other main force VC battalions located within the area of operation.

In planning for IRVING, the Division concentrated on Psy-Ops programs, population control, and Civic Action projects. Each was essential for the successful accomplishment of the mission. Although BINH DINH Province itself is about the size of Connecticut with a total population of 860,000, the IRVING AO encompassed only the Province's central-coastal sector. However, there was a population of 300,000 in the operational area, 85% of which was concentrated along the coastal region and engaged in rice farming and salt production.

As the Free World Forces were required to operate in this heavily populated area, it was imperative that an effective population control program be planned and executed. It was through these precautions that non-combatant casualties were kept to a minimum.

Population control was put into effect as part of the Psy-Ops program, and, unlike previous operations, control measures were required throughout the operation and varied only in degree. In all, Psy-Ops dropped 12,261,000 leaflets and expended 154.5 broadcast hours during IRVING, most of which was directed toward this control. Furthermore, both means were used to establish curfews and to instruct the villagers to remain in place until more specific instructions were given. "Stay put. If movement is necessary move only in our direction when the battle must be carried to a hamlet, file out of the hamlet in the specified direction."

Civic Action was also carefully planned. By holding refugee flow below anticipated levels, all combat units were able to concentrate on fighting the enemy without serious concern for inflicting casualties on non-combatants. In spite of this effort, there were still 19,000 refugees, most of whom were from the PHU MY District. Their movement was controlled by refugee forward collection points, established in each Brigade area. A central collection station under Division control was located in the vicinity of PHU MY District Headquarters. Care, feeding, and medical treatment were administered at every echelon.

THE ALLIES

Actually, the 1st Cavalry's Operation IRVING, 2-24 October, was one of three separate, but closely coordinated operations of three allied nations. The stated mission was to continue the Pacification Campaign in the Province and to uproot the long established VC infrastructure along its coastal region. The 22nd ARVN Division and the Capitol ROK Division participated in operations DAI BANG (EAGLE) 800 and MANG HO 6, respectively, and it was the tri-national cooperation throughout the operations which was most significant.

On D-Day, 2 October, the US Forces, encompassing the north and west, had planned to pare down an effective portion of the fairly large AO by landing forward. Five Air Cavalry Battalions were to assault in objectives 506A, 506B, 506C, and 507. (Map 11a). This forward strategy would enable the Division to put massive force on the enemy's heartline within a few hours. Simultaneously, the ARVN and ROK deployments would push northward in the southern portion of the AO so that all three schemes of maneuver would reinforce and complement one another. The 22nd ARVN Division was to launch an overland attack to the northeast with two infantry battalions and two airborne battalions. Their APC's would work between the ROK's on the southeast and the

US on the west over suitable terrain and in an area that was familiar to them. The Capitol ROK Division was to push northward through the PHU CAT Mountains, clearing mountain sanctuaries and coastal hideouts in its advance.

On the South China Sea, the ARVN junk fleet and the US Navy in swift boats conducted patrols. Naval support was important, for without the ability to seal escape routes to the sea, the enemy could have avoided encirclement.

Operation IRVING opened with elements of the division air assaulting across PL WHIP into assigned areas beginning at 7:00 AM on the 2nd. On D-Day the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry was assigned its usual reconnaissance mission, dispatching one White Team (Scout ships) and one Red Team (Gunships) in the vicinity of HOA HOI. While surveying the area, the White Team spotted seven NVA soldiers in the hamlet, received fire from them, and requested the gunships' support. The aircraft then called for A Troop's infantry unit to develop the situation. This Blue Team, on stand-by alert at HAMMOND, was promptly notified and was on the ground at HOA HOI within 15 minutes of the initial sighting. Although the enemy force was originally estimated as a platoon, the Blue Team became heavily engaged with an obviously larger force.

Advised of the situation, Colonel Archie R. Hyle, CO 1st Brigade, decided to commit the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry. While airborne to another location, LTC James T. Root, CO 1/12 Cav, received the change of mission, requiring him to divert his companies from the planned assault into objective 506B. Relying extensively on heliborne assault, the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry had maneuvered five rifle companies within a few hours to completely surround the hamlet. In a classic example of airmobility, the enemy was sealed within the perimeter, effectively cut off from any escape. While establishing this cordon and, before artillery was called in, the battalion made a maximum effort to remove all non-combatants from the battle area. A temporary lull in offensive action was called in order that these civilians, mostly women and children, could safely depart. A broadcast ship had arrived on station and issued specific instructions for the villagers. As a result, they gathered in four district areas outside the perimeter for control and screening during the fight.

The contact lasted throughout the day and into the night. Artillery fired numerous missions and TAC Air strikes pounded the area. During the hours of darkness a C-47 (USAF), armed with 7.62 miniguns and aircraft flares, remained overhead to support the troops in contact. There was

continuous illumination as well as 685 supporting rounds from the Division's 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery.

Two sweep-throughs followed the next morning. Another 40 enemy were routed from their protective bunkers. By noon on October 3rd, the enemy had lost over 250 killed or wounded while the US losses remained relatively light. This particular engagement confirmed the presence of the 7th and 8th Battalions of the 18th NVA Regiment, the two battalions that had planned to exfiltrate the IRVING AO into the SOUI CA on September 29th.

Meanwhile, also, on D-Day, the two battalions of the 3rd Brigade, 1/7 and 5/7, assaulted all companies into objective 507. Once on the ground all forces established blocking positions and then began to conduct search and destroy movement toward the sea.

Population control on D-Day included over 2,000,000 leaflets and 14 hours of aerial broadcasting resulting in fewer refugees and civilian casualties than anticipated. Elsewhere, a B-52 strike covered a portion of the NUI MIEU Mountains in objective 506A, after which a follow-up reconnaissance on the 3rd revealed documents and seven enemy dead, confirming the presence of elements of the 2nd VC Regiment at the time of the strike.

All forces advanced on schedule gradually decreasing the circumference of the pocket. The sweep to the sea continued in-coordinated overland movement and air assaults to destroy the enemy in and around the coastal flats.

On the 4th of October the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry air assaulted into the HUNG LAC Peninsula to clear that area of enemy. B Company landed north to sweep south and C Company landed south to sweep north to link up with B Company. Enemy were forced out of caves and underground hideouts. The Division Cavalry Squadron continued its air and ground reconnaissance throughout the operational area. The naval blockade was effective in sealing escape routes and in preventing enemy departure in sampans.

On D-Day plus three (5 October) the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry air assaulted back into the SOUI CA Valley to exploit another B-52 strike and to prevent enemy surprise from the west, or rear, of the operation.

While other Cavalry units continued search and destroy missions in assigned areas, the ARVN 22nd Division completed its attack to the northwest and began a systematic sweep of their assigned AO concentrating two battalions in both the northeast and the southwest. The Capitol

ROK Infantry Division swept through the PHU CAT Mountains and sealed off the northern sector in support of the ARVN operation. It flushed the enemy from natural caves as well as from rice paddies on the coastal plains.

The search continued in three areas: The SOUI CA, the HUNG LAC Peninsula, and the NUI MIEU Mountains. From the beginning the Free World Forces concentrated on searching for, finding, and uprooting the VC. To accomplish this, all able bodied males between the ages of 14-60 were taken into custody for processing. Some 3,857 suspects were interrogated and just less than 20% of these suspects were identified as hard core VC. The search continued to find the enemy in small, fragmented groups.

On October 9th, the 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery (Aerial Rocket Artillery) fired two SS-11 missiles at bunkers on the HUNG LAC Peninsula. The missiles proved extremely effective in destroying the bunkers and led to the capture of 55 VC without a fight. Also on that day, the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry was released from Division control to become OPCON to 3rd Brigade and thereby assumed the searching mission of the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry in the SOUI CA Valley.

On 10 October, the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry reported that a fourteen year old Vietnamese boy had walked into its positions at LZ PLAYBOY in the NUI MIEU Mountains. The boy claimed to have been a prisoner of the VC until 5:00 that morning. The boy believed he was the only survivor as that morning the VC threw hand grenades and fired into a pit in which he and eighteen other prisoners were held. After the enemy's departure, he had managed to escape.

Believing his story, the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry proceeded to systematically search the area in which the boy thought the POW camp was located. Four more survivors were encountered during the search and each verified the young boy's story.

With the help of these survivors, the main camp was located on October 11th to the northwest of LZ PLAYBOY. An old man with badly burned feet was found and evacuated; he had been left behind by the VC because he could not walk. At 2:30 that afternoon, a short distance away from the main camp, the bodies of 12 Vietnamese were found. Their hands were tied behind their backs before they were killed.

These atrocities were specifically condemned in a division Psy-Ops leaflet. This leaflet was reported by two returnees to have encouraged their return to the government. The real meaning of this discovery can perhaps be appreciated by read-

ing the following letter to US Forces by Vo Phouc, one of these captives. (The translation is as close to the original as possible.)

Republic of Vietnam

To the Commanding Officers of the US Army
Dear Gentlemen:

I am Vo Phouc from Hung Lac Hamlet, By Thanh Village, Phu My District, Binh Dinh Province. I am representing 157 people of good will and National cadres who were captured by the Viet Cong and kept in the rock cave at Chanh Giao Mountain, My An, some of whom had been held 2 to 3 years; I was held for 20 months. On 9 October 1966, we were freed by the US Army to return to the National Government. Thanks to you who freed us and restored us to life, gratitude like the sky and ocean we feel for you, we will never forget that great feat which can never be repaid by us.

Now we return to our families and the National cadres are very happy and I send my regards to you gentlemen and please send our regards to the American government and people who are trying to help us, trying to kill the savage communist despotism.

One more time, we sincerely thank you, American Army, people and government who are helping the Vietnamese people eject the savage Communist despotism and are building a strong Vietnamese nation.

Respectfully yours,

Vo Phouc /s/
VO PHOUC /t/
14 Oct 1966

Contact began to diminish on the coast as the units completed searching to the sea and doubled back to catch the enemy as he came out of hiding. Meanwhile, a new picture began to develop in the west. Several substantial ammunition caches were located in the SOUI CA Valley. On 12 October intelligence reports indicated that at least two battalions of the 2nd VC Regiment were regrouping in the KIM SON Valley and that the regimental headquarters had moved there with one of the battalions from the CAY GIÉP Mountains. Plans were made to exploit the intelligence with air-ground reconnaissance and long range patrols in the KIM SON and SOUI CA Valleys.

Then on October 13, forces were repositioned as once again we entered the KIM SON Valley with two battalions. The 2/8 Cav remained along the sea coast. Operations continued in and around the SOUI CA where the 1/5 Cav had undoubtedly

located the VC Hoi Son secret base areas. For seven consecutive days A and B Companies of the 1/5 Cav uncovered large enemy weapons, food, and medical caches. Found on the 15th were four cameras, one of which was owned by the Look Senior Editor, Sam Castan, and taken from him when he was killed during CRAZY HORSE. On the 18th, a major cache of ammunition, supplies, and material was located by A/1/5 Cav which reported that this particular cache was found on platforms on a hill with apparently no attempt to camouflage, giving an indication of the sense of security the enemy felt in his rear area.

A recap of some of the more important items we located in these caches will show the devastating effect on the Hoi Son base area. The thirty-three major finds in the SOUI CA and its surrounding high ground revealed 133 weapons, both individual and crew served, 330,500 rounds of small and heavy caliber ammunition, 4 complete mortars and 43x57 RR rounds. The hospital complex uncovered on the 13th held in part, 1,400 bottles of morphine. Other supply caches contained 5,000 reams of typing paper, 60 bolts of cloth, and numerous telephones and radios.

For the remaining days of IRVING attempt was made to establish contact with sporadic success. C/1/5 Cav engaged a company from the 2nd VC Regiment on the 15th resulting in 39 enemy dead. Otherwise contact was light in the waning days of the operation.

In 22 days THE FIRST TEAM had combined efforts with other Free World Forces so that the enemy had no alternative to fighting—surrender. The statistics were overwhelming, for in total figures for the three allied operations the enemy lost 2,063 killed, 1,930 captured, and there were 141 returnees to the GVN. In particular, Operation IRVING was unique in that THE FIRST TEAM captured, interrogated, and processed more enemy than in any previous operation. Also for the first time since the division began operations in Vietnam the number of enemy captured exceeded the number killed. In round figures the 1st Cavalry alone accounted for 681 enemy dead and 741 captured. Not only did the enemy suffer heavy personnel losses, but his vital logistical and support losses in the SOUI CA and KIM SON Valleys—the life sustaining caches of food, ammunition, clothing and medical supplies were uprooted and either evacuated or destroyed. His political machine—the VC infrastructure—and his ability to control the population by terror had dissolved. A significant step toward eliminating VC influence in this fertile area had been taken and we insured that an effective revolutionary project would follow the military victory.

THAYER II

THAYER II commenced on October 25, with the termination of IRVING, and continued the successes realized during these first two phases of the Binh Dinh Pacification Campaign. However, as the six battalions in the KIM SON and SOUI CA Valleys and one battalion, the 2/8 Cav in the NUI MIEU continued to look for and destroy elements of the 2nd VC and 18th NVA Regiments, the 2/5 Cav, the IFFORCEV reserve-reaction force, was alerted at Camp Radcliff and committed to Pleiku on the 29th of October for Operation PAUL REVERE IV.

Toward the end of October, agent reports, contacts and sightings by the 4th Infantry Division, recently based at Pleiku, indicated a large scale buildup along the border, particularly in the Plei Djereng-Duc Co area.

PAUL REVERE IV

On 31 October, the frag order Travis was issued requiring the 2nd Brigade and its CP to move into the PAUL REVERE IV AO where it would operate until December 27th. With the 2nd Brigade CP deployed the 1/5 Cav, the 2/12 Cav, B/1/9 Cav and 1/77 Artillery. Extensive search and destroy operations followed in the Chu Pong-Ia Drang area and along the border. With the exception of heavy contact made by C/1/5 Cav on the 21st of November, the 2nd Brigade units made only minimal contacts. On the 21st C/1/5 had the mission to continue its search southward along the Cambodian border from its position six miles from Duc Co. About 9:45 AM its second platoon became engaged with a sizeable enemy force. Approximately 15 minutes later, as the 3rd platoon was coming to the 2nd platoon's aid, it likewise became engaged in a separate action 300 meters away and found itself surrounded on all sides. The men of the 3rd platoon fought for their lives but there was just no chance as the enemy filled the air with a heavy volume of machine gun fire and hand grenades. Artillery was called in on top of the 3rd platoon's position which still did not prevent the platoon from being overrun. The NVA closed in on the platoon and killed all but one wounded before fleeing the area. The 2nd and 3rd platoons of C/1/5 Cav suffered badly, but the enemy paid dearly with his 147 killed. These two platoons from Charlie Company had engaged a battalion of the 101 C Regiment of the 10th NVA Division, a previously unencountered unit for the Cavalry. There is no question that Charlie will think twice about striking the next time. One would think he should have learned this lesson a long time ago.

Light sporadic contact with small groups continued for the remainder of the operation. The 1/5 Cav departed the AO on 6 December and the 2/5 Cav was withdrawn on the 22nd. PAUL REVERE IV terminated on the 27th when the 2nd Brigade Headquarters, the supporting elements and the 2/12 Cav closed into Base Camp and prepared for commitment into the THAYER II AO.

THAYER II

During the period of PAUL REVERE IV, THE FIRST TEAM maintained sustained operations in four distinct and widely separated areas of the II CTZ. (Map 12). A brigade and three battalions were in PAUL REVERE IV, two brigades and four battalions were on THAYER II in Binh Dinh, a battalion was at Camp Radcliff, and a battalion task force at Phan Thiet on Operation BYRD. One can only wonder at the massive logistical support that was required for the daily necessities of food, ammunition, equipment, and petroleum to keep the "birds" flying. Effectively operating in these diverse areas once again points up the versatility of the Air Cavalry and the capability to react to the enemy whenever and wherever he may appear.

Meanwhile at high noon on November 11th, the Division Artillery acknowledged the firing of its one-millionth round in the Republic of Vietnam as one gun from a selected battery in each artillery battalion, organic and attached to the 1st Cavalry, fired a TOT. These rounds were fired from the respective tactical positions in the various areas of operation and could be heard from the South China Sea to the Cambodian border.

In the THAYER II AO the division forces ranged from a brigade with two maneuver battalions to three brigades with eight maneuver battalions once PAUL REVERE IV terminated. Emphasis continued on searching the KIM SON and SOUI CA Valleys, looking for the enemy which had fragmented after IRVING and attempted to avoid all contact unless he thought he had a decided advantage. The operation was characterized by long periods of light and scattered contact punctuated by sharp engagements with enemy units up to battalion size.

On November 1st, elements of the 1/9 Cav and B/5/7 established contact with the 93rd Battalion of the 2nd VC Regiment in the area between National Route 1 and the DAM TRA O Lake, south of the GAY GIEP Mountains. The fight lasted over nine hours, and for his heroism in leading his company that day by repeatedly jeopardizing his own life, Captain John L. Hitti,

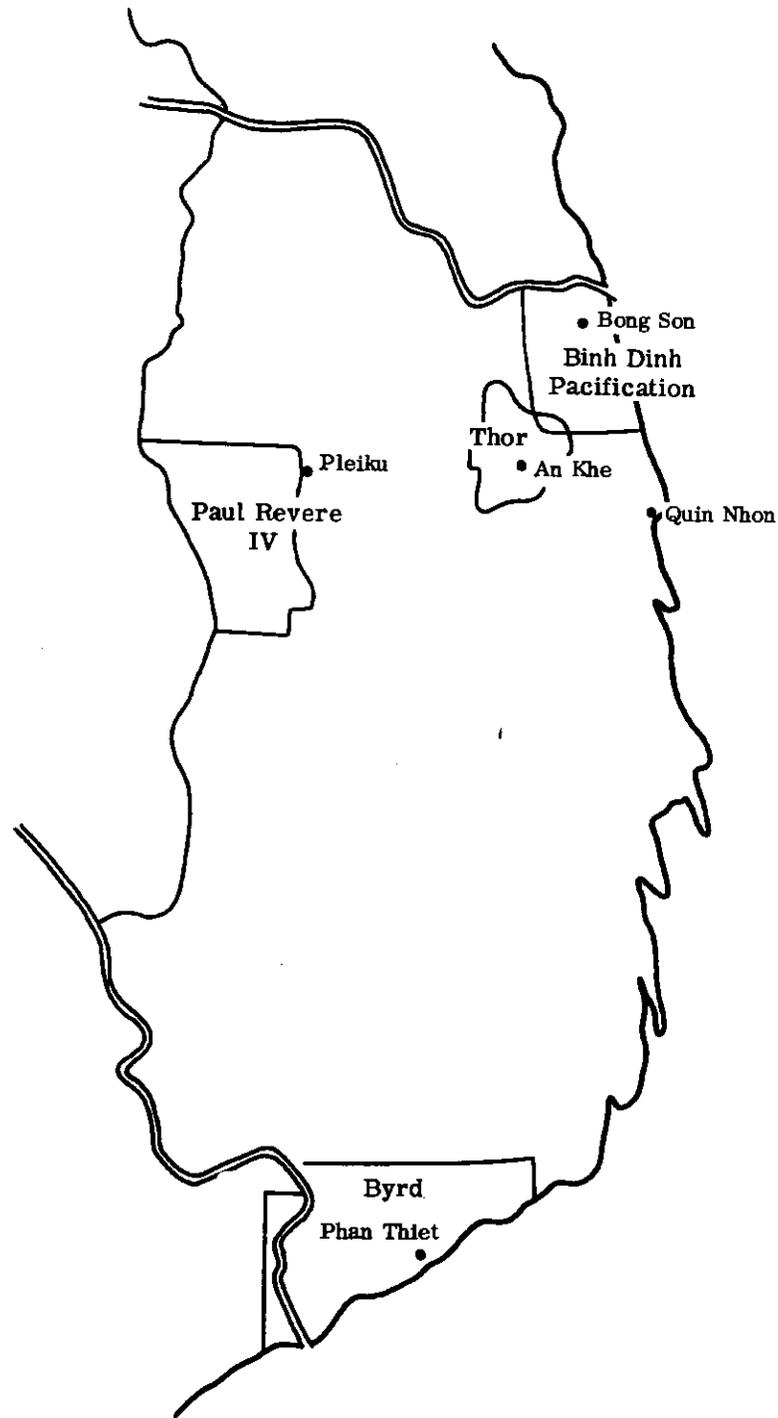
CO B/5/7 was nominated for the Distinguished Service Cross. There were forty-three enemy dead when contact broke at 6:00 PM that evening.

On 1 December the infantry platoon from C Troop 1/9 Cav entered the hamlet of PHU HUU (2) in search of the KIM SON Valley floor. Two squads became pinned down by a large volume of machine gun and small arms fire. Captain Hitti's company was once again nearby to answer the call for help, and his 2nd platoon arrived at the hamlet in an hour and a half after a double-time overland movement. The 5/7's platoon penetrated the hamlet and the well prepared defensive position after close-in, fierce fighting for the remainder of the daylight and on into dark. It was reinforced by a sister platoon that evening while other cavalry units positioned themselves in blocking positions to prevent exfiltration. Contact broke that night, but a sweep through the next morning revealed sixty-seven enemy dead and four wounded. Unknowingly these two platoons had successfully fought an enemy battalion when it was in well-concealed, well-planned, mutually-supporting bunker positions.

ROVER

Determined to clear thoroughly the KIM SON Valley, the division began Operation ROVER on December 9th, which was a five day refugee evacuation effort to clear the valley of civilians. By doing so the valley was then designated a "free fire" zone which authorized massive artillery and TAC Air ordnance bombardment at will without regard for the Rules of Engagement. On D-Day, pamphlets and loudspeakers were used to inform the indigenous populace that they had five days to evacuate and specified the routes to follow to arrive at collection and screening points. Over 1,100 of the local peasants took heed and were resettled in secure areas.

The highway 506 Valley, just east of the KIM SON Valley was the location for heavy contact on December 17th. C/1/8 on a ridge to the west of the 506 Valley spotted and pursued an enemy squad southeast into the valley. Subsequently numerous aircraft were fired on throughout this general vicinity. The infantry platoon from A Troop 1/9 Cav air assaulted to exploit the contact and encountered heavy resistance on the valley floor. The 1/12 Cav was called upon to attempt to encircle what was determined to be at least an enemy battalion in well-dug in defensive positions. By dusk a total of five infantry companies and two platoons from the 1/9 were committed, but darkness prevented a shoulder to shoulder cordon around the battalion. In spite of continuous illumination from an Air Force flare ship,



MAP 12

the enemy eluded during the night to the east and southeast. However, a final sweep of the battle area on December 19th revealed a body count of ninety-five enemy dead. Once again the Cav had brought the fight to the enemy and forced him to show his hand.

LZ BIRD

The two day Christmas truce ended violently when early in the morning of December 27, nineteen hours after the truce termination, the three battalions of the 22nd NVA Regiment attacked C/1/12 and two artillery batteries at LZ Bird in the KIM SON Valley. The battalions had moved southward from their usual bases in the AN LAO Valley taking advantage of the two days of truce to get into position for the mortar and infantry attack. As his mortar fires landed among the howitzers of B/2/19 Arty (105mm) and C/6/16 Arty (155mm) the infantry assaulted the defensive perimeter and were able, because of sheer numbers alone, to reach several of the firing positions in each one of the artillery batteries. Both the cavalry and the two artillery batteries fought desperately to hold the positions they still controlled. There was violent close-in firing and hand-to-hand combat. This determined stand, combined with the direct fire of the division's first two "bee hive" 105mm rounds from B/2/19 Artillery and extremely accurate ARA fire drove the enemy from the position. The next morning 44 enemy were counted among the "gun" pits. Pursuit during the ensuing days brought the enemy total losses for its attack on Bird to over 200 killed.

A few days later the division captured Senior Captain Phuoc of the 22nd NVA Regiment. With him was the map depicting the enemy's version of the positions on LZ Bird, from which the attack had been planned. Senior Captain Phuoc was the operations officer of the Regiment and had planned and executed the attack. Subsequent interrogations have revealed vital information on enemy tactics and techniques.

1966 closed during the second two day truce period around the U. S. New Year. On December 31st, THAYER II was in its sixty-eighth day, the longest operation undertaken by the division in Vietnam. On that day, the 3rd NVA Division had lost a total of 980 killed in THAYER II, representing each of its three regiments. 1967 would see the continuation of THAYER II as it exceeded 100 days and accounted for a division record for killed in one operation—1,757 dead by body count. It was a very promising note on which to end the first eighteen months since the birth of the Air Cavalry on July 1, 1965. There was

nothing slow in its upbringing as it was forced into immediate full growth and maturity from the very beginning.

RECOGNITION

This unusual success certainly did not go unheralded, or without recognition. The achievements of the division and pictures of Sky Troopers repeatedly adorned daily newspapers and weekly magazines throughout the United States. Columbia, South Carolina took it unto itself to adopt the 1st Air Cavalry as its own and offered assistance in building materials and "hard-to-get" items for civic action projects. The city was most willing to help this division which gave so much of itself for the cause of freedom. The General Assembly of the State of Georgia resolved in February, 1966 to erect a suitable monument in Columbus, Georgia, in honor of all Cavalrymen, living and dead, as an expression of gratitude by the people of Georgia for its supreme sacrifice in Vietnam. In October, 1966 the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) was selected from a field of nominees as the "Outstanding Aviation Unit" for the period April, 1965 to March 1966 by the Army Aviation Association of America. THE FIRST TEAM was cited for its innovation in the use of Army aircraft above and beyond the usual mission.

Since arrival in Vietnam in September of 1965, the 1st Air Cavalry has conducted 12 operations involving single or multi-company task forces; 32 operations at battalion or brigade task force strength, and three operations it called campaigns because of the duration and the forces committed. These are the PLEIKU CAMPAIGN in October-November 1965, the BONG SON CAMPAIGN, January-March 1966; and the BINH DINH PACIFICATION CAMPAIGN.

These operations have been costly to the NVA and VC enemy—over 7,400 killed by body count with an additional 5,960 estimated killed, for a total of over 13,360—3,206 captured, 2,476 individual weapons and 349 crew operated weapons captured or destroyed, 1,295 tons of rice, and 512 tons of salt captured or destroyed. When at all possible the division operated with ARVN and CIDG units to assist them in winning their war for self-determination. Command emphasis continually stressed the importance of the Civic Action projects and the Revolutionary Development programs.

YEAR OF THE HORSE

1966 certainly was the year of the Horse as the only way one could interpret the success of the 1st Cavalry. Each member of THE FIRST TEAM

was inspired to an awareness of the importance of our mission to the people of Vietnam and of our unique capability to accomplish that mission. This mission is the continuous orientation on the enemy, and the knowledge that we possess that means to exploit decisively any contact by the Sky Troopers or supporting forces. It is the execution of the vertical envelopment and the pursuit, when our organic helicopters enable the commander to carry the fight to the enemy and deny him the sanctuary he needs when he breaks contact. There is a flexibility, an ability to react to rapidly changing situations. The division

embodies an ever prevailing esprit de corps. Corporal, Captain, Colonel, or Commanding General—each is constantly learning from the other, as we demonstrate the Airmobile Division is uniquely equipped to defeat the enemy at any point on the counterinsurgency scale, from the local VC defense platoon to the well-armed NVA Regiment. The 1st Cavalry Division—THE FIRST TEAM—is proud of past achievements. Continuous refinement of airmobile tactics and techniques will produce still more decisive victories in the days ahead.



CH-54 SKYCRANE lifting out a CH-47 CHINOOK



A Sergeant of the 1st Cavalry Division (AM) directs the landing of a resupply helicopter in a dry rice field near the Cambodian border. Nov. 1965.



Preparing to board assault helicopters. October 1965.