

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Battle Experiences 9 July 1966

Commanding Officer, Troop C

7

On the morning of 9 July 1966, the 1st Squadron 4th Cavalry (-) moved to execute a division size recon in force mission in the area south of AN LOC and west of Highway 13. The main axis of advance was along the MINH THANH Road. This road is a secondary laterite road which was in excellent condition during the operation. It extends from the southern portion of the XI CAT Rubber Plantation at coordinate XT 744801 through secondary undergrowth and over two semi-fordable streams to the entrance of the Minh Thanh rubber Plantation area at coordinates XT 638706.

The Squadron moved from its perimeter at the AN LOC airstrip with Troop C leading followed by Troop. SP time was early morning approximately 0730.

Artillery units were pre-positioned to support the squadron move to the SW. Air support was readily available with an air-cap over the column and an airforce LEO riding in the squadron C&C helicopter.

Troop C moved south of Hwy 13 to a RJ at XT 760847 where the troop then proceeded west and south along secondary laterite plantation roads to a holding area at approximate coords XT 745808.

Troop C order of march and formation were as follows:

1st Platoon, CP group w/CO's APC Medic APC
2d Platoon, 3d platoon and Hq (-) group consisting of Operations/Comm APC, AVIB and Maintenance section APC.

The troop VTR had been left at the Minh Thanh plantation during an earlier operation. The flame thrower track (Zippo) was integrated into the tactical formation of the 1st platoon. Tactical formation throughout the majority of the operation consisted of the 1st platoon flanking the road way on the right or west and NW of the road, the 2d platoon on the left or East, south and SE of the road. The CP group, 3d platoon and Troop Hq (-) followed by various distances along the roadway with the Troop CP group generally aligned with the rear vehicle of the flanking platoons. Three tanks were available for this operation; one from the 1st platoon advanced along the roadway, the other two tanks led their respective flank platoon formations. The 3d platoon did not have tanks. The squadron (-) had integrated elements of Company B, 1/2 Inf Bn into troop formations on 7 July giving a total of six fighting troopers aboard each track. Although it is impossible to narrate the separate actions of either attached infantry or organic cavalry troopers, it must be said that these infantrymen adapted quickly and excellently to cavalry troop tactics and fought exceedingly well.

With the troop halted in the pre-recon positions, artillery preparations were fixed along the route of advance. Poor weather delayed pre-planning airstrikes approximately an hour. The Troop remained in this holding position at coords XT 745808 for slightly over an hour until the low ceiling lifted.

LTC Lewne, Squadron CO, gave the order to move out and Troop C in a deployed formation, moved south and then SW paralleling the roadway. As the troop left the southern edge of the rubber, the underbrush and jungle growth became so thick that the 1st platoon was unable to maneuver in a flanking formation on the right of the road. The platoon returned to the roadway and proceeded SW in a column formation along the road.

1

REGRADED TO	UNCLASSIFIED
PER AUTHORITY	EO 12958.1-R
DATE	3 Nov 26 Chris Johnson

HP
GDS
rec'd
Dec 72

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

See the 2d platoon, because of extremely limited visibility and thick jungle growth, was forced to return to the road from its left flanking formation. The troop continued in this posture for approximately 2,100 meters.

The troop returned to its flanking wedge formation approximately at coords XT 730786. This wedge formation was continued by Troop C for several hours as the Squadron (-) conducted its recon mission along the axis of advance. Recon by fire was employed by the flanking platoons. No return fire was received and no enemy activity observed. During this time artillery preparations were being fixed several thousand meters in advance of the troop's lead elements. The effectiveness of this fire could be observed along the roadway. Fire teams and an armed Chinook was making passes along the road in front of the troop. Overhead there were many LOH's and other command and observation aircraft. However, no signs of enemy activity were observed. The advance continued in this manner without incident until the troop reached a position short of Objective DICK on the bridge site at coords XT 694751.

Upon arrival at coords XT 698754 the troop assumed a box formation with the 3d platoon deployed facing west, the flanking platoons deployed to the north and south respectively and the Troop Hq securing the rear of the box and maintaining contact with the trail troop - Troop B. Artillery preparations followed by airstrikes were used in softening up the bridge area. A particularly effective napalm strike was employed to burn out dense undergrowth along the left side of the road adjacent to the bridge. Following the strikes the 3d platoon supported by overwatching tank fire, with two engineer mine sweeper/demolition teams attached, rapidly moved forward in a mounted posture to the bridge sides of the bridge, a quick check was made for demolitions and then the 3d platoon leader, PSG Torres crossed several APC's to add force on the far side of the bridge. Extensive scouting mine sweeping and checks were made of the bridge and surrounding areas. No evidence of enemy activity was found. The bridge was in good condition and would facilitate the crossing of heavy armor.

During this time the TC of C19 received a moderately serious small caliber bullet round in one of his legs. No incoming rounds had been heard in the area, although a gun team had just made a pass and it was felt that the man had been hit by a tray slug. It is entirely probable that he could have been wounded by a hidden enemy sniper.

Upon securing the bridge at DICK, the 1st and 2d platoons respectively were rapidly moved forward across the bridge and into blocking positions along either side of the roadway at approximate coords XT 688748. It was late mid morning by this time.

At this time a radio message was received from the Squadron CO, to speed up the operations. Because of time factors and the thick jungle growth the troop reverted to a column formation, as described earlier, and moved out to the SW towards Objective TOM or the RJ at BM 59 (coords XT 663737).

The advance continued without incident until the lead platoon leader, Lt Lyons (1st Platoon) reported 5 to 7 VC's running across the road from right to left at approximate coords 671740. He quickly reported a group of 20 VC running in the same direction. Both these groups were immediately taken under fire. This information was rapidly reported. It was soon followed by reports of incoming small arms, then automatic weapons fire

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

Rapidly the lead elements deployed and were engaged by enemy mortar and anti-tank fire. As enemy contact developed rapidly the word was passed to the Squadron CO, that "this was it"! A large VC Force had been contacted just short of objective TOM. Precise detail narration of the battle is extremely difficult because of the lack of observation, loss of contact with vehicles and killed and wounded leaders and vehicle commanders.

The Squadron CO requested a determination as to which side of the road the main concentration was located. Initially this was difficult to determine because of the tremendous volume of fire being put out by all the deployed APC's. Reports were made that the VC were attempting to cross the road at the front of the column from right to left. Additional reports were received of heavy enemy fire being received at the rear of the troop and coming from the left side of the road. Initial determination was made that the main VC force was located on the left or south side of the road. Soon after this, as accurate casualty counts, concise reports and aerial observer reports tallied up; it was determined that enemy forces were concentrated on the right or NW side of the road. Artillery fire was reconcentrated in this area and its devastating effect could be observed by the ground troops.

Airstrikes were immediately called in on the left side of the road. They were continuous and extremely effective, especially the Skyraiders napalm runs and several of the CBU attacks.

Artillery barrages were devoted to the right side of the road. They ranged both up and down the troop column and in and out from the roadway. Fires were brought in quite close to the troop APC's but no damage was sustained by friendly forces.

During this period several CS gas drops were made from helicopters of Troop C (air) 1/4 Cavalry. These provided extremely effective. The gas drifted over the roadway and settled along the dense jungle on the NW of the APC's along the road. Initially some slight concern developed in certain members of the troop, this was quickly overcome and the CS concentration in the troop battle area was not sufficient to cause masking.

A platoon level approach to the detail combat actions starts initially with the 1st platoon, the lead platoon. The 1st platoon was leading with two tanks. This platoon received the brunt of initial enemy fire. The TC of the lead tank was killed immediately by a bullet round in the head. Soon after the platoon leader reported his scout section out of action. Later it was learned that the section leader and 2d squad leader were killed and casualties sustained on all vehicles.

The attached infantry NCO's remanned the TC positions where possible. Soon the platoon leader was hit by fragments in the face, neck and head. He was evacuated by his platoon SGT, PSG Crawford, who took command of the platoon. The 1st platoon at this time was receding under the pressure of heavy enemy fire. PSG Crawford returned to the forefront of the column, initiated action to rearm the lead tank and caused the 1st platoon to hold its own at the lead of the troop column. The TC of the flame thrower track was seriously wounded and placed in the medic APC. The flame thrower APC continued to fight vigorously. Under direction of the Troop CO, PSG Crawford had his zippo expend its napalm along the right side of the road at about a 25 degree angle with the roadway. C-13, the scout section leader's vehicle was down to a two man crew as it returned from the Dust-off or medical collecting point at the rear of the column. It was hit by anti-tank fire and was soon burning, likewise C-19 was hit by enemy fire disabled and was soon burning, about mid-way along the column just off the road.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

As the fight continued the 1st platoon had both tanks in full operation along with the four APC's. They had lost four TC's killed.

The CP group was split upon initial VC contact as the medic APC began collecting the wounded and taking them to a collection/evacuation point with the troop Hq (-) group. C-66, the Troop CO's track, was initially in a position at the rear of the 1st platoon APC's then among lead elements of the 2d platoon. All tracks were constantly moving and readjusting positions to avoid anti-tank and mortar fire. The majority of platoon vehicles remained on one side of the road or the other in their herringbone positions. The commander's track, C-66 was constantly on the move to both sides of the road. The second platoon was leading with tank C-25, commanded by the platoon sergeant, SSG Wilson. This platoon reacted quickly and effectively to close on the 1st platoon, deploy and lay down a heavy volume of tank, 50 caliber and 7.62 machine gun and M79 fire. C-25 tank maneuvered along both sides of the road firing HE and cannister into suspected locations. It was hit in the turret by either anti-tank or rifle grenade fire. The TC was moderately injured and forced to evacuate the tank. This tank was rapidly remanned by SSG Born and continued to fight well during the remainder of the battle. The 2d platoon APC's were well deployed along either side of the road in a tight formation. They provided the stable center of sector for the troop column.

Since contact was lost with the medic APC, permission was given for the 2d platoon to collect wounded and return to the dust-off area in one of the fighting carriers. Upon return of the evacuation track to the platoon a report was made that C-23 had been hit by the 20mm cannon fire and that C-29 had sustained several anti-tank round hits and was disabled with all the crew killed or wounded. The 2d platoon continued to fire aggressively and concentrated its fires on the right side of the road. Later as the enemy withdrew, elements of the 2d platoon with Lt Rezek, the platoon leader, moved to the Dust-Off site, consolidated and moved the wounded to a new Dust-Off location at objective DICK, west of the bridge.

The 3d platoon was hit by enemy fire from both sides of the road immediately after the action initiated in the 1st platoon area. This platoon was unable to close in the 2d platoon in a tight formation. A gap of about 300 meters developed between these platoons as the fighting progressed. The 3d platoon soon was in a heavy engagement of its own around the AVLB, the troop Hq group and an armed Chinook which had been shot down on the roadway. This position, at coords XT 687746, became a strong point and the initial Dust-Off site. The 3d platoon fought to protect the growing number of casualties which were accumulating at the Chinook or GO-GO site. In the process the platoon lost two tracks to anti-tank fire. These tracks also burned. Fortunately the gap between the two platoons was never capitalized upon by the VC and the troop was not split. The road remained open but heavy fire was received from this area. The troop headquarters (-) group is included with the 3d platoon because they fought the engagement in the same location. The crew of the AVLB gave a good account for themselves, they maneuvered the vehicle continuously and used machine gun fire and grenades to keep the enemy at a distance. This vehicle was not damaged. The maintenance section fought their APC as a gun track and covered the medic APC and the operations/commo APC (C50).

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

SFC Dennis, commo chief worked his 50 caliber machine gun and the radios alternately and loaded many wounded into his track. He kept reports flowing and called in the initial Dust-Off evacuations. The area of the downed Chinook became too "hot" for Dust-Off's. The MIA's were placed in the medic APC for cover and beside the various firing APC's. This accounted for the loss of contact with the medic track. Several of the medics were wounded while they cared for the wounded and one burned seriously when he entered one of the burning APC's to rescue wounded.

Troop B elements began to enter the fighting zone and advanced up Troop C's herringbone column taking up firing positions. Several of the vehicles closed the gap between the 2d and 3d platoons. Later the commanding officer of Troop B, Cpt Kyles, came to the forward location of the 1st and 2d platoons with a full cavalry platoon. These vehicles took up firing positions with the majority of the fire being placed on the roadway.

At this time in coordination with the CO of Troop D (air) the Dust-Off and resupply site was reestablished to the NE of the downed Chinook at Objective DICK. This area was relatively free of enemy fire and had a larger area which could accommodate several helicopters. This new site remained the evacuation and resupply point throughout the rest of the battle and during the reorganization phase.

With Troop B well disposed along the roadway and recon elements of that Troop pushing to the SW, Troop C was ordered to phase back its forces to objective DICK with the assigned mission of securing that area, protecting the bridge and resupplying; the platoons moved back in order: 3d, 1st and 2d. All wounded were taken directly to the Dust-Off site and all dead evacuated aboard APC's to that area. Resupply and re-arming began immediately. Support was tremendous! Plenty of ammo of all kinds, replacement weapons, medical supplies and support personnel were brought into DICK. The troop was joined by the Squadron Headquarters APC section along with the 11577 Squadron medic track, with surgeon. Troop D (air) Aero Rifle Platoon was landed and attached to Troop C at Dick in the late afternoon.

During this period larger reinforcements had also arrived in the immediate battle area in the form of the 1/28 Infantry, which was airlifted to DICK and swept SW along the right position of the road; and an ARVN APC Troop (with an RF Company) which closed on the eastern edge of DICK in mid-afternoon. The RF Company secured the LZ at DICK for several hours by pushing out a considerable distance into the dense undergrowth on either side of the road and the stream line. This allowed Troop C to resupply and rearm rapidly. The ARVN APC Troop later moved to secure the downed Chinook for the night.

As the afternoon drew to a close Troop C had completed resupply, rearmament, Class 1 and was in a tactical posture for future missions. The troop was given orders to ROM, at DICK, secure the bridge and establish the forward squadron CP. The troop disposition consisted of the 3d platoon and a rifle squad securing the bridge and the area to the east of the bridge. The 2d platoon and the Aero Rifle platoon (-) on the south or left side of the road with emphasis on the thick underbrush near the road. The battle day ended with the troop in the above described posture at Objective DICK.

The following lessons learned are foremost in mind during the preparation of this narration; flame thrower APC's (Zippl) should be kept under direct control of the troop CO. The location of the enemy concentration must be quickly determined by troops on the ground as well as aerial observers. A heavy initial base of fire on all suspected areas is essential to gain fire superiority rapidly in any attempted ambush.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Zippo's should be employed ASAP upon determination of the enemy concentrations. Track mounted Zippo service units should accompany the column. Medic A/C's should not be utilized as a "storehouse" for wounded, but kept in constant shuttle between the fighting area and a Dust-Off site. A Dust-Off resupply site must be established and controlled by operational and medical personnel in a reasonably secure area once enemy contact is made. Medical evacuation from the battle area must be controlled by small unit leaders as well as medical clearing personnel.

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

38

VC CAMPAIGN ALONG NATIONAL ROUTE 13

In early May 1966, a Civilian Irregular Defense Group patrol, led by U.S. Special Forces personnel, killed a Viet Cong Lieutenant about five kilometers southeast of LOC HINH District Town, along National Route 13 in northern BINH LONG Province. Among the papers discovered on the body of this officer was a map and a plan for the attack on LOC HINH Town and the Special Forces Camp by three Viet Cong Regiments and one North Vietnamese Army Regiment. The discovery of this document marked the beginning of a prolonged campaign along National Route 13, leading from SANGHAI through THU DAM NOI, the provincial capital of BINH DUONG province; onward to the north through CHAU THAM District Town; through NON QUAN (AF LOC) the provincial capital of BINH LONG Province; and finally north through the LOC HINH Plantation to the Cambodian Border.

On 17 May, a CIDG Force and one battalion of the 9th ARVN Regiment engaged a two battalion VC force which included the 2d Battalion 273d Regiment and possibly a battalion of the 271st Regiment. The action which took place vicinity XU 5904, about two kilometers from the Cambodian Border, resulted in heavy casualties by both sides.

(U) The 3d Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, was dispatched to LOC HINH with three infantry battalions and one artillery battalion on 19 and 20 May 1966. Between 19 and 26 May, this brigade established a defensive perimeter around the LOC HINH airstrip and patrolled and conducted search operations westward to the Cambodian Border without substantial contact. The brigade returned to its base at LAI HIE on 26 May 1966.

Subsequently, intelligence from a number of sources indicated that the VC, having postponed their attack, intended to go ahead with their original plans. Agents reported through the Vietnamese Army that the VC were inaugurating a campaign to last from 20 May until 20 August to destroy friendly forces along Route 13; to interdict the route and to harass or attack LOC HINH, NON QUAN, CHAU THAM, HINH THAM, and SOING BE. VC forces involved consisted of six regiments. It was assumed that these regiments included three of the 9th Viet Cong Division, 271st, 272d, and 273d; and another grouping of the 101st, 141st, and possibly the 250th Regiments of the North Vietnamese Army.

The 3d Brigade returned to LOC HINH on 2 June 1966 with one infantry battalion and one artillery battalion. At this time, the 5th ARVN Division Commander, with headquarters at THU NOI, informed the Commanding General, 1st Infantry Division, that he believed the Viet Cong would attack the BINH LONG provincial capital, NON QUAN. The decision was made to move one troop of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, with two ground units to NON QUAN.

On 8 June, the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry was moved to LAI HIE as an infantry reaction force and A Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry commenced its move from LAI HIE through CHAU THAM to NON QUAN. Although road blocks, mines, and minor harassment were encountered Troop A arrived at CHAU THAM about 1300 without significant contact.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

At this point the 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry was moved by helicopters to the QUAN Airfield, placing it in a better position to react to any engagement between QUAN and NON QUAN. At 1440 hours, approximately 12 kilometers south of NON QUAN in a densely wooded area, the lead tank received a direct hit from a 75mm recoilless rifle. The ambush by all three battalions of the 72d Viet Cong Regiment was triggered. During the three and a half hours duration of the battle, Troop A was supported by a number of airstrikes, and 105 mm, 152 mm, and 8" artillery. The 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry was committed in an airmobile assault to the north of the battle area and swept both sides of the woods in support of the cavalry. Coupled with the valiant fight by A Troop, these measures destroyed 90% of the 1st Battalion 272d Regiment, including the battalion commander. Fifty percent of the 2d Battalion was destroyed, while the 3d Battalion was generally south of the major action. The chief of staff, 272d Regiment reportedly was also killed during the engagement. Troop A and the 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry continued to NON QUAN the following day.

U On 11 June 1966, A Company, 2d Battalion, 26th Infantry committed one rifle platoon with a GICG reconnaissance platoon in an airmobile recon operation to the western edge of QUAN LOC NINH airstrip to effect a link up. Light contact was made at 0900 and about noon, C Company was committed to assist. By 1400 hours it was apparent that the VC force consisted of at least one battalion and the remainder of the 2d Battalion, 26th Infantry moved by foot to the LOC NINH Plantation. Massive air and artillery fire power assisted the infantry in overrunning the positions and by 1900 the VC withdrew leaving 98 dead and numerous weapons on the battlefield. Subsequent reports from plantation workers and captured VC revealed that the 2d Battalion, 26th Infantry had destroyed over 50% of the 1st Battalion, 272d Regiment.

W The 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry under GICG of the 1st Brigade conducted an air mobile raid on 21 June in the area of a reported rice storage area along the SAIGON River west of the HUEHUEH Plantation. This raid discovered 1506 tons of rice and large quantities of other supplies. A second unit, the 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry, was committed before the operation terminated on 28 June.

W The 1st Infantry Division was deployed, on 30 June to S & D enemy location. The 1st Battalion 26th Infantry was conducting operations to the northeast. The 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry, under division control with attached 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry (-), was conducting armed reconnaissance operations and infantry reconnaissance patrolling in the general area of the QUAN LOI - AN LOC Plantation. The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry was securing engineers finishing the airstrip at KINH THANH. The 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, under control of the Division Artillery Commander, continued its pacification operations in the PHU LOI area with the BINH DUONG Province Chief and the 7th ARVN Regiment.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

About 0900 on 30 June, Troops B and C, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry and C Company, 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry proceeded north from HQ QUAM and replaced an ARVN adjacent to the damaged CANH Bridge. The column then moved north to conduct an armed recovery mission along Route 13 and secure engineer equipment to be brought on the return trip from LOC NHEE to the bridge site. Four thousand meters from the bridge site, Troop B started receiving recoilless rifle, small arms, and mortar fire and this triggered an ambush by all three battalions of the 271st Viet Cong Regiment. The Commanding General, 1st Infantry Division was notified of this action while he was with the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry at LOC NHEE for a fixed-wing airlift to QUAM LOI. At 1020 the 2d Brigade Commander was instructed to retrace the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry from its operation to the SCNG BE Airstrip at QUAM L I. At 1000 hours the 1st Brigade Commander was ordered to move the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry and the Brigade Command Post to QUAM LOI in that order and upon arrival to take command of the operation. By 1330 hours, the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry, had been committed into a landing zone north of the cavalry, and placed under the operational control of the squadron commander. It is interesting to note that when the battle started, the Commanding Officer, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry was under the O'CONNOR of the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry; however, because he was in command on the ground, the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry was placed under his command. The 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry closed QUAM LOI by fixed-wing aircraft at 1530 hours and by 1809 hours was introduced by airmobile assault into an LZ west of the battle area. By 1620 hours, the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry had closed into QUAM LOI and was prepared for an airmobile assault. The 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry was ordered to move from IAI NHEE by fixed wing aircraft to QUAM LOI and assume the mission of security for QUAM LOI - HQ QUAM. With the infantry sweeping south; the U.S. and ARVN cavalry blocking along Route 13 and the road south of the battle area; and air strikes and artillery covering the routes of withdrawal; the 271st Viet Cong Regiment was defeated by 1700 hours and began withdrawing to the northwest. Eighty-eight close air support sorties were flown in support of the battle and the 8" and 155mm batteries expended 277 and 548 rounds respectively. The Viet Cong bodies counted on 30 June totaled 267 killed. Due to bad weather on 1 July, the airmobile assault by the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry into an LZ farther to the west did not take place until 1000 hours. This landing was made into an area in which VC prisoners indicated the 271st Regiment would rally. A heavy preparation by air and artillery was fired, including fires from one battery which had been lifted into the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry LZ by C-47. Additional wounded VC were picked up in the area, but there was no evidence of a major force in the immediate area of this landing zone.

At 1630 hours, 1 July, the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry was lifted by assault helicopters from their perimeter along Route 13 into two LZs farther to the northwest. At 1800 hours, A Company proceeded to a water trail crossing and became heavily engaged. C Company and the recon platoon were sent to reinforce A Company. Company B was 1500 meters farther to the north and the battalion command post was 1000 meters to the north. Companies A and C received a heavy volume of mortar and rifle fire against their perimeter during the early evening. During the night a VC battalion surrounded the two companies. The battalion headquarters had no significant contact.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

Page 4

At 0530, 2 July, the VC launched a series of five assaults against A Company, C Company, and the Recon Platoon. The 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry was sent from the south to link up and B company, 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry from the north. Fighter bomber strikes were brought in under a 200 foot ceiling and artillery fire delivered from the landing zone occupied by the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry. The VC attack was repulsed with losses to the 2d Battalion, 273d VC Regiment that included 70 killed. The 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry, minus one company at the artillery base, was assembled on Route 13 and airlifted to an LZ east of the battle. The landing zone was secured by the 1st Squadron 4th Cavalry and the attached MWL SFC troop and rifle company of the 1st Battalion, 9th Regiment. The 3d Brigade was ordered to move its headquarters back to LOC NHEM at 0900 together with the 2d Battalion, 26th Infantry. At the same time, the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry VCs ordered to move by fixed-wing aircraft from LAI NIE to LOC NHEM and provide a reaction force to be used to the northwest. The 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry linked up with the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry, at 0930 and then proceeded to the lake at XU 5904. The battalion was lightly engaged en route. A large VC force was then located between the Infantry/Cavalry force on the east and the two infantry battalions on the west. At 1500 hours, the 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry from QUAM LOI relieved the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry, preparatory to a sweep to the east. During the night, the 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry came under mortar attack which later seemed to be a cover for the withdrawal of the VC both to the southwest and northwest. After sweeping the area with only minor contact, all forces were withdrawn from the operational area on 4 July. The 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry, 1st Battalion 26th Infantry, and 1st and 2d Battalions, 2d Infantry were assembled at the QUAM LOI Plantation. The 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry (-) assembled at the LOC QUAM airfield. These troops stood down for two days for rest, resupply, new uniforms, and for maintenance on armored vehicles. The first Chapter of the Campaign along Route 13 was closed.

While the battles with the 271st and 273d Regiments took place north of NON QUAM, the 272d Regiment at least partially recovered from its battle south of NON QUAM, moved to an area between QUON THAM and NON QUAM. Further reports indicate that another regiment may have taken up positions along route 13 between QUON THAM and LAI NIE. When the 272d Viet Cong Regiment ambushed A Troop, it may have expected a soft convey and instead ran into an armored troop. However, a diary taken from the body of a VC captain from the 271st Regiment after the battle on 30 June indicated that his mission was to destroy U.S. armored forces on Route 13. It thus appears that the VC are under orders to fight and win the battle of National Route 13 and that they intend to do so regardless of losses. The remaining chapters in the Campaign along National Route 13 are yet to be written.

The remainder of this document amplifies the battles along highway 13 and covers the battle of 9 July near the MIEU THON rubber plantation, and the battle of 25 August which did not involve any squadron elements under squadron control.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
BATTLE OF 9 JULY 1966

Intelligence sources had indicated that there was a Viet Cong Regiment in the MIEN TIEN area. The US 1st Infantry Division immediately made plans to find and fix the unit. Word leaked out that a small unit would proceed to MIEN TIEN on the AN LOC MIEN TIEN Road, but actually plans were made for a heavy armor task force to make the trip. Preplanned air strikes and artillery fires were included in the planning.

The 1st Squadron 4th Cavalry (-) departed AN LOC at 0700 hrs 9 July with Trp C leading followed by Trp B. Co B 1/2 Inf was carried on the squadron vehicles. They were divided up so as to provide seven (7) men on each M-113. It was felt that if contact were made it would be in the vicinity of position DICK, a bridge at XT 694751. With this in mind Trp C moved with a platoon on each side of the road in an echelon formation and one platoon in column on the road. The unit conducted a heavy reconnaissance by fire as it moved along.

At 0900 hrs Trp C approached the bridge and deployed on both sides of the road to provide covering fire for the infantry. The infantry dismounted at this point to go forward and check the bridge for mines and booby traps. After thoroughly checking the area around the bridge for mines and booby traps, Troop C moved out, this time in column formation with all three platoons on the road. A preplanned airstrike went in at position TOM, a road junction at XT 663736 while a GO-GO aircraft reconnoitered the area to the southwest of TOM. The GO-GO aircraft, a CH-47 helicopter with 4 cal .50 machineguns, a 40mm grenade launcher and 2- 7.62mm machineguns, was being field tested in the Republic of Vietnam at this time. Despite the ordnance dropped on the position the Viet Cong did not reveal their presence at this time. At approximately 1106 hours Lt Jack Lyons, 1st Plt Ldr of Trp C, reported that his lead vehicle had spotted 10 VN personnel running across the road. Five minutes later he reported that 10 more had run across the road and he was taking them under fire. This seemed to set off the entire ambush. The lead vehicle at this time was in the vic XT 682743.

Lt Lyons deployed his platoon, putting the main firepower of his tanks in the direction of the fleeing enemy. The whole column was receiving intense automatic weapons, small arms, recoilless rifle and mortar fire. Cpt Steve Slattery Trp C commander called for an air strike and the air force responded with Napalm along the road.

The forward air controller at 1120, reported to the Squadron Commander, LTC Leonard Lowane that he had sighted the VC on the north side of the road and was bringing tactical air in on them. Cpt Slattery reported to LTC Lowane that the rear of his column was being hit hard by recoilless rifle and mortar fire.

Cpt David Kelley, Trp B commander moved his troop forward into the battle area after receiving the command from the squadron commander. Cpt Kelley sent his second platoon forward and he immediately lost his platoon leader, Lt Benjamin Phillips, and the Plt Sgt PSG Roberto Quijano, due to direct mortar hits. The second platoon tank section leader SSG Chester Fehnel took charge of the platoon and moved it forward to assist Troop C.

Cpt Kelley instructed his third platoon leader, Lt Richard Wroe, to secure an area for medical evacuation for wounded. The GO-GO aircraft received several hits and went down in the vicinity of the Dust-Off area. This area was still receiving small arms and mortar fire. Sgt John Blair a vehicle commander in the third platoon of Troop B was running short of ammunition and had "burned up" his .50 cal machinegun. Using his initiative he took his vehicle up to the downed GO-GO and acquired one of their 50 calibers and a supply of ammunition.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

He made several trips bringing ammunition up to resupply the vehicles. Meanwhile at the point of heaviest contact, SSG Alfreed Trp C, 1st Plt scout section leader reported sighting several VC moving a recoilless rifle trying to get it around to his flank. SSG Breitschinder, in the lead tank, attempted to take it under fire. He was mortally wounded by a snipers bullet as he attempted to take it under fire. He was mortally wounded by a snipers bullet as he attempted to raise himself up from his Cupola for a better look. SSG Alfreod was wounded shortly thereafter but remained behind his weapon, rallying his crewmembers to repel the VC attack.

The Dust-Off area was becoming jammed with vehicles and Cpt Slattery ordered his second platoon leader Lt Stanislas Reczek to take charge. With able assistance of SSG Guy Killingsworth of Troop B Lt Reczek got the Dust-Off area operations smoothly and started the combat vehicles back to the front.

Col Lowane, upon seeing the direction of the main attack, reported this to the Division Commander who sprang the rest of the troop, three infantry battalions poised to cut off the retreat of the battered VC force. With air on the north, artillery on the south adding to the tremendous fire power of the cavalry unit on the ground, the VC soon broke contact and fled. The 1/28 Inf landed to the north and attacked in a southwest direction while the 1/18 Inf landed and worked closely with the 1/4 Cav (-). B and C were given the mission to set up a blocking position from XT 693-750 to 650723.

Troop C (air) had been providing flank reconnaissance and fire support, and was given the mission to put their Aero Rifle Platoon in at position DICK to RON with Troop C at the bridge site.

The fighting had lasted for approximately three hours resulting in American losses of 12 KIA's and 51 WIA's. The 272 Regiment which was engaged suffered 278 KIA (BC) and 300 (est) KIA. Troop C had 4 APC's destroyed.

Fire Support

At the time troop C made contact, a preplanned air strike was about to be put in forward of their position. This was quickly reverted to the area where contact had been made. The FAC requested immediate air and there was constant air coverage throughout the battle. There was at least one artillery observer in the air at all times. The fire support had been split up prior to contact and the air worked the south side of the road and left the north side to the artillery. Gun teams filled in between sorties and concentrations. The CH-47, GO-GO, provided heavy fire before being shot down.

Results

Friendly Losses:

	Troop C	Troop B
	12 KIA	
	39 WIA	21 WIA

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

STATUS REPORT

TROOP C
9 July 66

UNCLASSIFIED

KIA

SSG Brotschnoider, Hans K
SSG Alford, Ulysses
SSG Ferguson, Robert F.
SSG Tetreault, Robert N
Sgt Price, Alvin
Sgt Hyman, Wallace
Sgt King, Bobby
Sp4 Wilson, Daniel
Pfc Wucssenberry, John Q.
Pfc Deck, Robert W.
Pfc Horrpra, Josso E.

DOW

Pfc Scott, John W

WIA

Cpt Slattery, Stephen M
2/Lt Lyons, John K
SSG Boccher, Robert C
SSG Hobbs, Eric E, Jr
SSG Sanders, William D.
SSG Potter, Paul W
Sgt Vernon, Charles E
SSG Wilson, Donald R
Sgt Albert, Benjamin T
Sgt Kolley, Oliver R
Sgt Bird, Russel B.
Sgt McIntire, Orville G
Sp5 Harris, Curtis K Jr
Sp4 Robinson, James H.
Sp4 Slone, James M
Sp4 McClarin, Ronald E
Sp4 Wiseman, Forrest
Sp4 Stinson, Cecil E Jr
Sp4 Merritt, Lewis G
Sp4 Bean, Franklin M
Sp4 Wright, James C
Sp4 Vazaldun, Pablo M
Pfc Otto, Joseph S
Pfc Vacovelli, Raymond
Pfc Enriquez, Raul
Pfc Smith, James E Jr
Pfc Managan, George S
Pfc Little, Costoll Jr
Pfc Weaver, Melvin
Pfc Biddulph, Ronald F

WIA

Pfc Blank, Will H
Pfc Thayer, Richard E
Pfc Dozier, Lester Jr.
Pvt Dilis, Gary L
Pfc Moyer, Meredith
Pfc Kessler, Paul K
Pfc Ottlings, Joseph
Pfc Ragasin, Agostion
Pfc Howard, Earl

LWA

2/Lt Roczek, Stanislaus J
E7 Torres, Carlos
SSG Jones, James L jr
Sgt Morrison, Orphus G
Sp4 Onoll, Charles J
PFC Drow, Hans

EMT attach TRP C

WIA

Pfc Sechrost, James R
Pfc Cooper, Robert
Pfc Farrolly, Hubert
Sp4 Orton, Jimmie D

LWA

Sp4 Harris, Eddie D

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL
STATUS REPORT
Troop B
9 July 1966

KIA

Sp5 Baker, Stanley W

WIA

2/Lt Phillips, Benjamin H Jr
SSG Cruz, Enrique C
Sgt Waldon, Anthal
Sgt Brewman, Everett O
Sp5 Taylor, James R
Sp4 Scawthorn, Raymond C
Pfc Mance, Henry L
Pfc Quijano, Norbert
Pfc Whitman, Donavan, W
Pfc Cockran, Ulysses
Pfc Rhodes, Raymond D

LJA

2/Lt Maughn, Franklin D
2/Lt Wroe, Richard W.
SSG Felnel, Chester A
SSG Vestech, Vlastinil
SSG Burke, Billy Jr
Sgt Blair, John D
Sgt Catalane, Frank P
Sp4 Barrett, Gerald A
Pfc Dyer, Eugene F
Pfc Khrevsky, John H.
Pvt Ramsey, John
Pvt Hammer, Bobbie D

CONFIDENTIAL
MHT attach Trp B

LWA

Maj Taylor, George

Trp D (air)

LWA

Cpt Sanders, John P
CWO Donahoo, Frank M.
Pfc Scott, Sammie M.

D Co 1st Engr attach Trp B

LWA

Sgt Johnson, Reginald
Pfc Corra, Jesso

CONFIDENTIAL