

Nov. 68-Jan69 0.2. All notes are taken out of operation Thong Thun phase 2

which begin on the ~~1st~~ <sup>June</sup> ~~1968~~ continued until I left. The 2nd battallion 14th infantry worked out of fire support base Kien NE of Duqua. It continued to conduct its profitable VCI operations in the MiHiDuquo boytri complex. These continued operations largely neutralized the enemy infra structure in this vital region of the west Saigon. This then the 2nd of the 14th was the company that worked with us. The 2nd of the 14th then was employed by the 2nd brigade.

2nd Nov. 1968. Action was heavy during the afternoon in the area of operations of the 2nd battallion 14th infantry around Duquoboytri. 1445 hours D company sweeping 5 kilometers NE of Duquo apprehended 2 VC suspects. An hour later A company <sup>east of</sup> operating 6 kilometers Boytri apprehended a VC suspect. A company remained in this general area and at 1616 hours helicopter gunships flying in support of the company detached a small group of armed enemy. The helicopter engaged the enemy and the ground troops moved into the contact site to discover 3 dead enemy and 2 AK47 rifles. Between 1630 and 1715 hours as the ground troops searched the contact area one enemy soldier himself turned himself into the troop as a hoychow and one individual was detained as a suspected enemy.

3rd Nov. The 2nd brigade reported numerous small contacts. In the morning at 748 an infantryman from A Company 2nd Battalion 14th infantry was wounded by a boobytrapped handgrenade that he tripped as his unit moved in a sweep thru an area 8

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location of numerous supply caches and small base camp complexes. Extensive use by the enemy of mines and booby traps posed a critical for the brigade elements in the execution of their extensive daily sweep operations and reconnaissance-in-force activities.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO San Francisco 96225

AVDCMH

1 February 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report of the 25th Infantry Division for the  
Period Ending 31 January 1969, RCS ACSFOR - 65 (R-1).

SEE DISTRIBUTION

Location: Vicinity of CU CHI Base Camp (XT 647153), CU CHI, RVN.

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History Detachment.

Map References: Vietnam, 1:50,000, Series: L7014, Sheets: 6132 II;  
6131 I, II; 6232 II, III, IV; 6231 I, II, III, IV; 6230 I, II, III,  
IV; 6331 III; 6330 I, III, IV.

(C) Section 1, Operations: Significant Activities.

A. General. The 25th Infantry Division (Tropic Lightning) continued its participation in Operation TOAN THANG, Phase II throughout the report period, 1 November 1968 to 31 January 1969. Operation TOAN THANG, Phase II commenced on 1 June 1968, and the divisional Operational Reports for the quarterly periods ending 31 July and 31 October 1968 provide comprehensive data and information on the division's operational activities in the operations earlier stages.

Throughout the reporting period, all divisional resources and assets were committed to Operation TOAN THANG which is directed at the destruction of Viet Cong/North Vietnamese (VC/NVA) main force units and enemy political and guerilla infrastructure (VCI) operating within the divisional tactical area of operational interest (TAOI) (see sketch #1).

As the reporting period opened on 1 November 1968, the 25th Infantry Division was generally deployed in the following posture: the 1st Brigade operated in and around TAY NINH City with an overall area of operations that included the northwest quadrant of the divisional TAOI, the 2nd Brigade was deployed in the southern half of the TAOI with an area of operations that generally included areas south of the east-west 30 grid line, and the 3rd Brigade operated in and around the town of DAU TIENG with an overall AO that encompassed the northeast quadrant of the divisional TAOI. These general brigade areas of operations remained in effect throughout the reporting period with modifications and boundary changes made from time to time as will be indicated throughout this narrative. A daily Task Organization for the division for the months of November, December, and January is included as Tab A of this report. This Task Organization indicates the composition of the divisional brigades for the reporting period.

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
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The general tactical situation at the beginning of the reporting period was characterized by the withdrawal of VC/NVA main force units into sanctuaries in northern War Zone "C" and Cambodia to reorganize, refit, and retrain following the offensive against TAY NINH City in the August-September time frame. Intelligence sources available to the division indicated that the enemy's intention at the time was to prepare his main force units that had been badly mauled in August-September for a renewed offensive effort against TAY NINH City. While these preparations were taking place, the enemy would limit his activities to scattered battalion size and smaller operations aimed at interdicting the main supply routes (MSR) and harrassing U.S. and South Vietnamese military bases and installations. In addition, enemy local force units would continue their normal harrassing activities within their customary areas of operations. *They were ready for years if we needed them.*

In view of this general enemy situation, the 25th Infantry Division was deployed in a manner in which it could maintain continuous surveillance of the recognized lines of communications (LOC) and avenues of approach for enemy main force units from their sanctuary areas to known target areas: namely, SAIGON and TAY NINH. In addition, extensive operations were to be carried out against enemy main force and local force units suspected to be still located in reduced numbers in such areas as the "CITADEL", the "TRAPEZOID", the BOI LOI Woods, the "CRESCENT", and the "STRAIGHT EDGE" Woods.

Throughout the month of November, the 1st Brigade with two maneuver battalions (3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry and 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23rd Infantry) continued to follow the operational tactics that had proven so successful in August and September in pre-empting the enemy's attack on TAY NINH City. The two infantry battalions and the brigade's direct support artillery battalion (7th Battalion, 11th Artillery) continued to maintain blocking positions on the outskirts of the city astride the primary avenues of approach. These blocking positions in the form of artillery fire support bases (Fire Support Bases BUELL, RAWLINS, and WASHINGTON) provided strategically located bases of operations from which the 1st Brigade could mount extensive daylight reconnaissance-in-force and helicopter borne combat assaults in all directions from the city against suspected enemy base areas. During the hours of darkness, the bases sent out extensive platoon size ambush patrols to monitor principal trails and suspected routes of enemy movement. The artillery weapons located at these fire bases were in such a position that day and night they could direct fire into any area surrounding the city.

1st Brigade operations throughout November were closely co-ordinated with South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) airborne battalions and South Vietnamese Marine Battalions that had moved into the TAY NINH region at the height of the enemy attacks in September and had remained in the area in force to defend the city against the continued enemy threat to the city. In addition, the brigade maneuver battalions worked closely with local Regional Force (RF) and Popular Force (PF) units in conducting joint and combined offensive operations against suspected enemy positions and supply areas.

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In the month of November, the enemy made no attempt to carry out his threat to renew his attack on TAY NINH. Fighting was generally light despite extensive 1st Brigade efforts to seek out the enemy.

The month of November in the 2nd Brigade area of operations saw almost daily small scale contacts with local force enemy units in the CITADEL-HO BO Woods-FILHOL Plantation complex north of route 1, the (SUGAR MILL) region of DUC HUE and in the MY HANH-DUC HOA-BAO TRAI triangle.

The 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry working out of Fire Support Base STUART at TRANG BANG and Fire Support Base PERSHING to the northeast conducted extensive offensive operations in the CITADEL to locate numerous enemy supply caches and small base camp complexes. For the first half of the month, the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry working out of Fire Support Base PATTON near TRUNG LAP also operated extensively in the CITADEL. On 19 November, the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry moved into PATTON to replace the 4th of the 9th in the TRUNG LAP area.

Although no large scale actions by the enemy were encountered, the brigade working in the CITADEL experienced daily difficulties with mines and booby traps that the enemy planted throughout the region.

The 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry working out of Fire Support Base KEENE northeast of DUC HOA continued to conduct its profitable VCI operations in the MY HANH-DUC HOA-BAO TRAI complex. Those continued operations largely neutralized the enemy infrastructure in this vital region to the west of SAIGON.

The 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry and 2nd Battalion, 3rd Armor operated to the east of the CU CHI Base Camp out of Fire Support Base CROCKETT near PHU HOA DONG. In mid month, the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry relocated to Fire Support Base (REED) in the SUGAR MILL area DUC HUE district south of TRANG BANG to counter increased enemy activity in that general area. Two of the most significant combat actions of November within the division TAOI occurred on the nights of 26 and 28 November when the night locations of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry southwest of TRANG BANG came under heavy ground attacks. These enemy attacks were both turned back with a total enemy body count of 51.

The beginning of November in the 3rd Brigade area of operations in the northeastern quadrant of the division TAOI found the 1st Battalion (Mechanized) 5th Infantry working out of DAU TIENG and conducting extensive sweep operations in the BEN CUI and MICHELIN Rubber Plantations. The 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry was deployed in the TRAPEZOID to the south of DAU TIENG operating out of Fire Support Base MAHONE near THANH AN. In the meantime, the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 22nd Infantry operated in the BOI LOI Woods out of Fire Support Bases McNAIR and WOOD.

As was the case in the 2nd Brigade area of operations, the maneuver battalions, of the 3rd Brigade experienced almost daily small scale contacts with enemy local force units. The daily sweep operations resulted in the

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The month of December saw a marked increase in the occurrence of significant combat actions as the enemy main force units located in Cambodia made an obvious attempt to mount increased operations within the division's TAOI. In addition to more intense ground contacts with enemy forces, the division's three base camps at CU CHI, TAY NINH and DAU TIENG was subjected to increased attacks by fire.

In the 1st Brigade, the general pre-emptive operations around TAY NINH City were continued and expanded with the employment of an additional fire support base, Fire Support Base MITCHELL, southwest of the city. To counter an increased enemy threat from the southwest, the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry was placed under the operational control of the 1st Brigade and assigned an AO in that area. This battalion established Patrol Base MOLE (later redesignated Fire Support Base SEDGEWICK) from which to mount its pre-emptive operations.

Between 15 and 22 December, MITCHELL and MOLE became the focal points in the 1st Brigade's actions to destroy the renewed enemy movements against TAY NINH. This effort came to a climax on 22 December when Patrol Base MOLE became the target of a regimental size enemy assault....the largest single enemy effort in the division TAOI since August-September. This attack was turned back with the enemy sustaining 81 dead by body count and an addition 120 killed or wounded as indicated by blood trails and drag marks leading away from the contact site. With this defeat, the enemy main force units again retired across the border into Cambodia, and the immediate threat to TAY NINH was relieved.

The pattern of operations in December within the 2nd Brigade area of operations was generally similar to that of November with an increase of enemy activity in the CITADEL and the area to the south and west of TRANG BANG. The 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry and 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry were successful in countering these increased enemy activities in the CITADEL while the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry turned back enemy probes south and west of TRANG BANG.

Subsequent to Christmas day and the cease fire that was in effect on that day, 2nd Brigade elements moved into the MUSHROOM area to the immediate north of the CITADEL and the HO BO Woods to capture and destroy significant quantities of rice that the enemy attempted to position in that area under the protection of the cease fire.

In the 3rd Brigade area of operations in December, the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry continued to concentrate on the destruction of the enemy strongholds in the TRAPEZOID area. Although the battalion continued to experience almost daily contact with the enemy in that area, the long term success of the battalion's operations in the TRAPEZOID began to become apparent in the progressively reduced severity of these daily attacks.

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The 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry continued its operations in the BOL LOI Woods throughout December. The battalion's major engagement during the month occurred on 17 December when it defeated an enemy battalion size ambush along route 239, the MSR between TAY NINH and DAU TIENG. The enemy attempted to ambush a logistical motor convoy