

INCLOSURE 17

NARRATIVE OF THE CAMPAIGN ALONG NATIONAL ROUTE 13

17

148

7 AUG 1966

THE CAMPAIGN ALONG NATIONAL ROUTE 13

(C) 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 NINH 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 NINH 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 SAIGON through THU DAU MOT, the provincial capital of BINH DUONG Province; onward to the north through CHON THANH District Town; through HON QUAN (AN LOC), the provincial capital of BINH LONG Province; and finally north through the LOC NINH Plantation to the Cambodian Border.

(C) 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 NINH 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 NINH airstrip and patrolled and conducted search operations westward to the Cambodian Border without substantial contact. The brigade returned to its base at LAI KHE on 26 May 1966.

(C) 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 NINH, HON QUAN, CHON THANH, MINH THANH, and SONG 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.

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

(C) On 8 June, the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry was moved to LAI KHE airfield as an infantry reaction force and A Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry commenced its move from LAI KHE through CHON THANH to HON QUAN. Although road blocks, mines, and minor harassment were encountered, Troop A arrived at CHON THANH about 1300 without significant contact. At this point the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry was moved by helicopters to the HON QUAN airfield, placing it in a better position to react to any engagement between CHON THANH and HON QUAN. At 1440 hours, approximately 12 kilometers south of;

DOWNGRADED AT 5 YEAR INTERVALS

DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS

DOD DIR 5200.10

CONFIDENTIAL

149

HON 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 272d 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 105mm, 155mm, and 8" artillery. The 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry was committed in an airborne 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, 18th Infantry continued to HON QUAN the following day.

(C) On 11 June 1966, A Company, 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry committed one rifle platoon with a CIDG reconnaissance platoon in an airborne reconnaissance operation to the western edge of the LOC NINH Plantation. The remainder of A Company moved by foot from the 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, 28th 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, 28th Infantry had destroyed over 50% of the 1st Battalion, 273d Regiment.

(C) The 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry under OPCON 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 MICHELIN 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.

(C) The 1st Infantry Division was deployed, on 30 June as shown on Inclosure 1. The 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry was conducting operations to the southeast of SONG BE; the 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry 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 QUANG LOI - AN LOC Plantation. The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry was securing engineers finishing the airstrip at MINH 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.

(C) About 0900 on 30 June, Troops B and C, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry and C Company, 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry proceeded north from HON QUAN and explained an AVLB adjacent to the damaged CHU LE Bridge. The column then moved north to conduct an armed reconnaissance along Route 13 and secure engineer equipment to be brought on the return trip from LOC NINH 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

CONFIDENTIAL

General, 1st Infantry Division was notified of this action while he was with the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry southwest of SONG B. On the return flight, he alerted the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry at PHUOC VIEH for a fixed-wing airlift to QUAN LOI. At 1020 the 3d Brigade Commander was instructed to reassign the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry from its operation to the SONG B airstrip and be prepared upon receipt of helicopters to move to the airfield at QUAN LOI. At 1000 hours the 1st Brigade Commander was ordered to move the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry and the Brigade Command Post to QUAN 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 OPCON 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 QUAN LOI by fixed-wing aircraft at 1530 hours and by 1800 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 QUAN LOI and was prepared for an airmobile assault. The 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry was ordered to move from LAI NIE by fixed-wing aircraft to QUAN LOI and assume the mission of security for QUAN LOI - HON QUAN. 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 west and 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 CH-47. Additional wounded VC were picked up in the area, but there was no evidence of a major VC force in the immediate area of this landing zone.

(C) At 1630 hours, 1 July, the 2d Battalion, 18th Infantry was lifted by assault helicopters from their perimeter along Route 13 into two LZ's farther to the northwest. At 1500 hours, A Company proceeded to a major 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 automatic weapons 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. At 0530, 2 July, the VC launched a series of five assaults against A Company, C Company, and the Recon Platoon. The 1st Battalion, 28th 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 was delivered from the landing zone occupied by the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry. The VC attack was repulsed with losses to the 3d Battalion, 273d VC Regiment that included 78 killed. The

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

1st Battalion, 2d Infantry, minus one company at the artillery base, was assembled on Route 13 and helilifted to an LZ east of the battle. The landing zone was secured by the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry and the attached ARVN APC troop and rifle company of the 1st Battalion, 9th Regiment. The 3d Brigade was ordered to move its headquarters back to LOC NINH at 0900 together with the 2d Battalion, 26th Infantry. At the same time, the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry was ordered to move by fixed-wing aircraft from LAI KHE to LOC NINH and provide a reaction force to be used to the northwest. The 1st Battalion, 28th 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 enroute. 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 QUAN 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, 28th Infantry, and 1st and 2d Battalions, 2d Infantry were assembled at the QUAN LOI Plantation. The 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry(-) assembled at the HON QUAN 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.

(C) While the battles with the 271st and 273d Regiments took place north of HON QUAN, the 272d Regiment at least partially recovered from its battle south of HON QUAN, moved to an area between CHON THANH and HON QUAN. Further reports indicate that another regiment may have taken up positions along Route 13 between CHON THANH and LAI KHE. When the 272d Viet Cong Regiment ambushed A Troop, it may have expected a soft convoy 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.

1 Inclosure -- Map

CONFIDENTIAL

152

INCLOSURE 13

AFTER ACTION REPORT OPERATION LEXINGTON 111

18

1371

CONFIDENTIAL

HEADQUARTERS  
FIRST BATTALION, 16TH INFANTRY  
APO US FORCES 96345

LEXINGTON

III

AFTER ACTION REPORT

CONFIDENTIAL

155

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
HEADQUARTERS  
FIRST BATTALION, 18TH INFANTRY  
APO US FORCES 96345

20 June 1966

**SUBJECT:** Combat After Action Report (Operation LEXINGTON III)

**THRU:** Commanding Officer  
2d Bde, 1st Inf Div  
ATTN: S-3  
APO US Forces 96345

**TO:** Commanding General  
1st Infantry Division  
ATTN: AVID - T  
APO US Forces 96345

1. (U) **NAME AND TYPE OF OPERATION:** Operation LEXINGTON III, Battalion search and destroy operation in Rung Sat Special Zone.

2. (U) **DATES OF OPERATION:** 210900 May - 091200 June 66.

3. (C) **GENERAL:** Operation LEXINGTON III was initiated by Headquarters MACV. The operation called for a single battalion operating in the Rung Sat Special Zone. Maps, Vietnam 1:50,000, Sheets: 6342I, 6342II, 6442IV, 6442III. The operation was conducted in five phases. Phase I included a airlift and scallift into Operation Base SHARK YSO58347 in TACR "B" (Incl 1 - Overlay of TACR "B") and a motor march into Operation Base PORPOISE (VUNG TAN). Phase II covered company size search and destroy operation in TACR "B" and several in TACR "A" (Incl 2 - Overlay of TACR "A"). Phase III was the move from Operation Base SHARK in TACR "B" to Operation Base BARRACUDA in TACR "A". The move was made by helicopter airlift and scallift. Phase IV covered company size operations in TACR "A". In phase V the 1/18 Inf and A 1/7 Arty moved from Rung Sat Special Zone back to Boarcat by helicopter airlift and scallift.

Throughout Operation LEXINGTON III 1/18 Inf maintained a company size rapid reaction force at the operation base.

The operation was unique in that the 1/18 Inf employed airlift by HUUB and scallift by LCH and LCU. The fire support included A 1/7 Arty in DS of 1/18 Inf, LF Bn (HUUB), Naval Gunfire, USAF and Navy Air. A USMC LNO with Naval Gun Fire Team supported the 1/18 Inf the entire operation.

a. Reporting Officer: Maj J.C. Bard, Commanding

b. Task Organization:

- (1) COMNAVFORV LNO: Lt Col A. C. Smith Jr. USMC  
Maj E. King USMC
- (2) Co A: Capt L.R. Miller: Commanding
- (3) Co B: Capt J.J. Roberts: Capt F. Allan: Commanding
- (4) Co C: Capt R.J. Tocco: Commanding
- (4) A 1/7 Arty (DS): Capt Magregur: Commanding
- (5) RAG Boat Co, YNN
- (6) Battalion Troops
- (7) HHC 1/18 Inf (-)
- (8) Recon Plt.

4. (C) **INTELLIGENCE:**

a. Information: Available information on VC Forces prior to commencement of Operation LEXINGTON III indicated that there were supposedly one (1) Engineer Battalion, and Local Forces consisting of four (4) companies, six (6) Platoons, and two (2) squads within the operational area of TACR "A" (QUANG XUYEN District) and TACR "B" (QUANG GIO District). Initially eighteen (18) specific target areas (11 in TACR "A", 3 in TACR "B", 4 outside TACR's) were furnished by the Naval Advisory Group, with one (1) more in TACR "A" added during the course of the operation. Information on suspected supply routes and other installations and units were also furnished by MACV intelligence estimates and Combined Intelligence Center reports.

156

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

The RSSZ was also suspected of being a thoroughfare for the 4th Bn, 165A Regt and three (3) other companies. The RSSZ was considered VC controlled without population domination. It was further considered a VC transportation corridor for the movement of arms and ammunition and an important link in the VC resupply system for traffic between Saigon and Fung Tau, from the western region, and by sea from NVN. Also it was considered by the VC as a lucrative area for the interdiction of the shipping channels leading to the port of Saigon, thereby disrupting the economy of the RV and the friendly war effort.

b. Enemy Situation: There were no large engagements with VC Forces. The VC 225th Engineer Battalion or its elements, as well as the other local force companies, were not encountered. Large massing of VC Forces was not anticipated, and none took place. Contacts with local force units and guerrillas were expected, and took place. Except for a limited amount of booby traps, sniping, SA harassing fire, and one meeting engagement, our forces moved unopposed. It is estimated that the Battalion encountered only local forces and guerrilla elements. The VC forces encountered within or near base areas showed no intention of defending these facilities, as was expected. The majority of the VC KIA's were as a result of night ambushes along streams and/or waterways. Base camps and facilities were found generally near the streams indicating the need for easy accessibility in this type of terrain. Although some of the specific target areas were not checked due to lack of transportation or fire support, as well as denial of operating areas, maximum effort was placed against suspected routes into the target areas with significant results. Targets 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12 did not have installations or activities as reported. The area in the Southern tip of TAGR "A" (bounded by the RACH GANH HAO LON, the SONG DIEG TRAM, and the South China Sea), although not a specific target area, did prove lucrative in that a large base camp was uncovered and contact was made with an undetermined amount of VC, resulting in two (2) VC KIA and two (2) weapons captured. This area could not be pursued further as the operation was terminated at this time. Maximum use was made of RED HAZE and SLAR missions. Despite constant surveillance by these devices, no significant movements were noted in the TAGR's. The very few SLAR returns indicated there was a limited number of boats used by the VC or the VC chose not to move because of his knowledge of the SLAR capability as well as our presence in the area. RED HAZE sightings were primarily in and around populated areas and main shipping channels.

c. Significant Incidents:

- (1) Seven (7) ambushes against VC in sampans resulting in twenty-six (26) VC KIA, twelve (12) weapons captured or destroyed, and seven (7) sampans destroyed.
- (2) Engagement with VC squad resulting in three (3) VC KIA and two (2) weapons captured.

d. Significant VC facilities uncovered:

- (1) Large incomplete base camp with only fortifications near the LONG THAM VC controlled village vic 13106492.
- (2) Company size base camp w/1900 rds SA and 6 sampans vic XS944626.
- (3) Two (2) ammo facilities vic XS956628 and XS958616, containing four-ton (14) weapons, grenades, and repair tools.
- (4) Hospital vic XS954609 w/13 huts (60 bed capacity), one (1) operating room, 6 sampans, and a few medical supplies.
- (5) Base camp with capacity for forty (40) personnel vic Y5018578.
- (6) Incomplete base camp w/landing dock vic Y5029613.
- (7) Base camp w/twenty (20) huts and forty (40) bunkers vic Y5937541.
- (8) Large base camp (150m x 75m) w/five (5) large huts vic Y5008563.

e. Terrain and weather were as expected. Showers or thundershowers did appear in the afternoons, and at times early evening. Mangrove swamp forests were encountered. Concealment from air and ground in this area was excellent. There were LZ's available in TAGR "B" (CAN GIO District), but very few in TAGR "A" (QUANG XUYEN District). The major obstacles were, of course, the waterways tide level, and the dense, low evergreen mangrove forest areas.

f. Limitations: Aerial photographs requested were not initially available. When they did arrive, the operation had already been complete for the particular coverage received. However, the photographs were excellent, with minimum cloud cover. RED HAZE and SLAR inflight reports were not available until the last few days of the operation. This occurred only because direct liaison was finally made with the surveillance unit, only after repeated requests through channels failed to produce results.

**CONFIDENTIAL**



g. VC Losses and Documents Captured: (see Para 9)

h. Psy War:

- (1) Psy War effort included use of U-10 aircraft for loudspeaker appeals and for dissemination of printed matter, and footcovevment for audio appeals and visual contact.
- (2) Psy War personnel accompanying the Mad Cap team on visits to the communities of Dong Hoa and Can Gio succeeded in establishing a friendly atmosphere. US aims and reasons for being in Vietnam were explained to villagers.
- (3) Nine loudspeaker missions were flown over the operational area by U-10 aircraft, for a total of 17 hours broadcast time.
- (4) Leaflets dropped on Operation LEXINGTON III were as follows:

TYPE	AMOUNT
How to surrender	20,000
ARVN versus VC Life	20,000
Symptoms of Disease	20,000
Medical treatment for ralliers	10,000
AP 109	10,000
	80,000

- (5) Areas of drop and broadcast were the southern most section of the Hung Sat Special Zone.

i. Civil Affairs: During the operation the Battalion Civic Action Team accomplished the following tasks:

- (1) Held Medical Sick Call in villages near Battalion CP, especially Ly Nhon XC937599 and Dong Hoa Y8059476. Boats were used to convey medical personnel to all villages in Can Gio sub sector area via Y8163518. Organic Battalion personnel were augmented at times by teams from 2d Bde and Division Headquarters. Advice was given on cleanliness and sanitation for preventive purposes.
- (2) Attempts were initiated to procure certain items such as insect repellent which would be distributed by local MCOV officers.
- (3) Efforts were made to conduct an aerial anti-mosquito spraying of Dong Hoa and Ly Nhon. Both attempts were unsuccessful due to danger to crops in Dong Hoa and unavailability of aircraft in Ly Nhon.
- (4) In an attempt to fire 81mm mortar rounds into an area in which small arms fire was observed from operational base SHANK, four rounds landed in the village of Dong Hoa Y8059476, killing 7 persons and wounding 30. The Battalion Surgeon and medical personnel immediately rushed to the village and began administering to and separating the wounded for evacuation. The wounded were evacuated by helicopter within 3 hours to hospitals at Long Binh and Vung Tau. BN CMA personnel quickly visited them at the hospitals, getting their names, conditions and locations for relatives. The next morning, transportation was provided to convey relatives to Vung Tau to visit those hospitalized. Also, aid was given in the purchasing and transporting of coffins for the dead. Work was begun immediately on assessing damage and making repairs. Organic personnel augmented by Division Engineers worked quickly to repair damage. This included carpentry, cementing, and roof repair. Two completely new roofs were installed and repairs were made on approximately nine others. A total of 100 sheets of corrugated roofing was used. Many villagers requested compensation for damage or repair supplies, rather than having the work done by US personnel. This was done through personnel from G-5, 1st Infantry Division. Emergency supplies of food and textile kits were distributed to the families of those killed or injured. One woman was given an immediate payment of 2000 Pien-tse, due to her being destitute after losing her husband. The people were advised to submit claims for deaths and injuries, as well as crop damage, through appropriate VN channels. MACV personnel in the area worked to have these claims expedited as soon as they were submitted.
- (5) Local advisors in both areas in which the Battalion worked extensively, expressed appreciation for the work of the troops, and indicated that their own efforts had been aided. In reference to Dong Hoa, it was stated that the quick and thorough action taken offset much of the bad feelings possibly encountered.

5. (C) MISSION: 1/18 Inf conducts extensive patrolling, ambushes and search and destroy operations in TACR "A" and "B".

6. (C) CONCEPT OF OPERATION:

- a. Maneuver: This operation was conducted in five (5) phases.

Phase I GRCRD 11 - 66 (corrected from 12 - 66) initiated this phase with a

158

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

motor march to Operation Base PORPOISE YS301434, a sealift from Mike Beach, Saigon to Operation Base SHARK and a airlift from Bearcat to Operation Base SHARK to clear Operation Base SHARK.

Phase II Frag Order 1 thru 7 to OPRD 11 - 66 covered search and destroy operations in TACR "B" and TACR "A" with maximum ambushes at night. These operations were controlled from Operation Base SHARK. Operations were conducted in TACR "A" during this phase because of the activity encountered on several ambushes in this TACR. Initially there was very little activity in TACR "B".

Phase III: Frag Order 8 to OPRD 11 - 66 directed the move from Operation Base SHARK in TACR "B" to Operation Base BARRACUDA in TACR "A". The move employed air assault by Co A on Operation Base BARRACUDA to clear and secure this area. Co C was airlifted into Operation Base BARRACUDA from Operation Base PORPOISE as the Bn rapid reaction force. A Btry 1/7 Arty was airlifted by CH-47 from Operation Base SHARK to Operation Base BARRACUDA. Supplies and Supply personnel moved by sealift using LCU and LCM's during this phase.

Phase IV: Frag Order 9 thru 15 covered the search and destroy operations in TACR "A". Operations in TACR "A" were controlled from Operation Base BARRACUDA with A Btry 1/7 Arty in BS.

Phase V: On 091200 June 66 LEXINGTON III was terminated. Co A and HHC (-) moved by sealift to Mike Beach, Saigon and then by motor convoy to Bearcat. Co B and Co C were airlifted from Operation Base BARRACUDA and Operation Base PORPOISE to Bearcat. The Bn rear located at Operation Base PORPOISE conducted a sealift from Operation Base PORPOISE to Mike Beach, Saigon and then moved by motor convoy to Bearcat.

b. Fire Support: Fire Support was provided by Artillery, Naval Gunfire, FAC Air and HUIB Fire Teams. A Btry 1/7 Arty was in direct support of the 1/18 Inf during the entire operation.

7. (C) EXECUTION:

a. Chronology:

18 May

1/18 Inf published OPRD 11 - 66 (LEXINGTON III)

19 May

191208, sealift convoy departed base camp for VN Navy dockyards, Saigon, and arrived at 191400.

191700 two VN LCUs completed loading and departed embarkation point to anchor over night on SONG HHA RE River.

191750 Bde notified Bn of 24 hr delay in Operation LEXINGTON III.

191855 Convoy Commander and vehicles returned from Saigon.

191940 sealift was notified of 24 hr delay.

Normal security measures taken for Base Camp security.

20 May

1/18 published Frag Order 1 to OPRD 11 - 66.

201130 Bde notified Bn LEXINGTON III will begin on 21 May 66.

Normal security measures taken for base camp security.

21 May

1/18 Inf published Frag Order 2 to OPRD 11 - 66.

211135 1/18 Inf initiated LEXINGTON III with the first lift of Alpha Company.

211030 FAC destroyed a sampan at YS137523.

211140 Co A and Hq's (-) landed at LZ TROUT via YS059473.

211203 motor convoy departed Bearcat enroute to Vung Tau with Co B and Recon

2/18 Inf providing security.

21143 the sealift portion had landed and unloaded at LZ TROUT and the land tail closed RP.

211435 Co C lifted of enroute to Vung Tau.

211700 Co B closed Vung Tau.

211730 Danger 77 visited Operations Base SHARK.

No contact was made during the day. During the night, the rifle companies established a Battalion perimeter with listening posts to the front of each company.

22 May

1/18 published Frag Order 3 to OPRD 11 - 66

220715 Naval Gunfire Team (ANGHCO) arrived Operation Base SHARK.

220720 Three (3) LCM's based at SHARK.

220915 Gunships fired on sampan in Bn TACR, at YS105500.

221700 VN LCM boats conduct deceptive extraction of Co C.

Co A remained in OP area via YS059472 as the Bn reserve and established ambushes during hours of darkness. Co B and Bn trains remained at Rear operation base, YS301415. All elements will remain in present locations with A & C Companies conducting night ambush patrols in respective areas.

( CONFIDENTIAL )

222300 Dn monitored call from Artichoke 37 for Dustoff. Bn answered call and a Navy PCS landed at Op Base SHARK YSO59473, one (1) man was off loaded and 4 others given medication.

222355 Medovac of casualty from Navy PCS completed.  
H & I fires by Co A, 65 element and Naval Gunfire during the night.

23 May

1/18 Inf published Frag Order 4 to OPRD 11 - 66.  
230650 B slicks arrived at Op Base SHARK.  
230700 first lift of Alpha completed.  
230724 aircraft received SA fire from vic YS134712, fire team notified.  
230745 airlift of Alpha completed into Op area JAGUAR.  
230836 Co C closed Op Base SHARK from PANTHER.  
230910 fire team destroyed a sampan with no one aboard at YS109729.  
230923 aerial observer received SA fire from YS112498, Arty fired into area with unknown results.

231030 Fire team received fire from vic YS109529.  
231030 Co D departed PORPOISE for Op Base SHARK.  
231310 LCU closed Op Base SHARK with Co A.  
231400 Co C departed Op Base SHARK for Op Base PORPOISE.  
231458 Fay War Ship over Op Base SHARK.  
231620 1st Div CG arrived Op Base SHARK.  
231710 Co C closed Vung Tau.  
232010 Co B's L element vic 026587 received A/W fire. During the day Bn continued operations in TACR w/nog enemy contact. FF II Commander visited Battalion. Co D established two (2) night ambush sites. Bn continues operation in TACR "B" and prepares for TACR "A".

24 May

1/18 published Frag Order 5 to OPRD 11 - 66.  
240225 Co B's M-2 ambush position fired on two sampans moving west to east.  
240305 Arty fired, results unknown.  
240630 Co B's L element received auto weapons fire from YS024571.  
240730 Co B departed Op SHARK for LION by LCM.  
240910 Co B closed LION.  
241007 Co B found damaged sampan with letters and misc papers in it.  
241010 Naval advisor reported a mine at YS019618 and a boat hit by a mine at YS028606. Also contact with VC at YS019610, 4 VC KIA, captured one (1) 57RR, one (1) M and two (2) carbines, located 6 or 7 bunkers, one (1) hut.  
241020 Co C departed PORPOISE for SHARK by LCU.  
241213 Co, helilift extraction completed from JAGUAR.  
241300 Co C closed Op Base SHARK.  
241400 requested mosquito spray for civic action program but request denied.  
242020 ambush patrol of Co C sank one sampan, killed 2 VC (BC) at YS014568.

1/18 Inf continues Operation LEXINGTON III. Co A at Op Base PORPOISE, Co B operation in LION (?), Co C as Bn perimeter defense. No contact during the day.

25 May

1/18 Inf published Frag Order 6 to OPRD 11 - 66.  
250625 Co C ambush patrol confirms 3 VC KIA. Found papers.  
250730 remainder of Co C departed Op Base SHARK to PUMA.  
250845 airstrike delivered on YS003565 suspected mines.  
250910 Co C landed at PUMA.  
250955 Co C located a base camp at YS030565 which had not been used for some time, destroyed one (1) hut.  
261010 Co B extracted from LION by LCM boats  
251100 Co B closed Op Base SHARK.  
251100 Co A arrived Op Base Shark by LCU.  
251205 Co B departed Op Base SHARK for Op Base PORPOISE by LCU.  
1/18 Inf continues operations. Co A at Op Base SHARK, Co B at Op Base PORPOISE Co C in area PUMA. No contact during the day.

26 May

1/18 Inf published Frag Order 7 to OPRD 11 - 66.  
260600 ambush patrol from Co C killed 5 VC (BC) vic YS014567 in a sampan travelling W to E, captured two (2) wps and two (2) packs which sank along with the sampan.  
260610 Co A Engle Flight airlift began.  
260612 Co A Engle Flight completed.  
260940 Co B departed Op Base PORPOISE.  
261045 Co A located platoon size base camp at YS100492, had auto wps positions and building material.  
261140 first element Co A returned from Engle flight.  
261155 Co B arrived Op Base SHARK by LCU.  
261250 Co C departed area PUMA for Op Base.

261305 Co C returned to Op Base PORPOISE at 261305.  
261305 element from Co A landed by ho lift at LZ PINK YS085563.  
261045 all elements of Co A were extracted back to Op Base SHARK.  
261945 ambush patrol from Co A sank one sampan at YS032524, also received one round of sniper fire from same location.  
262040 four (4) mortar rounds landed in DONG HOA. Crater analysis and tail fins indicated they were 82mm mortars from Ducless unit. Casualties were 7 dead civilians, 24 wounded civilians, and 6 wounded P.F. soldiers.  
262240 casualties were evacuated from DONG HOA to the 1st ROK MASH and the 36th Hospital at WUNG AN, also some to the 9th Evac.  
Co A and Co B remained in perimeter security for the night. Co C remained at Op Base PORPOISE. Co C had 5 VC KIA (BC), captured two weapons, sank one sampan. Co A destroyed one sampan.

27 May

1/18 Inf published Frag Order 8 to OPORD 11 - 66.  
270725 Co B departed Op Base SHARK by LCM boats for Operational area OCELOT.  
270830 Co B closed OCELOT.  
270835 two (2) railiers turned themselves in to 1/18 Inf in village N.E. of 1/18 Inf CP.  
271007 Co C departed Op Base PORPOISE for Op Base SHARK.  
271145 1/18 began civic action program to repair damage from mortar rounds. Construction material and food sent to DONG HOA.  
271400 Co C closed Op Base SHARK.  
271514 Co A departed Op Base SHARK by LCU for Op Base PORPOISE.  
271712 Chinook arrived with supplies for DONG HOA.  
Negative contact during the day, Co A at PORPOISE, Co B conducting S & B operations with saturation ambushes at night in OCELOT. Co C in perimeter defense. Civic action will continue in DONG HOA.

28 May

1/18 Inf published Frag Order 9 to OPORD 11 - 66.  
280650 Co B made contact with two (2) sampans, 11 VC at YS087492, resulted in nine (9) VC KIA (BC), destroyed 5 carbines.  
280700 Co C began airlift to BARRACUDA  
280730 Co C closed BARRACUDA.  
280828 extraction of Co B by LCHs began.  
280900 Co A commenced airlift from Op Base PORPOISE to BARRACUDA.  
281036 Co A closed BARRACUDA.  
281037 Co B closed Op Base SHARK and aided in civic action in DONG HOA.  
281045 A 1/7 Arty began airlift.  
281555 A 1/7 Arty closed Op Base BARRACUDA.  
281640 Co B began extraction by LCU from Op Base SHARK.  
281945 Co B closed Op Base PORPOISE.  
Contact during the day resulted in nine (9) VC KIA, five (5) carbines destroyed and two sampans sunk. Co A and Co C in perimeter security of Op Base BARRACUDA.

29 May

1/18 published Frag Order 10 to OPORD 11 - 66.  
290330 Hq (-) received one suspected 57mm RR, resulting in one (1) minor WIA.  
290720 Co A departed BARRACUDA.  
290748 Co A entered area LEOPARD.  
291405 contact was made with an unknown number of VC armed with one .30 cal MG vic XS944626.  
291550 contact was broken, resulting in two (2) friendly WIA, one later died. Estimated company size base camp at this location was destroyed and the following equipment was captured: 1,540 rd SA arms, one bag of documents and six sampans destroyed.  
Co B remains in area PORPOISE, Co C remained at BARRACUDA. Co A conducted saturation ambushes in its area of responsibility.

30 May

Co A continued to patrol area LEOPARD.  
301215 an unoccupied base camp was destroyed vic XS953613.  
301330 Co A at XS953616 found a weapons cache consisting of 7 rifles (6-8mm & 1-303) and 70 rd arms.  
301415 Co A found an inboard motor sampan at XS954615 and destroyed it.  
Co B remained at PORPOISE and Co C at BARRACUDA.

31 May

1/18 Inf published Frag Order 11 to OPORD 11 - 66.  
The operation for Co C was cancelled due to pending operations of Vietnamese forces in the area, as a result Co A continued patrolling in area LEOPARD.  
310900 Co A received SA fire from XS955605, Arty and mortar fire was fired into the area with negative results.

161

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

310915 Co A located a small hospital with 15-20 huts vic YS954609, huts destroyed by burning.

311025 a patrol from Co C made contact with a VC squad at YS959577, resulting in 3 VC KIA (BC) and two weapons captured.

311910 Co A made a foot march back to BARRACUDA and closed at 311710.

Co C patrol conducted saturation ambushes in their area. Co A departed BARRACUDA by LCU at 311930 for PORPOISE. Co B perimeter security along with Co C (-)

1 June

1/18 Inf published Frag Order 12 to OPGRD 11 - 66.

010700 Co C (-) departed BARRACUDA for PUMA.

030820 Co C (-) found one (1) weapon (US bolt action) at YS014568.

At YS014568 Co C (-) received SA fire from estimated 6 VC vic YS013560, fire was returned with unknown results.

010933 Co C (-) located squad size base camp that had not been used recently vic YS962585.

011120 Co C located a larger base camp at YS008578, 1 VC KIA (BC) and one US cal 45 S&W, a second base camp was located vic YS010570 with negative results.

Co A remained in PORPOISE, Co B remained as perimeter security for BARRACUDA.

2 June

1/18 Inf published Frag Order 13 to OPGRD 11 - 66.

1/18 continues Operation LEXINGTON III with Co B conducting search and destroy operations in Target 19.

020732 Co C is ready for extraction.

020840 aircrafts with M-54 Depth Charges was begun to clear channel for Co B.

020940 all Co B elements landed vic YS032605, YS034605, YS040607.

021200 Co A and Recon Plt arrived at BARRACUDA.

021345 Co B located small base camp of two huts vic YS029613, night ambushes were conducted in area.

3 June

Operation LEXINGTON III continues with Co B conducting S & D operations to the northwest of the area vic YS032615.

031030 Recon Plt located 1 hut w/storage bin empty, capacity 2-3 tons. YS948595

031345 Co B found a fortified VC position vic YS023618, platoon size, also

found several cal 106, 57 or 90mm skull cases.

031450 Recon attacked one sampan killed 4 VC (BC) captured one M1 carbine at YS945588.

032140 Co B ambushed a sampan resulting in 3 VC KIA, one (1) Russian carbine and one (1) grease gun captured vic YS015614.

Co B continues saturation ambushes. Co A at BARRACUDA and Co C at PORPOISE.

4 June

040615 Co A departed Op Base BARRACUDA by LCM.

040900 C & C received SA fire from vic YS007521.

041025 Co B requested Artillery fire YS013614 on a suspected enemy position.

041125 Co A found 10 tons of rice vic YS993536.

041330 Co B was airlifted from AO 19.

041415 Co B closed BARRACUDA.

041520 C & C ship located 2 huts & 2 sampans vic YS015607.

041645 C & C ship spotted sampan at XS994587, FAC checked out w/unk results.

During the morning Bn utilized Air Force Air armed with 1000 lb GP with Daisy Cutter Fuses to clear future LZ.

5 June

1/18 Inf published Frag Order 14 to OPGRD 11 - 66.

Co A continued to patrol in assigned area.

050925 Recon closed BARRACUDA and brought in a M1 carbine and documents.

051155 Co A located an abandoned base camp consisting of 20 huts vic XS986640.

Co A resupply of water to Co A was completed by the C & C ship.

Co A conducted saturation ambushes during the night. Co B located in area PORPOISE, Co C in area BARRACUDA.

6 June

1/18 published Frag Order 15 to OPGRD 11 - 66.

060700 Co C departed BARRACUDA for area of operation.

060800 Co C landed vic XS937687 conducted extensive patrolling to the south, south east and south west.

061145 Co A extracted by LCM from vic YS028577 and moved to BARRACUDA.

061225 Co B moved from PORPOISE to BARRACUDA by LCU.

061330 Co A departed BARRACUDA for PORPOISE.

061405 Co C engaged a sampan vic XS947625 resulting in two (2) VC KIA (BC) and one sampan destroyed.

Co C conducted saturation ambushes during the night. Co B located at BARRACUDA.

7 June

Co C continued extensive patrolling with negative contact.

071220 Co C spotted a sampan moving south at YS948678. Sampan turned around and a fire team was called out to search area with negative results.

162

CONFIDENTIAL

Co C conducted saturation fire during the night. Co B remained in area BARRACUDA, Co A remained at POIPOSE.

3 June

Operation LEXINGTON III continued with Co B conducting a sealift by LCM's at 080000.

081020 a base camp was located via Y5995520 with one bunker, one (1) VC was sighted in the area of base camp who fled in a SE direction from Y5020520. Upon pursuing the VC, two (2) booby trapped grenades and a trail with punji stakes was located at Y5005515.

061250 contact was made with unknown number of VC at X5014532 resulting in one (1) VC KIA (DC) and one (1) 7.62 rifle captured.

081342 heavy small arms fire was received from vic of Y5003516 resulting in one (1) US KIA and one (1) US injured.

081415 contact was made with 3 VC at X5998538 resulting in one (1) VC KIA (DC) and one (1) Japanese 7.62 weapon captured, VC broke contact and fled into swamp.

080930 Co C was sealifted out of their AO and brought to BARRACUDA.

081240 Co C departed BARRACUDA by LCU for POIPOSE.

080800 Co A departed POIPOSE.

081200 Co A arrived at BARRACUDA, assumed perimeter security for battalion.

9 June

1/18 published Frag Order 16 to OPGRD 11 - 66.

091200 Operation LEXINGTON III terminated.

091415 Co B and Recon airlifted out of AO, both elements had negative contact.

091130 128 Air Mob element killed two (2) VC (DC) and sank (1) sampans, X5970626.

091800 Co B and Recon and Co C closed Basecamp.

091830 Co A, Battery 1/7 Army and elements of Bn Headquarters moved by LCU from BARRACUDA.

Elements moving by sealift will remain over night aboard LCM and LCU in Saigon Harbor. Rear area at POIPOSE was sealifted by LCU to Saigon Navy Yards on 10 June and 11 June.

8. (C) SUPPORTING FORCES:

a. Artillery: A 1/7 Army (105 How) was direct support of 1/18 Inf during the entire operation. By occupying the same operations base as the 1/18 Inf the fires were timely and accurate.

b. Air Force:

(1) TAC AIR was employed on pre planned strikes. Bn S-3 Air coordinated air request with A10 and submitted all requests to Sig.

(2) Two missions were flown utilizing 1000 lbs Frag with Daisy Cutter Fuses. These were used to clear future LZ's for helicopter assault. The first mission had two duds in two areas. Other than for the duds, the missions were very successful. One mission was flown with M-54 depth charges to clear suspected water mines. Results unknown.

c. Army Aviation: Army Aviation was used every day of the operation. Numerous moves of company and platoon size were made. Fire teams were on station or on call at the operation base (on a daily basis) and the C & C ship was used seven to ten hours daily. Due to the inaccessibility of the RSSZ\* the 1/18 Inf depended greatly on the Army aviation support which was exemplary. Support was provided by the 162d and 128th Aviation companies of the 11th Aviation Bn. The aircraft were used to their maximum capability on numerous occasions in the evacuation of wounded and in the resupply and extraction of platoon size elements. The success of LEXINGTON III was directly proportional to the outstanding effort and accomplishments of Army Aviation.

9. (C) RESULTS:

a. Friendly Losses: KIA - (1), WIA - (4).

b. Enemy Losses:  
VC KIA (DC): 37 (3 by Army AIR)

WEAPONS AND AMMO

Small arms - 30  
Frag grenades - 51  
SA ammo - 2172 rds  
Grenade fuses - 750  
Comp VC explosive - 100 lbs  
Sub-machine gun mag - 8  
Grain propellant - 7 tubes

INSTALLATIONS

Base Camp - 11  
Ammo facilities - 2  
Hospital - 1  
Fortified positions - 4  
Bunkers - 10  
Huts - 14  
Landing dock - 1

163

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

WEAPONS AND AMMO (cont)

Saltpeter - 100 lbs  
Knives - 2  
Slingshot - 1

MATERIALS

Combat packs - 2  
Sampans - 37  
Fuel oil - 1002 gal  
Emery cloth - 300 sheets (12" x 12")  
Water jugs - 30 (20 and 50 gal cap)  
Rice - 20,100 lbs  
Cement - 200 lbs  
Salt - 5 lbs  
Granado press/mold - 1  
Eating dishware and utensils - 25 sets  
Mirror - 1  
8" boat propeller - 1  
2 1/2 T-T hydraulic jack - 1  
75 lb anvil - 1  
3" woodcutting saws - 3  
Portable loudspeaker - 1  
10 gal cans - 8  
Kerosene - 1 gal  
Soldering rods - 20  
Pistol bolts - 3  
Rice threshing machine - 1  
Misc clothes - for 40 pers  
Misc tools - wrenches, files, spades, picks, shovels, rivets, nuts and bolts, planes, wedges.  
Fishing tackle gear w/100 pieces of lead  
Misc med supplies (vitamins, penicillin, saline solution ampulos, gauge, etc)  
Green parrot  
Dong Hoa village government rubber stamp

DOCUMENTS

Propaganda books  
Medical training books  
Receipt from LZ NVCN Finance Agent  
Roster of party members (posn BY NVCN village)  
Sketch of unknown hamlet  
VC instructions on use of claymore mines  
6 envelopes sent to C702 unit from various other units w/code numbers  
VC receipt pad for ammo (no unit shown)

a. Installation Locations:

<u>BASE CODES</u>	<u>NOTE</u>	<u>AMMO FACILITY</u>
YS010555	YS030565	XS956623
YS019555	XS958516	YS958616
YS030565	XS945509	
XS944226	XS944604	
XS947514	YS016073	<u>HOSPITAL</u>
XS962582	YS012510	XS954609
XS018578	YS029613	
XS029613	XS943595	
XS964528	YS030537	<u>FORWARDED POSITIONS</u>
XS987541	XS986540	YS023618
YS008563	YS987541	XS995521
YS002545	YS030527	YS008563
YS006525	YS006525	YS100492
YS014533	YS075544	

10. (C) ADMINISTRATION:

a. Personnel:

21 May 66

8 June 66

144

	<u>FWD</u>	<u>REAR</u>	<u>CONFIDENTIAL</u>	<u>REAR</u>
HEC:	122	214	117	201
A:	156	57	143	35

CONFIDENTIAL

a. Personnel (cont)

	FWD	REAR	FWD	REAR
C	132	62	135	58
Total	556	377	535	332

b. Administrative Plans: Flow of personnel, mail, etc was best handled by using the C & C helicopter on a scheduled run daily between base camp and the FWD CP.

11. (C) SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES:

a. Several rice caches discovered in the Rung Sat Special Zone were destroyed by dumping it into the salt water which is found throughout the area. The base camp installations were well constructed and beyond the destructive capability of the companies operating in the AO. Engineer demolition team was on call at the operation base and also conducted instruction on demolition techniques to the companies when in reserve in the same area. Due to the many rivers and streams in the AO it was necessary to carry river crossing equipment on many operations. Nylon ropes and air mattresses were adequate. Sampans captured were also difficult to destroy. The most successful and fastest method used was a clymore on the bottom of the sampan.

b. The salt water predominant in the RSSZ caused medical problems when operation lasted more than 48 hours. Immersion foot, infection of any insect bites or small cuts were serious enough to place these individuals on light duty and cut down the combat strength of the unit.

12. (C) COMMANDERS ANALYSIS: LEXINGTON III was termed a highly successful operation by COMUSMACV and COMAVFCRV. The high kill ratio and the damage to Viet Cong base camps and to their equipment and food stocks were not only effective in reducing the VC disruption of friendly shipping through the RSSZ, but they were major factors in maintaining the high morale and aggressiveness of the US troops involved. The conduct of Phase III operations improved the operation in two respects. First of all, TACR Alpha was by far the most lucrative area for operations. Secondly, by lengthening the time a unit spent in the swamp to 48 hours its effectiveness was increased while the favorable by-products of increasing the units time at Vung Tau and at the FWD operational base were also significant. When the 1/18 Inf returns to the RSSZ Phase III - type operations should be duplicated in whatever target areas are selected.

As an overall improvement in US Army Military operations in the RSSZ it would be a definite advantage for the US Army unit commander to have complete tactical freedom in his TACR, not only for his ability to respond immediately to the latest intelligence, but perhaps equally as important, to provide him an opportunity to plan ahead with some assurance that the plan will be executed. This is necessary when such requirements as LCM's, LCVP's, Monitors, Commandments, salvage ships, Mark 54 Depth Charges, Air Force or Navy air strikes, and others must be fulfilled. Coordination lead time involved is at least two days, preferably four or five days if LZ preparation using Daisey Cutters is required.

13. (C) CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED:

a. Conclusions:

(1) When operating in the RSSZ, operations should not exceed 48 hours without an opportunity for troops to "dry out". Two to four days of remaining dry and treatment of sores and infections were adequate to allow units to go on another operation.

(2) A great deal of coordination is necessary with the VNN to conduct timely sealoft operations. The COMAVFCRV LEO's presence in the 1/18 Inf TOC proved invaluable in accomplishing this coordination. By accompanying the Bn Co in the Command and Control helicopter during sealofts his direct radio contact with the RA6 Boat Company's Naval Advisor provided the necessary link in this difficult coordination.

(3) Army Aviation (HUEI and HUEB aircraft) is an absolute necessity in operation in the RSSZ.

(4) More freedom of action by the Battalion operating in a TACR is necessary to take advantage of the most recent intelligence and activities of the VC. The time required to clear areas at time was too long to take advantage of the operation.

165

CONFIDENTIAL

(5) With the exception of targets not being accurately as reported, the intelligence base for the operation was largely valid in that the VC forces:

(a) Did have unopposed freedom of movement.  
(b) Used the waterways as a primary route of travel as evidenced by the several successful ambushes thereon.  
(c) Had the majority of their facilities within a short distance from the waterways, thereby facilitating movement and the transporting of supplies and personnel to and from these facilities.

(6) That few booby traps were encountered probably resulted from the fact that the area was considered safe by the VC because of difficult terrain, excellent concealment from air and ground in the mangrove forest areas, and that few operations had penetrated the area previously.

(7) VC personnel and material losses will probably have an adverse effect on VC future plans and operations. They have probably suffered a loss of prestige in the RSSZ because of US casualties compared to their losses. Some of the friendly indigenous personnel that inhabit the RSSZ will now have reason to doubt the VC propaganda of "ownership" and infallibility in this area as a result of unrestricted US movements and VC losses.

(8) Although no contact was made with the VC 225th Engr Bn or its elements, it still cannot be confirmed whether or not a unit does exist with this identity.

(9) The fact that locations of bases found are now known, as well as the fact that the VC were forced to evacuate and disperse, will cause them to have to relocate, reconstruct, or repair these facilities. Because of the terrain, VC efforts in this regard will be hampered for sometime, and the capability to support travel of VC units through the area is reduced.

b. Lessons Learned:

(1) New arrivals have a tendency to fire prior to identifying the enemy or insuring that moving objects are not friendly troops. Green Troops must be indoctrinated to let the enemy close, with the idea of a first round kill.

(2) Insect bites and open sores became infected quickly in the dirty salt water found throughout the RSSZ. Operations in this area should not exceed 48 hours, troops should be given adequate time for personal hygiene and treatment of infected insect bites.

(3) When the audio terminals of the PRC-25 radio got wet the radio becomes inoperable. Corrective action of using a cigarette lighter or matches can dry these terminals. A wet handset also makes transmission impossible and by covering the handset with aluminum foil from the accessory pack of C-Rations or with a plastic bag this problem is greatly reduced.

(4) Extreme caution must be exercised in selecting landing sites during hoist operations due to tidal changes and the inconsistency of the soil composition in the RSSZ. Tide data can be obtained from S-2, which is a helpful factor in selecting time and place. Detailed reconnaissance insures the best possible landing sites.

(5) LZ's and PZ's are few and far between in the RSSZ; however by clearing some of the B-52 bomb craters, extraction could be performed by one HUH-1 going in at a time. Daisy Cutters can be employed to clear areas for LZ's. Three LZ's were cleared for operations in an area inaccessible by any means except air-lift.

(6) When the short or jungle antennas are inadequate the erection of a field expedient antenna will increase the transmission range to where good communication are established. RTG's should be indoctrinated on the use of field expedient antennas.

(7) Communications between individuals in the RSSZ can be accomplished by hand clapping as this is a prevalent background noise in the mangrove swamp.

(8) River crossing equipment to include a 100-150 ft rope and air mattresses should be carried by each platoon for river crossing operations.

(9) The pace count changes considerably in the mangrove swamps and each unit should check its pace for 100 meters. Approx 280 steps were used to measure 100 meters.

(10) The 1:25,000 Photo-Maps of the RSSZ are considerably better than the standard 1:50,000 maps. These maps should be made of all Vietnam and issued through normal channels. The few that the battalion used were given by the COMNAVFORV LHO.

(11) The few aerial photo maps available proved to be invaluable and units going into this area of operations should request air photos of their entire TACZ prior to the commencement of the operation.

166

CONFIDENTIAL

(12) Two more M-60 HE's for the wps plt of each rifle company added considerably to the fire power of the platoon and company. Whenever the weapons platoon of a rifle company is used as a fourth rifle platoon the M-60 HE's should be made available.

(13) Each platoon should have 4 PKC-25's due to the number of squad size ambushes each platoon is required to place out at times.

(14) The platoon column is the only practical formation in the RSSZ because of the dense undergrowth.

(15) Individual's morale and alertness decreased after about 48 hours in the swamp. Rotating troops approx every 48 hours and giving them a 2 - 4 day break solves this problem.

(16) The VC in the RSSZ did not appear to be well trained or aggressive.

(17) The ambush was the most successful maneuver throughout LEXINGTON III. Maximum ambushes should be established on this type of operation. The use of FM and SLAR reports assists in picking ambush locations.

(18) In open areas such as rice paddies,  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton mounted radar is very effective.

(19) The use of sectionalized paper plates proved most satisfactory in serving A-Rations in the FID area. S-4 should assure that an adequate amount of paper plates is kept on hand. By using paper plates man-hours and cargo wt. are saved.

(20) The COMNAVFORV LNO located right in the En TOC proved most valuable in coordination requirements with VNN and US Navy. When-ever possible a LNO should be attached or some arrangements for coordination should be established daily.

*John C. Bard*  
JOHN C. BARD  
Major, Infantry  
Commanding

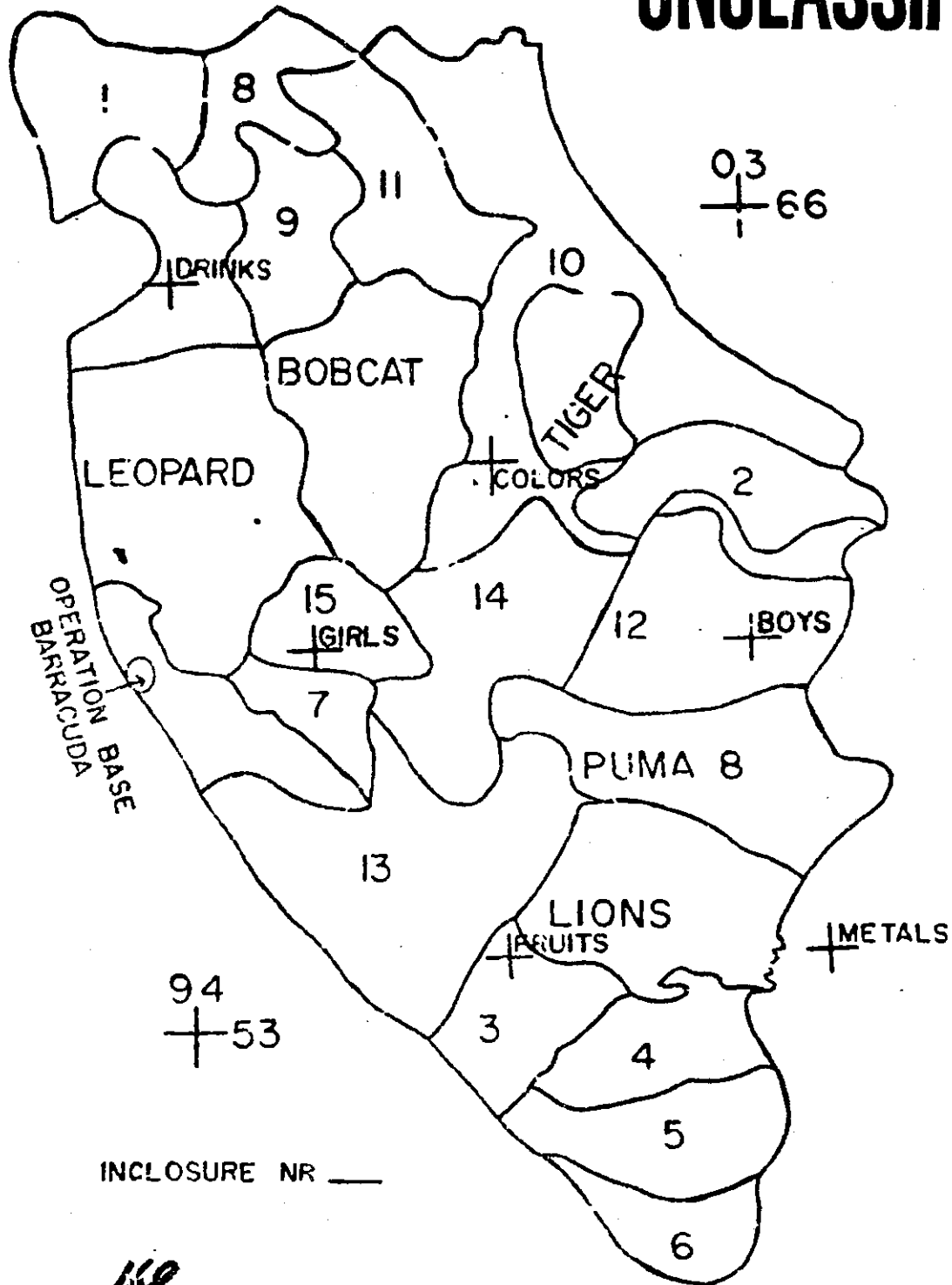
DISTRIBUTION: Special

11/2

167  
CONFIDENTIAL

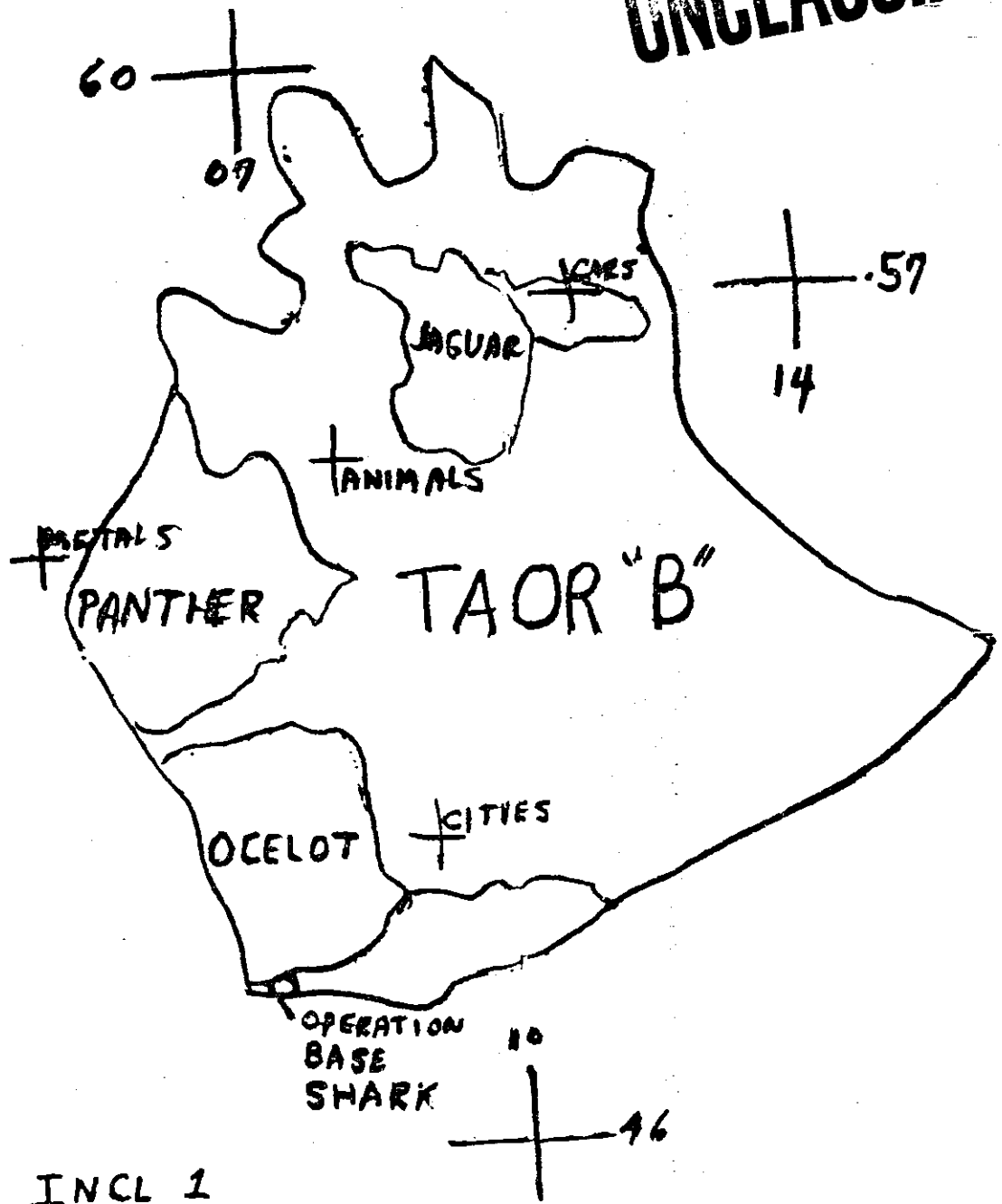
TAOR "A"

**UNCLASSIFIED**



**UNCLASSIFIED**

UNCLASSIFIED



INCL 1

169

UNCLASSIFIED

**UNCLASSIFIED**

**PLEASE DO NOT RETURN  
THIS DOCUMENT TO DTIC**

---

**EACH ACTIVITY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DESTRUCTION OF THIS  
DOCUMENT ACCORDING TO APPLICABLE REGULATIONS.**

**UNCLASSIFIED**