

1. COUNTRY: VS, RVN MR-2, KONTUM, PLEIKU, and DARLAC Provinces; CB	8. REPORT NUMBER: 6 029 1166 70
2. SUBJECT: (U) VC/NVA Tactics	9. DATE OF REPORT: 9 Nov 70
3. ISC NUMBER: 720.000 744.102	10. NO. OF PAGES: 8
4. DATE OF INFORMATION: May 68 to 29 Jul 70	11. REFERENCES: DIRM: 1H2h, 1S1
5. PLACE AND DATE OF ACQ: CMIC, SAIGON, VS 31 Oct 70	12. ORIGINATOR: US Element, CMIC, USMACV
6. EVALUATION: SOURCE F INFORMATION 6	13. PREPARED BY: GEORGE C. WHITEHEAD SP4, USA
7. SOURCE: <u>Returnee Interrogation</u>	14. APPROVING AUTHORITY: <i>W. H. Beardsley</i> W. H. BEARDSLEY LTC, USA Dir, US Elm, CMIC

15. SUMMARY: (Leave Blank)

(C) This report concerns tactics in use by VC/NVA units operating in KONTUM, PLEIKU, and DARLAC Provinces, RVN. Included is information regarding the actual attacking of Allied outposts as well as limited information on lure-and-ambush tactics and reinforced ambush tactics discussed at the Military-Political School of the B-3 Front during the period Mar to Jul 70.

1. (C) Background Information:

a. Name: NGUYEN VAN LAM (NGUYEENX, VEAN LEAMS), aka PHUOC LONG (FUOWCS, LONG), CMIC-3219-70

b. Rank: Equivalent to battalion executive officer; regroupee

c. Position and Unit of Assignment: Chief of Military Staff; 28th Recon Bn, B-3 Front

d. DPOB: 3 Feb 33; TRA ON Markot, TRA ON (VC) District, CAN THO (VC) Province, RVN

e. Parents' Names: Father, NGUYEN VAN DAC (NGUYEENX, VEAN DEACS), deceased; Mother, TRAN THI HAI (TRAANL, THIV HAI), deceased

f. Circumstances of Return. Source planned to rally when he heard that the VC had murdered his uncle who was working for the VC. Furthermore, Source had been in the service over ten years, was tired of fighting, and was disillusioned with Communism because there was no freedom and because there were conflicts between the VC and the NVA. After finishing the Military-Political School of the B-3 Front, Source rallied to the ARVN PLAY DI RENG Post on 29 Jul 70.

g. Significant Activities. Source had been assigned to the 11th MI Co, 2d MI Sect, B-3 Front from May 68 to Feb 70; he served as executive officer from May 68 to Jul 69, and commanding officer from Jul 69 to Feb 70. In Feb 70, Source was promoted to Chief of Military Staff of the 28th Recon Bn, B-3 Front. He attended the Military-Political School of the B-3 Front from Mar to Jul 70, when he rallied to the GVN. For further information concerning Source's significant activities, see IR 6 029 1127 70.

h. Additional References. CMIC PW/Rallier Exploitation Guide, Annex N; IRs 1516 0861 70, 6 029 1127 70, 6 029 1130 70, and 6 029 1146 70.

2. (C) VC/NVA Tactics:

a. General. The attack tactics discussed in this report were utilized by battalion-sized units of the B-3 Front in operations during the period Feb 66 to Feb 70. The tactics were identical, and the supporting elements were the same in every operation. These operations were carried out against fixed Allied installations of approximately battalion size, in a variety of terrains. The lure-and-ambush tactics described in this report were discussed at the Military-Political School of the B-3 Front, but Source had no practical experience of their use in combat, nor has he heard of their use. The lure-and-ambush tactic was proposed for use by regiment-size units to ambush landing zones subsequent to a decoy attack on a nearby outpost. The reinforced-ambush tactic was proposed for use by a battalion-size infantry unit to ambush an Allied company engaged in patrol activity. Source's knowledge of the latter two tactics was solely theoretical.

b. Planning of Attack Tactics:

(1) Reconnaissance. Approximately one week before the commencement of a mission, a reconnaissance element, normally platoon-size, moved into the target area to reconnoiter. The element sought a high area or tall tree in order to see into the target compound. If there were civilians in the area, they were questioned at night about the strength of the target unit, the type of the unit, and whether there were any other Allied forces in the area. During the same night, one squad crossed the wire into the compound and made note to mined areas, the locations of the headquarters and

communications systems, the number and location of bunkers and tunnels, the construction of bunkers and buildings, the size of the openings in the bunkers (in order to fabricate torpedo charges), and the location, number and orientation of any artillery in the area. The reconnaissance took one day and one night. Possible reinforcement routes of Allied forces were checked out; however, the route of the attacking troops was not. One squad of the reconnaissance group remained in place to keep surveillance and, sometimes, to build bunkers. The unit then returned to report the nature of the terrain, defenses, and strength of the target unit to the attacking battalion headquarters. On these missions each soldier carried an AK-47 with a basic load of 20 rounds of ammunition, two grenades and a bayonet. The platoon leader carried a pair of binoculars and a Chicom compass with a luminous dial (type unk).

(2) Preparations. Approximately two weeks before an attack, the attacking battalion started preparations:

(a) Logistics and Personnel. The rear service element gathered enough food to last the unit one month and attempted to cache it in the attack area about 10 days prior to the attack. They also prepared enough rice for each man to last two weeks; this ration was given to the rear service element upon arrival in the area of operations in order to provide a surplus in case of extended activity. The battalion was then brought up to strength with soldiers from a nearby unit not engaging in the attack, usually from the 22d or 23d Replacement Battalions which were the replacement battalions of the B-3 Front.

(b) Political Training. Political training was given to the troops for 10 days prior to the attack. They studied eight hours a day, reviewing their previous training and listening to speeches by the battalion political officer on the upcoming mission. In the speeches it was stressed that everything was ready and that they would easily win. During this time, the headquarters section built a sand table model of the target area and a briefing was given to the company commanders. No plans were made for the resupply of ammunition in the field; each man carried his own ammunition.

(c) Evacuation of Casualties. Plans for the evacuation of casualties were made at this time. Usually the wounded were moved by rear service personnel to a dispensary that was set up two kilometers from the target when the unit arrived in the attack area. If for some reason the rear service element could not evacuate the wounded, one platoon of every four was designated to accomplish the job. This designation was made before the battle.

(3) Movement. The assembly ~~area for the attack~~ was usually a 10 to 12 days' march from the base area, and one day's march from assembly ~~area~~ to the target area. All movement was on foot. One squad of reconnaissance troops, carrying one Chicom 71B, 2-watt radio, departed one day before the main body did. Two routes were planned; if the unit was seen by observation planes or a patrol, the alternate route was taken to avoid a possible bombing.

(4) Assembly Area. Usually, the main unit arrived in the assembly area during the day. A roll call and a weapons inventory were taken. The political officer gave a speech designed to reassure the troops and to raise their fighting spirit. The unit then moved to the attack area by night in order to be in position two hours before the attack.

(5) Supporting Fire. Supporting fire was always provided by the 40th Arty Regt (subordination unk), which was based in the Tri-border area. This unit supported the B-3 Front in the RVN as well as one front in CAMBODIA and one front in LAOS. The 40th Arty Regt sent one battalion in support of a battalion-size infantry unit. One company fired three 12.8mm HMGs, one platoon being assigned to each weapon. One company fired two 75mm RRs, while another company manned from five to 10 60mm Mortars and from five to 10 80mm Mortars. The basic loads of these weapons were unknown to Source. These weapons were always positioned on the uphill side of the target to enable them to shoot down into the compound. These weapons were given predesignated targets by the commander of the operation, who was the infantry unit commander. The artillery was in place when the infantry arrived. The distances of the artillery weapons from the target area was estimated by Source to be approximately 200 to 300 meters. The commander in charge of the operation gave the order to fire and to cease fire; the artillery provided their own spotters and communications for adjusting fire. Source did not know what these arrangements were.

(6) Communications. Each company in the attacking unit had a field telephone (type unk) to communicate with the battalion forward headquarters. Battalion forward headquarters was supplied with a field telephone, as well as one 71B, 2-watt radio for communication with battalion rear headquarters. Rear headquarters had one 71B, 2-watt radio, as well as one 15-watt radio (type unk) for communication with regimental headquarters. Flares were also used; a green flare indicated a withdrawal, a red flare signaled the attack, and a white flare was used to show the position of a unit when the radios or telephones were not working. The B-3 front had a radio interception capability based in the 150th Co. The equipment and the mission of this company were unknown to Source.

(7) Battle Supply. The attacking unit was never resupplied during firing. If the unit was dug in, rear supply would resupply the soldiers with rice. Every soldier carried his own ammunition, normally from 500 to 700 rds. The attacking unit could operate for two weeks without being resupplied.

(8) The Attack. The attacking unit always attacked from the uphill flanks of the outpost; one company attacked from the right uphill flank, with the mission of occupying the right side of the outpost. Another company attacked from the left uphill flank, with the mission of occupying the left side of the compound. One squad of the third company was designated to attack the headquarters and communications post inside the compound. Two platoons were held in reserve on each flank, approximately 100 meters from the target.

The battalion rear headquarters was set up approximately 400 meters from the target, and the dispensary was set up two kilometers from the area of the attack. The fourth company of the attacking unit provided security for the artillery support unit and the rear battalion headquarters. The battalion forward headquarters was composed of the battalion chief of staff and the battalion executive officer and was located within 50 meters of the target. The battalion commander directed the battle and issued orders to the reserves, one squad at a time. Once having entered the compound, the chief of staff directed the battle if the units could not carry out their missions. The reserve forces were sometimes used to help remove the wounded.

(9) Withdrawal. The withdrawal was ordered by the battalion commander if the unit was clearly losing; Source estimated that 50 percent casualties constituted a clear loss. Each company followed a different route to withdrawal; there was no formation for the withdrawal march, each man made his own way. If attacked while making their way to the assembly area, the withdrawing unit would offer no resistance. The assembly area was approximately eight hours' march from the target area; no roll call was taken at the assembly site; the unit reformed and returned to the base area by a different route than the one taken to the target area.

(10) After Action Report. After arriving back at the base camp, a count was taken of WIA, KIA, and weapons lost. All the troops were then debriefed and rated on their performance; heroes were named and cowards denounced. The political officer gave another speech and emphasized the heroism of the troops. A written report was made to regimental headquarters.

(11) Barriers to Effectiveness. The only time an attack was cancelled was if a man rallied, was captured, or more than one-third of the unit was handicapped as a result of a bombing raid. If the unit was spotted by observation planes, it changed routes and continued the mission.

c. Lure-and-Ambush Tactics. This tactic was to be used to lure allied reinforcements into a landing zone surrounded by VC/NVA troops. This tactic was discussed by the Source at the Military Political School of the B-3 Front, but Source had no actual experience with its use. This tactic was only to be used by regiment-size units.

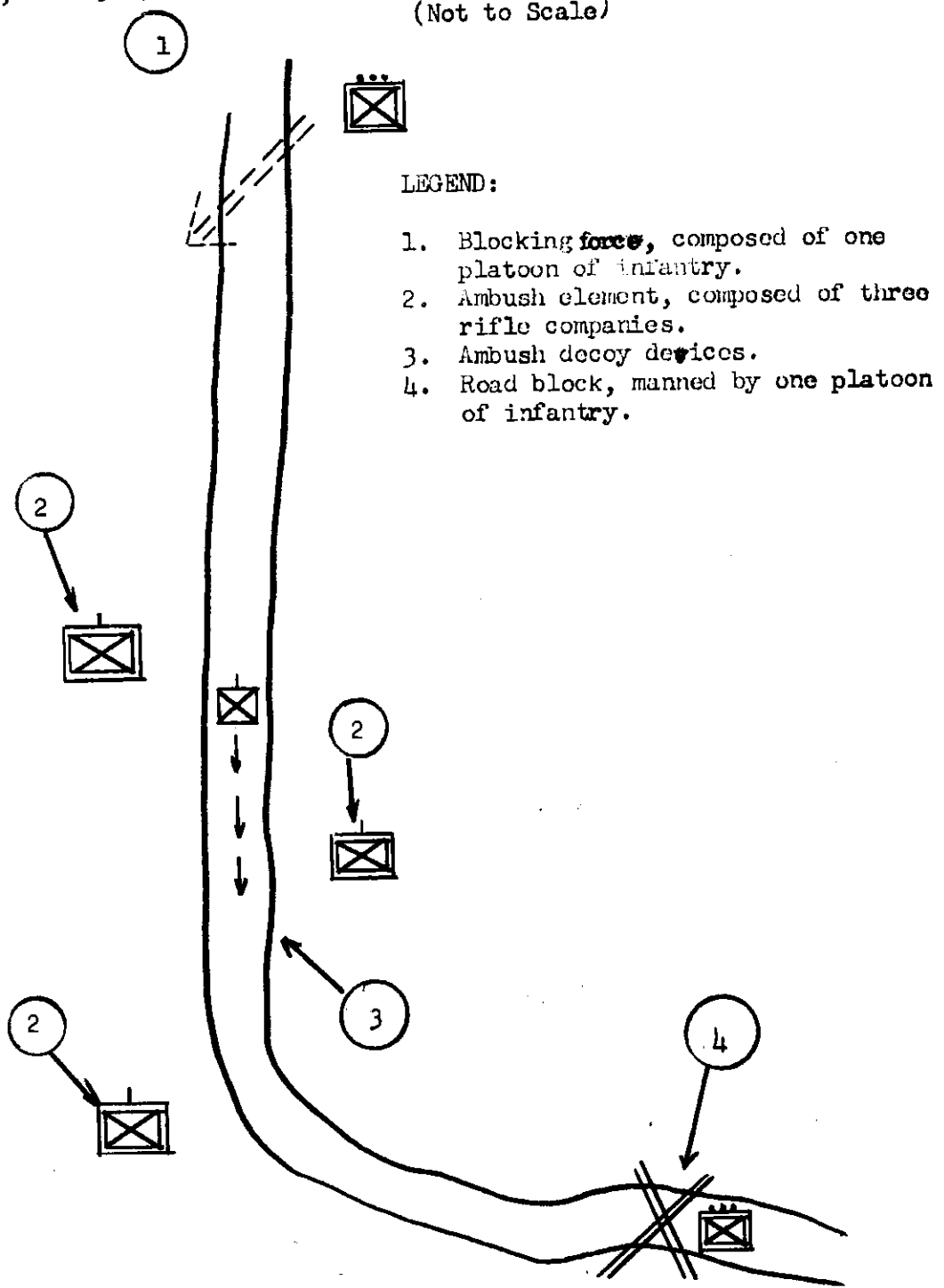
(1) Tactical Doctrine. Initially, tunnels were to be dug into an Allied outpost, the terrain of which inhibited the landing of helicopters within the outpost. Two platoons were to be used to man spider holes within this compound and near its perimeter in order to snipe effectively at the Allied troops. This was to give the impression that there was a large number of troops in the immediate surrounding area. The rest of the regiment was to be stationed around the area nearest to where helicopters might land. The snipers were to prevent any exit from the outpost, while the remaining unit were to engage the Allied reinforcements at the landing zone.

(2) Weapons to be Used. The attack was to be made with infantry soldiers, three or four 12.8mm HMGs per battalion, approximately 30 mortars per regiment, as well as an unknown number of B-40 ATGLs, B-41 ATGLs, and 75mm RRs. The object was to put such great firepower into the landing zone that the landing troops would be wiped out before they could group and counter attack. (See sketch on page 8).

d. Reinforced Ambush Tactics. This tactic was to be used to ambush company-size patrol units on roads. This tactic was designed for use by battalion-sized attacking forces to insure the effectiveness of the ambush. An area of a patrolled road was to be altered to look as if there had been enemy activity in the area; footprints were to be made or wires laid. This deception was to be used to bring the Allied patrol together in one location on the road. Three companies were to deploy on both sides of the road, and one platoon was to man a roadblock set up on the road just out of sight of the ambush area. When the attack began, another platoon-size element was to close off the other end of the road, encircling the patrol. At this time, the entire battalion was to move in on the Allied patrol at once, with all withdrawal routes effectively closed. This tactic was to utilize great firepower to decide the engagement quickly and surely. (See sketch on page 7).

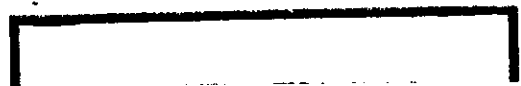
(C) COMMENTS: Source was of above average intelligence, but was extremely anxious to return to the CHIEU HOI Center. Thus, he had to be carefully prompted to insure his giving a complete answer instead of a quick one.

Sketch of Reinforced Ambush Tactics, as provided by returnee NGUYEN VAN LAM, CMIC 3219-70 (DOI: Jul 70)
(Not to Scale)



LEGEND:

- 1. Blocking force, composed of one platoon of infantry.
- 2. Ambush element, composed of three rifle companies.
- 3. Ambush decoy devices.
- 4. Road block, manned by one platoon of infantry.



Sketch of Lure-and-Ambush Tactics, as provided by returnee NGUYEN VAN LAM, CMIC 3219-70 (DOI: Jul 70)

(Not to Scale)

