

INTRODUCTION

For six months, from May to November 10, 1969, I had the privilege and honor to serve as the Commanding Officer of Troop D, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division. For the remaining six months of my second combat tour of duty in the Vietnam War, November 1969 to May 1970, I was a G-3 Operations Officer on the combat desk of the 1st Cavalry Division general staff.

1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry was an air cavalry squadron. Troops A, B, and C were the air cavalry troops organized with a fleet of UH-1 "Huey" Helicopters, the OH-6 "LOH" Light Observation Helicopter, and the AH-1 "Cobra" Attack Helicopter. Troop D was a ground cavalry troop organized with Scout jeeps with machine guns, 106mm Recoilless Rifles, 81mm mortars, and Infantry squads mounted in trucks. The proud combat soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers in Troop D deemed it to be the real cavalry.

In 2010 my son, Richard, discovered copies of the originals of five Troop D Operational Reports and ten Troop D "Lessons Learned" reports on the website of The Vietnam Center and Archive at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. These copies of the historic documents had been donated by the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.

As I read the Operational Reports, after four decades, I was there on the ground again reliving activities on some of the days in four of those reports. Words brightened fading memories of good days and bad in a combat unit, a Cavalry Troop, in South Vietnam. As I read each daily entry I remembered some of the background. I thought others might be interested in a more in depth picture of what and why and who. My attempt here is to be able to add some details for some of the entries; to clarify, elaborate, and correct. My intentions are to be informative not to rewrite an historical military report.

I've recreated the original typewritten Operational Report in a Word document. To maintain continuity I typed the report verbatim and focused on words in the sentences that prompted adding details to include clarifications, elaborations, and/or corrections.

Three things I regret: not having enough time to be personal with all the soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers I served with in the Troop; not having pictures of all the soldiers, the Troop, the vehicles, and the country where we were; and, not keeping a personal journal (although it seems to me it was discouraged then, for some reason).

I hope the reports, details, clarifications, elaborations and corrections are interesting.

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(retired)
October 23, 2011

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
TROOP D, 1ST SQUADRON (AIRMOBILE), 9TH CAVALRY
1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)
APO SF CALIF. (US FORCES) 96490

AVDARS-D

30 August 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report for Month of August 1969

Commanding Officer
1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry
1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)

Clarification

The heading of Operational Report for August 1969 includes the United States Postal Service address used by the United States Army. APO SF 96490 was the abbreviation for Army Post Office San Francisco. Mail and packages to APO SF 96490 came to us in South Vietnam. Similarly, mail and packages addressed to APO NY was delivered to countries in Europe.

AVDARS-D is a correspondence code for the division, squadron and troop.

Correction

The date of 30 August 1969 on the original Operational Report for the Month of August 1969 is incorrect. The original Operational Report for the Month of August 1969 should have been dated 31 August 1969.

1. Significant Organizational and Unit Activities:

a. Principle Operations (Base defense and security of Song Be with the use of day area and route reconnaissance and night maneuvers in and around the LZ and Phuoc Long Province chief's estate).

Correction

Base defense and security of Song Be should read base defense and security of Fire Support Base (FSB) Buttons.

Clarification

Fire Support Base Buttons and Song Be were frequently commingled in communications. Song Be, Phuoc Long, and Phuoc Binh were three towns near Fire Support Base Buttons. Troop D was not responsible for the

defense or security of these communities but we did scramble to respond to urgent requests for help when their security was threatened.

LZ is a military abbreviation for Landing Zone.

Elaboration

A Fire Support Base (FSB) was a large military camp, usually enclosed and surrounded by two or three strands of concertina wire, designed and constructed to accommodate a combat Brigade headquarters, an Infantry Battalion headquarters, an Infantry Company, Artillery Batteries, landing pads and revetments for helicopters, helicopter and vehicle refueling points, dug-in sand-bagged fixed fighting positions around the perimeter and dug-in sand-bagged bunkers for living areas both with sand-bagged overhead cover. A Fire Support Base was a permanent military site.

Night maneuvers included the set-up of an ambush by the Troop. There were times when Troop D had established an ambush position at night and nothing had happened. In the early morning hours, even at sun-up, children would appear near our ambush site, safely away, but visible, with baskets of bottled soft drinks. Soldiers always were issued cases of soda in cans through regular military supply channels. But the children, usually girls four through twelve years of age, always had soft drinks in bottles, and the drinks were cold even in the early morning.

A Landing Zone was clear, open terrain able to accommodate the landing of one or more helicopters for resupply, infantry or reconnaissance units. It was not designed or intended to be a permanent military encampment.

It is most probable politics, even in a combat zone, were in play for a United States Army Cavalry Troop to be assigned security missions for the Phuoc Long Province Chief's estate. While the Provincial Government, and its Chief, were at risk a reasonable person might ask why a United States Army Cavalry Troop should perform a security mission for his residence instead of a unit from the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam (ARVN). Distrust of ARVN units perhaps, as well as internal and external politics.

1 August 1969: While conducting a route recon, a jeep at YU205068 hit a mine resulting in one slight WIA. The type of mine was undetermined and the route recon continued with no further incidents.

Clarification

Recon is a military truncation of the word reconnaissance.

YU205068 are grid coordinates from Map Sheet 6432 IV, Titled DONG SRE VIET, Vietnam, Scale 1:50,000, dated 1969, the map sheet used in 1969.

Elaboration

A small part of the 1969 map sheet we used is included in this document.

A map sheet is divided into sectors. Map sheet sectors are divided into grid squares. A map sheet grid square is made up of a thousand square meters. A location in the map sheet grid square is identified by grid coordinates. Letters preceding grid coordinates identify a map sheet sector. The first two numbers identify the north-south grid line on a map sheet and the third number identifies, in one hundred meter increments on this map sheet, a specific location along the north-south grid line within a few meters. The fourth and fifth numbers identify the east-west grid line and the sixth number identifies, in hundred meter increments, a specific location along the east-west grid line. A line of the grid square, either the north-south line or the east-west line is one kilometer, or one thousand meters, in length. By drawing a physical or visual line from where the three numbers on the north-south grid line and where the three numbers on the east-west grid line would intersect in a map sheet grid square corresponds to a physical place on the ground: in a river, on a road, in the jungle, in a creek, on a bridge, on the side or on top of a hill, in a village, in a rice paddy, at a road junction or intersection, etc.

In comparing the grid coordinates typed in the Operational Report over forty years ago and activities on the ground with actual grid coordinates on the 1969 map sheets we used then I've found a few minor errors. It is easy to say our Troop Clerk erred, but we all shared the responsibility for accuracy. The Orderly Room was at the 1st Cavalry Division base camp near Phuoc Vinh. I was with the Troop's Second and Third Platoons about one hundred miles north near Song Be at Fire Support Base Buttons. Many days could pass between the action and the recording of the action. We all tried to do our best, and ninety-nine percent of the time the grid coordinates are spot-on. From my memory, after four decades, ninety-nine percent of the activity on the dates recorded also is accurate.

I believe the mine was located at YU175051 and was not at YU205068. Today using Google Earth and the map sheet we can "see the ground". YU175051 is generally at Longitude 11° 48' 10.50" N and Latitude 106° 59' 29.69 E. This trail we were on when Lieutenant Ross' jeep struck the mine is south and west of the base of Nui Ba Ra mountain. Where this mine was planted in the trail was near the spot often chosen for L.Z. Nancy. Three towed 105mm howitzers frequently would be brought to this vicinity from Fire Support Base Buttons and set up to provide fire

support for infantry companies working south and east of Nui Ba Ra. The pattern and the placement of the cannons was so routinely done the enemy could be fairly certain of success with a booby trap, a sniper, or even a mine as we discovered.

The left rear jeep wheel of D Troop's Third Platoon Leader, First Lieutenant Marion "Buck" Ross, from Mississippi, "hit" the mine.

Lieutenant Ross was an outstanding officer. He was trustworthy, reliable, dependable, and very hard working. He was a good, talented leader. He knew his men and took care of them. The members of his platoon loved him. His seasoned, combat tested, Platoon Sergeant adored him. I wrote the citation for his courageous actions and Lieutenant Ross was decorated with a Bronze Star Medal for Valor. I wrote in his officer's report card that he should be watched closely for advancement opportunities, he should be promoted ahead of his contemporaries, he should be selected for early schooling and for early command assignments. It is hoped that he was successful and prospered. Lieutenant Ross was reassigned in November 1969 shortly after I went to the Division G-3 staff. Even at his young age, in his mid-twenties, Lieutenant Ross was that good and that deserving.

In the jeep with Lieutenant Ross was his driver and his Platoon Medic. It is possible a fourth person was in the jeep but who it was has faded from memory. I don't remember who was injured, but I distinctly remember some very shaken soldiers. We could never figure out how the left rear wheel could strike the mine rather than the front wheel. Nor could we figure out how his two lead scout jeeps had missed the mine. The explosion was small and muffled so it probably was a hand grenade rigged so either someone stepping on it or a vehicle running over it would release the safety pin to allow the detonation. To say the explosion was small does not diminish the lethality. The mine destroyed the tire and was strong enough to lift the left rear of the jeep into the air. I had been preaching about the dangers of our young soldiers riding on the rear fenders of the jeeps with their feet and legs hanging over the side, off the jeep. After this experience everybody wised up but I never stopped preaching about it. I was deeply thankful no one was seriously hurt, but I appreciated the support of a convincing training aid that demonstrated to everyone the value of keeping their feet and legs inside the jeep. The explosion got everyone's attention. It was a powerful persuader.

Clarification

WIA is the military abbreviation for Wounded In Action.

2 August 1969: Savage elements conducted a route and area recon in the vicinity of YU1811, with no reports of enemy activity.

Clarification

In addition to Savage, Troop D also was called Delta Troop and D Troop.

Elaboration

Armed Savage was part of the radio call sign assigned to the Troop. The radio call sign for the Troop Commander was Armed Savage Six. First Platoon Leader was Armed Savage One Six, Second Platoon Leader was Armed Savage Two Six, Third Platoon Leader was Armed Savage Three Six. Within the Platoons the subordinate leaders' radio call sign would identify a Section or Squad. Armed Savage Two One was the Second Platoon Scout Section Leader, Armed Savage Three Eight was the Third Platoon 81mm Mortar Squad Leader, etc. The number Six identified the Troop Commander and Platoon Leaders. Armed Savage Five was the Troop Executive Officer, First Lieutenant Kenneth Lowe. The number Seven identified senior non-commissioned officers. Armed Savage Seven was D Troop First Sergeant William Price. Armed Savage One Seven was the First Platoon Sergeant.

The authorized, forward operating, front-line combat strength of Troop D was 125, including medics. However, like all combat units in Vietnam, and like all armed forces combat units in all wars the United States has participated in, Delta Troop was never at full strength. Every day the Troop always performed combat operations short-handed.

The three cavalry platoons in Troop D were informally identified by the colors of our nation's flag. First Platoon was known as "Red" and Second Lieutenant Hahn was the Platoon Leader. Second Platoon was known as "White" and First Lieutenant Cullen was the Platoon Leader. Third Platoon was known as "Blue" and First Lieutenant Ross was the Platoon Leader.

The Platoon Leader and Platoon Sergeant, a senior non-commissioned officer, were the senior leadership of each Cavalry Platoon and were the platoon command group. Each of these leaders had a jeep with driver/radio-telephone-operator (RTO). Usually a combat medic, when available, rode with the platoon sergeants.

Each platoon had a Scout Section with two Scout Squads, an Infantry Squad, a Mortar Squad, and an Anti-Tank Section.

In each platoon was a twelve man Scout Section led by a Staff Sergeant. There were two Cavalry Reconnaissance Squads (also called Scout

Squads) in the Scout Section. A Scout Squad had two M151 jeeps and each jeep had a pedestal mounted M60 machine gun and a three-man crew: a Sergeant who was Squad Leader, a Machine Gunner/Observer, and a Driver/RTO/Assistant Machine Gunner.

In each platoon was a ten man Infantry Squad led by a Staff Sergeant. In each Infantry Squad there were two M60 machine-gunners, two M79 Grenadiers, and five Riflemen all mounted in a three-quarter ton truck.

In each platoon was a four man Mortar Squad led by a Staff Sergeant. This indirect-fire crew was mounted in a three-quarter ton truck with a portable 81mm mortar and various types of mortar ammunition including High Explosive, White Phosphorous, and Smoke rounds.

In each platoon was an eight man Anti-Tank Section that consisted of two 106mm recoilless rifles each mounted in a jeep. A Staff Sergeant, who was the Section Leader, manned one gun with a three man crew. A Sergeant, who was the Assistant Section Leader, manned the second gun with a three man crew. 106mm ammunition included Armor Piercing, High Explosive, White Phosphorous, Smoke and Anti Personnel rounds.

The Delta Troop command group was my driver, Private First Class Ferguson, and me. An artillery forward observer (FO), Captain Tom Mahoney, a Sergeant who was the assistant FO, and their driver, all mounted in one jeep, were attached to Delta Troop.

Captain Tom Mahoney was an outstanding officer. When promoted to Captain he was to transfer from the Troop because the FO assignment was for a Lieutenant. He wanted to stay with the Troop and I wanted him to stay. His request was processed through our chains of command and was approved. The Troop was indeed very fortunate such an outstanding officer served with us. I admired Tom. He was very special person.

In addition to the Platoons, Platoon Leaders were informally addressed by the colors of our flag, Red, White, Blue. The Troop Platoon Sergeants were informally addressed as Red Mike, White Mike and Blue Mike.

It was permitted, accepted, and tolerated for the soldiers to address the Platoon Leaders as Red, White, or Blue; and, to address the Platoon Sergeants as Red Mike, White Mike, or Blue Mike in a very informal setting. Nevertheless, our Delta Troop soldiers were always respectful and always addressed their Troop officers properly in a formal setting.

3 August 1969: Savage elements found a trail in grids YU0415 and YU0416 which was used by 6 to 10 individuals moving north in the last two hours.

Elaboration

Individuals moving north (or any direction) was fairly easy to determine because the dirt in Phuoc Long Province (now Phuoc Long-Binh Phuoc Province) was reddish. Boot prints, foot prints or tire tread flip flop prints were easy to see.

There were young men (and older veterans) in the Troop who were avid hunters at home and knew how to read signs and tracks, on the ground, on the mountains, in the "woods", or a rubber plantation. They loved to apply their hunting knowledge and experience to track and find our prey.

4 August 1969: Savage elements set up a road check, and picked up 2 ARVN's without ID cards and a CID member with a carbine and severe burns. The individuals were released.

Clarification

ARVN or ARVN's was an acronym and a term United States Armed Forces members used to describe a soldier, or soldiers, or unit of the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam.

CID member identifies a Regional Force/Popular Force (RF/PF) person, similar to a national guard service member.

5 August 1969: Savage elements conducted a bridge recon at YU1811, with no reports of enemy activity in the area.

No elaboration.

6 August 1969: Savage elements conducted a recon around the base of Nui Ba Ra with no reports of enemy activity.

Clarification

Nui Ba Ra, a volcano millions of years ago, is a small but predominant mountain rising up to about 760 meters high (about 2,300 feet) from flat ground. Nui Ba Ra was about one kilometer south and a little east of Fire Support Base Buttons and west of the towns of Phuoc Long and Song Be.

Elaboration

On our reconnaissance around the base of Nui Ba Ra we found no enemy forces.

We did find dozens of leeches. Our clothes, equipment, combat socks and boots didn't protect us. The leeches also slipped down under our socks and underwear without our knowing it. That we were in Leech Country was discovered by one soldier seeing a leech on the back of the neck of another soldier. We stopped, undressed in the jungle, and inspected each other to find all the leeches. These leeches were black and small, about the size of a large rectal suppository. A leech would cling to our bodies by boring its head into the skin and as it drew blood it expanded. Some sucked enough blood that they grew large enough their diamond back was visible. Leeches were not painful, but if the attempt to remove the leech was by pulling on it, part of the leech would stay in the skin. Then infection was the danger. Our quickest and safest way to remove a leech was with the heat from a lighted cigarette. The leech couldn't stand the heat and pulled back, away from where it was attached to our skin. We were able to remove all of them soon enough so no one became ill, injured, or infected. It was a topic of fun conversation, a lot of good natured kidding, speculation, and wild laughter after the experience.

A major United States Army communications complex was on top of Nui Ba Ra. This complex housed radio towers and antennae to provide extended distances for military radio transmissions for all units working in the 1st Cavalry Division Area of Operations. Also on top of the mountain was highly secretive and sophisticated surveillance and detection equipment monitoring the continuous infiltration and movements of the thousands of North Vietnamese Army soldiers pouring every week into South Vietnam from the Ho Chi Minh Highway in Cambodia. Security for this complex provided protection for the detachment of communications soldiers as well as for the massive amount of electronic equipment.

Platoon size units from the 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry infantry companies drew rotational duty on top of the mountain to provide the defensive security and protection against enemy attacks and sapper assaults. Most of the time this rotational duty was seen by most combat soldiers as an enjoyable respite from living in and fighting the heat in the jungle. It also was a relief to be somewhat out of harm's way for a few days. From time to time Delta Troop was called on to temporarily provide its 106mm recoilless rifles and their crews to support the defensive effort. It was cool up on top of the mountain, over 2,000 feet, and the soldiers thought it was just so cool to be up there for a few days.

Google Earth presents a photograph of towers on top of the mountain.

7 August 1969: Savage elements, while set up as a blocking force for a Combat Assault at YU039143, found at YU137140 a trail which showed recent use by 8 individuals.

Elaboration

A purpose of the blocking force was to destroy the enemy fleeing from the infantry unit conducting the combat assault. A Landing Zone is prepared by Cobra gunships firing rockets and cannons into it prior to the soldiers' assault. That devastation and threat can encourage an enemy to flee.

8 August 1969: Savage element, while conducting a route recon, found at YU201113 a fire-cracker round, believed to have been set up as a mine. Savage elements continued 600 to 700 meters further and conducted an area recon because the bridge was out. At 2230 hours, Savage elements moved outside the LZ to secure for Blue Max at the POL point where they received fire and engaged with small arms with negative assessment of enemy losses.

Clarification

The grid coordinates YU201113 is well east of Fire Support Base Buttons, on the eastern side of the Song Be River. Today I have no recollection of the Troop ever crossing the river and I have no recollection of a "fire-cracker round".

Blue Max was a military term to generically identify Cobra gunships. The 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion, an Aerial Rocket Artillery (ARA) unit, was Blue Max.

The POL (Petroleum Oil Lubricant) point was our gas station. POL was a military term to identify a refueling location for helicopters and vehicles. There was a POL point on Fire Support Base Buttons and the airstrip (the Song Be Airport) across the road.

The words in the report seem to indicate the Blue Max helicopters were refueling on the airstrip at night and some of the Troop's scouts with their M60 machine guns went there, outside Buttons, to provide security for the helicopter crew and the aircraft.

Enemy fire on the Troop scouts and the Blue Max boys had to come from the south, across the airstrip.

In 1969 the east-west road between Phuoc Long and Binh Phuoc was Road 310. In Binh Phuoc both Road 310 and the north-south Road 311 formed a junction with Highway LTL1A. The junctions of Road 310 and LTL1A and Road 311 and LTL1A were so close together it seemed then

that 310 and 311 intersected. Today, on Google Earth Road 310 is 741 and Road 311 is 749. 310 (741) ran between FSB Buttons and the airstrip [the Song Be Airport]. The airstrip was near the northeastern foot of Nui Ba Ra. From the airstrip south to the base of the mountain was dense woods and jungle.

Elaboration

Road 310 (741) was outside the third strand of wire and paralleled the southern perimeter of Buttons. Every night the National Police erected barricades on 310 (741) about two hundred meters west of Buttons' south gate and before the junction with Highway LTL1A. So, the enemy fire on the Blue Max boys at the POL point most likely came from the southern, wooded side, of the airstrip. The Troop did not pursue the shooters.

This airstrip was large enough and long enough to accommodate the United States Air Force and United States Army cargo workhorses: the twin engine C-123 Provider, the twin engine C-7 Caribou, and the four engine C-130 Hercules. The airstrip still can be seen on Google Earth.

Occasionally helicopters belonging to the 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion and to Troop C, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry would remain overnight at Fire Support Base Buttons. The pilots and crews did not like to remain overnight at Buttons because it was a dangerous place and the helicopters were vulnerable to rocket and mortar attacks. The only reason the crews and helicopters stayed overnight on Buttons was because of bad weather. Blue Max was refueling late at night to fly one hundred miles south to the 1st Cavalry Division base camp near Phuoc Vinh.

9 August 1969: Savage elements remained at the LZ and conducted a maintenance stand down.

Clarification

A maintenance stand down provided time for the soldiers to take care of their cavalry mounts. In this case we needed to take time to maintain our vehicles. We changed oil and replaced the oil filter, lubricated vehicle joints, repaired or changed tires, refueled the vehicles and topped off our five gallon can with fuel, replaced spark plugs, cleaned air filters, and made adjustments where necessary. These cavalry vehicles went where the enemy was or where their trail led us, sometimes over very rugged terrain. The cavalry vehicles took a lot of beating in very rough country.

Elaboration

Particularly vulnerable on our jeeps was the U-bolt. A jeep carried three or four cavalymen, extra ammunition, extra food, a five gallon can of

fuel, a five gallon can of water, a case of hand grenades and a case of smoke grenades. Sand bags filled with red dirt covered the floor of the jeep to absorb the shock of a mine blast. All this weight put a strain on the jeep's U-bolt. The Troop Maintenance Sergeant was always on us to "lighten the load". The platoon sergeants would get testy about his pestering and would corner him when he visited the Troop on Buttons. The platoon sergeants wanted his "expert" advice on whether to dump the ammunition, grenades, sand bags, fuel, water or food. He finally got the message and told us he would order triple the amount of U-bolts to support the troop's missions. A good man he hated to come to Buttons.

The platoon sergeant's were Red Mike, White Mike and Blue Mike. Our Maintenance Sergeant was unfairly tagged Yellow Mike. He was aware of this. I would not tolerate this degrading moniker and I was serious and adamant about preventing its use. While our Maintenance Sergeant made no bones about his fear of being in the forward area he was serious about doing his job and supporting our missions. He always expressed his feelings something bad would happen to him. And it did. He was very seriously wounded on a maintenance visit to the First Platoon at the Fire Support Base near An Loc/Quan Loi. During an enemy mortar attack he received shrapnel in his legs. He lay on a road under attack until a military ambulance got to him. After being cared for and loaded into the ambulance the ambulance was struck by a mortar round or by a rocket and the Maintenance Sergeant was seriously wounded again. Later I was able to visit him in hospital and thank him for his work and his bravery. As I recall now his left leg at the knee had to be amputated. Premonitions came true. Those who used the unkind reference were remorseful and apologetic but it was too late for them to tell our Maintenance Sergeant.

10 August 1969: Savage elements conducted a recon to hill 269 with no reports of enemy activity.

Clarification

Hill 269 is otherwise unidentified in the original operational report.

Elaboration

Hill 269 probably is the "hill" at YU224040 (see the map) where contour line 269 is obvious. The terrain in Phuoc Long Province would generally be classified as undulating with elevated rises and shallow valleys where woods, jungle, rubber plantations and farms were prevalent. This Hill 269 at YU224040 quite often was used by the Troop because it provided a dominant and commanding 360 degree view of the area. Hill 269 was an ideal location for, and frequently was used as, a Landing Zone.

11 August 1969: Savage elements conducted a recon to the ARVN compound in grid YU2403 which was hit the night before. This was the third compound checked out. Savage elements found a Chicom grenade and reported only minor damage to a bunker from a RPG round. At 1520 hours, Savage elements secured an LZ for Company B, 5/7 Cav on hill 269.

Correction

The ARVN compound at grid YU2403 was not a base for soldiers of the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam. This "compound" was a Regional Forces/Popular Forces (RF/PF) camp of Provincial guardsmen.

Clarification

The RF/PF camp, in the boonies and isolated, was a Listening Post (LP) and an Observation Post (OP) for the Provincial government and had been established on a major east-west trail that paralleled a large creek that crossed Highway 311 (see the map). The RF/PF (their nickname was Ruff Puff) were not combat soldiers but they would fiercely fight the enemy when confronted or defending their camp. Women and children, families of the Regional Forces/Popular Forces guards, lived on the camp. Several United States Army Advisors lived, trained, and fought with the RF/PF.

Elaboration

When we arrived near the camp we dismounted, made contact with the RF/PF and their Advisors, and conducted a patrolling search. We found a dead Viet Cong cadre in black "pajamas" alongside Road 311. The RF/PF and their Army Advisors had left him there from the fight the night before.

Clarification

Chicom was a military term to describe a Chinese Communist hand grenade.

RPG was a generic military abbreviation to describe a Rocket Propelled Grenade. RPG could be interpreted as the rocket itself and/or the rocket propelled grenade launcher.

5/7 Cav was a military abbreviation for 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry.

12 August 1969: Savage elements conducted a recon north of LZ Buttons and were scrambled to the bridge approximately 1-1/2 kilometers to the southwest of YU195135, where a VC company was suspected.

Clarification

Scrambled is a military term used to express a quick and aggressive reaction to an armed threat.

VC was the military abbreviation for Viet Cong. Viet Cong were called "Charlie"; or the full military phonetic letters of "Victor Charlie" was used.

13 August 1969: Savage elements, while conducting a recon at YU144057, found a trail used by 20 individuals moving north. At YU147056, Savage elements found 2 graves that had been dug up a week earlier.

Clarification

The graves were not in a cemetery.

Elaboration

It is presumed the graves were for two VC. North Vietnamese Army forces would not have buried their soldiers there.

14 August 1969: Savage elements set up a blocking force at YU045143 for an Air Strike 7 kilometers to the northeast. While returning to the LZ at 1745 hours at YU095107, the CO of 5/7 Cav spotted an individual evading north across the road. The Blue Platoon engaged the area with small arms and received automatic weapons fire. The result of this action was 1 VC KIA for Blue Platoon and 1 VC KIA for Trp G, 2/11 ACR which was scrambled into the area, and no friendly casualties.

Clarification

The blocking force was there to kill enemy soldiers fleeing the air strike.

CO is a military abbreviation for Commanding Officer.

Blue Platoon was an informal address for D Troop's Third Platoon,

KIA is a military abbreviation for Killed In Action.

Trp G, 2/11 ACR is a military abbreviation for Troop G, 2nd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

15 August 1969: Savage elements, while conducting a recon northeast of LZ Buttons, were informed by 2 ARVN's of a company of VC at YU192082. While checking this area, Savage elements received reports of punji pits and picked up 8 detainees who were released when the hamlet chief produced their cards. At 2200 and again at 2300 hours, Blue Platoon was scrambled for the theft of Class I through IV on the air strip.

Clarification

Theft of Class I through Class IV covers a very broad spectrum of military supplies, logistics and materiel.

Class I is a military classification for food and water, Class II was weapons, equipment, clothing and vehicles, Class III was fuel, Class IV was construction material, sand bags, concertina wire, and Class V was ammunition. What was stolen and who were the thieves is unknown.

16 August 1969: Savage elements conducted a maintenance stand down and at 1500 hours became Opcon to the 2nd Brigade and remained Opcon to 5/7 Cav. At 1705 hours, Savage elements were scrambled for 5/7 in contact at YU219056.

Clarification

Opcon is a military abbreviation for Operational Control.

"In contact" was a term used to describe an United States Armed Forces unit exchanging gunfire with an enemy force of VC cadre and/or North Vietnamese Army soldiers.

17 August 1969: The White Platoon at YU119045 picked up 2 detainees who were taken to the S2 at Song Be. Savage element's 106 Recoilless Rifles were deployed, the 2 from Quan Loi became OPCON to 1/7 Cav at Bo Duc Special Forces Camp; the one from White Platoon became OPCON to Co B, 1/8th Cav working out of Bo Duc, and the one from Blue Platoon was dismounted on the top of Nui Ba Ra.

Clarification

White Platoon was an informal address for D Troop's Second Platoon.

S2 is a military abbreviation for a specific 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry staff officer and it also was a generic term used to identify a battalion staff department. A S-2 is the military designation for the Staff Officer in Charge, at the battalion level, for gathering intelligence, interpreting information, identifying the enemy and assessing the enemies strength, capability, and actions.

The S2 was at Buttons not Song Be. We never brought detainees onto Buttons without permission from the Battalion Commander, S-3, or S-2.

Correction

106 Recoilless Rifles should read 106mm Recoilless Rifles.

Bo Duc Special Forces camp should read Bu Dop Special Forces camp.

Bo Duc, Bo Dup, and Bu Dop were names that were used interchangeably in Delta Troop Operational Reports. I visited this camp when my soldiers and their 106mm Recoilless Rifles were sent there to support the Special Forces Detachment and infantry companies. The correct name is Bu Dop.

This camp, near Highway LTL1A, was deep in no man's land very near the Cambodian border and was ten to fifteen kilometers north of FSB Buttons.

Elaboration

Google Earth presents an aerial photograph of the Special Forces Camp and the airstrip at Bu Dop that was taken around 1969. On Google Earth where the Special Forces camp was located is now barren.

Clarification

1/7 Cav is a military abbreviation for 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry.

1/8 Cav is a military abbreviation for 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry.

18 August 1969: The Blue Platoon provided security for the Province Chief for a road tour of the province. In the afternoon, Savage elements provided security for a Medcap at Song Thuy Hamlet. The White Platoon's 106 Recoilless Rifle was released for return to LZ Buttons.

Elaboration

Forty years later I can't imagine a combat platoon of an United States Army Cavalry Troop providing security for a Province Chief's road tour. This type of mission would only have been assigned by the General (the 1st Cavalry Division Commander) or by the Colonel (the 2nd Brigade Commander). We would have smartly saluted and accomplished the mission. As cynical as it seems it is my opinion these missions were politically motivated and designed to facilitate strategic trade-offs: you provide security for my road tour so my villagers can see how important I am and the VC can't kill me, and I'll make sure my Provincial Government supports your military operations and permits your Fire Support Base to remain unhampered in my Province (as long as you continue to pay rent).

Clarification

Medcap is a military term to describe a medical assistance visit by a United States Armed Forces doctor, nurse or medic to a village or hamlet. In addition to the formal Medcap visits where the Troop provided security for the medical folks and their vehicles and equipment Delta Troop medics also provided minor ailment, sick call level assistance.

Song Thuy Hamlet should read Son Thuy.

On the 1969 map sheet we used there were several villages and hamlets with the same name, and Son Thuy is an example. At or near the "intersection" of Road 310 and Road 311 was the hamlet Ap Son Thuy (2). Farther east on Road 310 Ap Son Thuy appears.

19 August 1969: at 0200 hours Savage elements at YU140070 received 2 bursts of AK-47 fire from the northeast. There were no friendly casualties and no assessment of enemy losses. At 0630 hours, LZ Buttons received 20 rounds of 82mm, automatic weapons, and RPG fire. Savage elements conducted a recon of the suspected area of enemy fire with no signs of recent activity. Savage elements also conducted a dismounted recon of Nui Ba Ra where they climbed to within 300 meters of the top and CSed some caves.

Clarification

AK-47 is a Russian made, extremely rugged, assault rifle.

Elaboration

When the AK-47 assault weapon was fired on automatic it produced a distinct sound that a combat soldier will never forget. The AK-47 is a selective-fire, gas-operated 7.62x39mm assault rifle that began development in the Soviet Union in 1945. The AK-46, manufactured in 1946, was later modified and the newer model was produced in 1947. It was called AK-47. This assault rifle was used extensively by most of the North Vietnamese Army soldiers during the Vietnam War, and the AK-47 is used today all over the world. Its inventor was Mikail Kalashnikov and it is officially known as the Avtomat Kalasnikova. Hence the name AK-47.

Clarification

82mm is a military term used to describe both the enemy's 82 millimeter mortar or an 82mm mortar round.

CSed describes an action using a tear gas grenade.

20 August 1969: At 0530 LZ Buttons received 10 rounds from an 82mm mortar impacting in Savage bunker area with no reports of friendly casualties. Savage elements conducted a maintenance stand down. The two 106 Recoilless Rifles were released from 1/7 Cav at Bo Duc and returned to Quan Loi.

Correction

Bo Duc should read Bu Dop where the Special Forces camp was located.

21 August 1969: Savage elements set up a blocking force at the base of the east side of Nui Ba Ra, while the ARVN's searched and cleared down the mountain. Savage elements picked up 79 detainees coming out of the woods and later taken to Song Be for further questioning. The White Platoon 106 Recoilless Rifle was dismounted on the top of Nui Ba Ra.

Elaboration

As I read this I wondered how so many people could be on the side of a mountain. More puzzling is why Troop D soldiers didn't fire into so many coming out of the woods. Maybe it was because the ARVN could be seen herding them out.

22 August 1969: Savage elements at YU148071 found 3-3' X 3' X 6' foxholes that were a month old. Savage elements also distributed Chieu Hoi leaflets along Highway 311 while setting up check points.

Clarification

A quick conclusion is the three 3' X 3' X 6' foxholes were dug and used by the enemy.

Elaboration

How the dimensions of 3' X 3' X 6' were written without any identification of the order for which is width, height, depth, or length can have different interpretations. A 6' long, 3' wide, 3' deep hole is more on the order of a temporary fighting position than a foxhole. On the other hand a 6' deep foxhole for a VC or North Vietnamese Army soldier seems ludicrous since a vast majority of Vietnamese males, north or south, were under 5'9". Is it possible the foxholes were American made? Of course, but a 6' hole is a grave not a foxhole. If the holes were 6' deep we'll never know why.

Chieu Hoi leaflets were handed out to encourage North Vietnamese Army soldiers and VC cadre to surrender. Chieu Hoi leaflets were designed to permit safe passage, sort of like a hall pass or a white flag on paper.

23 August 1969: Savage elements set up a blocking force at YU164074 with no reports of enemy activity.

No elaboration.

24 August 1969: Blue Platoon provided security for a Medcap at YU143097 where the hamlet was attacked the night of 23 August. After the Medcap, Blue Platoon joined the White Platoon in a clover-leaf recon around the hamlet. Trail markers were found at YU145091, YU142093, YU141095 and YU142094. At YU145091 and YU141083, Savage elements found holes 1 foot in diameter and 8 feet deep; believed to be hiding places for mortar tubes. At YU142094 were nine 4 X 2 X 3 foot fighting positions about 20 days old. And 40 meters North of YU143094 Savage elements found a bandage used for a serious wound which was about 3 days old. The two 106 Recoilless Rifles at Quan Loi became OPCON to 1/7 Cav at the Bo Duc Special Forces Camp.

Clarification

A clover-leaf recon is a reconnaissance conducted outwardly from a start point (in this case the hamlet) and continued outwardly in a round-about way either to the left or to the right and curved back around to the start point. Movement is visually and physically similar to half a leaf of clover.

An 8' deep hole only one foot in diameter would seem to require gas operated mechanical equipment to dig and ropes to pull the mortar out.

Mortar tube describes the mortar weapon barrel.

Correction

Bo Duc should read Bu Dop where the Special Forces camp was located.

25 August 1969: Savage elements stood by as a reacting force. At 1620 hours Savage Elements escorted an artillery element from YU225040 to the L.Z.

Clarification

YU225040 probably was Hill 269 and the location of L.Z. Mary. The artillery element was escorted to FSB Buttons.

26 August 1969: Savage Elements were inspected by Squadron and remained on the L.Z. for maintenance of weapons and vehicles.

No elaboration.

27 August 1969: Savage Elements remained on the L.Z. as a QRF for the convoy coming from Phuoc Vinh. They were not called out.

Clarification

QRF is a military abbreviation for Quick Reaction Force.

28 August 1969: Savage Elements set up a blocking position from 250018 to 262010. At YU253014 Blue Platoon found 5 foxholes 5 X 3 X 3.

Clarification

The way the dimensions of 5 X 3 X 3 are written for these five foxholes illustrate the point made earlier. Were these foxholes five feet deep or three feet deep?

Elaboration

These five foxholes were within about a thousand meters of where the September 14, 1969 battle on Road 311 occurred.

29 August 1969: Savage Elements escorted A Company 5/7 Cav to YU125100. Blue Platoon set up in a blocking position at YU142084. White Platoon at YU144078 made a dismounted sweep to YU142084 with no report of enemy activity.

Clarification

The informal use of Red, White and Blue in addressing the platoons and the Platoon Leaders in the Troop carried over to the administrative staff one hundred miles to the south at the 1st Cavalry Division Base Camp near Phuoc Vinh. The soldiers who worked in the rear area in supply and administration rarely if ever came to FSB Buttons. Those who took care of maintenance and armament came forward at least once a month. So even though they were not with or near the platoons the use of the "colors" was prevalent and permissible and obviously carried over into a formal report. That is why clarification, elaboration and correction helps.

30 August 1969: At 0130 Savage Elements were scrambled to red alert because villagers were leaving Song Be. At 1122 hours Savage Elements conducted a search with ten National Police in the area of YU193045 with no report of enemy activity. At 2358 hours Nui Ba Ra received incoming and small arms fire from the Northeast. White platoon had two WIA's, but were not medevaced.

Elaboration

When the Province Chief or his Provincial Government assigned check point missions to the National Police outside the relative safety of the towns, out in the wilderness, the Battalion Commander or the Brigade Commander would be contacted with a request for a security escort for the policemen. We were comfortable working with the policemen because they did their job while we did our security mission to protect them.

Usually the National Police worked along Road 311, Road 310, Road 309, near Highway QL14, or Highway LTL1A. Sometimes they chose major trails or crossroads and sometimes they wanted to monitor traffic along the Song Be River. Almost always the National Policemen chose locations that placed all of us out in the open so to provide security and protection for all of us the Troop would establish strong point positions. Either the Second or Third Platoon's Infantry Squad would establish a reinforced inspection point with the National Policemen. On both sides of the inspection point strong point positions would be established to enable 360 degrees of observation and supporting fire. Distances between positions varied depending on the terrain, the lay of the land.

The National Policemen's mission was to intercept movement along the lines of communication in the Province and to check papers and conduct inspections of bicycles, motorcycles, wagons, cars, trucks, buses, and

pedestrians. The policemen were not there to find enemy soldiers, we were. At the same time, while on the check point, our mission also was to support the police as they searched for bandits, questioned strangers and looked for contraband.

In 1969 it was Phuoc Long Province. Today it is Phuoc Long-Binh Phuoc Province. This area west and south of the towns of Phuoc Long and Song Be was a major infiltration route, a virtual highway no less, for North Vietnamese Army forces moving down the Ho Chi Minh Highway and entering South Vietnam from Cambodia through a vast area along the international border known as The Parrot's Beak which was several kilometers west of Buttons. Some estimates placed the number of enemy soldiers pouring into South Vietnam along this route into the 1st Cavalry Division's Area of Operations (AO) at a thousand every few days.

Paradoxically, now we know, President Richard Nixon had ordered the withdrawal of thousands of American troops every few days during this time and ordered US forces to avoid major engagements.

Clarification

The report entry is clear about the mountain, Nui Ba Ra, receiving incoming and small arms fire from the Northeast; and, White platoon had two WIA's, but were not medevaced.

The following is not intended to dispute the August 30 entry in the report.

Neither the VC nor the North Vietnamese Army used artillery in our area of operations. They did use 40mm mortars, 82mm mortars, rocket propelled grenades, hand grenades and high explosive satchel charges.

"Incoming" was a generic term used when receiving or reporting enemy mortar fire. Small arms fire, of course, was rifle fire. The conclusion from this entry is the "attacking" force was Viet Cong and this conclusion is reinforced because the fire was from small arms, from a rifle or rifles, and was not from AK-47s which the North Vietnamese Army soldier used.

Nui Ba Ra was a tough climb for anyone during daylight hours. If the time recorded in the Operational Report was accurate then it was almost midnight when the incoming and small arms fire was received.

Today Google Earth shows a road going up to the top of the mountain on its eastern side and along this road are buildings and a Pagoda. Those were not there in 1969. Walking up through the woods or going up by helicopter were the only ways to the top.

Viet Cong cadre or North Vietnamese Army soldiers did not have abundant ammunition. To use valuable ammunition by firing at an unknown target, uphill, at midnight, would be unusual. North Vietnamese Army units had larger fish to fry and did not waste time and energy to climb over 2,000 feet at a steep angle to fire on a communications outpost. To attack and destroy the complex yes; just to fire on it, no.

Delta Troop's Second Platoon, White platoon, was not on top of the mountain. From time to time two of the Troop's 106mm Recoilless Rifles and the crews were on the mountain. If Viet Cong cadre made the climb and fired on the complex on that date at that late hour then it is possible some of the 106mm Recoilless Rifle crew members were on the complex' perimeter and could have been Wounded In Action.

At this late date I'm more inclined to believe the action could have been at Fire Support Base Buttons rather than Nui Ba Ra. The Troop's Second Platoon (White Platoon) was on Buttons not on the mountain. Now, forty years later we'll never know for sure.

It is curious, and extremely unusual, for the clock time in the report entry to be so precise at "58" minutes. Most of us would have written midnight instead of hanging back two minutes. A "45", "50", or even a "55" minute check may have occasionally been used but not "58". That is curious.

Medevaced was a military slang term to indicate medical evacuation.

31 August 1969: Savage Elements conducted a first light around base of Nui Ba Ra with no report of enemy activity. At 1555 hours White Platoon found a fresh trail going straight up the mountain at YU175079.

Clarification

A first light is a military term to describe a mounted patrol in and around an area to insure it was secure and to detect enemy activity.

Elaboration

While I raise questions about the information in the August 30 entry and in this entry I do not intend to dispute the report.

Because of the amount of time it would take a mounted patrol to search completely around the base of Nui Ba Ra the report entry is suspect. A quick look at the map sheet with a rough calculation figures the distance to be about seventeen kilometers around Nui Ba Ra. It was a patrol not a Sunday drive. Even though a road is on the map it was rugged terrain.

The grid coordinates YU175079 add to my suspicions. Those coordinates identifying the location of the trail going straight up the mountain are on the north-northwest side which is the airstrip, and was the Buttons, side.

- b. Other Activities
None

No elaboration.

- c. Base Defense
During the month of August Troop D conducted day and night operations around Song Be for the purpose of security around the L.Z. Besides manning bunkers the Troop was utilized around an artillery element, in the revetments and around the Province Chief's estate.

No elaboration.

- d. Base Improvements
During the month of August Troop D continued to improve living conditions and fighting positions at Song Be. At Phuoc Vinh the interior of the Supply Room was renovated.

No elaboration.

- e. Training and Organization
On the 10th, 11th and 12th the Troop at Song Be received training in the techniques of ambushing and patrolling from the 75th Rangers and the armorer attended the 3 day "Unit Small Arms Repair Course" given at 27th Maintenance (BN). During the month all weapons were test fired. Two individuals attended the Combat Leaders Course and fifteen individuals qualified in repelling. Also the Troop attended classes on the new UCMJ.

Clarification

UCMJ is the military abbreviation for the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The UMCJ manual outlined many facets including offenses and military justice, and established judicial and non-judicial punishments the offenses.

- f. Administration and Logistics

(1)	Authorized	Assigned	Present for Duty
	OFF WO EM	OFF WO EM	OFF WO EM
	5 N/A 127	5 N/A 130	5 N/A 130

Clarification

OFF is the military abbreviation for Officer.

WO is the military abbreviation for Warrant Officer.

EM is the military abbreviation for Enlisted Man (or Enlisted Member).

(2) Organizational Standing for Combat

CO	CPT Hudson
XO	1LT Lowe
Opns OFF	N/A
1st Plt	2LT Hahn
2nd Plt	1LT Lowe (1-18 Aug) 1LT Cullen (19-31 Aug)
3rd Plt	1LT Ross
Lift Section	N/A
Maint Section	N/A

Clarification

XO is the military abbreviation for Executive Officer.

Opns Off is the military abbreviation for Operations Officer.

Plt is a military abbreviation for Platoon.

Maint is a military abbreviation for maintenance.

(3) Awards and Decorations

Soldiers Medal	3
Silver Star	0
Bronze Star "V"	0
Bronze Star	2
Air Medal	6
Purple Heart	2
ARCOM	5
ARCOM "V"	4

Clarification

"V" indicates Valor. A "V" device will be attached to the cloth portion of the medal and attached to a ribbon to show the decoration was for Valor.

<u>Losses</u>			<u>Un-programmed Losses</u>		
OFF	WO	EM	OFF	WO	EM
0	N/A	8	0	N/A	1

No elaboration.

(5)	<u>Promotions</u>	
	E-6	0
	E-5	9
	E-4	8

Clarification

E-6 is a United States Army pay grade.

E-5 is a United States Army pay grade.

E-4 is a United States Army pay grade.

United States Army rank for an E-6 pay grade is Staff Sergeant or Specialist Sixth Class.

United States Army rank for an E-5 pay grade is Sergeant or Specialist Fifth Class.

United States Army rank for an E-4 pay grade is Corporal or Specialist Fourth Class.

Elaboration

The "E" before the pay grade number is for Enlisted. An "O" before a number is for Officer. A "W" before a number is for Warrant Officer. Enlisted Members, Officers, and Warrant Officers in all branches of the Armed Forces have a designated pay grade. A pay grade determines the level of base pay. Increasing years of military service increase the amount of base pay. While serving in Vietnam military pay was exempt from Federal income tax but once out of Vietnam (the combat zone) military service members paid Federal income tax like everybody else.

(6)	<u>R&R</u>	
	In-Country	1
	Out-Country	7

Clarification

R&R is the military abbreviation for Rest and Relaxation.

Elaboration

In-Country R&R locations included Saigon, Nha Trang, Vung Ro Bay, Vung Tau, Cam Ran Bay and probably others.

Out-Country R&R locations included Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and maybe others.

(7)	<u>Replacements</u>		
	OFF	WO	EM
	1	N/A	14

No elaboration.

(8)	<u>Logistics</u>	
(a)	Class I	

Class A	1850 meals
Class B	None
Class C	4340 meals

Clarification

Class A indicates "hot" or cooked meals.

Class B

Class C indicates C-Rations.

Elaboration

Memory has faded on Class B food. It might have been cold cuts, or LRRP (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol) rations which was the precursor to the "instant" dried food in a package found in supermarkets today. The LRRP meal was dried food in a plastic bag which sprang to life when it was stirred in the bag with warm or hot water. Hot water usually was hard to come by when in the wilderness. It could be hazardous to your health to build a fire to boil water in enemy territory. Without cold, warm or hot water the LRRP ration was terrible when eaten dry. That was the draw-back to LRRP rations.

C-4, the plastic explosive, was a fantastic heating element. First, punch a couple of holes in a C-ration can. This was your stove top. Next, cut off a piece of C-4 with your bayonet. Light the piece of C-4 with a match or cigarette lighter. Drop the lighted C-4 in the C-ration can with the holes (or alternatively drop the lighted C-4 on the ground and place your C-ration can with holes over the C-4). Voila, your heating stove is ready for your food, which is already packed in its own C-ration can.

Tabasco Sauce and Louisiana Hot Sauce were favorites.

We always carried an extra case (12 meals) of C-Rations in each of the Troop vehicles. First, because we didn't know when we would be assigned a mission away from the supply point. Second, because on occasion we were with or near infantry companies or infantry scout platoons and could supply them with food. Third, many Vietnamese children and peasant families were hungry and we could give them food to eat even though our C-Rations probably tasted terrible to them.

The C-Ration meal was in a box.

In this meal box was the main dish in a can (some of the main dish cans I remember contained Ham and Lima Beans, Ham and Eggs, Turkey, Tuna, Spaghetti and Meat Balls, Pork and Beans). Also in the box was a small can with a Roll. In a smaller can was the dessert of Sliced Peaches, or Fruit Cocktail, or Sliced Pears, maybe Sliced Apricots. In an even smaller can was Crackers and a tiny can of Peanut Butter. The C-Ration meal box also contained a tiny can opener, a small pack of four cigarettes, a book of matches, a tiny pack of instant coffee, a tiny pack of instant chocolate, a tiny pack of salt and pepper and sugar, a chocolate bar (it was round), a tiny box with two mini pieces of chewing gum, a tiny roll of toilet paper, and a couple of other items (there may even have been a toothpick!). Individually or all together this was food. All or any of these items could be used as a reward for information or as trading material.

Of course the Vietnamese children loved the candy, chewing gum and the peanut butter and crackers (even some of our own hard core protesters liked those too).

(b)	Class II	
	1/4 Ton Truck, Utility	2
	Air Mattress	15
	Ruck Sack Nylon	24
	Fire Extinguisher	5
	M-60 Machine Gun	1
	XM-28 Gas Mask	120
	Shirt Wool Knit	75

Clarification

1/4 Ton Truck, Utility was the fabulous M151 Jeep.

(c)	Class III	
	JP-4	N/A
	AVGAS	N/A
	MOGAS	4000 gal
	Diesel	250 gal

Clarification

JP-4 was as jet fuel.

AVGAS was Aviation fuel (gas).

MOGAS was jeep and 3/4 ton truck fuel.

Diesel fuel was used in 2-1/2 Ton Trucks (known as the duce and a half) and in 5 Ton Trucks.

(d)	Class IV
	None

No elaboration.

(e)	Class V	
	5.56mm	5040
	7.62	4800
	40mm	None
	60mm	None
	81mm	None
	106mm	None
	45cal	None
	Frgs	None
	Claymores	None
	M-72	None

Clarification

5.56mm was ammunition for the M16 rifle.

7.62mm was ammunition for the M60 machine gun.

40mm was ammunition for the M79 Grenade Launcher.

60mm was ammunition for the small 60mm mortar.

81mm was ammunition for the 81mm mortar.

106mm was ammunition for the 106mm Recoilless Rifles.

45cal was ammunition for the .45 Caliber Pistol.

Frgs is an abbreviation and term used for Fragmentation Grenades.

Elaboration

The .223 Remington round was the model for the 5.56mm ammunition that was developed and approved in 1964 as the new NATO round to replace the 7.62mm ammunition for the M16 rifle and the .30 caliber Carbine.

Belted 7.62mm ammunition was for the M60 machine gun. There were eighteen M60 machine guns in the Troop.

40mm ammunition was for the M79 Grenade Launcher, a great weapon for open terrain and the wilderness.

60mm ammunition was for the small 60mm mortar used by the infantry platoons and squads. Delta Troop did not have a 60mm mortars.

81mm ammunition was for the three 81mm mortars in Delta Troop.

106mm ammunition was for the 106mm Recoilless Rifles. These powerful Anti-Tank guns fired High Explosive, White Phosphorous, and Smoke rounds. The diameter of the barrel and the round was ever so slightly larger than a M-60 Tank gun. The 106mm guns were especially effective in defeating ambushes with its Anti-Personnel round called the Flachette (or Flashette).

(Note: A .50 caliber spotting rifle was mounted on top of the 106mm barrel and was bore-sighted with the main gun. Time, and the enemy situation, permitting the .50 caliber spotting rifle tracer round would be fired first at the target and the 106mm gun would be adjusted based on where that tracer round impacted.

.45 caliber ammunition was for the Colt .45 caliber pistol. All officers and senior non-commissioned officers in the Troop were armed with a M16 rifle and a .45 caliber pistol.

Frag was an abbreviation for Fragmentation grenades. Besides the Fragmentation grenade a concussion grenade also was used by soldiers in Delta Troop.

2. Losses

a. <u>Enemy</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Quarter</u>
NVA KIA	0	0
VC KIA	1	1
NVA Captured	0	0
VC Captured	0	0
Detainees	89	90
C/S Weapons	0	0
Indiv Weapons	0	0
Ammunitions	1	81
Documents	0	1"
Packs	0	0
Uniforms	0	0
Rice	0	0
Salt	0	0
Grenades	1	1
Booby Traps	0	3

Clarification

NVA was the abbreviation for North Vietnamese Army
 C/S Weapons was a military term for crew served weapons
 (a crew served weapon requires two or more soldiers to
 handle, load and fire the weapon).
 Indiv Weapons indicates Individual Weapons.

b. <u>Friendly</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Quarter</u>
US KIA	0	1
US WIA	2	6
US MIA	0	0
AC Firings	N/A	N/A
AC Hit	N/A	N/A
AC Hit (No Fly)	N/A	N/A
AC Dest (Combat)	N/A	N/A
AC Dest (Non Combat)	N/A	N/A
Indiv Wpns Lost	3	4
C/S Wpns Lost	0	0
Vehicles Dest (Combat)	1	1
Vehicles Dest (Accident)	0	0
Vehicles Turned In	3	3

Clarification

AC is a military abbreviation for aircraft.

Wpns is a military abbreviation for weapons.

Dest is a military abbreviation for destroyed.

Elaboration

It is regrettable the Operational Report does not identify our soldier who was Killed In Action during the quarter of June, July and August. Also regrettable is the absence in the report of the names of those Wounded In Action. One soldier listed as WIA was wounded by a booby trap when on dismounted patrol searching an area where sniper fire had come from. I believe the other listed as WIA for August was myself. At 0630 hours on 19 August Fire Support Base Buttons received an enemy mortar attack. I received shrapnel in the palm of my left hand or ripped open my palm on PSP (Perforated Steel Planking) when diving into the mud for cover. The Aid Station Medic cleaned my hand and gave me a Band-Aide. First Sergeant Price sent a Purple Heart to me. I always regretted refusing that Purple Heart believing my wound/injury was not serious enough for it.

3. Commanders Comments

Discussion

During the month of August Troop D remained OPCON'D to the 5/7 at Song Be (L.Z. Buttons). Operations conducted during the month consisted of sweeps (mounted and dismounted), route reconnaissance, area reconnaissance, security missions and quick reaction force. The first platoon of D Troop remained on base defense at Quan Loi. Additionally the Troop was further fragmented with two 106 recoilless rifle vehicles and crews being dispatched to Bo Duc, two 106 vehicles and one mortar to Nui Ba Ra. The two platoons at Song Be performed missions within their organizations and capabilities, the platoon at Quan Loi continued to perform the mission of an infantry platoon. The fragmentation of the 106 and mortars greatly distracts from the combat potential of the Troop.

Correction

Bo Duc should read Bu Dop, where the Special Forces camp was located.

4. Recommendations

That this Troop which was organized to be used as a highly skillful, fast moving, quick communicating Troop be utilized in its entirety. Fragmentation of the Troop does not lend to its combat effectiveness and should be held to an absolute minimum. The true usefulness of this Troop is fully realized when used as a ground reconnaissance unit and as such can furnish commanders valuable and timely EEI.

Clarification

EEI is the military abbreviation for Essential Element of Information.

ANDREW J. HUDSON
Captain, Armor
Commanding

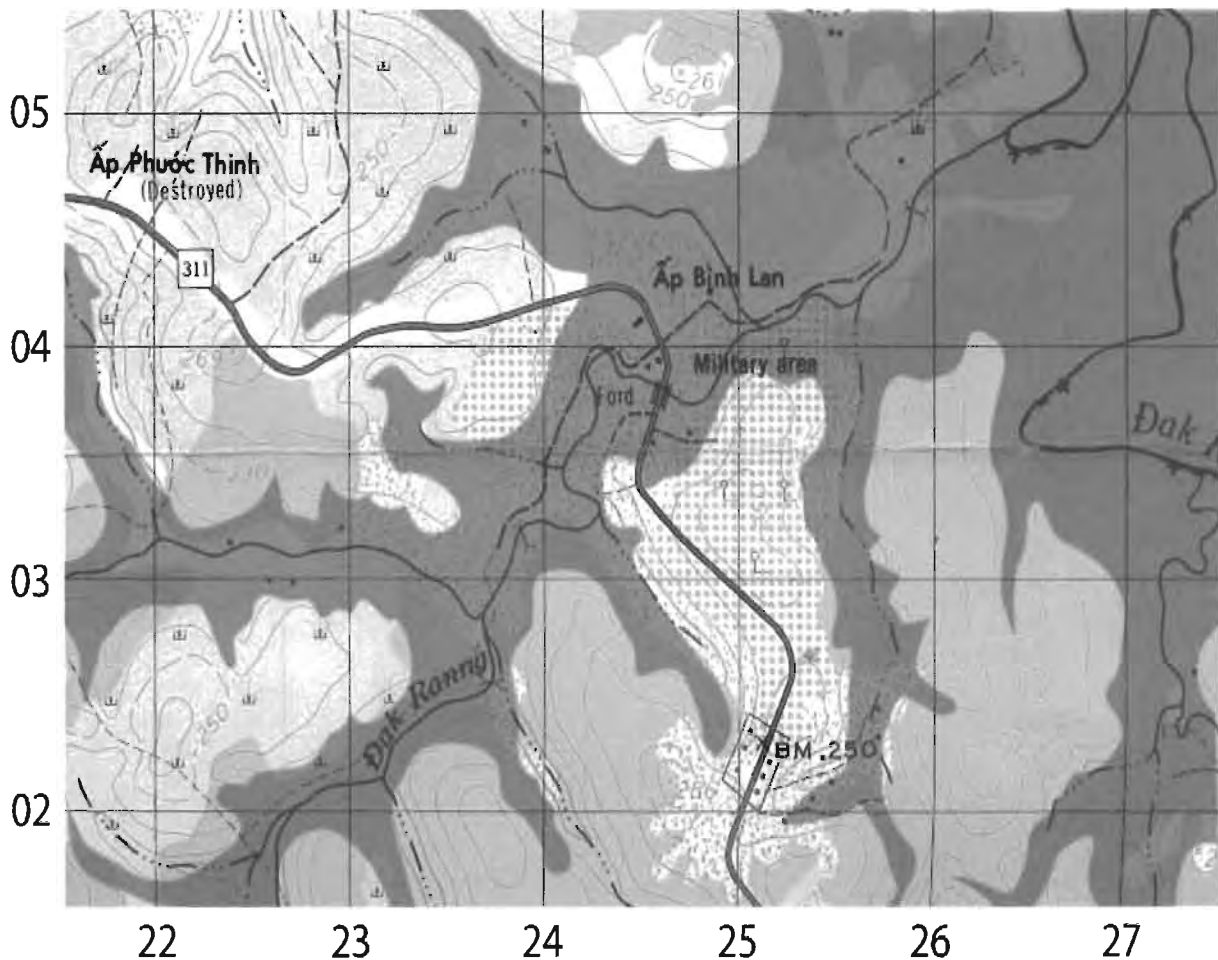
Elaboration

It is my signature on the original August 1969 report.
Lieutenant Lowe, the Executive Officer, or First
Sergeant Price, could sign their name on a report and
write "for" in front of my name in the signature block.

Andrew J. Hudson
Lieutenant Colonel
United States Army
(retired)
October 23, 2011

ROAD 311

**1969 MAP SHEET 6432 IV, TITLED DONG SRE VIET, VIETNAM,
SCALE 1:50,000 & 2011 GOOGLE EARTH SATELLITE IMAGE
NO WATER OVER 311 IN 1969 BETWEEN LINES 24 & 25
SOUTH OF WATER 311 STILL EXISTS BUT IS NOT NUMBERED
REROUTED 311 IS 749 & CONTINUES NORTHWEST & INTERSECTS
WITH 741 WHERE BUTTONS WAS & NUI BA RA IS LOCATED**



**MAJOR EAST-WEST TRAIL & CREEK SHOWN BELOW AP BINH LAN.
TWO DOTS LEFT OF "MILITARY AREA" MARK RF/PF CAMP.
JUST NORTH OF BM 250 SIGNIFICANT CURVE & BATTLE AREA,
BETWEEN GRID LINES 25 & 26, STILL EXISTS ON GOOGLE EARTH
AT LONGITUDE 11°46'46.00" N & LATITUDE 107°03'48.50" E.**