

U.S. MARINES IN VIETNAM

HIGH MOBILITY AND STANDDOWN

1969

by
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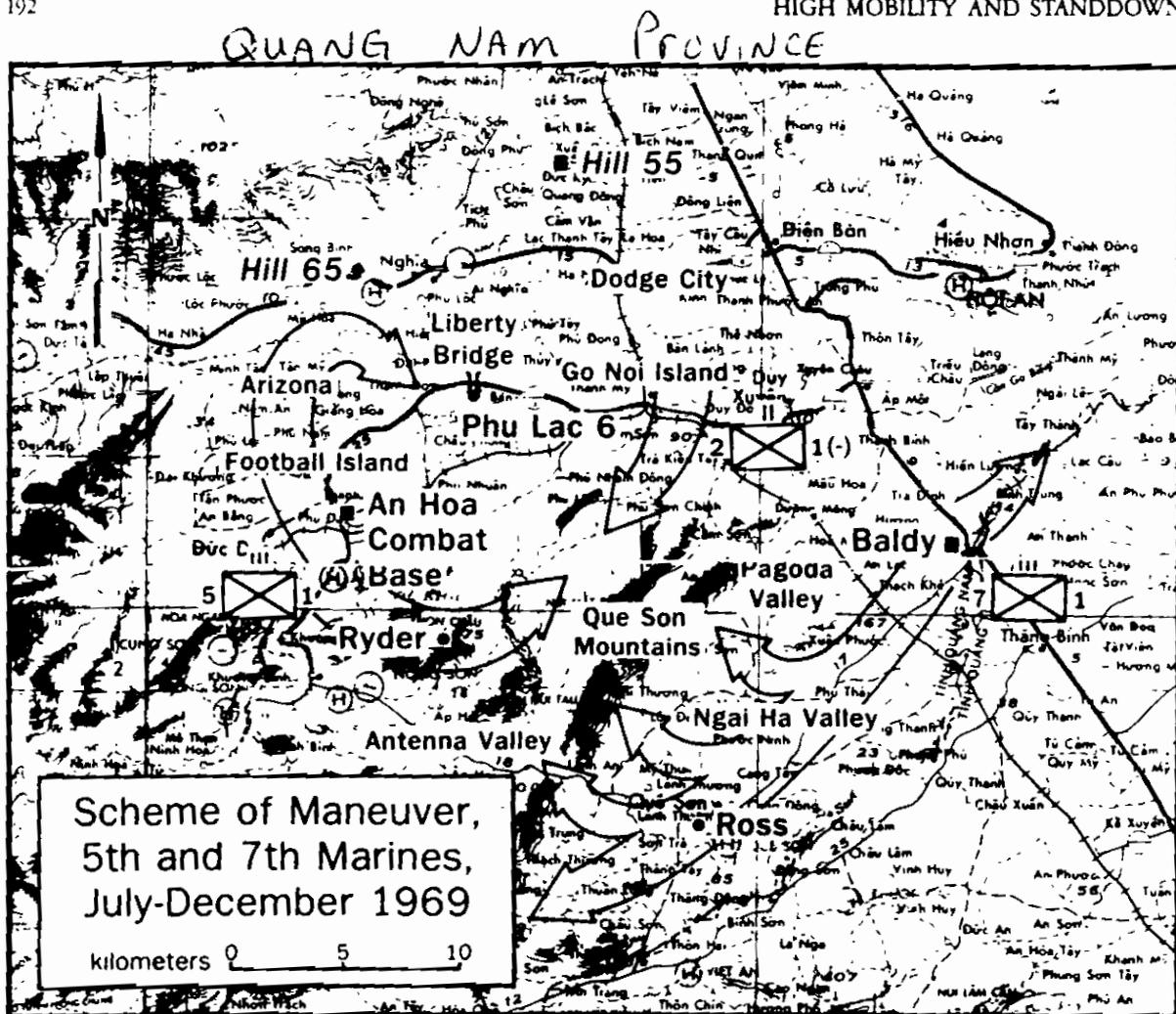
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Anthology and Bibliography

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See Reference Map, Sections 31-33, 37-39

struck at the command group and Company A, and again the aggressive attack was broken with the assistance of accurate artillery and air support. Later in the day, as the battalion command post attempted to relocate, the lead elements of Company A, acting as security for the move, came under very heavy .30- and .50-caliber machine gun fire. A hasty perimeter was set up while fixed-wing aircraft and artillery peppered the suspected enemy weapons site. With the lifting of supporting arms fire, Company A moved out in the attack, but again came under heavy automatic weapons fire, this time supported by 60mm mortars. In spite of the fire, a platoon of the company was able to establish a toehold on the southern flank of the enemy's perimeter, and batter his positions with machine gun, small arms, and hand-held rocket fire for 90 minutes before being ordered to withdraw because of continued resistance and impending darkness. Once contact was broken, air and artillery moved in

and pounded the enemy position throughout the night.

Following a heavy air, artillery, and mortar bombardment the next morning, the attack resumed. Reinforced by a platoon from Company C, Company A seized and secured the enemy position despite continued resistance. A detailed search of the complex, believed to be the site of the NVA battalion's command post defended by two well-entrenched infantry companies supported by at least one heavy weapons company, revealed 80 enemy bodies.

While Company A continued its search of the enemy position, Company B, under Captain Philip H. Torrey III, moving to assist, came under intensive fire. Sizing up the situation, Torrey ordered two of his platoons into the assault, with the remainder of the company providing cover fire for the advance. Expertly maneuvering across 300 meters of fire-swept rice paddies, the two platoons stormed the enemy position,



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A800-140

"Cpl Walter Rebarz and his scout dog, King, lead a CAP patrol composed of Marines and local Popular Forces out from a protected village three kilometers south of Tam Ky.

you, you had better be in touch with the people and find some way to reflect their needs, their concerns, and some how get their involvement This was the approach taken by the Marines."²⁸

Operationally, 1969 was an active year for the program. Aided by the increase in size and a mobile posture, combined action platoons conducted in excess of 145,000 combat patrols and ambushes, 73 percent of which were conducted at night. Although these

operations were nearly double the number executed the previous year, the overall enemy toll, 1,938 killed, 425 taken prisoner, and 932 weapons captured, was lower, reflecting the enemy's inability to penetrate, or desire to avoid, platoon-protected villages and hamlets.

Capitalizing on the success and effectiveness of the Combined Action Program, General Nickerson, in October, initiated the Infantry Company Intensive Pacifi-