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2ND BATTALION 35TH INFANTRY OPERATIONS

AVDC-C-OP

5 August 1967

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report for the period 19 May thru 20 May 1967

THE BATTLE OF VINH HIEN

While in the process of securing an LZ, vic 775457, at 191545H May 1967, in preparation for a combat assault in support of C/2/35, in contact to the north, A/2/35, began receiving enemy automatic and small arms fire from three or four enemy positions to their north. The CO, A/2/35, decided with the concurrence of the Battalion Commander, to attack these enemy positions and to further develop the situation. The initial enemy fire wounded one soldier seriously. Moving to the south, A/2/35 overran the enemy positions, killing two enemy. By 1610H, the enemy had disengaged and had retreated to the southwest. A sweep of the contact area produced an FM Radio, medical supplies and several NVA uniforms. They continued the search and then, upon receipt of information of enemy movement to the southwest, began a sweep in that direction.

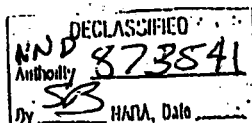
At 1735H, A/2/35 again received some small arms fire from the south. Realizing that his company might be led into an enemy ambush, CPT Barcena, CO, A/2/35, requested and received an air observation team from B/1/9 Cav (airmobile) to screen his flanks and front. Continuing to move to the south, A/2/35 was again fired upon at 1830H from the south. The observation team located the enemy and directed the company along a concealed route to the enemy position. The position was destroyed and two enemy were killed. One Thompson sub-machinegun was captured. At 1910H Company A closed for the night, vic BS774455. At 1915H, one VC sniper fired at and wounded one of the company's riflemen. The VC was killed and his weapon captured. The company dug in and listening posts were put out. The wounded soldier was evacuated.

At 200025H, the CO, A/2/35, reported that his LP's to the northwest and southwest had engaged a total of eight enemy. The LP's threw grenades, detonated their claymores and fired their weapons. Two enemy with grenades were killed; the other six fled. The LP's shifted their locations and waited. A sweep was conducted by one of the platoons but they only discovered three blood trails and the two enemy killed. The blood trails indicated that three enemy were seriously wounded.

At 0147H, CPT Barcena reported his perimeter under attack by an estimated enemy company. Using existing trench lines that encompassed the entire area, the enemy was able to move undetected to within a few meters of where the LP's had been. The enemy, thinking the LP's were there threw grenades and attacked the empty positions. This brief warning enabled the LP's to ambush the attackers and move back to their lines. By this time artillery defensive concentrations were being fired. Despite the heavy volume of outgoing fire, the enemy pressed forward in a vigorous ground attack. Using the "hugging" tactics to avoid the heavy artillery concentrations, the enemy threw large numbers of hand grenades into the perimeter. It was these hand grenades that inflicted most of the casualties. Flareships and gunships were requested. By 0222H the enemy had ceased the coordinated ground attack and was engaging A/2/35 on only the northern flank. DUSTOFF, aeromedical evacuation, was alerted to stand by to evacuate the wounded once the area was secured.

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At 0247H, CPT Barcena requested a resupply of ammunition. LTC Granger, realizing that a resupply helicopter would, in all probability, be shot down in the attempt, decided to commit C/3/4 Cav (-); not only to carry the much needed ammunition, but also to block the southern escape route. Under the light from the 105mm illuminating rounds, C/3/4 Cav (-) departed LZ LIZ. At 0355H, the armed AC-47 "Dragonship" arrived on station and rained accurate fire on the enemy. The aircraft commander of the AC-47 also guided the APC's along the best route of advance toward the besieged company. At 0418H, Co A reported ten WIA and requested medevac for them. By 0427H, DUSTOFF was overhead and going into the LZ. Receiving AW fire the helicopter had to pull out, unable to extract any of the WIA's. He flew to LZ LIZ to check his helicopter for damage and to await the time when he could again attempt the extraction.

C/3/4 Cav closed A/2/35's perimeter without incident at 0451H. Just prior to the closing, the enemy fired rifle grenades and small arms sporadically throughout the perimeter. Contact was broken on the arrival of C/3/4 Cav. Additional resupply was requested and the resultant resupply helicopter and DUSTOFF extracted the twelve WIA's and two KIA's. See sketch #1.

Between 0630H and 1210H, there was no enemy contact. A/2/35 and C/3/4 Cav conducted an extensive search and sweep in the night area of contact, locating 10 enemy killed and 3 weapons. In addition, one hamlet guerilla was captured. Upon interrogation, it was discovered that he was wounded during the initial probe at 0025H. He observed two others in his group killed. At 0900H, A/2/35 located a VC Bunker Complex 100 meters west of their night location. An engineer squad from D Company, 65th Engineer Battalion, was airlifted with explosives to the LZ and was carried by an APC to that location. Elements from both C/3/4 Cav and A/2/35 provided security while the engineers worked on the destruction of the VC Camp and its bunker complex. See Sketch # 2.

At 1221H, this work party came under attack by the enemy. Firing RPG-2's the enemy hit one of the APC's killing the track commander and driver. The APC was destroyed. In reinforcing the engineer work party A/2/35 (-) and C/3/4 Cav (-) met heavy enemy resistance but aggressively fought through it driving them to the southwest. At 1341H, C/2/35 was alerted to move to a pick-up site where they would be extracted for a combat assault to the southwest. The Battalion Reconnaissance platoon was alerted to move from LZ LIZ to vic BS768463. At 1410H an airstrike helped to break up the enemy concentration. By 1448H, Recon/2/35 Inf was in position and by 1500H, C/2/35 (-) had conducted their combat assault into an LZ vic BS786443. While elements were being moved into position, a FAC spotted twenty armed enemy moving toward the destroyed APC. While the Battalion Commander adjusted the fire of the 106RR from LZ LIZ, CPT Barcena sent a ground element toward the enemy position at the APC. When troops arrived at the destroyed APC they killed two more enemy, one of them inside the track.

C/2/35 (-) moved from the landing zone to the east linking with A/2/35. By 1540H, C Company was in contact with a well entrenched enemy southwest of A Company. During a stiff village fight that lasted more than an hour C Company killed twenty-six armed enemy. Meanwhile, A Company and C Troop 3/4 Cav had turned to the east and were pushing through the southern edge of Vinh

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Hien (3) toward Highway #1. After C Company had evacuated their wounded and dead, they moved into the northern part of Vinh Hien (3), paralleling A Company's route of movement. Just inside the hamlet, C Company encountered another entrenched enemy element. Helicopter rockets and small unit tactics eventually overcame the remaining VC force, and C Company established a combined perimeter in the paddy area east of the hamlet. See sketch # 2.

C/3/4 Cav had begun a sweep back toward the blocking position of the recon platoon. At 2015H, Recon/2/35 and C/3/4 Cav (-) closed LZ LIZ to provide FSB security. There were no further incidents that night. An armed AC-47 "Dragonship" reported on station at 2015H and his fires were directed by CPT Lanning. Artillery was fired into the hamlet throughout the night to deny the enemy access to the remnants of the battle area.

At 210620H, the two companies began a systematic search of the hamlet and other areas of contact. In addition, before the village was destroyed each and every bunker, spider hole, and hut was methodically searched for signs of the enemy. By the time the hamlet had been razed, all enemy material had been evacuated or destroyed. One ton of explosives was used to destroy the complex.

1. Results:

(a) Friendly Losses:

1 KIA.....5
2 WIA.....24

2. Enemy Losses - Personnel

(a) KIA.....89
(b) CIA.....3
(c) Detained (suspects).12

3. Enemy Losses

(a) weapons.....17
(b) mixed ammunition...10,000 rds
(c) rice.....1,000 lbs

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AC.

VINH H HEN (1)

VINH HIEU (2)

VINH, HIEN (3)

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#1

FROM LIZ

34 CAV

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