

HEADQUARTERS  
2D BATTALION, 35<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY  
(Cacti Blue)  
3D BDE TF, 25<sup>TH</sup> INF DIV  
APO 96355

12 May 67

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report for 11 May 67  
Battle of the Pursuit

TO: Commanding Officer  
3d Bde TF, 25<sup>th</sup> Inf Div  
APO 96355

1. Name of Operation: BAKER
2. Date of Operation: 110600 May 67 to 111200 May 67
3. Location: BS78 grid line east to the coast between the 45 and 49 grids
4. Command and Control Headquarters
  - a. Hq, 2d Battalion, 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry
  - b. Company C, 2d Bn, 35<sup>th</sup> Inf
  - c. Team Strunck, 2d Bn, 34<sup>th</sup> Armor
  - d. Team Krout, Reconnaissance Platoon, 2d Bn, 35<sup>th</sup> Inf
5. Task Organization
  - a. Company C, 2d Bn, 35<sup>th</sup> Inf
  - b. Team Strunck
    - (1) Company C, 2d Battalion, 34 Armor (-)
    - (2) 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Company B, 2d Battalion, 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry
  - c. Team Krout
    - (1) Reconnaissance Platoon, 2d Battalion, 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry
6. Supporting Forces
  - a. Battery C, 2d Battalion, 9<sup>th</sup> Artillery
  - b. Battery C, 2d Battalion, 11<sup>th</sup> Artillery
  - c. Reconnaissance helicopter team, 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (Airmobile)
  - d. Armed helicopter team, 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (Airmobile)
  - e. 174<sup>th</sup> Aviation Company
  - f. USAF

7. Intelligence: Current IntSum

8. Mission: The 2d Battalion, 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry was conducting search and destroy operations within the battalion area of operations as a part of Operation BAKER. Company C, 2-35 Infantry was assembled following twenty-four hours of daylight patrolling, and was preparing for the mission of night saturation ambushing in the vicinity of their position at BS7952. Team STRUNCK composed of Company c/2-34 Armor (-) with seven tanks, reinforced with two armored personnel carriers of C Troop  $\frac{3}{4}$  Cavalry and one rifle platoon of Company B, 2-35 Infantry, was conducting search and destroy operations in the vicinity of Lam Ha (1) (BS776527) with the mission of destruction of any enemy forces located, and severing the enemy's lines of communication between the South China Sea and the mountains to the west of the coastal plain. Team KROUT, composed of the Reconnaissance Platoon, 2-35 Infantry,  $\frac{3}{4}$  Cavalry (five armored personnel carriers), was conducting a search and destroy sweep, with one specific portion of the mission being the investigation of a village located vicinity BS7747 where there was a suspected enemy command post.

9. Execution:

- a. At approximately 1130 hours, Company C, 2-35 Infantry, Team STRUNCK and Team KROUT were conducting operations in conjunction with their assigned missions. At this time a report was received of a possible enemy command post located in the vicinity of BS788484. Team KROUT was directed to move immediately to the area to investigate the report.
- b. At about 1200 hours, Team KROUT reached the position at BS770473, and determined that the armored personnel carriers of the 3d Platoon, C Troop,  $\frac{3}{4}$  Cavalry could not traverse the saturated rice paddy land and river area between their location and the suspected enemy CP location to the east. Lieutenant Krout dismounted two squads of the Reconnaissance Platoon, 2-35 Infantry and continued to move east toward his objective, leaving Lieutenant Gardner, the platoon leader, C Troop,  $\frac{3}{4}$  Cav with the armored personnel carriers and one squad of the reconnaissance platoon to search for a crossing. Lieutenant Gardner immediately started to move north, searching for a crossing of the inundated area, and seeking to reunite the elements of TM KROUT.
- c. At 1215 hours the Reconnaissance Platoon (-) with fifteen men observed seven enemy dressed in camouflage uniforms, wearing soft caps, and carrying individual weapons. Reconnaissance and armed helicopter support was immediately requested, and Lieutenant Krout started to close with the enemy from the reconnaissance platoon position at BS788482, toward the point where the enemy was observed vicinity BS795478. The Reconnaissance Platoon was crossing the rice paddy area at this time, and the advance could not be concealed. The enemy attempted to engage Lieutenant Krout's force, but fire was returned without slowing the reconnaissance platoon (-). In the face of the determined advance the seven enemy fled to the southeast at about 1225, closely pursued by the fifteen man force under Lieutenant Krout, with

both the pursuer and the pursued at the dead run. Fire was exchanged, but due to the speed of movement both enemy and friendly fire was ineffective.

- d. During this initial pursuit, at about 1220 hours, the reconnaissance helicopter team of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry arrived over the area of contact and made direct contact with Lieutenant Krout on the ground.
- e. By 1230 the 2-35 Infantry command and control helicopter and armed helicopters of the 1/9 Cavalry arrived at the scene of the action, and observed the halt of the pursuit when Lieutenant Krout's force was taken under heavy fire from two, later three directions with automatic weapons. During the next ten minutes Lieutenant Krout developed the situation from the ground, while the reconnaissance helicopter developed the enemy situation by flying over suspected enemy areas at extremely low altitudes to draw enemy fire. By 1240 it was estimated that the fifteen men of the reconnaissance platoon were engaged with at least a reinforced platoon of enemy in bunkers and other field fortifications. The volume of fire indicated that the enemy was well equipped with weapons, and had adequate supplies of ammunition for a sustained firefight.
- f. At 1240 the armed helicopters of the 1/9 Cavalry were directed against the observed enemy targets, using 2.75 inch rockets and miniguns. Target coverage, observed from the 2-35 command and control helicopter, was excellent and the reconnaissance platoon was able to regain fire superiority. At the same time the battalion commander directed Team STRUNCK to advance from his location vicinity BS776527 directly toward the point of contact, skirting along the edge of the villages on a north-south axis, and entered the battle against the fortified areas observed by the elements of the reconnaissance platoon on the ground. Next Company C, 2-35 Infantry was alerted to be prepared to conduct a heliborne assault in the immediate vicinity of the contact, and troop carrier and armed helicopters were requested to support the action. Final selection of a landing zone was not made at this time. Finally, the remaining position of Team KROUT, consisting of Lieutenant Gardner's armored personnel carriers and one squad from the 2-35 reconnaissance platoon, were directed to move south along the inundated area, seeking a point to cross over into the area south of the point of contact to serve as a blocking force.
- g. At about 1245 an erratic 2.75 inch rocket from the armed helicopters veered from the trajectory into the target area and struck a tree in the vicinity of Lieutenant Krout's position. Two men of Lieutenant Krout's force were wounded in the legs, and Lieutenant Krout was forced to pull back from his forward position to permit evacuation of his wounded. A medivac helicopter was immediately requested, but the armed helicopters of the 1/9 Cavalry evacuated both wounded men before the medivac ship arrived and Lieutenant Krout was again free to maneuver by 1255 hours. At that time Lieutenant Krout was directed to restore contact with the enemy force, and to fix it in position pending the arrival of larger elements. He promptly moved his force forward, and resumed his firefight with the entrenched enemy.

- h. By 1300 hours it was clear that the enemy intended to fight from his fortified position. The 1/9 reconnaissance helicopter on station was directed to move to Lieutenant Gardner's armored cavalry platoon, originally a part of Team KROUT to assist that element in bypassing the rice paddy area which blocked movement. This proved to be a most profitable marrying of aerial reconnaissance shock action and responsive firepower. At the same time Team STRUNCK was moving as rapidly as the terrain permitted, with guidance on direction and obstacles being provided from the command and control helicopter. Simultaneously, artillery blocking fires were directed on the rear (south) and right (east) of the enemy position as it had been developed. At this time he contact centered on a square sandy area about 400 meters on a side located at BS797470, with a scattered covering of small pine trees in sandy soil. On close examination, fortifications be observed on the ground in this area, and muzzle flashes of several automatic weapons were clearly visible.
- i. By 1310 hours Lieutenant Krout had achieved his mission of fixing the enemy force and he and the enemy were engaged in a fierce exchange of small arms and automatic weapons fire. At this time replacement armed helicopters came on station. Lieutenant Krout had exhausted his supply of colored smoke grenades and the pilot of the H-13 reconnaissance helicopter voluntarily delivered the few smoke grenades he had aboard, making a successful landing and delivery in spite of intense enemy fire. Assisted by the smoke grenades, Lieutenant Krout marked his position and effective fire was placed on the fortified area by the armed helicopters. Artillery fires were shifted to the south and east to permit the gunships to work. At the same time Company C reported ready to be lifted into the area of contact. The force under Lieutenant Gardner continued to search for a means of crossing the rice paddies and the tank-infantry force under Captain Strunck was approaching the point of contact at the reconnaissance platoon location.
- j. At approximately 1325 hours the reconnaissance platoon was joined at the scene of the action by C/2-34 Armor (-) and the fire of the tanks was directed at the objective area. The tanks initially had difficulty in crossing some of the VC dug trenches but with the assistance of the infantry reconnaissance elements a crossing site was soon discovered. Once the tanks were in position directly in front of the enemy bunkers area, the reconnaissance platoon directed the tanks canister and 90mm HE rounds into the enemy position. Almost immediately the enemy fire decreased sharply and the combined arms team began to sweep toward the enemy position.
- k. At 1325 hours, the battalion commander requested an immediate air strike on the south flank of the enemy position.
- l. At 1400 hours, the first lift of Company C, took off after extensive artillery preparation on the east flank of the enemy position. In the same time span the 3/C/3-4 Cavalry was maneuvering to the south to locate a crossing site to enter the enemy area and serve as a blocking force. The Cavalry platoon was assisted by the White Team (OH-13 helicopter from B/1-9 Cavalry). Without

the White Team's assistance, it is probable the blocking force would not have been able to get into position.

- m. The first lift of Company C touched down into a hot landing zone at 1415 hours. The landing was fired upon by enemy B40 rockets or rifle grenades. The company quickly swept the area, gained control of the LZ and stopped all enemy fire. There were no friendly casualties as a result of the enemy fire. Company C then began to sweep toward the enemy position moving west and southwest. At this point 3/C/3-4 Cavalry crossed the stream south of the enemy position and began advancing to the north to their assigned blocking position, 1500 meters south of the enemy position. The White Team was providing observation over the south flank when they noticed 15 armed enemy withdrawing south.
- n. The airstrike requested earlier arrived on station at 1450 hours and was utilized to the southwest of the objective area in an attempt to slow or break up the enemy withdrawal. The attacking units increased their rate of advance and the remaining enemy broke to the south in small groups to flee the closing trap.
- o. The enemy was routed by 1500 hours and from 1500 until 1640 hours, US elements chased down and killed the enemy. Any enemy success of avoiding the tank team was turned into defeat as they fled south into the effective mobile blocking force. The success of this blocking force is contributed to the ability of the White and Red Teams from B/1-9 Cavalry to observe the fleeing enemy and direct ground elements to the enemy's concealed bunker positions and other hiding places.
- p. At 1760 hours the blocking force and the attacking elements united and continued a sweep to the south. By 1735 hours all action had ceased and 3/C/3-4 Cavalry was instructed to move by the most expeditious route to LZ Liz to continue its security mission. Company C and C/2-34 Armor made light contact enroute to LZ Liz with negative results, closing LZ Liz at approximately 1915 hours to resume its security mission.

#### 10. Results

a. Enemy Losses	
KIA	32
WIA/CIA	1
b. Friendly Losses	
WIA	11
c. Weapons Captured	
SKS	2
AK47	1
MAT49	2
US M1 Rifle	3
1919A6 LMG	1
BAR	1
Pistol P38	1
Pistol .45 cal	1

Mauser Rifle	1
Other Equipment/Ammunition	
AN/PRC 10 Radio	1
Transistor Radio	3
Miscellaneous documents	
Medical Aid Bag	1
Miscellaneous Web Equipment	
Chicom grenades	2
9mm ammunition	63 rounds
.30 cal linked ammunition	1 can
Anti personnel rifle grenades	2
MAT49 Magazine	1

#### 11. Lessons Learned - Tank Infantry, Air Cav Teams

- a. ITEM: The employment of tank, infantry and air cavalry teams in operations against the VC
- b. OBSERVATION: Tank, Infantry and Air Cavalry teams proved highly successful in this operation as indicated by the facts in the after action report. As the contact developed it became apparent that even though the Recon Platoon (-) had engaged a much larger force, it had fixed the enemy location and the enemy was holding his ground. At this moment the tank/infantry team was committed directly into the enemy position. At the same time a highly mobile task force of APC's with two OG13 helicopters (the White Team from B/1-9 Cav) maneuvered to the rear of the enemy position to intercept the enemy if and when they withdrew from their positions. As expected the arrival of the tanks on the battlefield immediately turned the tide and the enemy moved from their positions to begin a hasty retreat. It was at this time that maximum use was made of the mobile team of helicopters and APC's. Almost all kills were a direct result of the sharp eyes of B/1-9 Cav. They were so effective in locating the withdrawing enemy and directing their own weapons platoon (Red Team) or our mechanized teams from C Troop 34 Cav that few if any enemy escaped. The technique used was simple and successful. The observation helicopters in communication with the ground elements actually directed the action in that they located the enemy and the ground elements flushed them out for the kill. This close coordination between air and ground elements was the key to success of this operation.
- c. RECOMMENDATION: That more air cavalry troops be introduced in country to operate in conjunction with ground elements so that each separate brigade would have one air cavalry troop.

#### 12. LESSONS Learned - Enveloping Forces

- a. ITEM: The employment of mobile enveloping forces.
- b. OBSERVATION: Mobile enveloping forces were employed to move into the blocking position. Because these forces were highly mobile and made a deep envelopment of over 1500 meters, the enemy was trapped. Formally the

envelopment was often made by air assault of an infantry company and usually they were placed only a few hundred meters behind the enemy. On several occasions, the enemy did not cooperate in that he would walk faster and in a direction different than was expected. However, in this case due to the deeper envelopment and mobility of the blocking forces, the enemy was still caught in the trap and he suffered a total defeat.

- c. RECOMMENDATION: That whenever possible mobile forces be used to envelop and establish the block and that in relatively open terrain the envelopment be at least 1500 meters behind the enemy positions.

Sic LTC Granger  
LTC Granger

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Incl: Annex 1 and 2