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AGAM-P (M) (9 Aug 68) FOR OT RD 68X051 4 September 1968

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report - Op PERSHING II, 2d Brigade,
1st Air Cavalry Division, Period 20 January - 29 February 1968
(U)

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2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure that the Army realizes current benefits from lessons learned during recent operations.
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 2D BRIGADE
1ST AIR CAVALRY DIVISION
APO 96490

AVDAB-B-C

26 March 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report - 2d Brigade, 1st Air Cavalry Division Participation in Operation PERSHING II

TO: See Distribution

1. (U) OPERATION. Operation PERSHING II
2. (U) PERIOD COVERED. 2000014 January 1968 - 2912004 February 1968.
3. (U) LOCATION. Eastern Binh Dinh Province. (See Incl 1).
4. (U) COMMAND HEADQUARTERS. 2d Brigade, 1st Air Cavalry Division
5. (U) REPORTING OFFICER. Colonel Joseph C McDonough, CO, 2d Bde, 1 ACD.
6. (C) TASK ORGANIZATION. The Brigade Task Force consisted of:
 - a. HHC, 2d Bde
 - b. Maneuver Units
 - 2-5 Cav (released 18 Feb 68)
 - 2-7 Cav (released 19 Feb 68)
 - 2-8 Cav
 - 1-14 Inf (arrived 29 Feb 68)
 - 1-35 Inf (arrived 19 Feb 68)
 - 1-50 Inf
 - A Troop 1-9 Cav (released 19 Feb 68)
 - c. Support Units
 - 1-77 Arty (DS 2d Bde)
 - A 1-77 Arty (DS 2-5 Cav)
 - C 2-19 Arty (Attached 1-77, DS 2-8 Cav)
 - A 1-21 Arty (Attached 1-77, DS 2-7 Cav)
 - Plat (-) E 82 Arty (Attached 1-77)
 - C 4-60 Arty (OPCON 1-77)
 - 29th SL Btry (OPCON 1-77)
 - 7-13 Arty (Reinf 1-77)
 - A 7-13 Arty
 - B 7-13 (DS 1-50 Inf)
 - C 7-13 Arty

**FOR OTRD
68X051**

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7-15 Artv (GSR 1-77)

B 7-15 Artv
C 7-15 Arty

1-30 Artv (GSR 1-77)

B 1-30 Artv (Released 18 Feb 68)
C 1-30 Arty
C 1-16 Artv (Arrived 18 Feb 68)

D 2-17 Artv (Reinf 1-77, Released 22 Jan 68)

B 2-20 Artv (ARA)

11 AVN Gp (-)

A-227 AHB (Released 28 Feb 68)
B (-) 227 AHB (Released 28 Feb 68)
D (-) 227 AHB (Released 28 Feb 68)
C (-) 228 ASHB (Released 24 Feb 68)

B (-) 8th Engr Bn

2d Plat 545 MP Co
2 Sqs, 25 Sct Dog Plt
Det LRRP, (3-9 Tms)

D -15 TC Bn
Det, 184 Cml Flt (-)

1st FSE

E -15 Med Bn

D-27 Maint Bn

41 PIC Det

Tm, 191 MI Det

Tm, 55 MI Det

Tm, 5th Wthr Sqdn

ALO

Tm 245 Psvops Bn

Tm, 371 RRU Co

Tm, 13 Sig Bn

Det, B-54 Sig Bn

Det, B-43 Sig Bn

d. Area Support Units

WDMET

560 LEM Co

C (-) 272 MP Bn

Plt C-504 MP Bn

Det, 184 EOD Co

Det, 25 EOD Co

B-35 Engr Bn

C-35 Engr Bn

19 Engr Bn

73 Engr Co

7. (C) INTELLIGENCE.

a. Terrain: During Operation PERSHING II, the 2d Bde operated in northeastern BINH DINH Province. The western portion of the AO was dominated by steep hills and mountains which provided the enemy with excellent cover and concealment, while the eastern portion of the AO was a mixture of rice paddies and coastal plain providing numerous large LZ's. The eastern por-

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tion; however, had two important hill masses, the CAY GIET (TIET) : mountains located in the center and the HUI MIEU Mountains located in southern half of the AO. Both of which served as enemy base areas. In the mountain areas the vegetation was generally dense jungle while the coastal plains and valley floors were predominantly rice paddies interspersed with areas of coconut, banana and palm trees. Close to the South China Sea the predominant terrain was sand dunes. The dense vegetation, jungle growth, and rock formations precluded swift foot movement in the highlands while trafficability even for APC's was generally unrestricted on the plains and rice paddies. Deep streams and heavy vegetation in some areas did however restrict movement. Terrain features did not present an obstacle to air mobile operations.

b. Weather: During PERSHING II, the weather was generally clear, warm, and favorable for combat operations. Visibility was generally unlimited. Precipitation was minimal with scattered showers and thunderstorms occurring generally in the early evening. Approximate high temperatures ranged in the upper 80's, with lows averaging in the 60's.

c. Enemy Situation:

(1) Enemy forces consisted of the 3d NVA Division reinforced with local force guerrillas. The 3d NVA Division is comprised of three Regiments, the 18th NVA, the 22d NVA, and the 2d VC Regiments. Even though called a VC unit the latter was composed of primarily North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese regroupes.

(2) The 3d NVA HQ generally operated in the ORECOM Trail and KON River Areas; however, during the TEF Offensive a forward CO moved into the highground north of the Suoi Ca Valley. The forward CP; however, was forced to withdraw to the west due to heavy fires targeted against their positions.

(3) The 18th NVA Regiment operated primarily to the south of the Bde AO and the 2d Brigade had no significant contacts with their elements. The 22d NVA Regiment composed of the 7th, 8th and 9th Bns operated in the northern half of the AO. A PW fixed the location of the 8th Battalion in the CAY GIET Mountains. Due to heavy losses suffered in December 67, the 22d NVA Regiment was believed to be at considerable low strength and avoided a decisive engagement with US Forces.

(4) The 2d VC Regiment was deployed with two battalions, probably the 95th and 97th, in the HUI MIEU Mountains and one battalion, probably the 93d, in the highground north or east of the SOU CA Valley. The 2d Brigade did make contact with and soundly defeated all battalions of the 2d VC Regiment primarily on the PHU MY Plains.

9. (C) MISSIONS. Conduct operations in close coordination and cooperation with the 22d ARVN Division; PHU MY, HOAI AN, and HOAI MUYON Districts; and HA TAY and VINH THAM SP Camps to: Destroy enemy forces and infrastructure and provide security to GVN RD Program.

9. (C) CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS.

a. Maneuver

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(1) The 2d Brigade assumed control of the PERSHING AO from the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) 171200 January; however, Operation PERSHING II did not commence until 200001 January when the 2d Brigade came under the operational control of IFFV. The brigade was deployed with the 2-7 Cavalry responsible for the AN LAO Valley, BONG SON city area (to include the BONG SON Bridge complex) and the northern TIGER Mountains. 2-8 Cavalry's AO was the BONG SON Plain and they were reinforced with one mechanized infantry company from the 1-50 Infantry. They were also responsible for the security of LZ's ENGLISH, GERONIMO and LARAMIE. 2-5 Cavalry was responsible for the highground south of the BONG SON River and west of Highway 1. They also provided security for LZ's CLIE and FONY. 1-50 Infantry (M) operated in the southern TIGER and the NUI MIEU Mountains, CRESCENT, and the PHU MY Plain. During the reporting period one company from either the 2-5 Cavalry or the 1-50 Infantry (M) remained OPCON to the 2d Brigade for security of LZ UPLIFT. A 1-9 Cavalry provided aerial reconnaissance and surveillance throughout the population centers in the plains, operations were keyed to deny the enemy access to the villages and hamlets. (See Incl 2).

(2) On 18 February, the 2-5 Cavalry began deploying out of the PERSHING AO and the 1-50 Infantry assumed responsibility of their area of operations. The 1-35 Infantry (3d Bde, 4th Infantry Division) arrived in the PERSHING AO under the control of the 2d Brigade and two companies were immediately placed OPCON 1-50 Infantry (M). The remaining two companies and the recon platoon relieved the 2-7 Cav and assumed responsibility for their AO on 181000 February 1968. The 2-7 Cavalry then started deployment out of the PERSHING AO on 19 February 1968. During this period, LZ's MUSTANG and TAPE were closed. (See Incl 3).

(3) The battalions' AO were then adjusted on 24 Feb 68 with the 1-35 Infantry assuming control of all their organic companies. The 1-35 Infantry gained the responsibility of the HOAI AN area and LZ LARAMIE. (See Incl 4). With the departure of A 1-9 Cavalry on 19 February 1968, Grange Teams, consisting of ARA ships of B Battery, 2-20th Artillery and C4-13 scout ships from 2d Brigade Aviation Platoon and E Battery, 22d Artillery, assumed the responsibility of providing aerial reconnaissance and surveillance. The first base at LZ CLIE was closed and the artillery repositioned at LZ SALEM in order to free a maneuver company.

(4) The 1-14 Infantry began arriving in the AO on 28 February and relieved the 2-8 Cavalry assuming responsibility of their AO at 200600 February. At 291200 February, the 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division relieved the 2d Brigade of responsibility of the AO and Operation PERSHING II terminated.

(5) The 23d ARVN Division operated in the PERSHING AO with two regiments of four battalions each and a VII Marine Task Force-A with two battalions. The 40th ARVN Regiment was responsible for the Eastern BONG SON Plain and the 41st ARVN Regiment was responsible for the PHU MY Plains and the NUI MIEU Mountains. VMTF-A was responsible for the CRESCENT Area during the period 20 January to 3 February 1968, where upon they departed the AO. They were replaced by a battalion of the 40th ARVN Regiment who assumed responsibility for security of Highway 1 and LZ SALEM. The 2d Bde continued to work closely with the TWIN district headquarters and Special Forces CJDG Camps in the PERSHING AO. Several successful combined operations were conducted with the 14 RF Companies and 70 PF platoons of the three district headquarters at PHU MY, HOAI AN and HOAI NHON. Also, 2d Brigade

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continued to operate closely with the four CIDG companies located at BINH THAMH VNCF Camp and the four CIDG companies at the HA TAY USASF Camp.

b. Artillery

(1) During the entire PERSHING II, the 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery was responsible for providing DS fire support to the 2d Brigade.

(2) The PERSHING II area of operation was divided into the northern and southern AO's by the fire coordination line, KAREN, which paralleled the BONG SON River. North of PCL KAREN, Headquarters, 7th Bn, 13th Artillery was tasked with the following DS functions: fire coordination, clearance of fires and advisory. Headquarters, 7th Bn, 15th Artillery was delegated the fire planning responsibility for the southern AO. Headquarters 1st Bn, 77th Artillery controlled resources from R Pattern, 2d Bn, 20th Artillery and US Naval Gunfire.

(3) A targeting section located at 2d Brigade TOC was formed using the S-2 section, 1st Bn, 77th Arty as the nucleus, with augmentation from the 41st Group, IFFV Artillery. The augmentation consisted of one officer and three enlisted personnel. The purpose of the targeting section was to coordinate the fire plans submitted by the 7th Bn, 13th Arty and 7th Bn, 15th Arty. The targeting section also planned heavy artillery fires in area of immediate interest, and the 175 gun fires in the KON River Valley.

(4) The Fire Support Coordination Element was located at 2d Brigade TOC, and was formed by augmentation of two officers from IFFV Artillery. Their primary functions were issuing air advisory for high performance aircraft, requesting Arc Lights, approving air strikes for the Brigade S-3, and the coordination of US Naval support.

(5) Utilizing O1-E aircraft provided to 41st Group units, a plan for VR was developed and put into effect on the 21 January 1968. Flying time averaged 15 hours daily. The aircraft provided observers for SPAR reports, registrations, and provided AO coverage in both the northern and southern areas of operations.

(6) Statistical Summary

(a) 1 ACD Arty Units

<u>TYPE TARGETS</u>	<u>NR MSNS</u>	<u>NR ROUNDS</u>
Confirmed	59	5,255
Acquired	166	5,935
Counterbattery	3	154
Preps	46	3,952
Interdictions	3244	17,917
Special Purpose	43	3,230
In Support of ARVN	28	1,601
Others	<u>106</u>	<u>3,496</u>
Total	3700	41,592

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(b) Other

US Army Arty	98,321
US Navy	1,706
ROK Artillery	390
RVN Artillery	10,577
Total	111,094

(c) Caliber

105mm	112,465
105mm	24,328
175mm	323
8"	17,704
5" (Navy)	1,706
Total	156,526

C. Aerial Rocket Artillery

(1) B Battery, 2d Battalion (Aerial Artillery) 20th Artillery had the mission of Direct Support (DS) of the 2d Brigade. The battery operated from LZ TWO BITS until the LZ was closed out; then from LZ ENGLISH. One section normally laagered at LZ UPLIFT for quicker reaction in the southern AO.

(2) A preponderance of ARA fires was delivered in support of GAPS (Ground/Air Plans). GAPS were conducted everyday of the operation. There was only one hot LZ, at grid BR 868540 on 9 February 68. Three fire missions were flown in support of this combat assault resulting in 7 enemy KIA.

(3) On 29 Jan a total of 4 aircraft were damaged by a sapper attack on LZ ENGLISH. D Company 15 TC Battalion provided outstanding field maintenance and completed work on four aircraft in two days to help reduce this problem. The aircraft availability for the reporting period was an excellent 83%.

(4) When A 1-9 Cavalry deployed from the PERSHING AO their mission was assumed by "Orange Teams". ARA ships were teamed with OH-13 scout ships from 2d Brigade Aviation and E Battery 2d Artillery. This technique was found to be quite successful with the maneuverability of the scout ship and fire power of the ARA.

(5) B Battery provided outstanding responsive fire support when given the mission of DS to the Brigade. ARA fires were controlled by the 1-77 Arty Bn. They passed down all of the GAPS and Fire Mission. When ARA was employed at Orange Teams, their missions were controlled by Brigade since the requests went through normal Infantry command channels, and it was necessary to provide at LNO at the Brigade TOC to effectively control the teams. Two ships were laagered at LZ UPLIFT at all times. This provided more flexibility, saved flying time, provided fast response for fire missions for the Southern AO, and provided for the defense of LZ UPLIFT by flying mortar patrol at night.

(6) Statistical Summary

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	<u>UH-1B</u>	<u>UH-1C</u>	<u>Total</u>
Missions	877	505	1382
Sorties	1344	739	2123
Hours	693	378	1071
A/C Hits*	1	4	5

* Does not include 5 aircraft damaged on 29 Jan by VC who penetrated perimeter

Expenditures

<u>2.75" FFAR</u>	<u>7.62</u>	<u>87-11</u>	<u>MK24 Flares</u>
14,128	111,755	1	28

Missions performed by type:

Gaps	135
Fire Missions	89
Armed Recon	27
Orange Team	46
Training	16
Medevac	2

d. Aviation

(1) Brigade Aviation

	<u>OH-13</u>	<u>UH-1D</u>
Tasks	346	565
Sorties	697	775
Hours	442	370
Passengers	332	1414

The Brigade Aviation Platoon experienced the following aircraft hits

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TYPE WPN</u>	<u>NO RDS</u>	<u>ALT</u>	<u>MSM</u>
31 Jan 68	AW	1	50'	VR
3 Feb 68	AW	7	50'	VR
4 Feb 68	SA	1	50'	VR
4 Feb 68	AW	4	5'	CC
4 Feb 68	AW	7	50'	VR
4 Feb 68	AW	Unk	50'	VR

(2) 1-9 Cavalry

(a) Time flown: OH-13 - 423:30 hrs
UH-1B - 670:40 hrs
UH-1H - 234:55 hrs

(b) Aircraft firings: OH-13 - 13
UH-1B - 20
UH-1H - 0

(c) Aircraft hit: OH-13 - 3
UH-1B - 9

(d) Aircraft lost: UH-1B - 1

(3) 11th Aviation Group

(a) 227th AHB (-) provided the 2d Bde TF with the necessary air-lift capability for aerial combat assaults, logistical resupply, command and control and some medical evacuation missions. A Platoon from D-227th provided gunship support. C Co (-) 228 AS4B provided the necessary CH-47 support, while D Co 15th TC Battalion provided the helicopter maintenance support.

(b) All missions were received from the 2d Bde S-3 through the Avn LNO, broken down by the Avn Bn Operations Officer and passed on to the mission ready aircraft that were forecast for the following days operations.

(c) The number of aircraft that were mission ready were effected directly by the status of aircraft maintenance. The number of aircraft assigned varied from a maximum of 28 lift helicopters plus four gunships at the beginning to 20 lift helicopters plus three gunships at the end of the operation. The change in number of assigned aircraft was caused by higher priority commitments in the JEB STUART AC.

(d) Because of the severe maintenance problems encountered and the decreasing number of assigned aircraft, a daily analysis of aircraft available, aircraft utilization, mission planning and mission priorities had to be made. The following is a summary of the aviation support furnished:

UH-1 SORTIES	7,251	Cargo (Tons)	688
C/A	2,950	Hours	1,779
Log	2,847	Ave. A/C Assign	21
CC	667	% Availability	66%
Recon	51	CH-47 SORTIES	1,085
Medevac	24	Passengers	8,191
Training	322	Cargo (Tons)	2,161
Maint	211	Hours	570.5
Other	198	% Availability	60%
Passengers	10,324		

(e) There was one major aircraft accident in which the four crew members were killed. The accident occurred when the aircraft was inadvertently flown into instrument weather conditions prior to EMTT. The crew was attempting to meet their reporting time for a command and control mission. The reporting time was also prior to EMTT. Following the accident, the policy was put into effect that except in a tactical emergency, reporting times would not be earlier than sunrise. This allowed the take-off time to be after EMTT.

(f) At the beginning of Operation PERSHING II, several of the infantry battalions were putting as much as 12 hours on their log aircraft in one day. The policy was put into effect by the Bde Commander that the maximum log time was six hours a day, unless the battalion had their companies in contact. The battalions were able through careful planning and efficient aircraft use to decrease their logtime and conform with the 6 hour limit without affecting the quality of support.

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(g) With the departure of C (-), 228 AS4B on 24 Feb 68, C47 support was provided by the 196 Aviation Co, a IFFV aviation unit. UH-1 support was also provided by an IFFV unit, the 61 Avn Company, during the last days of the operation when the 227 AHB was preparing for deployment to the JEB STUART AO. Aircraft were laagered at LANG airfield west of Qui Nhon and, both companies provided outstanding support to the Bde.

e. Communications: During FERSHING II communications support for 2d Brigade TF was furnished by the Brigade Signal Platoon, a Detachment of 21 men from B Co, 54th Signal Battalion, IFFV, and a detachment of 27 men from B Co, 43d Signal Battalion, 1st Signal Brigade. A total of 4 portable type and 28 new telephone circuits were installed as well as a 200 line distance switchboard and communications center facility. The 1st Signal D-3 (RATT) Net proved invaluable for direct secure communications between HQ, 2d Brigade and HQ, 1st Air Cavalry Division, particularly during the period 19 Jan - 31 Jan when telephonic communications between the two HQ's were marginal.

f. S-5

(1) In the S-5 field, 2d Brigade TF assumed the responsibility for those projects begun by the Division north of the BONG SON river, to include MEDCAPS and inoculations at refugee centers. 2d Brigade, of course, continued to support the GVN program in the districts south of the river. The Brigade relocated 52 refugees to PHU MY District Refugee Camps and in An Khe 2d Brigade relocated a refugee camp and assisted in the construction of 103 houses and 6 wells.

(2) Psyops support was provided by a detachment from the 245th PSYOPS Bn. They provided outstanding support by providing leaflet drops, loud-speaker missions & armed propaganda teams.

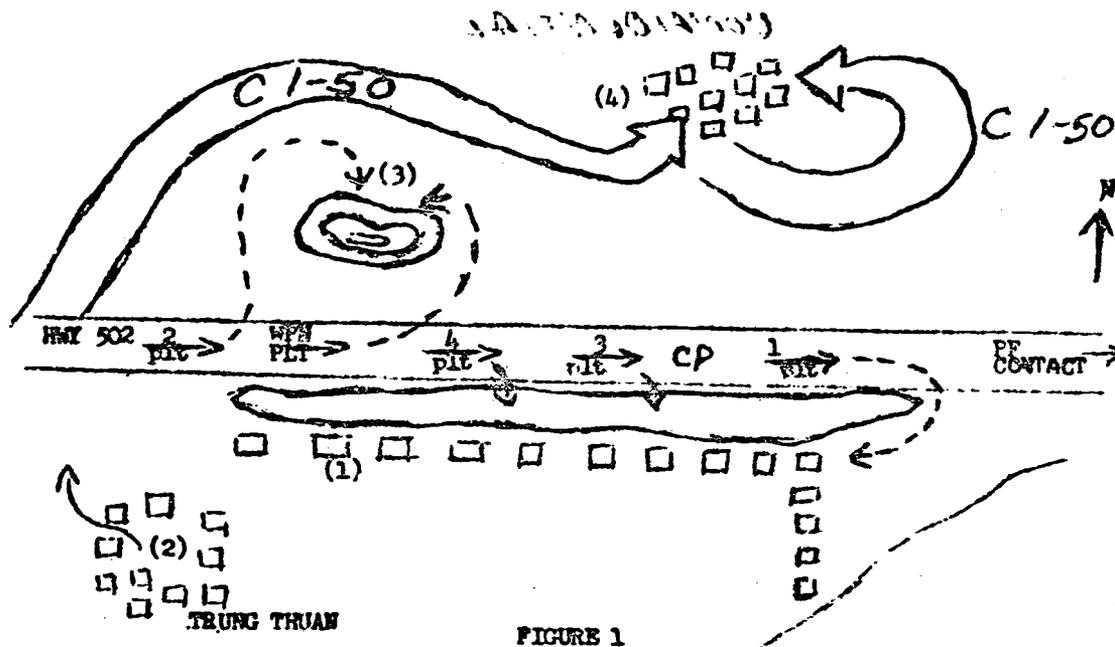
g. Engineer: B Co, 8th Engr Bn provided DS engineer support to the 2d Brigade. Priority projects, such as bunker reinforcement, road maintenance and fire base improvement continued, despite the lack of men and equipment. B Co, 8th Engineer also continued with respect to the increased use of trackmounted infantry, and the increased use of roads for resupply.

h. Chemical: Chemical support was provided by a detachment from the 184th Chemical Platoon (73). Capabilities were somewhat limited due to the lack of personnel; however insecticide, personnel detector, non-persistent CS, using the E-158, and defoliation missions were flown. The platoon also had the capability for persistent CS drum drops but no targets developed.

11. Major Contacts

a. During FERSHING II the majority of the action was on or near the PHU MY Plains but all units in the AO were successful in inflicting losses on the enemy. There were 5 major contacts and all battalions of the 2d VC Regiment were engaged and defeated at least one. FERSHING II cost the enemy 1250 personnel killed or captured by F-MAF in the FERSHING AO and 237 weapons. The Brigade accounted for 614 killed and 166 captured while sustaining only 21 US killed and 164 wounded for kill ratio of 1:29.

b. (Figure 1) On 23 Jan 1968, a PF outpost was attacked south of the NUI MIEU Mts. A 1-50 Inf, while moving east to reinforce the outpost on Hwy 504 near TRUNG THUAN, triggered an enemy ambush prematurely when they spotted an NVA (1). The company using the cover of a high berm quickly engaged the enemy with machine guns, small arms, and grenades. An enemy platoon (2) tried to maneuver to the flank of the company but the 2d platoon fell back & occupied a position behind some high ground (3) and prevented this maneuver. The enemy started to retreat and artillery and ARA were called. C 1-50, moving to reinforce A 1-50, turned north off of HWY 504 & started to search a hamlet (4) north of the contact area. They received fire from the hamlet & artillery and ARA was directed into it. C 1-50 then swept the hamlet from east to west. A 1-50 also conducted a sweep of their area. The enemy was identified as the 95th Bn, 2d VC Regiment. Results of the action were 130 enemy KIA (124 by A 1-50); 1 NVAC; and 25 weapons captured by Pde units and 13 enemy KIA, 1 NVAC and 7 weapons captured by the PF's. US losses were 4 KIA and 19 WIA.



c. (Figure 2) On 31 Jan 1968, the PHU MY PF's made contact with the 97th Battalion, 2d VC Regiment near the hamlet of BINH TRI (4R905675) just outside of PHU MY. A, B, and D 1-50 moved into the area and reinforced the PF's with A & D to the north and B to the south. D Co conducted a search of hamlets (1) to the NE. Both A & B received heavy fire (2) as they started to enter BINH TRI. All forces pulled back and Arty & ARA was called in. At 1645 hrs C 2-5 air assaulted to the west of the village. Arty continued throughout the night and SPOOKY was on station dropping flares and engaging suspected enemy locations. In the morning after a Arty prep A & B conducted a coordinated attack (3) sweeping through BINH TRI. Results of this contact were 62 enemy KIA, 30 weapons captured and 2 PW's by US Forces and 26 enemy KIA, 7 weapons captured and 1 PW by PHU MY PF's. US losses were 3 KIA and 9 WIA.

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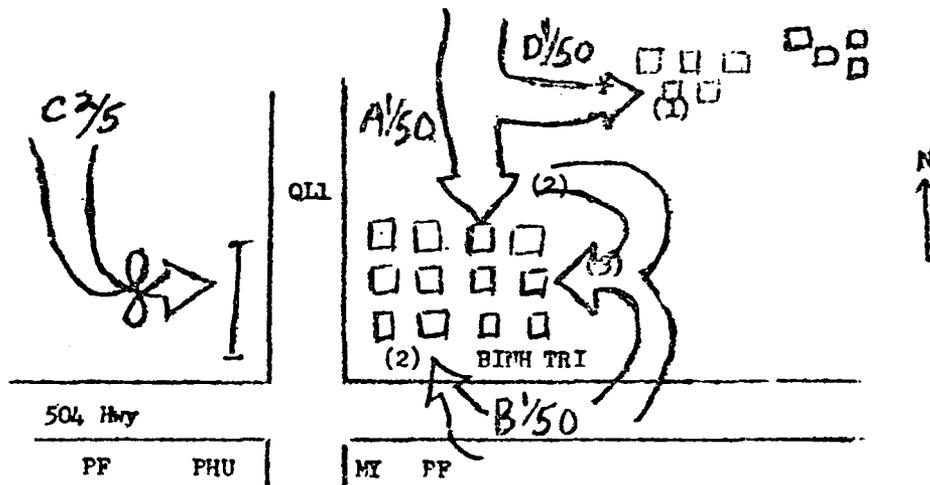


Figure 2

d. (Figure 3) On 3 February 68, B 1-50 Infantry reacted to a timely intelligence report conducted ops vic VINH NHON Hamlet (PR 934612). While moving into the hamlet heavy fire was received (1). The unit called in Artv and ARA after which they swept (2) the hamlet generally west to east. The enemy unit was identified as the 95th Bn, 2d VC Regiment. Results of this contact was 28 enemy KIA, 15 NVAC and 26 weapons captured. US losses were 1 US KIA and 2 US WIA.

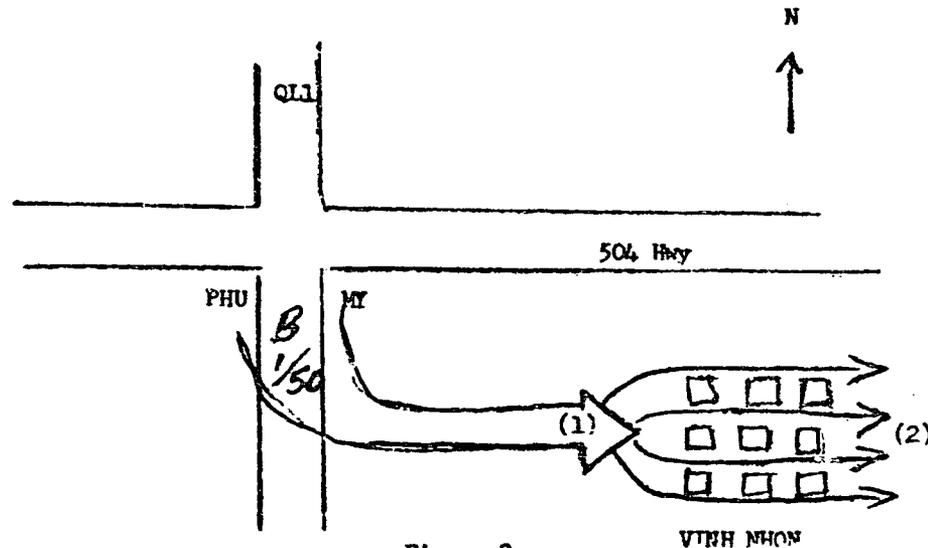


Figure 3

e. (Figure 4) On 3-4 Feb 68, A 1-50, D 1-50 and A 2-5 (OPCON 1-50 Inf) conducted a coordinated attack vic AN LAC TRY (PR8770) to destroy enemy forces located in the area. The enemy was never firmly identified, however, they were believed to be elements of the 2d VC Regiment. A 2-5 moved by foot and occupied the north west side of the village (1). A 1-50 approached the village from the south and received heavy fire (2). They then moved to the eastern side of the village (3) and established an FOB.

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Artillery, ARA and air strikes were called in on the village & SPOOKY was on station all night. D 1-50 arrived the next morning and placed 1 plt OPCON A 1-50. Both companies the conducted a coordinated attack, screening through the village. Results of the contact were 82 enemy KIA and 12 weapons captured. US losses were 32 WIA.

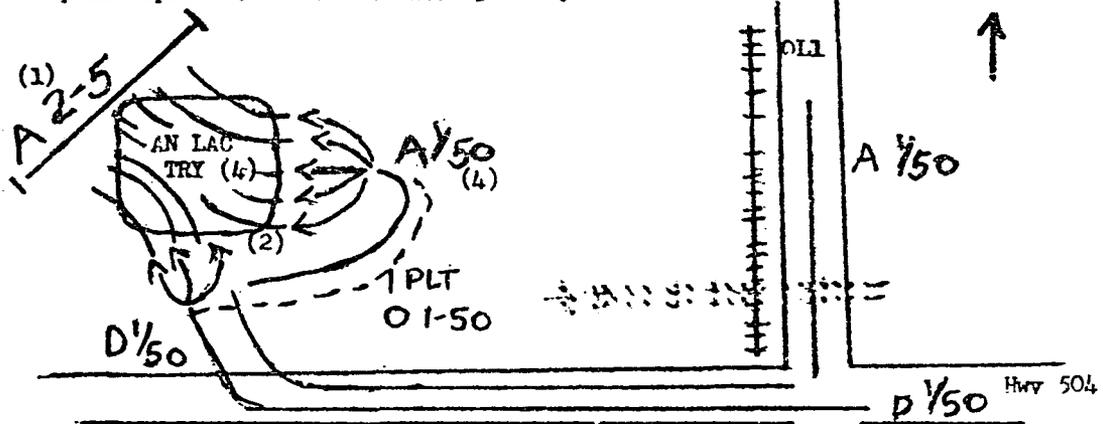


FIGURE 4

PHU MY

f. (figure 5) On 12 Feb 68, the 1st Bn 41st ARVN Regiment made contact with the 93d En, 2d VC Regiment near VINH PHU 4 (BR955635). C 1-50 was called in to reinforce the ARVN Bn and moved down HWY 540 and turning south into the contact area. While moving west of the contact area C 1-50 engaged an enemy squad (1) fleeing the contact area. The company then moved to the ARVN Bn's area (2), and after softening the area with artillery and ARA, both units conducted a coordinated attack with C 1-50 attacking up the highground (3) and 1-41 attacking into the low ground (4). Results of the contact were 13 enemy KIA and 4 weapons captured by C 1-50 and 77 enemy KIA and 10 weapons captured by 1-41 ARVN Regt. US losses were 1 KIA and 2 WIA.

PHU MY

540 Hwy

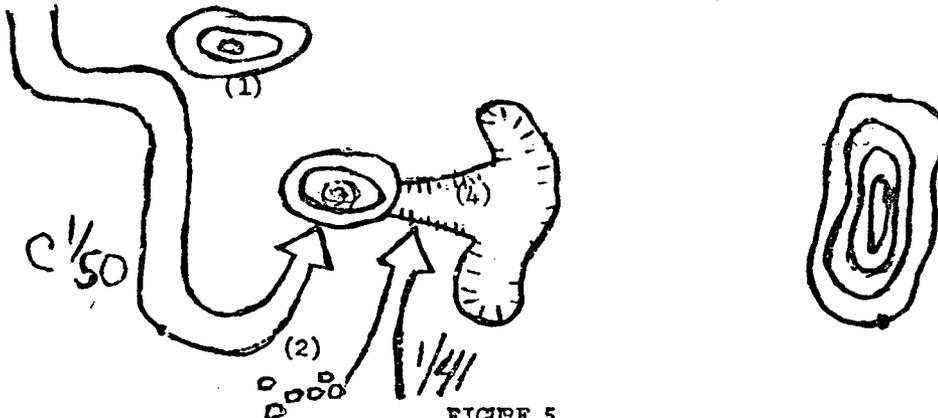


FIGURE 5
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g. The enemy's main objective during the "Tet Offensive" was the populated area of PHU MY. However, due to quick reaction to timely intelligence by Allied Forces the "Offensive" was a failure in the PERSHING AO. During this period the enemy suffered 307 killed, 54 captured and lost 100 small arms and 11 crew served weapons. The three main battles during the period are covered in paragraphs 11c, d, e.

12. (C) ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

a. The only major problem of administration was the mail. The re-routing of incoming mail through the JEB STUART AO, combined with the necessary delays caused by the Tet Offensive did appreciably slow the flow of mail. However, by re-opening the APO at LZ ENGLISH and the overall restoration of communications after the offensive, adequate service was re-established.

b. Logistics

(1) General. The 2d Brigade TF was supported by the 2d FSE (1 ACD DISCOM) and by FSATF Lathrop (ONSC) during Operation PERSHING II. Although the quality of service and support diminished as a result of a redistribution of FSE-FSA assets, when the 1st Air Cavalry Division deployed north, it had little if no effect on the conduct of combat operations.

(2) Supply. Class I, Non-TO&E class II and IV, Class III, and Class V items were provided by ONSC through the supporting FSA. Resupply convoys from Qui Nhon were dispatched daily to LZ UPLIFT and LZ ENGLISH to fill unit requirements generated the previous day. Certain items on non-TO&E class II and IV were occasionally in short supply but never for an extended period. Shortages were usually filled within 7-10 days. TO&E items were extremely difficult to obtain; however, this was primarily due to the departure of the Division Class II & IV Point from An Khe to the JEB STUART AO. To requisition needed TO&E items, units had to send their request to Hue-Phu Bai. As these items became available, DISCOM was to ship the items to units in the PERSHING AO thru the supporting FSE. During the 41 days of PERSHING II, however, units received no TO&E replenishment from Division Class II & IV.

(3) Services. FSA TF Lathrop provided laundry and bath services for units based on LZ UPLIFT and LZ ENGLISH. These services were adequate to meet the needs of all supported units.

(4) Water Point. Ample water supply was provided by the H&S Co 35th Engr Bn and H&S Co 19th Engr Bn for units at LZ UPLIFT/ENGLISH.

(5) Transportation. ONSC provided required truck support in an outstanding manner.

13. (C) RESULTS OF PERSHING II.

	US	GVN	TOTALS
KIA NVA/VC	447/167	428	1042
Detainees	727		727
PW NVA/VC	38/19	49	106

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	<u>US</u>	<u>GVN</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
Returns NVA/VC	0	22	22
CD's	109		109
Total Enemy Losses	780	499	1279
Indiv Wpns	136	78	214
Crew Served Wpns	22	3	25
Total Wpns	158	81	239
Mines & Grenades	236		
S/A Ammo	4483		
Lg Cal Ammo	121		
Rice	40.73 Tons		
Salt	.01 ton		
Aircraft Fired On	64		
Aircraft Hit	19		
Aircraft Nonflyable	9		
Aircraft Lost	3		
Mortar Attacks	5		
Friendly KIA	21		
Friendly WIA	164		

14. (C) COMMANDERS ANALYSIS

a. Based on my ten months of experience as a battalion and brigade commander in the PERSHING AO, the following is a list of forces I consider necessary to conduct operations against NVA and VC main forces elements and to support concurrently the GVN RD program in the BONG SON-PHU MY area.

Maneuver

4 Infantry battalions
1 Air Cavalry troop
1 Armored Cavalry troop

Artillery

6 light batteries
5 medium and heavy batteries
12 M-42 (Dusters)
4 M-55 (Quad .50)
4 searchlights

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Aviation

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- 1 reinforced company, assault helicopter (UH-1)
- 1 platoon, assault support helicopter (additional on call) (CH-47)
- 1 CH-54 on call (to displace 155 howitzers if needed)
- 1 GCA and airfield control team (LZ ENGLISH)
- 2 Medevac aircraft (1 ea LZ ENGLISH and UPLIST/additional on call)

Bde Control

- IPW, CI, OS teams
- Psyops team
- CA team
- Company National Police Field Forces

ARA Support

- FSA
- 4 Engineer companies and 1 light equipment maintenance section
- 2 MP platoons
- 2 EOD teams
- 2 Signal teams

While the area can be held with less force, it would be very difficult to extend GVN control, to insure reinforcement of a heavily engaged friendly unit, and to deny the enemy entry to population centers.

b. The Infantry strength in the AO should not fall below three battalions if the brigade is to hold those populated areas now under GVN control and to deter the enemy's plans to regain a foothold in his old safe havens. With these limited forces, the commander must be careful in selection of targets to exploit, especially those in the mountainous areas. The weakness of a three battalion force, or less, lies in the possibility of being forced to fight two or more major engagements simultaneously and the inability to conduct a deep spoiling attack or raid on enemy concentrations. Conversely, four battalions provide adequate forces to attack the enemy if he masses in his base areas, conduct stability operations on the plains, reinforce isolated posts such as the CIDG Camp at Vinh Thanh, and fight two large engagements at the same time.

c. An Air Cavalry troop is invaluable to screen enemy base areas and infiltration routes that are beyond artillery range to the west. In addition, the troop provides the ability for immediate reaction to intelligence reports to include developing the situation by insertion of a ground reconnaissance element. Our air cavalry troop always had a good share of the brigade's kills and was directly responsible for the initiation of many of our most successful contacts. The unit effectively denies the enemy freedom of movement in open areas during daylight and provides area coverage of the AO as no other unit can. When I lost A Troop 1-9 Cavalry, I reorganized my Brigade Aviation Platoon and ARA Battery so as to form four Orange Teams (one OH-13 and one UH-1 ARA ship per team) to retain an Air Cavalry capability.

d. Helicopter support requirements should be in excess of a reinforced company. The ability to move a rifle company in one lift must be maintained

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to assist a unit in contact or to react to a firm intelligence report. This is critical because of the wide separation of forces and the inability to provide ground reinforcement quickly due to distance and terrain. Experience has shown that 16 mission ready assault (UH1) and 4 assault support helicopters (CH-47) are required on a daily basis to support sustained operations and to provide the forementioned capability. In addition, each battalion and brigade commander, to exercise effective command and control of the committed units, must have aircraft fitted with radios for his use on a 24 hour basis. For logistical support of wide spread units, each battalion must have a resupply aircraft (UH1) during daylight hours. To support a heavily engaged unit or make a deep penetration raid, the commander must have the ability to displace one light artillery battery on short notice in conjunction with a one rifle company lift. Aircraft, for this last capability, need not laager in the AO, but should be made available on short notice. Because of the size of the AO and the need to support various outposts it is believed that, as a minimum, the following aircraft must laager in the AO on a 24 hour basis. Brigade and battalion CC helicopters, one flare ship, and two gun ships at LZ ENGLISH and LZ UPLIFT, and a ready reaction lift of 6 UH1. Given these aviation resources, the brigade can effectively fight two large engagements simultaneously with little threat to either engaged unit.

e. Medical evacuation helicopters on immediate call are a needed life saving asset. Two aircraft are required for coverage of the AO and they are used to shuttle wounded from the field to LZ ENGLISH or UPLIFT. Additional aircraft must be available to move the wounded from PERSHING AO to Qui Nhon so that immediate response is maintained in the field area.

f. An armored cavalry troop would be invaluable as a road security force and could provide a quick reaction element, especially at night, for contacts on the plains or villages along the road. The added fire power of the tank gun is decisive in contacts that require the enemy be dug out of fortified villages.

g. Artillery support recommended for the PERSHING AO consist of six light and a combination of 4 medium and heavy batteries. This allows domination of the BONG SON Plain, CRESCENT Area and PHU MY District, coverage of Highway 911 but is not adequate for continuous coverage of the AN LAO Valley. It gives the commander the flexibility to move one battery to support an operation not in range of the artillery required for the above coverage or to provide reinforcing fires during a heavy contact. M-42 (Dusters) and M-55 (Quad-5-'s) assist in fire base security thereby freeing maneuver troops. They can also be used in contacts as appropriate. Ideally the PERSHING AO should contain a light and a combination of 7 medium and heavy batteries. With these resources coverage of the FISHHOOK, AN LAO Valley, CROWS FOOT, HAPPY Valley, as well as the plains areas can be achieved. Artillery could then be move to complement the scheme of maneuver throughout the AO. Artillery aviation requirements have been found to be 4 fixed wing and 4 helicopters. These aircraft are used in fire planning, visual reconnaissance, liaison, and air observer missions.

h. A National Police Field Force Company would be a most valuable asset to operations in the PERSHING AO. Their worth has been proved over the past ten months. Since the Tet Offensive, this capability has not been available, although it appears that cordon and search of hamlets might now be a most productive operational technique.

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1. Since a separate brigade operating in the PERSHING AO assumes responsibilities normally accomplished by division, there are several staff and special staff sections that require assistance. The S-2 section needs IPW, CI and OB teams provided by division of IFFV to process, analyze, and disseminate the large mass of enemy information available. In addition, because of the size of the AO, an IPW screening point and CI representative to handle the informal agent nets north and south of the BONG SON River should be maintained at both LA ENGLISH and LZ UPLIFT. In the S-5 field a psyops and civil affairs team is desirable to provide assistance and to coordinate the available support.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Incllosures:

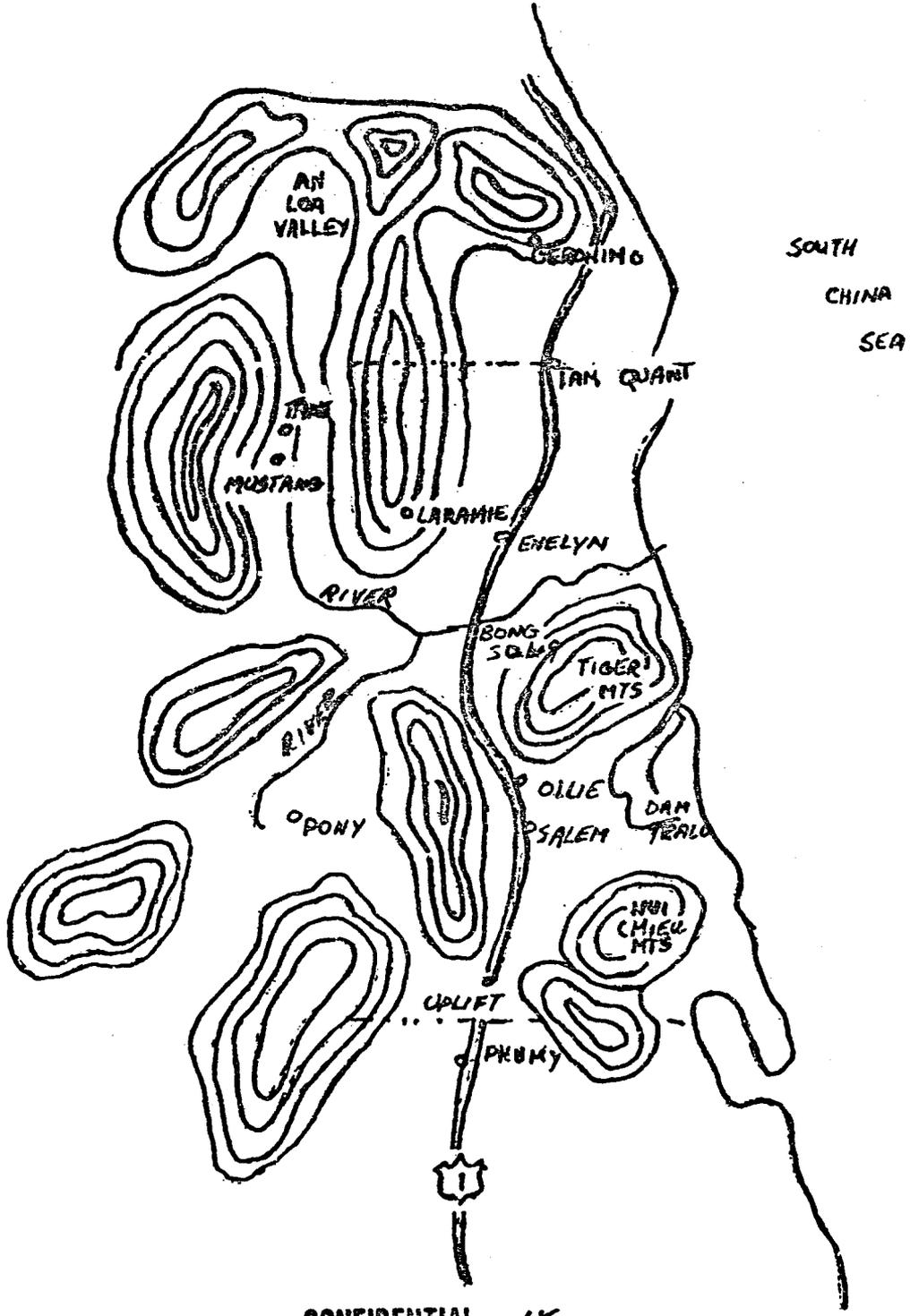
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2. Boundary Sketch - 20 Jan 68
3. Boundary Sketch - 18 Feb 68
4. Boundary Sketch - 24 Feb 68
5. Lessons Learned

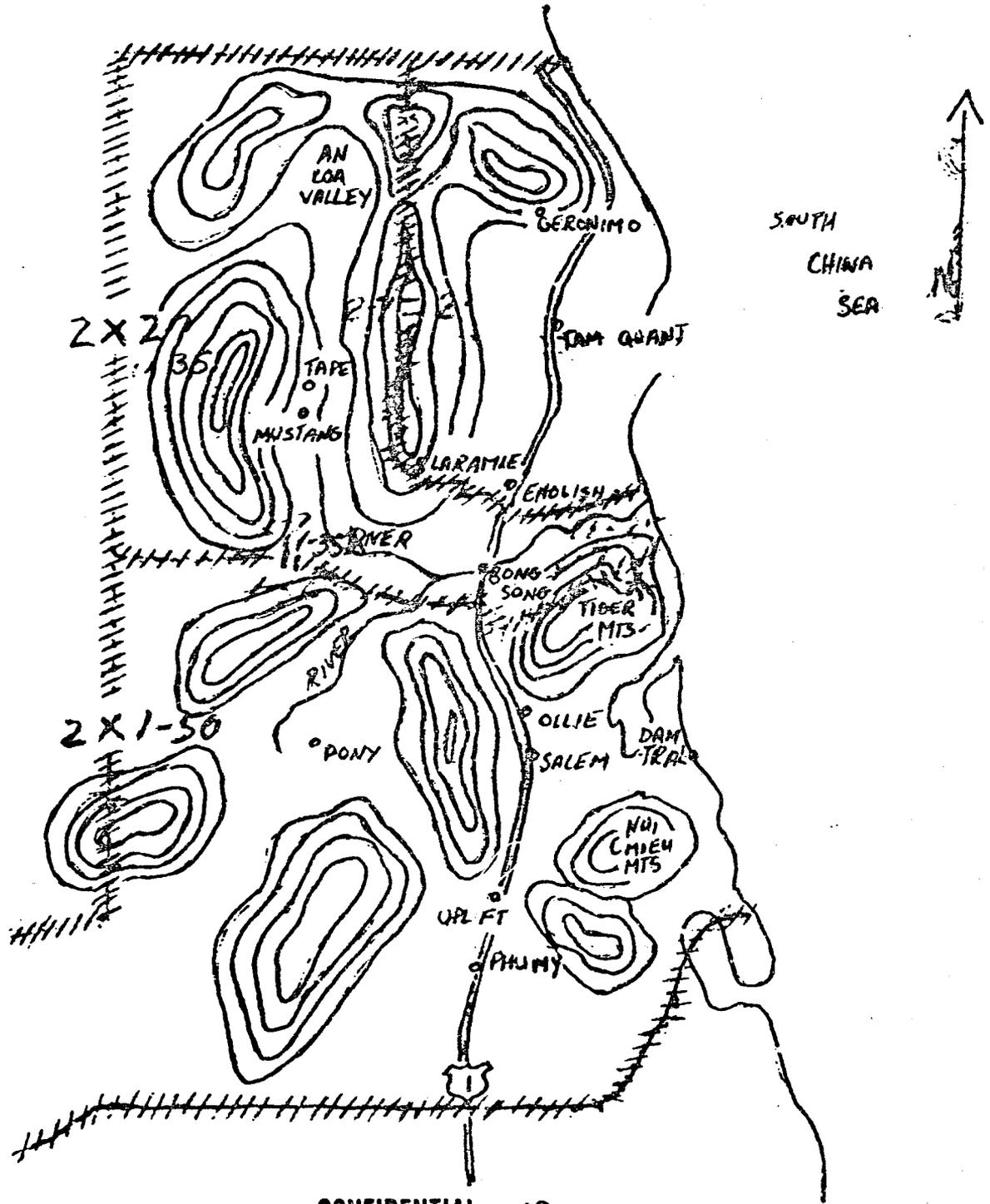
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 WILLIAM F. DEMARBRO
 Captain, Infantry
 Adjutant

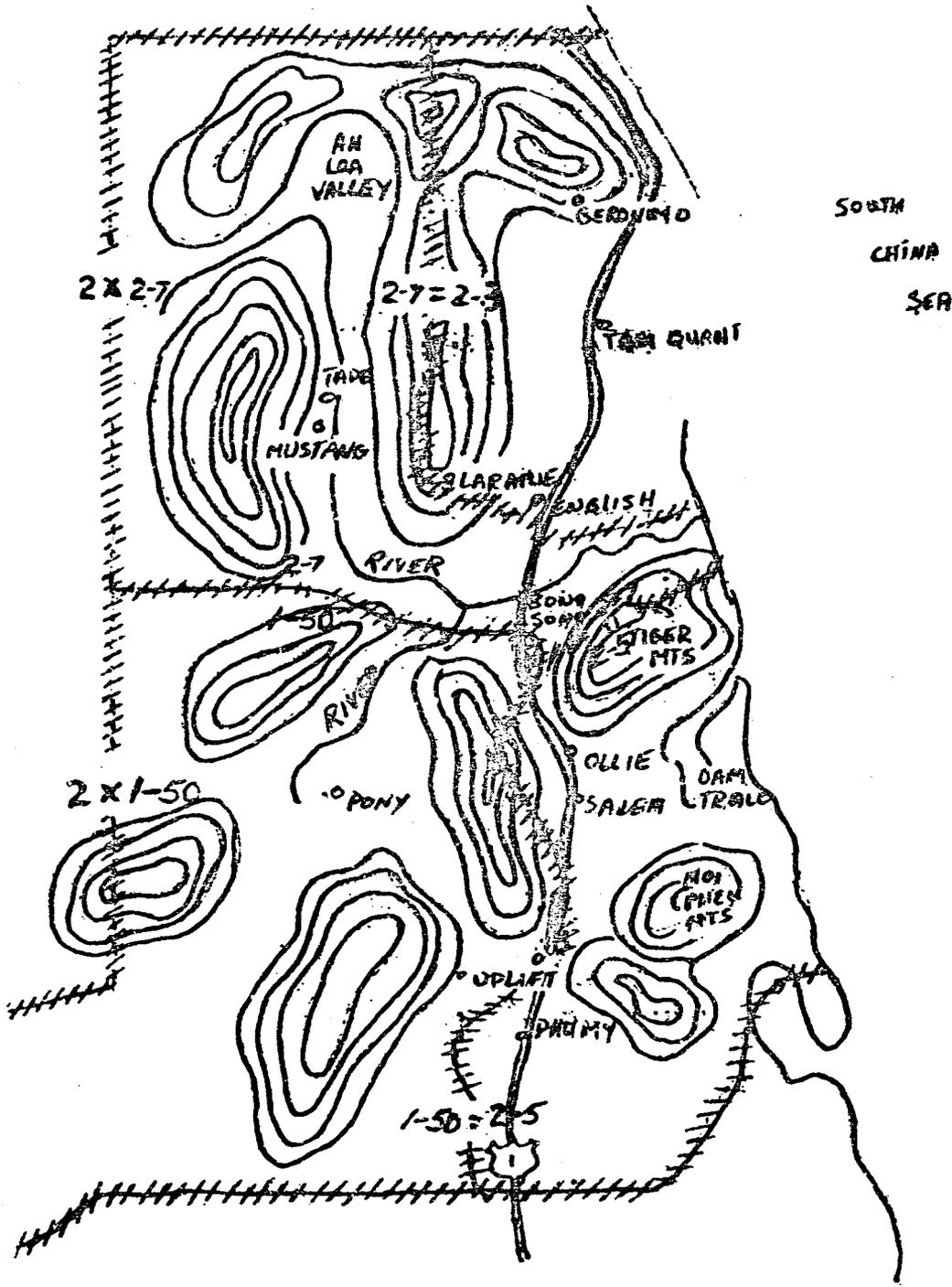
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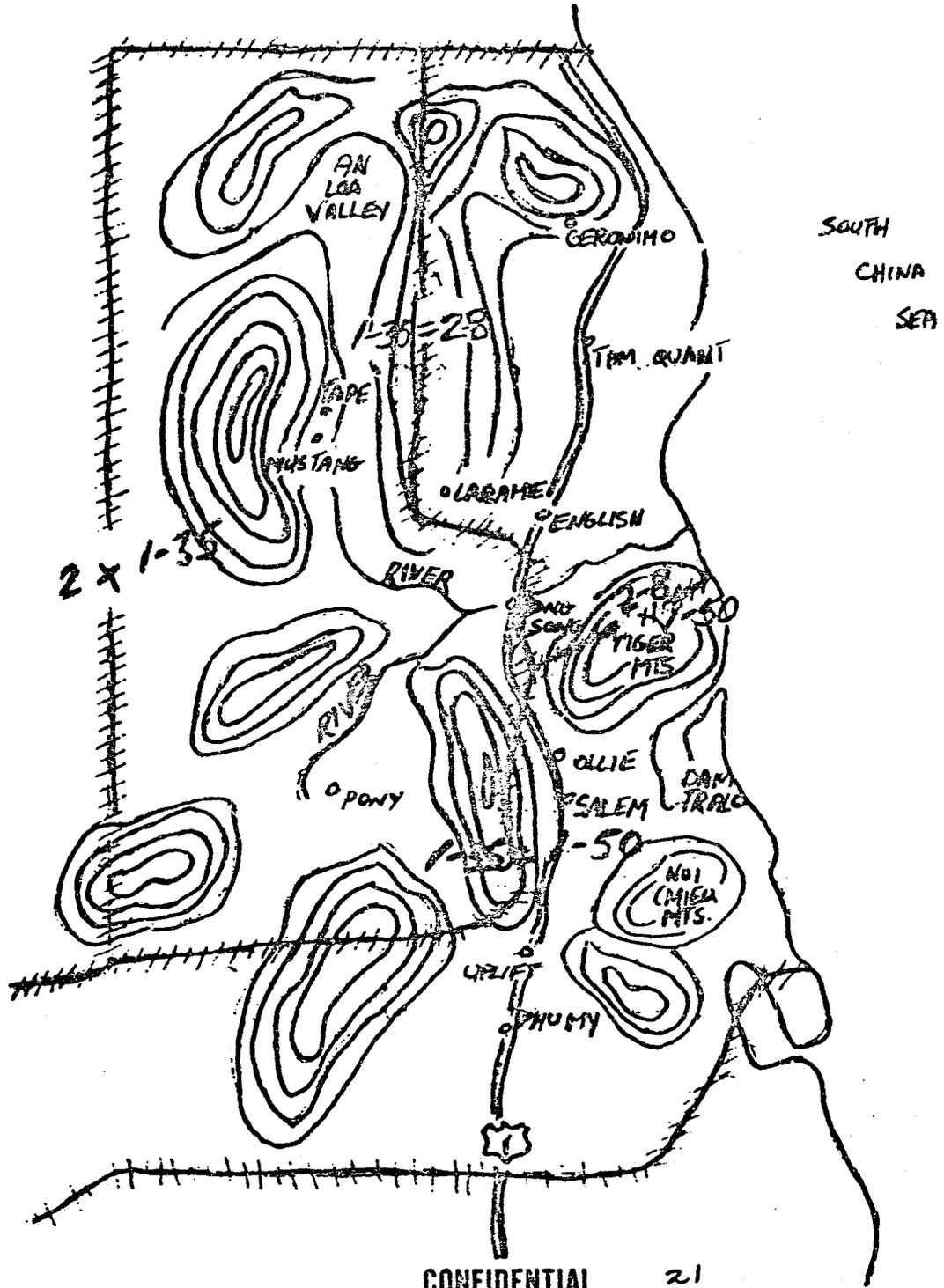
- 2 - USARV
- 10 - IFFV
- 10 - 1st ACD
- 2 - 4th Inf Div
- 2 - 3-4 Inf
- 1 - 2-5 Cav
- 1 - 2-7 Cav
- 1 - 2-8 Cav
- 1 - 1-50 Inf (M)
- 1 - 1-77 Arty
- 1 - 2-20 Arty
- 1 - 1st Bde
- 1 - 3d Bde
- 1 - Div Arty
- 1 - Spt Cmd
- 1 - 11th Avn Gp
- 1 - 227th Avn Gp
- 1 - 228th Avn Gp
- 1 - 13th Sig Bn
- 1 - 8th Engr Bn
- 1 - 15th TC Bn
- 8 - S-3

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LESSONS LEARNED

1. ITEM: Prompt reaction to intelligence.

DISCUSSION: During the Tet period intelligence from all sources, including civilians, indicated major troop concentrations near PHU MY. 2d Brigade, in conjunction with GVN forces, reacted to the more reliable reports by employing troops or, as a minimum, conducting aerial reconnaissance against all reliable reports. Due to this reaction, the 2d VC Regiment was soundly defeated and the Tet offensive failed in the PERSHING AO.

OBSERVATION: Population centers can be denied the enemy reaction of mobile forces to timely and reliable intelligence. All reports of enemy activity must be promptly checked, at least by visual reconnaissance.

2. ITEM: Continuous and close coordination with GVN forces.

DISCUSSION: During Operation PERSHING II, close and continuous coordination was maintained with all GVN forces in the AO. A Brigade Liaison Officer was located at the 22d ARVN Division Headquarters, to include a "point-to-point" telephone system. Continuous radio communications were maintained with the 40th and 41st ARVN Regiments, PHU MY, HOAI AN, and HOAI NHON District Headquarters; and the US and VN Special Forces personnel at HA TAY and VINH THANH, respectively. In addition, Brigade personnel made frequent liaison visits. Due to this close liaison, timely intelligence could be acquired from all units in the AO and combined operations planned and executed without delay.

OBSERVATION: Close and continuous liaison must be maintained with all appropriate GVN, ARVN and allied forces to insure proper coordination and effective reaction.

3. ITEM: The Air Cavalry and Mechanized Infantry Combined Arms Team.

DISCUSSION: With the attachment of the 1-50 Infantry Battalion to the 2d Brigade, a great deal more firepower became available. Using the air cavalry concept of aerial reconnaissance and numerous air assaults, the enemy was found and fixed, the mechanized infantry was then employed to finish the enemy, using its greater firepower.

OBSERVATION: The mobility of the air cavalry and the firepower of mechanized infantry can be very effectively employed together. It is recommended that at least one Mechanized Infantry Battalion be permanently attached to an Air Cavalry Division.

4. ITEM: ARA controlled by the Direct Support Artillery Battalion.

DISCUSSION: Direct Support Artillery channels were used to provide ARA support to infantry units. This proved better than the previously used system of requesting missions through the ARA Bn. Response time for fire missions were reduced since they were sent directly to the ARA Battery, instead of passing through an intermediate headquarters.

OBSERVATION: Fire missions should be passed directly from the DS Bn to the ARA Battery when ever they are collocated in or responsible for the same AO.

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5. ITEM: The armed reconnaissance mission can be effectively accomplished by using one scout ship (OH-13 or OH-6) and one gun ship (either with M-3 or M-21 system).

DISCUSSION: When A Troop, 1-9th departed the AO, it was recommended by ARA that "Orange Teams", made up of one OH-13 and one UH-1 armed with the M-3 system, perform the function normally done by the 1-9th. The OH-13's were from the brigade aviation platoon and E Btry, 2d Artv. It was felt by the pilots that an Orange Team made a most effective combination for finding and attacking the enemy. Two OH-13's working as a scout team can find targets, but do not have the firepower to fix or destroy the enemy. They cannot engage bunkers, nor open jungle canopy. Two gunships working together have the firepower, but lack the maneuverability, and the visibility of the OH-13, therefore missing many of the targets. Tactically, the Orange Team provides the combination of finding and simultaneously engaging the target. A Pink Team of one OH-13 and one gun ship with the M-21 is best for troops in the open. An Orange Team of one scout ship and one gun ship with the M-3 or similar system is best when encountering fortified positions. With eight ARA ships available daily, it was possible to have 2 ARA sections and 4 Orange Teams. When more ARA sections were needed, they were pulled from the Orange Teams. It was necessary to keep a liaison section of one officer and one RTO at the Brigade TOC to coordinate the Orange Teams.

OBSERVATION: On reconnaissance missions, Pink Teams should be employed when troops in the open are anticipated and Orange Teams when fortified or covered positions are anticipated. Also, when an ARA Battery is collocated with a Brigade Aviation Platoon, Orange Teams should be formed depending on the availability of ARA aircraft, to perform reconnaissance missions against known enemy locations.

6. ITEM: Combating enemy forces in a cave-rock pile complex.

DISCUSSION:

a. Enemy and Terrain: The terrain was marked with large black granite boulders with natural vegetation on the perimeter. Trail networks ran up and down the mountain slope, not laterally. Trails that were well used and easily seen from the ground were not booby trapped. There was always a water source nearby that was difficult to detect from the air and to trace through the rocks from the ground. A small village was within one kilometer of the rock pile area. Enemy positions were within 200 meters of the valley floor. Enemy usually concentrated in a small area of the total rock complex, possible for control purposes. Enemy escape routes were along the contours of the mountain, not up and down the trails. Enemy escapes were usually attempted 2000-2100 hrs, 2400-0100 hrs, and 0530-0615 hrs. No security measures were observed. No camouflaging of personnel was observed. Fresh feces were found around enemy positions which provided an excellent means to detect routes of enemy movements. This was one of the first indications of enemy positions. Enemy weapons were believed not to be cocked and loaded on initial contact. They used rock tapping or voice for inner-defense communications, and proved unwilling to use Chi-Com gas masks when CS was used.

b. Friendly Activities: Fire team security was posted 360 degrees around the enemy positions. One security element was placed in the rear of

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each platoon. Two rifle platoons were positioned on the rocks with one rifle platoon, weapons platoon and Company Headquarters acting as RRF and on standdown in the company FOB. Rifle fire was used only when US lives were endangered. M-26 grenades produced the most casualties. Grenades were also used to stun the enemy, thereby making them more receptive to PSYOPS. C-4 was used in no less than ten pound blocks. For area illumination SF600 was the most effective followed by 81mm mortars, 155 Artv (PRVN) and 105 Artv (US). For troops working in the rocky areas the following equipment was considered the minimum essentials: steel helmet, weapon with magazine, extra magazines and hand grenades. The other gear was placed in a secure area. This provided for easy movement of troops around the danger area. Protective jackets were used by the security element around the perimeter. It is considered best to take PW's during daylight since night capture moves too risky for friendly troops. Scout aircraft are best used during initial contact, thereafter they are too loud to be effective. Diesel fuel poured into cave areas needed to be mixed with a more flammable substance to be completely effective. A unit should maintain one-half day's load of M-70, M-26 and concussion grenades in the FOB and have one night's supply (350) rounds of 81mm illumination on hand in the event of poor flying weather or in the event artillery fire cannot be obtained. M-26 grenades have proved more effective at night than concussion grenades. Two 81mm mortars were utilized for illumination, H&I fires and mortar ambushes. Aggressive volunteers worked on the rocks during daylight and 120 foot ropes with grappling hooks were used to retrieve equipment from the caves. Yellow paint was used to mark danger areas for troops and to identify the target from the air. Extra "C" rations were issued to the men for consumption at night while everyone was alert.

OBSERVATION: 2-5 Cav conducted successful ROCK PILE- Cave complex operations against NVA forces in the NUI MIEU Mountains (BR 9975).

7. ITEM: Rear Security on Tactical Marches.

DISCUSSION: Recently an ambush force jumped on to a road at the rear of a platoon on a tactical march and fired 30-40 rounds from automatic weapons. The rear security element was within 100 meters of the main body. They had not given constant observation to the rear. As a result, the last soldier was killed instantly and two others in the main body were wounded. Had the proper security measures been followed, the attack could have been aborted.

OBSERVATION: Rear security must be placed far enough to the rear of the column to provide security for the main body. This element must constantly observe to the rear, both for their protection and for that of the main body. Security placed too close to the main body can result in injury to the main body as well as the security element.

8. ITEM: Dug-in defensive positions in a company-size FOB.

DISCUSSION: The practice of not digging in defensive positions has caused numerous casualties from enemy fire. Not only should the fighting positions be well prepared but also other shelters must be dug to keep the soldier below the level of ground while sleeping. Keeping the body below the ground level minimizes injuries caused by mortars, M-79's grenades and small arms fire landing in and near the company FOB.

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OBSERVATION: Defensive positions and sleeping shelters in the company FOB must be dug in, in all circumstances.

9. **ITEM:** Night Denial operations.

DISCUSSION: The majority of enemy movement takes place at night. However, due to lack of visibility and subsequent control problems, he is very susceptible to night ambushes. The 2d Brigade enjoyed great success with night operations and seriously damaged enemy resupply activities. In particular, the 2d Battalion, 8th Cavalry conducted numerous successful night ambushes, resulting in 20 enemy KIA. They used no new techniques other than carefully planning and executing their operations "by the book". Hitherto enjoying complete freedom of movement during the night, the enemy was placed in dire straits as his avenues of tactical and logistical movement were denied him.

OBSERVATION: Night ambushes, when properly conducted, can be very effective in restricting enemy activity.

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