

[REDACTED]

APPENDIX D TO ENCLOSURE 1

SUBJECT: AFTER ACTIONS REPORT - TET OFFENSIVE FOR PHU MY DISTRICT

1. (U) OPERATION: PERSHING II
2. (U) PERIOD COVERED: 31 January 1968 - 4 February 1968.
3. (U) LOCATION: Phu My District, Binh Dinh Province, RVN.
4. (U) COMMAND HQ: 1st Bn (H), 50th Inf, 1st Air Cav Div.
5. (U) REPORTING OFFICER: Lieutenant Colonel Cheney L. Bertholf Jr, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry, 1st Air Cavalry Division.

6. (C) TASK ORGANIZATION:

310800 Jan - 311730 Jan A, B & D Co 1/50 (C Opcon 2/8, A Opcon 2d Bde UFLIFT).

311730 Jan - 020714 Feb A, B, 1/50, C 2/5.

03 Feb B 1/50, Elements 1st Bn 41st ARVN
A co 1/50, D 1/50, A 2/5.

7. (C) SUPPORTING FORCES:

2d Bde Aviation	E Btry 7/15 Arty	41st ARVN Regt
B Btry 7/13 Arty	D Co 227th Avn Bn	Regional Forces
A Troop 1/9 Cav	15th Med Bn	of Phu My Dist
2/20 Arty ARA	B Co 8th Engr	

8. (C) INTELLIGENCE:

a. The enemy's offensive on Phu My District Headquarters was the local effort in the nation wide coordinated Tet Offensive. In spite of this fact, no information concerning the offensive was made available to our tactical units prior to the fact. In this Battalion, virtually all enemy information was obtained from the advisors to 41st ARVN Regiment and Phu My District. This intelligence began to flow in only after the enemy had quite blatantly moved, in force, to within striking distance on three sides of the district Headquarters of Phu My.

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b. On the nights of 29 and 30 Jan, the enemy first projected his intentions with mortar harrassment and limited ground probes of Phu My District and, to a lesser degree, of 41st ARVN Regimental Hq at LZ Crystal.

c. On the morning of 31 Jan, the enemy night activities continued into the day and it appeared to the Phu My District advisor that he was about to receive a daylight ground attack. Civilians were evacuating several hamlets around Ihu My. At 0755 31 Jan, the road between LZ Uplift and Ihu My was closed to non-tactical traffic.

d. A Popular Forces patrol made contact with an enemy force, unknown size, moving towards Ihu My, at Tan An (GR 028692), and the 1st Bn (K), 50th Inf began deploying its forces in preparation to deliver yet another disaster to the enemy.

WRONG
SHOULD BE
BR 928692
MAP 0637-4

9. (C) MISSION: To fix and destroy in turn the enemy elements poised for an attack on Phu My District.

10. (C) CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS: Using intelligence gathered by Vietnamese forces, 1/50 Mech and several airmobile companies will preempt the enemy intention to win a great victory at Phu My. Once located by ARVN, RF and PF saturation patrols, the enemy will be fixed in place by mechanized forces, prepared by Artillery, ARB and Tactical Air. Where possible, enemy concentrations will be encircled by airmobile troops to preclude the enemy's fleeing in the face of the inevitable crushing mechanized attack. This encirclement effort will be complimented by carefully planned and coordinated artillery blocking fires, illumination and ground surveillance. Priority of supporting fires goes to units in contact.

11. (C) EXECUTION:

a. General: As the situation developed, the enemy was to be located in three separate positions in turn around the Phu My District Hq. In each case, initial intelligence was gained by Vietnamese units, and mechanized units were rapidly moved to the scene. In each case, the enemy, once located and fixed, was prepared by supporting arms, then ruthlessly reduced by a violent mechanized attack.

b. Manuever:

(1) The first of the three encounters took place to the N.E. of Phu My.

a. At 1045 on 30 Jan the Battalion was notified that the US Forces had terminated the Tet truce effective 0945 that day. Although the Battalion had no "hard" intelligence concerning enemy locations, available companies were deployed on Search and Clear operations without significant findings. Night locations were, as prescribed by CO, 2d Bde, near Rt 1, north and south of LZ Uplift. During the night, the enemy conducted various indirect weapons attacks and probes.

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b. On the morning of 31 Jan, 1/50 again deployed two Mech companies on general search and clear missions with no firm intelligence of pinpointed enemy locations. At 0850, Phu My District Hq reported that a Popular Forces patrol was in contact to the N.E. of Phu My District at Tan An (BR 928691). An aerial scout team was immediately requested and dispatched to Phu My. B and D Co's were directed to immediately move towards the reported contact. By 1100 both were in position south and north of Phu My on highway 1 respectively. D Co was directed to move east to the northern edge of Tan An, and to sweep S.W. to fix the rear of the enemy force gathered to attack Phu My. Co B 1/50 was held at LZ Crystal and directed to reconnoitre a counter attack route around the N.E. of Phu My. At 1236, Co D 1/50 arrived at the northern end of Tan An and began its sweep in a south westerly direction. Contact was made with an estimated enemy company as the Co effected its turn. (See Sketch 1)

c. Request was immediately made to CO, 2d Bde for the release of Co A 1/50 from base defense of LZ Uplift. Co A moved to the right flank of Co D and Co B moved to the South side of Binh Tri (BR 912678) where contact was also made immediately. During the movement of both companies, 8", 155 and ARA were used extensively on both Tan An and Binh Tri hamlets. The enemy force was then estimated to be in battalion strength. While Co B contained the enemy to the south side of Binh Tri, Co A and D launched a simultaneous attack to the S.W. through Tan An. Co D attacking on the left continued to encounter stiff resistance from a well entrenched enemy armed with many automatic and anti-tank weapons. Co A encountered sporadic resistance and moved to the northern edge of Binh Tri. Throughout this action, teams from the 1/9 Cav and the 2d Bde Scout sections were invaluable in screening the flanks and rear of the attacking companies where an undetermined, but significant number of snipers were engaged and eliminated. Of particular merit were the outstanding actions of Lt Mauldin, Bde Scout team leader who continued to aggressively screen even after his H-13 was hit several times. Co D eliminated the enemy resistance, but was prevented by darkness from conducting a thorough police of the contact area, and could positively identify only 5 NV's KIA prior to moving back to LZ Uplift for security. Enroute to Uplift, 1/9 Cav gunships flying overhead cover for Co D received fire at coordinates BR 920704. Returned fire caused two secondary explosions and an enemy assessment of 5 KIA. Meanwhile, Co C 2/5 was airlifted to Phu My District Headquarters and was integrated into the defenses to the right. A and B Co's set up north and south of Binh Tri. Spooky provided illumination and highly effective blocking fires throughout the night.

d. During the night, both A and B 1/50 engaged small groups of enemy attempting to escape from the hamlet. Also during the night, LZ Crystal and Phu My District were probed and mortared from the south and west. Apparently, the main attack on Phu My was to have come from Binh Tri where the enemy was being held and reduced by the combination of Mechanized Units and Spooky.

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c. Co B suffered several casualties during the initial phases of the attack. As the Company reached the south edge of town it encountered an enemy which had been scattered and confused by the intensive and accurate artillery fires which had been adjusted by the 1/50 CC helicopter.

d. The following is a break down of enemy and friendly losses for the Vinh Thon engagement:

	<u>ENEMY</u>	<u>US</u>
KIA	21	1
WIA	3	1
CLA	18	-
S/A	21	-
C/S WFNS	5	-

(3) Before Co B had finished exploiting the town of Vinh Kohn, the third side of Phu My District was threatened, and another element of 1/50 Inf (M) was called into action to eliminate this menace. At 1253 on 3 Feb, two Popular Forces platoons made contact with an estimated NVN Battalion at BR87E703. Co A 1/50 was released from its bridge security mission and began moving towards the contact area at 1449. At 1503, Co A 2/5 was made OICOR to 1/50 and was directed to begin moving to the contact area on foot, with the mission of blocking NW of the hamlet to impede the escape of the enemy force into the mountains.

a. At 1728, Co A advancing from the south side of the hamlet was heavily engaged with a well armed and numerically superior enemy which was dug into the hedge rows on the edge of the hamlet itself.

b. Co A broke contact in minutes and backed one hundred meters to allow for artillery, air strikes and organic fires. SPOCKY was requested and confirmed for 1900 arrival.

c. With darkness closing in, Co A 1/50 was directed to move to the S.E. of the hamlet and A 2/5 was directed to block in place. This configuration was favored by the terrain; the town was on a finger running N.W. - S.E. with paddy to the North and South. Thus, the two companies were readily able to contain the three breakout attempts which occurred prior to SPOCKY'S arrival.

d. Throughout the night there were various attempts to breakout, primarily to the NW of the hamlet. Illumination and blocking fires from SPOCKY again proved invaluable.

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e. The plan for the 4 Feb attack was to prepare the objective area with Tactical Air and Artillery prior to the main effort of A 1/50 from the S.W. Co D 1/50 was moved into the S.W. edge to support by fire. The attack began at 0923.

f. As Co A 1/50 advanced, all three companies came under heavy direct and indirect fire. All three sustained casualties, but Co A 1/50 continued to advance to the S.E. edge of town where it came under withering automatic and anti-tank weapons fires. As Co A 1/50 advanced, a large enemy force attempted to break out to the NW. This attempt was readily spoiled by a well dug in A 2/5.

g. At 1106 a 1/9 Cav gunship was shot down by enemy fires. Only the rapid reaction of the Personnel Carriers of Co A saved the crew. Co A's APC's rushed across the open paddy North of the objective area to the rescue of the crew of the stricken helicopter. Seconds after the crew were picked up, the helicopter burst into flames.

h. Additional Tac Air and Artillery were employed against the enemy and Co A was directed to again attack NW through the town, then to cart wheel right and continue to the North with Co D along side once the turn to the North had been completed. This maneuver was flawlessly executed by the two companies, and An Lac Dong (4) had fallen to the 1/50 by 1525 hours. (See sketch 5)

i. The following is a break down of enemy and friendly losses at An Lac Don (4):

	<u>ENEMY</u>	<u>US</u>
KIA	76	-
WIA	-	32
CLA	-	-
S/A	7	-
C/S WINS	4	-

12. CONCLUSION

a. In 5 days operations in 3 separate contacts, Companies A, B, and D of 1/50 successfully preempted the local enemy's effort to overrun and occupy Ihu My District Headquarters.

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b. Resume of losses:

	<u>ENEMY</u>	<u>US</u>
KIA	139	2
CIA	19	-
WIA	4	40
S/A	57	-
C/S WINS	9	-

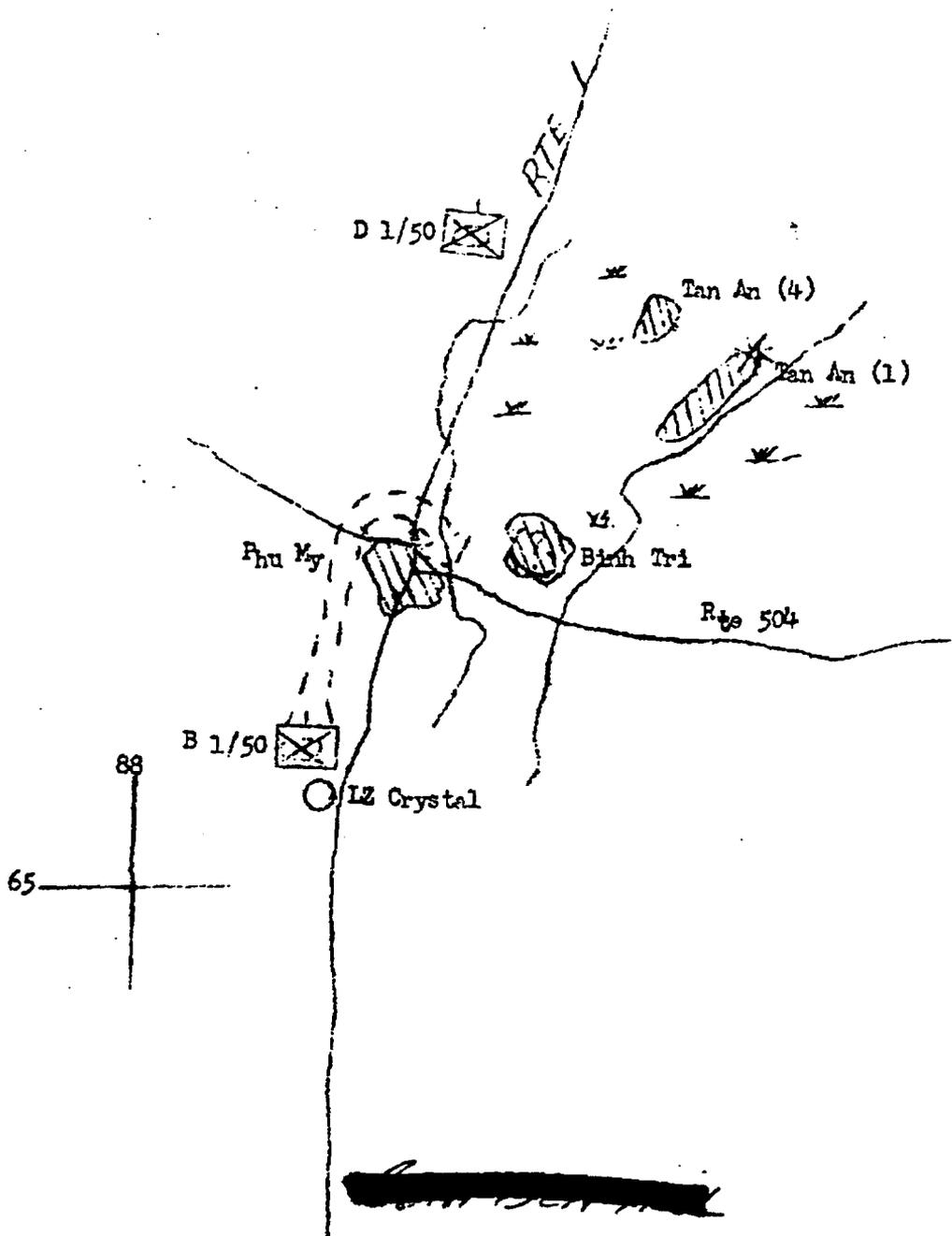
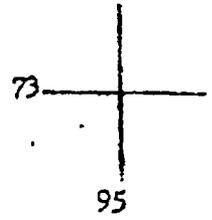
13. **COMMANDER'S RESUME:** This series of contact gave 1st Bn 50th Inf an excellent opportunity to exercise its full capabilities to the maximum. Their overwhelming firepower was once again used as the main punch with dismounted elements being used to fix and contain the enemy. Artillery, Tactical Air ARA and SPOKY were successfully integrated into the scheme in each case. Of particular importance in these engagements was the manner in which the Allied Units produced the sound, hard intelligence on which the unit was able to react swiftly and decisively.

Henry L. Bertholf Jr.
 HENRY L. BERTHOLF JR
 Lieutenant Colonel, Infantry
 Commanding

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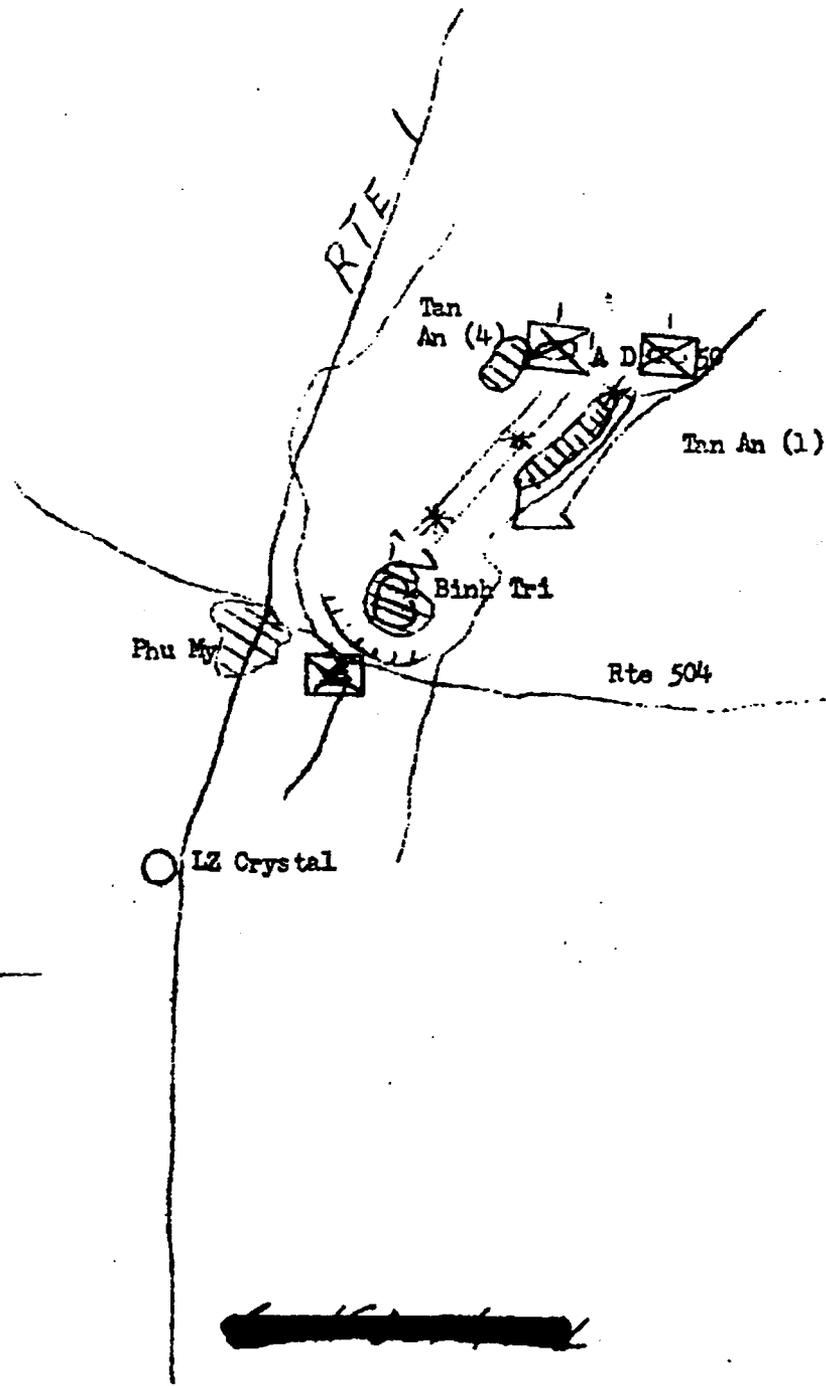
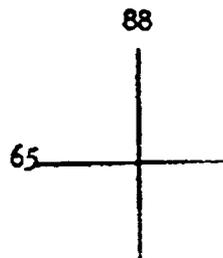
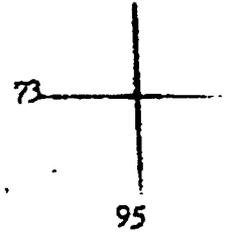
SKETCH MAP 1
1100-1400 31 Jan



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SKETCH MAP 2
1400-1830 31 Jan



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SKETCH MAP 3
3 Feb 68

Phu My

92

67

Rte 504

Trung Thanh (2)

BL 50

41 (ARVN)

Kien Phu

Vinh Nhon

99

57

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LZ Uplift

SKETCH MAP 4
3 Feb 68

85

73



A2 5
Trung Binh (1)
An Lac Dong (4)

A1 50

RT/E

Phu My

91

64

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1/50 Mechanized Infantry actions during TET

taken from 1/50 MI webpage <http://www.ichiban1.org/index.htm>

29-30 Jan 68

In violation of the Tet Truce, Phu My District Hqs receives mortar fire and limited ground probes, as does the 41st ARVN Regimental HQ at LZ Crystal. At 1045 on 30 January, the 1/50 (M) Infantry Battalion was notified that due to enemy action, the Tet Truce was terminated effective 0945.

31 Jan 68

The 1/50(M) battles NVA enemy which had moved in force during the Tet Truce to within striking distance on three sides of the Phu My District Headquarters. 0850 Popular Forces patrol in contact N.E. of Phu My at Tan An BR928691. B and D Companies 1/50 were directed to immediately move to the contact area. Both companies were in position by 1100 north and south of Phu My on Hwy 1. At 1105 D Co. was directed to move east to the northern edge of Tan An, and to sweep S.W. to fix the rear of the enemy force gathered to attack Phu My. D Co. made contact with an estimated enemy company. A Co. was released from base defense at LZ Uplift, and joined D Co.'s right flank. B Co. 1/50 moved to the south side of Binh Tri (BR 912678) where contact was also made immediately. A & D 1/50 launched a simultaneous attack on the estimated enemy battalion. Co. D attacking on the left continued to encounter stiff enemy resistance from a well entrenched enemy armed with many automatic and antitank weapons. D Co. eliminated the enemy resistance and later moved to LZ Uplift for base security. A & B 1/50 stayed for the night at the contact area.

1 Feb 68

The final attack on Binh Tri by A & B 1/50 and C 2/5 Cav met only with sporadic fire. The enemy lost 42 soldiers KIA in this encounter. We lost one soldier KIA and seven wounded. 29 weapons were captured.

2 Feb 68

1047. 41st ARVN elements make contact at Vinh Nohn, BR940610. B Co. 1/50 moved to a position directly north of the enemy sighting. A joint coordinated attack was initiated by Co. B at 1202 and within 20 minutes engages several squads dug in on the north side of the town. The enemy lost 21 KIA in this action and 21 small arms and 5 crew served weapons were captured. B Co. suffered one KIA and one WIA.

1253. Two Popular Forces platoons made contact with an estimated NVA battalion at BR878703. A Co. 1/50 was released from bridge security and moved to contact area at 1449.

1728. A Co. engages a well armed and numerically superior enemy dug in the hedgerows on the edge of the hamlet. A/2/5 Cav. (OPCON 1/50) was directed to block NW of the village. Called in artillery and stayed there for the night.

4 Feb 68

D/1/50 sent in to support A/1/50. Coordinated attack by the three companies, all three companies came under heavy direct and indirect fire. At 1106, a 1/9 Cav gunhip was shot down by enemy fire. A Co. APCs rushed across the open paddy to rescue the crew of the stricken helicopter. Seconds after the crew was picked up, the helicopter burst into flames. Co. A and D 1/50 were directed to again attack NW through the town, then to cartwheel right and continue to the north. This maneuver was flawlessly executed by the two companies and An Lac Dong (4) had fallen to

the 1/50 by 1525.

Enemy losses were 76 KIA and eleven weapons captured. No friendly losses in this encounter but 32 U.S. personnel were wounded. Total U.S. losses for all three encounters 3-4 Feb 68 were 2 KIA and 40 WIA, while total enemy losses were 139 KIA, 19 CIA, 57 S/A and 9 C/S weapons captured.

5 Feb 68

In successive battles, the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry, 1st Cav Division had leaned on the enemy and completely defeated elements of the 22nd NVA Regiment and the 2nd VC Regiment.