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AO FLYING FINN



5-8 JAN 1970

2^D BN (AM) 5TH CAVALRY
1ST AIR CAVALRY DIVISION

(54)

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Authority: *WMD-832541*

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OPERATION FLYING FINN

1. (U) **INTRODUCTION:** During the period 5-8 January 1970, the 2d Battalion (AM) 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, FOUND, FIXED, FOUGHT, (supported by TACAIR, B-52 strikes, Aerial Rocket Artillery (ARA) and Helicopter gunships) and FINISHED the 2d Battalion 95C Regiment, 9th VC Division, plus portions of the 95C Regiment Forward CP, Rear Service Group elements and a sapper reconnaissance element. In addition, one of the largest ammunition cache sites ever found in War Zone "C" was destroyed by TACAIR and B-52 Bombers. The site of the engagement was North-Central Tay Ninh Province vic XT 370784. At Tab A is a schematic depicting the general locale. This report records the principal events and the results of that action and draws lessons therefrom.

2. (C) **GENERAL**

a. **Influencing Factors:**

(1) **Mission:** At the time of this action the mission of the 2d Battalion (AM) 5th Cavalry, was to conduct airmobile operations and ground reconnaissance operations to interdict and locate enemy forces and destroy enemy base areas and cache sites within the Battalion's assigned area of operations (AO); and to provide security for Fire Support Bases (FSB) Ike and St. Barbara. On 4 January 1970, A, B, and C companies had been operating in Western War Zone "C" vic XT 155820 in an attempt to interdict the reported flow of NVA men and supplies from Cambodia through War Zone "C" to the Saigon Area preparatory to another TET offensive against the Vietnamese populace. While engaged in these operations in AO ROSEMARIE, an intelligence picture began to form 24 kilometers to the East along the MUSTANG TRAIL, which indicated enemy movement southward along the MUSTANG TRAIL, toward FSB VICKY XT 403732 and FSB IKE XT 344715. As the mission of the 2d Battalion (AM) 5th Cavalry called for the interdiction of enemy movement and the security of FSB IKE, B and C Companies were quickly airlifted to AO FLYING FINN along the MUSTANG TRAIL. B company was inserted at LZ TAIPEI XT 382819, and C company was inserted at LZ BANGKOK XT 375770. B company established a series of ambush positions across the MUSTANG TRAIL while C company was inserted five kilometers to the South to exploit a B-52 strike. The day of 5 January 1970 found B and C companies moving slowly toward each other in an attempt to locate the enemy forces reported to be in the area.

(2) **The Battlefield:** This portion of War Zone "C" is an alluvial plain with little variation in elevation. The majority of the plain is covered with single to triple canopy jungle, bamboo, and buffalo grass. Mobility through the jungle is slow, but rapid movement can be made across the open fields and along the hard-packed MUSTANG TRAIL. The weather during this period was clear, warm and dry. About 5% illumination was available during the period 5-8 January 1970. Visibility was good throughout.

(3) **Opposing Forces:**

(a) **Enemy:** Documents captured during a sweep of the contact area identified the major enemy force to be the 2d Battalion,

GROUP 4

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
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95C Regiment, 9th VC Division. The strength of the 2d Battalion, 95C Regiment, was estimated to be 250 men prior to its contact with the 2d Battalion (AM), 5th Cavalry. Based on the determined resistance of the enemy, despite the ground, air, and artillery attacks mounted by the 2d Battalion (AM), 5th Cavalry and supporting air and artillery units, the morale of the 2d Battalion, 95C regiment appeared high. Perhaps their rugged defense was born of the realization that they were surrounded with almost all avenues of escape blocked either by elements of the 2d Battalion (AM), 5th Cavalry or its supporting fires. The enemy's supporting weapons included 82mm mortars, and undetermined number of light machine guns, an undetermined number of B-40, B-41 rockets with launchers, a 75mm recoilless rifle, and an undetermined number of satchel charges. Based on the quantity of munitions found and the number of secondary explosions, it can be assumed that the enemy was caught in a staging base preparatory to attacks upon FSB's IKE and/or VICKY. It should be kept in mind that the title 9th VC Division is a misnomer as the 9th VC is now almost entirely composed of North Vietnamese Army (NVA) personnel.

(b) Friendly Forces.

(1) The disposition of US/ARVN units in the vicinity of AO FLYING FINN is shown at TAB A.

(2) On 5 January 1970, Company D, 2d Battalion (AM), 5th Cavalry was committed to defensive operations at FSB IKE, Company A 2d Battalion (AM), 5th Cavalry was committed to the defense of FSB ST. BARBARA XT 275680.

(3) Company B, 2d Battalion (AM), 5th Cavalry had a total of 113 men (including attachments) with each platoon containing an average of 31 enlisted men.

In addition to M-16 rifles, with a basic load of 16 to 20 magazines, each platoon had 3 M-72 light Antitank Weapons, 3 M-79 Grenade Launchers, with a basic load of 80 rounds (50 high explosive and 30 shotgun), and 3 M-60 Machineguns, with a basic load of 1000 rounds per gun. In addition, each platoon carried 12 Claymore mines and each member of the platoon carried 4 fragmentation grenades, 1 smoke grenade and 1 C-S grenade.

(4) Company C, 2d Battalion (AM), 5th Cavalry, had a total of 116 men (including attachments) with each platoon containing an average of 32 men. Weapons and ammunition carried were essentially the same as Company B.

(5) Company D(-), 2d Battalion (AM), 5th Cavalry, had a total of 67 men (including attachments) with each platoon composed of an average of 31 men. Weapons and ammunition carried were essentially the same as Companies B and C. The third platoon Company D did not participate in the contact, although it played an important role in the defense of both FSB ST. BARBARA and IKE.

(6) Reconnaissance Platoon, Company E, 2d Battalion (AM), 5th Cavalry had a total of 23 men (including attachments) armed with 3 M-79 grenade launchers, 2 M-60 machine guns, 17 M-16 Rifles, and 1 Cal. 45 Pistol. Each machine gunner had 1000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, each grenadier had 50 rounds of HE and

20 rounds of shotgun 40mm ammunition. Each rifleman carried from 15 to 22 magazines of 5.56mm ammunition. The platoon carried 14 Claymore Mines. Each member of the platoon carried five fragmentation grenades and one smoke grenade.

- (7) Non-organic fire support available in the contact area included:

<u>ARVN ARTILLERY</u>		
FSB CAROLYN	2A/46	3 X 155mm
FSB VICKY	C-1	6 X 105mm
 <u>US ARTILLERY</u>		
FSB ST. BARBARA	A/2/32	2 X 8" HOW
		2 X 175" HOW
FSB IKE	C/2/19	6 X 105mm
	A/1/30	3 X 155mm
FSB JAMIE	A/1/30	3 X 155mm
ARA from Tay Ninh, 15 minutes away, 3 sections normally available.		

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b. Chronological Sequence of Events

5 January 1970

- 0919 - Intelligence reports received from 1ACD HQ through 1st Brigade, 1ACD, indicated presence of an enemy element at XT 375787. Based on this further definition of the enemy's location within AO FLYING FINN, the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) at FSB IKE was ordered to prepare for a combat assault vic XT 376788 (2d Platoon, Company D was the QRF consisting of one officer and 29 EM).
- 1039 - 2d Platoon, Company D inserted at XT 376788 with the mission of ground reconnaissance toward XT 375787. See schematic at TAB B. Because the enemy could evade to the South, West, and Northwest, additional forces were required to establish his location. The Recon Platoon of Company E was at that time conducting ambush operations vic XT 357747. This platoon was alerted to move to a pick up zone (PZ) and prepare for insertion into a triangular shaped LZ just south of the reported enemy location.
- 1106 - Recon Platoon was inserted at XT 373781 with the mission of moving North toward the reported enemy location. An avenue of escape lay open to the West. To prevent this, the 1st Platoon, Company D, 2d Battalion (AM), 5th Cavalry plus the Company Command group was alerted to prepare for movement to XT 368784 at the end of a long crescent shaped LZ.
- 1137 - 1st Platoon Company D and the Command group were inserted at XT 368784. At this point, the only uncovered route of egress was to the Northwest. Blocking fires across this route were planned and placed on call. Recon Platoon was made OPCON to CO, Company D. The Command and Control ship departed AP to FSB ST BARBARA to refuel.
- 1321 - Recon Platoon reported signs of recent movement to their South on a North South trail.
- 1335 - 2d Platoon, Company D, reported trail movement to the South on a North South trail at XT 372788.
- 1403 - Recon Platoon, Company E, reported contact with unknown size enemy force (USEF) at XT 372782. Recon Platoon received heavy small arms.

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and B-40 fires along with hand grenades. The fire came from a bunker complex, which the platoon had inadvertently penetrated. Striking first, the enemy took a toll of one KIA from recon platoon and two WIA. These personnel were the point element.

- 1404 - 2d Platoon, Company D, continued movement to the South while the 1st Platoon, Company D and the CP group held a blocking position at XT 370783.
- 1417 - ARA lifted off from Tay Ninh to come to the support of the unit in contact.
- 1418 - 2d Platoon, Company D, began to receive SA and AW and B-40 fire. Recon Platoon was still in contact.
- 1419 - The Recon Platoon reported that it could not reach its point element.
- 1421 - The Recon Platoon reported its total casualties as: one KIA, 4 WIA, and two MIA. Medevac was put on standby and Company C was directed to move West to vic XT 374780. Now the enemy had been fixed but the Recon Platoon had become too heavily engaged. As a consequence considerable effort would be spent trying to extricate Recon Platoon from its close contact.
- 1427 - A scout team, just reporting on station, began to search the contact area and received ground-to-air fire(GAF).
- 1440 - Artillery blocking fires were started to the SW of the contact area from XT 370770 to XT 365777.
- 1445 - Two scout aircraft received GAF and the Recon Platoon broke contact.
- 1517 - CC ship made a low level pass through the contact area to drop a case of smoke grenades to 2d Platoon, Company D. In so doing the CC ship received GAF.
- 1530 - 3rd Platoon, Company B, was ordered to move South from its ambush position vic XT 376787 in order to be available to support the action, either as an additional leading force or to reinforce Co D.
- 1540 - 2d Platoon, Company D, engaged by snipers resulting in four US WIA.
- 1555 - USAF FAC came on station but, due to the proximity of Recon Platoon to the enemy and the fact that Recon Platoon now considered its point element missing-in-action, an airstrike could not be put in at that time.
- 1600 - 1st and 2d Platoons of Company D had come into the contact area with the standard load of ammunition, food and water. When it became apparent that these elements would not be withdrawn, a log bird was placed on call. In addition a 6+2 lift was put on call at Tay Ninh.
- 1627 - 2d Platoon Company D, reported that the enemy was trying to evade to the East but was turned back by friendly fire.
- 1630 - In order to further define the limits of the bunker complex, 2d Platoon, Company C, was directed to move West to XT 375782 and link up with 2d Platoon, Company D. By this 3d Platoon, Company B, had moved South to XT 374788. This platoon was further directed to move an additional 200 meters to the South, at which location it became OPCON to Company D.
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- 1700 - At this point it was clear that an exceptionally large enemy force was fixed between the friendly forces. It was also apparent that the engagement of the Recon Platoon must be broken in order to permit the full application of available Artillery and Air Power. Hanging like a dark cloud over the battlefield was the actual condition of the two MIA from the Recon Platoon and the knowledge

CENTRAL

that the enemy was probably capable of attacking the Recon Platoon and Company D(-) during the night. At this time two platoons of Company D were away from FSB IKE leaving it vulnerable to attack. Assuming the risk that FSB IKE could be defended by one rifle Platoon, Headquarters elements and available artillerymen, a decision was made to commit Company B(-) to the battle rather than return it to FSB IKE.

1710 - Company B(-) was directed to final extract from XT 382799 and conduct a combat assault into the triangle LZ at XT 374780.

1801 - A medevac was attempted at XT 374783 to remove wounded from 2d Platoon, Company D. As it was taking off it received a B-40 in the rotor head. The aircraft fell to the ground. All five crew members were injured and one of the wounded was killed, as was a second man who was pinned under the aircraft. A scout ship received GAF but was able to recover at FSB IKE.

*Tom was already
wounded and
waiting for this
medevac.*

1810 - Additional medevac aircraft were requested to standby.

1830 - Company B(-) completed its combat assault into the triangle LZ. 3rd Platoon, Company B hit a trail which it thought was due South when it actually ran to the SE. Following the trail, this Platoon arrived at the triangle LZ in time to join its company. Company B now advanced promptly in the direction of the Recon Platoon. Moving swiftly along the North edge of the triangle LZ, Company B began to close on the location of the Recon Platoon. As it neared the Recon Platoon, Company B began to receive AW and B-40 fire, vic XT 370783. At the same time Medevac 14 attempted to extract the crew of Medevac 15 but suffered a blade strike. The aircraft was able to fly to XT 393808 with negative casualties and the crew were extracted from there.

1900 - Company B closed at XT 372781 to within ten meters of Recon Platoon and began to receive SA and B-40 fire from bunkers to the North and Northwest, resulting in one US WIA who died at 2015 hours.

1904 - A flare ship came on station but could not be used because flares would silhouette the positions of Recon Platoon and Company B.

1943 - Medevac 26 was able to evacuate seven injured from the site secured by 2d Platoon, Company D and Company C(-) at XT 375783.

1947 - Shadow (AC-119) came on station but could not be used until Recon Platoon could be pulled back. Shadow assisted in the blocking fires. See TAB C for ground maneuver and dispositions of units on 5 Jan 70.

2100 - Company D(-) reported it had withdrawn to the West and disengaged.

2110 - Based upon intelligence reflecting a serious threat to FSB IKE the Brigade Commander moved Company A to FSB IKE from FSB ST. BARBARA and pulled 3rd Platoon, Company D from FSB IKE to FSB ST. BARBARA.

2135 - The above moves between IKE and ST. BARBARA were completed. The night wore on with Company B, Recon Platoon, and Company D(-) reporting enemy movement trying to find a clear path through the US forces and the blocking fires. Morning found the enemy still in place.

2215 - The final medevac was completed.

2225 - The Command and Control ship returned to FSB IKE and was released until first light on 6 January 1970.

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- 0615 - Before first light, Company B reported that the enemy was trying to break out of the contact area. Additional artillery was placed to block this movement and the enemy movement retreated to the North.
- 0625 - Two NVA were seen trying to move to the West. They were engaged with small arms, resulting in one NVA KIA. The other NVA was not found.
- 0721 - Company B was directed to link up with Recon Platoon and assist in its withdrawal to the triangle LZ.
- 0801 - Company C and 2d Platoon of Company D were directed to move to the East to provide additional clearance for an air strike and to facilitate medevac for two lightly wounded men who had been hit on the previous day.
- 0817 - All elements were pulled back to permit an airstrike. As Company C withdrew the enemy engaged with small arms fire and appeared to be trying to maintain contact in order to avoid the airstrike. Company C set stay-behind ambushes to insure that the enemy was disengaged.
- 0825 - Company B was out of contact and Company D(-) was ready to receive resupplies.
- 0845 - Company B reported that Recon Platoon had almost closed on their location, carrying 5 WIA from Recon and one KIA belonging to Company B.
- 0852 - Company B reported that the 2 NVA belonging to Recon Platoon were in fact KIA and that Recon Platoon had linked up with Company B.
- 0857 - Company B and the Recon Platoon reached the triangle LZ.
- 0921 - Company B and the Recon Platoon were ready for the airstrike to begin.
- 0915 - Company C reported that the medevac site used the previous evening was secured and could accept medevac helicopter.
- 0917 - Company B reported seeing one NVA evading to the East.
- 0940 - Company B received log at the East end of the triangle LZ.
- 0947 - Medevac extracted all WIA's at Company B's location. Log bird went into Company C's location with log and extracted two KIA.
- 0952 - Check fire imposed by Medevac was lifted by Battalion Commander.
- 1005 - Artillery shifted to the Northwest to permit airstrike.
- 1015 - First airstrike started. *(Fighter jets F-4 F-100)*
- 1025 - Airstrike completed.
- 1025 - Company D's Commanding Officer reported secondary explosions on six of eight passes. Sound like 82mm mortar rounds and B-40 rocket heads exploding.
- 1035 - Second airstrike started. Company B and Company D reported secondary explosions on each pass plus small arms cooking off.
- 1045 - Second airstrike completed.
- 1059 - Command and Control ship breaks for POL.
- 1104 - Third airstrike started. Small arms continued to cook off, secondary explosions occurred on each pass. Two aircraft dropped napalm on last pass producing huge secondary explosions. Smoke column rises 400 feet above jungle canopy.
- 1122 - Third airstrike completed.
- 1125 - Company C received more log. 2d Platoon of Company D extracted to FSB IKE.
- 1130 - Company B reported finding a store of 82mm mortar rounds and fuses in bunker complex near south edge of triangle LZ.

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- 1156 - Command and Control ship made smoke run to Company B.
- 1219 - Fourth airstrike started, secondary explosions on each pass.
- 1237 - Fourth airstrike completed.
- 1245 - Fifth airstrike started. Eight of ten passes caused secondary explosions.
- 1255 - Fifth airstrike completed.
- 1305 - Battalion Commander and S-3 conferred with Colonel Joseph E. Collins, the 1st Brigade Commander at FSB IKE.
- 1313 - Company D was directed to stay West of bunker complex. Company C was directed to move on 250 degree azimuth to begin sweep of contact area.
- 1339 - Company B moved forward and engaged and killed one NVA with small arms fire.
- 1340 - Battalion Commander and S-3 airborne again over contact area.
- 1343 - Company B reported movement to the front.
- 1410 - Company B killed five NVA while sweeping bunker complex.
- 1415 - Recon Platoon moved in to recover its three KIA's.
- 1430 - Recon Platoon found its three KIA and three NVA KIA beside them.
- 1450 - Company B found numerous B-40 rounds and B-40 packs in the contact area.
- 1456 - Company B made visual contact with Company D(-).
- 1500 - Company B and Company D(-) maneuvered on one NVA seen walking around in a daze.
- 1502 - Company B reported one NVA KIA.
- 1507 - Company B killed one NVA and captured one AK-47.
- 1510 - Company B killed two NVA.
- 1512 - Company B engaged one NVA in a bunker with grenades, resulting in one NVA KIA and a secondary explosion.
- 1515 - Company B found two NVA killed by airstrikes.
- 1520 - Company B found two NVA killed by airstrike in bunker due to secondary explosion.
- 1521 - Company B captured one SKS rifle and one RPD LMG.
- 1523 - Company B killed one NVA.
- 1526 - Company D(-) killed one NVA.
- 1527 - Company D(-) began to receive either B-40 or rocket fire.
- 1532 - Company D(-) reported two WIA.
- 1533 - Battalion Commander ordered Company D(-) and Company B to back off and put in more airstrikes.
- 1535 - Company D(-) moving again to link up with Company B.
- 1539 - Company B assisted Company D(-) to disengage.
- 1540 - Company B reports two WIA.
- 1543 - Company D(-) received sniper fire.
- 1550 - Company B found remains of at least 50 NVA cremated by napalm. Company D(-) broke contact.
- 1555 - Company B and Company D(-) linked up and Company D(-) passed behind Company B into the triangle LZ.
- 1600 - Log bird evacuated the three KIA of Recon Platoon.
- 1614 - Company D(-) reported its total casualties for the action as one KIA and four WIA.
- 1615 - Company B reported two WIA as a result of the afternoon's action.

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- 1625 - Battalion Commander and S-3 return on station after conferring with Brigadier General George W. Casey and Colonel Joseph E. Collins at FSB IKE.
- 1645 - Medevac for Company B and Company D(-) completed. Three of the WIA required medevac.
- 1647 - Company D(-) reported killing six NVA while attempting to reach Company B plus finding 20 NVA found in three bunkers hit by airstrikes. Company D(-) reported large amounts of equipment lying around the destroyed bunkers.
- 1650 - Sixth airstrike started.
- 1715 - Sixth airstrike completed; many secondary explosions.
- 1716 - Company B and Company D received log.
- 1729 - Company B moved to West end of the triangle LZ and set in NDP. Company C moved to the East end of the triangle LZ and set in NDP.
- 1731 - First Platoon of Company D placed OPCOM to Company B. Commanding Officer of Company D and command element were withdrawn to FSB IKE to assume defense of FSB IKE on 7 January 1970.
- 1732 - Log bird evacuated one KIA and three WIA.
- 1743 - Command and Control ship departs for POL.
- 1746 - Artillery blocking fires for the night were established.
- 1804 - Battalion Commander and S-3 went into triangle LZ to confer with Commanding Officer Company B and Commanding Officer Company C. Commanders were told of B-52 strike planned for 7 January 1970.
- 1811 - Extraction of Company B and Company C was explained along with radio deception plan to be used the next day.
- 1814 - Battalion Commander and S-3 airborne.
- 1821 - Seventh airstrike started. Three secondary explosions are heard. They are believed to be satchel charges and small arms.
- 1840 - Command and Control ship breaks station.
- 1844 - Seventh Airstrike complete.
- 1848 - Command and Control ship breaks station.
- 1852 - Eighth airstrike started. Secondary explosions reported until 1900 hours.
- 1907 - Airstrike completed.
- 1917 - Company B received 18 rounds of 82mm mortar outside perimeter, one individual slightly wounded. Individual was outside perimeter setting up trip flares.
- 1931 - Shadow (AG-119) requested.
- 2005 - Second Platoon Company C reported movement to North of NDP.
- 2006 - Log bird ran two sorties of Class V to FSB IKE.
- 2030 - Shadow 76 reported to Company B's location.

7 January 1970

- 0715 - Medevac was completed for one individual slightly wounded by mortar rounds impacting outside of Company B's perimeter the previous evening.
- 0759 - Company B reported finding fresh cut trails to the West of its night location indicating a few individuals had exfiltrated to the South.
- 0905 - Extraction of Companies B and C, 1st Platoon of Company D, and the Recon Platoon begins. SEE TAB D
- 1015 - Extraction complete. The triangle LZ is clear for the B-52 strike at 1115 hours.

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- 1132 - Company B reports 15 secondary explosions as a result of the first B-52 strike.
- 1400 - USAF FAC reports a secondary explosion from an airstrike put into the bunker complex.
- 1538 - Second B-52 strike completed.
- 1600 - Airlift of Company B and Company C back into the contact area began. Additional airstrikes requested for West end of contact area.
- 1655 - Company B and Company C lift completed.
- 1633 - Commanding General, 1st Air Cavalry Division, Major General E. B. Roberts reported sighting four to eight individuals running South along the MUSTANG TRAIL. Engaged with ARA, gunships, and CBU's.
- 1803 - Air strike on bunker complex was completed.
- 1804 - Companies B and C on line from North to South began to sweep contact area. Entire area was completely destroyed. Pieces of flesh and equipment everywhere.
- 1900 - Companies B and C establish NDP.

8 January 1970

- 0916 - Company B reported finding six NVA KBAIR and 30 dead chickens at XT 368784.
- 1300 - Company B reported finding one NVA KIA (female), 11 NVA KIA, 1800 AK-47 rounds, 9 B-40 rounds, 25 pounds of fried fish, several NVA uniforms, 16 chicom grenades, 60 pounds of rice, and captured US equipment. 26 Bunkers mostly destroyed. Bunker area 250 meters long and 50 to 75 meters wide destroyed.
- 1300 - Company C found one 82mm mortar base plate, two SKS, one AK-47, one RPD, and five NVA KIA and several documents.

Companies B and C continued to search the ruins of the bunker complex for the remainder of the day. Both units were extracted from the area on 9 January 1970.

c. Results:

(1) Enemy found on the battlefield were 24 NVA KIA, 67 NVA KBAIR and ARC LIGHT BY 1ST BDE SCOUTS. (On 26 and 27 January 1970, Company A and Company B 2d Battalion (AM), 5th Cavalry, found a total of four NVA KBARTY buried near the contact area. Condition of the bodies indicated that they were killed during the period 5-8 January 1970). Total enemy losses were by body count: 111. An unknown number of enemy personnel were, in all probability, trapped in the underground stories of the bunker complex when it was collapsed by 11 sorties of B-52 bombers. Enemy weapons captured were:

AK-47	20	02	M-79 grenade launchers
SKS	05	26	M-79 M-79 rounds
RPD	02	17	B-40 rounds
RPG	<u>07</u>	10	60mm mortar rounds
TOTAL	34	1,000	M60 rounds
		1,875	SA rounds

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(2) Friendly:

(a) Casualties: 07 KIA, 16WIA (EVAC), 49 WIA (Slight)

	Co. B	Co. C	Co. D(-)	E-RCN	HHC
KIA	01	0	02	03	01
WIA (EVAC)	02	0	09	05	0
WIA (Slight)	24	06	13	05	0

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(b) Ammunition Expenditures:

<u>ARTILLERY</u>			
<u>105mm</u>	<u>8"</u>	<u>155mm</u>	<u>175mm</u>
3683 HE	125 HE	967 HE	32 HE
TOTAL: 4,807			

SAC AIR (B-52)

11 Sorties of B-52 Aircraft
15 Secondary explosions resulted from the B-52 strikes.

TAC AIR

20 Sorties of F4-D, F-100, A-37 Aircraft
46 500# Bombs
04 750# Bombs
40 Napalm Cans
5600 Rounds 20mm
30 secondary explosions resulted from TAC AIR

AERIAL ROCKET ARTILLERY (ARA)

9 Sections of Two AH-1G Cobras each
116 10# Rockets
2700 40mm HE Grenades
27,000 Rounds 7.62mm Minigun

Cobra Helicopter
Gun Ships

ORGANIC WEAPONS

All elements involved, with the exception of 3d Platoon Company C, fixed their basic load plus 50%.

IMPACT AWARDS*

	<u>Silver Star</u>	<u>Bronze Star w/"V"</u>
Company B	0	3
Company D	3	0
Company E Rcn Plat	1	2

TOM

Eighty-four awards are pending to include a medal of Honor for a Medic from HHC, attached to D Company.

3. (C) CONCLUSION:

a. Evaluation:

1. The decision to employ platoons initially to conduct the search for the enemy element was based on experience in War Zone C. Reflected in selection of this course of action is the first and most difficult aspect of successful combat in this area: FIND THE ENEMY. In maximizing the chances of success in this regard, there was the inherent risk that one or more platoons would become engaged with a superior enemy combat capability. Moreover, control of several maneuver units and supporting fires, particularly in thick jungle, becomes difficult as events revealed. A more simple scheme for searching would have been to conduct an on-line sweep of the area. This would have facilitated employment of fires and control of units. Moreover, if a bunker complex is the suspected target, it is desirable to deploy forces with sufficient frontage to permit development of the complex. Intelligence available in the battalion plus recent ground reconnaissance in the general area indicated there were no bunkers in what was to become the battlefield. Thus, the decision to try to find the enemy with platoon formations seemed both prudent and necessary to prevent the enemy from escaping along an uncovered route. Subsequent events upheld the initial decision, for as the platoon sized elements began to assemble into larger formations for the night, contact was made. Contact occurred when the 2nd platoon, Company D and the Recon platoon (OPCON TO Co D(-)) tried to move in a Westerly direction to close upon the Co D(-) CP. The Recon Platoon found evidence of recent trail activity. Checking further, the Recon Platoon found signs of fresh-cut timbers. With 20/20 hindsight one can wish that the point element of the Recon Platoon had not taken the steps that carried it forward ten more feet. Three brave men were to be killed and cut off from their comrades. As a result of the dedication of these men to the reconnaissance mission, the Recon Platoon, Co E, 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cavalry, did what it set out to do: Find the 2nd Bn 95C Regiment. It took the rest of the 2/5th Cav, and all available artillery and air power to destroy it.

2. Subsequent movements by the remaining two elements of Co D (-) resulted in contact on three sides of the bunker complex - one almost immediately (2nd Plat, Co D), and then 1st Plat, Co D, when it attempted to extricate the Recon Platoon.

3. Supporting Fires following the initial contact included ARA, in the direct support role, and cannon artillery for blocking fires to the northwest and south of the contact area. Due to the lack of precise information as to the location of 2nd Platoon, Co D, airstrikes were withheld. When 1st Platoon, Co D, became engaged, distances between friendly elements became too close to permit effective close air support. Rather, reliance was placed on ARA in conjunction with scout helicopters from troop A 1/9th Cavalry, for supporting fires. Meanwhile, C Company, which had been directed to drive west to the contact area, linked up with the 2nd Platoon, Company D and secured a Medevac site. The attempt to evacuate the wounded from 2nd Platoon, Company D, beginning at 1800, brought ground-to-air fire against the Medevac helicopter and orbiting scout helicopters. The Medevac crash brought additional casualties and further complicated control of maneuver units and supporting fires.

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4. Given the close engagement and the number of wounded, it was decided to continue blocking fires to the North and Northwest of the contact area and to reinforce with Company B on the South. While this would complete the seal on the enemy force and ensure the security of the hardpressed Recon Platoon, it left a marginal force for the defense of FSB Ike since Company B was the only remaining force for the task. Subsequently, when higher headquarters received intelligence indicating a strong possibility that FSB Ike would be attacked that night, additional forces were made available by Colonel Joseph E. Collins, 1st Brigade Commander, for the defense of FSBs Barbara and Ike.

5. The next morning found friend and foe still locked together by the close presence of the other and the blocking fires. The day of the 6th consisted of two parts: (1) isolating the enemy and (2) placing all available fire power upon him. Despite seven airstrikes and hundreds of rounds of artillery, the afternoon of the 6th found the enemy still prepared to fight. At division headquarters machinery had been set in motion to open the bomb bays of eleven B-52 bombers on the 2nd Bn 950 at 1415 hrs. 7 January. On the afternoon of 6 January, Brigadier General George W. Casey said, "There's an art to convincing the enemy that you are going to stay in there and slug it out. If he gets the idea you are going to pull out so a B-52 strike can be put in, he'll vanish before the strike can be delivered." Later that afternoon in the contact area, a simple deception plan was briefed to the Commanders of Company B and Company C. Basically, forces were to be left in the triangle LZ until the last possible moment and then extracted to an LZ just North of FSB Ike to wait out the B-52 strikes. The extraction was timed so that only 60 minutes would elapse between the extraction and first bombs on the bunker complex. Further, the radio traffic used to run the extraction would be modified to make the extraction appear to be a reinforcement of the contact area. Subsequent to the extraction of Company B and Company C, radio traffic was continued with these units as if they were still in the triangle LZ. Just how effective these measures were cannot be determined; however, the BDA of the B-52 strike and later intelligence produced by division proved conclusively that the majority of the enemy force remained in the bunker complex after the extraction of the 2nd Bn (AM) 5th Cavalry(-) and took the B-52 strike at 1415 hrs. Another B-52 strike was put into the same area at 1510 hrs and Company B and Company C were re-inserted into the triangle LZ. The remainder of the day and part of the next day were spent in sweeping the contact area. Another 15 NVA KBAR were found. The majority of the complex was crushed by the air attack. The terrain, which had only hours earlier been so clear in the minds of the troops, had been drastically rearranged and bore no relation to their memories or maps. The triangle LZ and the crescent LZ which had once been separated by 400 meters of thick jungle were now one. At ground level there was no sign of life. The area was totally forsaken by all birds and insects resulting in a weird and almost unbearable silence. Even though it appeared as though life had never existed in the bunker complex, Companys B and C had the distinct impression that below their feet many had died or were dying entombed in their collapsed bunkers. On the 8th of January, the police of the battlefield was completed and Companys B and C moved on to fresher intelligence outside of AO FLYING FINN.

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b. Lessons Learned

a. The spectacular results of this contact did not come about through any special magic. The formula applied was that of : FIND, FIX, FIGHT, AND FINISH the enemy with the FIGHT AND FINISH put largely in the hands of the supporting weapons. This is nothing new, but simply a tactic proven again.

b. The FINDING AND FIXING phases came close to serious trouble as Recon platoon and Second Platoon Company D became more heavily engaged than was desirable. Due to their bravery and coolness, they were able to keep from getting more heavily involved. Company B's presence in the triangle LZ was the key to the relief of the Recon Platoon and the subsequent link up with Company D(-).

c. Only an airmobile battalion could have moved 24 kilometers from AO ROSEMARIE to AO FLYING FINN to concentrate on a new battlefield and then redispense itself quickly enough to place a cordon around an enemy battalion.

d. Artillery fires can be used effectively to block routes of escape and to hold the enemy in a killing zone.

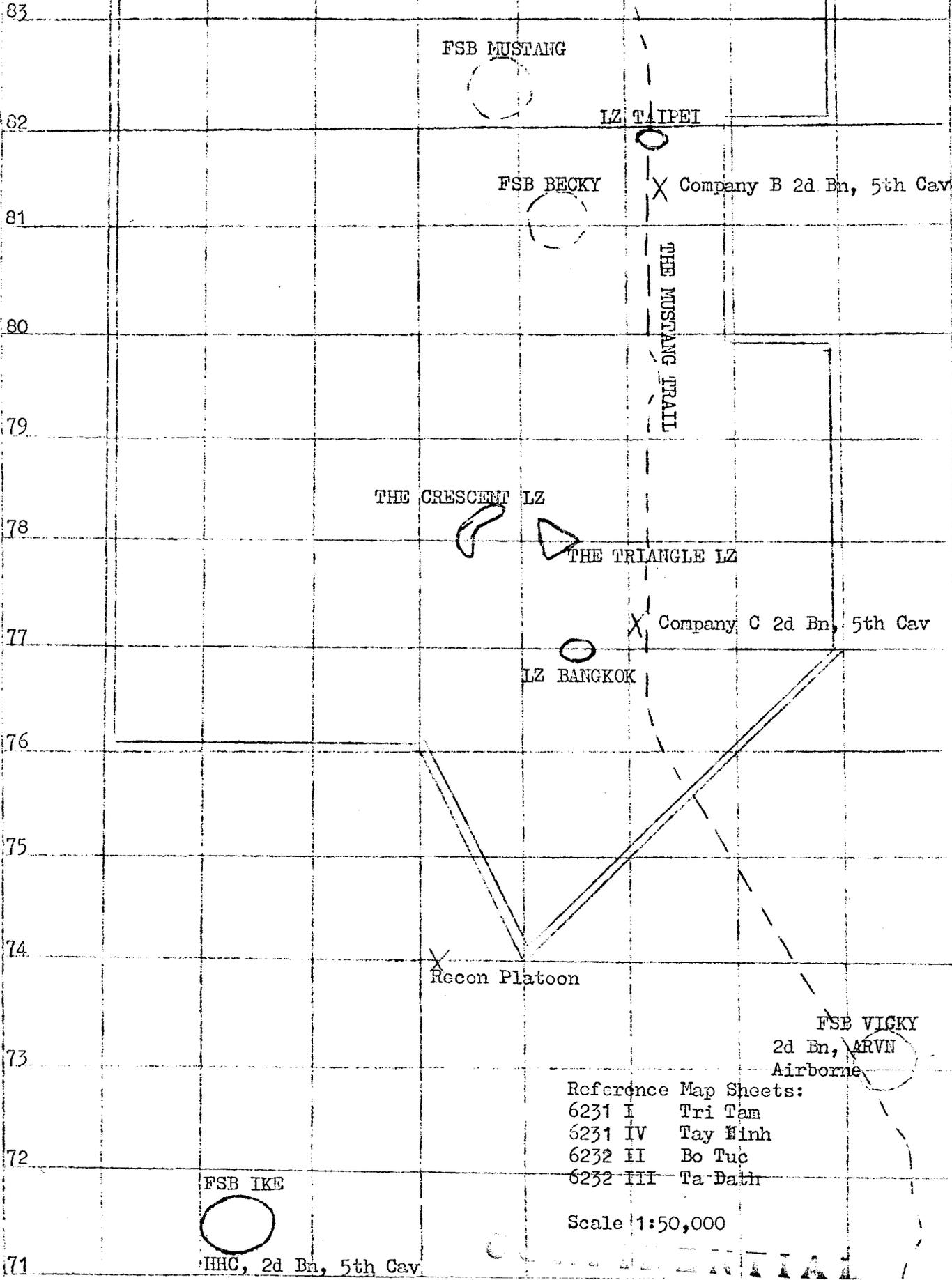
e. The B-52 is an excellent close support weapon. If friendly forces can be left on the battlefield until just prior to the B-52 strike, the chances of destroying enemy forces are greatly enhanced.

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3 5 3 4 3 5 3 6 3 7 3 8 3 9 4 0 4 1

AREA OF OPERATION FLYING FIRM



Reference Map Sheets:

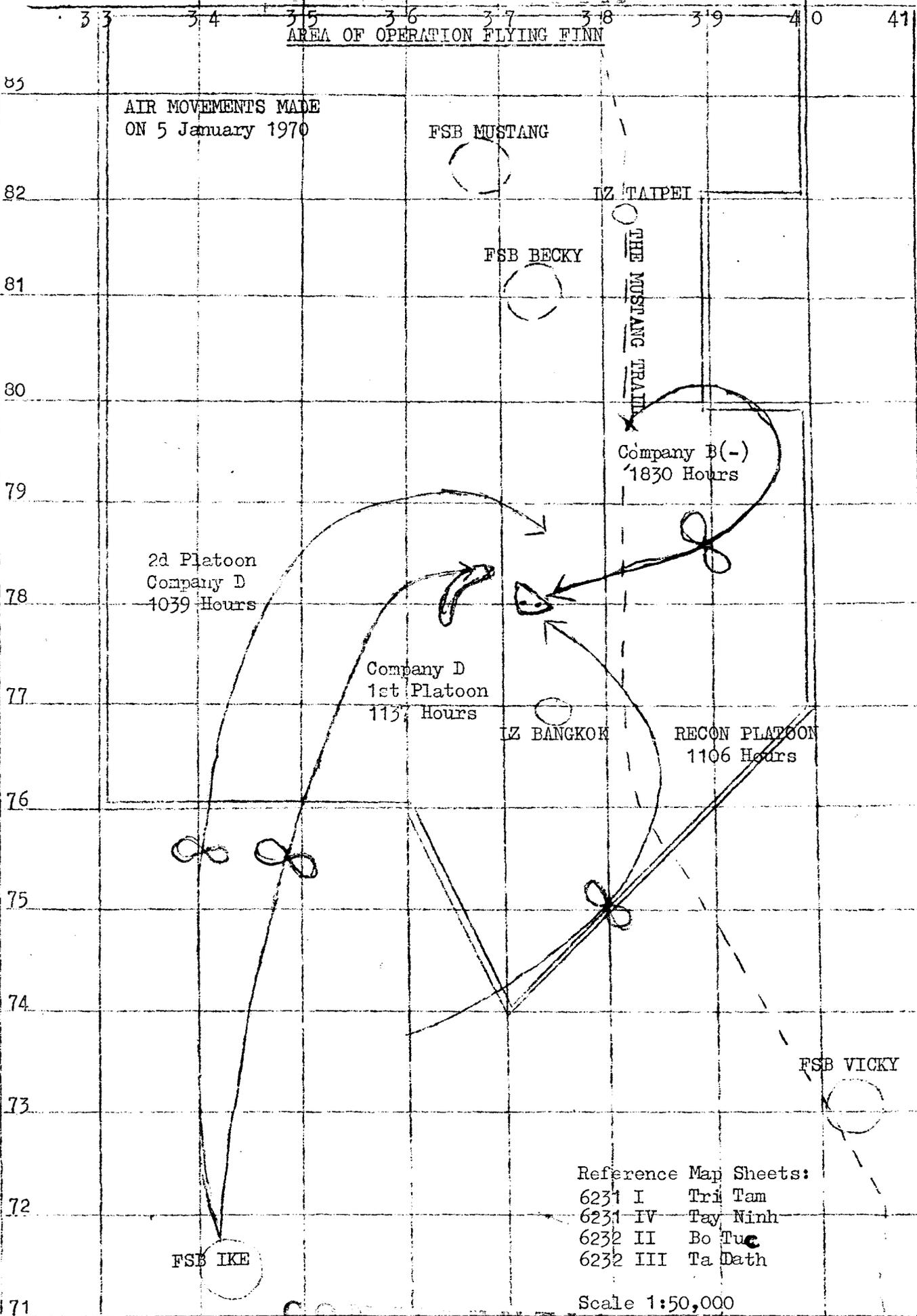
6231 I	Tri Tam
6231 IV	Tay Ninh
6232 II	Bo Tuc
6232 III	Ta Dath

Scale 1:50,000

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AREA OF OPERATION FLYING FINN

AIR MOVEMENTS MADE
ON 5 January 1970

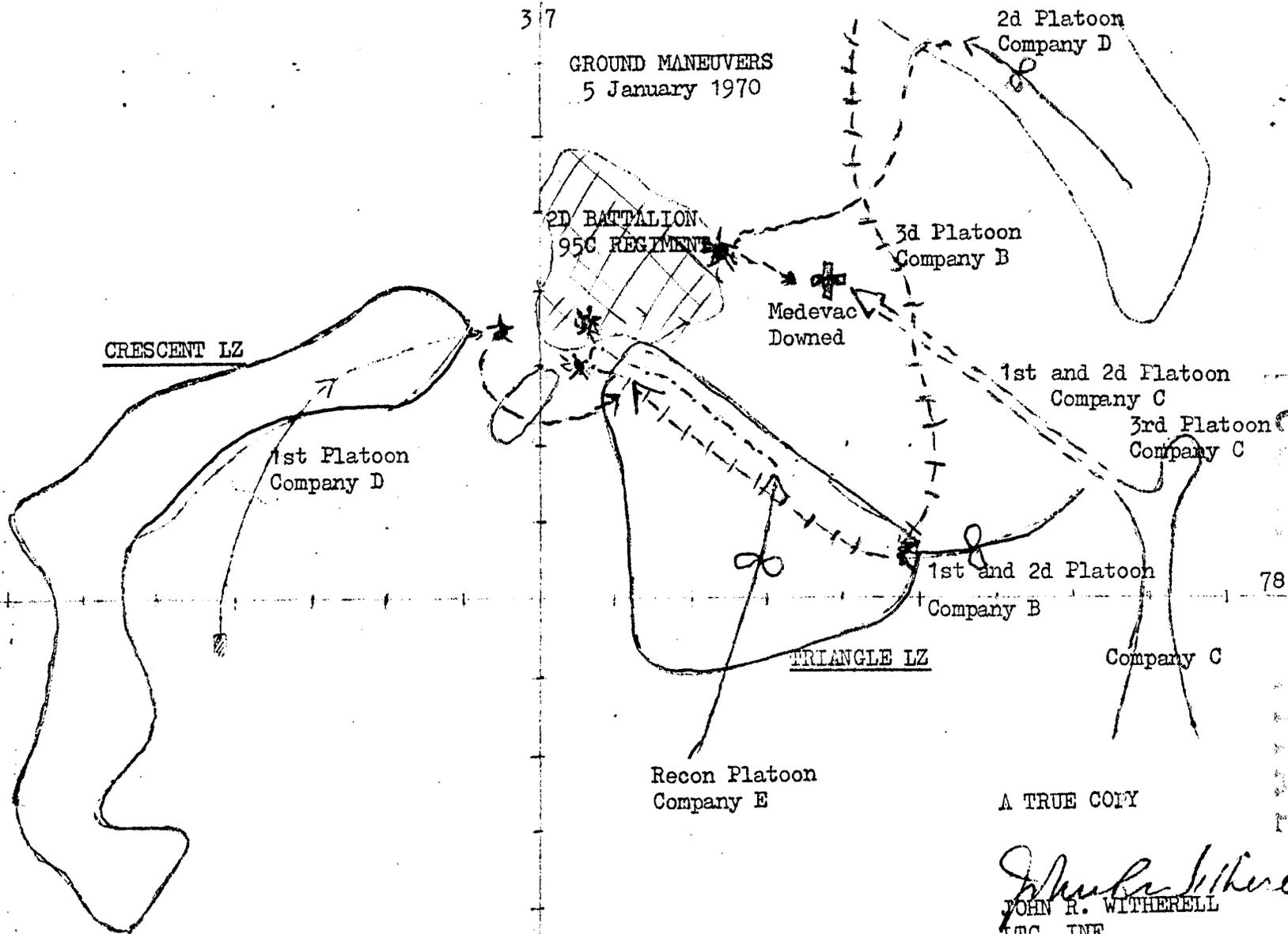


Reference Map Sheets:
 6231 I Tri Tam
 6231 IV Tay Ninh
 6232 II Bo Tue
 6232 III Ta Dath

Scale 1:50,000

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GROUND MANEUVERS
5 January 1970



Inclosure 2 (TAB C)

Reference Map Sheet
6232 II Bo Tuc
Scale 1:50,000

A TRUE COPY

John R. Witherell
 JOHN R. WITHERELL
 LTC, INF
 Commanding

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AREA OF OPERATION FLYING FINN

AIR MOVEMENTS MADE
ON 7 January 1970

FSB MUSTANG

LZ TAIPEI

FSB BECKY

THE MUSTANG TRAIL

Area of 5 B-52 Airstrikes

Area of 6 B-52 Airstrikes

Companies
B, C, D(-),
Recon Platoon
Extracted

LZ BANGKOK

Companies B and C
Inserted

FSB VICKY

FSB IKE

Reference Map Sheets:

- 6231 I Tri Tam
- 6231 IV Tay Ninh
- 6232 II Bo Luc
- 6232 III Ta Dath

Scale 1:50,000

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AFTER ACTION REPORT
(5 JAN 70)

1. At 0919H Jaguar Yellow reports a double check 6 reading at XT-375787.
2. At 1039H D Co 2/6 inserted at XT-373790, LZ green.
3. At 1106H E Co 1/6 inserted at XT-374780, LZ green.
4. At 1137H D Co 1/6 inserted at XT-368784, LZ green.
5. At 1321H E Co 1/6 reported trail movement on N-S trail running to the N.
6. At 1335H D Co 2/6 reports trail movement to the S on a N-S trail at XT-372788.
7. At 1403H E Co 1/6 reported contact at XT-372782. Received B-40s, S/A, Chi Com grenades from bunkers. Initial casualties: 01 KIA, 02 WIA.
8. At 1404H D Co 2/6 continued movement south. At the same time D Co 1/6 held blocking position at XT-370783.
9. At 1417H ARA was bounced.
10. At 1418H D Co 2/6 started receiving fire, at the same time E Co was still in contact.
11. At 1419H E Co 1/6 reported 01 MIA.
12. At 1421H E Co 1/6 casualties were reported as: 01 KIA, 04 WIA, and 02 MIA. At the same time Medevac was put on stand by. Also D Co 2/6 still in contact. C Co 1/6 directed to move west to XT-374780.
13. At 1427H White 34 on station, he took G/A fire.
14. At 1440H Arty blocking fires to SW in grids XT-370780 and XT-365788.
15. At 1445H White 27 and 34 took G/A fire. Also E Co 1/6 out of contact.
16. At 1517H CC bird executed smoke resupply while taking G/A fire.
17. At 1540H D Co 2/6 in contact with snipers. Casualties resulting: 04 WIA.
18. At 1555H Rash bird on station, air strike not used due to friendly troop disposition.
19. At 1600H log bird on call for resupply, also at this time lift birds (5+2) on call at Tay Ninh.
20. At 1627H D Co 2/6 still in contact, with enemy trying to escape to East of their position.
21. At 1630H C 2/6 directed to move ^{west} South to XT-375782 and contact D Co 2/6 also at this time B Co 3/6 had moved South to XT-374788; they were ^{further} directed to move South 200 meters.

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file
WA

22. At 1700H B Co 3/6 directed to move SW 75 meters.
23. At 1710H B Co (-) given change of mission and directed to FX to CA at XT-374780.
24. At 1801H at grid XT-374783 Medevac 15 received 30 cal and B-40 fire. He crashed at Medevac site. Casualties: 05 crew, 03 D Co 2/6. White 27 took G/A fire at the same time. He recovered to FSB Ike in NO-FLY condition.
25. At 1810H requested 03 Medevac birds to stand by at FSB Ike.
26. At 1830H B Co ^{with B Co 3/6} completed CA ~~while~~ receiving GARA prep fires at XT-375780; negative casualties. B Co ~~directed~~ to link up with B Co 3/6 and move northwest to link up with E Co 1/6.
27. At 1830H D Co 1/6 received sniper and B-40 fire at XT-370783.
28. At 1830H Medevac 14 ^{had blade strike} took ~~G/A~~ fire at same site as Medevac 15. Medevac 26 ^{downed} recovered Medevac 14 crew at XT-395805. Negative casualties.
29. At 1840H Apache 28 and Blues on station to secure Medevac bird At XT-395805. Was unable to locate downed bird.
30. At 1900H B Co closed on objective at XT-372781. Received S/A from bunkers to the North and Northwest. Casualties were 001 WIA who become a KIA at 2015H.
31. At 1904H Flare ship on station; not used due to B Co and D Co 1/6 disposition.
32. At 1943H Medevac 26 completed evacuation of 07 ambulatory patients from C Co site at XT-375783. Delivered to A/15 Med.
33. At 1947H Shadow 21 reported on station.
34. At 2108H requested medevac. Medevac on station at 2125H. Delivered 05 patients to FSB Ike at 2204H. He returned to evacuate 01 patient. He then returned to FSB Ike and took 06 patients to A/15 Med at 2224H.
35. At 2110H A Co began to move to FSB Ike. Move completed at 2135H, to include moving D Co 3/6 to FSB Barbara on return trip.
36. At 2225H CC bird returned to FSB Ike and released.

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6 JANUARY 1970

- 0615 Before first light, Company B reported that the enemy was trying to break out of the combat area. Additional artillery was placed to block this movement and the enemy movement started back to the North.
- 0625 Two NVA were seen trying to move to the West. They were engaged with small arms, resulting in one NVA KIA. The other NVA was not found.
- 0721 Company B directed to link up with Recon Platoon and assist in Recon's withdrawal to the triangle LZ.
- 0801 Company C and 2d platoon of Company D directed to move to the East to provide additional clearance for an air strike and to expedite medevac.
- 0817 All elements are pulled back to permit airstrike. Airstrike on the way. As Company C withdrew enemy engaged with small arms and appeared to be trying to maintain contact in order to avoid the airstrike. Company C set a stay behind ambushes to insure that the enemy is disengaged.
- 0825 Company C out of contact, Company D(-) ready to receive log bird.
- 0845 Company B reports that Recon Platoon almost closed on their location carrying 5 WIA from Recon and 1 NVA belonging to Company B.
- 0852 Company B reports that the 3 MIA belonging to Recon Platoon are in fact KIA and that Recon Platoon has linked up with Company B.
- 0857 Company B and the Recon Platoon reach the triangle LZ.
- 0921 Company B and the Recon Platoon are ready for the airstrike to begin.
- 0915 Company C reports that the medevac site used the previous evening is secure and can accept medevac helicopter.
- 0927 Company B reports seeing 1 NVA evading to the East.
- 0940 Company B receives log at the east end of the triangle LZ.

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- 0947 Medevac extracts all WIA's at Company B's location. Log birds goes into Company C's location with log and extracts 1 KIA.
- 0952 Check fire imposed by Medevac lifted by Battalion Commander.
- 1005 Artillery shifted to Northwest to permit airstrike.
- 1015 First airstrike started.
- 1025 Airstrike completed.
- 1025 Company D Commanding Officer reports secondary explosions on six of eight passes. Sounds like 82mm Mortar rounds and B-40 rocket heads exploding.
- 1035 Second airstrike started. Company B and Company D report secondary explosions on each pass plus small arms cooking off.
- 1045 Second airstrike completed.
- 1059 Charlie Charlie ship breaks for POL.
- 1104 Third airstrike started. Small arms continue to cook off, secondary explosions on each pass. Two aircraft drop napalm on last pass producing huge secondary explosions. Smoke column rises 400 feet above jungle canopy.
- 1122 Third airstrike completed
- 1125 Company C receives more log.
- 1130 Company B reports finding a store of 82mm mortar rounds and fuses in bunker complex.
- 1156 Charlie Charlie ship makes smoke run to Company B.

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- 1219 Fourth airstrike started, secondary explosions on each pass.
- 1237 Fourth airstrike completed.
- 1245 Fifth airstrike started. Eight of ten passes caused secondary explosions.
- 1255 Fifth airstrike completed.
- 1305 Battalion Commander and S-3 confer with Brigade Commander at Fire Support Base Iks.
- 1513 Company B directed to stay West of bunker complex. Company C directed to move on 250 degree azimuth to link up with Company B and to begin sweep of contact area.
- 1339 Company B moves forward engages and kills one NVA with small arms fire.
- 1340 Battalion Commander and S-3 airborne again over contact area.
- 1343 Company B reports movement to the front.
- 1410 Company B kills five NVA while sweeping bunker complex.
- 1415 Recon platoon moves in to recover its three KIA's. ~~Recon platoon~~
- 1430 Recon Platoon finds its three KIA and three NVA KIA, killed by the three men lost.
- 1450 Company B finds B-40 rounds and B-40 packs lying all over the combat area.
- 1456 Company B makes visual contact across a small clearing with Company D(+).
- 1500 Company B and Company D(+) maneuvers on one NVA walking around in a daze.
- 1502 Company B reports one NVA KIA.
- 1507 Company B kills one NVA and captures one AK-47.

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- 1510 Company B kills two NVA.
- 1512 Company B engages one NVA in a bunker with grenades, resulting in one NVA KIA and a secondary explosion.
- 1515 Company B finds two NVA killed by airstrikes.
- 1520 Company B finds two NVA KIA in a bunker due to secondary explosion.
- 1521 Company B captures one SRS rifle and one RPD MG.
- 1523 Company B kills one NVA.
- 1526 Company D(+) kills one NVA.
- 1527 Company D(-) begins to receive either B-40 or rocket fire.
- 1532 Company D(-) reports two WIA.
- 1533 Battalion Commander orders Company D(-) and Company B to back off and put in more airstrikes.
- 1535 Company D(-) moving again to link up with Company B.
- 1539 Company B assists Company D(-) to disengage.
- 1540 Company B reports two WIA.
- 1543 Company D(-) receives ~~sniper~~ fire.
- 1550 Company B finds remains of at least 50 NVA cremated by napalm. Company D(-) breaks contact.
- 1555 Company B and Company D(-) link up and Company D(-) passes behind Company B into the triangle LZ.
- 1600 Log bird evacuates the three KIA belonging to Recon platoon.

- 1614 Company D(-) reports its total casualties for the action as one KIA and four WIA.
- 1615 Company B reports two WIA.
- 1625 Battalion Commander and S-3 return on station after conferring with ADC-A and Brigade Commander at Fire Support Base Ike.
- 1645 Medevac for Company B and Company D(-) complete, three of the WIA required Medevac.
- 1647 Company D(=) reports killing six NVA while attempting to reach Company B plus finding 20 NVA found in three bunkers hit by airstrikes. Company D(=) reports large amounts of equipment lying around the destroyed bunkers.
- 1650 Sixth airstrike started.
- 1715 Sixth airstrike completed, many secondary explosions.
- 1716 Company B and Company C receive log.
- 1729 Company B moves to West end of the triangle LZ and sets in NOP. Company C moves to the East end of the triangle LZ and sets in NOP.
- 1731 First platoon of Company D placed up onto Company B. Commanding Officer of Company D and command elements withdraw to Fire Support Base Ike to assume defense of Fire Support Base Ike on 7 January 1970.
- 1732 Log bird evacuates one KIA and three WIA.
- 1743 Charlie Charlie ship breaks for POL.
- 1746 Artillery blocking fires for the night established.
- 1804 Battalion Commander and S-3 go into triangle LZ to confer with Commanding Officer Company B and Commanding Officer Company C. Commanders are told of B-52 strike planned for 7 January 1970. Extraction of Company B and

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Company C explained along with radio deception plan.

1814 Battalion Commander and S-3 airborne.

1821 Seventh airstrike started. Three secondary explosions believed to be sahnel charges and small arms.

1840 Charlie Charlie ship breaks station. Aircraft not equipped for night flight.

1848 Charlie Charlie ship released at Fire Support Base Ike.

1844 Seventh Airstrike complete.

1852 Eighth airstrike started, secondary explosions, continued until 1900 hours.

1907 Airstrike completed.

1917 Company B receives 18 rounds of 82mm mortar outside perimeter, one individual ~~is~~ wounded. Individual was outside perimeter setting up trip flares.

1931 Shadow requested.

2005 Second platoon Company C reports movement to North of NOP.

2006 Log bird runs two sorties of Class V to Fire Support Base Ike.

2030 Shadow 76 reports to Company B's location.

SUMMARY OF ARTILLERY EXPENDITURES

105 - 425 HE

155 - 75 HE

5 Sections of ARA

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7 January 1970

- 0715 Medevac completed for two individuals slightly wounded by mortar rounds impacting outside of Company B's perimeter the previous evening.
- 0759 Company B reports finding fresh cut trails to the West of its night location indicating a few individuals had exfiltrated to the Southeast.
- 0905 Extraction of Companies A, B, C, D(-), and Recon platoon begins.
- 1015 Extraction complete. The triangle IZ is clear for the B-52 strike at 1115 hours.
- 1132 Company B reports 15 secondary explosions as a result of the first B-52 strike.
- 1400 USAF FAC reports a secondary explosion from an airstrike put into the bunker complex.
- 1538 Second B-52 strike completed.
- 1600 Airlift of Company B and Company C back onto the contact area begins.
- 1655 Company B and Company C lift complete.
- 1633 Commanding General, 1st Air Cavalry Division, Major General E. B. Roberts reports sighting four to eight individuals running South along the Mustang Trail. Engaged with ARA, Gunships, and CBV's from an airstrike.
- 1803 Airstrike on bunker complex completed.
- 1804 Companies B and C on line from North to South sweeping contact area. Entire area completely destroyed. Pieces of flesh and equipment everywhere.
- 1900 Companies B and C establish Night Defensive Positions.

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8 January 1970

0916 Company B reports at XT 368784 finding six NVA KBAIR and 30 dead chickens.

1300 Company B reports finding one NVA KIA (female), 11 NVA KIA, 1800 AK-47 rounds, 9 B-40 Rounds, 25 pounds of fried fish, several NVA uniforms, 16 chicom grenades, 60 pounds of rice, and captured US equipment. 26 bunkers mostly destroyed. Bunker area 250 Meters long and 50 to 75 meters wide.

1500 Company C finds, one 82mm base plate, two SKS, one AK-47, one RED, and five NVA KIA and several documents.

Companies B and C continued to search the ruins of the bunker complex for the remainder of the day. Both units were extracted from the area on 9 January 1970.

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