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D-R-A-F-T

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO San Francisco 96225

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report of the Battle for TAY NINH (U)

TO: See Distribution

CLASSIFIED BY _____
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO
YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFY ON: 31 Dec 75

1. (U) Name of operation: The Battle for TAY NINH (U).
2. (U) Dates of operation: 17 August to 27 September 1968.
3. (U) Location: Reference
 - a. Map, CAMBODIA, 1:50,000, Series L7016; Sheets 6132 II, 6131 I and 6131 II: and VIETNAM, 1:50,000, Series L7014; Sheets 6232 III, 6231 IV, 6231 III, 6232 II, 6231 I and 6231 II (inclosure 1).
 - b. Pictomap supplement to standard 1:50,000 scale map, VIETNAM, 1:25,000, Series L8020; Sheets 6231 III N, 6231 IV S and 6232 III N (inclosure 2).
 - c. Map, VIETNAM, 1:100,000, Sheets 6131, 6132, 6231 and 6232, Series L607 (inclosure 3).
 - d. Map, Controlled Mosaic, TAY NINH, Series L001, Sheets 70-76, 70-77, 71-75, 71-76, 71-77, 72-76 and 72-77 (inclosure 4).
4. (U) Control and command headquarters:
 - a. US 25th Infantry Division (Tropic Lightning).
 - b. Headquarters, TAY NINH Province (ARVN).
 - c. Headquarters, 25th Infantry Division (ARVN) (August).
 - d. Headquarters, Airborne Division (ARVN) (September).

MFR:

*This is the draft which
H G Williamson
saw and approved.*

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DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS:
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

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5. (U) Reporting Officer: MG Ellis W. Williamson, Commanding General, 25th Infantry Division, APO San Francisco 96225. This Combat After Action Report was compiled by the CO, 18th Military History Detachment (Major Richard A. Baun), APO San Francisco 96225 and the 20th Military History Detachment (Major Charles C. Pritchett and SP5 George R. Skinner), APO San Francisco 96375. Contributions were made by CO, 16th Military History Detachment (Major Paul W. Child, Jr.) CO, 26th Military History Detachment (1LT Raymond F. Bullock) and CO, 27th Military History Detachment (Major Donald A. Lacey), APO San Francisco 96375.

6. (U) Personnel interviewed: See inclosure 5.

7. (C) Task organization:

- a. US 25th Infantry Division: See inclosure 6.
- b. Teams A-301, A-322 and A-323 subordinate to Team B-32, Company A, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne).
- c. Vietnamese (August)
 - (1) All provincial and district Regional Forces, Popular Forces (inclosures 7 and 8), Census Grievance cadre, Revolutionary Development cadre, Provincial Reconnaissance units, Self Defense units, Armed Propaganda Teams and one Armored Car platoon (V-100). Artillery which was deployed by platoons in each district town and the provincial city.
 - (2) 2d Troop, 10th Cavalry Squadron (organic to 25th ARVN Division - attached to TAY NINH Province).
 - (3) 51st Ranger Battalion (19 to 29 August).

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(4) Headquarters, 25th Infantry Division (ARVN) (Command Element).

d. Vietnamese (September)

(1) All provincial Regional Forces, Popular Forces, Census Grievance cadre, Revolutionary Development cadre, Provincial Reconnaissance units, Self Defense units, Armed Propaganda Teams and one Armored Car Platoon (V-100), Artillery deployed by platoons in each district town and the provincial city. The Regional and Popular Forces units were deployed the same as in August.

(2) Headquarters, Airborne Division; Headquarters, 3d Airborne Brigade; 2d Airborne Battalion; 4th Marine Battalion; 5th Airborne Battalion; Battery A and Battery B, 1st Airborne Artillery Battalion, and Mortar Platoon (81mm), Headquarters Company, Airborne Division.

(3) Headquarters, Task Force B; 2d Marine Battalion; 3d Marine Battalion; 6th Airborne Battalion.

(4) 1st Marine Battalion.

(5) 8th Airborne Battalion.

8. (C) Supporting forces:

a. US Army:

1st Advanced Platoon, 32d Medical Depot

1st Battalion, 27th Artillery (155mm)

2d Battalion, 13th Artillery (105mm) and 2d Battalion, 32d Artillery (175mm/8 inch), 23d Artillery Group

3d Squadron, 17th Cavalry

6th and 7th Transportation Battalions, 48th Transportation Group

11th Combat Aviation Battalion

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12th Evacuation Hospital
45th Surgical Hospital
64th Quartermaster Battalion
86th Signal Battalion
145th Combat Aviation Battalion
210th Combat Aviation Battalion
222d Combat Support Aviation Battalion
269th Combat Support Aviation Battalion
277th Supply and Service Battalion
362d Engineer Company (LE)
372d Radio Research Company
554th Engineer Battalion (CBT)
588th Engineer Battalion (CBT)
720th Military Police Battalion

b. US Air Force:

3d Tactical Fighter Wing:
90th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)
510th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)
531st Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)
604th Tactical Fighter Squadron (A-37)

12th Tactical Fighter Wing:

391st Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-4)
557th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-4)

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559th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-4)

31st Tactical Fighter Wing:

136th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100) (Air National Guard)

188th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100) (Air National Guard)

306th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)

308th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)

309th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)

32d Tactical Fighter Wing:

147th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100) (Air National Guard)

355th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)

416th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)

612th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)

35th Tactical Fighter Wing:

352d Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)

614th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)

615th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100)

120th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-100) (Air National Guard)

8th Tactical Fighter Squadron (B-57)

5th Special Operations Squadron (Spooky) (AC-47)

19th Tactical Air Support Squadron (O-1) (FACs)

c. Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF):

23d Tactical Fighter Wing:

514th Tactical Fighter Squadron (A-1)

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518th Tactical Fighter Squadron (A-1)

522d Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-5)

d. ARVN: 5 Teams, 30th PSYWAR Battalion

9. (C) Background:

a. TAY NINH Province, located northwest of SAIGON, is bordered on the north, west and south-southwest by CAMBODIA. It shares its southern and eastern borders with HAU NGHIA, BINH DUONG and BINH LONG Provinces, RVN. TAY NINH, the capital city of the province, is located approximately 99 kilometers from SAIGON and approximately 25 kilometers from the CAMBODIAN border. TAY NINH is not considered a delta province, but many delta topographical features are prevalent. In the southwestern half of the province, the countryside is characterized by rice paddy terrain which is heavily flooded during the rainy season. The southeastern quadrant of the province is also flat with a mixture of rice paddies, cultivated rubber plantations and forests. The northern half is characterized by flat, jungle dominated terrain.

b. The two seasons in the province are the monsoon, which lasts from May to December, and the dry, which lasts from January until April. The temperature ranges between 70 and 90 degrees throughout the year.

c. One of the most prominent mountains in RVN, NUI BA DEN (BLACK LADY or VIRGIN Mountain), is located approximately 10 kilometers to the northeast of TAY NINH City. This mountain was a stronghold of the Viet Minh for years and is now controlled by the Viet Cong with the exception

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of the summit which was captured in 1964 and became a US communications site. The area to the north of NUI BA DEN is considered generally an unpacified area. This area, known as WAR ZONE "C", is sparsely populated and the suspected location of COSVN Headquarters, the political arm of the Viet Cong. Operations ATTLEBORO, BIRMINGHAM, JUNCTION CITY, YELLOWSTONE and WILDERNESS have been some of the larger operations which have been conducted in TAY NINH Province in 1967 and 1968.

d. TAY NINH Province is the accepted center of the Cao Dai religion which claims approximately 200,000 followers out of the province's total estimated 310,000 population. The great temple or Holy See of the Cao Dai is located in LONG HOA near the provincial capital. This religious sect had a 50,000 man army at one time and was considered one of the leading political forces in the country. Generally, the Cao Dai have been pro-government but attempts in the past have been made by the Viet Cong to enlist their support or at least neutralize their political beliefs. The province chief for the past few years was a Cao Dai, however, he was replaced by a Catholic prior to the attack in September 1968.

e. The province has a land area of over 392,500 hectares and is politically divided into four districts: HIEU THIEN, KHIEM HANH, PHOUOC NINH and PHU KHUONG. A III Corps CORDS brief which contains additional background information is attached (inclosure 9).

f. Officials of TAY NINH Province were uncertain of the enemy's intentions and capabilities in March, April and May 1968 as his troop

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strength was largely unknown. However, two VC provincial battalions, two VC provincial companies and the local VC district guerrilla organizations were confirmed to be operating within the provincial boundary. Infiltration through the province towards SAIGON had increased to about a battalion a day in preparation for the enemy's next offensive against the nation's capital. These infiltrating battalions assisted the local guerrilla and provincial units as they passed through, in exchange for guides, food, supplies, etc.

g. The enemy infiltrated into the province from CAMBODIA west of the FISH HOOK area (XT5890) into a staging area south and east of KATUM (XT3390) near the Saigon River west of the MICHELIN Rubber Plantation (XT5650) and east of SUI DA (XT3357). Among the several infiltration routes from this stronghold or staging area was one through the CAU KHOI Rubber (XT3240) west across the VAM CO DONG River through the RENEGADE WOODS (XT2930) and into the ANGEL'S WING. This is an area in CAMBODIA east of grid line XT2214 to XT2614 which is used by the enemy for staging attacks against SAIGON (see inclosure 10). Considering the enemy's main stronghold and infiltration route outlined above within the province, it was believed that one of his objectives was to interdict National Route 22 near the CAU KHOI Rubber Plantation (vic XT3135) and isolate TAY NINH City from SAIGON.

h. ARVN forces successfully defended the city in May against a three-battalion VC attack upon the Chieu Hoi Center which is located

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between the Cao Dai Temple (XT241496) and TAY NINH City (XT1950-2050) and upon the Special Forces complex astride Highway 4 (XT204509). Advisor personnel believed this attack was conducted by one of the infiltrating units. The province experienced more enemy initiated incidents in the May Offensive than during the entire TET Offensive-Counter Offensive.

i. An enemy recovery from the setbacks of the May attack began in June with harrassing activities. In early July, intelligence reports revealed that a major attack upon the city would be initiated. The 5th NVA and the 9th VC Division's bases had been located in the province at XT4460 and XT1876 respectively. This is probably the first time that two division size units were known to be located in the province. By 20 July indications were clear that a large attack would be conducted against the city within a few days. On 24 July, the Acting Commanding General, Brigadier General William T. Gleason dispatched the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, to TAY NINH Province to reinforce the 25th Infantry Division's 1st Brigade whose area of operations generally encompassed the province. In addition to this battalion, the brigade exercised operational control over the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M); the 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M); the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry and the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor (-B, C). Direct support artillery for the brigade was furnished by the 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery and general support by elements of the 23d Artillery Group. With these forces, the brigade established a defensive arc of artillery fire support bases around the

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city from which infantry units could conduct wide ranging operations to interdict and preempt enemy movement on TAY NINH City. At the same time, the brigade established similar defenses around DAU TIENG, a major division base camp located in BINH DUONG Province 25 kilometers to the east of the city. Province headquarters assembled a battalion size RF reserve composed of the 161st, 267th, 315th and 688th Rifle Companies which operated under the supervision of the sector staff (the Province Chief is also Sector Commander and has a staff of ARVN officers assigned. The staff is comparable to a US infantry battalion) and had the mission of defending TAY NINH City proper. The remainder of the outlying hamlets, villages and towns were protected by the permanently assigned RF/PF forces and other local defense units such as Civilian Irregular Defense Groups, Revolutionary Development cadre and Census Grievance cadre.

j. When the enemy attack failed to materialize in late July and the battle lull that had characterized action in the province since mid-May continued, intelligence data and information were reassessed. The date for the predicted attack was established as early August and later moved forward to mid-August. The need to change the attack dates was believed to be the result of extensive preemptive actions conducted throughout the province to counter the enemy build-up. Among these measures was a steady increase of B-52 bomber strikes against suspected enemy base camps, supply caches and assembly areas. In August, September and October 1968 a total of 253 missions were flown in the province (inclosures 11 and 12). Generally, each mission contained six aircraft with each averaging 30,000

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pounds of ordnance. Several US advisors believed that the extensive use of the B-52 strikes forced the enemy to stay above ground at all times and, therefore, be susceptible to artillery fire which was employed in abundance from the various fire support bases.

k. Intelligence reports later confirmed that two enemy battalions were destroyed by these B-52 strikes. One of these battalions, located in the STRAIGHT EDGE WOODS (XT1334), was believed to have had the mission of attacking the city from the south. The other was located in an advance position north of NUI BA DEN. Sector personnel believed that the B-52 strikes probably forced the enemy to delay his attack upon the city because of his heavy losses and the need to regroup and resupply his forces.

l. All allied forces located within the III ARVN Corps Tactical Zone were participating in Operation TOAN THANG or COMPLETE VICTORY which was initiated by OPORD 5-68, Headquarters, II FFORCV and III ARVN Corps, dated 5 April 1968. Based on this order, the 25th Infantry Division (US) prepared and issued OPORD 1-68 to all organic units (inclosure 13). Message AVFBC-OP #050470, Commanding General, II FFORCV, subject: Operation TOAN THANG (U), dated 31 May 1968, redesignated the campaign as Operation TOAN THANG II effective 312400 May 1968 (inclosure 14). These forces had been involved in a similar operation entitled RESOLVED TO WIN which began subsequent to the 1968 TET Offensive and terminated just prior to the initiation of COMPLETE VICTORY.

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m. Essentially, there were no ARVN units based or operating in the province at the beginning of August with the exception of artillery platoons (two tubes) deployed in the province and district towns. The local forces, RF/PF, etc., were committed primarily to the defense of fixed installations, hamlets, bridges, etc., and were available for only limited daytime operations.

n. TAY NINH Province is generally located within the tactical areas of interest of the 25th Infantry Division (ARVN) and the US 25th Infantry Division (inclosure 15). Elements of the 1st Infantry Division (US) and the 5th Special Forces Group also operated within the area. Camps operated by the Special Forces were located at BEN SOI (XT092476), KATUM (XT330898), THIEN NHON (XT087816), TRANG SUP (XT170555) and TAY NINH (XT204509).

o. Many consider the entire heavily populated complex to be TAY NINH City; however, this is a misconception as TAY NINH City proper is generally the portion of the complex located in grid squares XT1950, XT1951 and XT2050 (inclosure 16).

10. (C) Intelligence:

a. The enemy concentrated upon two objectives within the III Corps Tactical Zone after conducting his unsuccessful offensives against SAIGON in May and June. These objectives were:

"Liberate" the country section by section.

Inflict heavy casualties upon friendly forces especially the 25th Division (US) and necessitate the redeployment of free world forces away from SAIGON, then attack the capital city.

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b. Participating enemy units:

(1) 5th NVA Division:

275th Regiment

33d Regiment

88th Regiment

(2) 9th VC Division

271st Regiment

272d Regiment

273d Regiment

(3) 101st Regiment

(4) 174th Regiment

(5) D14 Local Force Battalion

(6) D16 Local Force Battalion

c. For detailed information on the activities of the above enemy units see inclosures 17, 18 and 19.

d. Weather: The months of August and September were in the middle of the southwest monsoon season. The weather was characterized by hot humid days with heavy rain showers in the late afternoon and early evening hours. There were about 12 hours of daylight during this period. The sun rose at 0641 hours and set at 1903 hours in early August. By late September, daylight hours were reduced as sunrise was at 0642 hours and sunset was at 1844 hours.

e. Terrain: The northern half of the province is characterized by dense, heavily vegetated forest/jungle. The western portion of the southern

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half is open, flat, agricultural land with patches of forest; and the southeast has open land, forests and four large rubber plantations. The rubber plantations, as well as the central portion, have a network of relatively good dirt roads. Trafficability for foot, vehicle and tracks, was good on the roads to extremely poor in the rice paddies.

11. (C) Mission: Allied forces operating in III CTZ had the mission of conducting a combined offensive over an extended period of time to locate and destroy all enemy units operating in the area.

12. (C) Concept of operation and execution:

Colonel Freemont B. Hodson's basic plan for the defense of TAY NINH City was to deploy his forces beyond the city in blocking positions astride the likely enemy avenues of approach. From infantry-artillery fire support bases, the 25th Infantry Division's 1st Brigade commander mounted extensive daylight reconnaissance in force and helicopter borne combat assault operations designed to detect and destroy the enemy in his assembly areas and approach marches. These daylight operations were supplemented by numerous platoon size ambush patrols laying in wait at night for the enemy along principle roads, trails and waterways.

This concept of operations was executed with the establishment of Fire Support Base BUELL along route 4 three kilometers northwest of TAY NINH (XT213532) and Fire Support Base RAWLINS (inclosure 20) installed six kilometers east of the city (XT301502). The permanent 25th Infantry Division's base camp (brigade sized) seven kilometers west of the city

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(center of mass XT165517) was the location of the brigade headquarters and maneuver elements deployed in outposts to the northwest and west of the city.

Twenty-five kilometers to the east of TAY NINH, another permanent brigade sized division base camp, Camp RAMNIER, at DAU TIENG (XT495475) served as a base of operations for brigade forces operating in that general area.

Extensive cross-attachment between the infantry and mechanized infantry battalions was employed. Areas of operations around the city were assigned as follows: 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, LTC Alexander H. Hunt, Commanding, operated from Fire Support Base BUELL with a general area of operation north of TAY NINH; 4th Battalion (M), 23d Infantry, LTC Clifford C. Neilson, Commanding, maneuvered from Fire Support Base RAWLINS throughout an area of operations to the east of the city; 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, LTC John F. Kenney, Jr., Commanding, worked out of the TAY NINH Base Camp, outposting and maneuvering to the west of the base camp and city; with Headquarters and A Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, commanded by LTC Theodore E. O'Connor located at the TAY NINH Base Camp for a reserve. It received additional attached units as the situation dictated.

Direct artillery support for these maneuver elements was provided by the 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery, LTC Forest E. Pierce, Commanding, whose batteries were deployed at Fire Support Base BUELL, Fire Support Base RAWLINS, TAY NINH Base Camp and DAU TIENG Base Camp. Eight inch/

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175mm artillery support was provided by the 1st Battalion, 27th Artillery and the 2d Battalion, 32d Artillery deployed at the base camps and Fire Support Base ST. BARBARA at BAU CO (XT275685), 17 kilometers north of TAY NINH City (inclosure 21). General support artillery was organic to the 23d Group, II Field Force Artillery.

The 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M), LTC Andrew H. Anderson, Commanding, operated from the DAU TIENG Base Camp covering a wide arc which encompassed the MICHELIN Rubber Plantation to the east and the BEN CUI Rubber Plantation to the west.

Within the city of TAY NINH, the 161st, 267th, 315th and 688th Regional Force Rifle Companies and the 2d Troop, 10th Cavalry Squadron, 25th ARVN Division were organized into a provisional battalion under the control of the Province Chief. In the outlying hamlets, villages and towns, permanently assigned Regional Force Companies and Popular Forces deployed in squads and platoons, assumed a static defense posture to engage any enemy who might penetrate the heavily populated urban area.

Despite the wide ranging operations of the 1st Brigade maneuver elements to seek out the enemy, contact was rare as the battlefield lull which had characterized operations in TAY NINH Province since mid-May continued through July and the first two weeks of August.

However, LTC Albert N. Stubbleline, the 25th Infantry Division G-2, continued to predict a major attack on TAY NINH City. Major General Ellis W. Williamson who assumed command of the division on 3 August directed a continuation of the operations around the city. LTC Duquesne

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A. Wolfe, assumed command of the 1st Brigade on 5 August and continued to pursue the general strategy and tactics established by Colonel Hodson.

To avoid pattern operations, Fire Support Base BULLL was closed and relocated. On 10 August, Fire Support Base BUELL II was established four kilometers north of the old fire base (XT227568).

The lull was broken abruptly on the night of 17 August (inclosure 22). At approximately 2110 hours a platoon ambush patrol from D Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry in position along route 13 approximately six kilometers from the city (XT294520) detected a column of 300 enemy troops moving towards the city. The platoon leader called artillery fire upon the column and engaged the rear elements of the force with his own organic weapons. After approximately 120 rounds of artillery fire fell on the enemy and a brief fire fight was waged between the column and the ambushing patrol, the enemy formation broke and withdrew to the northeast. This enemy force was later identified as the 3d Battalion, 275th VC/NVA Regiment.

Although this contact provided the relatively minor results of five enemy killed (as opposed to 12 US wounded), its significance is measured more in the fact that it alerted the 1st Brigade and local Vietnamese forces to heavy enemy troop movements around TAY NINH City.

Meanwhile within the city, a plot was uncovered in which the enemy attempted to steal armored personnel carriers from the 2d Troop, 10th Cavalry Squadron (ARVN). Two soldiers, assigned to the troop, were VC

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agents who had the mission of driving the armored personnel carriers to a school within the city where they would link up with sappers. This force would then use the vehicles to attack the USMACV Compound and other key local government installations.

The plan went awry, however, when one of the pair was ordered to DAU TIENG with a small element from the troop. The second agent then attempted to enlist the assistance of a third soldier for the plot. This soldier informed the troop commander of the incident, and the VC agent was promptly taken into custody.

As the evening passed, approximately 20 small scale attacks upon government outposts throughout the province were reported (inclosures 23, 24, 25, 80 and 81).

At 0115 hours, 18 August, the enemy effort in and around TAY NINH City began as the TAY NINH Base Camp and 1st Brigade Headquarters was struck by five rounds of 82mm mortar fire and 19 rounds of 107mm rocket fire. As the artillery units at the camp began to fire the first of 508 rounds of counter mortar fire to be expended during the night, the brigade Tactical Operations Center received a radio call at 0123 hours that Fire Support Base BUELL II was under heavy 82mm mortar attack (inclosures 26 and 27).

When the last of approximately 100 mortar rounds fell on BUELL, the perimeter of the fire base was assaulted by two enemy battalions which charged the position in human wave attacks. From within the base, the approximately 500 men of Headquarters and D Companies, 3d Battalion, 22d

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Infantry; C Company, 4th Battalion (M), 23d Infantry; 1st Platoon, A Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor; B Battery, 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery; and A Battery, 3d Battalion, 13th Artillery responded to the enemy attack with a withering blanket of small arms, automatic weapon, mortar and artillery "killer junior" fire.(inclosures 28 and 82).

To augment his organic fires, LTC Hunt called in supporting fires from helicopter gunships based at TAY NINH and artillery from nearby mutually supporting fire support bases (RAWLINS and ST. BARBARA). Before the attack was finally repulsed, Air Force fighter-bombers came on station above Fire Support Base BUELL II to smash at the enemy with napalm and 500 and 750 pound bombs.

Coordinating his fire support so that the air strikes were concentrated on the southern half of his perimeter and the artillery fires in the north, LTC Hunt was successful in deterring the enemy in his desperate efforts to reach the perimeter wire. At approximately 0430, the enemy heavily outgunned and badly mauled broke contact and withdrew to the northeast.

Moving forward from their bunker line positions to sweep around the fire support base and pursue the fleeing enemy, Hunt's infantrymen recovered 105 enemy bodies and captured 13 wounded prisoners of war. Littered around the battlefield were 15 AK-47 rifles, 12 RPG rocket launchers, four machine guns, one M-16 rifle, 10 pounds of enemy documents, 4000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 117 RPG rounds, 263 hand grenades, 21

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recoilless rifle rounds, 25 bangalore torpedoes and nine 82mm mortar rounds. Hunt's losses in the battle were one killed, 26 wounded and one self-propelled 155mm howitzer and two tanks damaged, but still operational (inclosures 29 and 83).

Readout of the captured documents and interrogation of the prisoners of war later identified the attacking force as the 3d Battalion, 273d VC/NVA Regiment and elements of the 178th VC/NVA Regiment.

As the enemy mounted his assault on Fire Support Base BUELL II the PHOUUC NINH District Headquarters (XT129504) located 10 kilometers west of TAY NINH was struck by a mortar and small arms attack at 0140 hours. One kilometer to the south of the city, the BEN KEO RF/PF Training Center (XT235476) received a 70 round mortar attack at 0150 hours.

The scattered attacks by fire, however, soon were replaced by widely executed ground assaults. At 0230 hours an estimated company of enemy troops were reported to have forced their way to the central portion of LONG HOA (XT248470) where they were heavily engaged by a PF platoon. At the same time, the TAY NINH Province Headquarters on the western outskirts of the city (XT198506) was hit by a concentrated mortar barrage of 15 rounds.

The enemy made a serious attempt to disrupt electronic communications into and out of TAY NINH City at 0234 hours when an estimated company assaulted the perimeter of the communications relay site on the summit of NUI BA DEN Mountain (XT281581) to the northeast of TAY NINH. Striking

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with small arms, automatic weapons and rockets against the facility's bunker line manned by A Company, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, the enemy was able to breach the line in one location and was successful in blowing up one generator before he was pushed back out of the site.

All other sectors of the bunker line held fast throughout the night and at approximately 0615 hours, the enemy withdrew down the mountain leaving behind 15 dead, five AK-47 rifles, three rocket launchers, three pistols, 12 hand grenades, 100 satchel charges and 20 RPG rocket rounds. Eight defenders of the mountaintop were killed in the fighting, but the enemy was unable to accomplish his objective of disrupting the flow of vital radio communications for TAY NINH City and the surrounding area. A photographic study of NUI BA DEN is attached (inclosure 30).

Meanwhile, in the city itself a strong enemy force assaulted the TRUONG HOA RF Outpost which guarded the approach to the southeastern edge of the city complex (XT268452). This ground attack commenced at 0245 hours and by 0300 hours the RF company manning the position had been overrun and scattered. As the early morning wore on, a PF outpost located five kilometers north of the city (XT217552) reported itself to be under a heavy ground attack. The PHU KHUONG District Headquarters (XT234476) also reported that it was receiving a ground attack from an estimated company size enemy force.

Other stand off and harrassing attacks were continuing upon outlying outposts in the province. Extracts from the daily journals maintained by

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the Tactical Operations Center, III Corps (ARVN), reveal the times and locations of these attacks in both August and September (inclosure 31).

Analysis of information gathered relative to the attacks in the TAY NINH vicinity during the night of 17-18 August indicated that in addition to the above mentioned enemy units in action to the north and northeast of the city, the 271st VC/NVA conducted attacks to the west of TAY NINH making a feint against the TAY NINH Base Camp and assaulting the CU CHI string of hamlets (vic XT1945-XT1950). Elements of the 275th VC/NVA Regiment and the D-14 Local Force Battalion moved from the CAU KHOI Rubber Plantation (XT3244) southeast of TAY NINH to attack the LONG HOA area and penetrate the southeastern section of the city.

In the meantime, the 272d VC/NVA Regiment remained in an area northwest of the city and was not committed during the night. Both the eastern and southern fingers of LONG HOA had been occupied by 0730 hours on 18 August and attempts were being made by the enemy to infiltrate weapons to agents inside the Cao Dai Holy See.

The populace evacuated the occupied area and took refuge in the Holy See as by noon there was an estimated 7000 refugees in this area. The PHU KHUONG district chief deployed all available forces and the enemy's drive was actually halted in the LONG HOA area by these local defense units consisting of Revolutionary Development (RD) cadre, RF/PF, etc. On the western flank of the action, the 1st Brigade's Combined (US and ARVN) Reconnaissance and Intelligence Platoon (CRIP) made a stand near

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the medical dispensary as the line of resistance formed in the vicinity of XT234467, XT244466 to XT248476. Advisor personnel believed that the enemy intended to hold his position for the remainder of the day then attack PHU KHUONG District Headquarters on the following day. This was confirmed later by two Hoi Chanh who also revealed that three regiments were to attack, occupy and hold the city for a three day period.

Action in the LONG HOA area was contained by the local forces and was considered a Vietnamese operation up to this point; however, a plan to eject the enemy was developed by the province chief, his US advisor, LTC Vernon L. Bond, Jr., and the 1st Brigade commander. The plan was to maneuver a US element to block in the vicinity of the outpost which had been overrun in TRUONG HOA (XT268452) and maneuver another blocking force down Highway 22 to occupy positions on the southwestern edge of the city complex (XT240447). Once these blocking forces were positioned, Vietnamese troops, utilizing only organic weapons, were to attack from the center and clear the LONG HOA area.

In accordance with this plan, A and B Companies, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M), moved into a blocking position in the vicinity of a bridge site (XT270458) on the southeastern edge of the city and a task force consisting of A Company, 2d Battalion, 34th Armor and C Company and the Scout Platoon, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M) occupied the blocking positions on the southwestern edge of the city complex (XT240447). The southeastern blocking positions were later reinforced by D Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry.

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The attack to clear the area began at approximately 0900 hours and the RF/PF swept approximately two blocks past the market area (XT236472); but could not advance further due to firm resistance. The action became a stalemate and at approximately 1830 hours the RF/PF returned to the province compound to provide local security after being relieved in place by a 25th Infantry Division unit, B Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry reinforced by the 1st Brigade's Combined Reconnaissance and Intelligence Platoon. This unit established positions during the night of 18-19 August at the point where the RF/PF action began on the previous morning (XT237467).

At 1845 hours, B Troop came into contact with the enemy at XT242473, and in the firefight that took place one cavalryman was killed and five wounded. The CRIP platoon made contact at 2015 hours at XT234467. Meanwhile, in the blocking position on the southeast, A and B Companies, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M), had made contact with an estimated enemy company near the bridge site at XT270458 and by 1715 hours, were heavily engaged with the enemy at XT263463. In this later fight which was supported by helicopter gunships, four infantrymen were wounded and one armored personnel carrier was destroyed.

The PHU KHUONG District Headquarters (XT234476) received over 100 rounds of indirect fire beginning at 2100, and apparently the enemy withdrew from the city under cover of this attack.

As the situation developed during the day in and around TAY NINH City, the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) sweeping out of the DAU TIENG Base

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Camp into the BEN CUI Rubber Plantation intercepted elements of the 33d VC/NVA Regiment as they assembled to move south through the concealment of the plantation. At 0720 hours, B Company of the battalion established contact at XT438467 to begin an engagement that continued until 1630 hours (inclosure 32). Reinforced by the battalion's C Company and Scout Platoon along with the 3d Brigade CRIP and supported by artillery, helicopter gunships and Air Force fighter-bombers strikes, this force blocked the enemy regiment's movement and forced it to withdraw to the north. A search of the battlefield following the action discovered 92 enemy bodies, one field radio, three .50 caliber machine guns, six AK-47 rifles, one RPG rocket launcher, 500 rounds of small arms ammunition and three RPG rounds. The mechanized battalion then established blocking positions within the BEN CUI Rubber to engage any further efforts by the enemy to move southward (inclosures 33 and 84).

The 51st Ranger Battalion, located in BIEN HOA, was alerted during the evening hours of 18 August for deployment in TAY NINH City the next day. The battalion began an airlift at 190615 August and closed into the provincial city at 0830 hours. Immediately after arriving, coordination was effected by the rangers with province officials, the 25th Infantry Division (ARVN), and US 25th Infantry Division's 1st Brigade. The rangers were given the mission to clear the northeast finger of LONG HOA and the provincial forces were ordered to clear the southeast finger. Both forces had elements of B Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry supporting

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this operation. The sweep towards the blocking positions still in location in the southeastern and southwestern edges of the city began at 0900 hours and by 1400 hours all forces had advanced outside the city without establishing contact as the enemy had withdrawn during the night. The rangers operated under control of Headquarters, 25th Infantry Division (ARVN) until 21 August when the battalion was placed under OPCON to the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (US). Operations continued with this US unit until 29 August, when the battalion returned to BIEN HOA. The rangers did not encounter heavy resistance during the entire period as it appeared the enemy's main objective was to destroy US units. The ranger's action was described by the battalion's senior advisor, CPT William W. Sherrell (inclosure 34).

Approximately four blocks of homes near the LONG HOA market area were burned by the withdrawing enemy during the night of 18 August. Damage caused by friendly forces was minimal as artillery and air strikes were not employed because the officials did not desire to create additional destruction. The enemy was located in foxholes and bunkers with connecting tunnels and in all probability tactical air and artillery would have been only marginally effective against these positions unless a position happened to receive a direct hit.

The enemy's feint against TAY NINH Base Camp and the CU CHI string of hamlets on 17-18 August was not serious as the local RF/PF along with one US mechanized unit contained the attack. Air strikes were considered but were not employed in this area as targets could not be defined.

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RF/PF contacts with the enemy in the immediate vicinity of TAY NINH City after 18-19 August were light and scattered although intelligence agents continued to report the enemy would attempt to immediately return and occupy the city. This tactic is used frequently by the VC to preclude friendly forces from pursuing, regardless of how badly the attackers have been mauled. The situation within the city slowly returned to normal as all intelligence reports and estimates began to indicate that the enemy's next offensive would be against SAIGON.

In the meantime, however, the US 25th Infantry Division's 1st Brigade which continued its screening operations around TAY NINH fought numerous significant battles against enemy forces attempting to maneuver into positions around the city. On 19 August, A Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry was moved from CU CHI to reinforce the 1st Brigade. As the troop moved north along route 26, it encountered a large enemy force, later identified as elements of the 275th VC/NVA Regiment which was positioned in the CAU KHOI Rubber Plantation (XT311485) approximately eight kilometers east of TAY NINH. The contact which began at 0937 hours continued until 1745 hours. The cavalry troop was reinforced by A Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) which moved into the contact area from Fire Support Base RAWLINS. The ground troops were supported throughout the day by artillery, helicopter gunships and Air Force fighter-bomber strikes. When the firing ceased, the two company size units swept the contact area and accounted for 34 enemy bodies, one RPG rocket launcher, three AK-47 rifles and three machine guns. US losses were four killed and 17 wounded.

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While this contact was taking place, B and C Companies with the Reconnaissance platoon, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) with the aid of supporting artillery, helicopter gunships and air strikes were engaging the 33d VC/NVA Regiment along route 239, the main supply route between TAY NINH and DAU TIENG (inclosure 32). The contact was established at 1225 hours at a point approximately eight kilometers west of DAU TIENG (XT425457). Fierce fighting continued until 2100 hours and resulted in an enemy body count of 76 and the capture of three AK-47 rifles and one RPG rocket launcher. Ten infantrymen were killed and 62 wounded by the heavy enemy fire. Two tanks and five APCs were also knocked out of action by the enemy (inclosures 35 and 85).

In the early morning hours of 20 August, the 3d Battalion, 273d VC/NVA Regiment moved to attack the TAY NINH Base Camp from the northwest. At 0105 hours however, the enemy column was engaged by an outpost approximately two kilometers (XT146543) northwest of the base camp (inclosure 36). This outpost was manned by 36 personnel of the 3d platoon, A Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry who called artillery, helicopter gunships and Air Force air strikes for support. The massive fire support that ringed the platoon's perimeter throughout the fight was the key factor in turning back repeated attempts by the enemy to overrun the platoon's position. At dawn the enemy withdrew leaving behind 155 dead, three wounded prisoners of war, two AK-47 rifles, three RPG rocket launchers, five machine guns and one field radio. Losses sustained by the platoon were five killed and six wounded (inclosures 37 and 86).

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This early morning action was followed closely by another significant contact when at 0945 hours B Company, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M) sweeping route 26 as it passes through the CAU KHOI Rubber Plantation (XT325470) approximately eight kilometers east of TAY NINH City made contact with an estimated company size enemy unit. A Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry moved to the contact area to reinforce the mechanized company. In addition, the contact was supported by artillery which fired 466 rounds into the contact area, helicopter gunships and 14 Air Force fighter-bomber sorties. The battle raged around a bridge site on the road until 1850 hours when the enemy broke contact and withdrew. A search of the area after the firing ceased revealed 28 bodies, four AK-47 rifles and one machine gun abandoned by the enemy. The two US ground units sustained four killed and seven wounded.

The enemy's continued presence in the vicinity surrounding the DAU TIENG Base Camp on 20 August was underscored at 1728 hours when the camp was rocked by a 47 round barrage of 82mm mortar rounds which resulted in wounding two personnel.

While the immediate vicinity of TAY NINH City remained relatively quiet on 21 August, the BEN CUI Rubber Plantation and DAU TIENG Base Camp erupted in heavy fighting. C Company and the Scout Platoon of the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) swept out of the DAU TIENG Base Camp into the southern BEN CUI and at 1130 hours came into contact with two battalions of the 33d VC/NVA Regiment at XT460440 (inclosures 38 and 32). In

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the fierce battle that followed 182 enemy soldiers were killed (by body count) as 1094 artillery rounds, helicopter gunships and 14 Air Force fighter-bomber sorties were committed to support the heavily outnumbered mechanized units. Eighteen infantrymen died in the fighting and 23 were wounded before contact was broken and the enemy withdrew.

As the heavy battle waged a short distance away, the DAU TIENG Base Camp was struck by four 122mm rockets at 1345 hours killing one man and wounding another.

In the meantime, A Company, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M) and A Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry came into contact with an unknown size enemy force at 1502 hours during a sweep through the CAU KHOI Rubber Plantation approximately 10 kilometers east of TAY NINH (XT355440). Helicopter gunships and Air Force air strikes were called in to support the contact which resulted in three troopers being killed and five wounded. A search of the contact area after the firing ceased failed to reveal any enemy losses during the fire fight.

With the continuing enemy threat to TAY NINH City and the heavy enemy activity in the BEN CUI Rubber Plantation to the east of the city, the 2d Brigade (commanded by Colonel Raymond O. Miller until 31 August, succeeded by Colonel Eugene M. Lynch) of the 25th Infantry Division moved to DAU TIENG (inclosure 39). This relieved the division's 1st Brigade of this area of operations and permitted concentration of 1st Brigade effort in the immediate TAY NINH area.

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The new alignment of 25th Infantry Division forces on 22 August was as follows: 1st Brigade in the immediate TAY NINH area with operational control of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry; the 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M); and the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor: 2d Brigade at DAU TIENG with operational control of the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) and the 1st and 2d Battalions, 27th Infantry.

The wisdom of the move proved itself as enemy activity increased in the area surrounding TAY NINH during the early morning hours of 22 August when Fire Support Bases BUELL II and RAWLINS III came under simultaneous attack at approximately 0105 hours. The enemy pattern of attack at both locations was identical . . . heavy mortar and RPG rocket fire followed by human wave attacks against the fire bases' defensive perimeter.

At BUELL, defended by C and D Companies, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, the enemy assaults continued until 0550 hours. The perimeter's base of fire supported by artillery, helicopter gunships and Air Force fighter-bombers turned back each assault before it reached the wire (see inclosures 28 and 82). When the enemy broke contact and withdrew at first light, the base defenders moved forward to discover 60 enemy bodies and capture 11 wounded prisoners of war, 16 AK-47 rifles, two mauser rifles, four machine guns, 103 RPG rounds, 205 hand grenades, 37 mortar rounds, 34 mortar fuzes, five bangalore torpedoes and 5670 rounds of small arms ammunition. The camp defenders sustained three men killed and 18 wounded.

The defense of Fire Support Base RAWLINS by A and B Companies, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry was also supported by artillery, helicopter

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gunships and Air Force fighter-bomber strikes. After several unsuccessful attempts to storm the fire base perimeter, the enemy withdrew leaving behind 25 dead, four wounded prisoners of war, two machine guns, seven AK-47 rifles, 42 RPG rounds, six bangalores, 38 hand grenades and 2100 small arms rounds. One infantryman was killed and 10 wounded while defending the base.

Analysis of documents taken from enemy bodies and interrogation of prisoners taken revealed that BUELL was attacked by the 174th VC/NVA Regiment and RAWLINS by the 3d Battalion, 275th VC/NVA Regiment, both elements of the 5th VC/NVA Division.

The 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M), now under the operational control of the 2d Brigade, continued its running battle with the 33d VC/NVA Regiment in the BEN CUI Rubber Plantation when at 0935 hours, B Company of the battalion engaged elements of the enemy regiment at XT462468 (see inclosure 32). Once again artillery (2148 rounds), helicopter gunships and 16 fighter-bomber sorties supported the mechanized forces. At 1300 hours the contact ended and the mechanized company reinforced by C Company and elements of the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry pushed forward to discover 24 bodies left behind by the enemy. Five infantrymen were killed and 16 were wounded in the fire fight. Four armored personnel carriers were damaged in the contact.

Elements of Company A, 5th Special Forces Group (ABN), had operated a Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) Camp at BEN SOI (XT092476) which

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is located along Highway 13 west of TAY NINH City near the CAMBODIAN border (inclosure 40). The operation of this camp was placed under control of the Vietnamese Special Forces during this period as all US personnel had been withdrawn for a test. Elements from the camp conducted a reconnaissance in force operation on 22 August and by 1345 hours had established contact with an estimated enemy battalion in the vicinity of XT142433. Contact continued until 1645 hours when the enemy, dressed in black pajamas, yellow scarfs and blue hats, began to withdraw towards the west. The friendly force sustained eleven killed, ten wounded, eight missing and also lost several weapons and some equipment. The enemy losses were 29 killed and eight weapons plus miscellaneous equipment captured in this engagement.

Significant contact with the enemy in the TAY NINH-DAU TIENG area dropped off completely on 23 August. However, on 24 August at 0030 hours the 33d VC/NVA Regiment moved to attack Fire Support Base SCOFIELD (XT407-440) which had been newly established by the 2d Brigade astride the enemy regiment's north-south line of communication. The enemy hurled an estimated battalion at the fire base which was occupied by Companies A, B and D of the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, elements of A Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, A Battery, 1/8 Artillery (105mm) and C Battery, 7/11 Artillery (105mm). Supported by artillery, helicopter gunships and Air Force AC-47 "Spooky" aircraft, the base camp defenders repulsed several human wave assaults on the camp perimeter. The enemy broke contact and withdrew at 0430 hours and at first light, the infantry and cavalry troops

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swept out of the camp and located 103 enemy bodies, one wounded POW and to "police" from the battlefield 13 AK-47 rifles, four machine guns, four 60mm mortar tubes, one 57mm recoilless rifle, one 75mm recoilless rifle, 11 RPG rocket launchers, seven mortar rounds, 50 RPG rounds, 35 hand grenades and 2000 rounds of small arms ammunition. US losses in the attack were nine killed, 41 wounded, four APCs destroyed, two tanks destroyed and five APCs damaged. Seven officers and enlisted defenders were interviewed regarding this action (inclosures 41 and 87).

The enemy maintained his pressure on DAU TIENG during the day with two attacks by fire. At 0650 hours the base was struck by eight rounds of 82mm mortar fire which wounded three personnel. Again at 1150 hours, five rounds of 82mm mortar fire slammed into the base resulting in one man being wounded. At 1725 hours, an enemy mortar position was detected three kilometers east of the base camp (XT517507). Artillery from the base camp engaged this position accounting for four enemy killed and the destruction of an 82mm mortar tube.

During the day, elements of the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) swept through the contact areas of previous days in the BEN CUI Rubber. Twelve enemy dead were located on the sweep, but no contact was made with the enemy.

The BEN SOI CIDG Camp was attacked by an undetermined size enemy force at 250005 August when over 200 82mm mortar rounds were fired on the camp. Rocket propelled grenades and small arms fire was also received during/after this indirect fire attack. The defenders held

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their positions and personnel/equipment losses were light; however, enemy casualties, if any, were unknown.

On 25 August, enemy activity shifted to the area south of TAY NINH when at 1145 hours the 88th VC/NVA Regiment entered the fighting for the first time by ambushing the LONG BINH-CU CHI-TAY NINH logistical convoy (see inclosure 42). The attack took place along route 22 (XT349335) as the highway passes through a rubber plantation seven kilometers north of GO DAU HA. Company C, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M), Company C, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry and B Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry reached the ambush site to engage the enemy in a battle that continued throughout the afternoon and evening (inclosures 43 through 57 and 88 through 97).

Action around TAY NINH and DAU TIENG subsided considerably on 26 August as the enemy made no effort to engage friendly forces and extensive sweep and search operations by the 1st and 2d Brigades failed to establish any significant contacts.

The 88th VC/NVA Regiment reappeared at 0040 hours on 27 August, when it staged an estimated two battalion attack on Fire Support Base RAWLINS. The base, defended by the 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M), initially came under a massive fire attack consisting of approximately 200 mortar rounds and 50 107mm rockets. This was followed closely by a ground attack. Supported by artillery, helicopter gunships, AC-47 "Spooky" aircraft and fighter-bomber strikes, the infantry manning the base camp perimeter stopped the enemy short of the wire, forcing him to break contact and withdraw at approximately 0300 hours. A sweep of the area

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surrounding the base camp at first light discovered 27 enemy dead, two wounded prisoners, three machine guns, three AK-47 rifles, five RPG-2 rocket launchers, 47 RPG-2 rounds, 22 rounds of 60mm mortar ammunition and seven bangalore torpedoes. Casualties sustained by the mechanized battalion in the attack were 15 men wounded.

Meanwhile, in the 2d Brigade area around DAU TIENG, the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry pushed into the northern MICHELIN Rubber Plantation during the day in search of the enemy. At 1506 hours contact was made with an unknown size enemy force at XT558588. Sporadic fighting continued throughout the afternoon and early evening with artillery, helicopter gunships and fighter-bomber strikes being directed into the area. Before establishing a night defensive position at XT528543, the battalion discovered three enemy dead. At 2200 hours the battalion defensive position was the target of 25 rounds of mixed 60mm and 82mm mortar fire which killed two and wounded three. This enemy fire was returned upon the suspected enemy mortar positions with unknown results.

With the defeat of the 88th VC/NVA Regiment attack on Fire Support Base RAWLINS on 27 August, the first series of actions in the Battle for TAY NINH came to a close as the enemy withdrew from the area to reconstitute and re-equip his badly depleted main force units. Intelligence reports continued to indicate however that the enemy would renew his general offensive with TAY NINH City as his objective. Also, on 27 August, Colonel Robert L. Fair assumed command of the division's 1st Brigade.

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The enemy's continued presence in the area between 28 August and 10 September was clearly indicated by a series of light harrassing attacks on RF/FF and 25th Infantry Division outposts in the area and light and scattered contacts between sweeping US forces and small enemy units.

On 28 August the 1st Brigade CRIP made contact with an estimated enemy company at 1100 hours as the platoon swept through an area three kilometers south of TAY NINH (XT261425). Artillery and helicopter gunships were called in to support the contact. After the supporting fires were lifted, the platoon moved into the enemy positions to locate 24 bodies. Three platoon members were wounded by the enemy's fire.

On 1 September the THIEN NGON CIDG, (Company A, 5th Special Group) (ABN), (XT087814), received twenty 120mm, sixty 82mm mortar and eight 107mm rocket rounds beginning at 010010 September. The camp's counter mortar/rocket plan was executed while "Spooky", 105mm and 175mm artillery supported by firing defensive concentrations. Approximately six of the defenders were killed in this action but enemy casualties were unknown.

A and C Companies, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M), came into contact with elements of the 275th VC/NVA Regiment on 3 September at 1715 hours as the companies swept through the BEN CUI Rubber Plantation (XT450449). In the fire fight that ensued the two companies accounted for 19 enemy kills by body count while sustaining one killed and eight wounded.

At 062315 September, the BEN SOI CIDG Camp received 82mm mortar fire from the west and a probing attack from the south. Tempo of the attack

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increased as the enemy began employing 120mm mortars against the camp and fired heavy machine guns against all supporting aircraft which arrived on station. The defenders utilized all organic weapons together with "Spooky", tactical air strikes and artillery to support this action. Heavy contact continued until approximately 070315 September when the estimated two enemy companies began to break contact and by 0515 hours all action had terminated. Ten enemy were killed and an assortment of weapons and equipment was captured. These forces continued to operate well without the presence of US Special Forces personnel. This camp sustained three indirect fire attacks which were followed by ground attacks/probes during September. Forty-one enemy were killed in these engagements with the friendly force suffering 37 killed and 17 wounded.

Not until the night of 10-11 September; however, was the long anticipated renewal of the enemy offensive against TAY NINH to begin.

The province chief was relieved prior to September's attack. He had held the position for the past three years, was a Cao Dai, and apparently held in rather high esteem by the local populace. His relief for corruption was announced by the Vietnamese news media in SAIGON and caused quite a furor among the population as his replacement was a Catholic. A Cao Dai demonstration was scheduled for the day of his departure (12 September) and all Vietnamese and US officials were deeply concerned; however, the events which began on 11 September solved the problem.

Elements of the 5th NVA and 9th VC Divisions along with local force units had remained in the province and significant enemy activity began

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to occur south of the city between Highways 22 and 26. The 25th Infantry Division (ARVN) initiated a large operation in this area on 5 September which resulted in several significant contacts. The operation was terminated on 10 September in order to reposition friendly troop units because all intelligence estimates indicated TAY NINH City would be attacked between 10 and 15 September (inclosures 58, 59 and 98).

The attack of the city in September was almost a repeat performance of the one initiated by the enemy in August. The 271st Regiment moved down Highway 4 from the north of the city and conducted another unsuccessful attack upon Fire Support Base BUELL II. This attack began at 0124 hours with a barrage of approximately 200 mixed 82mm mortar rounds, 107mm rockets and RPG rounds. The attack by fire was closely followed by a human wave assault as the enemy attempted to breach the fire base's perimeter. In keeping with the pattern established in defense of these fire bases, the return fire by elements of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, within the base was supported by artillery, helicopter gunships and air strikes. The ground attack that was hurled at the base was stopped short of the wire. Enemy losses in the attack were nine killed, one AK-47 and one M-1 carbine. Seventeen of the base defenders were wounded in the fight.

After attacking BUELL, the enemy regiment moved into the northeastern portion of the city complex, NINH THANH Village (XT245505). The enemy did not occupy the southeast arm of LONG HOA or the central market place

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as in the August attack; however, the northeastern arm (XT255465) was occupied by elements of the 33d and 88th Regiments and the D-14 Local Force Battalion. There was a much stronger attack against the CU CHI string of hamlets as at least a battalion size force occupied the area in well prepared defensive positions.

At midnight, 10-11 September, a PF element ambushed an enemy platoon at XT253493. Small arms and automatic weapons fire was exchanged in this action until approximately 0018 hours when the enemy withdrew towards the east. The 677th RF Company (XT202496) was attacked at 0115 hours by an unknown number of enemy who fired small arms and automatic weapons. This contact continued until the enemy withdrew at approximately 0245 hours.

PHOUC NINH District Headquarters received a mortar attack at 0130 hours and by 0140 hours PF positions at XT200490 and XT197491 and RF outposts at XT217553, XT216552, XT126508, XT126503 and XT187453 were under either a mortar and/or ground attack by an unknown number of enemy personnel who fired small arms, automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenades.

An estimated enemy company entered the new market place in the city (XT189490) at 0235 hours. This force was encountered by a PF element as automatic weapons and small arms fire was exchanged until 0300 hours when the enemy withdrew towards the south.

The pattern of province wide coordinated early morning attacks included an attack by fire on the US II Field Force Fire Support Base

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ST. BARBARA located at the village of BAU CO (XT275684) approximately 20 kilometers northeast of TAY NINH. Three fire base personnel were wounded when 50 rounds of 82mm mortar fire fell on the camp at 0235 hours.

In the meantime, the enemy struck to the east of TAY NINH in co-ordinated attacks against the DAU TIENG Base Camp and a company size blocking position in the BEN CUI Rubber Plantation approximately seven kilometers west of the base camp (XT437451).

The base camp came under mortar fire at 0345 hours as 12 rounds slammed into the complex. The camp's artillery immediately opened fire on suspected enemy mortar positions.

At 0425 hours elements of the 275th VC/NVA Regiment attacked the blocking position manned by A Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) (inclosure 32). Supported by artillery, helicopter gunships and Air Force fighter-bombers, the company repulsed the enemy assaults. At 0630 hours, A Company of the mechanized battalion moved from DAU TIENG to reinforce C Company. During the day, the two companies pushed out of the blocking position to sweep the immediate area. This sweep located 99 enemy dead, five machine guns, 18 AK-47 rifles, two pistols, one field radio, two RPG-2 rocket launchers, three RPG-7 rocket launchers and a large amount of medical supplies. The battalion's losses in the contact were three killed and 20 wounded.

The BEN KEO Training Center received 30 rounds of 82mm mortar at 0700 hours and TAY NINH City (XT2050) received a mortar attack at 0745

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hours. One enemy regiment was reported in the vicinity of XT289480 and moving towards the city at this time from the east.

At 0840 hours, 20 foot craters which interdicted Highway 22 were discovered at XT285365 and XT375288. These craters caused this primary LOC to be impassable until repair could be accomplished.

There were three distinct contacts reported in the TAY NINH area at noon. The RF/PF were in contact with an estimated two companies in the vicinity of XT2450, an estimated company at XT2745 and an estimated three battalions at XT1950. The city was placed on red alert at noon; however, the airfield was secure and most roads remained open. Several air strikes were being conducted outside the city but there was no action within TAY NINH City proper.

The 3d Airborne Brigade (ARVN), which had been participating in the 25th Infantry Division's (ARVN) operation, was alerted during the morning of 11 September for deployment into TAY NINH City. Action of the brigade was described in an interview with the senior advisor (inclosures 60 and 99). The brigade's 9th Battalion was alerted immediately and the brigade commander visited the city to effect coordination with the province chief and commanding generals of III Corps (ARVN) and II Field Force for future operations. A copy of the brigade's operations overlays for this period is attached (inclosure 61).

The brigade's command post moved to TAY NINH during the afternoon and was co-located with the province chief's headquarters; however, on

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14 September it was relocated to the nearby sector tactical operations center. The Airborne Division Headquarters was dispatched from its base at TAN SON NHUT to VEN VEN (XT350324) with the mission of commanding or controlling all Vietnamese forces in the province and coordinating with the various US units. This headquarters arrived and began operations at 111800 hours. A copy of the senior advisor's After Action Report with operational overlay is attached (inclosure 62).

The 9th Battalion was given the mission of air assaulting into a landing zone vic XT246448 from a pick-up point at XT350335 and clearing the northeast finger of the city while local PHU KHUONG district forces continued to hold in the southwest. After completing the assault at approximately 1330 hours, the battalion deployed into two elements of two companies with one element moving north and one northeast. The two companies moving north established contact vic XT247475 at 1625 hours while the other element of two companies continued northeast to vic XT246476 before establishing contact at approximately 1745 hours.

The attack continued throughout the night with the local civilians' aid in identifying enemy positions as the battalion commander was ordered to have his portion of the city cleared by dawn. The soldiers were instructed not to use small arms but make extensive use of hand grenades while clearing the area. Artillery was not fired into the built up area but was utilized to form a block at the northeastern edge of the city.

Helicopter gunships were requested and arrived on station but due to the prevailing weather conditions had to abort. Organic mortars fired

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about 200 rounds in the city, and the airborne soldiers continued to move, not searching, just throwing hand grenades into all bunkers which were discovered.

The 2d Airborne Battalion was given the mission of air assaulting into a landing zone at XT253505 and attacking towards the west. An attack in this direction would have driven the enemy further into the city and all friendly forces were attempting to eject him at this time. The brigade commander and his US advisor, MAJ Roy D. Martin, reconsidered the plan, designated XT228514 as the landing zone, and gave the battalion the mission of attacking to the southeast.

The battalion completed the air assault at approximately 111540 September, deployed in two columns of two companies each, and initiated the attack. After moving approximately three blocks into the city, resistance was encountered but indications were that the enemy was withdrawing towards the east. The advance was stopped, and after about four hours an element of the battalion was maneuvered to the northeast for an attack upon the enemy's north flank. This maneuver was successful and resistance ceased at approximately 2300 hours. The battalion completed the sweep about 0100 hours without further contact and occupied a defensive position at the city's eastern edge until daylight.

Action in the CU CHI hamlet area on 11 September was initially contained in the vic XT190505 by two RF companies of the province reserve along with the local PF, other cadre, and the province's armored car

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platoon. The remainder of the province's RF reserve was deployed at FHOUC NINH District Headquarters. Elements of the 25th Infantry Division's 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, occupied blocking positions along a line XT1845 to XT1850 and from XT1850 east to XT2050 to support these RF/PF contacts.

Agents later reported that the enemy force moved into the CU CHI hamlet area from CAMBODIA, by crossing the Vam Co Dong River, during daylight, on 11 September without being observed by friendly forces. The RF launched at least four assaults to the south to seize THAI HOA (XT190-505), one of the five hamlets in the CU CHI string, only to meet firm resistance each time followed by a fierce counterattack. The enemy was entrenched on the south side of the road which is a by-pass from Highway 22 to the TAY NINH Base Camp. One rather interesting point is that during the day two friendly convoys traversed this road between the opposing forces without being enraged. Artillery and air strikes (F-100s with 250, 500 and 750 pound bombs) supported the action but the enemy continued to maintain his position. The hamlet was destroyed, but the objective was retaken in the afternoon before the RF were relieved by a Vietnamese marine battalion.

Task Force B (Vietnamese marines) consisting of Headquarters, 2d, 3d, 4th Marines and the 6th Airborne Battalion, ARVN, participated in an operation during the period 10-20 September under control of the Airborne Division. This operation was conducted in the province's KHIEM

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HANH District. A copy of the marine senior advisor's After Action Report of this operation is attached (inclosure 63).

The 4th Marine Battalion was attached to the 3d Airborne Brigade on 11 September, and after the air assault of the 2d and 9th Airborne Battalions had been completed, began movement by helicopter from KHIEM HANH to TAY NINH. The initial lift began at 1600 hours but was not completed until 1900 hours due to adverse weather conditions. The first company arrived at 1700 hours and joined the RF/PF in the vicinity of XT1950.

The RF/PF returned to province headquarters at 2030 hours after being relieved in place by the marine battalion. The marines established a defensive position vic XT192507 but were ordered to attack a series of objectives to the south. The attack was initiated but heavy resistance was encountered and at 0300 hours, as Vietnamese artillery support, the attack stopped until daylight.

As the Vietnamese action within TAY NINH City on 11 September took place, elements of the US 25th Infantry Division continued their screening operations beyond the city. At 1150 hours, helicopters of the B Troop, 3d Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry detected an enemy force in position along the northern base of NUI BA DEN Mountain (XT275614). The helicopters struck at the enemy and called in Air Force fighter-bombers to continue the attack. A later search of the area by ground troops discovered nine enemy dead and one RPG rocket launcher.

Companies A and B, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry sweeping through an area along the eastern base of NUI BA DEN (XT2560) at 1643 hours came

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into contact with an estimated enemy company. This contact was supported by helicopter gunships and air strikes. When the two mechanized companies pushed through the positions held by the enemy, they were unable to discover any enemy casualties. Two infantrymen were killed and seven wounded during the fight.

Helicopter gunships from B Troop, 3d Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry continued to search for the enemy north of TAY NINH during the remainder of the afternoon and early evening. Two brief contacts with enemy forces of unknown size took place with the gunships accounting for four additional enemy body counts.

On 12 September, the 9th Airborne Battalion cleared the area to the east of the city which had been heavily engaged by artillery during the night. On 13 September, two companies were moved to and placed under control of brigade headquarters, while the battalion (-) continued to search the area east of the city until 14 September. Actions of the battalion during its participation in the TAY NINH City operation were revealed in an interview with the senior advisor, CPT Samuel C. McCreary (inclosures 64 and 100).

On 12 September the 2d Airborne Battalion was ordered to attack a series of objectives to the north of the city vic XT238525. Each was seized without encountering resistance and the battalion remained at its final objective overnight. The senior advisor to the battalion, CPT Clifton G. Fouty, was interviewed concerning the battalion's actions during this battle (inclosures 65 and 101).

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The Vietnamese marine counterattack to the west of TAY NINH continued at 120630 September without contact and the first objective (AP THAI THONG 1) vic XT191502 was seized during the morning hours.

The marines regrouped and began the attack toward their second objective vic XT187494 (APTHAI THONG 2) as Vietnamese artillery fired preparatory and supporting fires; however, heavy resistance was again encountered and gunships were requested by the advisor. Nine light fire teams were expended during the afternoon hours and VNAF flareships supported the action after darkness. Contact continued throughout the night and at 0930 hours on 13 September the second objective was secured (inclosure 66).

On 12 September, the 1st Brigade continued its operations beyond the city with the exception of A and B Companies, 4th Battalion (M) which late in the day moved into blocking positions to the immediate west of TAY NINH (XT1849-XT2049) to support the Vietnamese marines in that vicinity.

At 1035 hours, the northbound CU CHI-TAY NINH logistical convoy of the 25th Infantry Division came under enemy fire as it proceeded along Route 22 approximately 10 kilometers south of TAY NINH (XT316354). A Company, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M) and B Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry reacted quickly to this attack conducted by elements of the 88th VC/NVA Regiment. Helicopter gunships and artillery were called in to support the running battle which continued throughout the day. Later in

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the day, a task force under the control of the 3d Battalion, 187th Infantry (Airborne) moved into the area from the 3d Brigade in south to take over the action. The task force consisted of B Company of the airborne battalion, D Company, 2d Battalion, 506th Infantry (Airborne) and B Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry. Confirmed enemy losses in this overall contact area (XT3135-XT3335) during the day were 23 killed, seven AK-47 rifles and two machine guns. US forces sustained three killed and 16 wounded.

A DAU TIENG-TAY NINH convoy was intercepted by the enemy at 1545 hours along Route 26 eight kilometers east of TAY NINH (XT345456). A and B Companies, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) reacted to this enemy attack with the support of artillery and helicopter gunships. One serial of three in the convoy was able to move through the enemy fire to continue to TAY NINH. The remaining two were turned back, one moving into Fire Support Base RAWLINS and the other returning to DAU TIENG for the night. Enemy losses in this action could not be determined. The mechanized battalion sustained two men killed, nine wounded and one APC destroyed.

Helicopter gunships of B Troop, 3d Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry again conducted extensive armed aerial reconnaissance around the city in search of the enemy. Three separate contacts by these aircraft accounted for five confirmed enemy body counts.

The enemy maintained his pressure on US base areas by conducting rocket and mortar attacks on TAY NINH Base Camp at 0100 hours, DAU TIENG Base Camp at 1202 hours and Fire Support Base ST. BARBARA at 2315 hours.

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Fire Support Base BUELL came under its fourth major enemy assault during the Battle for TAY NINH at 0200 hours on 13 September. The attack began with a massive 1000 round bombardment of mixed 60mm and 82mm mortar fire followed closely by human wave assaults by two battalions of the 272d VC/NVA Regiment. The base's defenders from the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry met the enemy attack from their well-bunkered positions by laying down a murderous defensive base of fire. This was supported by artillery, helicopter gunships, Air Force AC-47 "Spooky" aircraft and several fighter-bomber strikes. Again, the enemy was turned back failing to ever reach the fire base's wire barrier. The fire ceased at 0400 hours, and the infantry moved forward to locate 76 enemy dead and capture one POW, 21 AK-47 rifles, 10 RPG-2 rocket launchers, one RPG-7 rocket launcher, four machine guns, one 75mm recoilless rifle, one SKS rifle, 11 75mm rounds and 9000 small arms rounds. US losses in the attack were 17 wounded.

In ARVN actions on 13 September, the 2d Airborne Battalion which had been operating north of the city was air assaulted to XT195478 with the mission of attacking west. The battalion completed the assault at approximately 1400 hours, and after encountering some resistance in the landing zone deployed with two companies leading the attack to the west and two companies trailing. The lead companies encountered heavy automatic weapons and B-40 rocket fire from a well supplied, disciplined and entrenched enemy force. The attack stopped, and the two uncommitted companies were

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ordered to move north across a road which ran from east to west and attack the enemy's flank. The enemy used the road as a firing lane to preclude this type maneuver and movement stopped.

After a VNAF air strike hit the position with 250 pound bombs, another attempt was made but extensive enemy fire once again stopped all progress. US Army gunships arrived on station and were employed while these two airborne companies crossed the road and moved towards the west. However, advancement was slow.

Vietnamese artillery fire supported the airborne along with six US Army gunships, but the battalion had made little progress by nightfall. Several casualties were sustained and two emergency ammunition resupplies were made by US helicopters. Flareships arrived on station, and the attack was reinitiated, but the enemy fire continued to be extensive even after employment of the air strikes, artillery and gunships.

The battalion command group attempted to move west but encountered elements of the enemy force and suffered some casualties. The battalion commander ordered the two companies on the north of the road to move forward (west), and as a result the enemy force which had attacked the command group was overrun.

These two companies continued their attack and by 2400 hours the battalion had reached its objective (road intersection XT188478) and consolidated. Resistance had diminished by this time and after daylight hours all the friendly casualties were evacuated. The battalion returned to XT238523 after policing the battle area on 14 September.

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Elsewhere in the area during the day, Fire Support Base ST. BARBARA was struck by 33 rounds of 82mm mortar fire at 0945 hours. C Company, 9th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M), swept through an area nine kilometers east of the city (XT3544) where at 1155 hours it encountered an estimated enemy company. Calling in supporting artillery, helicopter gunships and air strikes, the mechanized company forced the enemy to withdraw to the north. A search of the area revealed six enemy dead. One US infantryman was killed and six wounded in the fight.

Company A of the mech battalion sustained five men killed and 10 wounded at 1340 hours when the unit was ambushed by an enemy force during a sweep of route 4 three kilometers north of the NUI BA DEN. The company was supported by artillery and helicopter gunships, but enemy losses in the contact could not be determined (inclosures 67 and 102).

Earlier in the day, a helicopter gunship team flying armed aerial reconnaissance around Fire Support Base BUELL in follow up to the enemy attack, observed an enemy platoon size force in a position at XT195598. The gunships attacked with rockets and automatic weapons fire accounting for six enemy kills. One helicopter was damaged by the enemy's return fire.

On 14 September, the 9th Airborne Battalion air assaulted to the vicinity of XT149453, with the mission of attacking a series of objectives towards the east. The attack was initiated as Vietnamese artillery and US gunships provided support; however, contact was negative

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throughout the day. The battalion established a night defensive position (XT190436) for the night, and on 15 September conducted another air assault in the area with negative contact again.

On 14 September, 25th Infantry Division action shifted to the CAU KHOI Rubber Plantation southeast of TAY NINH (XT3345-XT3544). At 0933 hours B Company, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M) and C Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M), conducting a sweep in the area came into contact with an estimated enemy battalion. The running battle that followed continued throughout the day and was supported by artillery, helicopter gunships and air strikes. A total of 41 enemy bodies were discovered by the advancing infantrymen along with six AK-47 rifles, three RPG rocket launchers, one machine gun, 24 RPG rounds and 16 hand grenades. One infantryman was killed and seven wounded in the day long operation.

At 1200 hours, C Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) killed five enemy and captured one AK-47 rifle and one RPG rocket launcher in a skirmish in the BEN CUI Rubber Plantation seven kilometers west of DAU TIENG (XT425447). In the meantime, the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, sweeping out of BUELL accounted for six enemy dead in several small contacts. In addition, the unit captured eight 82mm mortar rounds, 48 RPG rounds, five 57mm recoilless rifle rounds, 63 hand grenades and 1600 small arms rounds.

The ARVN airborne units continued to conduct reconnaissance in force missions in the province but did not establish significant contact as the enemy began withdrawing into his base areas or was avoiding contact.

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After the general enemy withdrawal from the vicinity of TAY NINH on 14 September, the 25th Infantry Division's 1st Brigade continued to find contact with main force enemy units in the vicinity of the BEN CUI and CAU KHOI Rubber Plantations and in countering a serious enemy threat to Fire Support Base ST. BARBARA and BAU CO.

At 0121 hours on 16 September, an enemy battalion size force attacked a blocking position in the BEN CUI seven kilometers west of DAU TIENG (XT443451) (inclosure 32). The position was manned by A Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) which repulsed the attack with the support of artillery and helicopter gunships. The enemy assault broke at 0445 hours, and the infantry swept out of their defensive positions to recover 42 enemy bodies and capture one POW, 11 AK-47 rifles, one machine gun, seven RPG rocket launchers, 55 RPG rounds, 10 Bangalore torpedoes and 1050 small arms rounds. Five infantrymen were wounded in the attack.

At the same time the attack on the mech company was taking place, enemy guns shelled the DAU TIENG Base Camp with 12 82mm mortar rounds, 18 75mm recoilless rifle rounds and nine 107mm rounds. At 1157 hours, the base camp was again hit with five 107mm rockets, and 11 82mm mortar rounds falling on the complex. Three US personnel were wounded in these two attacks.

In the CAU KHOI at 1243 hours on 16 September the enemy ambushed elements of the DAU TIENG-TAY NINH logistical convoy at a point eight kilometers east of TAY NINH (XT352444). Company C, 4th Battalion, 23d

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Infantry (M) reacted to this attack with the assistance of helicopter gunships and fighter-bomber air strikes. After the enemy was driven off, the reaction forces located two enemy bodies. Seven US soldiers were killed and eight wounded in the attack.

During the day, the enemy maintained pressure on Fire Support Base ST. BARBARA at BAU CO with a 1607 hours mortar barrage of 31 82mm rounds. This attack wounded five personnel within the fire base.

On 17 September, the enemy again attempted to eliminate the blocking forces of the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) which straddled his line of communications through the BEN CUI Rubber Plantation. B Company of the mechanized battalion occupied such a position on the night of 16-17 September at XT443451. At 0205 hours a battalion of the 275th VC/NVA Regiment hurled itself against the position in a futile attack that continued until 0452 hours. Thirty-eight enemy bodies were located around the company's perimeter the following morning having been cut down by the company's defensive fires and supporting fire from artillery, helicopter gunships and Air Force air strikes. In addition to abandoning these dead as he withdrew, the enemy also left behind 18 AK-47 rifles, two pistols, eight RPG rocket launchers, one machine gun, one field radio, 71 RPG rounds and 50 hand grenades. Two mech company members were killed in the attack and 14 were wounded.

Later in the day at 1202 hours, elements of the 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M), sweeping along route 26 in the CAU KHOI seven kilometers

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east of TAY NINH (XT338458) came into contact with an estimated enemy battalion. Artillery, helicopter gunships and fighter-bomber strikes were called in to hammer the enemy's positions. By 1400 hours the enemy withdrew leaving behind 18 dead. Two infantrymen were killed and 22 wounded in this fierce fire fight.

The enemy's threat to ST. BARBARA continued on 17 September as the base was hit by two separate mortar attacks (1851 and 2050 hours) which resulted in 15 men being wounded. On 18 September the fire base was struck by three separate attacks by fire at 0810, 1520 and 1612 hours which wounded 16 personnel within the base. These attacks by fire on the base continued for several more days but were gradually eliminated as the 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M) moved to BAU CO to conduct extensive sweep operations in the area and drive off the harrassing enemy elements.

The 275th VC/NVA Regiment made its last attempt to restore its blocked line of communications through the BEN CUI when it conducted the final attack in a series against the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry (M) which occupied the rubber plantation. At 0005 hours on 20 September the night position of the mechanized battalion located five kilometers west of DAU TIENG at XT444451 came under a heavy mortar attack followed by a human wave assault on its perimeter. The enemy attack was met head on by the company's base of defensive fire, artillery, helicopter gunships, AC-47 "Spooky" aircraft and Air Force air strikes.

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Again, the enemy assaults were stopped short by the massive fires and the enemy was forced to break contact and withdraw. As he fled north, the enemy abandoned 37 bodies, two wounded (POW), 14 AK-47 rifles, three RPG rocket launchers, three machine guns, 16 Bangalore torpedoes, 10 RPG rocket rounds, 38 hand grenades and 6600 small arms rounds. Five US infantrymen were wounded in the attack.

Later in the morning at 1045 hours, Fire Support Base RAWLINS (XT352-445) came under an unusual daylight attack by the 3d Battalion, 174th VC/NVA Regiment. C Company, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry (M) and B Company, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry reacted to this enemy effort with the assistance of supporting artillery, helicopter gunships and Air Force air strikes. The enemy battalion was driven off with the loss of 28 dead. In sweeping the immediate area after the firing ceased, the two reaction companies captured two wounded POWs, two machine guns, four RPG-2 rocket launchers, one RPG-7 rocket launcher, six AK-47 rifles, one pistol, two sub-machine guns, four RPG-2 rounds, one RPG-7 round and nine hand grenades (inclosure 68 and 103).

With these two actions, the VC/NVA main force battalions, and regiments of the 5th and 9th VC/NVA Divisions withdrew from the general area east of TAY NINH and heavy contact was lost.

The final battles of the September phase of the Battle for TAY NINH were fought by ARVN forces west and north of the city near the CAMBODIAN border.

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The 276th Regional Forces Rifle Company was located in an outpost at PHOUC TAN (XT018435) which is approximately two kilometers east of the CAMBODIAN border on Highway 13 (inclosure 69). This outpost sustained stand-off/harrassing attacks by the enemy during darkness on 17 and 18 September. The 1st Battalion, 272d VC/NVA Regiment attacked this outpost in force during the night of 19-20 September; however, the defenders were able to hold the position although it was 90% destroyed during this action. A body count was made the next morning and 35 enemy KIAs were discovered with 19 being found inside the outpost's defensive barriers.

The 1st Vietnamese Marine Battalion was placed OPCON to province headquarters on 20 September and moved to PHOUC TAN for security purposes. The marines were air assaulted into a landing zone at XT023437 during the afternoon and by 1940 hours were operational in a defensive position at the outpost. An extensive indirect fire attack of mixed 60/82mm mortars was initiated upon these defenders at approximately 0230 hours on 21 September, followed with a ground attack by the 1st Battalion, 271st VC/NVA Regiment which was supported by anti-aircraft weapons. An Air Force "Spooky" (AC-47) aircraft arrived on station and supported the action along with 175mm artillery from TAY NINH and US Army helicopter gunships until approximately 1000 hours when contact began to diminish. A sweep of the battlefield after the enemy withdrew resulted in the discovery of 125 enemy dead and five POWs (inclosures 70, 71 and 72).

The marine battalion continued to operate in the vicinity of the outpost until 22 September when it was relocated to PHU LOI. The attacks

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upon PHOUC TAN outpost were probably best described by General Williamson, CG, 25th Infantry Division, who remarked that the enemy was conducting ATTs.

To the north of TAY NINH in War Zone "C" the KATUM CIDG Special Forces Camp (Company A, 5th Special Forces (ABN)) (XT330898) began to receive indirect fire at 0255 hours on 25 September when approximately twenty 122mm and 150 82mm mortar rounds mixed with over 100 rounds of rocket propelled grenades were fired by the enemy (inclosure 73). A battalion size ground attack (D-5 Local Force Battalion) was launched at 0330 hours, and a portion of the camp was seized by the enemy who began utilizing flame throwers and satchel charges to destroy the defenders' positions. The CIDG forces employed organic weapons, flareships, Spooky, tactical air support, artillery and conducted a successful counterattack to destroy this enemy force. Contact ceased at 0545 hours after the enemy lost 141 killed and seven POWs. An assortment of individual weapons, flame throwers, radios, demolitions and ammunition was captured by the camp defenders.

On 26 September the THIEN NGON CIDG Camp (XT0881) also to the north of TAY NINH in War Zone "C" received approximately 400 rounds of mixed mortar, rockets and rocket propelled grenades beginning at 2145 hours. This attack by fire was followed by a ground attack by a reinforced battalion of the 271st VC/NVA Regiment moving from the southeast. Organic weapons along with "Spooky" aircraft and supporting artillery were

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employed by the camp defenders and 157 of the enemy were killed and five captured in this action. Also captured from the attackers were 35 AK-47 rifles, 14 RPG-2 rocket launchers, seven RPG-7 rocket launchers, one 57mm recoilless rifle, one 60mm mortar tube and one field radio. CIDG Force losses in the attack were two killed and 11 wounded.

The PHOUIC TAN outpost was attacked in strength again during the night of 26-27 September. This outpost had been reinforced by the 8th Airborne Battalion which had been placed under operational control of province headquarters after the Airborne Division returned to its home base at TAN SON NHUT.

The outpost, occupied by the battalion and RF troops, received a ground attack from the south at approximately 2240 hours by an undetermined number of enemy soldiers. Small arms and automatic weapons fire was exchanged and a flareship was requested. The action increased in intensity and at 0150 hours, a heavy ground attack was launched by an estimated enemy regiment.

ARVN artillery supported by firing VT and helicopter gunships and an AC-47 "Spooky" were requested. One light fire team was expended when "Spooky" arrived on station. By 0340 hours, the enemy had penetrated the defenders' perimeter and "Spooky" was unable to provide close support due to the intense anti-aircraft fire in the area. The enemy fired an estimated 2000 rounds of 82mm mortars from eight different locations around the outpost.

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Heavy contact diminished to sporadic at 0520 hours and by approximately 0600 hours, contact was broken. The airborne battalion sustained 24 wounded while the RF had one killed and nine wounded. Enemy losses were 148 killed, one POW, 48 AK-47 rifles, three machine guns, nine RPG-7 rocket launchers. No positive identification of the attacking enemy force could be made.

The defense of TAY NINH City and its surrounding area in August was primarily a US operation and some unfortunate incidents occurred. A US mechanized squad went to investigate a group of refugees who had assembled near the second Holy See (XT265463). There was no action there at the time. However, when an APC arrived on the scene, it was destroyed immediately by rocket propelled grenade and machine gun fire. One of the US soldiers threw a hand grenade, and 17 refugees were killed either by the grenade and/or ensuing exchanging of small arms fire as the refugees were near the enemy who was well entrenched.

In another incident, the enemy warned the population in a hamlet (XT245475) on 24 August that artillery fire would be placed in the area that night. The people, with candles lit, were moving out of the area along a principal road when 19 rounds of ¹⁵⁵ 105mm artillery caught them in the open. (Personnel move at night with candles to preclude ARVN forces for taking them under fire due to curfew hours imposed.) This artillery damaged or destroyed several homes, wounded 40 and killed 24 civilians. These incidents created anti-US sentiment among the population; however, officials did preclude any demonstrations.

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It was never determined how the enemy knew the artillery would be fired into the area, but it was plain the enemy was making every attempt to discredit all US actions in the defense of the city.

Province officials believe that the enemy created another incident prior to the September attack as mortars and 40mm rounds were fired into the NINH THANH Village and Holy See. Analysis of the impacts readily revealed that the attack was with US made ammunition but believed to be initiated by the enemy. These incidents created serious psychological problems.

The defense of and action within the city in September was a Vietnamese operation and well received from a psychological point of view by the population. Government officials exploited the situation with five PSYWAR/OPS teams which were attached after the action began (inclosure 74).

A pursuit of the enemy by ARVN was not made after the September attack again, because the Vietnamese officials were afraid for their forces to be drawn away from the city. Again, the enemy let the intelligence agents report that another attack was imminent and conducted mortar attacks upon many friendly outposts while withdrawing back into his safe havens. This presented the appearance that another attack upon the city was being initiated. Officials were concerned because intelligence reports indicated a few enemy regiments were in the vicinity but had not been committed against the city in September.

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13. (C) Miscellaneous:

a. Medical: The majority of US casualties were evacuated to and received their initial medical treatment at Companies B and D, 25th Medical Battalion, and the 45th Surgical Hospital at the TAY NINH Tactical Operations Support Base. All other US casualties were treated by elements of the 68th Medical Group or organic divisional medical facilities. An interview with the Executive Officer, Company D, 25th Medical Battalion provided a description of the medical support and also a rather comprehensive summary of the tactical situation during the August and September battles (inclosures 75, 76 and 104).

b. Engineer: The 65th Engineer Battalion, 25th Infantry Division, was employed in a direct support role by one company supporting each infantry brigade. It was not required to provide general support, continue base camp development or similar projects. The battalion commander described its employment and commented on equipment shortages, casualties and his viewpoint regarding the enemy's attack upon TAY NINH (inclosures 77 and 105). The battalion's Company A supported the 1st Brigade during this period. The company commander described in an interview how the company was deployed, nature of tasks performed, support received, equipment status, maintenance and problems (inclosures 78 and 106). The battalion's chaplain was also interviewed to obtain a description of religious coverage. He related problems encountered and his impression of the engineer soldier's performance in combat and other topics (inclosures 79 and 107).

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c. Command and Control Ship (UH-1): The experiences of a C&C ship pilot were obtained by interviewing WO Henry L. Hansen who is assigned to the 25th Aviation Battalion. This individual was the pilot for the 1st Brigade commander during the reporting period (inclosures 108 and 109).

14. (C) Results:

a. Friendly losses:	<u>25th Infantry Division</u>	<u>Vietnamese Forces</u>	<u>US Advisors</u>	<u>Total</u>
Killed in action:	137	138	1	276
Wounded in action:	755	370		1125
Missing in action:	1	8		9
Tanks damaged:	2			2
Trucks damaged:	11			11
APCs damaged:	12			12
Helicopters damaged:	3			3
Tanks destroyed:	4			4
Trucks destroyed:	13			13
APCs destroyed:	28			28
b. Enemy losses:	<u>25th Infantry Division</u>	<u>Vietnamese Forces</u>		<u>Total</u>
Killed in action:	1618	871		2489
POW:	43	27		70
Hoi Chanhs:	7			7
Detainees:	30			30
Individual weapons captured or destroyed:	235	215		445

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	<u>25th Infantry Division</u>	<u>Vietnamese Forces</u>	<u>Total</u>
Crew served weapons cap- tured or destroyed:	151	90	241
Documents captured:	29 pounds		29 pounds
Medical supplies captured or destroyed:	5 pounds		5 pounds
High explosive rounds cap- tured or destroyed:	414	20	434
Mines captured or destroyed:	193	11	204
Grenades captured or destroyed:	1314	128	1442
Small arms rounds cap- tured or destroyed:	75,030	11,000	86,030
RPG rounds captured or destroyed:	902	1344	2246
Field radios captured:	4	4	4
Mortar fuzes captured:	34		34
Rice captured or destroyed:	1800 pounds	380 bags	
Milk captured:		220 cans	220 cans
Fatigues:		400 pair	400 pair
Machine gun ammunition:		15 boxes	15 boxes
Heavy machine gun mounts:		2	2
Bangalores:		21	21
B-40 boosters:		70	70
Sampans:		6	6

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	<u>25th Infantry Division</u>	<u>Vietnamese Forces</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bicycles:		5	5
Field telephone:		1	1
Explosives:		1000 kilos	1000 kilos
AK magazines:		130	130

c. Statistics reported by Headquarters, USARV, revealed that 710 Americans were killed and 2044 wounded in the Republic of Vietnam during the month of August. Of this total, 126 were killed and 205 were wounded in TAY NINH Province. In September, 641 were killed and 2058 were wounded throughout the country with 60 being killed and 171 wounded in TAY NINH Province (inclosure 110).

FOR THE COMMANDER:

110 Incl

1. Map, CAMBODIA and VIETNAM, 1:50,000
2. Pictomap, VIETNAM, 1:25,000
3. Map, VIETNAM, 1:100,000
4. Map, Controlled Mosaic, TAY NINH City and vicinity
5. List of Personnel Interviewed
6. Task Organization, 25th Infantry Division, 17 August-28 September
7. Designations and Locations, RF Rifle Companies
8. Designations and Locations, PF Platoons

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9. III Corps CORDS Info Brief (copy 1 only)
10. Map, Overprint designating area nicknames in III Corps
11. Summary of B-52 Missions
12. Dates and Locations of B-52 Strikes, TAY NINH Province, August and September 1968
13. OPORD 1-68, 25th Infantry Division (US)
14. Message, CG, II FFORCV, 31 May 1968
15. Map, TAOR of 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division
16. Sketch of TAY NINH and Aerial Photograph of city bridge and province headquarters
17. III Corps PERINTREPS, Numbers 35, 36, 37, 40, 41 and 42 (OCMH copy 1 only)
18. 25th Infantry Division PERINTREP Number 14
19. 25th Infantry Division PERINTREP Number 15
20. Aerial Photo, Fire Support Base RAWLINS
21. Aerial Photo, Fire Support Base ST. BARBARA
22. Situation Sketch of TAY NINH City, 17-18 August 1968
23. Synopsis of Interview, DSA for PSYOPS, TAY NINH
24. Synopsis of Interview, DSA, TAY NINH Province
25. Synopsis of Interview, Asst Sector Advisor, TAY NINH Province
26. Combat Action Analysis, Fire Support Base BUELL II, 18 August 1968
27. Aerial Photo, Fire Support Base BUELL II (Copy 1. only)
28. Synopsis of Interview, CO, Battery B, 7/11 Artillery, 18 and 22 August
29. Synopsis of Interview, with 7 defenders, FSB BUELL, 18 August
30. Photographic Study of NUI BA DEN (OCMH copy 1 only)

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31. Extracts, III Corps TOC Journals
32. Recommendation for PUC, 1/5 with Maps, Routes, Sketches and a Narrative (Copy 1 only)
33. Synopsis of Interview, 7 members, Company B, 1/5, 18 August
34. Synopsis of Interview, SA, 51st Ranger Battalion
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