

Notes on The
Battle of Kontum
1972

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"The Scribe"

INTRODUCTION

On 1 April 1972 the North Vietnamese Army invaded South Vietnam. An article in the Pacific Stars and Stripes read: "President Nixon was reported Saturday to be closely watching the North Vietnam's long-awaited major offensive as a test of the success of his Vietnamization program to shift the burden of the war effort to South Vietnam." The battle that had been in the making for years had finally begun. The enemy opened three major fronts. The first was in I Corps when he sent an estimated 30,000 troops streaming across the DMZ. The second was in III Corps where the enemy attacked out of his Cambodian sanctuaries and tried to capture the city of AN LOC. The third was in II Corps where two NVA divisions tried to capture the Provincial Capital of Kontum. This paper deals only with the battle of Kontum.

For the first time in the Vietnam war both U.S. and Vietnamese forces depended completely on each other for victory. Neither one of the allies could win alone. The U.S. forces could support the Vietnamese however, the responsibility for the ground combat rested squarely on the ARVN. The Battle for Kontum typified the combat on all fronts. The weaknesses and strengths that became obvious as the battle developed are a source of pride and sometimes shame for all involved.

Although there were no U.S. ground combat troops directly involved there were a large number of Americans acting as advisors and flying in U.S. aircraft in support of the South Vietnamese effort. Many of these Americans died doing their duty. It is to these men that this small literary effort is dedicated.

Phase I The battle for the Fire support Bases

The battle has begun. Early on the morning of 3 Apr a flight of gunships and slicks lifted off Camp Hallaway. There ^{was} ~~were~~ a total of eight gunships from the 361st ~~AWC~~ and 57th AHC plus five slicks from the 57th. The decision had been ^made the night before by LTC Charles Bagnal, CO of the 52nd ^{AVN} ~~AVN~~ BN (CBT) to attempt a rescue of the CH-47 crew that had been trapped on FSB 421 ^{SINCE} ~~since~~ their A/C was shot down on 31 MAR. FSB 421 had been under heavy enemy ^{attack} ~~ABF~~ to include arty, ^{MORTARS} ~~mortars~~, rockets and R.B. fire. The enemy had completely ^{surrounded} ~~surrounded~~ the FSB with AAA weapons; 51 cal 14.7 and 23 ^{mm} ~~mm~~. Several attempts ^{were} made to get A/C into the FSB but the fire was too intense. As the ^{sun} ~~sun~~ started to rise on the morning of 3 Apr. our aircraft approached KTM. When Col Bagnal reported in ^{to} ~~with~~ the AVN Cgd HQ, at Vo Dinh he was told that a heavy ground ^{attack} ~~attack~~ was in progress ^{AGAINST} ~~against~~

F5B 421. The gunships were
^{immediately} sent to the F5B.
the four sets of guns made
repeated runs on the ^{perimeter}
of the base. Large troop ^{formation}
were ^{observed} in the assault.
all APC received ^{intense}
enemy AA fire. Rockets ^{machine gun}
and 40 mm fire from the
gunships poured down on
the attacking enemy. Artillery
from ^{near} F5B's impacted
on the south and west ends.
The ^{enemy} were able to ^{penetrate}
the perimeter ^{carrying} heavy
machine guns and rocket
launchers. The ARVN ^(about) units
on the base along with the four
U.S. crew ^{members} were forced
into the ^{northern} half of the
compound. The U.S. ^{advisor}
in the base requested friendly
fire on his position. The
gunships responded by placing
fire inside the compound.
As the morning progressed
the ^{enemy} attack began to
subside - it was becoming
evident the ^{terrible} toll our
fire power had taken on the enemy

Later in the day the enemy ^{drove} withdrew
leaving ^{hundreds} of dead and
^{numerous} numerous weapons. Thus ended
the first major enemy attack.
As luck would have it, we
had the breaks. The fact that
on that particular morning we
had our gunships on station
was the key to success.

The next day an ARVN company
escorted the U.S. crewmen to
the north so that a push could
be made with forces coming
down the ridge ^{line} from
another FSB. As they ^{moved}
out of the FSB to the ^{north}
they ^{observed} the devastation
^{wrought} wrought by the gunships. Over
200 ^{enemy} enemy bodies were found
north of the perimeter. After
moving up the ^{ridge} ridge line
to the north the U.S.
^{crewmen} crewmen were ^{extracted}
by a ^{VNAF} VNAF UH-1H with-
out incident.

For the next several
days the ^{enemy} enemy pounded
the FSB's located ^{on} on the
large ridge line ^{new} of
Wartun ^{known} known as Rocket Ridge.

Several ground assaults were
beaten off by TAC air
gunships and artillery fire.
The ARVN airborne units
and units from the 22nd
ARVN Inf Div did well
defending their ~~bases~~. The
enemy, reported as ^{elements} elements
of the 320th NVA Div, was
taking a beating ^{against} against the
hardened, well defended FSB's.
It seemed he would continue
smashing himself ^{against} against these
small strong points indefinitely.
This was very much to our
advantage. The FSB's were
^{doing} doing what they were ^{intended} intended
for. If we could get the
enemy to expend his forces on
these bases our chances of
defending Kontum would increase.
This was ^{truly} truly an economy
of force ^{tactic} tactic. We used
all our advantages, ^{especially} especially
our heavy fire power. A
small element well fortified ^{and}
^{causing} causing the enemy to mass so
that fire ^{power} could do the business
of killing. The attacks came
mostly from the west although

Column

On 24 April, a column of 12 T-54 tanks came down the road from the North East. With the appearance of the tanks ARVN defenders retreated from the compound leaving their artillery pieces, tanks and a small group of U.S. advisors. The enemy employed a surface ^{wire} guided missile that destroyed part of the command bunker in which the U.S. advisors were located. Several were wounded and the advisors decided to abandon the camp escaping to the S.W. Later in the morning they ^{men} were picked up by the 1st Corps ^{Senior} Advisor MAJ. John P. ^{and} ^{abandoning} ^{was} Vann. He was flying ^{SW} on OH-58 observation helicopter. Since the AC ^{was} so small it was necessary to make several trips ^{carrying} the advisors to Dak to airstrip. Once there they were picked up by ^{ships} from the 57th AHC. The last ship out of Dak To was hit by ^{51 cal} ~~fire~~ ^{MACHINE GUN} fire and ^{began} burning in the air.

The APC was reported to have ^{have} exploded ^{on} impact in the ^{river} south of Dak To. It was presumed ~~that~~ all aboard were killed. The NVN tanks continued ^{moving} toward Dak To. ARVN ^{units} ~~then~~ ^{then} withdrew to the south. Gunships from the 361st and B/77³, ^{Air Cav Troop engaged} engaged the enemy tanks with rocket fire ^{effective} however this was ^{not} effective. The loss of Tan Lang had a disastrous morale and tactical effect on the ARVN units. Although there had been ^{rumors} and reported ^{sighting} sightings of enemy ^{armor} armor in the area the actual appearance of the T-54's in large ^{numbers} numbers produced the classic shock effect the armor types are always ^{rarely} rarely talked about. There was ^{no} no attempt made to stop them. Short of a few LAW's fired by U.S. advisors at Tan Lang. These were ineffective. By the same token, I believe the enemy was equally shocked at how easily he had taken Tan Lang. Here in lies the

fate of Kontum and possibly
II Corp. The enemy either
did not want to or, could
not, exploit rapidly his
success. Had he been able
or willing to drive his tanks
and infantry down QL 14

* he may have taken the city
within a couple of days. After
the loss of Tan Lang, chaos abounded,
ARVN forces were incapable of reacting
^{immediately} to defend the city of KTM.

There were no significant defensive
preparations made in the vicinity of the city.

I believe this weakness of the
enemy deserves careful study
especially from the point of view
of our reliance, conscious or
otherwise, on his inability
to react quickly. We will
not be able to afford such
complacency in future encounters
with a more flexible enemy.

The enemy gave the ARVN time
that he desperately needed and
it was put to good use. The
FSB's ^{on} the ridges were
abandoned. Some under pressure
others because they were
untenable. The troops walked out

leaving their 105mm howitzers behind. Some units made heavy ^{contact} contact and took ^{many} many casualties as the withdrawal turned ^{into} into an exercise in escape and evasion. ^{Some} Some units made it to the border camp of Ben Het to be extracted several days later. Others were able to move back to QL 14 and into Kontum. ^{many} Many ARVN soldiers were ^{lost} lost, either ^{captured} captured or ^{simply} simply not able to make their way back to friendly ^{locations} locations.

The 22d Div was considered combat ineffective and ^{drawn} withdrawn from KTM to ^{reorganize} reorganize and refit at ^{camp} Camp Ennare, Pleiku. Most of the air-borne units were pulled back to the ^{Saigon} Saigon area to assist in the defence in that area.

— The 23rd ARVN JAF Div from BMT was assigned the mission of defending KTM, a gloom and ^{PESSIMISM} pessimism ^{ON} ^{PARVIE} on panic infected U.S. and Viet names alike. The fate of KTM would be decided soon.

On the 29th of Apr Col John A. Todd Deputy Commander for the 1st Avn Bgd arrived at Pleiku. His presence was requested by B.G. John G. Hill Deputy S.A. for II Corps. Col. Todd would be the third member of a planning and control group consisting of the SA. Mr. John P. VANN, his deputy B.G. Hill and Col Todd. These men, along with the II Corps Commander (w/o ^{on with} Toan), made the key decisions each day on the conduct of the defense.

Another very significant event took place on 29 Apr. At about 1600 hrs two UH-1B helicopters, mounting the TOW airborne system arrived at Camp Holloway, Pleiku. These aircraft would soon make Army aviation history and prove a concept that was still in the testing stages.

The next week was devoted to preparing for the defense of Kontum. Initially there was confusion and attempts at establishing a perimeter were frustrated by command & control.

problems. The air cov. B/7/17 conducted Recce missions north and north west of KPM city. Enemy movement was evident. Tank tracks were observed to the NW of the city. There were indications of an enemy build up north and north east of the city. Large bunker complexes and fighting positions were located and targeted for air strikes. The cov. was the primary source of information of their preparedness, movements and acquired targets for air strikes. The cost was high in personnel and equipment.

Kanton received sporadic ABF's during the first week of May however the enemy turned his attention toward the border camps of Polai Kheng and Ben Het.

The battle for the
Border camps.

Phase II

On 5 May the Ranger Camps of Polesi Wlang came under intense enemy artillery and rocket fire. The rounds were impacting in a tight pattern within the perimeter. The rounds were coming in 3-5 seconds apart and appeared to come in three or four round volleys which would indicate at least three tubes firing. Enemy forces had moved in close around the perimeter and were placing accurate small arms and B-40 rocket fire on the defensive positions. The defenders reported tanks approaching from the north. A FAC working the area also observed the tanks but lost them when they moved into a wooded area. Elements from B/7/17 Cav. were called over from KTM to try and relocate the tanks. The cave and the airborn TOW aircraft arrived at about the same time. The airborn TOW A/c used the call sign "Hawk's Claw". Shortly thereafter a steady stream of F-4's began arriving over the target area. The UH-1B spotted two of the tanks, identifying them as T-54's which appeared to be painted black. The gunner

acquired one in his sight, but elected not to fire when another helicopter from the cav troop flew into his field of vision. Subsequently, the targets were spotted several times, but the gunner was unable to acquire the tanks early enough on his approach to the target to engage due to the thick jungle canopy in the area. TAC air, both U.S. and VNAF, was put in on the suspected target location in an attempt to blow away the jungle cover so that Hawk's claw could get a clear shot. F-4's and VNAF A-1-E's hit the area however, the tanks were not visible. Several secondary explosions and what appeared to be POC fires indicated that the air strikes may have destroyed at least some of the tanks. As our aircraft orbited the camp they were sporadically engaged by a 23mm AA weapon as well as 51 cal MG's and small arms fire. All aircraft were forced out of the area early in the evening due to weather. The ordeal by fire continued for the camp defenders through the night. Intense artillery, rocket

art mortar fire scored repeated direct hits on the command bunker and other bunkers in the compound. Many of these structures were damaged to the point that the defenders were forced out into individual foxholes. A 51 caliber MG was located just SE of the runway and it continually fired on approaching aircraft. The enemy had moved his troops to within 100-200 meters from the camp. Late in the afternoon of 6 May the decision was made by MA VANNI & Gen Hill to pull out the two U.S. advisors. This was a difficult decision in light of the fact that Poley Kling was located on one of the main enemy avenues of approach into the city of Hортон. Many of the camp defenders had become casualties and there was a shortage of supplies especially water. It was decided to extract the two U.S. advisors in the evening when it was dark enough to afford some concealment for the LOH from B try that would make the pick up. Just a dusk the LOH flew into the camp through

a hail of enemy fire and successfully extracted the U.S. advisors. It had also been planned to replace the ARVN Camp commander however, the VNAF ship pilot refused to fly into the camp.

Another, rather dramatic event, took place on 6 MAY. A FAC flying in support of the Polio King action received a radio call from "Gladiator 715" this aircraft had been shot down on 24 April South of Dak to and it had been assumed that there were no survivors as it was reported that the aircraft exploded on impact. The FAC established contact with a small group of survivors from the crash and elements from B try were dispatched to try and locate them. At first a trap was suspected because no one believed there could still be survivors from that crash. After locating the small party on the ground and in seeing they were in fact U.S. personnel

An LCH went in and picked up the two survivors. They were accompanied by a group of ARVN soldiers and Montagnards who grabbed the A/C when it landed and almost pulled it out of the air. Some of the aircraft in the area started receiving fire so the U.S. personnel were the only one's recovered. These men told of three other, badly wounded survivors, located in the vicinity of the crash site. A chik from B trap went into the reported location and recovered three more U.S. survivors. The men reported that they had been helped by some ARVN troops who were in the area, it was ^{also} reported that a large number of these troops were wandering around in the hills south of Dak To, probably survivors from Tan Canh, Dak To and the FSB's on Rocket Ridge. A group of Montagnards had provided food and other assistance to include an old

PRC-25 radio. It was with this radio that SP4 Seaman finally made contact with the FAC. He kept sweeping through the different frequencies in hopes of eventually making contact.

This was indeed a bright point in an otherwise very dismal picture.

Polei Keling took several ground probes during the night. The enemy attacks by fire continued on 7 May. Most of the camp was destroyed and all the defenders were living underground. It had been reported that the camp commander and other key officers attempted to escape from the camp during the night by way of a tunnel however it had collapsed during the heavy shelling. The ARVN 5-3 organized the defenders and generally took control of the situation. MA Vance spent a great deal of time flying over the besieged camp trying to offer assistance and encouragement to the defenders. On several occasions he attempted to have

his counterpart Gen Pzu talk
to the camp commander however,
the camp commander was
too shaken to talk to anyone.

Late in the afternoon of the
7th a very serious problem
arose when one of the Montagnard
Battalions (The 71st) located at
Ben Het ranger camp, apparently
mutinied, shot one of their
commanders, and seized several
Vietnamese officers as hostages.
They threatened to shoot them
unless aircraft were
made available the next day
to transport them to Pleiku
so they could spend some
time with their families. They
held a portion of the Ben Het
compound while the other
battalion, still loyal, held
the rest. Mr. Vann immediately
flew out to the camp and worked
out an agreement with the
Montagnard + Vietnamese. A plan was drawn
up to airlift the mutinous
battalion out of the camp the
next day. This seemed
to appease them and for the
moment the situation.

strategized. During the night Ben Het came under intense attacks by fire and large numbers of enemy troops were observed to the NW of the camp.

On the 8th the enemy ~~kept~~ continued putting heavy fire into both Ben Het and Polai Klong. The situation at Polai Klong improved somewhat in that an ARVN captain who spoke fairly good English and had virtually assumed command of the situation, was promoted to the rank of Maj by Gen. DZU and put in command. The most serious problem facing the defenders was their critical shortage of water. A plan was devised to air drop 3000 pound loads of water into the camp at night from CH-47's. It was decided to run the mission before sunrise in the early morning. Col John A. Todd, DBC, organized and lead the mission, however, it was aborted due to poor weather in the vic of the camp.

Enemy units moved in close to the perimeter at Ben Het heavy machine guns were located within a few hundred meters of the compound. A platoon from the 95th Rangers on a mission to destroy a 75 mm recoilless rifle engaged a reinforced NVA platoon.

Results of the contact were: Enemy 15 KIA and loss of a flame thrower and 75 mm ~~M~~ ~~R~~ ~~R~~ ~~s~~, Friendly 2 KIA, 5 WIA, one 105 mm ammo bunker and one small arms bunker destroyed. At about 1400 hrs two wire guided missiles were fired at the camp but both impacted outside the perimeter.

The result of the previous day subsided and all personnel within the camp turned their attention to the defense of their position. One of the Vietnamese held captive by the insurgents unit was released so that he could coordinate the defense.

The CO at Polai K Leng estimated that 1000 rounds of 130 mm hit the camp during the night and early morning of 9 MAY. Reports vary on the size of the attacking force, however, it is estimated that it was regimental size and supported by an unknown number of tanks. The defenders fired a 106 mm RR at the tanks, but missed. Allegedly, small arms fire became too intense to even use the M72 LAW. Approximately 350 defenders (including some dependents) moved out of the camp to the south leaving an unknown number of wounded in the camp. At 1700 hrs there were unconfirmed reports of tanks leaving the area to the west and that 150 of the defenders were 6 km west of Kanton city. As of 1800 hours 250 of the camp's defenders had joined with friendly units. In response to the loss of Polai K Leng the ARVN airlifted a battalion from the 45th Regt (23rd Div) at 1345 into a blocking position 12 km west of KTRM city.

The enemy anti-aircraft fire was quite heavy in the vicinity of Polei K Leng. A VNAF A1-E was shot down NW of the camp.

In response to the reported tank attack at Polei K Leng our Hawk's Claw package which consisted of One UH-1H COC, one UH-1B tow equipped aircraft and two AH-1G's gunships for fire support, was launched at about 0645 from Camp Holloway. After arriving on station and not able to locate suitable targets the package was diverted to Ben Het.

On the morning of 9 May Ben Het came under an intense combined arms assault. Prior to the attack the NVA sent logs through the wire from the north to detonate the mines with infantry following. The fighting continued at close quarters with the positions on the eastern perimeter

trading hands several times.
Late in the afternoon a small
enemy element still occupied
several bunkers. The defenders
stopped one tank at the main
gate with an M72. An estimated
100 enemy were killed in the
immediate vicinity of the
camp. Three PT 76 Tanks were
destroyed. Due to low clouds
the air was not able to
work however, our TOW ship
was able to easily acquire
and destroy three tanks.
During the early morning a
decision was made to send
in a slick from the 52nd AHC
to resupply the defenders with
M72 LAW's. The aircraft
was escorted by two AH-1G's
from the 361st AWC. All
aircraft received intense
automatic weapons fire and
all aircraft received hits.
The drop was successful however,
while escorting the slick out
of the camp one of the gunships
received multiple hits and
crashed several hundred
meters SE of the camp.

The aircraft exploded shortly after impact. The front seat pilot ^(LT) was observed climbing out of the aircraft and falling down near by. The A/C (Cpt Reeder) was observed running to the SW into a wooded area. After numerous air strikes an LOH from B try was able to locate and pickup (LT. _____) however Cpt Reeder was never seen again. The other AH-1G also received several hits and the A/C (Wo Allen) was shot through the chest. After the co pilot/gunner Cpt (Gambler) landed the aircraft on 0214, East of Oak To, Wo Allen was administered life saving first aid by Cpt Roy Sudaac who was flying the C-12 aircraft for Hawk's claw. After administering first aid Cpt Sudaac evacuated the stricken man to Pleiker.

The attack on Ben Het was successfully beaten off.

with the enemy taking very heavy losses. The situation was relatively stable on 10 May and by 0900 hrs 11 May the defenders had eliminated the enemy inside the camp and secured the entire perimeter. During the fighting four bunkers and the frontal perimeter wire was destroyed at about 1500 hrs the defenders swept out from the camp and established op's 1200 meters south of the airfield and 1000 meters in the other directions.

Another encouraging development was that VNAF ships resupplied the camp and extracted 14 WIA. The cumulative results from 9 May to 1600 hrs 11 May was Friendly - 9 KIA and 28 WIA; Enemy - 304 KIA and 1 PW, 29 CSW, 65 SA, one 75 MM RR, Two 60 mm mortars, 17 B-40 RL two B-41 RL, Two .51 cal MG's, a flame thrower and assorted amounts of ammunition captured. Three enemy tanks were destroyed.

This ended the second phase of the battle. | Lt

an ally he assumed that the enemy considered these border camps important enough to expend so much of his strength on them. Although Polei Heng was lost, the cost to the enemy in his attempts to take Ben Het and the time he consumed must be considered a big plus for the allies. Preparations for the defense of Kontum were proceeding at a rapid pace but time was the critical factor. The question was, would the defense be well enough organized and prepared to take what enemy one knew was soon to come.

The battle for the border camps was significant to the defense of Kontum. First it delayed the main attack on the city. Secondly, the resources expended in these well fortified camps would not be available to the enemy in his main effort. Thirdly, and probably most important,

was the fact that the successful defense of Bien Hoa was the first really positive action since the disaster at Tonkin. The fact had been established that the enemy could be stopped.

On the 11th of May the Vietnamese II Corps Commander was replaced. Gen Pzu was replaced by Gen Toan.

General Pzu departed smiling and apparently quite happy remarking that he had been fired but at least he had not lost any province capitals yet. General Toan made a favorable impression. He is reputed to be both a fighter and lover. Mr Vann had remarked that if you didn't do one you wouldn't do the other, and he had hopes that things would improve. The staff had not changed and was still very weak. Mr Vann recommended strongly that Gen. Toan use his personal influence to get some top notch people from Saigon. A matter of serious concern was that the briefings and other information

presented to the corps commander daily, bear no discernible resemblance to the actual facts. The daily staff update for the CG ~~was~~ known as the fairy tale hour. This lack of factual information created obvious problems in determining what should be done.

During the period 1 April thru 11 May 1970 CAG ~~has~~ had 136 aircraft hit by enemy fire. Sixteen of these were destroyed: six OH-6A, six AH-1G, three UH-1H, and one CH-47C.

Kontum airfield continued to take in coming rocket and artillery fire. A special note of praise should go to the courageous tower and GCA operators who continued to man their positions even when hardened veterans were cowering for cover. The defensive preparations were at a feverish pitch and it was essential to this effort to have the airfield open and operating.

On 12 May activity centered around anti-tank operations north of Kontum city. B/7/17TH Air com had been conducting VA's NW of the city and in the past few days they had detected numerous fresh tank tracks. Judging from the amount of fire our LOH's were receiving they were getting close to the quarry. The decision had been made to laager our com troop and the Hawk's claw package at Kontum air field. This presented some problems in that the airfield received sporadic AOF's throughout the day. It was believed however, that the high degree of rush was warranted. A great deal of wasted blade time was saved by having the aircraft stand by at the air field. Several aircraft were damaged but fortunately no one was killed.

One of the B troop LOH's piloted by 1st Lt — Smith finally located a T54 tank. Unfortunately the tank fired his main gun at the aircraft

along with his machine gun although the COH was not hit by the 100mm round the aircraft was shot down by SA fire. Both crew members were successfully extracted shortly, the A/C was a total loss.

In response to the tank sighting the TOW package was scrambled. The Bravo model had considerable difficulty acquiring the target because of the jungle canopy and camouflage several aircraft in the area substantiated that three T54's were in the area. After several unsuccessful passes two missiles were fired into cut bamboo camouflaged dumps in the area where the tanks were hidden with unknown results. FAC air was called in to attempt to blow away the camouflage. Following this attack the camouflage was blown away from one tank and it received a direct hit by a TOW missile. The T54 erupted into flames and was

still burning as of 19:00 hrs.
Numerous attempts were made
to hit the other tanks with TOW,
but they could not be acquired
by the gunner due to the dense
jungle and camouflage employed.
One tank was seen to move
a short distance just at dusk
and although Hawk's claw could
not get in a shot, the approx-
imate position was marked for
the TAC on station who was
attempting to get TAC Air
to strike the area again. The
area appeared to be a tank
park or assembly position
and was nominated for an
an ARC light (B52 strike) divert
that night.

TAC air was doing a job
on the enemy anywhere we
found him. There were over 50
U.S. Tac air sorties and 28
VNAF sorties in the Kontum
area on the 12th of May. In
addition there were 25 ARC
light strikes. The approaches
to Kontum city took on the
appearance of the carpet
bombing area for the breakout

at St. Lo. The resemblance stops there, however, for the ARVN were not interested in breaking out - especially to the North.

The new corps commander MA G Toan spent the night of 11-12 May in Kontum city. He visited several positions and then met with the 23rd Div and Kontum province Commanders and Staffs. He told them there would be no retreat from Kontum city. Early on the morning of the 12th he conducted inspections of units and forward positions, being highly critical of most prepared positions. It was reported that he gave his commanders up and down the line some good chewings.

The 44th Regt was scheduled to arrive in the city on the night of the 12th. The 44th was reported to be one of the best ARVN Regts in the 23d Div and everyone was anxious to get it into position before the main attack.

although everyone was raising confidence that the city would be held these were dark days and most harbored grave doubts as to the ARVN ability to hold the city.

Most of the GVN officials had evacuated the city and population control was becoming a serious problem. Our CH-47's from the 180th ASHC were doing a marvelous job of carrying in much needed supplies. Often times the A/C were forced to orbit until the shelling slowed enough for them to get into one of the pads. The chinks were taking civilian refugees and wounded out of the city. The civilian population was in a state of near panic and many of them would rush over aircraft in a desperate attempt to get out. This problem of refugee control plagued us throughout the battle.

Often times it was necessary for armed police to fire their weapons into the air to control the mobs. An unfortunate situation arose when there were unconfirmed reports that VNAF crews were charging civilians as much as 5000 piastres apiece for a ride to Pleiku. It appeared that this situation was corrected when it came to the attention of authorities.

On the 13th of May Kontum continued to receive what had become daily attacks by fire. Fortunately these attacks had not inflicted too much damage at this point in time.

ARVN losses from 1 APR to 5 May in Kontum province was reported as:

| | | | |
|---------|---------------|---------|-----------|
| 42 Regt | 31 KIA | 127 WIA | 1,304 MIA |
| 47 Regt | 60 | 335 | 127 |
| RF/PF | NOT available | | |

These units were from the 22nd Div and had suffered these losses in the fighting at Tan Canh and the

FSB's 76.

The city of Kontum was beginning to fill up with several hundred ARVN deserters. These men were probably from units of the 22nd Div who had deserted in the confusion of battle. ARVN authorities were reluctant to round these men up and return them to their units. In order to force the ARVN authorities to take action an ingenious plan was devised at SRAG HQ's and a false report was released that NVA soldiers were in the city masquerading as ARVN soldiers in uniform. This had the desired effect.

During the afternoon of the 13th the great tank hunt continued. The brave COH drivers of B Troop continued their perilous work of hovering around suspected tank locations trying to get a visual fix on them. A special place should be reserved for the men of B/7/17 air cov.

later redesignated H troop 17th Cavalry. The significance of the roll they played can not be over emphasized. They were our most important source of hard, timely intelligence, and the methods they had to use to gather it were extremely hazardous to say the least. This fact is attested to by the heavy losses they suffered in men and material.

An armored personnel carrier, which was uncovered by an APC light strike was located by the car. Hawk's claw was scrambled to engage the target. The APC was successfully engaged by two TOW missiles and it was set afire by the second hit.

One of the scout aircraft spotted a T54 tank however, due to the camouflage and canopy a steep approach angle was necessary in order to acquire the target. The angle was thought to be excessive however, the TOW

aircraft attempted to engage the tank. A very steep approach angle was necessary in order for the gunner to acquire the target. As a consequence the pilot nearly exceeded the safe flight envelope of the aircraft and had difficulty in pulling out of his dive. The missile overshot the target, another shot was attempted without success by firing at a WP grenade dropped by one of the scouts. Subsequently TAC air was requested to attempt to uncover the target, but before this could be accomplished it got dark and the day package was forced to return to base.

So it was that we learned a few lessons about our new TOA system. One was that we couldn't hit what we couldn't see. If the enemy successfully camouflaged his vehicles we simply couldn't engage them. This problem was aggravated by the dense jungle.

The second lesson was that this was a system still in the experimental stage. No one really knew what the limitations on the aircraft were. This whole system was sort of jury rigged to see if the concept was feasible. Thus it was, that we learned that the aircraft itself was a major limiting factor in the employment of airborne TOW system. It is hoped that many of these problems will be eliminated when the system is mounted on a more suitable airframe such as the Cobra.

The City

Phase III

On the morning of 14 May the Battle of Kontum began. The enemy fired 122 mm rockets and artillery rounds into the city as preparatory fires. At approximately 0530 hrs five T-54 tanks and an estimated two battalions of infantry attacked from the NW. One of the tanks broke through the perimeter and attempted to crush a bunker. This tank was put out of action by an M72 LAW fired by an ARVN soldier. Hawk's claw had been scrambled from Holloway and was on station by 0650. The sky was overcast at about 7000' which prevented TAC air from working. As the Hawk's claw aircraft arrived on station two T-54 tanks were observed withdrawing to the NW. One of them had just entered a ford across a small stream. The second tank was immediately behind the one in the stream. Hawk's claw engaged the tank in the stream first. The tank was hit by the first missile fired and the second tank was hit moments

later by the second round. It
initially burst into flames.
The first tank involved for
a few minutes then exploded
into flames also. The entire
engagement took about five
minutes. A VNAF F4C flying
in a 0-1 rocket accurate
artillery fire on the attacking
enemy troops. Enemy units
planned to withdraw under
the intense artillery fire. The
attack was over by 0900.
The burning hulks of the T-54's
were a welcome sight for both
the U.S. advisors and ARVN Troops.
T5B November, located about 7km
NW of Kontum on QL14, received
a very heavy ARF in the early
morning. The enemy continued
his rocket and artillery attack
on Kontum city and the airfield
throughout the day. One of the
ARF units was not able
to leave, if was extinguished before
it completely destroyed the PAC
facility. The ground attack
resumed at 1700 when
elements of the 1153, 1144, and

2144 were reported in heavy contact on the northern perimeter. This attack was beaten off before nightfall. Thus, ended the first day of attacks on the city itself. The defenses held and the outstanding performance of the Hawk's Claw had a very positive effect on everyone. MR. Vann was over the battle area most of the day in his OH-58 helicopter directing the defensive effort. Due to the intensity and accuracy of enemy fire directed at the airfield the decision was made to have our aircraft standby at Camp Holloway instead of Kontum.

On the 15th there were numerous reports of contacts with unknown size enemy forces north of the city, but no major attacks developed. Kontum continued to receive enemy rocket and artillery fire. This was a daily occurrence and the people of Kontum to include our tower operators were learning to adjust to it. The 44th Regt, 23rd ARVN Div

reported the following casualty figures for 14 May: Friendly - 18 KIA, 52 WIA, 9 MIA; Enemy - 173 KIA, 3 PW. The 2/53 rd Inf reported: Enemy 32 KIA and 1 PW.

Hawk's claw was laagered at the Kontum airfield again. They launched several times in response to reports from the air car.

One of the scouts reported sighting a tank, however, when the FOW aircraft got in the area the only thing observed was a vehicle variously reported as an APC, half track and 2 1/2 ton truck. At any rate a missile was fired at it and scored a direct hit totally destroying the vehicle.

At about 2000hrs six tanks were reported 2 km North of Kontum city. Hawk's claw, which had returned to Holloway, was scrambled to Kontum.

The enemy tanks moved into firing positions just beyond the perimeter and began firing directly into ARVN positions. Specter, an armed Airforce C-130, was on

station and engaged the tanks with 40 mm cannon fire without success. Flares were dropped to provide illumination for Hawk's claw. Unfortunately the gunner had difficulty acquiring any of the tanks on his sighting system. One missile was fired at a suspected tank location, however, there was no indication of the tank being hit. After unsuccessfully attempting to acquire a target the Hawk's claw returned to Holloway. The airforce Specter remained on station providing illumination and fire support for most of the night. Although the enemy tanks were firing on friendly positions they never advanced any closer and after several hours they pulled back out of the area.

Two VMAF C-123's were destroyed on 16 MAY by enemy rocket and mortar fire on Kontum airfield. One of the aircraft had been damaged several weeks earlier. One artillery round put a hole in

the runway, however, this was easily repaired.

The Hawk's Claw destroyed numerous targets NW of Kontum city. Most of the ~~them~~ were abandoned ARVN Trucks and APC's. All the items of equipment were considered usable. The targets were out of the range of friendly artillery and not considered suitable for AC Art.

Kontum airfield received sporadic rocket and artillery fire on 17 May. One of the rockets impacted in close proximity to two Cobra gunships wounding one crew member and damaging both aircraft. Later in the day an exploding rocket set off a stack of ammunition just as an airforce C-130 was unloading another ammunition pallet nearby. The pilot of the C-130 immediately put full power to the aircraft in an attempt to make a take off. Unfortunately, the ramp was still down on the aircraft and everytime the pilot tried

to rotate the ramp would
drag on the runway slowing
down the aircraft. As the
aircraft ran off the end of
the runway the right wing
struck a brick building
shearing the wing and
rupturing the fuel tank.
The fuel immediately ignited
engulfing the aircraft in
flames as it cartwheeled
for several hundred yards.

Only two survivors were
pulled from the wreckage.

The ammunition continued
to explode in the airfield for
the rest of the day hurling
105 mm artillery rounds all
over the area. Eventually the
entire ammunition dump was
destroyed. One of the shells
landed near a POC blivet
and set the TP-4 ablaze.

The exploding ammunition
dump eventually cost the
allies over 3000 105 mm artillery
rounds, 25,000 gals of POC,
one C-130, and seven
airforce personnel who were the
crew for the C-130.

For the next several days defensive preparations continued as the enemy continued firing artillery and rockets into the city. There were numerous reports of enemy contacts along the perimeter.

At night the flashes from enemy machine guns and recoilless rifles could be observed in close proximity to the friendly positions.

These enemy targets were engaged by FAC air gunships and Spectar's (armed C-130's)

Efforts were made on the night of the 17th and early morning of the 18th to clean up the airfield. By 1030 hrs the airfield was open to rotary wing aircraft but not ready for fixed wing traffic.

Hawk's claw successfully engaged a T-54 tank and 23 ~~more~~ anti aircraft weapons N.W. of the city.

Large groups of enemy soldiers were observed moving toward the city from the N.W. and S.E.

During the early morning of the 19th the 44th Regt. came under ground attack along the northern perimeter. The attack was supported by 105/155 mm artillery fire. The attack lasted until about 0330 hours when the enemy withdrew. Gunshy's from Camp Hollow and Airforce Specter's supported the 23rd Div. Some of the enemy had managed to infiltrate in behind elements of the 44th Regt, however, these pockets were eliminated by 0730 hours. Results of the contact were reported by the 44th as: 41 Enemy KIA and in the 53rd sector as 12 enemy sappers KIA.

The 23rd Div launched a reconnaissance in force to the north of Kontum city. At 1100 hours the 23rd Recon Company air assaulted using VNAF helicopters into an LZ 8 KM north of the city in the vicinity of a suspected artillery position.

The assault went well as elements of 1/45 moved into blocking positions south of the LZ. The plan was to have the Recca company move south from the LZ and catch any enemy troops between themselves and 1/45th. 2/45 conducted sweep operations to the south west. During this sweep operation 2/45th found 24 enemy killed by air (KBA). Enemy forces caught between the 23rd Recca Company and 1/45th attacked 1/45th in their blocking positions. The position held, however, reaction forces refused to leave their positions to conduct counter attacks.

The 23rd Div reported the following results for the 19th of May: 44th Regt. - 72 KBA; 45th Regt - 29 KBA; and 53rd Regt - 30 KIA.

There was a cautious note of optimism beginning to appear as it became evident that ARVN Forces would stand and fight under sustained

enemy pressure.

During the night of 19-20 May enemy forces apparently tunnelled up to the perimeter in the 53rd Regt area on the North East side. The enemy drove elements of the 53rd out of their positions and occupied some of the friendly bunkers with about a company sized force. The 53rd conducted counterattacks supported by TAC AIR, gunships, artillery and 9 ARVN M41 tanks. A problem arose when the tank commanders refused to advance. Gen Toan and Col Ba rushed to the scene and through various means managed to convince the Tank commanders that it would be best if they advanced. By late afternoon the positions were recaptured.

Kontum, city and the airfield received the usual ABF's throughout the day.

A UNAF C-123 was hit by an enemy rocket while it was parked on the ramp

The fuel cell was ignited and the aircraft burned to the ground. The crew was able to get out of the aircraft without injury.

Car reports indicated the enemy was reinforcing by infiltrating troops into the area.

The buildup was concentrated north and north east of the city.

B-52 ARC light strikes were scheduled into these areas on a daily bases. Bomb damage assessments (BDA's) conducted by air cam units indicated that the enemy bunkers and fighting positions were being destroyed. There was no significant indication that large numbers of enemy troops were being killed however, it was believed the ARC lights were hurting the enemy. Later events proved this belief was correct.

On 21 May the enemy launched a major attack against the northern perimeter. The units involved were deployed generally in a

ARC to the North of the city running from west to East they were 3/44, 4/44, 4/45 and 2/53rd. The FEBA Trace generally followed on ARC however, along QL 14 the FEBA extended up the highway to the Northwest to form a finger. At 0500hrs friendly units received a heavy ABF of mixed caliber, followed by a two pronged ground attack. The enemy was successful initially in cutting QL 14 at the base of the finger, and in driving a wedge between 4/45th and 2/53rd. Friendly elements conducted counter-attacks throughout the day supported by artillery, TAC AIR, and Tanks. 3/44th was successful in driving the enemy out and restoring the FEBA trace at the base of the finger. Two battalions attacked up QL 14 to the North, one on either side of the road, to reduce the penetration between 4/45th and 2/53rd. One battalion

was placed in reserve. The counterattack was supported by eight tanks. One tank was hit and sustained moderate damage. The counterattack was successful in ejecting the enemy and restoring the FEBA. During the action PMA. VANN was over-head monitoring the situation. He appeared to be pleased with the outcome and stated that Col Ba's presence in the battle area had a very positive effect on the troops and was responsible for the successful outcome. It is believed that the enemy attacked with a regimental size force. The 406th sapper Bn was identified as the unit that cut QL14.

There was evidence that the enemy was continuing his build up North East of the city. It was the cav Troop Commander's evaluation that the major enemy attack would come in the next few days from that area. This proved to be a very accurate evaluation.

Due to the heavy ABF's on
Koytum airfield during the
day Airforce C-130's were
operating in and out of the
field at night only. Early
in the morning of 22 May
The airfield received approxi-
ately five 122mm rockets.
A C-130 blew a tire while
landing at about 0115 hours.
This closed the field due to the
fact that the Airforce would
not allow more than one
aircraft on the field at one
time. Throughout the early
morning the airfield continued
to take enemy rocket and
artillery fire. The C-130
that had the blown tire was
hit by a piece of shrapnel
causing a fuel leak. The
spilled fuel was ignited by
another round. The fire
burned for sometime in
close proximity to the
C-130 however there were
no attempts to put it out.
After a while the flames spread
under the wing of the aircraft
and set the tip on fire. The

Airforce crew had taken refuge in a nearby bunker. At about 1030 hours Col. John A Todd DBC landed near the burning aircraft and he and his crew put the fire out with buckets of sand. The airforce crew was extracted. The C-130 was declared a combat loss by the Airforce.

There were indications that ARC light strikes had a significant impact on the combat effectiveness of the 320th NVA Div. Evidence of this was the results of several sweep operations. The 4153rd Sq found 70 KBA just 2 Km north west of Kontum city. In addition, they recovered small arms and crew served weapons to include an 82 mm mortar and a 12.7 mm AA gun. Later in the morning the 2153rd Id found 28 KBA 1 1/2 Km north of the city. There were several unconfirmed reports of sitting 150-200 KBA in ARC light strikes. Since

1 January there had been 820
ARC light strikes in the Kontum
area alone. In the previous
week there had been 84 such
strikes. It was becoming
obvious that the heavy bombing
was taking its toll of the
enemy forces.

The 23rd and 24th of May
were relatively quiet. It appeared
to be the "calm before the
storm". There were the usual
ABF's against the city and
the airfield. Elements of the
53rd Regt made contact with
an unknown size enemy force
killing 25 and capturing two
mortars. The FOB pad, which
was an old special forces
camp located about 3 km
south of the city on QL 14,
came under enemy artillery
fire. This camp was being
utilized as an alternate rear
and refuel point for our
aircraft operating in Kontum.
The 1/44th and 2/44th conducted
a combat assault using
seven VNAF ships and two
gunships about four km north

of their perimeter. They met light resistance as they moved back towards friendly positions.

On 25 May enemy activity increased significantly in Kontum. Enemy ABFP on the city continued throughout today. The caliber of weapons varied from 60mm mortars to 155mm artillery. There was one report of a suspected 240mm mortar round impacting in the 44th Regt area which left a 4'x6' crater. There were reports that two NVA sapper battalions had infiltrated the Southeast part of the city wearing ARVN uniforms. RF units were in heavy contact within the Southeast quadrant of the city. The 4/44 killed 16 enemy and captured one. The PW stated his battalion (6th BN, 1 Regt, 2nd NVA Div) was in Kontum city. The 23rd Div artillery was neutralized by the intense enemy artillery and rocket fire. Most of the

party pieces were operational but the crews refused to leave their bunkers for fire missions. Mr Vann closed the airfield and directed that all of our air controllers be evacuated; this was done by 1730 hours.

H/17 air cav conducted a VR of the large ridge line 20 km northwest of Kontum city. Numerous small arms and supply caches were found in the vicinity of the ridge and the adjacent valley. It appeared that the area north of Polei Kleng was being used as a storage and staging area. There were numerous sightings of small groups of people throughout the area. The road that had stopped West of the ridge now extended over it to the East. There were indications of heavy usage by wheeled and tracked vehicles. The Cav gunships expended on the numerous sightings resulting in small secondary explosions. About mid-morning the troop conducted a search for a suspected

rocket position 20 east of
Kontum City. Just as the
scouts discovered the position,
which consisted of a large
bunker complex and many
rockets stock piled, a FAC
advised him to exit the
area immediately. The
LOH had no sooner departed
to the west when an ARC
light landed right on
the rocket position totally
destroying it.

A 57th OH-1H was shot
down west of the MACV pad
in Kontum city. The pilot
made a hard landing which
collapsed the skids. Except for
one back injury there were
no other injuries. However,
upon exiting the aircraft the
pilot, 1st Gary B. Farris,
was decapitated by the main
rotor as he moved away
from the aircraft.

H/10th Air Cav. lost
an LOH 2419 SW of Kontum
City while conducting a VR.
The aircraft was hit by a
B-40 rocket and exploded killing

the pilot 1st Kungler and
his observer 1st Wilkerson.

The main attack, that
everyone had been expecting
hit the North East Quadrant
of the city early in the
morning of 26 May. The
enemy conducted an intense
artillery preparation beginning
at about 0230 hours and
lasting until about 0430
hours. The preparation was followed
by a massive combined arms
attack spear headed by 10-12
Tanks. The enemy penetrated
the perimeter and got in
behind the 1/53rd and
3/53rd inf battalions. The
44th Regt was also heavily
engaged. The enemy's Tanks
and infantry penetrated to
within several hundred meters
of the runway at the airfield.
Enemy units that had occupied
positions in the South east
part of the city were reinforced
during the night. Efforts to
conduct a counter attack
to drive the enemy out were
unsuccessful.

In response to the enemy
attack Hawk's Claw
was launched from Lang
Holloway at about 0615. The
Turkey shoot began at 0645
when the first T-54 tank of
the day was destroyed by a TOW missile.
This was the optimum situation
for the claw. The weather was
fairly good and the tanks
were exposed in the attack
during day light hours. Before
the morning was over the
Hawk's claw aircraft had
destroyed: Five T-54, Four
PT-76 tanks, two MG's,
one truck and one bunker.
This effectively stopped the
momentum of the enemy attack.

During the remainder of the
day the battle raged on
with opposing forces locked
in close combat within
the city. By the end of
the day the enemy controlled
the eastern part of the
city. Tac Air, artillery
and gunships supported
the ARVN effort to stop
the enemy.

The 27th was the third day of major enemy attacks on Kontum city. The enemy continued his attacks by fire on the city and continued reinforcing the forces within the city. Pressure was applied by attaching enemy units to the northern portion of the perimeter. Enemy artillery fire was impacting with great accuracy in the vicinity of the 44th Regt CP. (Est. 300 Rds).

Early in the morning of the 27th the enemy made another major tank/infantry attack from the North East. Once again Hawk's claw was scrambled from Camp Holloway to meet the threat. Two T-54 tanks were destroyed as soon as the claw arrived on station. Dense smoke and dust clouds obscured the battle area which prevented the Hawk's claw from acquiring any more targets. The Senior Advisor for the 44th Regt confirmed the two

tanks killed by the TOW
missiles plus two T-54's
knocked out by M-72. CGW's
400 meters north of his C.P.

Our resupply effort
continued throughout the battle.
The main logistical burden
at this point in time was
carried by CH-47's belonging
to the 180th ASHC. Even
though there were enemy
snipers in close proximity
to the LZ and enemy
artillery rounds impacting
near by the Chinooks
continued their essential work
of hauling ammo and food
to Kontum. The only area
that was secure enough to
use was the soccer field
located in the southwest part
of the city. A serious problem
that plagued our logistical
effort throughout the battle
was the lack of control of
refugees in the LZ. Our
CH-47's were taking as
many of these civilians
out of the city as possible
however, often times in their

panic to escape, they would mob the aircraft. On several occasions controllers were threatened by unruly mobs. This problem continued off and on throughout the period of intense enemy action but, it subsided as the situation later stabilized.

Late in the afternoon of the 27th a VNAF A1-E was shot down 2 km S.W. of the city. The pilot parachuted safely and was picked up by our C+C aircraft the AIR BOSS.

In late April the AIR BOSS concept was put into effect by B.G. Hill. The purpose of the AIR BOSS was to serve as an airborne C+C to control all aviation assets within the battle area. It was necessary to have this aircraft airborne most of the time and it flew as much as 14-16 hours a day.

There was considerable concern that the ARVN had not been successful at

launching a successful counterattack. The biggest fear was that the longer the enemy stayed in the city the more difficult it would be to dig him out.

The evening of the 27th was relatively quiet. The lull was used by us to resupply the units in Kontum. Our CH-47's flew resupply missions most of the night.

An interesting event took place in the Kontum Pass where ARVN forces had been trying, without success, to open QL 14 between Kontum and Pleiku. Friendly forces were bogged down by strong enemy forces occupying well constructed bunkers and fighting positions. Col. Tuong, II Corps Deputy for Operations, offered one third of his months pay (he said 10,000 piasters) to anyone in the unit he was with who would knock out a 51 cal AA weapon that had been firing at any air-

craft that came into the area. His offer was accepted and one soldier got into position covered by his comrades and threw a grenade into the cave from which the gun was firing. He also observed a 57 Recoilless Rifle nearby and knocked this out with a grenade. Both weapons were brought back to Col. Tuong but the gunner of the 51 cal had to be cut loose from the weapon since he was chained to it. The enemy soldier was identified as being from the 40th Artillery Regt normally part of the 304th Division but now apparently supporting the 95 B Regiment.

The operation to open QL 19 through the Kontum Pass dragged on for weeks. The enemy offered stiff resistance and the ARVN was unable to dislodge him until the first week of July.

On the 28th of May the enemy continued his early morning attacks, however, they were not as strong as the previous ones and were easily beaten off. Enemy ABF's continued throughout the day with the majority of the rounds landing in the vicinity of the 44th Regt C.P. The attacks were lighter than they had been for the previous three days. Scattered contacts continued throughout the day however, a major enemy assault never materialized. Hawk's claw was launched at 0935 to engage an enemy 51 cal M.G. position mounted on top of a water tower in the north central part of town. The position was attacked at 1010 hours. Five missiles were fired in an attempt to knock out the gun and destroy the water tower. The gun was destroyed and the water tower was damaged to the point where it was leaning badly to one side. Another 51 cal M.G. position located at the base of the tower

was knocked out by 105
artillery fire. At 1145 hours
100 enemy troops were located
just west of the city. TAC
air and gunships engaged
the troops. The attack lasted
about one hour. Later in the
day friendly elements found
70 enemy KBA, captured one
P.W., two M47's, two radios
and one B-40 rocket launcher.

The situation within the
city remained critical. The
enemy still occupied the Eastern
half of the city plus some
small penetrations in the North
West. During the night of 28-29
May friendly forces were pulled
back closer to the city so that
ARC light strikes could be
brought in closer.

The situation in Kontum
remained about the same
on 29 May. Enemy attacks by
fire tapered off during the day.
Although the ARVN were still
not able to launch an effective
counterattack there were indications
that the enemy was no longer able
to reinforce his elements. VNAF

air strikes in the South east quadrant of the city appeared to have a good effect. The enemy dug in and constructed fighting positions and bunkers throughout the area he occupied. There were snipers throughout the city which made movement and aircraft operations extremely hazardous. Two ships received intense small arms fire attempting to land at the 23rd Div C.P. Reinforcements were sent to Kontum by CH-47. These troops, about 400 of them, were from 3rd Airborne Regt.

MR. VANN and Gen Toan were becoming more optimistic at this point. There were indications that the enemy had been badly hurt. POW's stated that enemy commanders at all levels had been directed to personally lead attacks to insure their success. MR VANN and Gen Toan directed that an all-out effort be made by psyops personnel to try to get enemy troops to surrender.

While H/H^T air cav was conducting a UR north west of Kontum city one of their COH's received intense small arms fire. The aircraft was hit, pitched to the left and went into the ground nose first. Seconds after it hit the ground the aircraft burst into flames and exploded. The Cav C/C aircraft overhead immediately attempted a rescue. On approaching the burning aircraft the C/C came under intense SA fire and received several hits. The gunner was wounded. Another COH attempting to get in also was hit. A platoon of ARVNS with a U.S. NCO were put in on QL 14 about 600 meters from the downed aircraft. This unit came under heavy attack almost immediately. Air strikes were brought in and the unit was extracted before reaching the downed COH. Later on, the decision was made to put in a B-52 ARC light strike near the downed COH. The strikes went in on either

side of the crashed aircraft. No further attempts were made to get into the crash site.

The aircraft crew consisted of the pilot WO1 Gerald D. Spradlin and Spec 4 Larry K. Morrow. They were listed as MIA.

The logistical problem was relieved some what as Air Force C-130's using radar reflectors started dropping bundles of supplies by parachute. This proved very effective and continued throughout the remainder of the battle.

Early in the morning of the 30th of May the 44th Regt CP and 23rd Div CP received an intense ABF however, it was of short duration. Enemy elements within the city attacked units of the 44th Regt. The enemy was not able to make any significant gains. At about 0700 hours a large ammo dump located north of the airfield was set on fire and exploded. Two wounded NVA

Troops were captured early in the morning near the 44th Regt CP. There was an attempt to exploit these PW's for psyops purposes, however, the operation was not successful. Late in the day elements of the 44th Regt made some progress in clearing the northeast section of the city.

In the afternoon at about 1330 hours President Thieu visited the 23rd Div CP. He promoted Col Ba to the rank of BG.

The weather turned poor and started to adversely affect our aviation operations.

There was a note of optimism as it appeared that MACV had taken away Kontum's priority for ARVN light strikes. The entire picture was looking a little brighter.

Some progress was made in the Battle for Kontum city on the 31st of May. The weather was bad in the morning and it prevented operations until late in the morning. There were no enemy ABF's during the night. Elements of

the 44th Regt and RF/PF units continued attacks against enemy held positions within the city. The fighting in the Northeast was difficult and friendly forces suffered many casualties. The enemy, although not considered strong in numbers, occupied well constructed bunkers. The difficult business of rooting them out fell on the ARVN infantry troops. The task was very costly and it must be mentioned that the ARVN soldiers demonstrated a great deal of courage and persistence in this tedious work. The 44th Regt reported the following results: Enemy 88 KIA, 2 B-40 RL, 2 LT MG, 9 AK47's, 10 carbines and 1 PNC 25 radio captured. RF/PF units operating in the Southeastern quadrant reported finding 56 enemy KBA.

The situation in Kontum continued to improve on 1 June. There were indications the enemy was withdrawing to the Northeast.

The enemy penetration in the Southeast quadrant had virtually been eliminated. Only one large concrete building was reported as still held by the enemy. The 23rd Div reported that they had seized control of the airfield. Hawk's claw was used to hit several enemy bunkers in the northern part of the city. Several bunkers were hit by missiles with apparently good results. The gunner had difficulty acquiring the targets due to the debris in the area. When the C-47 aircraft first arrived in the target area it was hit by small arms fire which knocked out the aircraft's hydraulic system. The aircraft was successfully returned to Pleiku by the Aircraft Commander LTC. Jack Anderson the 17th CAG XO. LTC Anderson and his crew picked up another aircraft and completed the mission.

For the next several days the friendly forces

conducted clearing operations within the city. The Southeast quadrant was cleared first and then all forces were directed to sweep the Northeast quadrant. Hard, bitter fighting ensued with heavy losses experienced by both sides. ARVN M41 tanks after firing point blank into buildings occupied by the enemy. Throughout the period the enemy conducted sporadic ABF's. Several minor attacks on the northern perimeter were easily repulsed. It was believed that these attacks were to support enemy units attempting to withdraw from the city.

Our air craft continued providing aviation support. Unfortunately the cost was sometimes very high. On 2 June a 57th UH-1H flying south through the Khamti Pass was hit by enemy fire and crashed near QL 14. Most of the crew

and passengers were seriously injured when the aircraft burned on impact. Lt Eubanks, the pilot was killed in the crash. The UH-1H from H/10th Cav flying C-3 near the crash site attempted a rescue of the downed crew members. The aircraft received one hit from a 51 cal M.G. Unfortunately the round hit the aircraft Commander Lt Fred Suttle in the leg and lodged in his abdomen. He died several hours later in the hospital.

On one occasion as the enemy was withdrawing from the city he ran into one of his own dug-in units. A fire fight ensued and ARVN artillery supported both sides.

As ARVN units continued clearing operations, large numbers of enemy bodies were found in bunkers and destroyed buildings. Also, a large

number of enemy weapons were captured. Stiff resistance was encountered in the northeast quadrant but it eventually was cleaned out. The business of

The business of cleaning up the battle field was made more difficult by the fact that the enemy had booby trapped many of the dead ARVN soldiers. As time progressed this problem became more serious as the bodies rapidly decomposed in the hot sun.

By the 7th of June it began to appear that another enemy attack on the city was unlikely and the optimism was felt by everyone. On the 8th of June Air Force C-130's began landing again at the airfield at night. Our tower operators were set up at the airfield and a GCA flown up from Long Binh was put into operation.

The 9th of June was a most significant day:

On that day, the 23rd Div
Commander declared the
city secured.

Another event took place
on the 9th of June that was
felt by everyone. That was
the death of the II Corps Senior
Advisor, Mr. John Paul Vann.

After a farewell party held in
honor of BG Hill, who was
departing the next day, Mr Vann
got in his OH-58 helicopter
along with his pilot, 1LT Doughtie,
and a passenger, Cpt Robertson.
They took off from II Corps
Headquarters at about 2100 hours.

Mr Vann had insisted on going
to Kontum because he wanted
to spend the night with the 23rd
Div. For the previous thirty days
he had been up to Kontum at
least once a day and he
didn't want to break his
record. He took some fresh
fruit and other treats that were
left over from the farewell
party. He had intended these
for the men in Kontum so
that they could share in the
festivities that had taken place

earlier.

Apparently MR VANN elected to low level up QL 14 because the weather was poor. There were thunderstorms in the area and low scudgy clouds laying in and around the Kontum Pass. MR VANN called the 23rd Div CP shortly after take off estimating 15 minutes out of Kontum. That was the last anyone ever heard from him.

An ARVN unit located in the Kontum pass reported observing a helicopter crash.

A search effort was launched as air craft from 17th CAG scrambled from Camp Holloway and an ARVN unit was dispatched to the suspected crash site. Within an hour the wreckage was found down in some trees several hundred meters East of QL 14. The three bodies were found by the ARVN soldiers on the ground and MR VANN's body was carried out on LHC.

Anderson's helicopter. The
other bodies were recovered
later.

The Battle for Kontum
was over.

NOTES:

The Battle for Hanoi was

a mission that resulted from

an allied effort. Neither part of
the allied force could have been

shown but their joint effort

proved very successful. The

ARVN's provided the fighters.

The troops who met the enemy

had to have an easy opportunity

and held on. The U.S. provided

the firepower that did most

of the killing. This battle was

primarily a defensive one

for the allies and it helped

them see better that can be

extracted that will help in

future actions against the NVN

and some lessons that could be

applied to other battle fronts

in other times.

1. Whether it was planned or

not the defense was organized

to provide for a delay back

to find defensive positions. The

FSB's and the bunker camps

planned as other positions

to delay the enemy and other

allow for as much other

as possible. This tactic proved very effective. By creating these outer strong points the enemy was forced to eliminate them. This caused the enemy to mass his forces and which provided lucrative targets for our massed fire power. This was also an economy of force tactic for the allies. Many such strong points could be established on dominant terrain and manned by a relatively small force. By assuming a defensive posture the allies accrued all the advantages of the defense in that they were able to prepare their positions and organize the terrain to their advantage. A significant point is the fact that our mobility, notably the helicopter, allowed the ARVN's to utilize positions that provided for the best defense but would not have been feasible if air resupply was not available. These outlying positions

served our purposes very well. Using Kontum as the base, for we knew this was the enemy's objective, one can see how strategically located the FSB's on "Rochet Ridge" were. By controlling this ridge the shortest lines of communication for any advancing enemy force from Cambodia was effectively blocked. Also, these positions provided outstanding observation of the surrounding low ground which made ADVN artillery pieces located in the FSB's particularly effective. Thus, it can be established that by their very existence they represented a significant threat to any enemy plans to attack Kontum. I believe this was a key to the defense. If the FSB's were located so that they could have easily been by-passed by a large enemy force advancing on Kontum they would have served no purpose at all.

By a quick examination

of the terrain around Hontun it becomes evident that the northern approaches to the city were the best. Three main avenues of approach should be considered. One from the North West roughly paralleling QL 14 on the west. One from the north on the East side of QL 14 and the third from the North East. The river running East and West just south of the city constituted a significant obstacle to a massive advancing force although smaller enemy units did infiltrate across the river.

From this evaluation it becomes obvious that the enemy would have to mass somewhere to the North of the city prior to his main attack. The most direct route for him from his base areas, was through the valley located North West of the city. This valley was bordered on the

West by the river and
Rochet ridge and on the
East by PL 14 and a
ridge line that ran North
and South and was located
North of Ganton city.

Any large enemy move-
ments through this valley
would have easily been
observed from the bases
on Rochet Ridge.

Thus, it must be recogniz-
ed that these bases would
have to be eliminated if a
major enemy force was
to attack Ganton. This, in
fact, as described in Phase I,
is exactly what the enemy
did. As pointed out earlier
the FSB's did well and
did in fact account for
many of the enemy's losses. The
weakness of the defense was the
vulnerability of the Command
Post at Tan Cank. If there
had been well situated FSB's
North of Tan Cank the situation
may have been different. As it
was the loss of the Command
Post ended the resistance from

the FSB's. It is interesting to note that although the FSB's were abandoned there was no thought of abandoning the Ranger Border Camps.

I think the lesson that can be learned here is that command posts must be well protected. The loss of one of the FSB's would not have had as critical an effect as the loss of Tan Cakh did. The main reason being that the CP was located at Tan Cakh. Actually the loss of Tan Cakh itself should not have hurt the defensive position as much as it did. I believe the loss was greater psychologically than tactically.

2. This battle saw the introduction by the enemy of weapons not used in large numbers previously. For the first time, in this area, the enemy used relatively large numbers of tanks and artillery pieces. The fact that the enemy had this equipment available was known, however, when the enemy actually employed them, especially the tanks, the ARVN soldiers were terrified. This, I believe, was one of our great failures as advisors and may foretell future events if we do not take steps to correct the situation. It was not the firepower of the tanks that defeated the ARVNs at Tan Canh, it was their appearance. We have learned from bitter experience in past wars that one of the greatest advantages to armor is the fear it puts in the infantry. The ARVN soldiers defending TAN CANH simply were not prepared for an enemy tank attack.

Once again there is no

substitute for good training and planning. If soldiers are prepared for what the enemy will use against him on the battle field the chances are good for survival. Once the initial shock of the presence of enemy armor on the battle field was overcome by the infantry soldiers and he gained confidence in his ability to stop the enemy tanks defensive positions held.

The enemy use of artillery had an equally demoralizing effect on the ARVN soldiers. This fact was particularly evident in the fact that it was very difficult to get ARVN artillery units of the 23rd Div to fire counter battery fire when enemy rounds were impacting in the area. Here again, the fact that the enemy had artillery with him and could be expected to use it was known well in advance.

The enemy has learned to adjust to our heavy air strikes by digging in their artillery

to withstand direct hits from bombs, however, to this date, the ARVN have not yet bunkered in their Artillery pieces so that they could continue to fire while enemy shells bursted in the area. One wonders what would happen if an enemy aircraft suddenly appeared overhead.

3. It appears that the enemy spends a great of time and effort preparing the battle field. This fact can be used to advantage when trying to determine from which direction the enemy will attack and at about what time. It seems that the threat of our heavy air strikes has forced the enemy to build extensive networks of bunkers and fighting positions to protect his troops in staging areas. Often times this construction work can be observed quite easily from the air. The presence of these bunkers or the fact that they are being constructed or old ones being repaired is a good indication of the enemys intentions. The presence of a large bunker complex within 3-5 Km of friendly locations should alert the defenders. Once the enemy has constructed these bunker complexes he begins to infiltrate his combat troops into the area to mass for the attack. Often times the presence of well used trails in the area and sightings

of small groups of enemy soldiers is an indication that the enemy has started to mass. Every effort should be made to destroy these bunkers with air or artillery strikes. In this way, not only will enemy soldiers occupying the bunkers become casualties but any attempts by the enemy to reuse the bunkers will become obvious as he repairs them.

destroyed bunkers.

4. Aircraft misutilization was a serious problem throughout the battle. This is an area that will require extensive study to reduce these problems in the future. It can be anticipated that aviation assets in any future conflict will not be as readily available as they have been in Viet Nam and the question of aircraft utilization will be even more critical.

During the battle of Kontum enemy forces closed QL 14 in the area of the Kontum pass. This prevented any surface resupply from reaching the besieged city. The ARVN forces defending Kontum and what was left of the civilian population were totally dependent on aerial resupply. The two primary aircraft used in the logistical effort were U.S. Army CH-47 Chinooks and U.S. Air Force C-130's. The C-130 aircraft have a much larger load capacity than CH-47's. The problem was, that much of the cargo that was carried

by the Chinooks could have been easily carried by the C-130's. As long as the airfield was operational C-130's were able to operate. By proper planning and staff work more effective use could have been made of fixed wing assets. Large numbers of refugees could have been carried out of the city on C-130's. This was not the case and the Chinooks were used almost exclusively for carrying out refugees.

Another problem area involving the Chinooks was that the PZ's were not well organized and many of the sling loads were poorly rigged or improperly loaded. This resulted in a great deal of wasted blade time.

In the future this problem should be anticipated and steps should be taken in advance to insure the proper preparations are made. All PZ's and LZ's used by U.S. Chinooks should have U.S. personnel available to advise the Chinook pilots and control the landing area.

Another aircraft that was often times misutilized was the A4-16 Cobra gunship. This aircraft was extremely effective in providing very accurate fire support. However, it has limitations and there are other sources of fire support that can be utilized. Gunships are particularly effective against troops in the open however, they are not good against bunkers or other hardened targets.

Often times supported units utilized gunships to engage large bunker complexes and large area targets. These targets would have been more appropriate artillery or TAC air targets. Many times artillery and TAC air were available.

The fact that gunships were so responsive often lead to a reliance on them instead of organic weapons such as artillery.

As U.S. units draw down, aviation assets will be reduced. A greater emphasis must be placed on the proper

utilization of all aircraft. This may require an adjustment in tactical operations and a greater effort in planning but preparations must be made if we are to continue to effectively operate with reduced assets.

5. The airborne TOW system proved to be extremely effective. It is my belief that the system had a significant impact on the battle for Kontum.

The aircraft was able to standoff from its target an average distance of 2500 meters while flying at an altitude well out of small arms range and engage point type targets with a very high first round hit probability. I believe that if this system was available in large numbers it would greatly reduce an enemies armor capability and revolutionize the battle field. It may be possible to conduct counterattacks against large enemy armor

penetrations by employing
Tow aircraft working closely
with friendly bomber units

6. An area that needs more attention is aircraft vulnerability. Many of our aircraft received hits in areas where other aircraft had previously been hit or shot at. I believe one of our great shortcomings was our lack of attention to enemy anti-aircraft locations.

Surprisingly, the enemy anti-aircraft fire was not as intense in the area of operation, during the battle, as we had expected. However, we did suffer heavy losses. There was not enough emphasis placed on keeping up with enemy AA positions as there should have. Consequently, our pilots went out on missions not really aware of enemy locations. This resulted in aircraft being hit while flying over known enemy locations.

This situation can be corrected by insuring that shot and hit reports are submitted as soon as possible after the incident. Secondly, that this information is disseminated to the units so that they can post their map boards and keep them current. Thirdly, and probably most important, that the aviators receive a thorough briefing on enemy locations each day before they go out on missions.

7. Air car operations were essential to the successful defense of Kontum. The car troops were our primary source of intelligence information. It is because of the critical role they played that we should look at their operations. During most of the battle there were two air car troops employed in the Pleikue and Kontum area. Unfortunately, during this period, the car troops were sometimes poorly utilized.

Several lessons can be

extracted from our experiences.

One of the problems which arose as enemy activity increased was over reaction. This was a problem that continued in one form or another throughout the battle. Enemy activity was continually reported over a vast area of operations. Often times the car was bounced from one area to another reacting to "suspected" enemy locations or unconfirmed enemy sightings. This greatly reduced the efficiency of the air car.

It must be expected that as the enemy draws near there will be an increase in activity in all sectors. Someone in the chain of command must decide what area the car will operate in. This area must be realistic in size. Once the car is committed to conducting reconnaissance in an area a great deal of thought should be given to my decision to relocate them.

Another problem that frequently arose, when the friendly forces were in contact with the enemy, was the use of the car gunships to fire in support of local units. By doing this the car team was broken up and no longer effective.

The lessons we should have learned are:

- A. Air car units should be given an area to work in and be allowed to work the area thoroughly before being pulled out to look in other areas. The areas designated for the car should be carefully selected to insure that the time spent in them will be worth while i.e. highly probable to produce meaningful information. Too often the car units were sent into areas that were known to be void of enemy activity, or areas too far out from the battle area to be of consequence. Also,

b. Air cavalry troops work in teams consisting of scout aircraft or LOH's a CTC aircraft and AH-1G gunships which provide cover for the scouts. It is essential that the team remain intact. Gunships working as part of a cav team should not be used to provide fire support for local units. This degrades the cav potential for operating as it should in a reconnaissance role.

VULNERABILITY DATA Kontum - Pleiku

| APR. | UNIT | No. A/C Hit | No. A/C Destroyed |
|------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| | 57 th AHC | 20 | 1 |
| | B/7/17 th ACT | 21 | 5 |
| | 361 st AWC | 9 | 0 |
| | C/7/17 th ACT | 12 | 2 |
| | 180 th ASHC | <u>4</u> | <u>1</u> |
| | TOTAL | 66 | 9 |

| MAY | UNIT | No. A/C Hit | No. A/C Destroyed |
|-----|---------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| | 57 th AHC / 370 th GA | 37 | 0 |
| | H/17 th (B/7/17) | 22 | 4 |
| | 361 st AWC | 5 | 2 |
| | H/10 th (C/7/17) | 7 | 1 |
| | 180 th ASHC | <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> |
| | TOTAL | 43 | 7 |

| JUNE 1-9 | UNIT | No. A/C Hit | No. A/C Destroyed |
|----------|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| | 57 th AHC | 3 | 1 |
| | H/17 th (B/7/17) | 1 | 0 |
| | 361 st AWC | 1 | 0 |
| | H/10 th (C/7/17) | 2 | 0 |
| | 180 th ASHC | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> |
| | TOTAL | 8 | 1 |

GRAND TOTAL 117 17

ANTI AIRCRAFT FIRE INCIDENT

129th

| DATE | TYPE %C | HITS | DAMAGE | INJURIES |
|-----------|---------|------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 12 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | TAIL BOOM | NA |
| 13 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | COMPRESSOR | NA |
| 12 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 13 APR 72 | UH-1H | 7 | POWER TRAIN | ONE FATAL - ONE NON FATAL |
| 13 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | CONTROLS POWER TRAIN | NA |
| 14 APR 72 | AH-1G | 2 | MAIN ROTOR + TB | NA |
| 14 APR 72 | UH-1H | 12 | MAJOR | FATAL 6 ROCS 1 US GUNNER |
| 15 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 13 APR 72 | UH-1H | 6 | ENGINE | NA |
| 17 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | STRESS PANEL | NA |
| 18 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 16 APR 72 | AH-1G | 3 | CONTROLS | NA |
| 19 APR 72 | UH-1H | 9 | F.S. + MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 21 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 22 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | TAIL BOOM | NA |
| 28 APR 72 | UH-1H | - | - | - |
| 30 APR 72 | AH-1G | 2 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 30 APR 72 | UH-1H | 2 | TAIL BOOM | NA |
| 1 MAY 72 | UH-1H | 6 | CABIN AREA | US GUNNER NON FATAL |
| 30 MAY 72 | AH-1G | 2 | NOSE/TAIL BOOM | PILOT - NON FATAL |
| 2 JUN 72 | AH-1G | 2 | TAIL BOOM | NA |
| 5 JUN 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 25 JUN 72 | UH-1H | 1 | ELECT. CUT OUT | NA |

ANTI AIRCRAFT HIT INCIDENT CTRPT 7/17 CAU.

| DATE | TYPE A/C | HITS | DAMAGE | CAUS |
|-----------|----------|------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 8 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | NA | NA |
| 8 APR 72 | OH-6A | 5 | FUEL SYSTEM | NA |
| 9 APR 72 | UH-1H | UNK | ENGINE | 3 NON FATALS |
| 11 APR 72 | OH-6A | 8 | CONTROLS | 1 NON FATAL |
| 13 APR 72 | OH-6A | 2 | NA | NA |
| 15 APR 72 | OH-6A | 1 | NA | NA |
| 18 APR 72 | OH-6A | - | NA | NA |
| 19 APR 72 | UH-1H | 2 | HIT GUN MOUNT | NA FATAL |
| 19 APR 72 | UH-1H | UNK | ? | PILOT + OBSV. |
| 19 APR 72 | UH-1H | 5 | FUEL SYSTEM | NA |
| 25 APR 72 | UH-1H | -1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 25 APR 72 | UH-1H | 2 | P/SEAT | CE NON FATAL |
| 23 APR 72 | OH-6A | 1 | - | NA |
| 23 APR 72 | OH-6A | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 28 APR 72 | OH-6A | 1 | SKID | NA |
| 3 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 2 | MAIN ROTOR + WIND. SHIELD | NA |
| 11 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 4 | AVIONICS | NA |
| 14 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 1 | BUBBLE | NA |
| 25 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 3 | POWER TRAIN | NA |
| 25 MAY 72 | OH-6A | UNK | A/C DESTROYED | 2 MIA |
| 25 MAY 72 | AH-1G | UNK | CONTROLS | NA |
| 26 MAY 72 | AH-1G | 2 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 30 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 1 | TAIL ROTOR | NA |
| 2 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | 2 | - | CP 1 FATAL |
| 2 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | 2 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 2 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | UNK | - | NA |
| 5 JUNE 72 | OH-6A | UNK | UNK | 2 NON FATALS |
| 5 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | UNK | - | 4 NON FATALS |

ANTI AIRCRAFT HIT INCIDENT
C TRP 7/17 (H TRP 10 CRU)

| DATE | TYPE A/C | HITS | DAMAGE | CAUS. |
|------------|----------|------|-----------|-------|
| 21 JUNE 72 | AH-1G | 1 | NA | NA |
| 29 JUNE 72 | AH-1G | 1 | TAIL Boom | KIA |
| 23 JUNE 72 | AH-1G | 1 | TAIL Boom | NA |

ANTI AIRCRAFT HIT INCIDENT

201ST AVN Co.

| DATE | TYPE A/C | HITS | DAMAGE | CAUS. |
|-----------|----------|------|-------------------------|-----------|
| 10 APR 72 | OH-58A | 1 | NA | NA |
| 11 APR 72 | OH-58A | 6 | HYDRA SHOT CYCLIC AWAY | NON FATAL |
| 16 APR 72 | OH-58A | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 24 APR 72 | OH-58A | 2 | - | NA |
| 28 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | AUIONICS WERE HIT | NON-FATAL |
| 29 APR 72 | UH-1H | 3 | TAIL BOOM - PASS, COMPT | NA |
| 16 APR 72 | OH-58 | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 31 MAY 72 | UH-1H | 2 | NOSE COCK PIT | NA |
| 2 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | 2 | TAIL ROTOR | NA |
| 4 JUNE 72 | OH-58 | 12 | ? | NA |
| 4 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | 3 | TAIL BOOM | NA |

ANTI AIR CRAFT HIT INCIDENT
60th ASSAULT HELI CO.

| DATE | TYPE A/C | HITS | DAMAGE | CAUS |
|------------|----------|------|------------------------|------|
| 13 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 15 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | UNIC NOSE | NA |
| 28 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | VERT. FIN | NA |
| 07 MAY 72 | UH-1H | 1 | TRANSMISSION | NA |
| 4 JUNE 72 | OH-58 | 12 | ? | NA |
| 18 JUNE 72 | AH-1G | UNK | ELECT. + H40. SHOT OUT | NA |
| 17 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | 1 | TAIL BOOM | NA |
| 27 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | 1 | NOSE AND COCK PIT | NA |

ANTI AIRCRAFT HIT INCIDENT 57th AHC

| DATE | TYPE A/C | HITS | DAMAGE | CAUS. |
|-----------|----------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 13 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | TAIL BOOM | NA |
| 10 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | NA | PILOT NON FATAL |
| 3 APR 72 | UH-1H | 4 | FUEL SYSTEM, CONTROLS | NA |
| 04 APR 72 | UH-1H | 15 SHRAPNEL | ENTIRE RIGHT SIDE OF A/C | NA |
| 3 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | FUEL COCK PIT | CO PILOT NON FATAL |
| 15 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | FUEL SYSTEM | NA |
| 19 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 21 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 20 APR 72 | UH-1H | 2 | MAIN ROTOR + A/C BODY | NA |
| 22 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MOTOR ROTOR | NA |
| 24 APR 72 | UH-1H | 4 | MOTOR ROTOR | NA |
| 24 APR 72 | UH-1H | A MISSILE OF SORT | UNK | UNK |
| 24 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MOTOR ROTOR | NA |
| 24 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MOTOR ROTOR | NA |
| 25 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 26 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MOTOR ROTOR | NA |
| 27 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | BLADE STRIKES | CREW - NON FAT. |
| 27 APR 72 | UH-1H | 3 | NA | 1 KIA |
| 27 APR 72 | UH-1H | 3 | NA | NA |
| 28 APR 72 | UH-1H | 2 | MINOR | CE NON FATAL |
| 30 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MINOR | NA |
| 9 MAY 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 9 MAY 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 5 MAY 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MOTOR ROTOR | NA |
| 30 MAY 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MOTOR ROTOR | NA |
| 27 MAY 72 | UH-1H | 4 | MAIN PRESSURE & TRANSMISSION | 2 NON FATALS |
| 27 MAY 72 | AH-1G | 1 | MINOR | NA |
| 14 MAY 72 | UH-1G | 4 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 2 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | UNK | CONTROLS | 1 KIA 3 NON FAT. |
| 2 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | 1 | MOTOR ROTOR | NA |

57^M

| DATE | TYPE #/C | HITS | DAMAGE | CAUS. |
|------------|----------|------|------------------------|-------|
| 1 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | 1 | CONTROLS | NA |
| 8 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | 1 | RIGHT SKID | NA |
| 10 JUNE 72 | AH-1G | 1 | FUEL System | N/A |
| 12 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | 2 | NA | NA |
| 18 JUNE 72 | UH-1H | 3 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |

ANTI AIRCRAFT HIT INCIDENT
 .361st AWC

| DATE | TYPE A/C | HITS | DAMAGE | CAUS. |
|-----------|------------------------|------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 3 APR 72 | AH-1G | 3 | CONTROLS | 1 NON FATAL |
| 3 APR 72 | AH-1G | 3 | NA | NA |
| 4 APR 72 | AH-1G | 2 | MAIN ROTOR + POWER ROTOR | IVA |
| 8 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | AIR FRAM | NA |
| 14 APR 72 | AH-1G | 8 | - | PILOT LEFT LEG 12.7mm |
| 22 APR 72 | AH-1G | 2 | - | NA |
| 24 APR 72 | AH-1G UH-1H | 3 | T/R | NA |
| 25 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | SKIDS | NA |
| 26 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | NA | NA |
| 26 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | HYD SYSTEM | NA |
| 30 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | MAIN ROTOR BLADE | NA |
| 9 MAY 72 | AH-1G | UNK | UNK | ONE MIA + ONE FATAL |
| 9 MAY 72 | AH-1G | 7 | MAIN ROTOR | 1 CHEST WOUNDS |
| 17 MAY 72 | AH-1G | UNK | TAIL BOOM | ONE NON FATAL |
| 21 MAY 72 | AH-1G | 1 | TAIL ROTOR | NA |
| 6 JUNE 72 | AH-1G | 1 | NA | NA |

ANTI-AIRCRAFT HIT INCIDENT 180th ASHC

| DATE | TYPE A/C | HITS | DAMAGE | CAUS. |
|-----------|----------|------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| 16 APR 72 | CH-47C | 2 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 17 APR 72 | CH-47C | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 23 APR 72 | CH-47C | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 25 APR 72 | CH-47C | 1 shrapnel | CONTROLS | NA |
| 25 APR 72 | CH-47C | 1 shrapnel | CONTROLS | NA |
| 28 APR 72 | CH-47C | UNK | TRANSMISSION | NA |
| 29 APR 72 | CH-47C | 10 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 2 MAY 72 | CH-47C | 4 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 9 MAY 72 | CH-47C | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 25 MAY 72 | CH-47C | 3 | MAIN ROTOR POWER TRAIN + AIRFRAME | NA |
| 6 JUNE 72 | CH-47C | 1 shrapnel | AIR FRAME | NON-FATAL CE |
| 8 JUNE 72 | CH-47C | 2 | CONTROLS | NA |

ANTI AIRCRAFT HIT INCIDENT B TRP 7/17 (H TRP 17th CAU)

| DATE | TYPE A/C | HITS | DAMAGE | CAUS. |
|-----------|----------|-------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| 04 APR 72 | OH-6A | 7 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 9 APR 72 | OH-6A | 1 | FUEL SYSTEM | NA |
| 12 APR 72 | OH-6A | 2 | FUEL SYSTEM | NA |
| 14 APR 72 | OH-6A | 1 | RADIOS | NA |
| 15 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | - | NA |
| 15 APR 72 | UH-1H | 3 | FUEL SYSTEM | CE 1 FATAL |
| 15 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | CONTROLS | NA |
| 15 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | CONTROLS | NA |
| 16 APR 72 | OH-6A | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 18 APR 72 | OH-6A | - | NA | NA |
| 23 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | TAIL ROTOR DRIVE SHAFT COVER | NA |
| 23 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | FUEL SYSTEM, CONTROLS | NA |
| 24 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | ENGINE | NA |
| 24 APR 72 | AH-1G | UNK | TRANSMISSION | NA 4 |
| 24 APR 72 | UH-1H | UNK | ENGINE AND TRANSMISSION | NON FATAL |
| 24 APR 72 | AH-1G | 1 | T/R | NA |
| 26 APR 72 | OH-6A | 1 | POWER TRAIN | NA |
| 26 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | WIND SHIELD | NA |
| 27 APR 72 | OH-6A | 1 | T/R | KIA 4 |
| 27 APR 72 | UH-1H | 1 | ENGINE AND POWER TRAIN | NON FATALS |
| 29 APR 72 | OH-6A | 1 | TAIL BOOM | NA |
| 4 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 7 | CONTROLS | NA |
| 4 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 2 | FUEL SYSTEM | NA |
| 5 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 2 | FUEL SYSTEM | NA |
| 5 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 4 | CONTROLS | NON FATAL |
| 6 MAY 72 | AH-1G | 2 | TRANSMISSION | NA |
| 9 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 2 | FUEL & SYSTEM | NA |
| 8 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 6 | CONTROLS + MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 16 MAY 72 | UH-1H | 7 shrapnel | MAIN ROTOR | NA 2 |
| 16 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 15 shrapnel | ENGINE + TAIL BOOM | NON FATAL |

ANTI AIRCRAFT HIT INCIDENT (BTRP 17th) HTRP 17th CAU.

| DATE | TYPE A/C | HITS | DAMAGE | CAUS. |
|------------|------------------------|------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 10 MAY 72 | OH-6A UH-1H | 5 | ENGINE TAIL BOOM & COCKPIT | NA |
| 21 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 3 | HORIZONTAL STABILIZER | NA |
| 26 MAY 72 | AH-1G | 1 | ARM. | NA |
| 16 MAY 72 | UH-1H | 2 | TAIL BOOM | NA |
| 11 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 3 | BUBBLE AND TAIL BOOM | NA |
| 28 MAY 72 | AH-1G | 8 | TAIL BOOM & HOLE IN CANOPY | NA |
| 29 MAY 72 | OH-6A | 1 | BUBBLE WITH SHIELD & RIGHT DOOR FRAME | NA |
| 29 MAY 72 | UH-1H | 2 | - | 1 NON-FATAL |
| 29 MAY 72 | UH-1H | 1 | TAIL BOOM | NA |
| 29 MAY 72 | OH-6A | UNIK | UNIK | UNIK |
| 29 MAY 72 | UH-1H | 1 | TAIL BOOM | NA |
| 2 JUNE 72 | OH-6A | 1 | ROTOR BLADE | NA |
| 10 JUNE 72 | AH-1G | 1 | MAIN ROTOR | NA |
| 16 JUNE 72 | OH-6A | 2 | - | 2 NON FATAL |
| 18 JUNE 72 | OH-6A | 4 | TRANSMISSION TRANS , MAIN ROTOR & FUEL SYS. | NA |
| 18 JUNE 72 | OH-6A | 5 | FUEL SYSTEM & CONTROLS | 1 NON FATAL |
| 19 JUNE 72 | OH-6A | 6 | - | 2 NON FATALS |
| 20 JUNE 72 | OH-6A | UNIK | ENGINE | - |
| 20 JUNE 72 | OH-6A | 10 | ENGINE, TRANS. & CONTROLS | NA |
| 21 JUNE 72 | AH-1G | 1 | - | NA |
| 25 JUNE 72 | OH-6A | 1 | SKIDS | NA |

As of 9 Jul 72

| | 0 | WO | EM |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------|------------|
| H 1st 17 th ACS - | 24 | 26 | 219 |
| CO 17 th Inf - | 5 | 0 | 156 |
| 57 th AUNCO (AHC) - | 19 | 35 | 206 |
| 361 st AWC (Amb) - | 17 | 10 | 116 |
| HHC 17 th CAG - | 34 | 211 | 215 |
| 94 th Med Detach - | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| 344 th ADD - | 3 | 0 | 20 |
| 201 st CAC - | 54 | 26 | 214 |
| 25 th MED DET - | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| | <u>115</u> | <u>98</u> | <u>940</u> |
| | 112 | 108 | 1161 |
| | 159 | 108 | |
| HHT 7/D th - | 3 | 0 | 30 |
| 129 th AHC - | 52 | 47 | 326 |
| 546 th Med - | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| 60 th AHC - | 35 | 22 | 166 |
| 430 th Med - | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| 318 th ADD - | 1 | 2 | 13 |
| 180 th ASHC - | 29 | 14 | 186 |
| 339 th ADD - | 2 | 1 | 12 |
| H 1st 10 ACS - | Included in 129 th strength | | |
| | <u>124</u> | <u>86</u> | <u>746</u> |

TOTAL: OFFICERS: 477

EM: 1907

2384