

RG 472
11th ACK, 2nd Sqd
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Box 1

ANNUAL HISTORICAL SUMMARY

(RCS CSHIS-6 (R2))

2D SQUADRON, 11TH ARMORED CAVALRY REGIMENT

1 January 1970 to 31 December 1970

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Authority NND 927622

By DOW NARA Date 6/22/94

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1. Summary of the Year's Activities:

The year 1970 saw the Second Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment continue to serve its country and the Republic of Vietnam by fighting the spread of communism while taking an active role in the Vietnamization Process. During the year, the Squadron was called upon to conduct interdiction missions and to disrupt the communist spring offensive at Fort Defiance with War Zone "C"; to spearhead the drive into the Kingdom of Cambodia; and to disrupt the fall offensive within Binh Tuy Province. Each of these missions was eagerly accepted and successfully executed, thereby inflicting massive casualties on both Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army forces in the great traditions of the Eagle Squadron.

2. Breakdown of Monthly Activities:

a. January: The end of December found the Eagle Squadron, under the command of LTC Grail Brookshire, continuing its security mission along the Bu Dop Road (Highway 14A) northwest of Loc Binh. The Squadron was tasked with an area security mission designed to relieve enemy pressure on Allied forces in the Bu Dop area and interdict enemy lines of communication from Cambodia into Binh Long and Phuoc Long Provinces. The Second Squadron's primary mission was security of a Route Flow Company which was stripping back the shoulders of the infamous Bu Dop Road. Enemy resistance to the Squadron's elements was light, although the road itself was heavily mined. In mid-January the enemy began to react to the interdiction of his logistical network. On January 20th the Eagle Squadron's CP at Fire Support Base Ruth, southwest of Do Duc, was the target of over 100 rounds of enemy mortar fire. An Air Cavalry troop helicopter working in support of the Squadron also received some ground to air fire while checking a potential landing zone. The Squadron quickly reacted to this report with E and F Troops and H Company. The enemy, while expecting and primed for an Air Cavalry assault, received instead a Armored Cavalry assault which thoroughly disrupted his intentions and routed him. He limped across his refuge, the Cambodian border, with 27 of his comrades left behind, littering the battlefield. The following day two troops of the Second Squadron were called to reinforce elements of the Third Squadron caught in an ambush by the 141st LVA Regiment. With typical professional spirit they closed with and overran the ambush zone forcing the enemy to flee to the north, leaving 41 dead and a quantity of equipment behind. The Squadron relocated its operations to the Loc Binh area at the end of the month to relieve the Third Squadron and continue the reconnaissance-in-force operations in central and northern Binh Long Provinces.

b. February: Operation "Fresh Start" marked the beginning of February. The objective was interdiction of enemy north-south

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supply routes through War Zone C. The concept called for clearing Route 240, which runs east and west across the zone blocking a series of north-south trails that run from the Fishhook area of Cambodia to the Saigon River Corridor. Two Land Clearing Companies (LCC) were used in the clearing operation. The 2nd Squadron with the 984th LCC started cutting at the eastern edge of the An Loc rubber plantation and continued west along highway 240 to link up with the second LCC which was working from the west to east. While the Rome Flows cut along their assigned routes the troops of the Squadron conducted reconnaissance-in-force operations. There were no large contacts during the month; however, a considerable number of small actions cost the enemy over 100 KIA. During late February, the operation was expanded to include a series of tactical Rome Flow cuts through known enemy bases and around heavily used trails. Concurrently, the Squadron established an extensive system of mechanical ambushes along the enemy trail system. It was through this technique that the slightly over 100 KIA were accounted for.

c. March: The Squadron continued its interdiction missions in War Zone C during the month of March. The daily number of kills from mechanical ambushes rose sharply as the enemy continued to try to supply his units to the south. In late March the First Squadron was placed OICOM to the 1st BDE, 1st ACD and the Eagle Squadron assumed control of the entire War Zone 40. Though limited by the amount of terrain over which they could place constant surveillance, the Squadron expanded its network of mechanical ambushes and set about the business of running a check of their trap lines. The effective use of automatic ambushes resulted in over 90 KIA for the month.

d. April: In April the enemy directed a massive mortar and rocket attack on Fort Defiance, the 2nd Squadron Fire Support Base, which sat astride the enemy's main supply route in War Zone C. It appeared to be an attempt to neutralize the Squadron's CP and force the Squadron to relocate thus reopening the vital routes of supply. In addition to a heavy volume of .51 cal and RPG fire, more than 90 mortar rounds impacted in or near the embattled position within a 10 minute period. The intense volume of automatic weapons and main gun fire that the 2nd Squadron immediately poured out prompted the sapper probe which was apparently planned as a follow-up to the indirect fire. After a heated exchange the enemy withdrew north, once again to his sanctuary in Cambodia. The defensive preparations which the troopers of the Eagle Squadron had completed resulted in a minimum of casualties, 2 KIA and 16 WIA (mostly minor) and light material damage. The enemy losses included 8 KIA, found left on the battlefield the following morning and numerous items of equipment captured among which were 5x107mm rocket launchers, 1x75mm Recoilless Rifle, 1x107mm 7 launcher, 37 assorted mortar rounds, and many individual weapons indicated that the toll taken was much higher. The Squadron continued to operate in eastern Tay Ninh Province until late April but the attack of Fort Defiance was the most significant action of the month.

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e. May: On April 27th the Eagle Squadron was alerted for what would prove to be another chapter in the war annals of Southeast Asia: that being the attack into the enemy sanctuaries in the Kingdom of Cambodia. The initial concept called for a border crossing with limited objectives in the "fishhook" area including a link-up with ARVN paratroopers. According to this plan, following massive B-52 and artillery preparation, early on 1 May the Regiment moved from its holding areas south of the border with the 2nd Squadron leading. An NVA force, armed with RIG's and small arms attempted to delay the border crossing. The Squadron quickly neutralized this enemy element and crossed the border at 1025 A.M. Less than 1000 meters inside Cambodia, contact was made with an estimated company sized force. Fire and maneuver quickly reduced the resistance and the attack continued. Late in the afternoon, contact was re-established with an estimated NVA battalion, well entrenched in bunkers. After an hour of extremely close-quarter combat, the enemy fled the area leaving 52 of his fallen comrades behind. The second day of May saw the link-up with the ARVN airborne complete and the Squadron had settled down to search for cache sites that had been by-passed in the hurry to link-up with the Airborne. During the night, the Regiment received the order to attack with all possible speed to seize the vital road network at Snuol, 45 kilometers distant from the lead elements, and to have it done in 48 hours. Again the Eagle Squadron was selected to lead the way. After a passage of lines through the ARVN Airborne, the Squadron pushed through the jungle to the main Pimot-Snuol highway and swung north. Resistance was light and the troops were hindered only momentarily by bridges that had been blown by the US Air Force in an attempt to deny routes of easy egress for the enemy. The outskirts of Snuol were reached in the late afternoon on the 3rd and it became apparent that the enemy intended to fight for the city. E troop received heavy anti-tank and S/A fire as they moved through the heavy anti-aircraft gun positions that ringed the rubber plantation airfield. E Co reinforced and the Air was called in, and the back of the enemy's resistance was broken as darkness fell. The next morning, as the lead elements entered Snuol, the plantation manager and his family greeted LTC Grail Brookshire in the French manner by kissing him on both cheeks and proclaiming him the "Liberator of Snuol". Although sporadic fighting continued for several days around Snuol, no significant contact was made. For his defense of Snuol, the NVA paid a price of 148 killed in vain. The Regimental Commander, Col Don A. Starry and the 2nd Squadron S-3, Major Fredrick Franks were wounded on 4 May while attempting to coax an NVA out of a bunker. The enemy soldier responded by throwing out a grenade which rolled unseen near Major Franks's foot. The Regimental Commander, disregarding his own safety, threw himself at Major Franks, knocking him to the ground and saving his life. For this action, Col Starry was awarded the Silver Star. During the remainder of the month the Squadron operated to the east and south of Snuol, searching for cache sites and keeping open the Regimental land

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LOC that stretched 144 kilometers from Quan Loi to Suoi. May marked a significant month in the Squadron's history. Of greatest significance was the ease with which the Squadron made the transition from a jungle-busting mode of operation to the classic employment of armor: an attack on a narrow front to force a penetration, linking up with Airborne and Airmobile forces in the rear and then a 40 kilometer exploitation to interdict and destroy the enemy's lines of communication. The fact that it was selected to lead the Regiment throughout the entire operation will long remain a source of pride for the Second Squadron.

f. June: The Squadron continued interdiction, cache finding, and security missions until 19 June when it came under direct operational control of the 1st ACD and was assigned the role of keeping Highway 14A open from Loc Kinh to Bu Dop and securing engineer efforts opening routes into cache sites north of Bu Dop. On 12 June, the Squadron helm changed hands, with LTC Richard Coffman assuming command. Two days prior to the Presidential deadline for evacuating Cambodia, B Troop closed out the last fire base in Cambodia and the Squadron withdrew into Vietnam to positions along Highway 14A.

g. July: On the 12th of July the Squadron relocated its rear elements to Dien, which had become the Regimental base camp, and further assumed responsibility for tactical operations in Dien Hoa and Binh Duong Provinces. Fire Support Base VICTORY was established astride Highway TL 16 and reconnaissance operations were initiated against local guerrilla forces of Tan Uyen and Phu Gao Districts. The nature of the terrain and enemy changed drastically from what the Squadron was accustomed. Rather than fighting NVA, the enemy was now the survivors of VC elements that had been operating in the area for years. Instead of virgin jungle, the fields were cultivated and the area heavily populated. Again the Squadron adapted its techniques and continued to operate. Through the use of mechanical ambushes the enemy's routes of liaison and supply were interdicted and he lost thirteen of his hard core guerrillas during the month. On 28 July, the Squadron Commander in his C-47 spotted movement on the ground. Ordering his aircraft down closer to investigate, they were engaged by a heavy volume of ground to air fire that severely wounded LTC Coffman and killed acting CSM Bolan.

h. August: On 4 August 1970 LTC John L. Ballantyne III assumed command. The Squadron continued its interdiction mission in Binh Duong Province, until the 12th of August. At this time it was relieved of its operational responsibility and the troops of Eagle Squadron moved to Dien for a 3 week maintenance and training period. The next task was that of preparing the Squadron for a Command Maintenance Management Inspection and repairing the ravages of continuous combat operations. The unit had not been in a base camp environment since drawing its M551 Sheridans in October 1969. Extensive maintenance was needed and the total efforts of the Squadron were directed toward this objective. The period was well

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spent, culminating with a satisfactory rating on the GMI, and the completion of needed training for new replacements.

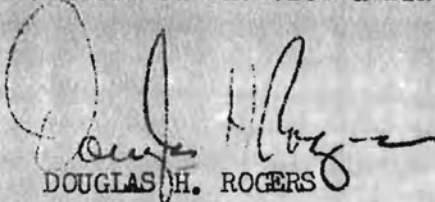
i. September: On 8 September the Squadron departed Dien for operations in Binh Tuy Province under the operational control of 3rd Brigade, 1st Air Cavalry Division. Fire Support Base BOLAN situated astride Highway QL-1, 15Km north of Ham Tan, was occupied on 9 September. The Squadron trains relocated and occupies RIVERA which was 2 Km north of Ham Tan on Highway 2B. Initial operations were directed against elements of the 33rd NVA Regiment, MR-7 and SR-4 Headquarters, and numerous local Viet Cong Companies. The month was spent getting acquainted with the AO and establishing a reconnaissance screen south of Mui Ong Mountain while elements of the 3rd BDE searched for the 33rd NVA Regiment. F Troop assumed a Romeo flow security mission for the 60th Land Clearing Company on Highway 336 from QL-1 to Tan Linh. The Squadron operated primarily northeast of Ham Tan. Results were slow in coming as the enemy elected to evade and remained elusive.

j. October: Activity stepped up considerably in October. Operations included interdiction of a main commo/linkson route along the Binh Tuy, Binh Thuan Province borders, during which time the Squadron was supported with naval gun fire from US destroyers. Additionally, search operations were conducted in eastern Long Khanh Province. The enemy lost 17, mainly in the extensive mechanical ambush areas established by E and F Troops. The mechanical ambushes proved to be the most effective weapon in the Squadron arsenal during this period.

k. November: Continuing the successful pattern established in October the Squadron targeted against known enemy routes of movement. The total kill was 14 and several of these were determined to be either political officials or officers. This loss in leadership must have been felt heavily by the enemy. Concurrently the Squadron initiated a maintenance and training program which consisted of a one week stand down by platoon at FSB Riviera on a rotating basis. As part of this stand down, the platoon received a Command Inspection by the Squadron Commander and received additional training by participating in the Armored Vehicle Reaction Course west of FSB Bolan. Emphasis during the training was placed on operating in a dismantled configuration, with manned ambushes and recon patrols in an attempt to develop skills to isolate and destroy the small groups of enemy in the AO.

l. December: The Squadron continued its interdiction mission within Binh Tuy Province, targeting against enemy routes of movement in conjunction with protection of the valuable rice harvest being conducted around Tam Tan on the South China Sea coastline. Continued efforts by the Second Squadron in establishing mobile check points (MCP), in conjunction with the National Police, along QL-1, 2B, and the Tanh Linh Road provided valuable intelligence information and resulted in 1,927 vehicles and 24,795 persons being checked. Nine

individuals and one load of contraband cargo were detained. It was felt that these mobile check points (MCP) were instrumental in drying up the Shadow Supply System that had been operating along QL-1 in the Squadron AO. This also marked the first month since coming into the war that no enemy were killed by the Second Squadron. This fact alone serves to highlight the changed tempo and tenor of the war and points to the overall success of the Vietnamization process.


DOUGLAS H. ROGERS
MAJOR, Armor
S-3

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