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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
28TH MILITARY HISTORY DETACHMENT
11th ARMORED CAVALRY REGIMENT
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96257

AVIC-WE

23 September 1968

SUBJECT: After Action Interview - Cordon and Search Operation (8 August - 11 August 1968).

TO: Office of the Chief of Military History
Department of the Army
Washington 25, D.C.

1. NAME AND TYPE OF ORGANIZATION: Headquarters, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (11th ACR).
2. INCLUSIVE DATES OF OPERATION: 8 August - 11 August 1968.
3. LOCATION: CHANH LUU Village, BEN CAT District, BINH DUONG Province, RVN, XT827321. Map: Vietnam, 1:50,000, Sheet 6331III, BEN CAT.
4. CONTROL OR COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: 3rd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.
5. PERSONS BEING INTERVIEWED: Colonel George S. Patton, CO, 11th ACR; LTC William C. Haponski, Assistant S-3, 11th ACR; LTC John W. McEnery, CO, 3rd Squadron, 11th ACR; Cpt Lee L. Fulmore, S-5, 11th ACR; 1Lt Knepper, 541st MID, ~~Battlefield Intelligence Detachment~~, 3rd Squadron, 11th ACR; Mr. Bryant, Interrogator of Prisoners of War (IPW), 541st Military Intelligence Detachment, 11th ACR; Sergeant (E-6) Sanh, Interpreter, 3rd Squadron, 11th ACR.
6. INTERVIEWING OFFICER: Cpt William B. Overbay, Historian, 28th Mil Hist Det, 11th ACR.
7. TASK ORGANIZATION: 3rd Squadron, 11th ACR (OPCON to 1st US Inf Div).
8. SUPPORTING FORCES: Co B, 2nd Bn, 16th Inf, 1st Inf Div; Co D, 2nd Bn, 16th Inf, 1st Inf Div; 1st Bn, 8th Inf Regt, 5th ARVN Inf Div; 4th Bn, 8th Inf Regt, 5th ARVN Inf Div.
9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION: CHANH LUU Village was a way station for Main

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Force units along an infiltration route to SAIGON and served as a supply base for the enemy forces during the TET Offensive. Recent interpretation of intelligence sources and aerial observations indicated that the village was still a supply base containing large caches of VC supplies and munitions and rest area for Main Force personnel. Although CHANH LUU has a history of VC control, previous US operations conducted in the area met with little success.

10. INTELLIGENCE:

a. Intelligence pointed to the increasing use of the village as a commo/liaison stopover point and rest area for Main Force Cadre. The C-61, C-62, and C-301 Local Force Companies were known to be operating in the area and permanently occupying the village. In addition, the K.1, K.2, K.3, and K.4 Battalions of the DONG NAI Regiment were generally located 10 to 20 kilometers east of BINH MY Village, XT908328.

b. The captured POW's were from various units including the C-61 Local Force Company, SFR-5 Mobile Force, and the K.1, K.3, and K.4 Battalions, DONG NAI Regiment.

11. MISSION: To conduct a cordon and search of CHANH LUU Village and to pacify any resistance by enemy elements in the area and to render the enemy inoperative.

12. CONCEPT OF THE OPERATION AND EXECUTION: The 11th ACR (OPCON to the 1st US Inf Div) initiated planning on 1 August under the direct supervision of Colonel George S. Patton. The plan emphasized three coordinated phases. The first phase was an extended and detailed cover and deception plan. The second phase was a cordon of CHANH LUU Village; and the third was the search of the village.

The first phase, the cover and deception plan, misled enemy elements into believing that the US forces were converging on the village of BIEN MY, a known VC supply point nine kilometers east of CHANH LUU. The plan was broken down into three parts, all intended to mislead the VC/NVA: dropping maps and making visual reconnaissance, sending decoy radio transmissions, and moving troops toward BIEN MY.

A The first part of the cover and deception plan was initiated on 5 August. ~~Printed~~ maps were dropped on known VC trails in the eastern part of the area of operation. The maps illustrated routes of movement by US/NVA forces, target areas, times of entry into these target areas, and map coordinates. Visual reconnaissance of the areas in which the maps had been delivered

CONTINUATION

ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ
СОВЕТСКОГО ГОСУДАРСТВА
СОВЕТСКОГО ПРАВА

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substantiated the fact that the decoy maps had been picked up by VC/NVA. Heavy air reconnaissance of BIEN MY and light reconnaissance of the village of CHANG LONG was undertaken as part of the plan to deceive VC/NVA elements into the conclusion that BIEN MY was the target of the operation. In addition, throughout the deception phase of the operation, troop movement in the vicinity of CHANH LUU was minimized.

The second part of the deception phase emphasized radio messages verifying the deception tactics. These messages were carried over the Regimental Command Net, the Regimental Intelligence Net, and the Regimental Fire Coordination Net and revealed upcoming operations, troop locations, and areas of operation. The dialogue consisted of radio operators asking for IPW teams, maps, troop movements, artillery positions and requests for aerial photography in the target area. The messages were continuously transmitted over a three-day period. (see FRAGO 61 to OPORD 4-68).

The third part of the cover and deception plan was undertaken by the 3rd Squadron, 11th ACR. They began moving towards the area of operation (AO) from Blackhorse Base Camp on 3 August and arrived at Fire Support Base (FSB) Normandy I on the same day. At this time, K Troop, 3/11, was one day's march from their objective and in the jungle north of CHANH LUU. Their mission was to go north of CHANH LUU in the direction of BIEN MY. I/3/11 arrived one day earlier in the BIEN MY/CHANH LUU Area and began a reconnaissance in force to the south of CHANH LUU in the direction of BIEN MY. Two tank platoons of M Company, 3rd Squadron were located at FSB Normandy I. B/2/16 and D/2/16 were located 10,000 meters to the east of CHANH LUU at FSB Normandy II.

The combination of all troop movements up to this time were enacted for the purpose of putting VC/NVA in a relaxed state of mind and to give them a false sense of security. It was hoped that by placing US forces in directions away from CHANH LUU VC/NVA elements would come to the conclusion that the operation was directed toward BIEN MY and not CHANH LUU.

Originally, the 3rd Squadron planned to airmobile B and D Companies into the Cordon at "H Hour", 082300H August 1968. A shortage of airlift and possible bad weather cancelled the plan. Instead, B Company was airlifted to the northwest of Normandy I at about 1430 hours and immediately began a foot reconnaissance-in-force operation to the north and away from CHANH LUU. At about 1600 hours, K Troop arrived at Normandy II, and married up with D Company. At 2000 hours, D Company mounted K Troop ACAV's and the combined force moved north in the direction of the deception target, the village of BIEN MY. Then, at varying times, each of the four troop elements turned towards the real objective, the village of CHANH LUU. B Company moved south on foot while I Troop turned north. K Troop and D

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Company moved west. All movement was blackout and cross country. It was made more difficult by being in the mid-monsoon season. The first elements rapidly fanned out to complete the seal. On the east, difficult terrain forced I Troop to approach in column formation along an abandoned railroad, and swampy ground slowed I Troop's linkup with B Company to the north. During this lapse, 4.2-inch mortar fire was used to fill the gap until the troops could complete the encirclement. Once the seal was complete, two tank platoons from M Company redeployed to reinforce the K Troop and M Company sectors of responsibility. 4.2-inch mortars organic to the 3rd Squadron, supplemented by 81mm mortars of D Company, kept constant illumination over the village of CHANH LUU, and the surrounding area for the remainder of the night. During the night, the VC made only one serious attempt to escape. About 0240 hours, 10 VC tried to slip out through a draw in the I Troop sector. They were repulsed by ACAV fire from both sides of the draw.

During the approach to CHANH LUU, the VC issued two volleys of signal fire to warn other VC in the vicinity of the approach of US forces. Although US forces expected a ground attack, the attack never materialized. According to Mr. Bryant, IPW, 541st MID, the attack did not occur because there were not enough VC to initiate an attack. He also added, "We never received fire from the village."

At 0700 hours on 9 August, the third and final phase of the operation was initiated by the 1st Bn, 8th Regt. The 1st Bn, 8th Regt was airlifted by helicopter to the southeast of CHANH LUU and immediately began a systematic search of the village, which lasted for two days. During the search, caches of ammunition, supplies, and food were discovered. Sergeant Sanh, ARVN interpreter, 3/11, in relating incidents inside the village as the 1st Bn, 8th Regt entered, said, "Right away 'Charlie' opened up with small arms fire." There was confusion on the part of the VC who were "running up and down the village carrying AK-47's and small arms." The VC used sniper fire, small arms, and automatic weapons fire, according to Sergeant Sanh.

The search of CHANH LUU was efficient and systematic. Cpt Lee L. Fulmer, S-5, 11th ACR, explained the systematic search of the village in this way. The ARVN Bn obtained the initial group of POW's. After questioning, these POW's led the way to another group of POW's and supply caches. The second group of POW's were questioned and they led the ARVN personnel to additional POW's and caches. The 1st Bn, 8th Regt 5th ARVN Inf Div worked in this manner for two days. The search, starting with a handful of POW's, mushroomed until the entire village was covered. As Cpt Fulmer stated, "By this systematic checking out of every tidbit of information, we were able to

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come up with a large cache of items." Cpt Fulmer complimented the ARVN personnel on their outstanding technique and ability to search a village.

A MEDCAP Mission was initiated in the village, but, according to Mr. Bryant, "not many people reacted to it." In his opinion, the reason for their reluctance was fear-- "The people were afraid; it was the first MEDCAP they had ever seen." Mr. Bryant said that many of the people who live in the village could use medical aid. The village was clean, but there were people with cuts, rotten teeth, and sores. According to Mr. Bryant, the Vietnamese were "afraid if they went to the MEDCAP, they might be accused of something; fear, I think, was behind it all." Cpt Fulmer, however, when asked about the success of the MEDCAP, commented, "I think we accomplished our mission (acceptance of the MEDCAP by the Vietnamese) very well." Cpt Fulmer explained that, although the Vietnamese were leery about the MEDCAP, after "continued urging by the interpreter in telling them they would not be harmed and after the first two or three that came to our medical team and were treated went back and told others, people began to make use of the MEDCAP." After the first few people approached the MEDCAP, the atmosphere was eased and the Vietnamese were no longer afraid. In fact about 80 people used the MEDCAP. Cpt Fulmer said, "I think they (the villagers) believed the Americans showed them they really wanted to help and that we were not as bad as the VC had depicted us."

one NVA general officer,
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one

Although the cordon was broken the evening of 10 August, the 1st Bn 8th ARVN Regt continued search operations for one more day. The cordon was broken only after it was decided that there would be no danger to the 1st Bn who remained in the village.

13. RESULTS: There were no US losses in the encounter. VC/NVA losses were killed in action, 2 POW's, 10 civil defendants, and 225 detainees. The following munitions were captured: 2 RPG launchers and 24 RPG rounds, 17 US M-1 carbines, 21 individual weapons, 24 rockets, 3 VC claymores, 1 US claymore, numerous grenades, and 3 AT mines made from 155-mm rounds. The following supplies and foodstuffs were captured: 2 tons of rice, 1.5 tons of salt, .5 ton of sugar, 200 gallons of milk, 50 gallons of kerosene, 50 bolts of cloth, 7 motorcycles with assorted web gear, 350 gallons of cooking oil, 50 lbs of medicine, and 45 lbs of documents.

14. ANALYSIS: The cordon and search of the village of CHANH LUU was a success. According to LTC John W. McEnergy, CO, 3rd Squadron, it represented one of the most successful cordon and search operations in recent history.

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1. DIVULGATION AT 1 YEAR INTERVALS
2. CLASSIFICATION AFTER 12 YEARS
3. DECLASSIFICATION

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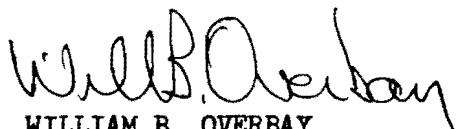
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One of the major reasons for the operation's success was the precise planning involved. The detailed execution of the cover and deception portion of the operation was instrumental to the effectiveness of the operation.

The outstanding accomplishment of the operation, however, was the excellent coordination between US and ARVN forces. Past experience had indicated that US units have a greater capability for establishing and maintaining a cordon than the ARVN forces. Due, however, to the ARVN's familiarity with the area, their language capability, and their sophisticated search techniques, the ARVN units can uncover caches usually bypassed by US elements searching an area. Colonel Patton, CO, 11th ACR, and the Regimental S-2 capitalized on this concept of functional specialization by combining US muscle, firepower, and mobility in establishing the cordon with ARVN intelligence and search parties. Spheres of influence and responsibility were clearly established and the operation proceeded without confusion, friction or misunderstanding. The joint force worked and accomplished their specialized missions as a unit.



WILLIAM B. OVERBAY
CPT, Armor
Historian

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3D SQUADRON 11TH ARMORED CAVALRY REGIMENT
APO San Francisco 96257

AVIC-ZP

26 August 1968

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Operations Report (RCS: MACV J3-32)

Commanding Officer
11th Armored Cavalry Regiment
ATTN: AVIC-WE
APO 96257

1. The operation was a Cordon and Search of CHANH LUU Village.

2. The operation commenced with the sealing of CHANH LUU Village at 02300 August 1968 and terminated when the seal was broken at 111700 August 1968.

3. The location of the operation was CHANH LUU Village, BINH DUONG Province, BEN CAT District, Vietnam, coordinates XT827321.

4. Headquarters, 3d Squadron 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment was the Command and Control Headquarters for U.S. forces during the operation.

5. The reporting officer was the commanding officer, 3d Squadron 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

6. The Cordon and Search was a joint U.S. and ARVN operation.

US FORCES: 3d Squadron 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (-)
Companies B and D, 2-16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Div

DETACHED: L Troop, (1st Platoon under Squadron control)

ARVN FORCES: 1st and 4th Battalions, 8th Regiment, 5th ARVN Div

7. Artillery support was provided by the organic elements of the 3d Squadron 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. Organic illumination was augmented by US Air Force C-47 (Spooky and Moonlighter). US TAC Air was on call but not utilized.

8. Intelligence prior to and after operation had pointed to the increasing use of the village as a Commo/Liaison stopover point and a rest area for Main Force Cadre. Units known to be operating in the area were the C-61, C-62, and C-301 Local Force Companies. In addition, the K.1, K.2, K.3, and K.4 Battalions of the DONG NAI Regiment were generally located 10 to 12 kilometers east of BINH MY Village, XT908328. CHANH LUU was cordoned by two troops from the 11th ACR, I and K Troops, and B and D Companies, 2-16th Infantry, 1st US Infantry Division. The village was searched by the 1st and 4th Battalions, 8th ARVN Regiment, 5th ARVN Div. Eighteen VC were killed and the following items were among those captured: 125 POWs, 6 AK-47s, 2 RPG-2 launchers, 3 M-16 rifles, 2 M-1 carbines, 1 SKS rifle, 1 9mm pistol, 3 Chicom claymores, 1 US claymore, 24 B-40 rocket rounds, 45 hand grenades, 3 AT mines. The POWs were from the C-61 Local Force Company, the S-R-5 Mobile Force, and the K.1, K.3, and K.4 Battalions, DONG NAI Regiment. POWs were evacuated through ARVN Channels. (For a complete report, see 5th ARVN Div Supintrep 224-68, dated 11 Aug 68).

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SUBJECT: Combat Operation After Operations Report (U.S.: MACV J3-32)

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18 August 1968

9. The assigned mission was to Cordon and Search the village of CHANH LUU as directed by the Commanding Officer, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

10. The concept of the operation was initiated 7 days prior to the operation by the 11th ACR (OPCON to the 1st Infantry Division) and the Senior Advisor and Staff of the 5th ARVN Division. CHANH LUU had been searched many times before, with negligible results. A Cover and Deception plan was designed to indicate that the village of BINH MY, 9 kilometers to the east was the objective of the Cordon and Search Operation. False radio messages were sent from troop to squadron to regiment requesting aerial photo coverage of the supposed target area. In addition, a false map was dropped from a helicopter in the jungle to the east of BINH MY. Later reconnaissance of the area indicated that the map had been picked up. The 3d Squadron 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment had at its disposal organic I and K Troops, 2 tank platoons from M Company, a platoon from L Troop, as well as B and D Companies from the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division. All elements were to move as though they were going to cordon BINH MY or participate in reconnaissance-in-force operations away from CHANH LUU. Then at the appropriate times after dark, all four maneuver elements would change direction and head for CHANH LUU. Once the Cordon was closed, the village was to be illuminated throughout the entire night to prevent VC from leaving the village unseen. At 0700 hours, the 1st Battalion, 8th Regiment, 5th ARVN Division was air-lifted into a secure LZ outside the cordon and began its search.

11. K Troop was deep in the jungle in an area called the Catcher's Mitt, some 25 kilometers away from CHANH LUU, and because of the difficult terrain, was on the move almost constantly from 0600 to 2300 hours. I Troop had arrived in the vicinity of the 3d Squadron CP, 1.5 kilometers to the north of CHANH LUU on the 7th of August. On the 8th, I Troop began a typical Reconnaissance-in-force to the south and away from CHANH LUU. The CP location of the 3d Squadron was called Normandy I, and this fire support base had been occupied continuously by a succession of units for at least a year. Securing Normandy I since the arrival of the 3d Squadron on 3 August, was M Company. Two other US companies were located at Normandy II, some eight kilometers to the east. B and D Companies were being employed almost exclusively as night ambush forces against the VC to their east.

Originally, the 3d Squadron planned to airmobile B and D Companies into the Cordon at "H Hour", 082300 August 1968. A shortage of airlift and possible bad weather cancelled the plan. Instead, B Company was airlifted to the northwest of Normandy I at about 1430 hours and immediately began a foot reconnaissance-in-force operation to the north and away from CHANH LUU. At about 1600 hours, K Troop arrived at Normandy II, and married up with D Company. At 2000 hours, D Company mounted K Troop ACAVs and the combined force moved north in the direction of the deception target, the village of BINH MY. Then, at varying times, each of the four troop elements turned towards the real objective, the village of CHANH LUU. B Company moved south on foot while I Troop turned north. K Troop and D Company moved west. All movement was blackout and across country. It was made more difficult by being in the mid-monsoon season. The first elements rapidly fanned out to complete the seal. On the east, difficult terrain forced I Troop to approach in column formation along an abandoned railroad, and swampy ground slowed I Troops juncture with B Company to the north. During this lapse, 4.2 mortar fire was used to fill the gap until the troops could complete the encirclement. The 3d Squadron 4.2 mortars supplemented by 81mm mortars of D Company kept constant illumination over the village of CHANH LUU, and the surrounding area for the remainder of the night. During the night, the VC made only one serious attempt to escape. About 0240 hours, 10 VC tried to slip out through a draw in the I Troop sector. They were repulsed by ACAV fire from both sides of the draw. At precisely 0700 hours the first UH-1C lift of the 1st Battalion, 8th Regiment, 5th ARVN Division, landed on the LZ marked and secured by the 3d Squadron. The ARVN deployed and advanced on the village.

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The ARVN's brought along a list of local VC and an informer was to lead them to a tunnel containing VC. The ARVN's original plan was to extract from the village at 1500 hours. However the search was so profitable that the seal was maintained the night of 9-10 August and the 4th Battalion, 8th Regiment joined the search on 10 August. US forces were instructed to break the seal at 1630 hours, 10 August as the 4th Battalion, 8th Regiment was withdrawn. The 1st Battalion, 8th Regiment remained to continue the search until 1200 hours on 11 August.

12. The results were as follows:

US Casualties: None

ARVN Casualties: 2 WIA

Enemy Losses: 22 VC KIA

122 VC POW

10 Draft Dodgers

21 Individual weapons

50 lbs of medicine

350 gallons of cooking oil

45 lbs of documents

2 tons of rice

1½ tons of salt

½ ton of sugar

50 gallons of kerosene

50 bolts of cloth

7 motorcycles

Assorted munitions including 3 large command detonated AT mines

13. No comments on administrative matters.

14. Special techniques, such as deception techniques properly deployed, can produce successful results and greatly interrupt VC operational plans, cause prolonged delays and confusion for the enemy.

15. Commander's analysis reveals that the operation was a success because of several factors:

- Sufficient forces and time were allocated.
- A good cover and deception plan.
- A well planned and executed cordon.
- A thorough search by ARVN troops.

16. It is recommended that continued thought be given to how to outwit the enemy. Tactics must be constantly changed to stay ahead of the VC.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

John C. Sweeney III
JOHN C. SWEENEY III
Captain, Armor
Adjutant

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